

THE CONCEPT OF GOOD AND THE GODLY MAN IN LIANGMAI NAGA TRADITION

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In habit and character Shri Hunibou Newmai
is a fit and proper person for the degree of Ph.D.

Dated Shillong,
The 10.9.92

Sujata Miri
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Supervisor.

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The moral life of any community consists in the continuous pursuits of the moral ideal. But the phenomenology of moral life demands the more or less complete embodiment of the moral ideal in a saint, hero or venerated person. For instance, moral education will not only be difficult but impossible without the availability of this ideal. I have considered in some detail the idea of a good man as it exists in my own traditional tribal society (Liangmai Naga). The Liangmai Naga tribe is a sub-tribe of the Zeliangrong Nagas who inhabit in three states of North-East India i.e. Assam, Nagaland and Manipur. Unfortunately, so far no written text is available on the conceptual system of this people.

Who is a good man for a particular society or culture? This is a question that needs to be handled with caution. A person may be exceptionally brilliant or exceptionally brave and so on, and yet not considered to be a good man. My dissertation is titled, 'The Concept of Good and the Godly Man in Liangmai Naga Tradition', and it consists of five chapters. The first chapter titled, 'The Good in different traditions', I have discussed the dictionary meaning of the term, 'good man' and also the distinction between the concept of the good man and the concept of an ideal man.

The first chapter also briefly highlights the ideal of the good man in four religious traditions. (a). The Bhagavad Gita gives us the ideal of good man known as 'Sthitaprajna'. (b). Mahayana Buddhism advocates the ideal known as 'Buddhisattva'. (c) Confucianism

offers us the ideal of 'Chun-tzu', and (d). the Liangmai Naga tradition gives the ideal known as 'Liangtuang'.

In the Liangmai Naga tradition a good man is known as 'mai-wi-mai', and ideal man is known as 'Liangtuang'. According to them to be 'mai-wi-mai' or good man one has to be a pious, righteous and moral person who never hesitated to sacrifice his own happiness for the welfare of others. Basically, the concept of 'mai-wi-mai' or good man also refers to an aspirant for the feat of 'Liangtuang' or an ideal man but he (i.e. the merely good) is at the initial stage. The concept of Liangtuang on the other hand is a model or an exemplified standard of perfection for a good man to imitate or to follow if so wishes. It may however be pointed out here that every good man or mai-wi-mai may not be able to become a Liangtuang because to become a Liangtuang one must not only possess all the virtues of a good man but also it is necessary for a person to be physically and mentally fit for the task. Thus, it is not necessary for all good men to become Liangtuang but a Liangtuang must necessarily be a good man or mai-wi-mai. Man's purpose of life on earth is to live a righteous life and maintain peace and harmony among not only mankind but also with other fellow creatures on earth. However if man allows evil and lets it prosper it will endanger his very existence on earth; so says the tradition.

The second chapter titled, 'The Concept of Godly Man', discusses three basic criteria which determine the concept of Godly man. That

is, in order to be considered as a Godly man, (a) one must be a good and a righteous person, (b) one must be also a religious person, and (c) one must also possess divine qualities and powers.

(a). A Godly person is precisely a good and a righteous man who strives for what is right and just according to the accepted moral standard of his society. Basically, in every society, a good man or a righteous man is the one who is sociable, good natured, humane, merciful, grateful, friendly, generous, benefizient, or their equivalents. These qualities are describable in all languages, and universally express the highest merit which human nature is capable of attaining. There is also a circumstances which never fails to be insisted upon the good man namely, the happiness and satisfaction the society derives from his intercourse and good offices.

(b). It is essential for a Godly person to be also religious (here I am refering to God-oriented religions only) because to be Godly one has to be a devotee of a particular deity or God, and follow strictly the principles or the way of life dictated by a particular religious tradition of which one is an adherant. It must however be pointed out here that the religiosity of a person should be reflected in his good deeds. Different religions emphasize different religious norms and beliefs. For instance, Orphism and Vedic tradition consider the practice of asceticism as one of the most important factors in determining the religiosity of a person. By an ascetic life of which the most important feature was abstinence from animal flesh,

and by knowledge of the correct magic formulae to use the journey after death, the Orphics hoped to release from body and return to the company of gods.

Similarly, asceticism also played a pivotal role in ancient Indian's (Vedic tradition) religious life. The ancient Indian especially the Vedic people strongly believed that the practice of asceticism not only helps a person to acquire mystical power but also more importantly, it helps to liberate one's soul from the cycle of birth and rebirth. I refer briefly in the chapter to the four types of ascetics mentioned in this tradition namely, 1. Muni, 2. Rishi, 3. Sannyasi, and 4. Sadhu.

It may not be wrong to say that, there are three approaches for undertaking asceticism in Hinduism. They are as follows: 1. Those individuals who undertake an ascetic life strictly within the framework of four stages of life as prescribed in holy shastra. 2. Those persons who have a desire to find out the right path and meaning of life in order to achieve salvation or moksa through asceticism. And 3. those persons who opted for asceticism as a means to acquire mystical powers through an ascetic life. The concept of the religious life in the Liangmai naga tradition to my understanding does not insist on asceticism though there is mention of godly beings undergoing tapas or penance at many places.

(c). Apart from being righteous and religious a Godly man must also possess certain extra-ordinary quality and power (in a

good sense) which other common people are devoid of. It may be also noted here that there is a distinction between the term, 'extra-ordinary quality' and the term, 'extra-ordinary power'. When we say, certain individuals possesses certain 'extra-ordinary quality' it means that they have much more than average intelligence, ability or skill, etc., especially in a good sense. But when we say, certain individuals possesses 'an extra-ordinary power' it refers to some unnatural, or mystical or supernatural power which can intervene in the course of nature either for good or bad. Though both are attributed to a Godly man, this distinction is essential because the former is a special inborn or innate quality and the latter is not necessarily inborn but it can be also acquire by some means. Godly man is always expected to use this extra-ordinary power for peace and general good. Because by definition the Godly man must be always good and magnanimous and not otherwise.

In the Liangmai Naga religious tradition I find not only one but two types of Godly men, namely, 'Tingwang kumbo mai' like God the Almighty and 'charah kumbo mai' also meaning godlike. For the Liangmai Naga religion, these two concepts do not differ in degree but in kind. A person who is like God the Almighty or 'Tingwang kumbo mai' is generally known as 'phanmyu kakungh' meaning an exalted person with divine insight or the messenger of 'Tingwang', God the Almighty, but small letter godly man is known as 'phanmyu' only.

The third chapter titled, 'The Liangmai Naga religious tradition', I have discussed the Liangmai Naga religion, their theory of creation, giving the relevant legends, and also man's purpose of life on earth and his inseparable relationship with God the Almighty, the regional gods and godheads as well as nature.

The Liangmai Naga religious tradition emphasizes that 'Tingwang', God the Almighty is the creator of the universe and all creatures on earth. According to them, man's purpose of life on earth is to beautify God's creation by maintaining peace and harmony on earth. The life span of the earth itself is dependent on his action. As long as man could maintain the ecology of nature by practicing certain moral values, he can enjoy the fruits of life on earth. If man failed to live according to his purpose of life on earth God will destroy the earth by a fire called 'kulyi myi' which means a fire without flame.

Man's constrained relationship with Tingwang, God the Creator, not only brought untold miseries to all creatures on earth but also resulted in the emergence of the regional gods and godheads who eventually ruled over all creatures on earth. Man's repeated disobediences of Tingwang paved the way for 'Charahwang' (the king of regional gods) a powerful godhead in the Liangmai Naga tradition to become the supreme ruler on earth. He also gave power to his younger brothers to control over different natural phenomena like, rivers, mountains, rain, wind, storms, fire and so on. The Liangmai

Naga religious tradition also emphasizes that man can become god-head through various ways. However, the tribe does not encourage the youngsters to achieve the feat of godhead. It is because of the fact that, the tribe considered this goal of life to be something which does not collaborate with the purpose of man on earth. ✓ For them, the top priority of man on earth is to sacrifice his happiness for the welfare of his fellow human beings and strives for maintaining peace and harmony on earth but not to escape from it. ✓

I conclude this chapter with a little digression to the general philosophical discussion about religion and morality in order to demonstrate that unlike thinkers like, R.B. Braithwaite and most emotivists the Liangmai Naga elders regard the two, i.e. morality and religion as inextricably bound together. ✓

The four chapter titled, 'The Exceptional Man and the Virtue of Head Hunting', I discuss the concept of 'head hunting' vis-a-vis the role of Liangtuang or an ideal man in the Liangmai Naga tradition. Many scholars including the Nagas themselves condemn the practice of 'head hunting' as an act of savage and barbarism but when we closely examine this practice in the context of the Liangmai Naga tradition we can come to see it in an entirely new light altogether.

According to the Liangmai Naga tradition, the term, 'tapi lubo' or 'head hunting', is applicable only to a warrior who brings home the head of a notorious criminal who has been a nuisance in the society. The tradition therefore, regulates the code of law of head hunting in order to keep surveillance over the warriors, and also to avoid victimization of innocent people. Accordingly the tradition differentiates between these two kinds of killing, namely, (a). 'Duangrih gihbo' or an indiscriminate killing which is usually committed by pseudo-warriors, raiders and criminals (they are known as in-garihmai or mazarihmai in Liangmai Nagas) and (b). 'Richang gihbo' or killing an enemy in a fair fight.

'Richang gihbo' or the act of killing an enemy in a fair fight is further divided into two types of killing. (a). Taking of the victim's head during the inter-village war and (b). taking of the criminal's head by either an aspirant 'Pajeng lwi lubo piu' (i.e. a person who has mastered the art of warfare and also the one who has already fulfilled the basic requirement of a good warrior) or Liangtuang. The former is governed by the concept of revenge, and the latter is governed by the code of law of head hunting. As a matter of fact, the Liangmai Naga does not consider taking victim's head during inter-village war as head hunting in the real sense of the term. The ideal of head hunting is intrinsically related to Liangtuang only.

As I have already pointed out that though these two concepts (i.e. the concept of head hunting and the concept of revenge) consist in taking home the victim's head they have diametrically opposed end -- the ideal of head hunting minimizes the conflicts and maintains law and order in the society while the practice of revenge results in more conflicts and bloodshed. The distinction between the concept of head hunting and the concept of revenge is that while the former consists in killing of the criminals and outlaws either by Liangtuang or an aspiring 'Pajeng lwi lubo piu' in order to maintain peace and harmony in the society and as well as to save the soul of an evil doer from eternal punishment, the latter consists in killing of culprit or his relatives by the victimized family or village in retaliation. The latter is more prevalent during the inter-village war when there is no Liangtuang to enforce law and order in the society.

I start discussing the fifth chapter entitled, 'The Relation Between the Good and the Godly' with special reference to men of great merit recognized as such by different traditions. And as illustration I refer to Ram, the hero of Ramayana who represented the ideal man who is both good and godly person in the ancient Indian tradition. Also I discuss the perfect man with reference to Upanisads, specially the 'katha upanisad' to show that the pursuit of a virtuous life is a necessary condition of achieving the ideal of perfection. The Liangmai Naga tradition similarly confirms the leading of a good

life as a necessary requirement for achieving the designation of the Godly. I have also tried to show that for being good it is not necessary to accept the concept of the Godly. While for being Godly you have to first and foremost be good. There may be mythologies regarding the 'arrogant' or 'bad' behaviour of gods, but for a man to be Godly demands that he exhibit in his behaviour all the good features of Godliness as recognized by his tradition.

In the conclusion, I differentiate the concept of the good and the concept of the Godly from that of the ideal or the exceptional man especially in the Liangmai Naga tradition. I have referred to Nietzsche's 'higher man' to show that there is a separate category of the exceptional man or ideal man known as Liangtuang who does not come under the head of either the good or the Godly. While the good pursue the good conduct as defined by their tradition and the Godly try and live upto the image of the concept of God as accepted by the society, the Liangtuang in most cases creates his own values.

Nietzsche is of the view that human beings generally fall into one or the other two radically different and widely disparate groups, one very numerous and occupying the human low land, and the other very small in number, constituting a higher, brighter humanity standing far above the rest (WP-993). The latter are exceptional in being the strongest, most independent, most courageous, having at their disposal a great quantum of power to which one is able to give direction and

thus being capable of genuine creativity. Manu:Hu-ngennang, amongst the Liangmai Naga tribe, represents the 'higher type' which Nietzsche characterizes as the richest and the most complex form of human life'; who are indeed attained, but they do not last, for they perish more easily; 'they are achieved only rarely and maintain their superiority with difficulty, while only the lowest preserve a apparent indistructibility(WP-684). Unfortunately within the tradition itself, this 'higher type' of man in spite of his exhibiting the qualities of robust health, exceptional strength, and over flowing vitality , has ceased to be encourage. Today he is almost a non existent entity.

What has replaced him is the large scale championing of 'the good' defined almost entirely in terms of the civilizing influence of Christainity and modernity. The present scheme of values along with the 'taming' or 'civilizing' process aims at inculcating the good values, 'good' understood in the highest Christain sense alone.

CHAPTER I

THE GOOD IN DIFFERENT TRADITIONS

The Chamber's 20th Century dictionary defines the term, 'good man' as the one who has suitable qualities; promoting health, welfare, or happiness, virtuous, kind, benevolent, well behaved, not troublesome, thorough, competent, sufficient, valid, sound, servicable, beneficent, genuine, pleasing, favourable, ample, moderately estimated, considerable, and so on. The Reader Digest's Universal dictionary also defines the term, 'good man' as having positive or desirable qualities, not bad or poor, virtuous, morally admirable, upright, benevolent, cheerful, kind, well behaved, obedience, etc.

The above explanation clearly indicates that the term, 'good man' refers to the one who strives for general good rather than personal good. A good man is also necessarily a virtuous, righteous and a moral person of the particular society to which he belongs. He must be good not only at heart but also in action. A person cannot be considered as a good man if he is good only in one particular walk of life. For instance, a person may be generous and benevolent but if he is not honest in his earning; his generosity alone cannot qualify him to be a good man. Because a good man must possess all good virtues and work accordingly.

Turning to the concept of the 'ideal man' we find that the Webster's Ninth New Collegiate dictionary defines the term, 'ideal or ideal man' as 1. a standard of perfection, beauty or excellence; 2. one regarded as exemplifying an ideal and often taken as a model for

imitation, 3. an ultimate object or aim of endeavours; goal; etc . The Reader Digest's Universal dictionary also defines the term, 'ideal or ideal man' as 1. a conception of something in its absolute perfection; 2. one regarded as a standard or model of perfection; 3. an ultimate object of endeavour, a goal; 4. a worthy principle or aim; 5. considered the best of its kind and so on.

The definition of an ideal man given in the dictionary makes it clear that an ideal man is the one who has already achieved the ultimate goal prescribed in a particular society which he belongs to. The ideal man is the exemplified standard of perfection and a model for imitation. The distinction between the concept of good man and the concept of an ideal man is that, the former is in the initial stage or in the process of becoming an ideal man but yet to be fully accomplished. And the latter is the one who has already achieved the feat or the goal of life prescribed by a particular society of which he is a member. Therefore, these two concepts are not interchangeable. However, it may be pointed out here that an ideal man is necessarily a good man but not vice-versa. This shows that there is only one way entailment between the concept of an ideal man and the concept of good man.

In order to understand the concept of good man it is also necessary to explain the concept of an ideal man. Because, as explained, a good man is in the initial stage or is in the process of beco-

ming an ideal man. Therefore, the model or an exemplified standard of perfection achieved by an ideal man is needed for a good man to follow. However, before discussing the concept of an ideal man in different traditions, let us first consider three basic questions about the good man; 1. What is the actual relationship between human existence and the notion of good and evil? 2. Why do we do good? and 3. Why after all we need to be good? We are not however going to define here the concept of good and evil. Our main emphasis would be on the basic nature of man in relation to good and evil. For instance, why do men opt for evil in spite of all restriction given by various religious and moral laws of different societies? Is this something to do with human nature as such? Or because man on his own cannot realise the meaning of life. This is why we need to highlight these basic human problems prior to having any discussion on general conception of the good man and the ideal man.

We hardly raise the question; 'what is the meaning of life' due to our pre-occupation with mundane things. But there come occasions or situations in life when this question comes to the forefront of our consciousness. If we lose a dear one, one's only promising child or one's partner in life, we ask what the meaning of life is? If one faces terrible deprivations and frustration for years together in grinding labour to build up one's business or profession and then when reaching its zenith, one finds to one's dismay that he suffer from cancer, he writhes in agony and asks himself: 'Is life meaning-

less striving ? Were my tears and toils to end in smoke ? Are life and suffering identical ?', and so on and so forth. There are also natural calamities like fire, floods, tempest, volcanoes and earthquakes which destroy lives and properties. Man is thus faced with the challenge of evil within himself and outside of him. To overcome this inside and outside challenge of evil most of us would therefore take shelter in theistic religions and pursue good either for fear of punishment or wanting reward from God(i.e.to liberate his soul). Thus most of us do good to others by expecting something in return if not on earth then in heaven. However, there are also some disinterested persons(e.g.Humanist philanthropists) who work for the good of others just for the sake of good and without expecting anything in return. Again there are some materialists who hold the view that the meaning of life is to eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die . These kind of conflicting and complicated human situations lead to different views on human nature vis-a-vis the notion of good and evil.

For instance, the Sophists are of the view that man by nature is rapacious, lustful, domineering and destructive of social life. But he finds that he can have maximum satisfaction of his evil nature by accepting some restrictions on them. Goodness is therefore, a necessary evil for man. However, Socrates exposed the falsity of Sophists' interpretation of human nature. He builds philosophy to show that there is goodness at the heart of man, his society and the universe.

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Socrates tells his contemporaries, the Sophists, that they are right in the picture they have drawn of man, that is, man is sensuous, sexual, rapacious and aggressive. But this is not the complete picture of man and hence the conclusion drawn by them are false. Socrates brings out his point by drawing distinction between a craftsman and his tools. A craftsman is user of his tools for his ends. As the name of the user of knife and awl is shoemaker, the name of the user of saw and hammer is a carpenter, so the name of the body is soul. What is primary in my personality is my soul. After establishing that to know ourselves is to know the psyche(soul), and not the body, Socrates goes on to say that if we want to know what the psyche is, we must look particularly at the part of it in which its virtue resides, and adds at once that this virtue is wisdom, i.e. knowledge of good or values and how to practice them. According to him, all goods are definable by reference to the good of the soul. All virtues are virtues when they cater to the good of the soul. All men desire and seek what is of benefit to them. If one has knowledge that virtue benefit one's soul, then he desires virtuous conduct, for he cannot choose what he knows, would harm his soul.

Whereas Socrates traces all evil conduct to our ignorance of nature of virtues and the welfare of the soul Gautama Buddha traces it to the ignorance of the nature of man's own reality. This

ignorance according to Buddha breeds evil in man. The illusory consciousness of 'I', that is delusion of the ego, is pivotal to our evil life. The real cause of evil in man is ignorant craving (trshna). Our craving arises out of fallacious belief in 'I'. Ignorance is the main cause out of which false desires spring. Ignorance and false desires are the theoretical and practical sides of human existence.

According to Buddha if we are delivered of this mythical consciousness and love of 'I', 'Me' or 'Mine', we will be delivered of craving (trashna), attachment (Moha), error (maya), pride (Ahankara), jealousy (Ersha) and we will be ushered into relationship with the living world with feeling of compassion and love, friendship and joy in the progress and prosperity of all.

Regarding this point Spinoza is of the opinion that the level of knowledge determine the level of perpetual knowledge which is at par with animal consciousness. At this level there is no understanding of inter connection of things. Our ideas are piecemeal, isolated, unconnected and unsystematized. We are affected by environments about and around us. Some of the conditions satisfy our preservative needs. We experience pleasure in them and start loving them. Some of the conditions frustrate our needs of self-preservation and we start to hate them. Our loves and hates are passive emotion because they are caused by external stimuli. We are not active in this respond . We have no knowledge of how we are affected by outer conditions. At

the ordinary level, I say that when we eat sweets I experience a stomach ache. But I don't know how this happens. The two things, sweet and stomach ache are associated for me but not intelligibly connected for me. For a doctor the two things are not just associated. He knows their inter-connectedness. He knows the nature of the chemical relation between the sweet and the stomach ache. The same thing is true about what is good or bad, right or wrong.

Thus, at the rational level, man knows what he is and what is his place in nature. He understands the universe as an inter-related casual system, of which he is a part. He understands what happens to him and therefore, knows how to behave in relation to it. He understands that the things we desire, hate, result of accidental associations and social conditioning. Our running after money, position, power are matters of social conditioning. If we reflect on this truth, we rise above social conditioning, we rise from the unreflective stage to reflective stage. We realise that true life is the life of reason, i.e. of understanding oneself and the universe. When we are enlightened about the inevitability of the laws of things, we do not experience anger or hatred. Thus according to him rational understanding delivers us of irrational fears, envies, hates and loves, on one hand and make us seek adjustment with society and universe on the other hand. This is the life of freedom from evil.

Thus, Socrates, Buddha, and Spinoza hold that ignorance is the cause of evil in us and we can be delivered by knowledge of good, or the true nature of our existence in the context of the totality of the universe. Socrates believes that the pursuit of philosophy or wisdom will deliver us of evil conduct. Buddha holds that deep meditation in which we repeatedly engage ourselves in reflective analysis of our person and law of change, can deliver us of the delusion of the ego and hence of evil tendencies in us. According to Spinoza rational reflection on ourselves in the inter-connected casual system of the infinite universe can free us from our bondage of evil life. However all three believe that ignorance feeds our passions and knowledge can expose and scorch them. Thus, their vision of a good life is to uphold certain virtues. While Socrates regards temperance, courage, justice and wisdom to be the cardinal virtues, Buddha regards compassion(karuna), universal friendliness(Metta), blissfulness(Mudita) and equanimity(Upekha) to be the cardinal virtues. [Spinoza gives the highest place to the intellectual virtue of understanding and love of the total universe as a system, a casually connected whole.

It is clear that there are two elements in human nature, namely, the good and the evil. Basically, man is ignorant or unconscious of the truth that soul is the most essential part of the human personality. Because of the lack of realisation in depth of this truth,

man, in action, identifies himself with his body. He in fact knows himself to be the bodily self. No wonder he gives himself to the satisfaction of his bodily appetites and lusts and thus indulges in evil practices is a liability and a loss. But man as an ignorant considers the worldly gains, to be the supreme test for observing the soul values of truth and goodness. Now honesty is a precious value of the soul, but man in his blindness rejects honesty in his conduct if it does not help him in his worldly enterprises and takes to dishonest dealing. If he finds that truth speaking is a hinderance in his worldly ambitions, he gives it up and takes untruthfulness in his conduct. The bodily pleasures and pride together deprive man of his source of salvation from evil in him. Man is too much in love with the pleasures in his biological urges. He is so much occupied in the satisfaction of the bodily needs that he has no time and energy left for getting knowledge of the true nature of his soul and its welfare. These bodily satisfactions not only leave no time for him to pursue the knowledge of the soul but they stand in his way of getting the knowledge of the soul. They pervert his vision. He comes to believe that the knowledge of the external world is of immense value, and the knowledge of his soul is of not much consequence.

Man thus, blinded by false ambition or greed of material gain, status, power and bodily pleasures completely misled and opts for evil. Nevertheless, man is not just a beast of prey, rapacious and lust-

ful and aggressive. He has in him some capacity for good life and hence goodness is not foreign to him.

Man has unlimited freedom of choice which enables him to do either good or bad. It is given to man to project ideals of life and strive to fashion his life in the pursuit of them. This has been possible for him because his life has certain characteristics or excellences.

There is no doubt that, man shares with animals in instinct of food, sex and bodily comforts, whereas animal has no say in the determination of its life by these instincts, man evaluates them. Man can choose to change from his past life. This is due to the fact that he can stand outside his life, review it as a film. It means that he is not identical with his life. He is a subject who can review his life as an object, like other objects and choose to stay it in or modify it or cancel it. Man's capacity to learn is also matched by his unlimited freedom to make choice as he always stands at the cross roads of life. Man's freedom of choice is though unlimited, his strength to carry out his choice is limited. His bodily passions, his past life, his social environments, and his biological, mental, moral and spiritual limits are so many obstacles in his way to fulfil his decisions. However, even when weaknesses and limitations defeat his decisions, it does not touch the fact of his unlimited freedom of choice or decision. We, as finite beings fall short of the ideal, the ideal we choose

to realise in life. There are natural, social and individual limitations that obstruct the full realisation of it. Thus only few exceptional individuals could realise their goal of life.

The characteristic of human life is that human consciousness is directed to the future. It transcends the actual and strives for what it lacks. It reaches for what is not. Human consciousness refuses to be frozen into a thing, complete massive and solid. It never feels complete, it is always conscious of what it is to do or be. A man's story is never complete till he is dead. It is ever expanding search for what is not. Man is, therefore, condemned to be unhappy, because the consciousness of what is lacks and has still to attain or obtain, spoils his cup of happiness. He journeys with future possibilities to the end of his life.

Lastly, the excellence of human life is that it can draw distinction between good and bad, right and wrong, means and ends and act at this level of distinction. Animal behaviour is determined by fear and temptation. Fear and temptation are motives in man too, and it is a tragedy that religion has exploited these motives for good conduct. Certain religions would have done credit to itself and man if it has not cultivated infant morality of fear and temptation and, taught man to do the right because it is right and avoid the wrong because it is wrong. However, there are men who are honest and do good to others because they consider honesty and doing good to others

to be the right type of relationship between human beings and for no other reason. These men believe in no God, no heaven and hell, no life after death. They are too high-minded to be concerned with public approval or disapproval. Their vision of beauty or honesty and doing good to others is so lovable to them that they live for it. Their exemplary life is not based on either fear of punishment or expecting something good in return.

It is in virtue of these excellences in man that he is able to frame ideals of life and strive to adopt his life to them. Philosophy and religion have both drawn concepts of good man and ideal man. Here I wish to limit myself to the study of the ideal of the good man in four religious traditions, namely, Hinduism(Bhagavad Gita), Buddhism(Mahayana), Confucianism and the Liangmai(Zeliangrong) Naga tradition.

The Bhagavad Gita offers a very satisfactory answer to the problem of evil in human conduct. According to Gita, man comes in contact with things and persons through his senses. In some cases this contact affords pleasure to the individual. He desires them and wants to possess them and develops attachment for these pleasure-affording things and persons. In other cases this contact gives him pain. He feels angry and annoyed and develops aversion for things and persons that cause pain to him. In this way, man develops attachment

for things and persons through his love and aversion for them . We are attached not only to things of pleasure but also to things of pain. The idea of the person whom I hate dominates my consciousness as much as that of the person whom I love. Our loves and hates are born and developed under the principle of pleasure and pain and constitute human bondage. When one is in bondage to love and hate, he loses his reason or sense of right or wrong and with the destruction of reason, he is totally destroyed (Gita: II:62-63).

If man is to rise above his bondage, he must take to niskama karma. To do niskama karma is to act without any desire for gaining worldly rewards, or freedom from birth or even moksa. Niskama karma is action done for the sake of its rightness, without thought of consequences here and hereafter. When a person rises above his desires (vasanas), his reason in him is able to show him duties or dharma in relation to profession(varna) and role (ashrama) and to mankind . If he performs his duties in the three-fold roles, without desire for fruits or any gain in life, here and hereafter he is a good man who is in the process of becoming an ideal man. Gita calls its ideal man 'Sthitaprajna'. Sthita means steady and prajna means reason. Sthitaprajna is steady in his reason and has a clear rational perception that rightness of an action is not determined by its happy or unhappy consequences. For instance, my honesty and truthfulness may cost me my job. But my honesty and truthfulness does not cease to be honesty and truthfulness even when the consequences, by all standards,

are miserable and undesirable. On the other hand, my honesty and truthfulness may help me in promotion in my job. Thus, if the rightness of honesty and truthfulness were to be determined by its consequences, then it is good for one, bad for the other; good in one transaction of life and bad in an other transaction of life. It is both good and bad, which is an absurd position.

In ethics, there are two fundamental notions, 'good and right'. Most philosophers regard good as fundamental and regard right as a means to it. They offer ideals of life as happiness, evolution or self-perfection. For them right is what is conducive to the ideal of life. There are other philosophers who hold right to be the fundamental notion and claim that though conducts at times bring about good consequences, yet right has a nature of its own and is not definable in terms of good. These philosophers speak of moral laws and not moral ideals. Gita's Sthitaprajna holds right to be the fundamental notion and aims at rightness and regards fruits of an act as secondary or of small consequence. For it the concept of rightness rises above the distinction of selfish or unselfish considerations. An unselfish action can be wrong or hellish. Since this is the attitude of the Sthitaprajna to consequences, he is neither overjoyed when the right action brings about happy consequences nor depressed with sorrow when calamities follow the discharge of right action. He feels no exaltation or aversion about the agreeable or disagreeable conse-

quences that befall him. He is uninfluenced by praise and blame, because he concentrates on the rightness of the action and the rightness of action is self-satisfying and self-sufficient for him. The agreeable and disagreeable consequences do not disturb the equanimity of his mind.

The Sthitaprajna knows that the longing for asakti, for fruits or consequences deviates the mind into evil actions. When we love to gain things, however unselfish they may be, we are led into wrong actions. So long we have asakti or longing for consequences, the world is divided for us into friends and foes, since some are helpful for us to secure success and some others are hindrances to us. But there is no gain or loss for us if our only interest is righteousness. When one is above attachment or asakti to fruits of action, there is no friend or foe for him. There is no jealousy for he seeks neither possessions nor positions, neither praise nor power. He is all forgiving and merciful. He is a Sthitaprajna. As a Sthitaprajna he is in a state of perfect tranquility for the conditions that distract the tranquility — vasanas; the egoistic loves, asakti for pleasurable consequences are not in him. As Sthitaprajna, he is in a state or attitude of mind to wish and do good to others, for the things that stand in his way of wishing and doing good to others. The Asakti for pleasurable consequences and egoistic loves are absent in him.

Gita's concept of an ideal man is admirable for its insistence on doing the right action, regardless of consequences for self and others, here and hereafter. It holds rightness as primary and it saves one from descending into untruth and evil means in life. It inspires man to accept the most calamitous consequences in an equitable frame of mind, in steadfast dedication to what is right. It calls upon man to rise higher to fear, anger and joy in the discharge of duties. It helps one to remain undisturbed and equitable and steady in his perception of what is right.

✓ In Buddhism we have two concepts of the ideal man. There is the concept of Arhat of Hinayana school of Buddhism. Arhat is like that of Sthitaprajna of Gita, free from all vasanas of body and egoistic loves. He is indifferent to the things of the world. For him a lump of earth and a piece of gold signify the same thing. Either of them has no attraction for him. He is pure in heart. His entire concern is to attain purity and nirvana. He is sinless and spotless in character. He is in a state of nirvana. He stays alone and benefits others indirectly through his example of life.

Mahayana school of Buddhism holds a different concept of the ideal man. According to it, a good person, called the Buddhisattva, is one whose chief aim is to help others to attain nirvana. The word, Buddhisattva, means whose essence is knowledge. In a technical sense it is used for a being who is in the process of obtaining but has not yet obtained Buddhahood or the ideal man. Buddha, before he was

born as Gautama so claims the Mahayana, was Buddhisattva. He attained this position by virtue of a vow he had taken to obtain enlightenment and became Buddha; and from then went on to various rebirths, and in each of which he did his utmost to help the suffering creatures. Thus the ideal of Buddhisattva is not self-centred, but other-centred. A Buddhisattva is entirely a man of compassion. He feels intensely for the sad state of his fellow human beings and is dedicated to deliver them into the state of nirvana. He desires to get nirvana himself in order to help others to get nirvana. He is in love with others and serves them with all his heart. He is not afraid, unlike Arhat, to endanger his nirvana state for the sake of others.

There are three levels distinguished in Buddhism at which we may develop feelings to do good to others. At the first level, a person does good to others to gain for himself some worldly advantages like for example, a rich man who builds charitable hospitals, which are better run than government hospitals. He thinks such charity accrues to his credit and brings a name to his family and gets the blessing of God for happiness, here and hereafter. At the second level, a person serves others, like the orphans, the lepers and the diseased, the lonely and the lost; for such love and service of the helpless earns them spiritual excellence to attain liberation or salvation. It brings peace here and here after. At both these levels the

persons seek advantages for themselves. The worldly man seeks worldly good. The religious man seeks spiritual excellence. But both seek some good for themselves. This is central to them. The good they do to others is a means to their own good. Both treat humanity as a means to their own good. There is a third level. A person does serve others out of the love for them. The others are not a means to his good. They are valuable in themselves. They are ends in themselves. They are so valuable in themselves that it is the delight of his soul to serve them to the point of his own extinction. It is love of moth for the light in which it finds it worthwhile to get consumed. It is like the love of the mother for the child. Her child is the centre and focus of her life and it revolves round her child. She wants to love and serve the child even if it means risk to her own life. She is prepared to barter her whole life for the child. It is cynical to think that a mother loves the child for what the child can mean to her when he grows up. If this was mother's love, she would not love and serve a permanently invalid child. Thus, when one makes a real sacrifice and serves for nothing in return he sacrifices even his highest good for others. There is no account of credit and debt. There is no calculation. There is uninhabited flow of love and service of others which bring nothing in return may even result in misery and denial of highest good for oneself. These are the three levels of service which Buddhism disting-

uishes and a Buddhisattva is one who lives at the third highest level of conduct open to man. He cultivates all the virtues of nirvana for the good of others.

Buddhism holds that one can attain nirvana in one's lifetime by getting freedom from vasanas and egoistic loves and after death, if he chooses, he can enter the state of complete nirvana. The state of complete nirvana, is a state of complete illumination and ananda. When one enters the state of complete nirvana, there is no rebirth. One is delivered for all times from the tragedy of rebirth and suffering. A Buddhisattva holds that the highest good is complete nirvana and the greatest tragedy is rebirth in the vale of suffering. Yet after he has attained nirvana, he refuses to enter the state of highest good, the state of complete nirvana. He cannot bear the idea that he should attain to complete nirvana while his fellow human beings are in bondage. It is intolerable to him to accept the highest good for himself when other living beings are in pain and suffering. He feels that he should not enter into the state of complete nirvana, as he had already vowed to himself to fellowship with the suffering creatures on earth. He therefore accepts with joy the crucifixion of unending rebirths till the humblest living creature is helped by him to attain nirvana. He is the last to get into the train of destiny to complete nirvana. He knows fully well that he gains nothing for this service, for he is already entitled to complete nirvana for asking of it. Here, we have conception of disinte-

rested altruism at its highest peak point. There can be no more dynamic altruism than the altruism of a Buddhisattva.¹

The concept of Buddhisattva is the concept of a martyr in the service of the living creatures. It is a most admirable concept when we realise that the Buddhisattva does not aim to relieve others of their physical suffering only, he perceives that fellow human beings are attached to sense pleasures, enslaved by egoism, pride, false opinion, lust, hate, craving and evil imagination. They do not love virtue and duty, they are ungrateful to their parents and spiritual teachers. They are addicted to violence, strife, falsehood and cunning. This perception of evil in fellow human beings moves the Buddhisattva to discipline himself for nirvana so as to free others of their evil character. His goal of life is therefore, to attain supreme and perfect enlightenment, promote the good of all beings and establish them in the final and complete nirvana and Buddha knowledge. To do this service, the Buddhisattva has to develop in himself virtues of charity, purity from passions, lust and sense desires (ragas); hatred and ill-will (dvesa), forbearance and patience (ksanti), energy, for in the pursuit of good (virya), rapt and musing (dhayana) and knowledge of supreme good or supreme truth (prajna). Thus, the ideal of Buddhisattva is that of the parvasta or turning over of ethical merit to the advantage of others.

1. The Philosophy of Religion page, 257. by, S.P. Kanal.

The concept of an ideal man is known as Chun-tzu in Confucianism. The Confucian philosophy rests on the obvious truth that man by nature is good and the business of religion and education is to develop or mature man's goodness. Confucius (551-479 B.C.)'s disciple Mencius (372-289 B.C.) offers the following argument in support of the view that man by nature is good. For instance, when a child is seen running towards a cliff and a man rushes to save the child ! the man will not save the child because he is his son or grandson. His conduct is above selfishness. He will not save the child to get praise or reward. He will not save the child to escape censure by others. His conduct is above the motivation of reward or punishment, social approval or disapproval. The reason is that he has no time to think of these possibilities. He acts at the spur of the moment in absolute spontaneity with no thought of the here and the here after. The action is too immediate to allow him to think about praise or blame and reveals the feeling of humanity in man. It is the feeling of humanity that is to be matured by religion and education. When this feeling of humanity matures, it becomes love^{of} humanity. Love seeks its object and not anything else. A greedy man seeks money, not praise in life. A lover seeks his beloved and not heaven. When a man comes to humanity, he seeks nothing except opportunities to serve mankind. His love of humanity is the highest thing in him. He, therefore, hates selfishness which he considers injurious to his love of humanity. His love of human-

ity is so overwhelming that he is happy to sacrifice himself for it.

If an ideal man is to make his love for humanity fruitful, he must develop insight into the nature of fellow human beings whom he wishes to serve. He can satisfy his love for them if he understands their nature and not by imposing his nature on them. Human nature is good. It is the good that an ideal man discovers in his people and provides conditions to mature it. There is no chance for an ideal man to develop vanity for as a lover of humanity, he knows humanity to be good like him, only needing some guidance and inspiration from him. He helps fellow human beings to awaken them to their goodness. Love of humanity coupled with insight into human beings to be served, is the first cardinal virtue of an ideal man, called 'Jen' in Chinese language.

There are other inborn good traits in human nature. Man is sincere by nature. Who can be more sincere than a child ! He is spontaneous in his expression to the dismay of his elders. Again there is reciprocity in human relations. If someone does me an unexpected favour, I instinctively feel that I should do some good to my benefactor. It is not only the mother who loves the child, the child responds to love by love. There is spontaneous love in a pair when they choose to be husband and wife.

There is mutuality or reciprocity in different relationships. Confucius provides instructions for maturing reciprocity in five

relationships, namely, the relation between child and parents; husband and wife; the elder brother and other brothers; the king and the people; and friend and friend. He gives wise counsel as to how to mature these relationships. He puts special emphasis on filial piety so much so that it developed into a national cult. He thought that if a man matures in his reciprocal relationships in these five spheres, that is, he does his duties and obligations in them, he will automatically behave in a correct way in other relationships. This is the second cardinal virtue of an ideal man consisting in sincere righteous reciprocal relationships called 'yi'.

An ideal man who loves humanity and has feelings in reciprocal relationships also cultivates good manners. An ideal man takes, with all seriousness, to the study and training in the etiquette of the people with whom he is in contact, to avoid misunderstandings to crop up between him and others whom he loves to serve. His manners have the grace of royalty and a soul of a humanist. Further, an ideal person is a father or a mother, a husband or a wife, an officer or a subordinate, a ruler or a ruled. Each role or office has certain great responsibilities attached to it. An ideal person tries to be an ideal father or an ideal mother; an ideal husband or an ideal wife; an ideal brother; an ideal officer or an ideal ruler. Every role and office has etiquette and standard of life attached to it. The study and observance of the style of life related

to one's role is a necessary equipment for an ideal man. This is called rectitude of names. One must be true to one's name. If a woman is a wife, she should be true to her role as a wife otherwise she is false to her name or unnatural in her behaviour. This third cardinal virtue of good manners and rectitude of names in an ideal man is called 'Li' in Chinese.

The fourth virtue of an ideal man is wisdom or 'chih'. Wisdom is perception of what is the right and spontaneous expression of it in one's conduct. When one achieves love of humanity (Jen), develops reciprocity in inter-relationship (Yi) and observes etiquette in conduct (Li), in full measures and responds on each occasion, social and private, with perfect spontaneity, he has achieved the virtue of wisdom (chih). The wise man is much concerned with preserving his virtue as an inferior man is concerned to preserve his possession. The wise man is ever anxious to know what is right as the inferior man is ever anxious to know what is profitable for him.

To summarise and supplement Confucian philosophy in the words of his great disciple Mencius, man by nature is good. The virtue of Jen (love for humanity), together with the virtue of Yi (righteousness), Li (decorum), and chih (wisdom) arise from inner seeds of the feelings of compassion, shame, modesty and the intuitive sense of genuineness and artificiality. Such seed feelings are as universal and come as naturally to man as taste of food, hearing of

music or sight of beauty. A human being is good if he is guided by these innate feelings. An important function of education and self-culture is to love one's original child-heart so that the four seeds become four flowering virtues.

The Confucian concept of an ideal man is beautiful. It is free from the speculative metaphysics of God and soul. It is optimistic and uplifting in character. According to critics Confucianism does not satisfactorily account for evil in human conduct. Confucius claims that man does evil because of bad education or bad environment. But bad environments and bad education can deviate us into evil conduct if only if we have potentiality of evil life, so say the critics. Confucius' view that a man becomes evil when he does not know his good nature or he tries to be good beyond his strength or under-cultivates his goodness, or tries to modify his good nature appears not to have satisfied them.

Any account of human well-being must rest on some conception of what is important or of value in human life. A good man must think that his own well-being lies in the attainment of those goals which are important to him. For some, what matters may be material success — wealth, power, the continued ability to enjoy what they bring; but for a good man what matters is that he acts rightly — that he lives his life in the service of the good. His criteria of well-being can be specified only by reference to his moral or religious values. A good man will think he is harmed only when

in so far as he is prevented from pursuing those goals and activities which are fundamental and important to him. Thus the man committed to a moral life will count as harmful anything which does not interfere with that. As long as he 'wills the good' poverty, disease, persecution and even death will not harm him, since they will not touch that which is of significance in his life. His entire life depends on the importance of acting honourable and justly. Nothing else matters. And this is to bear the affliction that life brings patiently, that is, not to desist from acting decently even under pressure or misfortune. A man who has such an attitude to life sees that as long as afflictions do not thus deflect him, they do not harm him — not in relation to what he regards as really important in life. A good man identifies himself with his family, his country, his fellow beings or with any group of which he is a member so that his moral well-being is bound up with theirs. He will not just work for their well-being and care about their successes and failures, but he will regard these successes and failures as his own. The destruction of his family, his country, his fellow beings would be considered as his own destruction, the suffering or disgrace of its members would be his suffering or disgrace.

As I have already pointed out, different philosophers give different views on the notion of good and evil in human nature. For instance, the Sophists are of the view that by nature human beings

are evil but Confucius gives a diametrically opposite view that human beings are good by nature. However, for Socrates, the human nature is a combination of both good and evil. The Liangmai Nagas although rejected Sophists view on human nature they agreed with both Confucius and Socrates view on human nature to certain extent. According to the Liangmai Nagas, though human beings are basically good in nature they pave a way for evil by themselves due to their misuse of their freedom of choice and stray from the path of righteousness. Evil thus creeps in human nature in the disguised form of greed, vanity, selfishness and many other irresponsible actions. Consequently, evil has germinated and firmly rooted in human nature so much so that it has become a part of human nature. The tribe thus believes that the presence of evil in human nature destroy the peace of mind and affects the size, height and even the life span of mankind and reduces it to this present status. The evil presence in human nature could be easily overcome if man is willing to eschew his greed, selfishness, vanity and many other similar vices and start working for the welfare of other fellow beings. The Liangmai Nagas' concept of good man thus revolves round this belief. For them a good man is one who follows all the maxims which in a nutshell consist in working for the general welfare of the whole community. A good man is one who fights against the evil force which are detrimental to the peaceful co-existence of the society.

In the Liangmai Naga tradition, a good man is known as 'mai-wi-mai', and an ideal man is known as 'Liangtuang'. These two concepts are not inter-changeable. It may be, however, noted here that a Liangtuang must be necessarily a good man but not vice versa. According to them to be a good man or mai-wi-mai, one must possess all good qualities or virtues like, love for peace (manai agyibo tu masenbo), truthfulness (majiboga chapbo), sincerity (inchangbo), kind-hearted (lungsa sibo), faithfulness (matunbo), generous (inmahbo), benevolence (wa sibo), Trustworthy (malum khai suibo), helpful (inkhasibo), courageous (hubo), and many other similar virtues. In other word, mai-wi-mai or a good man must be pious, righteous and moral persan who never hasitate to sacrifice his own happiness for the welfare of others. Basically, the concept of good man or mai-wi-mai also refers to an aspirant for the feat of Liangtuang or an ideal man but in the initial stage. The concept of Liangtuang on the other hand is a model or an exemplified standard of perfection for a good man to imitate or to follow if he so wishes. It may be, however, pointed out here that every good man or mai-wi-mai may not be able to achieve the feat of Liangtuang even if they wish. Because in order to achieve the feat of Liangtuang one must not only possess all the virtues of good man mentioned above but also it is necessary for a person to be physically and mentally fit for the task. He must possess not only strong determination or will power but must be also

an expert on martial arts or a good warrior who is physically and mentally capable of facing any situations and challenges. Thus only a few good man or mai-wi-mai would be able to achieve the feat of Liangtuang or an ideal man for the above reason.

The concept of mai-wi-mai or a good man plays a pivotal role in the Liangmai Naga society, without it peaceful co-existence is impossible in the society. The Liangmai Nagas therefore, ask each and every individual to be righteous and live a good life. The concept of mai-wi-mai man does not necessarily strive for the the Liangtuang. In other words, it is not necessary for all good men to achieve the feat of Liangtuang. Moreover to achieve the feat of Liangtuang one must possess an extra ordinary quality which many men lack or are devoid of. Thus, it is not necessary for all good men to become Liangtuang but a Liangtuang must necessarily be a good man or mai-wi-mai. According to the Liangmai Naga, although it is not possible for all individuals to become a Liangtuang it is possible for all to be good if they so wish. It is possible, because, man is good by nature, the notion of goodness in man is inborn or innate but evil is an external force which enters into human nature in a disguised form. Therefore, it is not that difficult for man to retain his good nature or his good old self and discard evil if one so wishes. Moreover, our purpose of life on earth is to live a righteous life and maintain peace and harmony among

not only mankind but also with other fellow creatures on earth. However, man loses his paradise on earth because of his foolish and irresponsible actions. He turns his purpose of life upside down and allows evil to control him. If man continues to allow the evil and let it prosper and keep growing it will endanger their very existence on earth. Therefore in order to prevent the menace of evil man must live a righteous life and work for peace and harmony among all living creatures. Thus, if everyone leads a righteous and a good life, there may not be any significance of the concept of Liangtuang or an ideal man. However, unfortunately, because only few could live a righteous and a good life the concept of Liangtuang or an ideal man plays a crucial role in making men aware of their goal of life on earth. Although the concept of mai-wi-mai or good man is fundamental, and without which there cannot be any Liangtuang, the concept of Liangtuang plays the more important role in the society.

The concept of Liangtuang is similar in many ways with that of Sthitaprajna of Gita, the Buddhisattva of Mahayana Buddhism and Chun-tzu of Confucianism. For instance, like Sthitaprajna, Liangtuang also work for what is right without having a thought of consequences here and here after. He holds right to be the fundamental notion and aims at rightness. He is neither overjoyed when the right action brings about happy consequences nor depressed with sorrow

when calamities follow the discharge of right action. He is not influenced by praise and blame, because he concentrates on the rightness of the action and the right action is self-satisfying and self-sufficient for him. The agreeable and disagreeable consequences do not disturb the equanimity of his mind. Like Buddhisattva he is not self-centred, but other centred. He does not do good to others to gain for himself either some worldly advantages nor to attain liberation or salvation. Like Chun-tzu, he also knows humanity to be good like him, only needing some guidance and inspiration from him. He helps fellow human beings to awaken them to their goodness through various means.

To explain the concept of the Liangtuan I have discussed the religion of the Liangmai Nagas in the third chapter of my thesis.

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF GODLY MAN

may have different moral standards, which may be opposed to one another. If that is so, then, does the concept of righteousness also differ from tradition to tradition? As an answer to this, I would say that even if, there are certain differences of moral laws in different traditions they are different only in degree but not in kind. It may also be noted here that moral laws are imposed by every society primarily, because, it is very helpful in maintaining peace and harmony in the society.

Basically, in every society, a good man or a righteous man is the one who is sociable, good natured, humane, merciful, grateful, friendly, generous, beneficent, or their equivalents. These qualities are describable in all languages, and universally express the highest merit which human nature is capable of attaining. There is also a circumstance which never fails to be insisted upon, namely, the happiness and satisfaction the society derives from the good man's intercourse and good offices. To his people, he endears himself by his pious attachments and dutious care. No one feels his authority, but with him, the ties of love are consolidated by beneficence and friendship. It seems undeniable, that nothing can bestow more merit on any human creature than the sentiment of the good man, which makes one promote the interest of mankind, and bestow happiness on human society. The happiness of mankind, the order of society, the harmony of families, the mutual support of fellow human beings, are the goal of life of a good man or a righteous man.

As pointed out earlier though the moral prescriptions may differ from tradition to tradition the primary objective of morality is more or less same everywhere. It follows from this that the concept of good man or righteous man must be also universal. Because wherever he may be, his primary objective is to lead a good life by rendering service for the welfare of his fellow beings. As an adage says, "Charity begins at home", the best place to start with any good work is one's own family or community. Therefore in order to have a clear picture of a righteous man or a good man it would be appropriate if we refer to a particular moral tradition and find out for ourselves whether the basic core of morality is universal or not. For this purpose, I would like to quote some important moral prescriptions of the Liangmai Naga tribe, and also give a brief reference to their conception of good life. Some moral prescriptions are given below :-

1. One should give respect not only to one's own parents but also to all elders, even to those people who are older by a day or so.
2. One should not sit idle while others are in trouble.
3. One should always be benevolent towards his fellow beings especially towards those who are poor and helpless.
4. One should not kill or torture innocent and helpless people. If someone does so he/she will have to meet the same fate of his/her victim.

5. One must not be guilty of incest. Anyone found guilty of this crime shall be ostracized for life.
6. All hunter must share the meat of their 'game' with their villagers.
7. If any family of the village is found unable to finish their work-load in time, all villagers should come forward and give a helping hand, which is called 'chaku kubo'.
8. The whole village should live like a big joint family by sharing happiness, sorrows, trials and tribulations of all the members
9. One should always be hospitable to strangers and must not let them go hungry.
10. No one should treat fellow human beings as slaves; it is a crime even to use prisoners of war for slavery.
11. Any person who seeks refuge, whether he be a friend or an enemy one must extend hospitality to him to the extent of even risking one's life for them.
12. One should not accuse anybody without having any concrete evidence of crime and if anybody accuses an innocent person he/she must pay a fine (Liyusi lubo) a big pig to the village council and also must apologize publicly.
13. One should not take what does not belong to oneself. One must not desire, not even be tempted by anything which belongs to others
14. All individuals should sacrifice their happiness for the welfare of their fellow beings.

An individual desirous of a good life must live a moral life. He should work for the welfare of his fellow human beings within the framework of the existing moral laws of the society. Therefore, whatever may be the case, no individual should violate the given laws and disturb the peace of the society. Those who violate the moral laws of the society for their own selfish motive can never enjoy a good life. A good man is a lover of justice who always strives for peace and harmony of the society with the spirit of love and affection towards his fellow men without any discrimination. The demands of morality are such that no one should violate the moral laws.

The Upanisads also broadly give a similar view to that of the Liangmai Nagas' concept of the righteous or the good man. For the upanisads, the ideal of ethics is self-realisation and moral conduct is self-realised conduct. The moral life is one of understanding and reason, and not of mere sense and instinct. If we do not recognize the ideal prescribed by reason and do not accept the higher moral law, our life would be worthless. A life of reason is a life of unselfish devotion to the world. It is reason that tells us that the individual ought not to have any interest of his own except the interest of the whole of which he is a part. He will be delivered from the bondage to worldly things and caprice. He is a good man if he subordinates personal

ends to social ends in his life, and he is a bad man if he does the contrary. If we want to escape from sin we must escape from selfishness. The upanisads demand the individual to renounce selfish endeavour, but not all interests. In this regard the Isa upanisad clearly points out that the righteous or the good man is not the one who leaves the world and retires to a cloister but he who lives in the world and loves the objects of the world.

(b). The Reader Digest's Universal dictionary defines the word, 'religious' as 1. of or pertaining to, or teaching religion; 2. adhering to or manifesting religion; pious, godly, 3. extremely scrupulous or conscientious, 4. pertaining to or belonging to an order taking vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, 5. A person belonging to a religious order; especially a monk or nun. The Collins English dictionary defines the word, 'religious' as 1. of relating to or concerned with religion, 2. pious, devout, godly, 3. appropriate to or in accordance with the principles of a religion. 4. scrupulous, exact or conscientious, 5. of or relating to a way of life dedicated to religion and defined by a monastic rule. The explanation given by both the dictionaries clearly indicates that to be religious (here I am referring to God-oriented religions only) one has to be a devotee of a particular deity or God, and follow strictly the principles or the way of life dictated by a particular religious tradition of which one is an adherant. It is also clearly pointed out that to be a religious person one must be

also righteous. Because, the religiosity of a person should be reflected in his good deeds. One may pointed out here that, even if we are discussing the concept of 'religiousness' only in terms of God-oriented religions we may still find it difficult to explicate this concept satisfactorily. Because even within the God-oriented religions the criteria of religiosity may differ from one religion to another. Moreover, different religions have different religious norms and beliefs which may conflict with one another. For instance, Orphism and Vedic tradition consider the practice of asceticism as one of the most important factors in determining the religiosity of a person. But the same may not be applicable to many other God-oriented religions. As an answer to this query I would safely say that, in this matter, for all religious traditions whether God-oriented or not, the basic criteria of religiosity would be more or less same even if they differ in degree. Of course, different religions may have different ways of looking at it (religiosity) but we must consider only the end result, that is, whether it satisfies the basic criteria given above or not. Anyway, this problem would become clearer when we come to discuss the concept of asceticism vis-a-vis the concept of religiosity in different religious traditions. The word, 'ascetic' is derived from Greek 'asketikas', meaning a hermit (asketes) who exercises self discipline. The Reader Digest's Universal dictionary defines the word, 'ascetic' as the one who renounces ma-

terial comforts and leads a life of self-discipline, especially as an act of religious devotion. The Chamber's 20th Century dictionary defines, 'ascetic' as the one who rigidly denies himself ordinary bodily gratifications for conscience sake, aiming to compass holiness through mortification of the flesh strictly following a life of austerity. Thus asceticism is a doctrine or theory which holds that the ascetic life releases the soul from the bondage to the body and permits union with the divine. To understand the concept of asceticism fully let me highlight two ancient religious traditions namely, Orphism (ancient Greeks) and Vedic tradition (ancient Indian). I will be also highlighting the concept of religious man in the Liangmai Naga religious tradition in the light of these two traditions.

To explicate the significance and importance of asceticism in Orphism, it is necessary to highlight the historical development in some section of ancient Greek society. This I have attempted to do with the help of A.H. Armstrong's survey of early Greek philosophy. The decline of Ionia began with its conquest by the Persians in 546.B.C., and culminated in the destruction of Miletus in 494.B.C. During the later part of the 6th century B.C. the centre of the intellectual life of Greece moved to the splendid and powerful city states of 'Great Greece', south Italy and Sicily. These colonies, however, retained their religious ties

with the parent states, of the mainland Greece. Here Pythagoras emigrated from Samos, and there about 530, B.C., he founded the Pythagorean Brotherhood, at Croton in south Italy. This new philosophical school which Pythagoras inaugurated, was very different from Milesian cosmogony, and had a very different spiritual background. In place of the unenthusiastic state religion of Ionia and the normal poetic mythology of the type familiar to us in Hesiod there lies behind Pythagorean philosophy, the strange religious movement known as Orphism. The Orphic movement appeared in Greece in the 6th century B.C. In our scanty evidence about it we hear of purification rituals, of small group of devotees living an ascetic life, and of a voluminous literature circulating under the name of Orphius, the legendary singer whom the Orphics took for their prophet, and another legendary singer Musaeus. Orphism had a widespread influence, whose precise bounds are not easy to determine, and lasted to the end of classical paganism, and it is difficult to be at all positive about the content of the earliest literatures and the beliefs of the earliest groups of devotees. But it appears that the Orphic books contained cosmogonies like Hesiod's, but more fantastic and with some unusual features (notably the world egg), and some of them at least a sacred story of much more religious importance and profound implications, the myth of the generation of man from the as-

hes of the Titans who had devoured Dionysus Zagreus, the god whom the Orphics worshipped. Thus man is a blend of divine and early nature and the purification and release of the divine element is the end to which the Orphic way of life was directed. The soul, it seems, to the Orphics was an immortal god imprisoned in the body and doomed unless released by following the Orphic way of life, to go round the wheel of reincarnation in the endless succession of lives, animal and human (so that all living things are akin, and to kill an animal is to murder one's own family member). By ritual purifications, by an ascetic life of which the most important feature was abstinence from animal flesh, and by knowledge of the correct magic formulae to use on the journey after death, the Orphics hoped to win release from body and return to the company of the gods. The next world was to them more real and important than this, a place of joy for the blessed initiates and of torment for those who are not of one company of the elect or gods. This other worldliness and the ascetic life which went with it were very different from normal Greek beliefs and religious practices and had an effect of the greatest importance on later Greek philosophy and religion.

Turning to asceticism in the ancient Indo-Aryan culture we find that in the Rgveda both 'munis' and 'Yatis' are referred to. The word, 'muni' which occurs many times, regularly means some kind of ascetics. In the later times 'muni' to be derived as a name for

ascetics because of meditation(mananat).In one passage of Rgveda (X,136,2),these munis are described as vatarasana, Kesin(long haired) and as wearing yellow and soiled garments.

Asceticism is a complex of a number of traits.The principal ones may be distinguished as celibacy, austerity, concentration and ecstasy. Asceticism, in general has expected and even insisted that its aspirants should take celibacy before they settled down as married men and women. The second element of ascetic complex is austerity or 'tapas' .'Tapas'etymologically means heat and significantly its practice is described in Sanskrit in terms of root 'tap',to get heated. In Vedic cosmogony 'tapas' plays an important role and in Rgvedic passage it figures in connection with the creative activity of Prajapati as well as power by itself. Though 'tapas',asserts a Rgvedic verse, a poet can behold the old creations of the fathers. In the Atharvaveda(XV:1.3;3,1) Ekavratya;as Mahadeva and Isana,is connected with 'tapas', and one of the varieties of his tapas is specified in his description that he stood erect for a whole year. In the Chandoya upanisad(II,23) three factors of Dharma are specified. Yajna or sacrifice is the first of them. Yajna is here identifies with 'tapas' ,austerity, as in the endeavour of Brahma-realisation,the latter has greater pertinence than the former. In the same upanisad(VII-1,5),in another context where.Brahmacarya, life-long celibacy is

propounded, at least two kinds of practices of austerity are specified and identified with Brahmacarya. It is asserted that what is known as 'mauna', silence, is Brahmacarya itself. Keeping silence is well-known to be one kind of austerity. Brahmacarya is further identified with 'anasakayana', practice of non-eating. Fasting is thus another kind of austerity. In the Brahdaranyaka upanisad (IV:4.22) it is stated that Brahmins desired to know the Brahman in accordance with the Vedic injunctions through sacrifice, through alms and gifts, and through the austerity of fasting. Knowing him one becomes a 'muni'. In the Katha upanisad (I, 3.1) Brahmavids, knowers of Brahma, are qualified as 'pancagnayah' and 'Trinaciketah'. Pancagnayah are well known as those who practise the austerity of keeping round them five fires; and Trinaciketah means those who keep a particular Yajurvedic vow.

The Prasna upanisad (I.1,2,4,9) informs that Prajapati desiring to have progeny practised austerity and thus produced a couple. When some half a dozen sages approached the great Pipalada with a desire to know Brahma, he asked them to stay with him for a year having faith, keeping celibate and practising austerity. Self realisation is achieved, the same upanisad declares, through austerity, celibacy, faith and knowledge. The Mundaka upanisad (I.1.8-9) states that Brahma is nurtured by austerity and yet asserts that for the real knower knowledge alone is austerity. This upanisad (1,2,11;1,7) already recognizes the four Asrama, without

naming it as such and there is no wonder that though knowledge is most important for Brahma-realization, yet not only the moral qualities of truth and faith, but even the physical attributes of celibacy and austerity, accompanied by living in a forest and by alms-begging, one applauded, and almost prescribed as the way to final salvation in immortality. The practitioners of this regimen are naturally described as wise and calm men. Further (III, 1.5) self-realization is declared as experience through correct knowledge. In the Taittiriya upanisad (III.1-5) is stated that when Bhrqu, the Varuni, approached his father Varuna for the knowledge of Brahma, the latter asked him over and over again to practise austerity. And it was through the practice of austerity that Bhrqu finally came to realize that Brahma was ecstatic bliss (ananda). In the Svetasvatara upanisad (VI, 21), in which perhaps for the first time personal God figures, it is declared that Svetasvatara came to know Brahma through the power of his austerities and the grace of God. In the Maitri upanisad (IV, 3), the practice of austerity is given a fixed and definite place as a stage in the upward spiritual march of the individual mind. Through austerities mind acquires the right attitude (astva) which enables it later to realize the self.

However strong the claim of 'tapas' or austerity was in the technique of self-realization, in the active pondering about permanence and impermanence and moral questionings which characterized the upanisadic age, it would have been surprising if doubts about

the efficacy of austerity, that is, of the test of physical endurance and bodily mortification, were not expressed. The Brhadara-nyaka upanisad (III,3.10) proclaims disbelief in austerity and its futility for Brahma-realisation through the most authoritative person of the age, Yajnavalkya himself. He tells Gargi Vacaknavi that, a person practises penance for many thousand of years without knowing the Immutable (Brahma), he would have achieved not the infinite but only something that is finite and ephemeral. Even the Mundaka upanisad, in which not only tapas but Brahmacarya and Satya as well, and even the performance of prescribed activity, are considered as competent and effective techniques for Brahma-realisation, subordinates austerity as a method of realizing Brahma and declares 'jnana', knowledge to be superior.

Yoga/concentration, the third requirement for the ascetic is one component emphasized maximally in the Indian tradition. In the Katha upanisad (I.3,3-6) control of senses is not only exhorted but insisted on and it is laid down that the senses can be kept control only through a mind which is 'Yukta', applied, or yoga-conditioned. If the Chandogya upanisad identifies Brahma as Dhyana and gives up this identification in favour of Vijnana, knowledge, the katha (II.6,10-11) speaks of the steady and the controlled state of the senses, mind and intellect as highest condition, and appropriately describes it as indriyadharana. In the complete yoga-system, dharana or continued concentration is the final state.

Yoga was considered to be so important that the whole system discovered in the Katha(II.6.13) is finally summarised as both knowledge and 'yogavidhi'. Svetasvatara(II,8-14) the later of the early upanisads, gives almost detailed instructions for the practice of yoga and clearly defines and describes the miraculous physical powers as well as the spiritual effulgence that result from its practice.

Ecstasy, another component of the ascetic life is arrived by the inclusion of the feeling of bliss experienced as part of the muni's concentration. During its continuance the muni is described as having attained the fellowship of the deities of the air and as being able to travel with them in their course because of his miraculous powers. They regard this state of being uplifted above the world as something that only came under consideration for themselves because they possessed the capacity of attaining to community with the gods.

Asceticism thus plays a pivotal role in ancient Indian's (Vedic tradition) religious life. The ancient Indians especially Vedic people strongly believed that the practice of asceticism not only helps a person to acquire mystical power but also more importantly, it helps to liberate one's soul from the cycle of birth and rebirth. In Indian puranas we find that asceticism is practised by not only men but also gods and even the Asuras. Basically, although all ascetics were those who renounce the worldly

pleasure, comfort and responsibilities in order to achieve their desired goal; their objectives or ultimate goal for opting for an ascetic life may differ from person to person. There are some individuals who practise asceticism just to acquire mystical power for self interest while some undertake asceticism until they achieve liberation of their souls. Broadly speaking there are four types of ascetics in ancient Indian tradition, namely, 1. Muni, 2. Rishi, 3. Sannyasi and 4. Sadhu. As a matter of fact, muni is an initial stage of Rishi. Normally, muni is a thinker, who reflects upon the truth and meaning of life. Rishi, is a sage or a man of great wisdom, the seer of the truth and the exalted person of divine insight. Rishis are those who wrote the Hindus' sacred shatras and the leading instructors of the Hindu religious faith. Usually the Rishis would set up an Ashram and impart the knowledge to those willing to be disciples. Sannyasin are the wanderers, who lives on mendicancy. Normally they are those who follow the four stages of life. Sadhu is a holy man who should be pious, honest, straight and always walk on the path of righteousness. He is a good person who always strives for good and righteousness. One way or other all the ascetics mentioned above have pass through a life of a hermit. Among them some may opt for the life of hermit or a recluse to devote the rest of his life to meditation.

It may not be wrong to say that, there are three approaches of undertaking asceticism in Hinduism. They are as follow: 1. Those

individuals who undertake an ascetic life strictly within the framework of four stages of life as prescribed in holy shastra.² Those persons who have a desire to find out the right path and meaning of life in order to achieve salvation or moksa through asceticism. And 3. those persons who opted for asceticism as a means to acquire mystical powers through an ascetic life.

Those who fall under the first category are basically the sannyasins. They strictly follow the four stages of life as prescribed in the sacred Hindu shastra. For Hindus, the ideal life (for superior castes) begins with mendicancy and ends with asceticism. According to the following scheme, which divides the ordinary span of a man's existence into four well marked period,

(a). Early youth which should be passed as a brahmachari or religious students living on alms. (b). Manhood, during which period the twice born man should as a grihasta, devote himself to household duties and the rearing of a family. (c). Middle age which should be spent as a Banorustha or forest recluse, with or without one's wife. In regard to food, the hermit should restrict himself to the spontaneous products of the earth obtained by himself, and should abstain under all circumstances, from partaking anything grown in town or the produce of any man's labour. (d). The closing period of life, during which final stage the good Hindu should become a sannyasi, abandoning all sensual desires and living by mendicancy on the charity of others.

Second type of ascetics were those who realised the emptiness of life through either internal or external force, and try to seek the truth and meaning in life. Eventually, they not only liberate themselves from the bondage of birth and rebirth but also became a man of great wisdom or a sage.

Those ascetics who fall under the third category of asceticism were persons who used asceticism as a means to obtain fame and mystical powers for some purpose. There are stories and legends about this kind of ascetics in the puranas. Most of the ancient Indian martial heroes and demigods are credited with ascetic practices; not only this, even gods themselves have undergone self-inflicted tortures for the attainment of the objectives of their desires. Referring to this point the late Prof' Monier William wrote as follows: "According to Hindu theory, the performance of penances was like making deposits in the bank of heaven. By degrees an enormous credit was accumulated which enabled the depositor to draw the amount of his saving, without fear of his draft being refused payment. The power gained in this way by weak mortals were so enormous, that gods as well as men were equally at the mercy of these all but omnipotent ascetics, and it is remarkable that even the gods are described as engaging in penance and austerities, in order, it may be presumed not to be outdone by human beings ..."¹

1. Indian Epic Poetry, note to page, 4.

In the Mahabharata it is related how two brothers daityas of the race of the great Asura, undertook a course of severe austerities with the momentous object 'of subjugating the three worlds'. Nothing can forsake the constancy of the ascetics to their vows, and Brahma was at last obliged to grant them very extensive powers and privileges, including complete immunity from danger except at each other's hands.¹ There is also another myth which talks about one rishi, the muni Aurva of Brighu race, who influenced by a fierce craving for vengeance on account of some wrongs suffered by his ancestors, subjected himself to the direct penance for 'the destruction of every creature in the world', and was only persuaded to desist him from his terrible purpose by the intercession of the Pitris or souls of his forefathers.² In Vishnu purana³ we also find another story where king Viswamitra had a fight with a hermit named Vasishta over a magical cow and king Viswamitra was defeated by the hermit. Defeated, and humiliated by a Brahman, the king turned to the only resource open to him, and resolved to acquire supernatural power by ascetic practices, solely with a view to an eventual triumph over the Brahman hermit, Vasishta. In the process he not only acquired the title of Maharishi but also most coveted title of 'Brahman-ris'.⁴ The kshatriya king thus, by thousands of years of intense mortification and stern-discipline, attained the exalted rank of Brahmanhood. Yet curiously enough his spe-

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1. Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Section CCXI. Babu Pratap Chandra Roy's translation.
 2. Mahabharata, Adiva Parva Section CCXII.
 3. Vishnu Purana, Page 297, translated & illustrated by H.H. Wilson
 4. Muir's Sanskrit Texts. Volume, I. p. 409.

cial and final hope of triumphing over Vasishta could not materialized and was eventually reconciled to his still unvanquished foe.

The ascetics who fall under the first and the second categories we find although they entered into ascetic way of life in different ways their ultimate goals are more or less the same, that is, to find meaning in life and to liberate their souls. However those ascetics who fall under the third category are different from the first two — their ultimate goal of undertaking austerity is to acquire a mystical or supernatural power. A person who undergoes austerity just for the sake of acquiring mystical power with a selfish motive, then, he is not a religious person in the present scheme of things. After acquiring the mystical power he may use it for the good of mankind and in this case, he could be considered as a good man but never a religious person. As a matter of fact, if one is not bound by any religious doctrine, there is no criterion to judge the religiosity of the person. One may wonder, what would be the condition of these ascetics (recluse) who does not follow any laws whether moral or religious standard and who acquire a mystical power by means of which they help people but only when approached. There is also a possibility that an ascetic may not follow any particular religion or moral standards while he enter into an ascetic life but after acquiring mystical

power he may be either opt for any particular existing religion or he may even establish altogether a new religion. And in this case, his religiosity would be definitely judged by the criterion of the particular religion he adheres to now. In that case, in ancient Indian religious context, one can safely say that the practice of asceticism is not the only criterion of judging a person's religiosity. A glance at the Vedic tradition would point out many others.

Now let us consider the concept of a religious man in Liangmai Naga religious tradition. Like many other tribal religions we also find some overlapping between religious obligations and moral obligations in Liangmai Naga tradition. In certain cases it appears that the religious laws of the tribe seem sanctioned just for the sake of strengthening or implementing the moral laws. For instance, moral law of the tribe asks the individuals not to ill-treat helpless people because it is not right to do so. The moral laws of course, hint that if one ill-treated helpless people especially the aged parents, he may suffer from 'Aduan shabo' or bad consequences in future. But it gets a definite religious sanction over those who do not treat the aged parents well and as a result, if they die unhappily, then, the responsible person and his offspring would have to suffer from a curse called 'tingthi-shabo' (a curse by family members). If one suffers from this curse

then, misfortune and unnatural death would frequently occur in the family. If one does not repent for his misdeed and perform a religious ritual called 'niw-thiu-luanho' (a ritual of appeasement to those souls who suffered from injustice we had caused) immediately this curse may germinate even to the extent of annihilating the whole family. However, these instances do not imply that there is no clear distinction between the concept of good/righteous man and the concept of religious man in the Liangmai Naga religious tradition. The Liangmai Naga religious tradition emphasizes that to be a religious or 'Charah cheng tadmai', one has to be good man or mai-wi-mai as well. If one person strictly follows all religious laws (especially a ritualistic sense) he would be known as 'taniya-rih-kamawi-mai'. However, this title is not enough to be considered as a religious man or Charah-cheng-tadmai. Because in order to be a religious person or charah-cheng-tadmai one has to be not only taniya-rih-kamawi-mai but also mai-wi-mai or a righteous man as well. The Liangmai Naga strongly believe that, if one only followed moral laws without being supported by any religious obligations one may pursue good actions to please others or for some rewards. Likewise, there is a possibility also for those who follow the ritualistic practice of religion without having any moral obligations from the fear of the supernatural sanction against them. However, if one is charah-cheng-tadmai or a religious man who fulfills both the religious and moral obligati-

ons not because of fear of any sanction either moral or religious but he is fully convinced that it is the right thing to do so. Thus, for the Liangmai Naga religious tradition, the religiosity of a person is determined by one's conviction and sincere commitment to both the moral and religious laws. I said in the beginning that a Godly man apart from being righteous and religious he must also possess certain extra ordinary quality and power (in a good sense) which other common people are devoid of.

(c). The Reader Digest's Universal dictionary defines the word, 'extra ordinary' as 1. beyond what is ordinary, usual or common place, and 2. exceeding the ordinary degree, amount, or extent, exceptional, remarkable. The Chamber's 20th Century dictionary also defines the same word as beyond ordinary, not usual or regular; remarkable, wonderful, special or supernumerary. The above dictionary explanation clearly indicates that the term, 'extra ordinary quality' refers to a certain individuals who have much more than average intelligence, ability, or skill etc., and especially in a good sense. Thus when we say, certain individuals possesses 'an extra ordinary power' it refers to some unnatural or mystical or supernatural power which can intervene in the course of nature either for good or bad. Although, both are attributed to a Godly man, this distinction is essential as different religions may have different ways of looking at this divine quality of Godly man. Thus,

the former is a special inborn or innate quality and the latter is not necessarily inborn but can be also acquired by some means.

The term, 'extra ordinary' though generally taken in the good sense has also a negative connotation. In other words, the term, 'extra ordinary' has both positive and negative connotation. As it is also possible that one can abuse this extra ordinary power for selfish ends and this power itself may become an instrument of chaos and destruction. For instance, different traditions talk of witch-craft or black magic where the practitioners possess certain extra ordinary^{Power} which inflicts pain, misery and even death on their enemies. However these negative aspects of the extra ordinary power cannot be attributed to the concept of Godly man. Because by definition the Godly man must be always good and magnanimous and not otherwise.

In the book of Exodus (The Old Testament of the holy Bible) we find the patriarch of the Jews named Moses using his supernatural power against the Pharaoh of Egypt many times in order to set the Israelites free from the bondage of slavery (Exodus, Chapter:8-10). He also used his supernatural power in order to take the Israelites across the Red Sea. It is recorded (Biblical account) that 'when Moses held out his hand over the Red Sea, the sea drove back with a strong east-wind. It blow all night and turned the sea dry land.' The water was divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with wall of water on

both sides" (Exodus:14;21-23). Again in the book of Joshua, we find that Joshua, the successor of Moses, applied or used his supernatural power against his enemies -- He destroyed the city of Jerico without even a fight (Joshua:6;15-17). Using his supernatural power he also defeated the Amorites (an ancient tribe of present Palestine). He made the Sun stand still in the middle of the sky and the moon did not move until the Israelites had conquered their enemies (Joshua:10;12-14). For a person belonging to another group whose interests are opposed to the Godly man's group for instance here that of the Jews it might appear that the Godly man is also a violent, destructive person. This creates a problem for me for I am committed to the conclusion that a Godly person only uses his supernatural power for a peaceful purpose.

Turning to the Liangmai Naga religious tradition I find not one but two types of Godly man namely, 'Tingwang kumbo mai' or Godlike person and 'charah kumbo mai' also meaning godlike. For the Liangmai Naga tradition, these two concepts do not differ in degree but in kind. A person who is like God the Almighty or Tingwang kumbo mai is generally known as 'phanmyu kakungh' meaning, an exalted person with Divine insight or the messenger of Tingwang, God the Almighty, but small letter godly man is known as 'phanmyu' only. The term, 'phanmyu' connotes four different things namely, 1. a priest or a prophet, 2. a sage or a wise man, 3. a medicine man and 4. a magician. And the term, 'kakungh' connotes three

qualities; 1. precious, 2. dear or rare, and 3. the loving and the affectionate one. The term, 'phanmyu-kakungh' is therefore a combination of two different concepts. The term, 'Tingwang kumbo mai' is hardly used by the tribe and instead of which they say 'phanmyu kakungh'. When a person is called 'phanmyu kakungh' it is certainly implied that he/she is a messenger of Tingwang, God the Almighty (refer to chapter III). But when a person is known by the term, 'phanmyu' it refers to a person who is guided by any of regional gods and godheads.

Traditionally, in every Liangmai Naga villages there will be at least one or two Phanmyu, and their main function in the village was to conduct religious rites and rituals. The phanmyu is a person who knows not only religious incantations and the formulae of religious words for rites and rituals but also he is an expert on herbal medicine. Basically, all 'phanmyu' are expected to be religious, pious, simple minded, beneficent, and all other similar virtues. They also work for peace and harmony in the society. But in reality, it may not be so, because the people sometimes consider anyone who knows religious incantations as 'phanmyu'. Generally, this type of phanmyu does not possess extraordinary power. Most phanmyu would however be chosen by different deities like, 'Charahwang' (king of gods), and his rebellious brother 'Puichamyu' (refer to chapter III), and many other smaller gods and goddesses. Those phanmyu who are chosen and guided by Charahwang and his brother Puichamyu would be more powerful than any

phanmyu who were guided and chosen by different gods. It is worth noting here that, different phanmyu chosen by different deities would have different roles and functions to play in the society. For example, if a phanmyu is chosen and guided by Charahwang or king of gods he would be more peaceful in nature and know more about religious and moral aspect of life and also men's destiny beyond death.¹ If one is chosen by Puichamyu, he would be more independence in nature, more militant, and more concerned with religious and political freedom.² Lastly, if one is chosen by Chamiyu zanbo rah or gods of paddy or wealth, he would be beneficent and generous in nature. He knows more about the productivity and fertility of land changing of seasons, drought, flood, etc. He also would know in advance which area or villages would get a bumper harvest and which area or villages may face famine and so on.³ All these different types of phanmyu usually possess mystical powers which enables them not only to communicate with different gods and goddesses but also gives them the power to visit even the land of the dead in their dreams. They may also have the supernatural power to protect themselves from evil spirits. People usually consider these types of phanmyu as 'charah kumbo mai' or a person who is like a regional or mountain gods. The Liangmai Nagas believe

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1. A phanmyu named Tajinnang Pamai from Ritiang village was said to be chosen and guided by Charahwang.
 3. A phanmyu called 'Malek mai pow' from Malek village was said to be chosen and guided by 'Chamiyu zanbo rah'.
 2. Jaduannang, Chenkhamang and Gaidinliu were said to be guided by Puichamyu, the rebellious brother of Charahwang.

that supernatural power specially for good purpose cannot be acquired by one's own effort. However, if one so desires, black magic can be acquired from Rahsha¹ or the evil spirit at the cost of his dear and near one's lives. It is said that if one acquires the mystical power for destructive purpose (black magic) from Rahsha or evil spirit in his young age he would never have an offspring, and if in old age then his three generations would suffer for it.

The Liangmai Naga religious tradition thus emphasizes that even if a phanmyu is considered as 'charah kumbo mai' or 'godlike' person he cannot be considered as 'Godly man' in the real sense of the term. Because these so-called regional gods and goddesses themselves are none other than those godheads and extra ordinary persons of olden days. Therefore, to some extent they are still subject to mistakes, errors and many other human weaknesses and shortcomings.

If we look for word to word corresponding meaning of the term, 'Godly man' in Liangmai Naga religious tradition it should be 'Tingwang kumbo mai' even though they may use the term, 'phanmyu kakungh' in place of 'Tingwang kumbo mai'. This is because the tribe believes that no creature on earth (including regional gods and goddesses) is fit to be equated with Tingwang, God the Almighty. Therefore, they would always consider this kind of person as phanmyu kakungh. The tribe also considers the phanmyu kakungh to

1. 'Rahsha' is a short form of the phrase 'charah kashabo' meaning evil spirit or a harmful god.

be not only good, pious, religious but also the one who possesses supernatural powers.

According to the Liangmai Naga religious tradition, no one can acquire the title, 'phanmyu kakungh' like that of 'Liangtuang' (refer to chapter I). The phanmyu kakungh is chosen by Tingwang with a specific purpose. He is the messenger of Tingwang. No one can, therefore, question his authority, not even Charahwang, the king of gods. If a person is phanmyu kakungh no introduction is needed because, from his actions he would be immediately recognized by all. No power on earth can harm him. He is not only a religious teacher who gives spiritual guidance but also the one who spends his entire life for the welfare of all creatures on earth. His goal of life is to win back the human heart to the path of righteousness, which has opted for the path of evil.

The Liangmai Nagas believe that man is the victim of his own foolish and irresponsible actions. These irresponsible actions not only result in their own downfall but also bring forth untold miseries and sufferings to other creatures on earth (refer to chapter III). These irresponsible actions of mankind also pave the way for the emergence of regional gods and godheads. However, if men do overcome their selfish and destructive nature they can still regain the grace of Tingwang, and bring about lasting peace and harmony on earth. The mission of 'phanmyu kakungh' is therefore to curb the evil power by establishing the right relationship be-

tween man and his creator through good will. Unlike Liangtuang he would never use physical force or supernatural power to accomplish his mission. He would always respect men's freedom of will. Therefore, he will never force anyone against his will even if he fails in his mission miserably.*

* It may be mention here that there were only two 'phanmyu kakungh' throughout the Liangmai (Zeliangruang) Naga religious history. The first one was named Tinglahbou and the second and the last was a lady named Juruipe. (refer to Appendix)

CHAPTER III

THE LIANGMAI NAGA RELIGIOUS TRADITION

The Liangmai Naga religion emphasizes the fact that it is Tingwang,* God the Almighty, who is the creator of the universe. It is interesting to note that though the creation started with man, Tingwang also created plants, animals as well as birds with him. Among them man was closer to a crow, a small plant called 'huningbang', and a big plant called 'tashiangbang'. The three friends of man were leading a life of contentment and happiness. But, man was terribly lonely because there was no other human being with whom he could share his joys and sorrows. He, therefore, desired to have another human being as his companion. To his utter dismay he could not find one as he was unable to travel the length and breadth of this vast earth. He, therefore, sought the help of his three friends, and his friends readily agreed to look out for his would be companion. The crow after a long and strenuous search, sighted smoke in the southern part of the earth. The crow came back to the man and reported about his having sighted smoke. The crow inferred that there might be man living there, So he advised him to go to that place to find out for himself whether there was really a man living there or not. The man heeded the advice of the crow and set out immediately in search of that human being whom he believed to be living in the southern part of the earth. The crow had given him elaborate directions so as to locate the exact place. The man followed the directions carefully and searched the

* Tingwang means king of the universe. (Ting=Universe and wang=king) 'Wang' is a short form of 'Chawang' meaning king.

place despite many difficulties.

The man found a hut near a river bank. He went to the hut and knocked at the door. The door was immediately opened by a beautiful girl whose name was 'Charah Ting Rangpui'*. This beautiful girl was the daughter of Tingwang, God the creator. The man explained the nature of his plight. He requested Tingwang to kindly allow him to take His daughter as his companion. Tingwang was not willing to do so in the beginning. But the man did not give up. He went on pleading and persuading Tingwang. Eventually Tingwang relented and allowed him to marry His daughter but warned him not to sleep with her until he fed her with 'khiangshi', a sour fruit.

Tingwang also in His graciousness gave man the power to know the distinction between good and evil and also the freedom to choose either good or evil. He warned him that all of his actions would be recorded, and that he would be rewarded for his good acts and punished for his bad acts. Man's purpose in this world is to beautify God's creation by maintaining peace and harmony on earth. Man is also aware of the fact that the life span of the earth depended on his actions. He knows fully well that as long as he maintains the ecology of nature by practising certain moral values, he can fully enjoy the fruits of life on earth. God warned him that if he failed to live according to mo-

* Charah-Tingrang-pui: Charah means god; Tingrang means source of all causes or origin; Pui means mother.

ral values, He would destroy the earth by a fire called 'kuliyi-myi', which means a fire without flame. Thus God made man conscious of his responsibility to preserve the planet earth and its inhabitants. So that they could avoid total annihilation. After having sufficiently warned man, Tingwang blessed the man and wife and bid them farewell.

The man fed his wife with 'khiangshi' as he was told by God. They led a bliss conjugal life. As a result of this, his wife gave birth to all kinds of animals, birds, and plants when they reached a junction of eight foot-paths. She also gave birth to a 'Tating kang', a hard and smooth stone the tribe use for sharpening their weapons. The man wanted his wife to give birth to a human baby but to no avail. The man wanted his own offspring so badly that he went back to God for His help. God took pity on him. He gave him a walking stick made of iron and advised him to hit the tating kang after performing a suitable religious ritual. This particular ritual can be performed with the help of two kinds of herbs namely, 'Ka'ang nui' and 'tagai nui'. The man followed the advice of God in letter and spirit. As a result of this, many human beings came out from the stone ! Thus the earth was filled with many human beings.

According to the Liangmai Naga history, in the beginning, human beings lived in harmony. They spoke the same language, and

had perfect communication with one another. Not only the human beings communicated with one another by means of language but also there was communication between human beings and trees and animals because trees and animals also spoke the same language. Also there was no conflict between human beings and other creatures of God, Tingwang was also part of such a society. He used to talk to them in the same language. Thus, there was no separation between God and His created beings. No wonder this period was considered to be the golden age of the Liangmai(Zeliangrong) Nagas. In this golden age, justice, righteousness and peace reigned supreme. Human beings and other creatures did not have to worry about anything at all. They never went hungry because God provided them with plenty of fruits to eat. Unfortunately, this golden age did not last long for the following reason; as the population of the human beings increased the human beings became selfish and greedy and they stopped having consideration for other creatures. In fact human beings became so greedy that they started destroying plants and trees even when they did not have any genuine need. This thoughtless action of human beings became a permanent threat to all the creatures on earth including his own fellow human beings. Slowly but steadily the separation between the human beings and the other creatures became a reality. The plants stopped bearing fruits in protest against the irresponsible behaviour of the human beings. The fruit bearing plants felt no more responsible for producing fruits for mankind. However, they continued to produce fruits for other creatures. But

they stopped this also because they could no longer put up with the greed of the human beings. Due to lack of food all the creatures became nearly extinct. Even those who remained had to face starvation, and their suffering knew no bounds. Fortunately some vegetables and other plants took pity on the suffering creatures and they started producing food for all the creatures for a short time till human beings could tend for themselves. The human beings were well aware of the fact that it was only a temporary arrangement. The elders talk of this desperation which drove the men once again to God. "In desperation, therefore, they selected two strong men to place their problems before Tingwang or God". God was very much displeased with human beings for their irresponsible actions. He told them in unequivocal terms that they would destroy the paradise on earth unless they change their ways. He also reminded them that it was the duty of mankind to take care the other creatures but not to destroy them. God gave them two sacks of paddy and warned them not to stop on their way home under any circumstances. He also warned them that if they disobeyed, He would neither show His face nor would he talk to them again. God made the human beings toil for their living. Thus, man had not only to look after the other creatures but also to look after himself. He had to depend on paddy for his food. Therefore, paddy had to be looked after with great care and attention. With this warning God bade them farewell. As luck would have it, these two

men on their way back home became very thirsty. They were so thirsty that they forgot God's warning and left their sacks of paddy near a river bank and quenched their thirst by the river water. After quenching their thirst they returned to the place where they have left the two sacks but to their utter dismay they found that the sacks were no longer there ! This made them remembered the warning of God. They simply had to get back the sacks of paddy. Fortunately for them there were certain marks which left by the sacks ! They were aware of the fact that if they failed to recover the lost sacks it would bring about the total destruction of all creatures on earth. They were responsible for their own suffering because they disobeyed God. They travelled for many days and nights; eventually, they found their sacks of paddy in the middle of the ocean ! But they were beyond their reach. They sought help from some birds namely, Ake(parrot) and Mazai(a kind of bird who feed on paddy). These birds instead of helping them ate some of their paddy and flew away. The two men became helpless. They just stood there looking at the sacks. They were hoping against hope that some kind of help would be forthcoming. Taza ma-khe pui, queen of rats took pity on them and volunteered to procure the sacks of paddy on the condition that men should share their harvest with her race for all times to come. Men were left without any option but to accept the condition laid down by the queen of rats. They promised her that her race would be allowed

to enjoy the left over and also to stay with the human beings . Satisfied with their promise, she brought a small portion of paddy from the sacks for the benefit of mankind.

Here ends the tale but man never learnt from his mistakes. Neither did he try to reform himself. Instead he became more and more aggressive and selfish. Although God kept His distance from mankind due to their disobedience He did not withdraw His grace from mankind for sometime. Hoping that mankind would mend its ways but this never happened. God became so furious that he went away from this world. Because of this, the world became very gloomy and the creatures on this earth started suffering from all kinds of diseases. The Liangmai Nagas believes that the withdrawal of Tingwang is the source of all natural calamities, diseases and sufferings. They also believe that the size, height and even the span of life of man was reduced because of evil thoughts and actions. They believe that a day would come when men would become smaller and smaller in size so much so that he could climb even the small cotton plants. And one day he would completely disappear from this earth unless he reforms himself.

Men's evil deeds generated enmity and hatred not only among human beings but also among different kinds of creatures. Man became the worse sufferer as he had not only to fight his own fellow human beings but also with other creatures. When doomsday

was fast approaching God in His kindness decided to give a second chance for mankind so that he could realise his goal of life on earth. Therefore, God sent Manu:Tinglahbou to convey His goodwill to mankind. Manu.Tinglahbou advised mankind to rectify their mistakes and reconcile with their creator. But to his utter dismay no one paid heed to his advice and men became worse than before. Men's uncompromising nature made God more unhappy and He decided to set a new life pattern for all creatures on earth. Thus the dark age came to an end with the great feast called 'Amangbou Zou Hubo'! This great feast was the first and the last feast on earth where all the creatures as well as gods and goddesses gathered together in order to decide their future. After this great feast of 'Amangbou Zou Hubo', men, land animals, aquatic animals, birds and gods were divided into different kingdoms. Charahwang (king of gods) was the Chief Guest of that great feast. It may be noted here that Tingwang, God the Almighty did not attend the great feast. God did not attend because He had already decided to completely withdraw from this earth. A deity called 'Puichamyu' also did not attend because he had rivalry with his elder brother Charahwang as regards leadership (refer to appendix). During this great feast of 'Amangbou Zou Hubo' the future of all other creatures was enhanced for they received certain boons from Charahwang. Man gained nothing because of

1. Amangbou was the richest man on earth in that particular time. According to the Liangmai Naga tradition only the richest man in a village or in the region is allowed to celebrate the great Feast called 'Zou Hubo' or 'Chakiw Kariew Dungbo'.

the fact that he was busy spending his time in merry making by eating and drinking. It is believed that even after the feast was over man did not return home to plant the paddy. Tingwang therefore, had to send some birds to warn men that the season of sowing seed was almost coming to an end. Man came home very reluctantly cursing God on the way home for not having allowed him to eat up all the food that was available at the feast ! Man did not ask for any boon from Charahwang in order to enhance his future. He had no regret for not doing so. His only regret was that he did not have two stomachs to store up more food. Charahwang however, reassured him that he was still a special creature of Tingwang. He also told him that one day he would be able to rule over the whole world through his wit. But his rule will not last very long for he had forgotten his responsibilities and had opted for evil and selfishness. Man started a new life knowing fully well that he had fallen from the grace of God. The Liangmai Nagas believe that after this great feast man lost his capacity to communicate with God and other creatures. They also believe that he was no longer able to see God face to face.

The Liangmai Naga religion revolves round this above mentioned tale. All the fundamental religious beliefs, rites and rituals have been derived from this. The religion emphasizes the fact that God not only created man to inhabit the world but also gave him a special status by conferring intelligence on him. This

special gift of intelligence has made man manifest himself in different dimensions of his personality. According to this myth, God gave man the great responsibility of taking care of the world and its inhabitants. In the beginning, God wanted man to enjoy the bounty of nature without any hard labour but man lost his paradise on earth due to his own foolish and irresponsibility. Because of this fact he had to face many a hardship and sweat for making a living. Man's disobedience to God also paved the way for evil to have a hold on this earth. The disobedience of man not only endangers his very own existence but also endangers the other innocent creatures on earth and as well as the life span of the earth itself. God created man with a specific purpose. He made him free to choose whichever way he would. We learn an important lesson from this myth. The lesson is this: a good man must lead a rational life and work for the welfare of his fellow beings. The supreme strength of man lies in his power to make a distinction between good and evil. This strength is superior to any other kind of strength.

Man's constrained relationship with Tingwang, God the creator, resulted in the emergence of gods and godheads who eventually rule over all creatures on earth. Man's repeated disobedience of Tingwang paved the way for Charahwang *a powerful godhead in the Liangmai Naga tradition to become a supreme ruler on earth. He also gave the power to his younger brothers to control over different natural phenomena like, rivers, mountains, rain, wind, storms, fire

* Appendix, the myth of Charahwang .

and so on. The Liangmai Naga religious tradition also emphasizes that man can become godhead through various ways. For example, Amangbou became a godhead (a god of wealth) through his exceptional quality of generosity, and Ashabou became god of wisdom, on account of his exceptional cleverness. It may, however, be noted here that the Liangmai Nagas albeit venerate and pay homage to the one who achieve the feat of godhead, they hardly encourage their youngsters to emulate him. It is because of the fact that, the tribe considered this goal of life to be something which does not collaborate with the purpose of life of man on earth. For them the top priority of man on earth is to sacrifice his happiness for the welfare of his fellow beings and strive for maintaining peace and harmony on earth but not to escape from it.

The Liangmai Nagas' myth of creation gives a vivid picture of man and his inseparable relationship with God and nature. Tingwang, (God) is considered to be a Supreme creator and planner. He is also considered to be the giver and dispenser of life with power to give life and dispense the same. Man is expected to be the manager of God's creation by maintaining peace and harmony on earth. Though God stopped communicating with man directly because of man's repeated disobedience He wanted to have a communication with him through the medium of nature. Thus, nature not only reflects God's will but also acted as a mediator between man and God.

It (nature) helps man to understand itself by observing the different seasons, the signs of rain, drought and as well as the sign of many other natural calamities. Man is able to have his own calendar on the basis of the movement of the Sun, the Moon and the stars. He is also able to understand the inter-connectedness and the inter-dependence of everything that is in nature including the animals and himself. Thus we often hear of phrases like, 'tathi kabak kumbo' (like dogs and pigs without a sense of basic human decency) when they wish to express contempt. The coward and timid persons are known as 'tathan pabi khuontu pingjiu pakbo' (as timid as deer). The lazy person is equated with 'kabiyu kiyuna' (beetle like insect). Benchang (a particular type of python) is compared with a person who possesses the qualities of greatness, nobility, courage and serenity even in the midst of troubles and dangers. This person is willing even to sacrifice his own happiness for his society. Quichang, the tiger, is compared with a person who would not harm a fly without any provocation and who would devour his enemies once the dignity, prestige and honour of his community or his own is in danger. Winged creatures also evoke certain similarities with that of certain human qualities. The Liangmai Nagas learn a good lesson from the way 'tapengpui' or the butterfly, flies up and down, very much like the life of man on earth full of ups and downs i.e. fortunes and misfortunes. A king today may be a beggar on the street tomorrow and vice-versa. The tribe also admires the free and

independent nature of 'chakhua' and 'chareng' (sky lark(?) and horn bill) as the people love their freedom and independence. It compares a foolish person with 'Abeng' (Owl), and a Tyrant and oppressor with that of 'chakiang' (a kind of bird which feed on smaller birds).

Similarly, the Liangmai Naga also learn many important lessons from plants. He knows that a tender but solid grass spike will one day grow into a tall bamboo. Without knowing its fate, the young shoot grows thinking proudly that it will certainly reach the sky. But nature has shown that there is no such guarantee. Thus, the elders of the tribe would always ask the foolish and carefree youngsters to learn their lesson from it. A thorny plant called 'thureng' is compared with a quarrelsome person who makes enemies wherever he goes. The tribe compares 'Mashangbang' (a kind of palm tree which resemble with betel-nut tree and coconut tree) with the person who is endowed with courage and determination to fight single handedly against social evil. Like the plant 'Mashangbang', he knows that he is alone in the midst of his enemies. Despite this he always stands for justice and truth without any fear even at the cost of his own life. The person who has these qualities is also compared with 'chamiangkien' (a creeping plant) which has no importance while it is fresh but emanates an uncomparable sweet fragrance which will last for many days when it

gets dried up after a few hours. These two plants signify two things, namely, 1. a good man with great qualities renders valuable service to his society at the risk of his own happiness and prestige, and 2. people recognize his importance and the worth of his achievements and sacrifices only after his death. A huge banyan tree is compared with a benevolent and kind hearted person who is always helpful to the poor and needy people.

Thus, for a Liangmai Naga, nature is like a book, he derives knowledge and wisdom from it and makes use of it in his day to day life. The Liangmai Nagas examine the objects around him meticulously. He cares for and treasures all he sees and observes so that they could become his guiding principle. Nature is also like a big hospital which provides all types of medicines which cure all bodily ailments. Nature and man compliment one another. Nature is everything to man therefore, it would be suicidal for man to ignore his inextricable relationship with God and nature.

For the Liangmai Nagas, to be born as a human being is a great blessing from Tingwang, for He created this world especially for mankind to enjoy the life on earth. The goal of mankind is to be born again on this earth as human beings. But unfortunately this goal of life cannot be realised by all human beings due to their actions of the previous life. Hence rebirth as human being is determined by the past actions. Those who commit heinous

crimes but escape the punishment in their life time are bound to be born as animals. Such person's souls do not even reach 'Charuidih' or the land of the dead but soon after their death they get born again ⁱⁿ the animal kingdom. And even as animals God will judge their actions and if they are not repentant for their misdeeds the process of rebirth would continue as birds, insects and so on. But all those who pursue good conduct in their previous lives would continue in the process of birth and rebirth and will continue to be born as human beings till the last day of this planet called earth. Tradition also states that those who die young would come back to earth earlier than the old. So for all creatures to be born as human beings is a blessing. Suffering in our life is due to our past misdeeds and it can be also caused by the misdeeds of our ancestors. The evil effect of all misdeeds can be removed by certain religious rituals known as 'tingthi rah thiubo' and 'Niyuh thiu luanbo' which involve the appeasement of the spirits of those who suffered from injustice we or our ancestors had caused. And if this religious ritual is not performed immediately, then the spirits would continue to punish three generations of our decedents. In other words, according to the Liangmai Nagas, if we have done good deeds in our previous life, then we would enjoy this present life, and if we pursue evil, then this very existence is hell itself.

The life span of this planet(earth) itself is dependent on the actions of mankind. As long as man can maintain the balance of nature and also peace and harmony among the fellow beings we will enjoy the fruit of life on earth; but once man ceases to preserve the balance which gets disturbed by the evil force unleashed by man then God will destroy the world by the fire which is called 'kuli myi' (fire without flame). This destruction is ineluctable therefore, it is said that men in the land of dead or charuidih always pray to God the Almighty to release them as early as possible so that they can enjoy their life on earth once again before its total destruction.

For the Liangmai Nagas, it is not necessary to worry for the heavenly bliss and eternal joy because all the good souls would enjoy this heavenly bliss after the total destruction of the planet earth. In any case, the seeking of heavenly bliss even if it would be attained beforehand would be either an act of escapism or a selfish act since majority would be still left suffering on earth. Therefore, they consider the life on earth to be the best as there is no other place more fit to serve humanity. For them, suffering serves as a stern teacher which helps in constructing one's personality and making man realise his goal of life and work for the welfare of his fellow beings. "No matter, friends or foes whosoever comes for help one must accept even to the extent of risking one's life. One must take up their burdens

as one's own and bring justice in the society. No criminals should go unpunished, but he must be given a fair chance to defend his life" are the popular wise word of the village elders. Thus the virtue of man is to preserve peace and harmony in the society which must function with a sense of justice. It is a duty of man to cherish the moral values and justice in order to maintain peace and harmony in the society. Man must enjoy the fruits of life: power, wealth, fame and so on; but it should be with the spirit of love and affection towards his fellow men. Accordingly, in the Liangmai Naga society, those warriors who work for the welfare of their fellow beings and strive for peace and harmony in the society are considered as ideal man or Liangtuang. Each and every warrior is not considered as 'Liangtuang' if he does not work for the welfare of his fellow beings even if he is exceptionally brave and has mastered the art of warfare. (This kind of exceptional warrior would be known as 'Chari Chagau' but never as Liangtuang). The word, 'Liangtuang' stands for the one who sacrifices his happiness for the welfare of his fellow human beings. A cursory glance at the Liangmai Naga religion, the concept of the good and the Godly makes me confident enough to lay the claim that for this tribe, the goals of religion and morality are interwoven and one appears to lead to the other.

The relation between morality and religion is undoubtedly close as they are both fundamental to the way of life of an indi-

vidual or of a society. Though most philosophers recognise that morality and religion are connected they are not clear as to what kind of connection it is. Some are of the view that religion is nothing but ethics illustrated by stories and reinforced by liturgical and homilatic arts, while others hold that morality is simply a consequence or outgrowth of theological position, and it is wholly dependent on religion, that is a man who has no religion cannot have any morality. It becomes necessary for me to first discuss the concept of morality and religion before analysing the relation between the two.

The word, 'moral' is said to be derived from the Latin word 'more', meaning convention or practice. It is our morals that inform us of the difference between good and bad, right and wrong, virtue and vice. Morality helps us to attain a good life to maintain peace and harmony in the society. But we seldom talk about morality as such. The main problem of morality is that it has not been adequately distinguished from other guides to conduct. Generally, people are convinced that morality is simply any code of conduct adopted by a group.

If we equate morality with a code of conduct adopted by a group of people and try to discover whether there is a universal morality our investigation may reveal a universal code of conduct. Plato would say that moral concepts are universal and changeless.

As a matter of fact, Plato was aware of the important difference in codes of conduct of different societies. And yet, he tried to formulate a universal morality by thinking that an analysis of human nature could provide him with a foundation on which to build this morality. Today many philosophers try to use the findings of psycho-analysis or sociobiology in the same way. But if the facts of human nature are to provide a foundation for morality, these cannot be newly established facts known only by those acquainted with the relevant science, but must be facts that are known by those whom we consider to be responsible moral agents. In any case, it cannot be that prior to psycho-analysis or sociobiology normal people did not know those facts about human nature upon which morality depends. According to them, therefore normal people would not have had sufficient reason to accept morality.

There are some other philosophers who thought that an analysis of rationality could provide the foundation of morality. Among them, Immanuel Kant is an outstanding example. For all of them, morality got equated with a form of rationality. They tried to show not only that it was rational to be moral, but also that it was irrational to be immoral. But there are instances, that some responsible moral agents often want to act immorally, and if rationality is to be considered as a basic criterion for morality then no responsible moral agents must ever want to act irrationally.

Even though all of those who have investigated the nature of morality start with an account of morality that has a specific content, almost none of them regard the content as an essential feature of morality. Instead, they define morality by means of some formula. As indicated, some define morality as the code of conduct adopted by a social group. Some define morality as the code of conduct that would ^{be} adopted by all rational persons. They, then, try to derive the content of morality by determining what code of conduct all rational persons would accept. Some others define morality as that code of conduct which a person takes to be overriding or most important. The content of morality is then determined by each person for himself.

However, I accept the view that morality is a public system that applies to all rational persons. A justified or rational morality is a public system that all impartial rational persons would advocate adopting to govern the behaviour of all rational persons.

A public system is a system of conduct that is both known and understood by all those to whom it applies and one that it would not be irrational for all those to whom it applies, to adopt to govern their behaviour. The rules of a game usually form a public system, which are known and understood by all those to whom they apply. And it is not irrational for all the players to adopt the rules. But morality differs from other public systems

as it applies to all rational persons. It is regarded as a system of conduct that all rational persons know and understand. As a matter of fact, ignorance of morality is never regarded as a legitimate excuse. It follows from this that morality includes not only behaviour that affects oneself but also that which affects others.

Indeed, morality or moral system, contains 1. beliefs about the nature of man, 2. beliefs about ideals, about what is good or desirable or worthy of pursuit for its own sake; 3. laying down of rules as to what ought to be done and what ought not to be done; and 4. motives that incline us to choose the right or the wrong course. We learn as children that we should be unselfish, that we should not tell lies and that we should follow the rules covering different aspects of life.

Generally, morality is concerned with relations between men, with how they ought to behave toward each other, with what general rules governing relation between men ought to be adopted by a society. As Thomas Hobbes has pointed out in Leviathan, the province of morality is limited to "those qualities of mankind that concern their living together in peace and unity."¹ The need of morality arises because a small human group such as a family, tribe, etc., needs mutual support and cooperation for defence against other groups, against animals, and against forces of nature. Quite apart from the advantages which accrue from society, man normally delights in each other's company.

1. Leviathan chapter, 13.

Along with the direct and indirect needs for the company of his fellows, man has tendencies that disrupt the society on which his life and happiness depend. When man faces misfortune or when the question of survival arises, his desire to preserve his own life leads each man into competition with his neighbours. Consequently, pride, jealousy, and sheer stupidity get the upper hand, and they lead to what Hobbes called a condition of war. To avoid this undesirable condition man has devised the system of rules which we know as law and morality. Though systems differ widely in detail, their common origin and purpose in the overriding need to preserve social harmony ensure a broad similarity in fundamentals.

It will be more appropriate if we discuss not only the content of morality but also motives which lead men to act morally, that is, to obey the moral rules of their society. We obey moral rules, even when it is irksome or inconvenient to do so, because we know that we shall suffer if we do not. Society enforces its code of rules by such sanction as disapproval, social ostracism, retaliation, and the penalties of the law. It is partly fear of such penalties that leads us to obey the rules. But it is not only fear. There are some people who are intelligent enough to see the advantages that they will gain in the long run by fulfilling their moral obligations. Secondly, we are creatures of habit and have been trained to obey and respect the rules of our society

from our earlier years. Of course, people sometimes obey the rules for no reason other than the fact that they are just the rules. This attitude is reflected in such saying as 'a promise is a promise', 'It just would not be right'. Very often respect for rules is enhanced or even created by respect for the author of the rule; we think it is right to obey a rule, even though we do not see the point of obeying it, because it emanates from a source we recognise as authoritative, worthy of our esteem, and competent to exact our obedience. This attitude will clearly be important when we come to consider religious rules, since to be a believer his God is precisely such an authority. Finally, it is possible that one may simply love to respect the right of others without having anything to do with the moral obligation or moral rules prescribed by the society. Sometimes, one may even violate certain existing moral rules of the society and consequently, the society may impose social ostracism on him; and yet he may be still considered as a moral person. This becomes explicit when we take up the cases of some of the 'good' and exceptional men those referred to as Liantuang in the Liangmai Naga tradition.

Turning to the definition of religion, we find that the term, 'religion' has been generally connected with the verb 'religare' that is, 'to bind'. People who are generally accounted religious do find themselves bound by various precepts, rules, and obligations imposed upon them by the laws or observances of the religion seems

to foster a tendency to loyalism. Yet the adherents of Buddhism and other religions all claim, in one way or other, some sort of release, some kind of liberation, which seems to contradict that known characteristic of religion to impose binding duties and required observance to its adherents.

For most people, belief in God and in after life are the essential ingredients of religion because these are prominent elements in the religion we know best. But if we include these in a definition of religion, we shall find ourselves committed to excluding many types of religions. In Buddhism, for example, there is neither a personal God nor personal immortality. What is essential to religion is 1. belief in supernatural powers which may be thought of either as persons or impersonally as 'forces'; 2. appropriate emotion attitudes, a sense of the sacred or numinous or uncanny, and an attitude of humility or reverence in its presence; and 3. rites, ceremonies, and other religious duties. Where the supernatural is thought of as person or persons, these duties are either thought of as duties towards supernatural persons or as enjoined by them, usually both. However, a naturalist would hold that there is nothing over and above nature. For example, Auguste Comte is of the view that, it is to humanity that the individual man owes everything that he is and has. It is because he shares in the general biological and psychological capacities of human nature that he is able to live a human life. And the men of given generation are able to

lead a fully human life because of the labours of their predecessors in building up their cultural heritage. Moreover, according to Comte, the service of humanity, in the many forms this can take, is the noblest ideal which could be proposed to an individual and humanity, unlike an omnipotent God, needs this service. Thus, Comte proposed to set up a religion of humanity with man, viewed as a unitary though spacio-temporally scattered being, as an object of worship.

A naturalist is committed to rejecting traditional religion, which is based on beliefs in supernatural. This does not necessarily carry with it a rejection of religion as such, however. Many naturalists like Ludwig Feuerbach, Auguste Comte, John Dew and Erich Fromm envisage a substitute for traditional religion which will perform the typical functions of religion without making any claims beyond the natural world. We can best classify naturalistic forms of religion in terms of what they take God to be, that is, what they set up as an object of worship. In traditional religion the supernatural personal deity is worshipped because he is thought of as the zenith of both goodness and power. More generally, we can say that religious worship is accorded to any being because it is regarded as having a controlling voice in the course of events and at least potentially exercising that power for good. This suggests that to find a focus for religious responses in the natural world, we should look for a basic natural source of value. Broadly speaking,

achievements of value in human life are due to factors of two sorts: 1. man's natural endowments, together with the deposit of his past achievements in the cultural heritage of a society, and 2. things and processes in non-human nature on which man depends for his successes and indeed his very life. Most naturalists locate their religious objects primarily on one or the other side of this distinction, although some try to maintain an even balance between the two.

Though there are various definitions of religion none of which specifies a set of characteristics which gives us a unique essence. It is cultural variation which determines what becomes special as a religious factor for a community. For religions such as Catholicism and orthodox Judaism, faith in personal God would be the dominating factor. In other religions, ritual may be sharply de-emphasized, and with it the demarcation of certain objects as sacred, as in protestantism. Beliefs in supernatural beings can be whittled away to nothing, as in certain forms of Unitarianism, or may never be present, as in certain forms of Buddhism.

There is no dispute over the definition of religion in the world of the Liangmai Naga tribe. The equivalent term of the word, 'religion' is known as 'charah cheng' in Liangmai Naga. The literal meaning of the word, 'charah cheng' is God's way of life. For them there cannot be any 'charah cheng' or religion without God or gods. They strongly believe that men need to follow charah cheng or God's

way of life because, it will bring not only peace on earth but also better understanding with God when the time comes for mankind to live with Him (God) in eternity.

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CHAPTER IV

THE EXCEPTIONAL MAN AND THE VIRTUE OF HEAD HUNTING

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

This being so it is interesting to note that he is not seen as a rebel or a recluse by the member of his society. He is not like the existentialist hero (The Fall) trying to find meaning of life in an alien setting. As I have made reference to the hero of the existentialist novels, I may refer specifically even though very briefly, to Camu's 'The Fall' to illustrate my point. As one goes through this monograph, we find that though Jean-Baptiste Clamence, the hero of 'The Fall' tries to rise above the ordinary people by serving humanity he fails to achieve his goal of life. In the beginning, he considers himself to be higher and more intelligent than the rest of his fellow men. He is definitely a successful lawyer, who tries his level best to be honest in his profes-

ssion. Apart from his profession he also commits himself to the service of the poor and needy people by helping them in every possible way. In this way, he enjoys popularity and success in his society, yet he is not satisfied with his achievements. The reasons for these are obvious to my mind.

Apparently of course, he loves to work for the welfare of the people who are in need but in reality he loves no one other than himself. He does not believe that human affairs are serious matters. But he occasionally pretends to take life seriously. However, very soon the frivolity of seriousness strikes him and he merely goes on playing his role as best as he can. He plays at being efficient, intelligent, virtuous, a good citizen, responsible, high mindedness and so on. However, he has no idea where seriousness might lie, except that it is not in all that he sees around him — which seems to him to be merely an amusing game, or atmost tiresome. Hence living among men without sharing their interests, he could not manage to believe in the commitment he had made. He is courteous and indolent enough to live up to what is expected of him in his profession, his family, or his life as a citizen, but each time with a sort of indifference that spoils everything. And yet he likes his own life under double code, and his serious acts are often the ones in which he is the least involved. Thus, at last he could not forgive himself and the people

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around him. He finds out that his achievements are meaningless , and that he has been indulging in an act of hypocrisy. So finally, he escape from his own country for the purpose of finding out the meaning of life in an alien setting. The Liangtuang's commitment can be seen in sharp contrast to Jean-Baptiste Clamence's. Unlike him the hero of the Liangmai Naga tradition is very clear about his conception of the ideal moral values and the ideal moral life. As a matter of fact, he is above the speculated ethical code of the society; he knows how to deal with any crisis according to time, place and situation. Sometimes he lifts himself above the particular existing law of the society and imposes his own law for tackling a particular situation. But whatever he does is not for his own good but for the good of his society as a whole.

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

Hence, in this chapter, I would like to examine the concept of head hunting or 'tapi lubo' and the exact implication of the term, 'head hunting' in Liangmai (Zeliangruang) Naga tribe. I will also try to explicate the significance and importance of this practice in the moral system and religion of the tribe. The concept of head

hunting or 'tapi lubo' is a complex one in the sense that there are various ways of taking home the victim's head, but all are not considered as 'head hunting' in the true sense of the term. Hence we have to transcend the literal meaning of the word, 'head hunting', to differentiate it from all cases of cutting head. To understand the concept of head hunting I need to refer back to the religious beliefs and the moral values of the tribe in the earlier times.

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

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

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

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

1. T.C.Hodson, 'The Naga Tribes in Manipur' Section III. Page, 115.

2. T.C.Hodson, op.cit. p.122.

His inability to adequately explicate the concept of head hunting is due to the fact that, he could not fathom the religious and moral implications of head hunting. Also, he wrongly equated the concept of head hunting with many other types of criminal activities.

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

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

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

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

¹. The Angami Naga Tribe part III, page, 107. By, J.H.Hutton.

it ? And unless he can show the body, where is the proof ? Most savages are somewhat economical of truth; at any rate the Naga is when it comes to his exploits in war and the chase. If slayer can produce the body of the slain his statement is likely to be accepted as true; since retrieving the body would be laborious, not to say after dangerous, proceeding, the head is the natural part of it to bring back as testimony, as it gives a definite assurance that the foe has been killed, not scotched. This at any rate is the Angami explanation. Moreover, if it can be retrieved, the Angami does prefer the whole body, and if the whole body is not available he will take the arms, hands, legs and feet of the corpse as well as its head. And in this connection it must not be also forgotten that the Naga does not fight in the open country and under the eyes of his fellows, but in heavy jungle and in raiding parties of small numbers from one upwards, where none can observe his deed of daring."1

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

1. J.H.Hutton, op, cit. part III. page, 107.

people do always give a rational explanation and as a matter of fact their(i.e.Nagas) acts are based on rational consideration which the critics fail to acknowledge.

But this myth about the savage Naga is propogated not only by outsiders but also the Nagas themselves who are equally responsible for the distortions of their own culture and more specifically about head hunting. It is no exaggeration to say that, most of the Nagas are of the view that head hunting is closely associated with the concept of revenge, and in certain cases, they also equate head hunting with the criminal activities of the raiders ! If we consider the practice of head hunting from only one angle , their assumption may have some validity; for instance, if we take the literal meaning of the word, 'head hunting' certainly it will give an immediate impression that it has something to do with violence and indiscriminate killing without any valid reason. However, when we closely examine the concept of head hunting in the context of the Liangmai Naga tradition, it gives an entirely different picture altogether. As far as the Liangmai Naga tradition of head hunting is concerned, the term, 'head hunting' or 'tapi lubo', is applicable only to a warrior who brings home the head of a notorious criminal who has been a nuisance in the society. This head hunting is done according to certain norms, for example, the enemy is given a fair chance to defend himself. This practice not only symboli-

zes courage and physical prowess but also it indicates sincerity, honesty and truthfulness of a warrior. J.H.Hutton was partly right in pointing out that, for a Naga warrior taking home the victim's head is a natural part of it to bring back as testimony, as it gives a definite assurance that the foe has been killed, not merely scotched(refer page 105).Thus, for a Naga warrior, there is no better proof of his worthiness in the society than either capturing the criminal alive¹ or taking home his head as a trophy of a fair fight. However, this does not mean that a warrior is free to do as he wishes.This 'tapi lubo' can be abused by 'mazarihmai' or a pseudo warrior and 'In-garih mai', the raiders.The tradition, therefore, regulates the code of law of head hunting in order to keep surveillance over the warriors, and also to avoid victimization of innocent people. If a warrior is found guilty of violating the code of head hunting for the first time, he will be termed as a pseudo warrior and the society will impose social ostracism on him.For his second consecutive violation, he will be considered as a criminal who deserves to be punished severely. The law of head hunting allows no warrior to challenge or kill a person without first having evidence of the person's crime. And even if a person is found guilty of committing a serious crime he has to be given a fair chance to surrender so that unnecessary blood-

1. Ideally speaking, capturing a criminal alive is more prestigious than taking home his head, but in practice, it is almost impossible as no Naga warrior would lower his prestige by giving up without fighting to the end.

shed can be avoided. Only when no alternative is available a warrior is permitted to use force. Head hunting is therefore neither an indiscriminate killing without having valid reason, nor is it always associated with violence. The term, 'head hunting' is in fact, not only complex but also a value based concept.

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

As per the code of law of head hunting, there are two stages of a person's becoming an outstanding warrior. (a). 'Pajeng-lwilubo piu' or a person who has mastered the art of warfare and also the one who has already fulfilled the basic requirement of a good warrior; (b). the 'Liangtuang' or the ideal man. If an ordinary warrior has a desire to acquire the most prestigious title 'Liangtuang' he is expected to acquire the title 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' first. However, in certain cases, a person may be considered as 'Liangtuang' without even having qualified for the title 'Pajeng lwilubo piu', solely, because of his good deeds and sacrifices for the welfare of his fellow beings.¹ Traditionally, if a warrior has a desire to acquire the title, 'Pajenglwilubo piu' he has to either capture alive or kill at least, a hawk, a python, a wild boar, a ti-

1. Generally, this type of warrior will be awarded the title only after his death.

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

As a matter of fact, even achieving the feat of 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' is a tough task. To become a 'Liangtuang' is much tougher. Nevertheless, the tribe would always encourage the youngsters to emulate the Liangtuang ; Thus, when a male child is born in a Liangmai Naga family, the eldest member of the clan, and the eldest male of the village are to go and bless the new born baby so that the child may grow up to be a Liangtuang. After eight days of birth, there will be a naming ceremony which is called 'Tajumh gyibo' in Liangmai Naga. This naming ceremony or 'Tajumhgyibo' is very important as the tribe has a belief that the giving of an appropriate name to a child would determine the life-line of the child. La-

ter, all boys in their pre-adulthood are required to perform a certain religious ritual called 'Aloubo' where once again they will seek the blessing of the elders. Thereafter, they sleep in their respective 'Khangchiwkyi' (boys' dormitory). These dormitories serve as educational institutions where strict rules and regulations are enforced. The eldest member of the dormitory is called 'khangpi,' and he is entrusted with the responsibility of disciplining the youngsters. During this period all the boys are required to undergo a rigorous training which will later help them to face all kinds of dangers in life. After completion of their training the elders will once again test their mental and physical ability by sending them for fishing and hunting. Only when their performances are satisfactory will they be allowed to pursue their goals independent in life.

Soon after the completion of the basic training an aspiring 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' has to go and hunt the wild animals and notorious criminal single handedly. No warrior should be assisted while executing this dangerous mission. A warrior who has accomplished his mission and brought home his victim's head as a trophy in a fair fight has to yell before reaching the village gate. And when the villagers hear the yelling, which indicates victory over evil, only then the title holder or 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' in a village is allowed to welcome him with a

white robe. It is believed that, if a warrior has accomplished his mission sincerely as prescribed by 'the code of laws of head hunting', the village gate will open by itself, when a 'Pa-jeng lwilubo piu' ask certain question to victorious warrior for clarification, and perform certain religious ritual. This welcome ceremony is attended by a selected few of 'Apai' (village elders) and 'Aku' (high priest). Soon after the welcome ceremony is over half portion of the white robe should be presented to the victorious warrior as a sign of respect and another half of the white robe will be used to wrap the victim's head so as to hide it from the general public. When this is done, along with the village Chief (Chawang), Aku and Apai he has to take rest for three days in order to pay respect to his victim, and also to perform a religious ritual for the future course of action. This particular religious ritual is known as 'A-langh kyi kiubo' in Liangmai Naga. In this religious ceremony the warrior has to take oath in the name of Tingwang, God the Almighty that, he will always maintain the dignity and responsibility of a warrior, and that he will never challenge or kill unequal opponents or innocent and helpless people. More importantly, this religious ritual 'A-langh kyi kiubo' is to seek forgiveness from God as they have violated the law of nature. As per this 'law of nature' one has no right to take away the life of his fellow beings. Therefore, if this ritual is not

performed immediately, God will punish them severely. This particular punishment from God is called 'Chuk kiubo' in Liangnai Naga.

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

consider him as a criminal and he will become an object of head hunting. It may be noted here that if a warrior could manage to capture the criminal alive the welcome ceremony is not necessary since the prisoner himself bears testimony to his bravery.

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

The raiders are a gang of criminals and outlaws who are not bound by the 'code of head hunting'. They do not have any sense and moral responsibility. Therefore, they do not bother

whether their action is right or wrong as long as it serves their purpose.' They think only in terms of material gain, and as a result, they always commit crimes by robbing and killing the innocent and helpless people without mercy. They also collect as many heads as possible so that they will be able to show off their physical prowess and gain some respect from fellow criminals. The raiders are therefore, considered as a source of evil and destruction.

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

against each other in retaliation for years to come.

It is also a common practice of the Nagas that, when a particular village declares war against the rival village they have to send 'thiyu rashi' (a ripe chilly) tied to 'Masumdangh' (a piece of burnt wood) as a symbol of war. Sometimes, the senders would indicate the place where the battle was to be fought, but in case, they fail to do so both the parties would have to be ready for war at any time, any place. However, when they besiege their rival village they have to give a warning yell before entering or attacking the village. So that women and children can run for safety.¹ J.P. Mill gives wrong information about the declaration of war in Naga society. He says;

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

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

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

2. J.P. Mill: 'The Ao Naga' (war and head hunting) page. 207.

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

'Richang qihbo' or the act of killing an enemy in a fair fight is also of two types. (a). Taking of the victim's head during the inter village war, and (b) taking of the criminal's head by either an aspirant 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' or a 'Liangtuang'.

1. In the 18th century some raiders sent a war declaration symbol to Khonoma (Angami) village on behalf of Nreng (Liangmai) village. Though Nreng village was one of the most powerful village during that time they were not aware of this plot. Thus they were massacred by the Khonoma villagers.

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

The Liangmai Naga tribe believes that if someone has taken away the head of an innocent person it has to be replaced before he reaches 'Charui dih' or the land of the dead. The souls do not leave the earth soon after the death of the bodies; they wait till

the living relatives give a farewell feast called 'Chake ngi' ; which is usually celebrate in the last part of every year. Thus, the living relatives try to take revenge for the death of their innocent kith and kin before this festival so that the innocent soul may not suffer from an inferiority complex or 'Chalyubo' in the land of the dead. In case, the living relatives fail to take revenge before the farewell is given they will have to hunt for not only the culprit's head but also his relatives'! It is to be noted that the living relatives usually do not take revenge for the killing of a criminal. Even if they do so, it would not help the criminal. On the other hand, they themselves may be branded as criminals.

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

(b). We find different explanations for taking the victim's head even among the Naga tribes. For instance, according to

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

1. The Ao Nagas, p.200. by J.H.Hutton.

2. The chin Hills Gazettier, I.196. recorded by Carey and Tuck

3. The Naga Tribes of Manipur, page.119. By, T.C.Hodson.

easily fall prey to greed and self-gratification. On the other hand, a Liangtuang is well prepared physically and mentally to face any crisis in life so that he can avoid the pitfalls of self-glory and self-gratification. For, to become a Liangtuang just acquiring physical prowess or mastery over the art of warfare is not enough; he should also possess certain good qualities like, truthfulness, sincerity, honesty, unselfishness, nobility, love for peace etc., through which he will be able to develop 'Pah-ri-ngiew-tanbo' or a strong personality. The Liangmai Naga has a firm belief that without a strong personality no one can achieve great things in life. If, one possesses this quality no evil spirit can harm him or stop him from achieving his goal in life. According to the Liangmai Nagas, those great warriors who work for the welfare of their fellow men and strive for peace and harmony in the society are considered as Liangtuang. The role of Liangtuang is therefore very crucial especially during the inter village war as his duty is to eradicate the senseless killing by banquishing the culprits. Usually, a Liangtuang would remain neutral even when his fellow villagers enter into a war with another rival village. Thus he will be able to mediate between the two warring villages for, he being without bias both villages will listen to him when he reasons with them to solve their problems by peaceful means. When a particular

or spiritual enlightenment. The Liangmai Naga religious tradition, on the other hand, emphasize that to be born again on earth as human being is a blessing from Tingwang, God the Almighty, for He created this world for mankind to enjoy the life on earth. But unfortunately, this goal of life cannot be realised by all human beings due to their misdeeds in their previous lives. Thus, rebirth as human being is determined by the past action; and evil persons who escape punishment in their life time are bound to be born as animals.

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

head hunting with the concept of revenge and other criminal activities

As I have already pointed out that though these two concepts consist in taking home the victim's head they have diametrically opposed end — the ideal of head hunting minimizes the conflicts and maintains law and order in the society while the practice of revenge results in more conflicts and bloodshed. The distinction between the concept of head hunting and the concept of revenge is that while the former consists in killing of the criminals and outlaws either by a Liangtuang or an aspiring Pa-jeng lwilubo piu in order to maintain peace and harmony in the society and as well as to save the soul of an evil doer from eternal punishment while the latter consists in the killing of a culprit or his relatives by the victimized family or village in retaliation. The latter is more prevalent during the inter village war when there is no one to enforce law and order in the society. It may be pointed out here that though all ancient Naga villages, big or small, were like independent states; when someone raided a village without declaring war the victimized villagers do not usually take the law into their own hands without knowing who the aggressors were. Therefore, if there was a Liangtuang to enforce law and order in the region, they would seek his help to punish the culprits. Unfortunately, owing to

unavailability or non-existence of Liangtuang in all ages, the practice of taking revenge has taken precedence over genuine head hunting. In most cases, the innocent villages would blame each other and fight among themselves in retaliation. And eventually this would lead to a declaration of 'Charui rih' (unending war which has to be fought even in the land of the dead) . once this kind of war is waged, even if there is a Liangtuang to pursue the ideal of head hunting, he becomes completely helpless as no compromise can be brought about on earth except in the next world through Divine intervention.

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

be killed. That is why, the ideal of head hunting is more related to Liangtuang than to an aspiring Pajeng lwilubo piu .

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

CHAPTER V

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE GOOD AND THE GODLY

Cultures all over , talk of men of heroism or exceptional merit. There are prophets, the sages, the men of letters, the poets, the great warriors and the great kings. All races talk of their great men, hero-worship them and at times emulate them for they are the men who have succeeded in accomplishing the goal of life as laid down by their respective traditions. The goal of life of a particular society is best preserved in the religious and moral traditions of that society. Hence to uncover the concept of good and the Godly man it is necessary to talk of the moral and religious norms that they successfully pursued.

The question of goodness versus wickedness is one of supreme importance for any society. But goodness and badness of society lies in making men and women good or bad. Whenever there is a self-conscious living together there is also a moral ideal which is a precondition of all social life. The good and Godly man in the Indian context must be the one who first and foremost pursues the dharma (moral and religious virtues), very much in the line of Rama, the hero of the epic Ramayana. Rama, the hero of the epic, is a man who devoted his whole life to the interest and service of others. He promised 'no fear' to all, even to his enemies whenever they approached him sincerely for protection, "I declare no fear to all who come to me sincerely for protection, even if Ravana comes."¹ He is an ideal example of an ideal son who sacrificed his happiness for fulfilling the promise of

1. 'The Law of Dharma in Valmiki's Ramayana' By, Benjamin Khan

his father. His love and respect for his parents was so deep that he could forgive his father and renounce the throne and go into exile willingly in spite of the fact that the command of his father was unjust.

The Ramayana also highlights a distinction between the Godly man and the ordinary person especially with regard to the capacity of understanding or grasping the true nature of divinity. For instance, Hanuman who is a Godly person could immediately recognise divine nature in Ram the moment he saw him but Sugreeva who is not 'Godly' was not able to do so. To substantiate my point let me refer to a passage from the scene in 'Kiskinda Kand' of Ramayana.

Rama, in his desperate quest of Sita, was journeying southwards and crossed the frontiers of Kiskinda. Following Sita's trail by hearsay and hints, he and Lakshmana arrived on the frontiers of Kiskinda. Their entry was not unobserved. Sugreeva, the ruler of the monkey clan, along with Hanuman, were watching for intruders, they noticed Ram and Lakshmana from far off on the mountain path. Assuming the shape of a young scholar, Hanuman went down and remained hidden behind a tree on their path. When they approached, he observed them closely and reflected within himself. 'So noble looking ! who are they ? They are clad in tree bark, hair matted and knotted, ascetics. But they bear enormous bows on their shoulders. Ascetics armed like warriors or warriors clothed in ascetics'

Rama said, "No you are a man of learning and I am only a warrior and you should not touch my feet." Whereupon Hanuman said, "I assumed the scholar's form only for the purpose of coming before you", and thus he resumed his original form. He then left them, to return later accompanied by Sugreeva.

Rama, at the first sight of Sugreeva, felt an instinctive compassion and also felt that this was a momentous encounter, a turning point in his own life. Sugreeva, sensing his sympathetic attitude, seized this occasion to mention his difficulties in a *general* way. 'Through no fault of mine, I suffer exile and privations'.

'Have you lost your home and are you separated from your wife?' When this question was asked by Rama, Sugreeva, too overwhelmed to speak, remained silent. Whereupon Hanuman stood up and told the story of Sugreeva. Rama was moved by this story. He was filled with pity for Sugreeva and promised, 'I will help you. Tell me what you want.'

Sugreeva took Hanuman aside and asked. 'What do you think of his offer of help?' Hanuman replied. 'I have not the slightest doubt that this person can vanquish Vali. Though he has not revealed his true self yet, I sense his identity. He could be none other than Vishnu himself. I notice that he has the marks of the conch and the disc in his palm. None but Vishnu could have bent

the bow of Shiva and broken it, none but he could have set upon Thataka and her brood or revived Ahalya from his stony existence. More than all my inner voice tells me who he is. When I was young, my father Vayu Bhagavan commanded me, 'You shall dedicate your life to service of Vishnu.'

'How shall I know him ? I asked. He answered 'You will find him wherever evil is rampant — seeking to destroy it . Also, when you meet him, you will ^{be} filled with love and will not be able to move away from his presence.' Now I feel held to the presence of our visitor by some unknown power. I have also no doubt who he is, but if you wish to test the power of his arrow, ask him to shoot at the trunk of one of these trees. If the shaft pierces and goes through, you may take it that he can send an arrow through Vali's heart.

They went back to Rama. Sugreeva requested Rama to give them proof of his archery. Rama said with a smile, 'yes, if it will help you. Show me the tree.' They took him along to where seven enormous trees stood in a row. Rama took out an arrow and shot it through not only the trunks of the seven trees but also through the seven worlds, and the seven seas, and all things in seven; and then it returned to its starting point in the quiver. Sugreeva was overwhelmed at this demonstration and bowed his head in humility, convinced now that he was in the presence of a saviour.

The Kiskinda Kand episode of Ramayana thus explains the quality of the good and Godly man vis-a-vis the ordinary persons. It clearly indicates that godly man is capable of discriminating what is good from what is evil without much difficulty. But an ordinary person may find it difficult to understand or grasp the nature of good and evil. Also what is interesting to note here is Hanuman's recognition of Ram as the avatar of Vishnu. While Sugreeva needs Ram to perform military feats, Hanuman is confident of Ram's power. This is because not only is Hanuman himself a godly person in comparison to Sugreeva, he is also god-like being the son of god, Vayu. Hence he shares this quality in common with Ram, that of being god-like.

A discussion of the concept of dharma in the ancient Indian tradition might be helpful here. Dharma is a comprehensive term, not only does it include the social, economical, moral and biological duties of men living in the society, but is far deeper in its meaning. To create mental and spiritual fellowship among men is the aim of dharma. ✓

"Complete dharma includes kama (satisfaction of desire or pleasure) and artha (acquisition of wealth) which are the necessary conditions for the continuance of human life. Recognised and pursued within the framework of dharma, kama and artha have an

honourable place, but pursued independently of each other especially of dharmā they become mortal evils. They lose their character of values and turn into lust."¹ While the goal of life is the realisation of spiritual values, one can pursue these unless one is assisted by biological and economical values. In the Ramayana, we see the lust for properties or wealth in the case of Kaikeyi, and lust for sexual pleasure in the case of Ravana and his sister Sūpernakha end in destruction. The whole epic depicts the conflict between dharmā on the one hand and, artha and kama on the other hand. Now artha, kama and dharmā are based on three psychological dispositions of men. Artha caters to the instincts of acquisition, kama, to the sexual instinct. In terms of eudaemonism, artha refers to material perfection, kama aims at the perfection of senses and sensual desire, and dharmā is the perfection of moral and spiritual elements in man so that it can further pursue moksa. Those who know dharmā consider truth as the real dharmā of life. Dharmā is not a 'means to an end' but an 'end in itself'. A good moral life is not only the aspiration of the individuals but of the society as well. ✓

A discussion on the Indian upanisadic thought at this juncture will substantiate this point further. The upanisadic thought, I find, is an attempt at a philosophical analysis of

1. 'The Law of Dharma in Valmiki's Ramayana', page. 41.
by, Benjamin Khan.

the good and Godly man who aims at the knowledge of the ultimate reality. They describe reality as ^{Being} (sat) but they also speak of Non-Being (Asat), as ultimate from which Being appeared. The law of morality is an invitation to become perfect as the Supreme Reality of God. Moksa literally means release from the bondage of the sensuous and the individual, the narrow and the finite. It is the result of self-enlargement and freedom. To live in goodness is to realise one's life in all. This ideal for which the moral nature of man cries can be attained only if the finite self transcends its narrow individuality and identifies itself with the whole. The path of deliverance is the path of soul growth. The reality in which we are to abide by transcending our individuality is the highest, and that is the reality asserted by the upanisads.

The general impression that the upanisads require world-denial is not quite correct."They insist on a spirit of detachment, Vairagya, which is not indifference to the world. It is not abandonment of objects but non-attachment to them."¹ We do not raise ourselves above the world by contempt for the world. it is the spirit of equanimity which is insisted on. To be tranquil is to envy no man, to have no possessions that another can take from us, to fear none. When the ancient thinkers insist on samnyasa or relinquishment of home and possessions, to accept the three great renunciations, consecrated in the three

1. 'The Principal Upanisads' page, 106. By, Dr. Radhakrishnan.

vows, namely, evangelical counsels of poverty, obedience and chastity, they point to self-denial as the root of the spiritual life.

What is important here to note is that the spirit of renunciation does not mean neglect of social duties. Samnyasa does not mean that we owe no duties to the world; we free ourselves only from ritualistic duties. Rare fruits of spirit ripen on the soil of detachment. There is a popular verse which makes out that one should give up attachment, but if one is not capable of it, let him cultivate attachment; not it should be attachment to all.

We should release ourselves from selfish likes and dislikes. The Divine cannot use our mind and body so long as we wish to use them for our own ends. Detachment is opposed to attachment, not to enjoyment. Enjoy through renunciation is the advice of the Isa upanisad. Good and evil do not depend on the acts one does or does not, but on the frame of mind one has. The good man is he who concurs with the divine purpose, and the bad man is he who resists it. If one's mind is good, one's acts will be good. Our attempt should be not so much external conformity as inward cleansing. From goodness of being goodwill and good works flow. When the soul is at peace, the greatest sorrows are borne lightly. Life becomes more natural and confident. Changes

in outer conditions do not disturb. We let our life flow of itself as the sea heaves or the flower blooms.

Work by itself does not give us liberation. It cleanse the mind, purifies the heart and produces the illumination which is the immediate condition of salvation. Contemplation is the way to cleanse one's mind and heart. It means rest, suspension of mental activity, withdrawal into the interior solitude in which the soul is absorbed in the fruitful silence of God. We cannot stop there; we must overflow with a love that communicates what it knows to others. Saints with abundant power and tireless energy work for the transfiguring of men and the changing of the course of secular history.

The virtues that are repeatedly emphasized and which are common in the ancient Indian traditions are namely, asceticism, liberalism, integrity, non-injury to life and truthfulness. What the Taittiriya upanisaḍ gives as a list of students' duties, I also find emphasized in the village dormitory system of the Liangmai Naga tradition. The student should not be negligent of truth, virtues, welfare and propriety. He should perform only those acts which are irreproachable. In case of doubt concerning any act of conduct, the students should follow the practice of those Brahmins, in case of Liangmai Nagas the village elders, who are competent to judge, and are devoted, not harsh

lovers of virtues. In one passage all the virtues are brought together under the three da's which are heard in the voice of the thunder, namely, dama, or self-restraint, dana or self-sacrifice, and daya or compassion. Dama is self-control. We should reduce our wants and be prepared to suffer in the interest of truth. Austerity, chastity, solitude and silence are the ways to attain self-control.

The good are also made to practice tapas . Tapas is severe self-discipline undertaken for becoming exceptional. It is exercised with reference to the natural desires of the body and the distractions of the outer world. Strength is developed by resisting force. The power gained by resisting one temptation helps us in overcoming the next. To evade discipline is to empty life of its significance. Nothing is more tranquil than to be unshaken by the troublous motions of the flesh.

The ancient Indian thinkers were of the opinion that the seed within men and women is intended for the purpose of creating a body by which another soul may come into physical embodiment. When thus controlled brahmacharya helps creative work of every description. When the seed is wasted in sex excesses, the body becomes weak and crippled, the face lined, the eyes dull, hearing impaired and the brain inactive. If brahmacharya is practised, the physical body remains youthful and beautiful.

the brain keen and alert, the whole physical expression becomes the image and likeness of the divine. The value of brahmacharya is realised too by the Liangmai Naga elder when he forbids the warriors from sexual intercourse for a considerable before undertaking a warring mission.

However it is in the emphasis on Dana or giving of gifts that the upanisadic seer comes closer to the Liangmai Nagas. Dana is negatively freedom from greed and positively assistance to those in need. There is no hope of immortality by wealth (B. U. II. 4. 2.). Possessiveness is condemned. The Taittiriya upanisad (I. II. 2) regulates the art of giving. One should give with faith, one should not give without faith, one should give liberally, with modesty, with fear, with sympathy.

The act of giving gifts to the needy whether they be strangers or friends is known as 'kalian pibo' amongst the Liangmai Naga. However the giving of a gift to the needy alone is not enough to pursue a good life. The tradition stresses more on sharing everything, both happiness and trials and tribulations with each other. With this view, the tribe considered the whole village to be one big joint family and help one another in all possible ways. Thus when a member of the society was not able to finish his work load in time due to certain difficulties,

the whole village would come forward and help him finish the work. This sort of community help has come to be known as 'chaku kubo'. For instance, if a hunter brought to the village a game, big or small, he would share it with the whole village by distributing small portion to every household. This act of his would be called 'madombo'. A family having gathered the highest amount of food grains in a year known as 'maliangbo' had to offer a mithun or a buffello to the whole villagers and feed each villagers at least once. Of course, the villagers must also give a helping hand to this family in return. Any family in the village, who has surplus food grains for the year must be also willing to share with those who do not have. In a traditional society, if one is extremely wealthy usually he would perform a great feast called 'Chakiyu-kariew Dungbo' or 'Zou Hubo' and this great feast would last for ten days or so. During this great feast the host family had to feed not only his villagers but also those strangers whosoever passing through the village.

So also the virtue of Daya or Karuna (compassion) is common to both the traditions i.e. Liangmai Nagas and upanisads. ✓
 We should try to be at peace with all, abhor all cruelty and ill-will. Enmity means misunderstanding. A forgiving attitude frees the individual. We should grudge none, forgive all. So long as we ✓
 remember an injustice, we have not forgiven either the person

or the action. If only we know that there is more suffering than wickedness in the world, we should be kindly. It is by compassion, which shrinks from no sacrifice, that we can overcome the ravages of selfishness. We must be patient. God himself is unimaginably patient. Tolerance, long suffering, patience are the fruits of spirit. Of course, the Liangmai Naga's fight against injustice is more in the line of Krishna's insistence to fight for justice, to Arjuna in the battle field. For example, it is more important for Liangtuang to be himself than to be a cog in the social machine; he must fulfill his capacities as a man of certain gifts, a warrior, not necessarily by inciting wars but at least by meeting the challenges of war when it arises. By doing so he enhances his control; he comes to be dictated not by circumstances, but becomes a master of them.

Somehow an impression prevails in academic circles that the upanisads advocate a life of spiritual renunciation at the cost of bodily life and mind. A reference to Karl H. Potter here find useful. Potter claims that the difference between the concept of resignation and the concept of renunciation is that while the resigned man doubts his ability to master that which he is resigned to, the man who renounced is confident of his ability to gain that which he renounces but finds more mastery — greater freedom' — in meeting the challenge of not exerting

his power to gain."The man who renounces has faith in his powers,while the resigned man does not have faith^{and}doubts his capacity to effect all that he wishes.Faith,that is to say the faith born of the conviction that one is capable of mastering a challenge,is a necessary condition for renunciation;without faith,a refusal to exert one's power is called resignation,not renunciation." *And that which signifies lack of faith is doubt,that doubt born of an inadequate conception of self, a conception of self as broken off from others and from the world in which we live in some way that sets limits on man's capacities in general.This doubt is manifested inwardly as fear, the fear that one is at the mercy of some or all of one's environment since it is irradicably other than oneself and thus incapable of being brought under control.

Man acquires merit not by denying the existence of the body and its appetites,but by refining them and bringing them under the control of his will.The mature or the cultured person is one who has distanced himself from nature but not broken away from it.Reason must always command the senses:it must encompass them.One who posits a sharp dichotomy between body and soul has a distorted view of life.Man is the very best, the finest,link between nature and culture.Dualities are not an attribute of the domain of nature,and god(brahma) and the

* Presupposition of India's Philosophy, Pages15-16.
By,Karl H. Potter.

domain of the spirit are beyond them. It follows that "dualities are an attribute of human intelligence and, therefore, the basis for moral judgement. The only viable view of human life is one based on a balanced and harmonised relationship (santulan) between the body, the mind and the soul."¹

Those who separate the spiritual from life generally concentrate more on the other-worldliness of the ancient thought. The good, they would say would belong to this life while the Godly will operate for the spiritual benefit of mankind. Are the two, that is, the good and the Godly operating in different hemispheres? I will try to answer this question with the special reference to katha upanisad.

Evidently, at the time of the upanisads, the sacrificial religion of the Brahmanas was popular. Desire for earthly and heavenly gain was the prominent motive of this religious tradition. In the katha upanisad, the author attempts to distinguish between Vajasravasa, the protagonist of an external ceremonialism, and Naciketas; the seeker of the spiritual wisdom. Vajasravasa, represents orthodox religion and is devoted to its outer forms. He performs the sacrifice and makes gifts which are unworthy. The formalism and the hypocrisy of the father disappoints the son. Naciketas reveal here, the utter inadequacy of a soulless ritualism. Though Naciketas admits that, true prayer and sacrifice are in-

1. 'Non-Renunciation, Themes and Interpretation of Hindu Culture' page. 90-91. By, T.N.Madan.

tended to bring the mind and will of the human being into harmony with the great universal purpose of God. For him, it should be done with a complete surrender or utter dedication. Thus, when his father gives away all his goods, he feels that this involves the giving away of the son and so he wished to know about himself.

Naciketas earnestly wishes to make himself an offering and thus purify his father's sacrifice. When his father replies to his query that, he (Naciketas) would be given to Yama, the god of death; Naciketas takes his father's word literally. Thus he tries to carry out in letter and spirit, his father's wishes. His father thought that Naciketas is so impertinent as to interfere with his doings but, in reality Naciketas honestly feels that if his father wants to give away everything he has, he should be honest and sincere enough to give away even his most valuable thing, that is, his own son. In other words, he (father) should be committed to his promise of giving away everything, including his own son. Here, Naciketas does not discard the old tradition but attempts to quicken it. There can be no quickening of the spirit until the body dies. Though Naciketas does not approve of the hollowness of the ritualistic practice of his father, as an ideal son, he voluntarily offered himself to the god of death in order to fulfil his father's wish. For him, carrying out the parents' wishes is the way of an ideal son and neglecting the wish or order of the parents is the worse form of conduct of a son.

Naciketas was thus sent by his father to Yama, in order to keep his promise. And after reaching Yama's abode, Naciketas had to wait for three nights without food, as Yama had gone out. When Yama returned he was touched by the sincerity and honesty of Naciketas and asked him to choose three boons in return(K.U.I.1.9.).For the first three boons, Naciketas asked Yama to make his(Naciketas)father not angry and recognise him when he is free from the grip of death. And for the second and the third boons he enquires about the condition of the liberated souls(K.U.I.1;12-13) and thus he request Yama to give him this knowledge(K.U.I.1;20).Yama granted the first boon but for the second and the third he wanted to find out first whether Naciketas deserved this knowledge or not. Therefore, Yama tries to lure Naciketas by requesting him to ask for some other boons which will enhance his worldly life. Naciketas cannot be however enticed by these worldly pleasures and comforts as according to him, man is not to be contented with wealth or worldly pleasures(K.U.I.1;27). Because, the material guarantees of human security are fragile. It is an earth-bound philosophy that makes man the end and aim of life, that recognises no value of a transcendental character. What is the value of wealth or life, as they are impermanent ? So long as death is in power we cannot enjoy wealth or life for the fear of death destroys

the zest for living. So Naciketas asks for self knowledge, or atma-vijnanam; which is beyond the power of death. He wanted to know what is the great beyond ? What is there after liberation? What is the nature of eternal reality ? What is man's relation to it and how can he reach it ? Here, Naciketas is not raising the question of the post-mortal state. He is asking about the great departure or mahan samparaya, from which there is no return.'

After testing Naciketas and knowing his fitness for receiving Brahma-knowledge; Yama explains the great secret to him;

"(Yama said): Different is the good, and different indeed is the pleasant. These two with different purposes, bind a man. Of these two, it is well for him who takes hold of the good; but he who chooses the pleasant, fails of his aim."¹

Yama explained to Naciketas that the highest good of man is not pleasure but moral goodness. So also most of the heroes of the Liangmai Nagas' exhibit the renunciation of the pleasant in preferring a life full of pain and sometimes violent death. The good is in all cases chosen even when as in the case of the eldest son of a great warrior named Manu: Hu-ngennang, is involved a tragic end for him and his kith and kin. To substantiate my point let me quote a passage from the story of 'Manu.Hu-ngennang the Warrior';

1. Katha Upanisad; I.2.1).

"...for soon came the night when his (Hu-ngennang) enemies in great numbers, came and attacked his house. Meanwhile his eldest son who was as brave as Hu-ngennang was courting a girl. That fateful night he was in his girl friend's house. Before going to sleep in her place, he asked the girl to at once wake him up if during the night she heard of any threat to his father's house. 'As the eldest son, I must protect my parents, younger brothers and sisters. If you fail to wake me up I will leave you forever'. Soon it was midnight; being young he slept soundly. Suddenly there was a big uproar. Some villagers had come to beckon the eldest son as his father's house was being attacked ! The poor girl was in dilemma: if she woke her lover and sent him to do his duty of protecting his family, he would surely be killed. But then if she did not obey his instruction she would lose him forever, 'I must do my duty which is to faithfully obey him', thinking so, she shook him awake. He took up his dao, and rushed towards his house yelling 'Hu-ngennang ! Hu-ngennang ! your son is coming !' 'He could be heard all over the village. There were too many raiders around the house but the brave lad managed to kill a great many till he met his own end right at the door-step, when the hidden enemy struck a deadly blow ... "1

. That is why it is said that while the evil go to hell, the final destination of the good is heaven. Thus the good and the pleasant is in the world for man to choose whichever he likes. The wise man would however discriminate between these two and choose the

1. 'The Liangmai Nagas Legends and Stories' (Hu-ngennang the Warrior); Page 39-40. By, Sujata Miri.

good over pleasant. But the simple minded, ignorant and ordinary person would prefer the pleasant for the sake of worldly well-being¹. In other words, the ignorant and the ordinary person is concerned with the pleasant and adopts a materialist view of life or worldly well-being (yoga ksema) alone; while the wise or good and the Godly person would always opt for wisdom with the good (vidya) over worldly pleasures. The ignorant person is filled with selfish desires and attracted by worldly possessions becomes subject to the law of karma which leads him from birth to birth and so he is under the control of Yama.²

Verse 24 of the katha upanisad also insist that, saving wisdom cannot be obtained without the moral qualification;

"Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even ^{he} whose mind is not composed can reach this (self) through right knowledge."³

No one can realise the truth without illumination, and no one can have illumination without thorough cleansing of one's moral being. The classical division of spiritual life into purgation, illumination and union gives the first place to ethical preparation, which is essential for the higher degree of spiritual life. Moral disorder prevents us from fixing our gaze on the

1. Katha Upanisad, I.2.2.

2. Katha Upanisad, I.2.6.

3. Katha Upanisad, I.2.24

Supreme. Until our mind and heart are effectively purged, we can have no clear vision of God. The Liangmai Naga religious tradition does not emphasize on seeking God directly. For they believe that good deed alone can find God. According to them, man was created by Tingwang, God the Almighty to look after the welfare of His creations and beautify it. So, first and foremost duty of man is to do good to others but not to seek salvation for himself. Therefore, it is his moral responsibility to rectify his past misdeeds and try his best to bring back peace and harmony on earth which has been destroyed by his wrong acts. Undoubtedly, God's grace, whether of the Almighty God or of the gods of the pantheon, is up to the divine forces themselves but as far as the seeker goes he must practice morality in order to grasp grace and profit by it. The verse quoted above from katha upanisad concedes that although the spiritual and ethical are not organically connected, however, if we wish to attain the spiritual, we cannot bypass the ethical.

Those who consider the pursuit of the good as complete and self-sufficient in itself tend to regard religion as nothing, but ethics illustrated by stories and reinforced by liturgical and homilatic arts. Widespread opinionⁿⁱ flourished in the eighteenth century, under the influence of the Aufklärung or enlightenment — namely, that though religion as traditionally understood

was outmoded and would eventually pass into the history of by-gone ages, it did contain one element of value. That moral element it contain was, indeed, the essence of religion. The rest, being excrescence, was eminently expendable. If only popular religions could be shorn of the superstitious accretions that encumbered them, they would be found to contain a moral core that was worth preserving. For instance, R.B. Braithwaite thinks that religious statements are used primarily as moral assertions and therefore function in the same way, that is, they announce a proposed way of behaviour or policy of action. Adulterated as they are by the various fables and other paraphernalia that attend them, their character as moral utterances may be obscured; nevertheless, their fundamental nature is ethical. As ethical assertion may be hidden beneath a smoke screen of incense or smothered under layer upon layer of ancient fables; but in the end the only question a philosopher can properly ask of religious man are of a nature such as 'What kind of conduct is the ritual calculated to discourage?' and 'What action is the myth intended to promote?' In this view, religious people for one reason or another associated the moral intent with various myths, liturgies, and ritual acts, but they need by no means assign any meaning to the ritual and myth other than that which is reducible to the ethical assertions they presumptively contain.

In sharp contrast, though within God oriented religions we may find certain differences, nonetheless, the basic criteria of religiosity is generally determined by a person's righteousness and his devotion to a particular deity or deities he adheres to. However, for an atheist who considers Humanism to be his religion the determining factor of his religiosity would be his good deeds and his devotion to the ideal (i.e.love for humanity), he believes and works accordingly. This implies that albeit, the concept of good man, may be found in both the religions(i.e. God oriented religion and the religion which has nothing to do with God) but there may not be any earnest reference to the 'Godly man' in a religion which has no room for God or gods.

I started discussing this chapter with reference to men of great merit recognised as such by different traditions. And as illustration I referred to Ram the hero of Ramayana who represented the ideal man who is both a good and a godly person in the ancient Indian tradition. Also I discussed the perfect man with reference to the upanisads, specially the katha upanisad to show that the pursuit of a virtuous life is a necessary condition of achieving the ideal of perfection. The Liangmai Naga tradition similarly confirms the leading of a good life

is a necessary requirement for achieving the designation of the Godly. I have also recognised that for being good it is not essential to accept the concept of the Godly. While for being Godly you have to first and foremost be good. There may be mythologies regarding the 'arrogant' or 'bad' behaviour of gods, but for a man to be Godly, demands that he exhibits in his behaviour all the good features of Godliness and recognised by his tradition.

I have however to differentiate the concept of the good and the concept of the Godly from that of the ideal or the exceptional man especially in the Liangmai Naga tradition. And this I propose to do in the next chapter i.e. in the conclusion.

Nietzsche discerns an 'order of rank' among human beings, reflecting the qualitative differences among the various 'types' of man and forms of humanity there have been and are and can be. And he considers it imperative, if human life is to flourish and develop, 'to maintain the order of rank in the world',¹ and indeed to widen the 'difference between strata' and intensity 'the pathos of distance' growing out of it. He regards this as a condition of the possibility of the "ever now widening of differences within the soul itself, the development of the higher, rarer, more remote, further-stretching, more comprehensive states — in brief, simply the enhancement of the type 'man' the continual 'self-overcoming'"². The alternative possibility he envisions, should this condition not be met, is that of the overall 'degeneration and diminution of man into the perfect herd animal, the dwarf animal of equal right and claim'. Thus he continues; "Anyone who has once thought through this possibility to the end, no longer knows any other nausea than other man — but perhaps also a new task!"³ Nietzsche's concern to drive home these points influences the greater part of his writings from Zarathustra onward. As he has Zarathustra say:

"...thus blink the mob — 'there are no higher man, we are all equal, man is man; before God we are all equal', before God ! But now this God has died. And therefore, before the mob we do not want to be equal."⁴

1, 2 and 3; 'Beyond Good and Evil', pages 219, 157 and 203.

4. 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra' IV, 13.

Nietzsche here gives brief expression to one of the basic arguments by means of which he seeks to undermine the doctrine of the basic equality of all men, and so to clear the way for the development of his case to the effect that some not only differ but are superior to others. Human beings generally fall into one or the other of the two radically different and widely disparate groups, one very numerous and occupying 'the human low land', and the other, 'very small in number', constituting 'a higher, brighter humanity' standing far 'above' the rest.¹ Thus he contrast the general run of mankind, among whom 'sickliness' is purported to be the norm, which 'man's lucky hit' consisting of the rare cause of great power of soul and body.² On the one hand, 'there is the domestic animals, the herd animals', which is now and has long been the rule.³ On the other, there are the 'exceptions', the 'fortunate accidents of great success', which are 'encountered in the most widely different places and culture: here we really do find a higher type, which is in relation to mankind as a whole, a kind of 'ubermensch' or superman.⁴

I refer in detail to Nietzsche to include a separate category of the exceptional man or ideal man known as Liangtuang (refer to page 39) who does not come under the head of either the good or the Godly. While the good pursue the good conduct as

1. The Will to Power; VII & VIII P.993.

2. On the Genealogy of Moral; III.1.

3. The Anti-Christ; 3

4. Opcit 4

defined by their tradition and the Godly try and live upto the image of the concept of God as accepted by the society, the Liangtuang in most cases creates his own values.

It is those who are at once the 'strongest' and the most spiritual of men, possessed of great 'power of soul and body' and of the richest and most complex natures rather than those who are either the least or most thoroughly civilized of human type, who are Nietzsche's 'higher man'. They are exceptional in being "the strongest, most independent, most courageous, 'having at their disposal' a great quantum of power to which one is able to give direction,"¹ and thus being capable of genuine creativity. The life and works of all Liangmai Naga heroes bear testimony to this. Their 'higher form of being' thus translated into higher form of 'culture (Will to Power P.1025) transcending the planes of merely natural and social existence and activity, and so opening a new chapter in the enhancement of life'. In them 'the spontaneous', aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces that give new interpretation and directions' (which Nietzsche refers to as 'the essence of life, its will to power) are present in abundance², and are brought into a 'fortunate organisation' conducive to 'facility in self-direction and self-elevation.

1. 'The Will to Power' pages, 776.

2. 'On the Geneology of Moral' II.12.

In the struggle against evil sometimes, the heroes of the Liangmai Naga tradition are expected to rise above the barely ethical, in that they exhibit an insight into social and historical events almost to a special vision into the state of things to come.

The ideal example of an exceptional man or Liangtuang in the Liangmai Naga tradition would be Manu:Hu-ngennang¹. He was known as a man of action who never sat idle while others were in trouble; he devoted his life for the service of the helpless victims of injustice. Whether friends or foes whosever came to him for help he never let them down and always took up their burdens as his own even to the extent of endangering his own existence. There are lengthy accounts of the sacrifices made by him for the welfare of his fellow men. A most daring achievement of his is his defence of innocent people who were terrorized by enemy raiders. Manu:Hu-ngennang took up the fight and fought all alone against the raiders fully aware that he was risking his own life as the odds were too much against him. Being exceptional Manu:Hu-ngennang could rise to the occasion and expel the threatening raiders knowing fully well that this action of his was bound to bring their wrath on himself. In any case, as a warrior, he was duty bound to protect his fellow villagers or anyone else in need. (His action remind us of Rama during his exile.) Interes-

1. 'The story of Manu:Hu-ngennang' From 'The Liangmai Nagas Legends and Stories' Page, 38. By, Sujata Miri.

tingly, Manu:Hu-ngennang in later year i.e. after the loss of his wife and all the children but one, faced such a crisis in his life that he had to take 'the law into his own hands', in order to enforce once again the supreme virtue of peace and harmony in his society.

Let me elaborate, the conventional art of warfare of his society forbade any cold-blooded killing as well as guerrilla warfare. These were considered as the actions of a coward and not of a true warrior. But being exceptional, Manu:Hu-ngennang realised the necessity of taking recourse to them. Since the enemy was evil and since his duty was to destroy the evil, the means to be adopted should be such that they would help in successfully completing his mission. The point I am trying to stress here is that the Liangtuang exhibits his special power in the society through taking decisions individually, even at the risk of his own reputation. His circumstances are such that if he ceases to undertake further killing as advised by his elders, he would fail in the bigger task of crushing the evil force which has already taken root in the hearts of the raiders and that of their off-springs. Mercy, the warriors, keep for the weak and the good but with the criminals the practice of mercy amounts to foolishness.

Being a Liangtuang, in other words, is not merely a matter of honour and respect by the village community. Circumstances com-

pel the Liangtuang to take decisions single handedly and sometimes his decisions may be opposed by others who lack insight into moral issues. As exceptional, he must know and realise that he is alone. If today he is honoured tomorrow he may be hunted and boycotted like Manu:Hu-ngennang was by his own people. But fearless he must go on in the pursuit of destroying the enemies and restoring complete harmony in the society. But though Manu:Hu-ngennang is remembered till today and represents the embodiment of all virtues true of the Liangmai Naga hero, while he lived he was aware that as exceptional he was alone. The others may share his glory but in times of crisis they will leave him to fend for himself. The life of most of the Liangtuang shows that while they lived they were not objects of hero-worship as such. However, in the later years tradition never tired in its admiration of such great men. When he is successful in his feats he is the enlightening presence, the native original insight, a man of heroic nobleness. He knows for certain his unique relation to his mysterious ecology and his duty vis-a-vis it. Not only that he expresses what he knows in his outward and actual actions but what he feels intensely, he sees that it is presented before all in visual shape, as a historical reality.

The ideal of an exceptional man or Liangtuang is also found in the folk songs of the Liangmai Nagas. There are many songs which convey to us the quality of an exceptional man through

the examples of natural objects, animals, birds and so on. Let me quote one particular folk song¹ which was sung by the Liang-mai Naga villagers during the first season of cleaning weeds in the paddy fields. This song expresses the significance of the exceptional qualities through Senchang (a particular type of python) and Chamiangkken (a type of creeping plant). Senchang is equated with the qualities of greatness, nobility, fearlessness, and serenity even in the midst of trouble and dangers; and Chamiangkken² signifies that like the plant the value of greatness and its importance are only cherished and admired by people after the death of Liangtuang. This song signifies two things, (a) that while he lives, with all great qualities, he renders valuable service to his society, risking his own happiness and prestige and (b) that people recognise his importance and the value of his achievements and sacrifices only after his death.

1. "Amarailiu tu Senchang ponkaruan kum;
 Maipui mainah kapjiu
 Chamai hui, richung jou kawan,
 E kamarailiu benta juwang
 Atu benkhum kajinai, nachia manai wiye.
 Ngut gaijiu narim wi
 Chamiang rim kakhung liutu chalungsi."

2. Chamiangkken does not have any significance while it is fresh but only when it dries up for a few hours does it produce a tremendous sweet fragrance lasting for many days.

Manu:Hu-ngennang amongst the Liangmai Nagas represents the 'higher type' which Nietzsche characterizes as the 'richest and most complex forms' of human life'; are indeed attained, but they do not last, 'for they perish more easily'; they are achieved only rarely and maintain their superiority with difficulty', while only the lowest preserve a apparent indestructibility.¹ So he writes:

"The higher the type of man that a man represents, the greater the improbability that he will turn out well. The accidental, the law of absurdity in the whole economy of mankind, manifests itself most horribly in its destructive effect on the higher men whose complicated conditions of life can only be calculated with great subtlety and difficulty."²

I refer to the above remarks of Nietzsche because I want to distinguish the Liangtuang or the 'higher man' from 'the splendid blond beast prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory.' There is somehow an impression prevailing in academic circles that (a) the Liangmai Naga warrior was either hungry for heads (a myth which I have tried to explode in chapter IV of my thesis), or (b) they were so untamed and irrational that they were incapable of rising above the immediate. The later point gets rejected by my analysis of the Liangtuang in pages 155 to 157. The modern Liangmai Naga is committed, to the view that the 'taming' or

1. 'The Will to Power' page.684.

2. 'Beyond Good and Evil' page 62.

'civilizing' process is a necessary condition for the emergence of a higher form of culture and spirituality higher than the one represented by the exceptional or the Liangtuang.

This view popular as it may be amongst the tribe today, in my view, completely refuses to see man as a creator of values and as a form-giver in his own right, leading to the suppression of the boldest and the most spiritual nature. The aim of the new process of so called civilization introduced with Christainity is primarily at the transformation of human beings homogeneous 'herd' on a plane reflecting their 'common' nature and the requirements of a smoothly functioning social order. Unfortunately within the tradition itself, this higher type of man in spite of his exhibiting the qualities of robust health, exceptional strength, and over flowing vitality, has ceased to be encouraged. Today he is almost a non-existent entity.

What has replaced him is the large scale championing of 'the good' defined almost entirely in terms of the civilizing influence of Christainity and modernity. Christain morality hopes to instill discipline and a sense of spirituality through a 'taming' process requiring a consistent persuade through whole chains of generations.

Christainity which talks of many a good things such as kindness, truthfulness, faithfulness, benevolence, and so on. This creation is God's and therefore good. When Job's wife holds God responsible for Job's suffering, he replies as follows, "... Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaked, What ? Shall we recieved good at the hand of God, and shall we not recieved evil ? In all this did not Job sin with his lips." (Job:2.10). Job is convinced that only good emanates from God, and that whatever that is evil cannot come from God. The Psalmist is of the opinion that long life is given in order to achieve what is good. Here, the Psalmist connects the concept of good with the concept of good life. He says; "What man is he that desired life, and loved many days, that he may see good." (Psalm 34.2). Solomon opines that we must keep good to those who need it. This sort of view is reflected in the following verse, "Whenever you possibly can do good to those who need it ." (Proverb; 3.27). Ecclesiastes which means the Preacher, the term, 'good' is related to a just man. I quote, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinned not." (Ecclesiastes; 7.20). Accordingly the book of Acts summerises the life of Jesus Christ on earth as follows; "How God anojnted Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts;10.38).

Christ is depicted as personification of goodness.

In both Matthew and Luke reiterate that whatever that is good comes from above, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gift unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him" (Matthew; 7;11. Luke. 11;13). Matthew also relates the concept of good to faithfulness. This come out crystal clear in the following verse, "His Lord said unto him, Well done thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into joy of thy Lord" (Matthew; 25; 21). Paul says that knowledge of God is good; he puts it as follows, "That ye might work worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being faithful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Collosian; 1; 10). Solomon indicates that a good name is preferable to having worldly riches as follows, "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, having favor rather than Silver and Gold" (Proverb; 22; 1).

What Nietzsche has in mind is the attainment of a type of humanity the possibility of which was discerned by Goethe, who writes, 'conceived a human being who would be strong, highly educated, skillful in all bodily matter, self-control, reverent toward himself, and who might dare to afford the whole range and wealth of being natural, because he is strong enough for such

freedom, and knows how to use to his advantage even that from which the average nature would perish. Nietzsche conceives of the 'higher man' in the same way, as his explicit linking of this conception with his own 'Dionysian faith' indicated.¹ This 'higher man' is the type of 'the sovereign individual, like only to himself, liberated again from the morality of the custom, autonomous and supra-moral ... who has his own protracted will, and whose mastery over himself also necessarily gives him mastery over circumstances, over nature, and elevates him above all more short-willed and unreliable creatures.'²

For human being of this sort "great ventures and overall attempts of discipline and cultivation" are possible. Possessed of a 'great health' that is more seasoned, tougher, more audacious and gayer than that of lesser men even under circumstances most favourable to them, Nietzsche's 'higher men' are argonauts of the ideal, through whose 'overflowing power and abundance' the landscapes of human existence is transformed, and 'the destiny of soul changes.'³ They possess 'creative power' others lack, and stand apart from the rest both in terms of the strength the measure of which is to what extent one can endure to live in a meaningless world because one organised a small portion of it oneself. In terms of Nietzsche's conception of the 'enhancement of life', his 'higher men' thus at once represent a highly enhanced form of

1. Twilight of the Idol; IX:49.

2. On the Genealogy of Moral; II.2.

3. The Gay Science Book; P.382.

human life and also are the primary instruments of its further enhancement.

It is owing to all these circumstances that ^{he} considers it appropriate to term the sort of human being under consideration not merely as 'different' but also 'higher' than others — not only exceptional in the sense of superior.' He argues that, given the untenability of assigning intrinsic values to each and every human being as such, it is only in terms of something along the lines of his 'Dionysian value standard for existence' that they can attributed any value at all. And it is this contention that, when his perspective of evaluation is adopted, considerations pertaining to the 'enhancement of life' take an decisive importance, and the differences noted acquire differential evaluative significance. There is an order of rank of different kinds of life because some constitute more 'enhance' forms of it, figure more prominently and directly in its further enhancement than others, and because no considerations of any other sort carry any weight to the reckoning to be made.' And that type of man Nietzsche terms 'higher' is to be esteemed as being 'higher in value' than others accordingly, and is to be regarded as worthier of life as well.

This is not to say that no value whatever is ascribable to all others, or that they are entirely 'unworthy of life'; but it is to relegate them to lower positions on the 'order of rank',

and does carry the implication that some may fare very poorly indeed. It is not however, either as individuals or as members of any particular racial, national or other group as such that they are to accord greater or lesser value, but rather only as instances of 'different kinds of life'.

"Every individual may be scrutinized to see whether he represents the ascending or the descending line of life ... If he represents the ascending line, then his worth is indeed extra-ordinary — and for the sake of as a whole, which takes a step further through him, the care for his preservation and for the creation of the best conditions for him may even be extreme ... If he represents the descending development, decay, chronic degeneration, and sickness ..., then he has small worth, and the minimum of the decency requires that he takes away as little as possible from those who have thus turned out well. The only value human beings have thus related to what they represent and may bring about, and is a function of characteristics they do not possess in equal measure."²

What I wish to add, in the light of the above point is that not only has this conception of the higher/exceptional (Liangtuang) has been generally replaced by the ideal of 'the good', the good as an ideal has also almost swallowed the concept of the 'Godly' (refer to chapter II) in the contemporary scene. There is hardly a person for instance, belonging to the new faith namely, the

1. Twilight of the Idol. IX.33.

Baptist Mission, who claims to be a saintly or exceptionally holy person !

However a more serious loss than the concept of the Godly is the loss of the concept of Liangtuang to the Liangmai Naga culture. It is the conception of the exceptional or the ideal that contained the spirit, the passion and the strength of the Liangmai Naga culture. The present scheme of values along with the taming or civilizing process aims at inculcating the good values, 'good' understood in the highest Christian sense alone.

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Banglahwang, who was his maternal uncle. Although all the other brothers accepted Charahwang as their eldest brother, and acknowledged his authority over them; Puichamyu never did so. His unhappiness over not being recognized as the first born son sometimes manifested openly and threatened the authority of Charahwang. Hence intentionally he constructed his house taller than that of Charahwang's. This act of Puichamyu enraged Charahwang, who decided to teach Puichamyu a lesson. He, therefore, thought of a clever plan. One day, Charahwang asked Puichamyu to block the river by pulling down their own house (i.e mountain) and fish from the dry river-bed. Without knowing his brother's intentions, Puichamyu readily agreed and did as he was told. When he came to realise that he had been tricked by his brother, he left his place and went down to the southernmost part of the Zeliangrong country in disgust.

The trick played by Charahwang on his younger brother did not please his father-in-law. Banglahwang, the father-in-law of Charahwang had been uneasy for quite sometime as he feared that one day Charahwang would dominate even him. Therefore, taking advantage of this incident he challenged Charahwang to a wrestling match. It was agreed that the loser must reside under the eight layers of the crust of the earth forever. With the help of his wife,

Kaimadihliu, Charahwang defeated his father-in-law. But before he went down under the earth surface Banglahwang warned Charahwang that he would take revenge. The Liangmai Nagas believe that Charahwangin spite of being the supreme guardian of the earth is unable to give the great feast called 'Chakiew-Kariew-Dungbo' even till today because every attempt of his to do was thwarted by an earthquake — This earthquake was cause by the decision of Banglahwang to take revenge on his son-in-law.

2. TINGLAHBOU THE PHANMYU KAKUNGH

In the beginning, Tingwang, God the Almighty wanted man to enjoy the bountiness of nature without any hard labour. But man lost his paradise on earth due to his own foolishness and irresponsible actions. Man's disobedience to God also paved the way for evil to have a hold on this earth. However, Tingwang in His kindness decided to give another chance to mankind so that they could realise their goal of life on earth. Thus, Tingwang sent Tinglahbou to convey His good will to mankind. Tinglahbou was said to be deaf and dumb by birth; and right from his tender age he was treated like an outcaste by his own people because of his love and compassion for those unwanted and helpless crea-

tures. His unusual behaviour never change even in his adolescence, and this disturbed his parents. Sometime he was severely punished by his parents in order to change his way of life. But to their utter dismay, Tinglahbou was unmoved in spite of their punishments. As he grew up his love and compassion for fellow creatures also increased. Although he was a dutiful son who always helped anyone in need his unusual nature made him a fool in the eyes of his friends and sometimes he was beaten by his villagers for this reason. However, strangely enough, he would never retaliate or show any feeling of resentment over their ill-treatments towards him. As time went by, one night, Tingwang revealed him in his dream that he would be the 'Phanmyu kakungh', the messenger of peace. He was told that his mission was to deliver a good will of Tingwang and set right the strained relationship between Tingwang and mankind. Thus, next morning when he woke up he found himself not only able to talk but also hear different sounds. His parents were quite amazed to find him normal hearing and speech. This news broke out like a wild-fire and people from different villages started rushing to Tinglahbou's place to confirm the news. When people started enquiring about the miraculous incident Tinglahbou told them that he was the 'phanmyu kakungh', the messenger of Tingwang, God the Almighty, and his mission on earth was to deliver the good will of Tingwang to mankind. Thus,

he started his mission by telling them that the purpose of man on earth was to maintain and sustain God's creations but not to destroy it. His top priority on earth was to maintain peace and harmony among all creatures on earth. He also reminded them that man is responsible for all miseries and sufferings prevailing on earth. Therefore, if men repented for their past misdeeds and mend their immoral way of living Tingwang will forgive them and would restore the paradise on earth. He therefore, advised them to rectify their mistake immediately and reconcile with their creator. But to his utter dismay, no one paid heed of his advice and man became worse than before. Tinglahbou however never lost his hope and kept on trying to make them understand the goodness of God's good will. He tried his best to make them realise that it is self-destructive to go astray from the path of righteousness -- but to no avail. Man's uncompromising nature made Tingwang more unhappy, and He decided to set a new life pattern on earth. God therefore, called back Tinglahbou from the earth. It is said that Tinglahbou did not meet a natural death. He was believed to be lifted to heaven alive by God from the earth through a storm like cyclone called 'mui maryibo' in Liangmai Naga. Before he was lifted to heaven, Tinglahbou told his wife all about the religious and moral laws. Thus, the Liangmai(Zeliangrong) Nagas came to know not only religious and moral laws but also those basic

and fundamental religious incantations, rites and rituals of the tribe from the wife of Tinglahbou . It is also said that some additional religious and moral laws and also most of the present religious incantations, rites and rituals were given by Charahwang during the great feast called 'Amangbou Zou Hubo'. And even till today, (those who are still upholding their traditional religion) whenever they performed any religious ritual their incantatory words would always start with (although they wrongly addressed to Charahwang instead of Tingwang) by chanting the name of Charahwang and phanmyu kakungh. It is like this; "Hè ! Apow* Charahwang ! Phanmyu kakungh niu dinbo sai suiija ..." which means "Oh! our great grand-Father, the king of gods ! as your messenger of peace had conveyed to us...". Only after chanting this phrase they have to proceed with their religious incantations. Without chanting the term, 'phanmyu kakungh' thus, almost all important religious incantations would be incomplete and invalid.

3. JURUIPE, THE LADY PHANMYU KAKUNGH

After the great Feast called, 'Amangbou Zou Hubo' (refer to chapter III) people became more confused about the concept of Tingwang, God the Almighty and Charahwang, the supreme deity on

*The term, 'Apow' means great grand-father, and it is most respected word in Liangmai Nagas.

earth. Thus, they later conflated these two different concepts into one i.e. Charahwang only. The conflation of these two concepts was due to the fact that mankind lost contact with Tingwang as the latter distanced Himself from mankind for their disobedience. The Liangmai (Zeliangrong) Nagas later came to believe that the sufferings and death faced by human beings were because of the mountain gods and goddesses. They were convinced that human beings are the domestic animals of these mountain gods and goddesses. Therefore, like we did to our own domestic animals they (gods) can punish or kill the human beings anytime they like. Because of this reason, when a person is suffering from any disease in a family they would invite a phanmyu and ask him to do certain religious ritual to pacify the responsible god or goddess.

Juruipe, the second 'phanmyu kakung' was thus, sent by Tingwang to clarify the misconstrued notion of Tingwang and also to rectify their false-beliefs about those regional gods and goddesses. She was said to be blind by birth, and unlike Tinglahbou she was never cured of her affliction. Juruipe makes it clear to mankind that, Tingwang, the creator of the universe is the one who creates human beings and all other creatures on earth including Charahwang and other godheads. She repeatedly warned mankind that their purpose of life on earth is to maintain and sustain God's

creations and not to destroy them. In the beginning God wanted mankind to look after His creations collectively and enjoy the bountiness of nature without much labour. However, men's repeated disobedience to God resulted in the emergence of gods and godheads, who were later entrusted by Tingwang to look after His creations until men came back to their sense. She also told them that all sufferings and death were not cause by those regional or mountain gods and goddesses. It was basically due to man's own irresponsible actions and disobedience to God. Human beings are definitely not the domestic animals of those mountain gods, but a special creature of Tingwang, God the Almighty. This wrong impression or false-belief that human beings are domestic animal of those mountain gods and goddesses is the handiwork of those self-centred gods and goddesses. They are well aware of this fact that the moment men rectify their mistakes and opted for the path of righteousness they have to share the responsibility of looking after God's creations with mankind. She thus, warned them that no amount of religious rituals and sacrifices could relieve pains and sufferings of mankind permanently. It is only when men repent for their misdeeds and live righteously they could overcome or remove those pains and sufferings and regain their lost status. Unfortunately, no one pays heed to her advice.

Before she died, Juruipe delivered the last warning from Ting-wang that if man does not reform himself and fulfil his purpose of life on earth he will have to reap what he sows. That is , since God has made it clear in the beginning that the life span of this planet earth itself is dependent on the action of mankind. If man does not follow the path of righteousness God would surely destroy the earth by a fire called 'kuli myi', a fire without flame.

Apart from reminding mankind about God's last warning she was also famous for her power to travel to 'Charuidih' or the land of the dead in her dream. When she was alive people would always request her to visit 'Charuidih' and find out all about their dead relatives over there. There was a story about her special visit to 'Charuidih' exclusively for a person named 'Kairenthuibou' of Ritiang village, who was killed by a wild-boar while hunting. Juruipe, the phanmyu kakungh, brought back with her Kairenthuibou's song as a message to his mother. He also gave a piece of the moon to Juruipe to be given to his sister 'Luithui-liu' as a gift from him. Juruipe returned to the land of the living but her grand-children noticed the bright object held tight in her hand and they tried to take it away. The broken piece of the moon fell on Kuiluang village and became a bright stone shaped like a new moon. It is said that some years ago somebody came

upon this stone and threw it down the hill, but the man died within a few days. Nobody has seen the stone ever since.

NOTES ON TWO PHANMYU KAKUNGH

The Liangmai Nagas believed that the abnormalcy of both the phanmyu kakungh by birth symbolized the relationship between Tingwang and mankind. Tinglahbou's deaf and dumbness by birth signify two different things, 1. although man knows what is good and what is bad, he turns deaf and dumb to the truth and righteousness God has asked him to follow, and 2. God on the other hand, chooses Himself to be deaf and dumb to men's irresponsible actions and willing to forgive them if they came back to him. Again the blindness of Juruipe by birth also signifies three different things; 1. Man although knows and hears enough of what is right and what is wrong he turns a blind eyes to it which results in self-destruction, 2. in spite of all shortcomings, stubbornness and destructive nature of mankind, God turns a blind eye to their misdeeds and does not want to punish them as He is still waiting for them to realize their mistake and come back to him, and 3. while living on earth man may not be able to see the truth as he always preoccupy his mind with mundane things.

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