

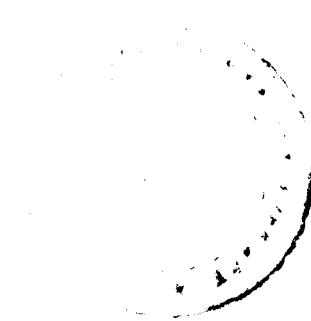
**THE LONGKHUM VILLAGE  
IN MOKOKCHUNG DISTRICT  
OF NAGALAND  
An Anthropological Study**

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IN MOKOKCHUNG DISTRICT  
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by  
**BENJONGTULA**



*Submitted in*  
**Fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology of  
North Eastern Hill University  
Shillong**

# NORTH EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY

## SHILLONG


March 2007

### DECLARATION

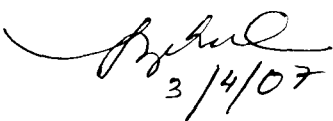
I, Benjongtula, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/ Institution.

This is been submitted to the North Eastern Hill University for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology.

  
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*I owe my special thanks to all my family members and friends, who stood by me, encouraging me and extending their help and support in the best possible way.*

*I also express my sincere gratitude to the Officers and Staff of Planning & Coordination Department, Nagaland for granting me leave and extending whatever help and support they could offer. I am eternally indebted for their kind gesture.*

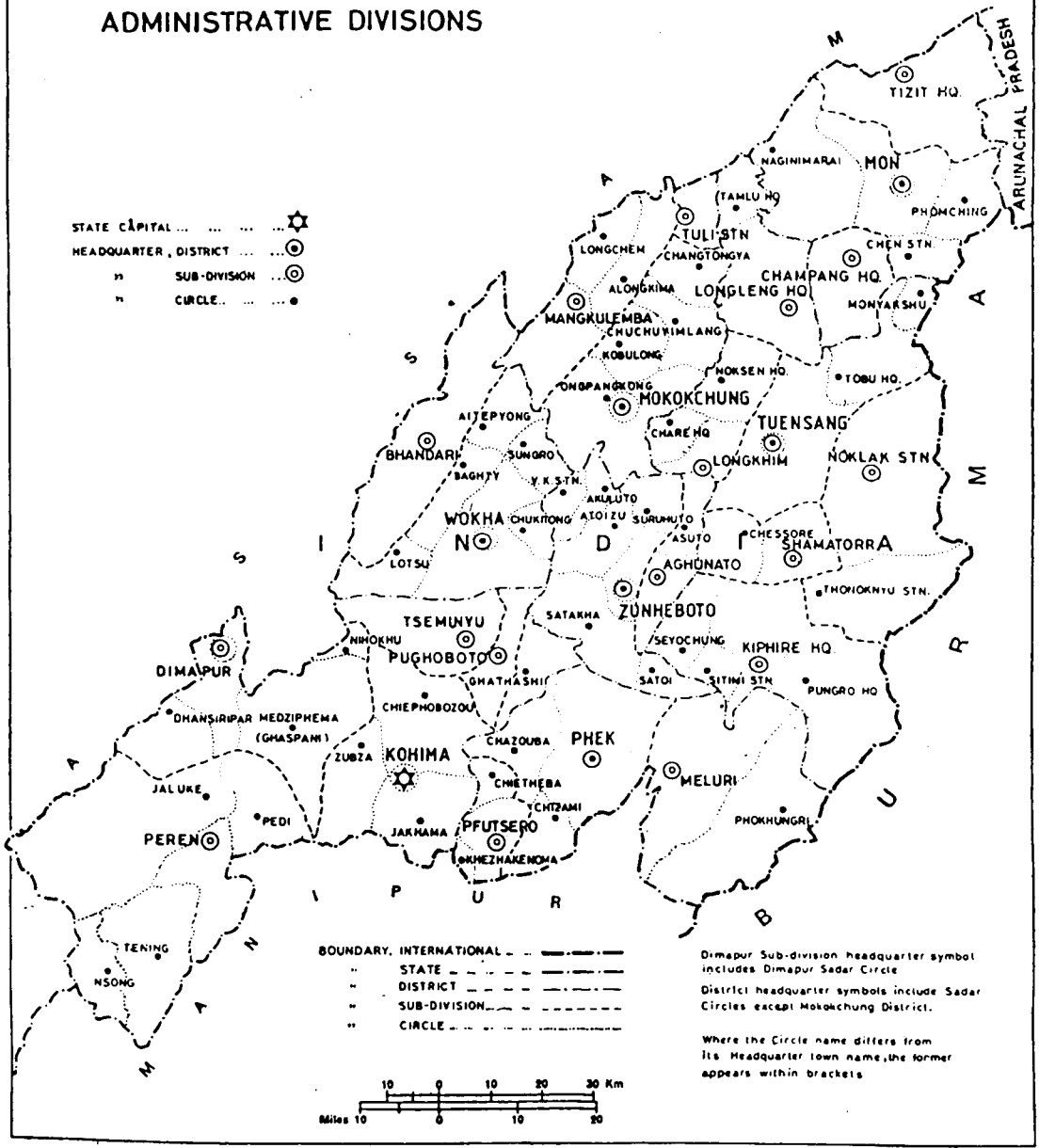
*And above all, I thank Almighty God, the ultimate source of everything.*

Shillong  
Dated: 2/4/07

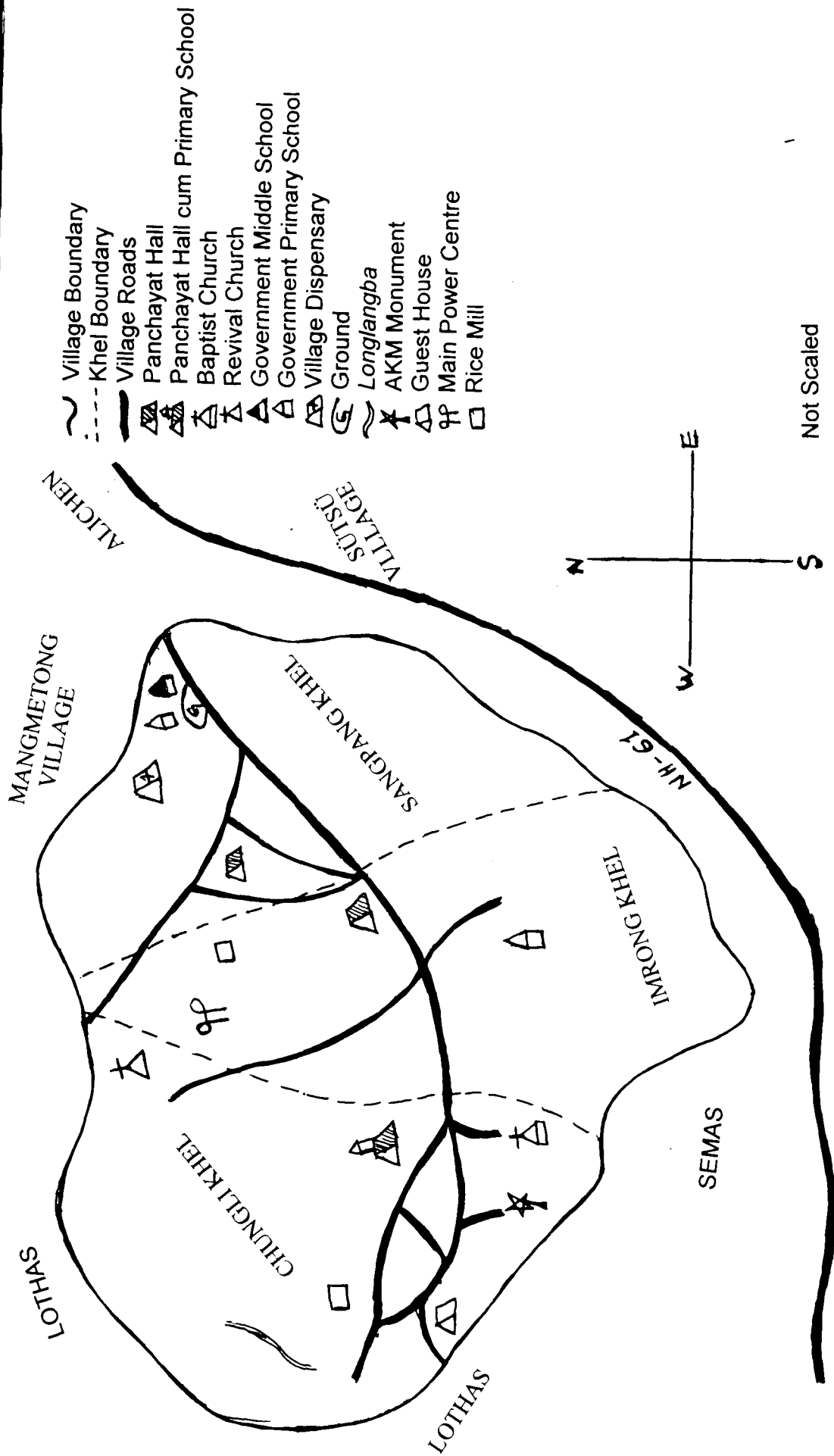
  
(BENJONGTULA)

# NAGALAND

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



# SKETCH MAP OF LONGKHUM VILLAGE



Not Scaled

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem:

Village life in India has been an important field of study since the beginning of the nineteenth century. British officials undertook a number of surveys of rural regions since they considered the knowledge, subject, people and their culture indispensable for their governance. The early administrators' reports were used by Karl Marx and Henry Maine in course of their reconstructions of the early history, if not prehistory, of social institutions the world over. Both the administrators' reports and the writings of Marx and Maine influenced the thinking of Indian nationalists and scholars.

The first influential account of Indian village appeared in the celebrated *Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East Indian Company* (1812). The Report is an oversimplified and idealized account of the village in the pre-British India. The next influential account of the Indian village was in Sir Charles Metcalfe's Minute included in the report of the *Select Committee of the House of Commons*, 1832. Metcalfe viewed Indian village as 'little republics' which were almost independent of foreign relations and with economically almost perfect self-sufficiency. These erroneous, idealized and oversimplified views of the Indian village first

propounded by the early administrators was later cast into the framework of universal history by Marx and Maine which influenced the scholars and writers who undertook research and surveys on the Indian villages.

The early village studies were of fictional nature and were conducted with least awareness about methodological sophistication. They treated villages as isolated entities, self-contained and little republics. However in course of time macro surveys were replaced by microcosmic studies of selected villages from different parts of India, which led to the development of analytical phase of rural studies. Such a turning point in social anthropology could be possible owing to the increased contact with the American anthropologists who were interested in village studies. The methods used for the study of isolated tribal communities were modified for studying villages in the context of civilization. The various studies on villages over the years focused on the life-ways and thought-ways of people living in particular villages. Light is also thrown on institutions as well as solidarities manifested in villages. Thus these studies led to a significant advance in the methodology of social sciences.

In the field of Anthropology, Robert Redfield was the first to provide the model for village studies in his investigation of a Mexican village and published the book *Tepoztlan, A Mexican Village: A Study of Folk Life* in 1930. His approach was later popularized in India through the field works of

Morris Opler, Oscar Lewis, Mckim Marriot and many others. During this period a number of specific village studies were published by administrators, economists, anthropologists, geographers, missionaries, etc. which created an atmosphere for later village studies. This was followed by another period marked with the publication of a chapter on *Division of Labour in an Indian Village* in 1948 by Morris Opler and Rudra Singh, which is considered as a turning point in the history of village studies in India, as trained and theoretically sophisticated anthropologists undertook field researches in Indian villages and utilized modern methods of investigation.

It may be noted that village studies in India took a distinct turn after India attained independence. The call of Mahatma Gandhi to 'go back to village' was well heeded and the government of India's plan to improve the life of rural communities commissioned researches to investigate into the village life. The Community Development Programme was launched in the villages and the Programme Evaluation Organization was established by the Planning Commission to undertake such researches. During this period there were increasing contacts with the American anthropologists interested in village studies like Morris Opler, David Mandelbaum, and Mckim Marriott. Among the Indian scholars several eminent social anthropologists like M. N. Srinivas, S C Dube, N S Reddy, and D N Majumdar also engaged themselves in village studies. They opined that Indian villages have been least isolated and were in contact with the centres of pilgrimage. The religious interactions

have been reflected in several studies. The network of relationship to the outside world has been emphasized. Economic relations cut across the boundaries of village in a variety of ways. Village is becoming progressively a part of wider economy. Social relations overflow the boundaries of the village easily and extensively. Kinship ties link members of every caste to people in other villages or towns. Families and lineages have become scattered but they continue to retain some contact with those who have stayed behind in the village. Village is linked through the system of Panchayats to other villages and larger organs of local government. During the British rule as well, the outside political agencies entered the village and after India's independence, political parties and government sponsored village panchayats have been instituted in the villages. In spite of the fact that communications between the villages are still poor, they were far from being self-contained. There were intimate economic, religious, and social links in existence between neighbouring villages.

The historic descriptions of Indian village, first given by British administrators early in the nineteenth century, are now seen as somewhat idyllic and oversimplified. Yet they have influenced the perceptions and views of generations of scholars. It is only since independence that a few social scientists, especially social anthropologists who carried out intensive field-studies of villages, have begun to critically examine the conventional representations of the Indian village.

The village community is a historical as well as a social fact. The inhabitants of a village had intimate social, economic, ritual and political relationship regulated by age-old traditions and institutions. In most parts of India, a village is not merely an administrative but also a revenue unit.

Though village studies in India have progressed tremendously in course of time, most studies are confined to caste-based villages and have emphasized the significance of caste system in understanding the social structure of Indian villages. Very few studies have been made among tribal villages. The present study is therefore a humble attempt to understand contemporary Naga life through an intensive study of a Naga village of Nagaland, with special reference to social, economic, political and, religious organizations of the village.

In social anthropology the concept of 'social organization' stands more as an addition than as an alternative to the concept of 'social structure'. While 'social structure' gives the impression of staticity, 'social organization' appears as dynamic process of social relations. The former is used as a model for understanding the pattern of social relationship and the latter as a study of how actually the social relations take place. Raymond Firth in his Presidential address to the Royal Anthropological Institute delivered in 1954 brings out the various difficulties with the concept of social structure. A.R. Radcliffe- Brown defined it as a network of actually existing relations has

revealed significant differences. The difference in its appropriations by scholars like Evans Pritchard, Talcott Parsons, Edmund Leech and Levi Strauss are not only about the scope of this concept but also about its content and degree of abstractions it entails.(Firth1954:1-6)

Firth in his next Presidential address delivered a year later at the same institute, explores further into the concept of social organization and its applicability. He reaffirms the importance of the concept of social structure but calls upon his fellow social anthropologist to appreciate the need to emphasize on its dynamic, that is, social organization. In this regard he lays down four spheres of its operation: 1) allocation of rights and duties on persons 2) range of social recognition, 3) resolution of conflict and 4) social control (1955:15-17) and also illustrates how these operate with examples of the role of the mediator, sibling and succession. In other words family, marriage and kinship provide the best possible scope to explore the dynamics of social relations.

Anthropologists generally agree that economic activity is usually sub-divided into three distinct phases: production, distribution and consumption. Production involves transforming nature's raw materials into products useful to human beings. Distribution involves those distributing products to people. Consumption involves using up the products- for example by eating food or wearing clothing. " All societies have customs specifying

how people gain access to natural resources, customary ways of transforming or converting those resources, through labor, into necessities and other desired goods and services, and for distributing (and perhaps exchanging) goods and services” (Ember & Ember 1973:104).

Radcliffe-Brown defines the political organization of a society as that aspect of the total organization which is concerned with the control and regulation of the use of physical force. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard have classified political system into two types: State and Stateless. The State societies have centralized authority, a government and in which cleavages of wealth, privilege and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority. On the other hand Stateless societies lacked centralized authority, and in them there is no sharp division of rank, status or wealth. In such societies kinship societies play a more prominent role in political organization.

When man made the distinction between the ‘natural’ and the ‘supernatural’ he had also distinguished ‘profane’ from ‘sacred’. It is the domain of the supernatural and the sacred that constitutes what is called religion.

It is obvious that as knowledge increases, the understanding of the sphere of ‘natural’ also increases. Here the sphere of ‘supernatural’ decreases complementarily. In complex societies it is the situation that

obtains. On the other hand, in simple societies, the sphere of 'natural' is smaller and the sphere of supernatural is larger. Nevertheless, both in complex and simple societies both these spheres are distinguishable. In short, Religion exists in all human societies.

Edward Tylor attempted a 'minimum definition of religion' According to him; Religion is the 'Belief in Spiritual Beings'. All religions seek answers to the fundamental and important ideas and events regarding the inexplicable in the universe. Religion will remain a characteristic of all human cultures as long as there continues to be puzzling and inexplicable events in the universe.

With these concepts in view, the study on changing social, economic, political and religious life of an Ao village known as Longkhum village, has been attempted.

### **Review of Literature:**

Village studies in India in a systematic manner started with Henry Maine with the publication of *Village Communities in the East and West* (1871). In 1892, Baden Powell also did some valuable work on village communities based on data collected through revenue settlement, survey records, district manuals, and gazetteers and published his book *Indian*

*Village Community* (1892). This book deals with land tenure system in India with special reference to the physical and historical conditions of India. He examined the tribes and the villages to describe different types of village groups based on physical and ethnographic conditions. Land revenue system is a special aspect which he had incorporated in his work. Thus Powell's contribution is considered to be a landmark in the study of villages and tribes in India.

Among the Indian writers Rev. Lal Behari Dey was the first Indian to write about village life. His book *Bengal Peasant Life* (1874) is about the village life including those pitiable poor conditions of the villagers as reflected in their indebtedness, superstitions, and religious bent of mind and also orthodoxy and tyranny of landowners. Based on his first hand experience he published his book which is considered to be refreshing and pioneering work as far as village studies in India are concerned.

Of the few empirical village studies in India mention may be made of H.H. Mann's *Land and Labour in Deccan Village* published in 1921 which is on the general features of the village such as physical characters, land holdings, crop cultivation procedures, and agricultural stock of each village. The actual economic conditions of the people as measured in terms of income, expenditure, indebtedness, etc have also been brought out. One of the shortcomings of his study lies in his failure to take into account the socio-

economic relationship prevalent in the village. W.H.Wiser's *Hindu Jajmani System* (1936) brings out the impact of caste system on the entire life of individuals living in the village. Thus Wiser's *Hindu Jajmani System* and *Behind the Mud Walls* (1971) published in collaboration with his wife Charlotte V. Wiser a first hand account.

David Mandelbaum in his article *Culture Change among the Nilgiri Tribe* published in *American Anthropologist*, 1941, Vol. 43 highlighted various agents of culture change. He refers borrowing of culture by the tribes from the Indian, British and the missionaries, which have influenced the four tribes of Nilgiri - Toda, Kota, Badaga and Kurumba. He goes on to analyze change and observes that owing to totally different economic base, prestige symbols, different ritual cult, the inter-tribal borrowing have been kept to the minimum and in spite of their proximity the tribes maintain a cultural segregation and cultural distinctiveness. Marriott's *Village India* (1955) has a definite and clear cut theoretical focus and it helps us in understanding the utility of the application of 'the methods of holistic analysis to the village in India's complex civilization'. Tom. G. Kissinger's (1974) book *Vilyatpur 1848-1968: Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village*, is a diachronic study of Vilyatpur, a village in Punjab. This study combines the perspectives and methods of history and anthropology in an attempt to reconstruct the social and economic history of this village. He selected a single village to study the process of migration, commercialization, occupational differentiation, population

dynamics etc by using the sources of information like records of census, tax and land ownership from the British annexation in 1848 through the year of his field work in 1968. The unit of analysis is the family. The behaviour and decisions of the families constituting the village during 128 years are his principal concern. His purpose is not to show that village life in Punjab is changing today, as it certainly is, but to follow the course of his development over an extended period and to discover the factor responsible for particular events.

Indian scholars like S. C. Dube (*Shamirpet*), F.G Bailey (*Bisipara*), D. N. Majumdar (*Mohana*), G.S Ghurye (*Lonikand*), and Andre Beteille's (*Sripuram*), also engaged themselves in field investigation and published several papers. Dube's *Indian Village* (1955) deals with specific village communities in different parts of India. F.G. Bailey's full-length monograph on Bisipara was published in 1957 under the title *Caste and the Economic Frontier*. This study presents an excellent cross-section of the interrelationships of the economic, social, and political forces in an Indian village. The author also examines the economic and political implications of sankritization in the context of the village as well as the wider canvas of the state. Taken on the whole, it is a theoretically sophisticated village study, which examines important problems facing Indian villages and community development plans. Though the book fails to give a total picture of Bisipara, it makes a departure from the other village studies by emphasizing the inter-

relatedness of the various aspects of the village life. Majumdar's *Caste and Communication in the Indian Village* (1958) is an elaborate study of the inter-caste relationship in the process of caste mobility and fusion and fission, which had produced innumerable social groups. According to him Indian village is not self-contained; it is integrated at different levels with the social system of the country. However it may be noted that the drawback of his studies lies in the generalization on all India level on the basis of village study of a particular region. G.S. Ghurye's (1960) *After a Century and a Quarter: Lonikand Then and Now*, was inspired by Coats' study of Lonikand, a village near Poona in 1819. Ghurye in 1960 studied the same village to find out the aspects of change. By far the greatest change that Lonikand had gone through was with regard to the facilities of education. The structure of the village community, its social organization, the change through a century and more in bio-social life are recorded and amply commented upon. The pattern of living is brought through description of representative families. *Caste, Class and Power- Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village* (1996) by Andre Beteille is an intensive study conducted in a village called Sripuram of Tanjore village in South India. The study is about the changing patterns of social stratification in a multi-caste village. This village provides the background for unusual description of a traditional society reacting to outside pressure. The transformation in the village takes the direction of a more open social system. Previously, the village social life was shaped by its division into three caste groups, the Brahmins, the middle-level Non-

Brahmins, and the Adi-Dravidas. The caste of a villager determined his position in the class system and power hierarchy and caste itself was acquired by birth. The study shows new forces disrupting the existing pattern and producing economic and political system that no longer depended entirely on caste. This study concludes that the caste structure does not afford an adequate framework for the analysis of Indian village society today. The significance of this study lies in its attempt to provide a more differentiated analytical scheme for the study of social change in India. Though this study is confined to a single village it provides insight in understanding the dynamics of village communities in India.

In the North-Eastern region one of the best known village studies was initiated by an American scholar R. Burling in a Garo village called *Rengsanggri* which is a full-fledged monograph on a tribal village, which was published in the form of a book titled *Rengsanggri Family and Kinship in a Garo Village* 1963. He made an attempt to study kinship and social structure. R. Burling in his article 'Return to Rengsanggri' edited in *NEHU Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. Shillong in 1998 made an attempt to see how change has taken place in Garo society. He attributed change to factor like imposition of external political control, new agricultural methods and Christianity. Other significant contributions include the work of B. M. Das and Bandhopadhyay's study (1963) confined to a particular caste living in two villages of Polpara district in Assam. An ethnographic description of the art of

making pottery and pottery makers being the primary concern of the authors, the inter-relationship of this caste with other villages have not been adequately described.

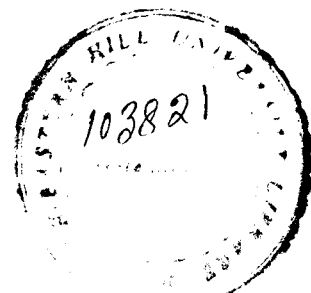
The first anthropological accounts on the Nagas were motivated by the British administrators like J. H. Hutton and J. P. Mills. Hutton wrote a monograph on the Angamis in 1915, which was republished in 1921. He has provided ethnographic account of the Angami culture including their agricultural practices. For the first time, the Angamis' terms of relationship recorded in the genealogical table have been collected and the patterns of inheritance have been described.

Hutton also published *The Sema Nagas* (1921) which was based on his eight years' experience at Mokokchung and Kohima. Though, in general, he followed the model of his earlier monograph, he added new topics like land tenure, position of women, kinship etc when he re-edited the book *The Sema Nagas*.

Mills' account of the Lothas, Aos and the Rengmas also provides descriptive accounts with emphasis on domestic life, law and custom and religion on the life of the Lotha Nagas. Under the active supervision and encouragement of Hutton, Mills published his book *The Lotha Nagas* in 1922.

Mills described the process of de-tribalization under the influence of Christianity that was introduced by the American Baptist Mission.

Mills published his monograph *The Ao Nagas* in 1926 which is based on his field work during his stay as a Sub-divisional Officer at Mokokchung for seven years from 1917 to 1924. He presents a descriptive account of the Aos with emphasis on the domestic life, law and custom and religion. He described various aspects of traditional Ao culture. The distinctive feature of the *Chungli* group and the *Mongsen* group in the pattern of tattoo, attires and clan stratification has been highlighted. The traditional house types, dress and social status attached to it have been discussed. He also explained at length about law and custom with special reference to marriage, kinship and inheritance practices. The economic life of the Aos and the rites and rituals related to agriculture has also been elaborately discussed. Another important constituent of his contribution is the religious life and ethos. According to him the Aos believed in several deities and spirits and they considered *Lichaba* the greatest of all and the creation of world is attributed to him. Rituals related to birth, illness are also explained. Mills has also made an attempt to highlight the social impact of the American Baptist Mission on the Ao society. He highlighted the errors in approach of the missionaries towards tribal problems and suggests changes in their orientation. He also criticized the subjective prejudices of the missionaries against all traditional custom,



ceremonies and dances of the Ao on the plea that they belonged to the old day of heathen dominance with head-hunting.

Mills' third monograph *The Rengma Nagas* published in 1937 presents a descriptive account of the Rengmas. The tribe was geographically divided into two areas –the western and the eastern and their habitation was located between the Semas and the Lotha Nagas. At the level of acculturation, the eastern Rengmas being isolated and cut off, have maintained their old traditional culture, while the western Rengmas being greatly exposed to Christianity have undergone transformation.

Furer-Haimendorf wrote his first publication on the Konyak Nagas which were left untouched by earlier ethnographers. *The Naked Nagas* published in 1939 is an interesting account of the early life of the Nagas before they were influenced by the administrators and missionaries. He has also described the developmental process in the Naga society in this book. He prefers recording his own impressions regarding the economic, religious, political, and social system. Though it may be a disappointment for theoretically and methodologically oriented anthropologist, it does fill in the gap in the ethnography of the Nagas in the absence of any monograph on the Konyak Nagas.

He later published another book *Return to the Naked Nagas* (1969), which was not in the nature of an academic study but a reflection of the impression of a western observer exposed for the first time to tribal people leading an 'archaic way of life'. Furer-Haimendorf at one place expressed grief at the Christianization of the tribes and their rejection of the tribal way of life, discarding exotic tribal items like local jewellery, drum and monoliths. He is pained by the drabness of Christian church as compared to the exotic beauty of *morung*.

Elwin published a handbook on the Nagas titled *The Nagaland* in 1961 for administrators and scholars interested in Nagaland. The book deals with the inhabitants of three districts of Nagaland, i.e., Kohima, Mokokchung, and Tuensang. The first two chapters deal with general ethnographic and historical perspectives of Nagaland and the remaining chapters deal with problems of adjustment between the newly created state and the union government, the armed rebellion, the Naga temperament, the development schemes, etc. This series was followed by another publication *The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century* (1969) which is a collection of the original accounts of some of the earlier British administrators.

The ethnographic account on the Nagas presented by Hutton, Mills and Furer-Haimendorf clearly exhibits the colonial notion of the Nagas as 'primitive isolate' while the writings of Elwin tend to adopt a paternalistic tone.

Contemporary accounts of the Nagas by V. K. Anand's *Conflict in Nagaland* (1980), K. R. Singh's *The Nagas of Nagaland: Desperados and Heros of Peace* (1987), S. Channa's *Nagaland- A Contemporary Ethnography* (1992) etc, tend to constitute Naga as part of Indian neo-colonialism disregarding the impact of colonialism on the lives of the Naga people.

Though the above mentioned publications are not village studies, they provide ethnographic account of the Nagas. No doubt all the above publications are useful in many ways. However it is apparent that there is hardly any village studies in Nagaland in general and Aos in particular, hence the relevance of the present study.

### **Objective:**

The objective of the present study is to provide a contemporary ethnographic account of an Ao village with reference to the changing social, economic, political and religious life in the village.

### **Methodology:**

The present study is based on field work which was conducted in a purposively selected village called Longkhum situated under Mokokchung District of Nagaland. The fieldwork was conducted over a period of about two

and half year during 2002-05 (July '02 to Dec'05). The proposed village is a legendary village with mythical caves and stones which are believed to have supernatural powers. Moreover the village is regarded as *Aofonümro*, which means the guardian and protector of the Aos. Hence the proposed village is considered ideal for carrying out a village study.

Before the main work was initiated, a survey was made of the village, meeting the village council chairman, pastors, elders, women leaders, students' leaders, etc for preliminary information. After preliminary survey was made, detailed study was initiated by conducting household census. Research methods such as participant observation and interview were employed. My key informants were Tsukjemba, aged 79, Aliyangba (97), Narupula (98), Mayawati (79), Akangjungshi (75), Pangerwati (54), Chubasenla (70), Aoriba (102), Aosangba (83), Longdangsucha (81), and Chubameren (78). The data collected were supplemented with case study and genealogy. Beside, secondary data were also collected from available books, journals, and research reports.

During the course of my field work, I enjoyed the status of an insider. Language was not a problem and making rapport was not difficult. I conversed with them in local language, participated in their daily life, seasonal and other activities and gathered information as much as possible in course of such participation.

## **Plan of the Thesis**

Chapter I deals with the statement of the problem, review of literature, objective and methods of the study.

Chapter II deals with the land and people including geographical location and people and their material culture etc.

Chapter III deals with the social organization with reference to family, marriage and kinship.

Chapter IV deals with the village economy with focus on agriculture, and non-agriculture economy.

Chapter V deals with the political organization of the village with reference to the village administration, Village Council, and the relationship of the village with District and State administration.

Chapter VI deals with the religious life of the people with reference to both traditional beliefs and practices and Christianity.

Chapter VII deals with continuity and change and the factors responsible for the changes.

## CHAPTER II

### LAND & PEOPLE

#### THE AO- NAGAS

Mokokchung, one of the 11 districts of Nagaland is inhabited by the Ao tribe. It is situated at an altitude of 1325 metres above the sea level having an area of 1615 sq. km. It is bounded by Wokha district in the southwest, Zunheboto district in the southeast, Tuensang and Longleng district in the east, Mon district in the northeast and Assam in the west. Mokokchung district enjoys monsoon types of climate, which is quite pleasant and healthy over the year with maximum temperatures during summer of 27°C, which do not rise beyond 32°C. In winter (January to February) the night temperature drops to 2°C. Average rainfall is about 250 cm, which is concentrated from 80% to 90%. The land is hilly with minimum slopes of 10°, while minimum slopes ranges from 45° to 60°. The population of Ao tribe according to 2001 census is 227230.

The Ao occupies a territory comprising long unbroken ranges of hills, which perhaps accounts for the fact that the entire Ao territory is divided into six ranges. The villages are grouped into units according to their proximity to various ranges and named thus: *Ongpangkong*, *Changikong*,

*Langpangkong, Asetkong, Japukong and Tsürangkong. The Longkhum village falls under the Ongpangkong range.*

### **Myth of Origin**

The Aos believed that their ancestors emerged from the six stone at *Longtrok* (literally six stones). Some of these stones are to be seen above a village called *Chungliymti* which is situated on the bank of the river Dikhu. The Ao myth records that of the six stones, three were males named *Longpok- Pongener, Tongpok- Longkumer, Longjakrep- Jamir* and the other three were females *Longkapokla, Elongse, Yongmenala*. These three males married the three females and thus the different clans among the Aos trace their respective origins to one of these stones.

### **Language**

The Aos have a distinct language known as *Ao-O shi* (Ao language). It has two distinct dialects i.e. *Chungli* and *Mongsen*. The *Chungli* dialect has now become the standard Ao language and the reason for this is because the American missionaries settled in *Chungli* speaking village and that this dialect was learnt and adopted for all subsequent communication and translation. That is how the entire Bible has been translated in this dialect and other formal discourse and official communication are today conducted in it. On the other hand, all the folksongs and traditions are preserved and transmitted through the *Mongsen* dialect. For example, the teller of the story

may be *Chungli* speaker and even though the main discourse may be delivered in his dialect when he wishes to authenticate his narration with the ballads of old, these are presented in the *Mongsen* dialect. The variations in dialect persist even today thus emphasizing the vital role that language plays in human society. On the personal level too a very interesting relationship is maintained between husband and wife speaking different dialects. Normally a *Chungli* speaking woman will communicate with her husband only in her own dialect but will use her husband's dialect with her son as by tradition the child must be taught his father's dialect.

### **THE VILLAGE**

Longkhum village is situated about 20 km southwest of Mokokchung at an altitude of about 1623 metres above sea level. Longkhum is bounded by the Lothas in the north-west and the Semas in the south-west, Mangmetong village in the north-east, and Sütü village in the south. Longkhum is literally translated as '*protected or covered with stones*'. The village is known by the Aos for its legendary and mythical caves and stones. The Longkhum people were known for their bravery and courage and considered great warriors. According to the oral tradition, during the ninth century, war against Nokrang was very significant. During this war, Longkhum played a triple role as crusader, defender, and protector and because of this, Longkhum earned the proud sobriquet *Aofonümro* which may be referred as the protector and the guardian of the Aos.

One of the most remarkable features of the Longkhum village is that the southeastern and western side of the village is protected by natural stone fencing and is believed to be the main obstacles for the enemies to attack the village. Another feature is a mythical cave known as *Amo-ku* or *Mongzu-ki*, which means 'the abode of the eagles'. It is located at the high precipice bearing three holes where eagles have nested for many centuries. The Aos believe that the eagles are the manifestation of the spirit of the death and therefore, who ever dies turns into an eagle and flies all the way to the abode of eternal rest. Whenever eagles are seen hovering above, the villager believes that someone from their tribe is dying. Just beyond the cave there is another mouth-like cave known as *Tunken marok*, which may be referred as 'stone turned to cup'. It is believed that the water from this particular spring possesses mythical and healing powers. On the western side of the village there is another cave like tunnel known as *fosen kü* or *posen ki* (Home of the fox), which is as dark as night during the daytime. It was believed that long ago, a dog entered the cave and reached the other end of the cave, which is located at another village called *Waromong*, about 60 kms away from Longkhum village.

Another striking feature of the village is the long pathway of about 1/2kms, where stones are naturally piled up along the way, known as *longlangba*, which literally means 'stone bridge'. There are footprints on this bridge and people believed that the stones were soft at certain point of time

and hence the footprints. Red rhododendron grows abundantly in this particular area. Besides, there is another cave *movong kū* or *mepong ki*, which may be literally translated as the 'cave of the wind'. It is believed that the winds coming out of this cave are strange and during cold season occasional warm wind breezed out of this hole. Next to the cave lie two elongated stones, which were worshipped and revered by the villagers as male and female in the olden days. These stones were also considered as caretaker and guardian of the village in the olden days. The northern side of the village is almost plain and it enables the villagers to easily communicate with other neighbouring villages and tribes.

There are many man made structures, which adds to the beauty of the village. A monument, which stands at the highest point of the village, was constructed in 1979 to commemorate the Golden Jubilee celebration of the *Ao Kaketshir Mungdang* (Ao Students Conference). It was in the Longkhum village that the *Ao Kaketshir Mungdang* took its birth in 1929. From this area one can see many places of Nagaland and also breakthrough view of the Himalaya Range.

At present the village has a total population of 2320 with 340 numbers of households. The village is divided into two dialectic groups: *Chungli* and *Mongsen*. *Chungli* group has one *khel* (spatially contiguous unit) known as *chungli mefu* and *Mongsen* group has two *khels* i.e *imrong mefu*

and *sangpang mefu*. Like any other numerous dialects of the Aos, Longkhum dialect has also its roots in the Ao language although there is slight difference in term of its accent, pronunciation and slang in its usage. Both *Mongsen* and *Chungli* speak their own respective dialect, which are mutually intelligible.

### **FLORA AND FAUNA:**

The area consists of both deciduous and evergreen forest and is very rich in natural resources. The flora includes flowering plants, ferns, lichens, fungi, orchids, wild apples and red rhododendrons; some of the evergreen trees include champa, bonson, gamari, sal, simul, hollock, walnut, bogiboma, etc. Besides, medicinal plants, hard and soft woods are also found. Pine trees are also found in some areas. Cherry blossom looks enchanting, which are planted by the villagers on the way between Alichen (sub-division) and the village.

Dense jungle clothes the lower summits. Forest area constitutes about 80 % the geographical area of the village. However there is a danger of denudation and deforestation due to constant practice of jhuming and felling of trees for fuel and other economic purposes. Wild animals such as deer, porcupine, bear, jackal, wolf, etc are also found. There are numerous birds such as sparrows, bulbul, eagle, etc. Hornbill, which is considered as a legendary bird by the Nagas is almost extinct.

## THE HOUSE:

The houses in the village are builded close to each other and they are connected with each other internally through small footpaths. Normally one could hear the happenings in each others house. Traditionally the houses were built in such a way that it precisely indicates the status of the owner. Though the frontal adornments were different, however the main structure was almost the same for every house in spite of different social status. The walls of the house were made of bamboo matting and the roofs were of thatch, beaten earth was commonly used for plastering the walls and polishing of the floor. The ceilings were made of bamboo matting. The houses had a small room on the ground floor known as *tiyong*, and another room, which is a little elevated from the *tiyong* known as *jooka* and behind the *jooka* there is the *sūnglang/chupang*. *Tiyong* was used for the domestic animals like pigs and fowls. The larger room *jooka* served as both kitchen and bedroom. They never had a separate bedroom and it was not necessary as all the children after attaining puberty joined their respective dormitories. The materials for construction were procured from the village vicinity itself. Bamboo matting, bamboo splint, and thatch are some of the materials used for the construction of a house. The elevated platform was meant for drying grains, vegetables and also used as a place for relaxing. Even today the villagers prefer to have this elevated platform *sūnglang/chupang* for the same purpose, which are constructed either attached to the house or separately. Traditionally they always kept small benches *mūkūm* in the kitchen near the

fire place for visitors. And even today they still practice this. The hearth was normally in the middle of the kitchen so that all the people could sit around the fire. Today the hearth is made of bricks or stone placed at the two ends few centimeters apart and two iron rods of about two to three foot each placed in a parallel manner. Even today the hearth is in the middle of the kitchen to accommodate as many people as possible around the fire place. Due to the cold climatic conditions of the village fire becomes an important source of warmth for the people, beside its importance for cooking and other purposes. Like in the past *tsükten/khuso* is erected just above the hearth for hanging baskets, mats, gourds, and drying meats and other vegetables.

Earthen pots were used, procured from the Changki village, the village known for its expertise in pottery. But today the people have started using aluminum pots bought from the market and the earthen pots are kept as a showpiece only. Traditionally they used indigenously made kitchen articles like *ao oso/ awa yabo* (bamboo plates), *suchung/ putsüng* (wooden plates), bamboo cups (*ao marok/ awa marok*) etc. However with the availability of aluminum and steel articles, use of indigenously made these kitchen articles are no more however some people still use these articles in the jhum fields.

The type of houses today is different from the traditional one. Earlier houses were bamboo walled and thatch roofs with little or no partition. One can say that the house type has changed because there is no thatch

house, or traditional hearths made of stone, wooden or bamboo utensil etc. Today many houses are concrete building made of bricks and cement. Almost all the houses are equipped with radios, telephone, television (TV) etc. In the early 1980s there was only one TV, which belonged to the village and was kept in the Government Middle School. The Head master of the school was in-charge of the TV. The villagers used to gather in the school for watching TV. The villagers have started using aluminum, plastic buckets and steel pitchers etc for fetching water from the taps and streams. They also use iron drums, aluminum pots, huge buckets etc for storing water. Some people construct cement tanks for harvesting rain waters just nearby to their kitchens. For washing purposes they no longer use ashes, charcoal instead they use steel wool and soaps.

For carrying firewood and vegetables they use the bamboo baskets known as *Khu/ Akhu* which are not closely knitted. But for carrying paddy, they use closely knitted bamboo baskets commonly known as *Chi/ akhi*. The villagers still use curved-out logs *süm/ aachem* for pounding grains and yam leaves *anūshi/ moyasū* a delicacy for the Aos. However paddy is milled since the installation of rice mills in the village which has lessened the labour for the women.

In the past they used bamboo box *kütsü/ aküt* for storing cloths. But today these have been replaced by wooden trunks, iron trunks and in the

present days they use all sorts of boxes, suitcase, cupboards etc to store things. They also keep their cloths in wooden and steel almirahs which are free from rats and insects.

In the olden days the villagers used split bamboos stick *aou milen/ wasung milen* as torch lights at night, later when kerosene were available they made kerosene burners *jarak* with a wick fixed to the oil container. But today almost all the houses have been electrified. They also use candles, petromax, gas lamp, cell torch, etc.

In the olden days families offered sacrifices and performed rituals before the construction and after completion of the house. Today instead, they invite pastor, deacons and the church elders and also relatives to pray and invoke God's blessings for the new house. In the olden days the people use simple method of locking the door with cross wooden bars. But today they use locks. They no longer decorate the front of the houses like before. However during Students Conference in the village, the Conference hall is built in the old style without involving any rituals.

### **TOOLS & IMPLEMENTS:**

Considering the tools, they are skilful wood-workers. In the olden days *ariju* posts were adorned with conventional figures of men, tigers, and hornbills, pythons, mithun heads which were excellent masterpiece. The axe

and daos were the tools used for making both the huge xylophones and small dancing drums. Fire was used to assist in the hallowing process. Dao holders are often ornamented either with pierced pattern or with carvings designs of heads, snakes, etc. Wooden utensils were also carved out of hard wood.

Big knives, axes, hoes and the sickles are the tools, which are commonly used. Splits bamboos were the usual material used for making both mats and baskets like *akhu*, *mūlok*, *apak*, *apa*, etc and almost all men had some knowledge in weaving bamboo products.

Tools and implements are designed by themselves in such a way that it serves the purpose as needed. Traditionally the agricultural tools such as *aya*, *keeya*, etc were made of bamboo and wood but today similar designs made of iron are readily available in the market leading to the adoption of modern tools. However it may be noted that though the materials have changed, the uses and its importance remains the same.

### **EDUCATION:**

The history of education in Longkhum could be traced back to the early 1900s with the arrival of the first American Missionary Dr Clark at Impur. The first school was established in the year 1903. During the colonial period, the pre-requisite qualifications of a teacher were that: he should have pass class II-III standard, he should wear half-pant and shawl, should not be a liar,

and should refrain from wearing any traditional dress. In due course of time when the American missionary entered the areas, they insisted teachers to wear dhoti. It is stated that during that time there was only one Primary School with only few teachers and students. The Teachers salary ranges from Rs.10/ and Rs.8/ per month for the Headmaster, and the Assistant Teacher respectively. No admission fees were charged and there was no attendance register for the Teachers. The subjects taught were only basic alphabets and arithmetic. During harvest season, there were hardly any teachers attending schools. Most of the time classes were finished before noon to enable them to go to the fields. There were instances of teachers found sleeping in the class room and woken up by the students. Examination was held only once in a year and result were declared on the basis of merit.

Since 1903, when the first Lower Primary School was established, there has been gradual expansion of educational facilities, and at present the village has three primary schools and one middle school. The educational scenarios over the last five years are shown in table I & II

**TABLE I**  
**NO OF STUDENTS STUDYING WITHIN & OUTSIDE THE**  
**VILLAGE (As on 2005)**

Sl. No	Years	Within the village	Outside the village	Total
1	2000	162	122	284
2	2001	135	237	372
3	2002	144	84	288
4	2003	152	64	216
5	2004	151	55	206
6	2005	130	88	218

Source: Field work 2005

**TABLE II**  
**NO. OF ENROLMENT IN THE SCHOOLS.**

SN	Schools	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
1	<i>Govt Middle School</i>						
	a) Class V	16	16	17	16	05	09
	b) Class VI	14	13	14	12	16	08
	c) Class VII	06	05	14	15	17	12
	d) Class VIII	12	04	06	09	13	08
2	<i>Tongpangriju Primary School</i>						
	a) Pre-Primary	02	02	02	06	06	02
	b) Class I	02	01	02	05	06	06
	c) Class II	02	Nil	01	04	04	04
	d) Class III	Nil	02	01	02	03	04
	e) Class IV	03	Nil	01	01	01	01
3	<i>Pongensalang Primary School</i>						
	a) Pre-Primary	34	30	32	32	29	24
	b) Class I	15	13	12	15	10	09
	c) Class II	15	13	12	14	10	07
	d) Class III	16	13	13	14	14	15
	e) Class IV	07	06	09	07	08	08

<i>Longmariju Primary School</i>							
a) Pre-Primary	09	09	11	07	11	08	
b) Class I	01	03	01	06	01	01	
c) Class II	02	Nil	03	Nil	06	01	
d) Class III	05	02	Nil	02	Nil	03	
e) Class IV	01	03	03	Nil	01	Nil	

Source: Field work 2005

Education opened up the mind of the Longkhum people to new ideas and change. They provided a common language for communications and enhance the sense of unity. The development of broader and healthier outlook of the people enabled them to accept the new trends of change in their society. As a consequences of the growth of modern education, the people witnesses gradual tendency of social cohesion the characteristics of which was conspicuously lacking among them in pre-colonial period.

### **FOOD AND DRINKS:**

The staple food of the villagers is rice. In the olden days rice was used for both eating and brewing rice beer *vü/ ayi*, but today only those who follow the traditional religion brew rice beer. Many have given up the habit of drinking after converting to Christianity on ethical and moral ground. Maize is cultivated for feeding pigs. Normally, the villagers take meal thrice a day i.e. morning, midday, and evening. Generally, in the morning extra meal is prepared so that the surplus is served as midday meal for those (old, sick and the young) that stay at home and midday meal is prepared in the field for

those working in the jhum field. Before they take meal they offer prayer to God, either individually or collectively however it varies from family to family. Generally food is served by the mother, but in her absence the eldest daughter in the family takes the role of the mother. Along with rice they also take varieties of vegetables, fish and meat. The common vegetables are *jeebe/aan* (mustard leaves), *mapul/mafo* (pumpkin), *pok* (gourd), *pento* (brinjal), *alo*(potatoes) *sheem* (beans),(long beans) *Lolee* , etc. As regards to fish and meat they take both fresh and dried. Normally they prefer curry with hot chilies. Yam leaves is considered to be one of the most essential vegetable, as numbers of items can be prepared from it. Its leaf, stalk, and tuber are all eaten. They prepare two types of items from the leaves, one is called *anüshi/moyasü* and the other is *rubo/raapa*. In the former case the leaves are collected and kept compact in a bag for about 3/4 days after which it is smashed into fine paste and packed in banana leaves. It is then cooks under low flame for about one night, then finally made into small round balls, and keep above the oven until it becomes hard and dry. This is one of the special ingredients for making gravies. The later is more simple and easy. The leaves are collected and dried in the sun. Similarly stalk of yam plants are collected and sliced longitudinally and dried in the sun. The tubers are in no way ignored as it can be preserved all throughout the year. It may be noted that the villagers are very fond of dried vegetables. Brinjals, gourds, beans, etc are also dried when there is surplus. Besides vegetables, other wild products such as edible mushroom and wild leaves like *laliwa*, *amünüm*

etc, which are available within the vicinity of the village, are also collected for consumption. Meat is relish but they highly relish an indigenous curry *mersüon/ mertsüenjo*. Generally domestic animals are killed at the time of Christmas, wedding etc. Wild animals like wild pig, deer, etc. are also relished.

In the olden days, vegetables and chilies along with dry fish were usually used in cooking. Soybeans were fermented and used as taste maker. Today they have learnt the art of cooking even non- local dishes like continental, Chinese, Indian etc but they still prefer boiled foods rather than fry. Smoked meat cooked along with *anüshi/ moyasüu* is highly relished. Beside some people also have come to know the art of making fruit juices, jams etc from fruits available such as plum, pineapple, mango, lemon, orange, and passion fruit and are sold in the market.

In the olden days smoking pipe was very common among men. Rice beer was an essential drink, which were locally brewed in every household. They brewed drinks from rice, sticky rice, tapiocas, etc. With the advent of Christianity such practices are on the declining. Drinking red tea is instead a common practice now. They use red tea as an alternative to rice beer. Almost every household have a separate kettle exclusively for red tea, which is always keep near the fire to keep it warm. It is significant to note that once a visitor enters their house the first thing they offer is red tea as a sign of

welcome. The tea leaves are grown indigenously for their own use. After the leaves are collected, it is grinded and dried and made ready for use as per the requirements. Presently they also take milk tea.

## **DRESS AND ORNAMENTS:**

### **Dress & Ornaments for men**

In the olden days every man wore body cloth known as *langtam lungen*. It was a strip of blue or white cloth some four feet long and ten inches breadth with usually a pattern at one end. This strip was folded from the opposite end and sewn into a narrow strip leaving the front end flat to form a flap. In putting it on the narrow position was tied round the waist with a knot in the front. The knot was then twisted round and the position left hanging down was pulled through the legs from the back and up through the belt in front, so that the pattern or ornamented position forms a flap in front. Each clan has its own style of dress and ornaments which traces back to their origin and historical events. Boys till five to six years almost wore nothing. They were then given a little dao belt. But once they attained eight or nine years of age they start wearing *langtam lungen* like grown ups.

It may be noted that there were distinctive dress for a common man, rich man, rulers, war heroes, etc. A shawl known as *mangkotep sū* or *tsūngkotep sū* was considered a special shawl and is respected by the people

of Longkhum. The motifs on the shawl are a symbol of status, wealth and power and can only be worn by people who have hosted the feast of merit.

The following motifs may be woven on the *mangkotep sü* or *tsüngkotep sü* shawl depending on the status of the person.

1. Human's head, shield, dao, spear, and cock: This motif represents a warrior.
2. Mithun's Head: This motif represents wealth, which could be worn by only those who had host feast of merit.
3. Sun, moon and stars: This motifs could be worn by a ruler or an administrator.

Earlier ordinary people were not entitled to wear this shawl but today it has becomes a common shawl for every man they usually wear on festive occasions like as 'moatsü' and 'tsüngremong' and other formal occasion.

In the past people wear traditional ornaments like *temkho*, *wazami*, *kümpang*, *khüptang*, *laküpmelong* etc. The headdress *temkho* is a ring made of bear skin affixed with hornbill's feather, 'wazami', *kümpang* is an armlet made of elephant tusk. *Khüptang'* is made of goat's hair or women's hair dyed in red and woven with yellow and *laküpmelong* is a necklace made of cowry shells.

Today these traditional dress and ornaments are worn only on special occasion like festivals *moatsü'* and *'tsüngremong* and also during cultural related programmes.

During the colonial period men were not allowed to wear *langtem/ ungen* and may be deprived of any government jobs. Thus initially all the Primary School teachers and government employees began to wear *Dhoti*. Later on when the American missionary entered the area, they found the traditional dress *langtem/ ungen* improper as it appeared more or less naked so they insisted that the villagers wear *Dhoti* instead, and all the Priests, teachers, and the government employees started wearing *Dhoti*. Subsequently this has been replaced by half pant (brownish in colour) indigenously called *khaki* half-pant and till 1947, all the male members commonly wore this. But after India attained independence and the subsequent evolvement of the Nagas in the Naga National movement, suspicion cropped up, as some of villagers were already involved in the Naga independence movement. The colour of the *kaki* half-pant being identical to the Assam Battalion uniform the Indian government banned the villagers from wearing *khaki* half- pant and empowered the Assam Battalion to capture any one wearing the same. Thus the villagers were force to abandon the kakhi half-pants. Instead they started wearing black half-pant, which were readily available in the nearby market of Mokokchung town.

The present generation prefers western cloths. Majority of them prefer jean pants, shirts, etc. Most of the educated one, during any social gatherings, student's conference, church service etc, instead of wearing traditional dress, prefers formal dress such as coat, necktie, pant, shoes, etc. with shawl known as *tsüngkotep sü/ mangkotep sü*. It may be noted that this shawl which was entitled for rich men or warriors, has now become a common shawl for any men. Besides this they wear casual such as sweater, jacket, pant, shoes, socks, sneakers, cap etc. The youngsters prefer the latest outfits and dress available in the markets. Men go for western dress rather than wearing the Indian dhotis, or kurtas or their own traditional ones.

#### *Case study 1*

Meren age 20 a BA students studying in Mokokchung stated 'I feel very awkward to wear traditional dress today as it is not suitable for the present life. If I wear the wear traditional attire as normal wear people would laugh at me. During any social gatherings, student's conference, church service etc, I prefer formal dress such as coat, necktie, pant, shoes, etc. with shawl known as *tsüngkotep sü/ mangkotep sü*. It looks more grand and presentable today'.

## Case study 2

Moa age 21 a B.Sc student studying in Mokokchung opined 'I had to wear school uniform when I go to schools and even in collage it is compulsory to wear college blazer. For other days I wear ready made garments which are readily available in markets. Thus there is no time to wear traditional dress and moreover traditional attires as 'normal wear' is not comfortable for the present generation'.

### **Dress & Ornaments for women**

A little girl's first garment was a cotton string tied around her waist. At about five years old she was given her first skirt, which was white or black ornamented with embroidery colour and the pattern of which varied from village to village. The patterns also depend on the ascribed and achieved status of her father. A woman's body cloth was usually white or dark blue and till she attained motherhood it was generally bound tightly around the body under the armpits in order to prevent exposing her breast.

Women were also identified by a distinctive skirt *sūbeti/ anū* which consist of a piece of cloth a yard and a half long and twenty to twenty inches long wrap round the waist with the top outer corner tucked just in front of the right hip. The patterns and the colour of the skirt however varied from clan to clan. Earlier *chungli* and *mongsen* women were distinguishable at a glance by the way they tie their hair. The former bind the bun round with strings made of

black thread, while the latter used strings of white thread. A shawl dyed in indigo *mosak* was most commonly worn. Other ornaments includes the arm sized coiled with bronze and brass *yongmen* were worn on both side above the ear, stringed by a thread across the head. A kind of earring called *nharü* about one and half-inch square, shining and transparent marble stones cut open on one side from the middle swings down the ear lobe. A necklace known as *alük/ asük* of oval shaped beads which are red in colour and some round shaped blue beads and bells which are sparsely embedded in between the red beads are some of the ornaments for women.

Earlier, women of different clans and status were identified by the dresses they wear. Till 1940s women were very particular about their distinctive *sübeti/ anü*. There was vast difference between the rich and poor in terms of dress and ornaments. However during mid 1940s the Village Conference proposed to have a common *sübeti/ anü* known as *waro nü*, which was woven in red with melon-embroidered. It is observed that today they prefer to wear dresses which are available in the market as they are less expensive and available in numerous patterns. However it is very interesting to note that for any formal occasion like wedding, church etc the women prefer to wear traditional *sübeti/ anü* as they believe this to be more decent and respectable than any other dress. Except for the elderly people, the younger generations have adopted western clothes like trousers, skirts,

jackets, blazers, frocks, blouses etc that can be procured easily from the markets.

It is observed that there are noticeable changes regarding dress and ornaments. Today one will hardly find in general men or women dressed in traditional attires all the time. However they do wear them during festivals, cultural programmes or during important social gatherings. Both men and women do not wear full traditional dress any more. Aged women continue to wear the traditional *sübeti/ anü* whereas the younger generation prefers western dress. There are many reasons for the preferences of western dress over the traditional one. Some of the reasons are: firstly the younger generations feel more comfortable as there are various dresses for all the seasons. Secondly, the demand for conformity with the accepted social living standards and this applies even to dress norms. For example, in schools, school uniforms are compulsory and this is one such example where there is no place for traditional dress.

### *Case study 3*

This is a case of Achila age 21 a student of BA studying in Mokokchung. She said 'it is very odd to wear traditional dress while going to college. Today with so many new trends in fashions, wearing of traditional dress now is unthinkable. I know traditional attires are beautiful and aesthetic but these are not suitable for college wear'.

#### *Case study 4*

Anungla age 20 a student of BA studying in Mokokchung said 'I cannot wear any of the traditional attire as I find it very uncomfortable. I feel more comfortable to wear western cloths as there are varieties for all the seasons.

#### *Case study 5*

Atula age 27 educated unemployed stated 'why wear traditional dress when plenty of dresses of different design for all season are available in the market. If at all I am financially independent I would have tried all the beautiful dresses that are available in the market'. She further stated 'traditional dress is like a uniform in which everybody looks almost same'.

### **FOLKTALES:**

#### **The Story of Longkhum Struggle Against Nokrang:**

According to the oral tradition, Longkhums' struggle against Nokrang is considered to be an important event amongst the Aos. Thus the Aos had given the sobriquet *Aofonümro* for Longkhum as it has played triple roles of being a crusader, defender and protector.

The story centers on a beautiful *Nokrang* girl and two beautiful Longkhum girls. During that time there flourished a powerful village known as

Nokrang, whose inhabitant did not belong to the Aos. The Nokrang village had impregnable natural fortress being located on a hilltop. The village itself was well fortified by high walls of stones, wood & bamboo spike thus was well protected and secured from all sides. Besides the natural defenses they had well-trained and ferocious dogs forming a part of the advance guards, the pursuit of which could not be withstood by any invaders. The Nokrang had a King who had a daughter of exquisite beauty. The fame of the beauty of this girl spread far and wide into the land of the neighbouring villages as far as Assam. The king of Assam heard of the fame of the beautiful Nokrang girl and wanted to know how beautiful she was.

The King of Assam ordered his nobles to meet the village King of Nokrang and ascertain his daughter's beauty. They were all stunned by her beauty and when they brought the news, the King was overjoyed and immediately issued proclamation asking all the courtiers and noblemen to assemble for a council. After a prolong discussion, they decided to send a goodwill mission to the Nokrang King to negotiate for a marriage settlement.

The mission proceeded with the marriage proposal. However the King of Nokrang was reluctant to send away his daughter to a distance place, so he conveyed his unwillingness to agree although he felt that it was foolish on his part to decline a King's proposal. Undaunted by the initial refusal, the King dispatched another delegation with a will that he would give anything as

the price for the girl. The girl's father was perfectly aware that the King was capable of giving anything he would demand and finally he appealed to the King of Assam to present him with a hornbill which had double strips on its feathers as he knew that such type of bird was not in existence in order to prevent the King from taking away his daughter from him.

Now, it was the turn of the King of Assam to play his game. He ordered a group of experts to catch a hornbill. At last they caught a hornbill but it was without the double black strips on its feathers. The king therefore embarked upon a cunning device to outwit the King of Nokrang by dyeing the feathers with a black dye, which looked exactly like the one demanded by the King of Nokrang.

The King of Nokrang was completely shocked at seeing it and regretted that his trick failed miserably. At last he had no option but to give away his daughters as promised. He and his daughter bid tearful farewell. The King of Nokrang became sullen and sad. He missed the absence of his daughter and decided to hand over the bird to a young man for safe keeping. The bird was kept in a cage for several years and it became tamed and so it was set free. The bird used to fly to the nearby forest during the daytime and returned in the evening. However one day the bird was seen flying in another direction towards the Longkhum village and did not return.

During that time there was a wealthy and powerful Chief in the Longkhum village who had many servants and one of them was a man named *Mezabang* who was an expert in hunting specially catching birds. One fine evening he caught a hornbill with a double black strip plumes. The news of the wonderful bird spread like wildfire and they believed that it was a bird from paradise. The people of the Longkhum village held a council meeting and it was decided that the plumes of the hornbill should be shown to all the Ao villages because of its unique feathers. Two beautiful girls from the Longkhum village named *Acharongmang* and *Jaksüngnaro* whose dazzling and entrenching beauty was known by the entire Ao community were unanimously selected for the mission. They departed from the village with mixed feelings of joy and sorrow. After traveling for many days and on the day they were to cross the Mopungchuket village, the entire villagers of that village were engaged in clearing a foot path which was a beautiful and ribbon-like path leading towards the Khar village in the west. The girls could not endure the glaring stares of the huge crowd. The people then gave a loud shout saying that they are fortunate to get two heads of two beautiful girls without going far. It was during the age of head hunting. The girls to find an escape route from this situation and composed a song and sang it to the crowd. The song enchanted the villagers and allowed them to leave without losing their heads.

Finally they reached the Nokrang village. The King's sons recognized the plumes of the hornbill, which belongs to them and reported to their father. The King was so enraged at seeing the plumes promptly announced the villagers to assemble and without investigating the circumstances of the plumes the girls were put under arrest, tortured them by every conceivable means throughout the night. Their flesh was pierced with red-hot iron spikes and were put to death in the morning and their mortal remains were thrown down the rock precipice, thus perished the finest flowers of Longkhum.

There was no information about the girls after they had departed from the village two months ago. The Longkhum villagers organized a search party and they came to know about the circumstances and the manner leading to their death at the Nokrang village. A meeting was called for the whole villagers and they unanimously decided to fight against the Nokrangs. During that time there was a brave warrior by the name *Pentochepchep* who had hunted countless number of heads. A group of 29 warriors who were distinguished themselves in various acts of heroism were selected under the leadership of *Pentochepchep* for the mission. They prepared provision for many days but were delayed by 30 days due to the birth of a son to *Pentochepchep*. After the completion of 30 days their departure schedule was fixed the following day. They announced to the villagers that they would return with a couple of heads from Nokrang as they did not have any head from the

Nokrang so far to adorn the village in spite of the loss of many lives. On the eve of the departure while retiring to bed *Pentochepchep* told his wife to take good care of their children and fields as he was going to fight for the welfare of the village but if he fails to come back his sacrifice should not be in vain. That night his sleep was disturbed by a horrible dream. He was aware that his dream seen in the first hour always came true. He woke up and sat silently for a while pondering over the dream he saw. From his dream he was aware that he was going to die, but a man of his caliber did not wish to believe in dreams. He woke up his wife and narrated the dream in detail. In his dream he found himself in the enemy's territory wearing white flowers in both of his ears and in a twinkling of an eye his village was swept out of existence by a heavy landslide. His wife on hearing his dream tried to prevent him from going to the war, as she too had a premonition that something terrible was going to happen. She tried to stop him by saying that he has plenty of prestige and honour in his name and an untimely death would be a regrettable loss. But nothing could stop him.

The mission was undertaken in the month between April- May. *Pentochepchep* and his band of warriors reached the Changkikong range and looked down from the hilltop and surveyed the land towards Nokrang. They started to march to the village but the dogs of Nokrang village became aware of their presence and started barking and pursuing them. They fled from the dogs and took shelter in a cave. On seeing the images of the warrior in the

water just below the cave, the dogs started barking louder than ever but the Nokrang villagers called the dogs back to the village. Many days had passed in this manner and foods were running short. Some of them suggested that they should go back to the village and come back with better equipped and with more warriors. But *Pentochepchep* encouraged them by saying that they should expect something within a day or two and after that only the future course of action could be decided. All the members accepted his suggestion and stayed for two to three days more during which an important event took place. They once again marched towards the Nokrang village but were chased by the dogs and took shelter in the cave again. The dogs started barking ferociously at the water so an old man of the Nokrang village looked down at the water and saw images of the warriors in the cave. He raised aloud alarm to the villagers who were following the dogs. After a while the place was swarming with the Nokrang villagers like ants. They had divided themselves into age groups: some brought long bamboos and others started piercing those in the cave with the long spiked bamboos. The Nokrangs gave out a loud cry, which shocked the earth to its very foundation.

The Nokrangs strike the bamboos into the cave consistently and *Pentochepchep* and his band cut off the tip of the bamboos one after another. *Pentochepchep* encouraged his men to be more courageous and strive hard to defend themselves, as there would not be anyone to carry the news if all of them perished there. The Nokrangs pierced inside the cave with loud cries.

They defended themselves up to the afternoon of the following day. The great *Tsürang* River was filled with bamboos. The Longkhum warrior's limbs were bleeding from wounds and they were weary and tired and by the next evening, the gallant warriors were killed one after the other. The Nokrangs villagers gave loud cries of jubilation. Only *Pentochepchep* and *Toshiba* a young warrior survived in the cave. *Pentochepchep* asked *Toshiba* to hide in the corner and cut the bamboo spikes with all his might. When *Pentochepchep* became exhausted *Toshiba* took his place and continued to defend themselves. At that moment a bird flew in before him. He talked to the bird ' O, bird of Longtrok, you know we'll have no messenger. So you take the news of our disaster to my wife and the villagers'. After killing 28 warriors of the *Longkhum* village, the *Nokrang* villagers held a council meeting and resolved to capture any survivor in the cave. During the lull *Pentochepchep* said to *Toshiba* that he would be the only survivor and one day he would become a leader and so he should be brave, patient and love his own villagers and when the Longkhum village is full of the heads from Nokrangs village., there would be great celebration at which the departed souls would look smilingly at them. He asked *Toshiba* to remember to keep a sign to immortalize the exact place where the warriors had perished. He then gave a loud cry which echoed in the cave and the valley and cut off the bamboo spikes with the last ounce of his strength and by sunset he was exhausted and could not defend himself anymore. When he was about to fall from the cave, he shouted not to rejoice in his fall in their arms, as there were amny

young warriors of the Longkhum village, countless as stars to avenge his death. A young man climbed up to the cave and found *Toshiba* in a corner and shouted that there was a small child. *Toshiba* life was spared and was taken to the house of the King. Thus the Nokrangs annihilated the bravest heroes of Longkhum village. The death of *Pentochepchep* and the capture of *Toshiba* marked the climax of the glory of the Nokrangs. However, the captivity of *Toshiba* was the beginning of the end of the powerful Nokrangs.

In the Longkhum village an atmosphere of gloom and desolation prevailed because the warriors did not return for a long time. The villagers wondered and at that point of time a bird came to the village and started flying around singing '*Pentochepchep is dead*'. It was the very bird that he had sent as messenger. The message of the bird was believed to be true by all and a day of mourning was observed in memory of those valiant and heroic souls perished in an unknown land. They were of firm conviction that all the thirty warriors were killed.

However, unknown to the Longkhum villagers, the sparing of *Toshiba's* life as a slave in the King's house of the Nokrang village had a far-reaching consequence. As a slave he tried to please his master by doing everything liked by him. Within a few months he won the confidence of the King who entrusted him to control all other slaves. In due course of time he grew up into a handsome young and talented warrior. His master had granted

him freedom of movement. However, in his heart he was always thinking of escaping from the Nokrang village. The walls were very high and below on the ground were fixed bamboo spikes. He had to spend a lot of time practicing high jump with the help of a pole. Escape in an ordinary manner was humanly impossible. Many young girls and even married women started liking him. He also received special attention from the King and his wife for his sincerity and good character. The admiration from the womenfolk and the special treatment from the King aroused jealousy of the young men of Nokrang village and they conspired against him and poisoned the minds of the King and his wife. They said that if they allowed the young man to live for a long time he would send message to the Longkhum village which would avenge them therefore setting him free would be worse. Moreover they accused of being an adulterer who had defiled the village. The King however refused to believe their report and refused to kill *Toshiba*. However, the King was forced to consent to a murder plot in the name of unity and safeguarding of the village. *Toshiba* being very smart learnt about the conspiracy of his murder from his female admirers. He remained alert and vigilant all the time and was fully prepared with the idea of jumping over the high walls.

Having hatched the idea to kill him, the Nokrang villagers approached *Toshiba* flattering him as being the most handsome and the best dancer in the village. And therefore on specific day, he should entertain the whole villagers by jumping, dancing, shouting, running up and down for seven

times. *Toshiba* accepted the proposal quite willingly. He pretended as if he was unaware of the conspiracy against him. Many girls and women were worried because they knew that the days for *Toshiba's* were numbered. They knew he was going to die on that day. But in spite of their pity he did not reveal his secret plan of escape instead he replied them that what was fated could not be avoided. That night he conversed with the King and his wife for a long time but he did not reveal the secret plot to them. The next morning he woke up early in the morning and asked for the particular attire from the King who gladly provided him. The whole villagers assembled and looked anxiously towards the direction where *Toshiba* was to emerge. Like a cock full of grandeur *Toshiba* appeared in the scene. He could see young girls and women weeping and on the other hand young men gashing their teeth. *Toshiba* addressed the people by saying that it was a great honour for a person like him to participate in such occasion. But they might be disappointed as his role might not be up to their expectations. Nobody in the crowd could correctly comprehend the meaning of his speech and took it lightly. He started giving a loud cry and danced up and down. He knew that they had planned to kill him on the seventh time of his performance and they were ready by the time *Toshiba* was to come for the seventh time. He ran up at full speed in the sixth time, like wildfire to jump over the wall in the seventh time. Seeing this haste the villagers doubted they might not be able to kill him and on the other hand the women and girls started to weep openly. In the seventh time *Toshiba* speed up with all his strength and jumped over the wall

and disappeared from the view. From outside the wall he shouted from the top of his voice 'O Nokrangs if you have men try to catch me, I am Toshiba 'Eagle' flying up to Longkhum'. The young men ready to spear him were stunned. They opened the gate and chased him up to the border of their territory but in vain. The fate of the Nokrang was decided.

As swift as the wind *Toshiba* reached the Waromong village and recalled the past events about the death of *Pentochepchep* and his friends and specially remembered *Pentochepchep's* last speech. He was unable to believe whether his escape to freedom was certainly a reality. After he reached Waromong he went straight to the house of the 'Chief of elders', *Loyangpong*. He and his wife *Akangla* welcome him heartily and nursed and nourished him properly with love and care. *Toshiba* narrated in detail the genesis of the struggle between the Longkhum and the Nokrang and his adventures. *Akangla* could not believe that the struggle still continues for such a long time as she had heard about the killing of the two Longkhum girls long ago when she was a child. *Toshiba* further added the main reason behind their failure was that they were put helpless in the face of ferocious dogs. *Akangla* comforted him and told not to worry about the dogs, as she knows an artifice to incapacitate them. *Toshiba* agreed that if only they could deal with the dogs there would be no problem with the Nokrang warriors. *Akangla* assured that she would handle the dogs but did not disclose how she would do. *Toshiba* promised that he would come back and left.

Day and night he hastened with all speed and finally reached the Longkhum as if in a dream. He was worried how to meet the families of those who had perished in the Nokrang village. That very night *Toshiba* addressed the assembled crowd, and narrated in minute details leading to the death of his friends and *Pentochepchep's* last word and also about the way he made his escape from the Nokrang village. Finally he asked the villagers if they would avenge the death of so many great warriors. The village elders were pessimistic about it as nearly for four generations they could not conquer the Nokrang village. However after a long discussion they finally decided to take revenge.

Many young warriors from every clan volunteered and on the eve of the departure all the villagers offered prayer and sacrifices to the God of *Longlangba* the God they always worshiped before undertaking any war. The large group left the village amidst cheerful sendoff from the people. As they reached the Waromong the people of Waromong accorded them a warm reception and a great feast was arranged in their honour. A day of rest was proclaimed and on that day the women were asked to wash their heads and to collect the fallen hairs accumulated in combs. The hairs thus collected would be used for a special purpose created by none other than *Akangla*. She then asked a group of people to cook sufficient quantity of sticky rice to be mixed with hairs and to make a numbers of small lumps.

The next day *Akangla* accompanied by some people carrying baskets full of lumps of sticky rice and presented to the Longkhum warriors. She briefed them with her ideas; and was asked them to simply throw the lump when the dogs start barking and chasing them. When the dogs ate the lump it got stuck in the mouth and throat and the dogs struggled with it they could kill dogs and overpower them. Congratulating the people of *Waromong* and credited them for their valuable service they left the village in the midst of great jubilation. They descended from the hill and reached the *Tsürang* valley. They surveyed the cave and were overwhelmed with grief and anger and lamented the irreplaceable loss of the heroic souls. After spending the night in the forest, the next morning they advanced towards the village and on reaching the enemy's territory they halted and refreshed themselves. Altogether they were 823 warriors, strong and courageous. Before reaching the village they were detected by a sentry who alerted the entire Nokrang village. With the beatings of log drums they released their ferocious dogs. The warriors of Longkhum began to beat their shields with daos and gave out a loud war cry. The glittering of daos and spears in the sunshine sparkled like lightning. They were sure that the God of *Longlangba* was with them.

In the first wave of the attack, they threw the lumps to the dogs and when the dogs tried to eat, it got stuck and they were able to killed one after the other. They easily killed all the dogs and marched against the wall to

break in. They removed all the bamboo spikes fixed on the ground. The Nokrang villagers who were fully dependent on the dogs were stunned by the power of the Longkhum warriors. As they tried to break in the wall, they were attacked with spears, stones etc however, they could withstand the repeated attacks and captured the village. Seeing the gallantry of the Longkhum warriors, the Nokrang villagers retreated. The Longkhum warriors burnt down the Nokrang village. The Nokrang villagers fled and took shelter in Assam. Consequently the Nokrang villagers dispersed to different places.

Thus the people of Longkhum wrecked a terrible vengeance on the Nokrang and blotted it out of existence from the face of the earth. *Toshiba* revered the actual place where the heads of *Pentochepchep* and his warriors were kept. As they stood in the ruins of the Nokrang, they were overwhelmed with joy and contentment and could imagine the smiles on the faces of the fallen heroes.

They left the ruin site of the Nokrang and reached the Waromong village and spent the night with the villagers. Meanwhile the Waromong villagers rejoiced in the victory, the warriors of the Longkhum attributed their victory to the brilliant devise of *Akangla* and her husband *Loyangpong*. The next morning they reached the village and celebrated the victory with great jubilation.

### **Creation of Earth:**

The Aos believed that it was *Lijaba* who created the earth and all living things and vegetation upon it. First he created the plain areas of Assam and when he was about to create the Ao areas, a cockroach announced that enemies are approaching. Thus out of fear he created the Ao areas hastily making its terrain steep and rugged.

### **Division of Day & Night:**

In the beginning there was no daylight and there was constant bloodshed between animals and human being. They affirmed to bring a solution to end this perpetual bloodshed. All birds and animals convened a meeting to discuss about the problems. After a long discussion the owl opined that there should either be a day or night forever. However, many disagreed with the owl's opinion and out of discontentment all the animals trampled the owl. Hence the head of the owl become flattened. Further the owl was expelled from the bird community. Thus till today owls comes out of the nest at night only. After a long discussion, a bird known as *Jempongno* suggested that there should be both day and night alternately. All were delighted by the suggestion of *Jempongno* and out of ecstasy all animals caressed and embraced him; hence its body became small. They unanimously agreed and decided to approach the sun to divide day and night. The cock volunteered for the mission and went to meet the Sun (*zoni*). The sun assured that their problem would be solved and asked the Sun to adhere to some of his

instruction. The first instruction was that the cock should crow when the sun wakes up from his sleep so that all animals should be prepared to proceed to the jungle. Secondly, as the Sun rises the cock should crow for a second time, so that on hearing it all animals should immediately proceed to the jungle. Third crow would be when the Sun ascends higher and bestow light to the earth. The Cock agreed to abide the instruction and returned with great joy. On its return they convened a meeting and delivered the assurances that sun had given. Thus from that day onward the cock started to crow thrice before dawn and both animals and human beings began to live peacefully and happily ever after.

### **The Story of Pig and Dog:**

Since olden days, the animals that lived closest to man were pig (*aok/ak*) and dog (*ai/azū*). One day, the master sent them to work in his field. While the pig worked throughout the day, the dog calmly slept all day long in the shed. The pig went home after working so hard and reported to the master about his hard work and the dog's laziness.

The dog was so cunning that it stayed back in the field and replaced the impression of the pig's footprints; the dog went home late to convince the master that he had worked very hard. The pig and the dog quarreled in front of the master defending their own rights. The master adjourned that truth would be confirmed the next day.

The following day the master went to the field and found only the footprints of the dog. The master was convinced by the footprints of the dog and chased the pig away from his house and allowed the dog to live with him.

### **Crushing of Deer's ornaments**

One day all animals were invited by the God, *Lijaba* to his courtyard for a feast. While the deer was searching for dress and ornaments for that occasion, the fox known to be the deer's best friend, snatched the ornaments belonged to squirrel and gave to his friend deer. When the deer was drying the shell, the earring, etc in the sun, the angry squirrel recognized his ornaments .Thus out of anger; the squirrel deliberately unfastened a dead branch from the tree and smashed the ornaments into pieces. Out of anger and disappointment, the deer jumped and trampled an earthworm that was basking in the sun. Out of pain the earthworm moved violently and accidentally smashed the eggs of a wild fowl. The fowl out of discontentment spoiled the field which happened to be the field of *Lijaba*. Out of anger *Lijaba* held the fowl and questioned the reason for causing such a great damage to his field. The fowl expressed her disappointment to the earthworm that had smashed her eggs. The earthworm in turn accused the deer for trampling him. The deer blamed the squirrel for spoiling her ornaments. The squirrel blames fox for snatching the ornaments.

Thus, *Lijaba* apprehended the root of all the destructions. *Lijaba* trapped fox in a basket and went to fetch hot water to kill the fox, before *Lijaba* return, the fox designed a cunning idea to escape from the trap. The fox called all animals and asked every animal what meat they preferred. When a wild cat suggests his preference, the fox asked the cat to first unfasten the trap, and the fox immediately trap the cat in the basket.

On his return *Lijaba* poured the hot water in the basket, without knowing the trick played by the fox. When the cat scream out of pain, *Lijaba* realized that it was not the cunning fox but his innocent grandson, hence he released the cat from the trap.

### **A story of two lovers:**

Once there was a handsome boy by the name *Mangchanger* who fell in love with a beautiful girl *Tsügenrongmang*. But unfortunately the boy's parents disapproved their relationship. He waited for a longtime with a hope that his parents would agree one day. However his parents became more adamant as time goes by. He became frustrated and an extreme idea struck his mind.

The next day, on their way to the field he expressed his anguish to his girlfriend. Just before they parted, he asked his girlfriend if she would like to carry firewood on her return. She agreed to his offer and decided to carry the firewood collected by him. On her return she found her boyfriend hanged

above a decorated platform nearby a huge tree. On seeing his dead, she broke down however she cried in silence to prevent from hearing by any passerby.

Meanwhile the boy's parents were worried about their son, when he did not return home for two-three days. They searched for him but in vain so finally the boy's mother approached the girlfriend to which she replied through a song. But the boy's mother could not comprehend what she was saying. The mother sent her younger son to persuade the girl to indicate the place where they could locate him. One night the younger brother of the dead visited the dormitory of his brother's girlfriend and requested her to disclose the secrets. She again replied with the song indicating the place where they would find him.

The following morning the boy's relatives rushed to the spot where they found the dead body. They were stunned by the tragic end of their beloved and the mother regretted for the rest of her life for the adamant stand.

## **CHAPTER III**

# **SOCIAL ORGANIZATION**

In social anthropology the concept of 'social organization' stands more as an addition than as an alternative to the concept of 'social structure'. While 'social structure' gives the impression of staticity, 'social organization' appears as dynamic process of social relations. Family, marriage and kinship provide the best possible scope to explore the dynamics of social relations. These three aspects are closely interrelated that separating one from another becomes more conceptual than real. However, for the sake of understanding one needs to begin by separating these units of social organization.

### **FAMILY**

It is the most important unit of social organization in any societies. A family is a social and economic unit consisting minimally of one or more parents and their children. Members of a family always have certain reciprocal rights and obligations towards each other, particularly economics, but common residence is not a defining feature of families (Ember and Ember 1993:183). Family is also the basic institutions that gives birth to and nurtures other social institutions in the interest of its own social and cultural needs.

A family helps in preserving customs and conventions and sees that these are safely passed from one generation to the other. Family helps

young members in marriage and selecting life partners. In the field of education, it is the responsibility of the family to provide good education to the children. Family performs religious functions. Thus family is the base of culture and all cultural activities.

Among the Longkhum, *Kibong/ Kivong* stands for family. This very word in itself contains the idea of a group that is formed under one roof, where the father, the mother and the unmarried children together form this group or unit. The typical Longkhum family is characterized by nuclear type. However extended family type does exist under certain circumstances. For instance, when a son, newly married is unable to build his house at the prescribed time and has to remain with his parent till he is able to establish a house of his own.

#### **Father's role:**

The first and the foremost expected role of a father is to provide food, clothing and shelter to his family. Normally, he is considered as the bread earner of the family. Besides, family being patriarchal the position of the father in the family holds great authority, prestige and responsibility. He assumes the leadership role in the family. Though both mother and father share responsibility over their family, the father has certain rights and obligations. In any decision relating to family matters both wife and husband deliberate on the issue together, however, the father's decision become final.

The father has absolute power over the family property. One major role of the father is to divide the bulk of his property during his life time to his sons. The presence of the father during the burial of the children's death and during child birth is important. They believed that delivery becomes easier when father is around. In the olden days since women were not allowed to perform rituals, the father presided over the social and religious rituals and ceremonies.

Besides, the normative role, he also renders help in the domestic works particularly chopping firewood, and also fetching water, sometimes even cooking. His duty towards his wife, her well-being and also helping her in cooking, fetching water etc are done not as his assigned duty but on voluntary basis out of his love and care for his wife and the family.

The role of the father has undergone certain changes with the change of time and occupation assuming different kinds of responsibilities. Today the duty and role of the father towards his children has taken a new direction. The desires for large number of children in the olden days have now been replaced by preference for fewer children. The present study reveals that out of 340 families 208 families have less than four children. Today, the father has geared his interest and priority towards a new value in giving modern education to his children unlike olden days when fathers emphasized more in training his children how to become good agriculturalists. Today, the

greatest concern of the father is searching economic resources to enable him to provide his children's education which has now become his top most priority.

### *Case study 1*

This is a case of Ajem, age 50 a teacher at Government Middle School Longkhum. He has three children and all are school going. He noted that as the children grow, responsibility also mounts. Being a teacher, he is aware of the value of education and the standard of the school in the village. He therefore sent his three children to study in Dimapur town. On being asked as to why he lives alone in the village, to this he replied that children need their parent's guidance and therefore he allowed his wife to live with their children in Dimapur town. He further added that he and his wife top most priority is to give their children the best possible education so that they can get through a competitive exam and get a secure job in future. He also opined that doing kitchen work is one of the most boring and tiring task for him for he has to cook, clean, and do marketing all by himself. He always long for vacations to be with his family.

### *Case study 2*

Mayang age 45 has two sons and one daughter. Presently all the children are studying in a boarding school at Mokokchung town. He is a government servant and employed in Mokokchung town. He is not highly

educated; however he is aware of the competitive spirits of the present generation. Since he is employed in Mokokchung town he is able to visit his children often. His wife is a hard working woman who single handedly cultivates large plot of land every year. He conveyed his appreciation of his wife for her hard labour and complements to their economy.

### *Case study 3*

This is a case of Lanu, age 45 and is a government servant who has three children and all of them are school going. His wife who is few years junior to him is a cultivator. Every year he and his family cultivate two plots of land. On being asked as to how he is able to manage his office duty and two fields at a time. To this he replied that more than half of his days are spent in the field. In the morning he goes to the office and does whatever things are to be done and immediately proceed to the field. He opined that providing basic needs alone is not an easy task. Being a father and the bread earner of the family his responsibilities is varied hence he is obliged to engage in dual duties at a time.

### *Case study 4*

This is a case of Wati age 32 who is a cultivator. He has three children and two of them are school going and the youngest is still a toddler. He noted that he is worried of how to take care of these children without any income. Every year he cultivates two fields, though he opined that the agriculture

products alone are not sufficient enough for his family. On this he emphasized that, besides providing food and shelters there are many additional expenditure like school uniform, school bags, shoes, etc. He stated that he is trying to set up a business in the village like grossery shop , so that he would be able to provide the needs of the family particularly school going children.

The case studies presented above shows the role of a father and also reveal the expressions of problems and diffulties faced by the father in performing his role.

#### **Mother's role:**

Procreation capacity of a woman is greatly valued in this community. A barren woman is look down by the community. Undoubtedly more values are placed on motherhood than any other female role. It is through her children that woman makes her most vital contribution to society. Motherhood even shows her role as wife, for her primary obligation as a wife is to provide continuity to her husband's lineage.

Soon after the birth of the child, mother starts taking care of the baby till one or two years of age. She gathers vegetables, prepares food, collects firewood and water, etc. When infant did not require frequent breast feeding, it is often handed over to the care of older children or older women.

Mother is expected to excel in house keeping and in agricultural works otherwise she is looked down by others. She is expected to be chaste, obedient and submissive. It is the mother who shoulders the entire burden of the household work. In the olden days, the life of the mother centered around the household work such as cooking, weaving, carrying firewood and looking after their children as well as looking after the domestic animals. Besides household works she also played an important role in agriculture too. The mother had the authority over the disposal and consumption of the agricultural products. Weaving for the whole family was done by the mother. It was the duty of the mother to welcome, serve and entertained guests. She was expected to look after the well being of the husband providing the best food and drinks.

Another important role of the mother is to teach her children particularly her daughters, the household matters like the art of keeping their house and surroundings neat and tidy, weaving, cooking etc. She also guides the children to obey elders and parents and even moral values and attitudes are taught by the mothers. In most of the family, it is the mother who initiates family prayer.

In the olden days, though mother or women in general were not allowed to perform any rituals however, it was the mother who was behind the initiation and preparation of any rituals during agricultural operations and

sicknesses. Even at home she was the first persons who took out paddy for drying in the sun from the barn for the family consumptions.

Even today mother continues to play an important role in the household works, child care, agriculture and animal husbandry. However with change of time and occupation certain roles have undergone changes. Some mother today help the family by earning through daily wage or weaving, business and some go to work in offices or school as teachers etc.

However the main occupation of a mother in the village is agriculture and she is the one who does most of the agricultural work. Table I shows the occupation of mothers in the village. The role of agriculturalist mother slightly differs from that of a working mother. For working mothers the responsibility is more because their activities are more diverse both inside and outside the house. In other words, she work at home, helps in agriculture, goes to office or schools.

**TABLE I**  
**OCCUPATION OF MOTHERS.**

<b>No of Government servants</b>	<b>No of Agriculturalists</b>	<b>No of Business women</b>	<b>Total</b>
10	308	11	229

Source: Field work 2002

### *Case study 5*

This is a case of Ajungla age 50, a government servant. She has three children and all are studying. Initially she had faced numerous problems having office duty on one hand and her family on the other. Every morning she gets up early, prepared food, helps her children to school and begins her office duty. In the evening she has to rush back from office to start preparing for the family. On being asked as to whether she would preferred to be a housewife or a working mother. To this she replied that from economic point of view it is good to have a job, however she expressed her intricacy in performing a dual duties at a time. But now her eldest daughter helps her in household cores which indeed lightened her burden.

### *Case study 6*

Sashila age 55 is a widow and a government servant. Her husband expired about 15 years ago. Now all her children are married and she lives alone in the village. She also expressed the difficulties faced by her as her husband expired when all her children were very young. She played role of a father, mother and office goer, which according to her have been faced by only few unfortunate women.

### *Case study 7*

This is a case of Amongla, age 59 and a cultivator. She has three children and has two grand children from her eldest son. Every morning she has to prepare food for the family and rush to the field. She noted that after getting back home she has no time to take care of her body as she is engaged in household chores.

The above case studies reveal the composite role of a mother.

### **Role of Son:**

The expected role of a son is to obey his parents. He is expected to be honest, hard working, modest, loyal and courageous as he is the bearer of the lineage of the family. He is the sole inheritor of the ancestral and landed properties. Till today this custom continues. Parents expected more from sons than daughters. However at present the role of son has undergone certain changes with change of time and priorities though certain expected roles are still maintained. Today, his main priority is education and spends most of the time in schools, colleges or universities etc. During holidays he helps his parents in field work and carpentry works, and also spends time in socializing with friends etc. Since the olden days, the eldest son was regarded as the guardian and protector '*tayimdong*' of his younger brothers and sisters and his role as *tayimdong* is still very significant till today.

## **Role of Daughter:**

The expected role of a daughter is also to obey her parents. The primary role of the daughter was to help her in parents in the field as well as in household works. She was more confined in the house than her brothers. All the grown up girls were expected to know weaving. She was also responsible in looking after her younger brother and sisters when her parents were away for field work. Daughters were normally engaged in baby sitting.

Cooking of daily meal is normally the task of women and young girls generally help their mothers in all types of household chores. When the mother is away from home or comes home late from the field the daughter takes the sole responsibility of the kitchen. Once a girl attains ten years of age, parents can depend on her at least for cooking. With change of time and priority, the roles of daughter have undergone certain changes. However certain expected role like helping her mother in household works still continues. She helps in maintaining the household chores, gardening, looking after the guests, keeping the surrounding neat and tidy. All these create an atmosphere where the daughters become closer and attached to her mother in all respect.

In olden days it was a disgrace for a woman who could not weave. But at present most of the daughters do not even know the art of weaving; rather they are interested in knitting, stitching and embroidery works.

The eldest daughter is expected to look after her younger brothers and sisters in many aspects. She looks after them, teaches them their lessons and also trains them how to wash, cook etc. She also takes initiatives in choosing her brother's life partner. And it is her utmost duty to look after her parents when they are sick. The daughter are not entitled to inherit ancestral property, but even after marriage she still remain attached to her parents and parents are look after by daughters more than her brothers.

It may be noted that the perception of patrilineal affected the attitude of parents towards daughters. Daughters often helped their parents to enable them to provide education to sons.

### *Case study 8*

Narola age 55 is the eldest daughter who has four brothers and one sister. As a child and being the eldest daughter of the family she had to shoulder so many responsibilities. She helped her parents in the field as well as in the household chores. She stated that since her parents were poor, they could not afford to send all their children to school, so she was asked to help her parents in the field to enable them to send her brothers to school. Her parents constantly reminded her brothers about the sacrifice she had made for them. Now all her brothers are educated, employed and settled in different towns.

## **MARRIAGE**

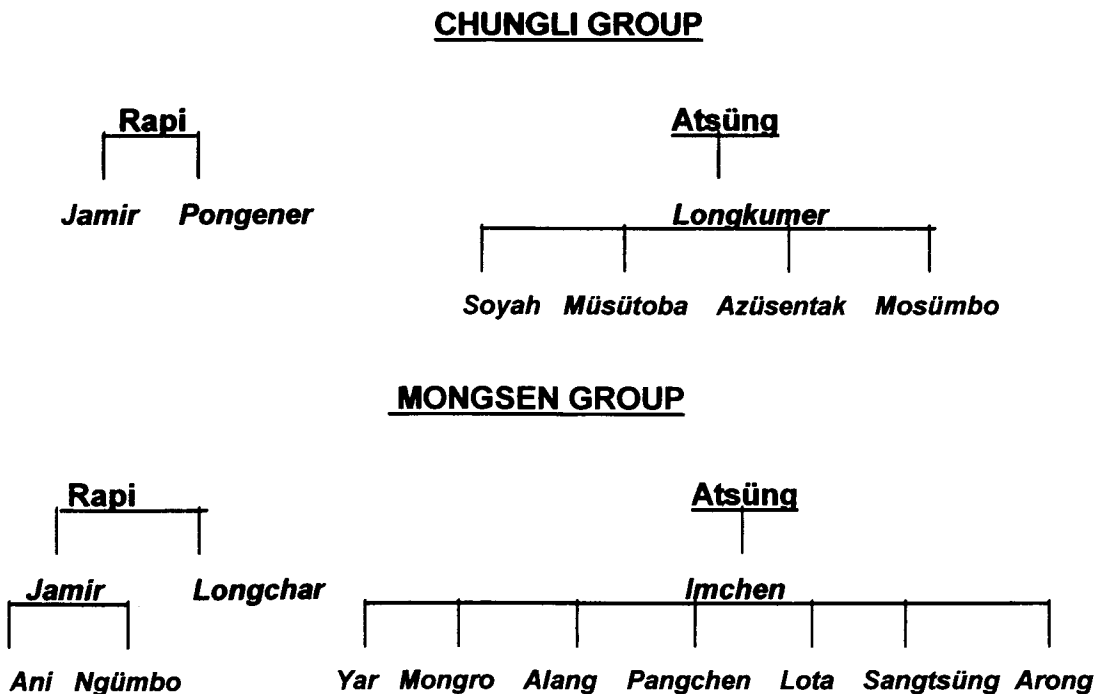
It is generally been assumed that the institutions of marriage is a universal features in human societies. Although many anthropologists have attempted to provide definitions of marriage, none of them has been satisfactorily and sufficiently general enough to encompass all its various manifestations. This is because; marriage is a unique institution of human society which can have very different implications in different culture.

It is a biological fact that marriage is intimately linked to parenthood. This fact has led many anthropologists including pioneers like Malinowski and Radcliff Brown to propose definitions of marriage which centers on Malinowski phrased as “the principle of Legitimacy”. According to Malinowski, a legal marriage is one which gives a woman a socially recognized husband and her children a socially recognized father. The oft-quoted is from ‘Notes and Queries on Anthropology’. This defines marriage as ‘marriage is a union between a man and woman such that children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both partners’. The way marriage is socially recognized varies greatly from society. Much variation is seen in different societies as how one get married, how a spouse is selected, whom one marries, how many persons one marries. The only cultural universality about marriage is that no society permits people to marry one’s own parent’s brothers and sisters.

**Rules and regulation of Marriage:**

Since olden days the Longkhum villagers practiced monogamy very strictly. They were also forbidden to get married within the member of the same clan. Even today they strictly adhere to the rule of monogamy and clan exogamy. Marriage within the same clan is a taboo and if such marriage happened they are excommunicated from the village. They believed that such marriage would lead to great misfortune in the family, sterility or may result in abnormal offspring.

**Fig 1. Clan Division in Longkhum Village**



It is observed that the rules of clan exogamy, monogamy and incest taboo are still strictly adhered to by all. Longkhum is broadly divided into two groups i.e *Chungli* and *Mongsen*. Under this, the clans are broadly divided into *Rapi* and *Rtsüng*. These two are further sub-divided into different sub-clans.

Under *Chungli* group, *Rapi* is sub-divided into two clans i.e *Jamir* and *Pongener* and *Atsüng* is constituted by one clan i.e *Longkumer*, while *Longkumer* clan is further sub-divided into *Soyah*, *Müsütoba*, *Azüsentak* and *Mosümbo*. It may be noted that *Rapi* and *Atsüng* are intermarriagable.

Under *Mongsen* group, *Rapi* is divided into two clans i.e *Jamir* and *Longchar*. *Jamir* is further sub-divided into *Ani* and *Ngümbo*. *Atsüng* is constituted by *Imchen* while *Imchen* is further sub-divided into *Yar*, *Mongro*, *Alang*, *Pangchen*, *Lota*, *Sangtsüng* and *Arong*. *Rapi* and *atsüng* are intermarriagable.

In both *Chungli* and *Mongsen* group, all clans are placed under common terms i.e *Rapi* and *Atsüng*, however it may be noted that between *Chungli* and *Mongsen* group *Rapi* and *Rapi* are intermarriagable and similarly is the case between *Atsüng* and *Atsüng*. The main reason for such practices is because of the fact that *Chungli* and *Mongsen* belong to different

dialect groups. It is also believed that *Chungli* and *Mongsen* are the descendants of different ancestors.

Polyandry and polygny was not known to the people. They strictly adhere to monogamous marriage. Since olden days levirate and sororate was never encouraged as they believed that such marriages lead to unpleasant consequences and fear that they may not bear normal child. They refer such marriage as '*adianu menden nung amenba*' which may be translated as replacing his/ her sibling's as they believe that it is not proper to replace one's own sibling's place. If such marriages take place it is believed that the life span of either of the parents gets shortened or the child born of such marriage are normally abnormal. Therefore such marriage was a taboo and even today they still believe in it and refrain from such union.

Marriage between maternal cousins up to third generation is not allowed though they belong to different clan with a view that they are closely related by blood. Such marriages are referred as '*ana kijem*' which may be translated as 'blood related marriage'. They believed that such couple never procreates good children '*tanur tajung mesoteter.*' Remarriage is possible for both man and woman after divorce.

However in case of the death of the husband, a widow cannot remarry as long as she stayed in her husband's house or else she will not be allowed to enjoy her husband's property.

It is observed that woman after marriage continued to retain her clan membership even though all their children take the clan of the father. Women have a certain degree of freedom after marriage, they do not have to submerge their clan identity, and their maiden name continues which indicates their higher gender status than other Naga tribes.

**Mode of acquiring spouses:**

In the olden days before the arrival of Christianity the marriageable boys and girls slept in their respective dormitories *Anju* (boys' dormitory) and *Zūki* (girl dormitory). The dormitory was not only the centre of learning and socializing with friends, but it was also a place of courtship between opposite sexes. It was here where especially the boys made frequent visit to their counterparts for wooing and courting them, which gave them an occasion to know each other. Such interaction eventually led to marriage, thus young people were careful to mingle with members of clans other than their own. After constant acquaintances if their liking for each other grew and if the boy intends to get married with a particular girl, his desire was expressed and conveyed to his parents or aunts. Thus his parents or aunts gave their final decision with regard to the decision of their son/nephew's choice.

However, with change of time and subsequent disintegration of youth dormitories the occasion of courting have changed. Today boys and girls know each other through other means of contact and socialization such as through student's activities, youth activities, in schools, colleges, work places etc. This way the young girls and boys come to know each other and if they intend to get married they go and express their feelings with their parents. If both the parents agree, a formal proposal of marriage will be brought by the boy's parents. In case the parents do not agree elopement takes place.

It is customary that formal proposal is initiated from boy's side after negotiations between the two concerned parties and the date of marriage is fixed. Village endogamy was very much prominent in the past; this was due to lack of contact with the outside world and due to rivalries between villages.

Marriage within the village is still preferred due to familiarity of a person's line of descendants. Families with histories of lunacy, hereditary disease or even criminal records are often avoided. Sometimes parental approval may be based on the personality traits of the boy or girl. For instance if the girl is reputed to be gluttonous or lazy, it is deemed a bad choice as the prosperity of the family depends on hard, physical labour in the fields and forests. On the other hand a boy with a quick and uncontrollable

temper is considered a bad match because he will be prone to enter into quarrels and disputes which will not only bring bad name but also results in fines which will effect the new family's assets. Due to such reasons, inter-village marriage is encouraged by the parents as it is easier to choose the best suited groom or bride for the person. It will not be possible for them to trace the history of the would-be bride or groom if he or she belongs to other village.

Marriage outside the village becomes inevitable due to interactions with different people and cultures while venturing outside the village in search of education, jobs etc. A present, 21 persons are accounted to have married to other villagers and gradually the trend is moving towards village exogamy.

In the olden days both boys and girls get married soon after they attained puberty. Table II indicates the interval of age of marriage for both boys and girls. The main reason for such changes is because of modern education.

## Age at Marriage:

**TABLE: II**  
**AGE OF MARRIAGE**

Interval	% of boys	% of girls
Below 15	0%	1.83%
16-20	7.2%	27.94%
21-25	27.20%	33.19%
26-30	48.89%	32.25%
31-35	13.50%	3.30%
36-40	1.83%	0.73%
Above 41	1.83%	1.10%

Source: Field work 2002

The marital status for both men and women is not only considered normative but also much more acceptable than being single (unmarried). Though there is no deprivation or ill-treatment for those who do not get married.

### *Case study 9*

This is a case of Niken age 48, an unmarried man and has no intentions of getting married. His house is a home where young boys spend their leisure time. He stayed with his mother until she died a few years ago. But now he has no option but live alone. He stated that he is very interested in innovating new technology in agriculture and allied activities. At present he is trying to develop terrace cultivation though it is very taxing and require

financial assistance from government for irrigation as the area is very hilly. He is so involved in these activities that he has no time for marriage.

### *Case study 10*

Atula age 45 is an unmarried woman who takes active part in the church activities. She stated that throughout prime life she spent most of her time in teaching children at Sunday school. She stated 'it was my choice not to get married as I wanted give the best possible contribution to the Church which I know will not be possible if I have a family to look after'. Till now she is involved in different women organization and keen to participate in any activities particularly pertaining to Church. She remarked 'in most occasion people tease me for not been able to get married and initially the attitude of people affected me to some extend but now I no longer feel awkward because this was my dream and I am contented with my life'.

### **Marriage ceremonies:**

In the traditional marriage system, the actual marriages take place about a year after betrothal. It was a norm that the man visits the girl's dormitory before he finally decides to marry her. Having informed her parents informally and if he is encouraged, he formally asks for her hand in marriage. After having informal discussion with both the mothers, the groom send one of his friend who act as an intermediary (*langpatong*) to make a formal proposal to the bride's parents. It was customary that some presentation were

made to the girl's family by the boy's family. Immediately after they made the agreement the boy's relative goes for fishing. Next morning two persons of the boy's relative go to the girl's house and present the fish and once this is accepted it marks the beginning of their marriage. The boy also presents a pack of salt which is more significant than fish. It was customary that once the girl accepted the salt she cannot reverse her decision if so, fine was imposed on her by the village. After these formalities are made they were labeled as husband and wife and were allowed to establish a house of their own the following year. It is also reported that there were also instances of men staying at his fiancé's house and helping her parents in their family activities which indicates that marriage by probation was in practice by the people in the olden days although it was not as a rule.

With the advent of Christianity, they no longer practice the traditional marriage ceremonies. At present solemnization takes place in the Church. The Baptist Church has fixed two days in December and two days in January for weddings. Therefore whoever wishes to get married in Longkhum Baptist Church has to choose any day from the prescribed date. It may be stated that this is a very recent practice and the new rule has come about in order to minimize the input of labour during weddings. However this practice is not prevalent in Revival Church, though, marriage proceedings are same in both the denominations.

It is a norm that the minimum duration between engagement and marriage is three months. Engagement is always done at the girl's residence where Pastor and two or three Deacons are invited for confirmation. The Pastor initiates prayer and fixed the date for wedding. The relatives of both are involved in this ceremony. After the engagement the couples are expected to obey the rules and regulations made by the Church authority, failing which the wedding will be debarred from solemnizing in the Church.

On the wedding day, the groom normally wears formal suit. The colour depends on one's own choice. However there is restriction on bride's wedding dress. Gowns are not allowed because it is expensive and many girls are unable to afford it. Therefore in order to maintain uniformity among the people, the Village Council and Church Organization unanimously resolved that the bride should wear traditional mekhla with white tops.

The marriage ceremony is hosted by the groom's parents. After solemnization in the Church the congregation proceeds to the groom's house for feast. The feast is prepared under the leadership of '*tümlaker*'. There are two categories of *tümlaker*; *soden tümlak* (constitutes those men whose mother belong to groom's clan), and *jala tümlak* (men who have married women of groom's clan). Thus, once men get married he becomes an important member in his wife's clan. The management and distribution of meat is always done as per the directives of *tümlaker*. For the marriage feast,

pigs are contributed by relatives and friends and if these are not sufficient the groom purchase the requirement. It is customary that the heads of the pigs are given to the respective contributors. The married couple stays with the groom's parents for a few days after which they moved out to a new house of his own.

The most important purpose of religious ceremonies is the recognition of the union by the family, kin group and the society at large. Such ceremonies are very important as they take vow in the Church which obliged them to hold on to their marriage regardless of any differences. Another advantage of such ceremonies is getting to know the kin groups better. For the ceremony the kin groups and friends renders their support and help in the preparation of the wedding. It is a tradition that the kin groups, friends and well wishers bring gifts in terms of cash or kind during the ceremony which makes the couple to establish a new home soon after the marriage.

From the above discussion, it is observe that people no longer practice the traditional marriage ceremonies. However it may be noted that basic principle still continues. For instance, the initiation always comes from the boy's side. There is always the involvement of a go-between who can be either a male or female from either side of the couple or can be someone who is not related to the couple.

## **Divorce:**

Despite Mills' remark, 'Infact it is very rarely that one meets an Ao man or woman of any age who has only been married once'(Mills-p212), marriage for the Aos is a serious matter. Though divorce is known, it is not as rampant as the above remark indicated and is resorted to only under extreme situations. The main reasons for divorce are due to infidelity or incompatibility.

Whatever the reasons, divorce settlement is base according to the traditional customary law. It is customary that whoever walks out of the family gets nothing. Both wife and husband have the right to gain custody of the children however the children ultimately belong to the father's clan. When divorce is mutual the family properties were equally shared.

If the wife commits adultery she would be thrown out of the house with nothing except her clothing and the basket *kütsü/ aküt* where she kept her personal belongings. It is customary that divorce is settled by two parties' i.e. husband's clan and wife's clan. On the day of the settlement if the husband forgives his wife, she would be warned by the husband's clan not to commit the same mistake. The same applied to the husband if he has committed adultery. Fines of adultery were imposed by the wife's clan if the husband committed mistake and vice versa. In fact fines for adultery were considered to be very severe and the highest fine of the time was imposed.

## **KINSHIP:**

Kinship plays an important role in both the regulation of behavior and the formation of social groups. Kinship system depend on the social recognition and cultural implementation of relationship derived from descent and marriage and normally involve a set of kinship terms and an associated set of behavioral patterns and attitudes which together, makes up a systematic whole.

The fundamental relationship between human beings is based on kinship. All societies distinguish various categories of relationship by descent or consanguinity, and most societies distinguish various categories of relationship by marriage of affinity as well. System of human relationships derived from the marriage and descent plays an important part in all societies. It is a major factor regulating behavior between individuals and affecting the formation of social, political and territorial groups. In modern society the domestic family is the most obvious example of an institution based on kinship. In the tribal societies kinship is of even more significant, having far-reaching effects on the social and economic life of the community. The kinship system exists in its own right, and a child who is born into a family is born at the same time into the kinship systems. Kinship occupies a very prominent place in the study of social organization which has a direct bearing on the issue of inheritance, marital alliance, political office etc.

In the village there exist two types of kinship relationships i.e. consanguineous and affinal that cement people together. Consanguine bond originates through birth and affinal bond, develops through marriage. In the village kinship relationship is an imperative one that the interacting individual basically belongs to a family like, a family of orientation, in which he/ she is born and consist of his/ her parents siblings. Then in the family of procreation which means, an individual marries, he and his spouse may establish a new family. Normally in the village one acquires a new set of relative by marriage, but those cases where marriage is specified in terms of a particular category of relatives, his affinal relatives may also be his consanguine ones. The pattern of residence is patrilocal in nature.

The main function of kinship is to regulate marriage and prevention of incest. Besides, kinship also plays an important role in the political set up of the village. The details of its role in political set up will be discussed in the chapter on 'Political Organization'. Till today the people of the village trace their descendants only through father' side which in fact covers the agnatic relations on the father's side covering any generation ascending or descending with whom genealogical relationship can be traced through the known ancestor. The Longkhum clan organization is broadly divided into two: *Rapi* and *Atsüng*. Marriage is allowed between *Rapi* and *Atsüng*. These are further sub-divided into different clans whose members are not allowed to marry between each other.

Kinship also played an important role in determining various patterns of relationship. It is observed that kinship provides categorization of different relationship into respective categories. The relationship and the terms used for addressing kin members are explained below.

The terms 'father', is used to address male members of father's clan usually prefixed to their actual name and the same notion is applied to mother's clan. Normally husband and wife address each other by name and there is no specific term for this. A man is expected to show respect and obedience to his in-laws. A quarrel with an elderly person who is related by blood was a serious matter and is believed to entail illness, poor crops and other misfortune.

**Kinship terminology**

**Ego's generation:**

**Kinship Types**

**Kinship terms**

	<i>Mongsen</i>	<i>Chungli</i>
1. Elder brother	<i>adi</i>	<i>aadi</i>
2. Younger brother	name	name
3. Elder sister	<i>adi</i>	<i>aaya</i>
4. Younger sister	name	name
5. Mother's sister's daughter	<i>adi</i>	<i>aaya</i>

6. Mother's sister's son	<i>adi</i>	<i>aadi</i>
7. Mother's brother's daughter	<i>kūmo</i>	<i>amo</i>
8. Mother's brother's son	<i>akū</i>	<i>oku</i>
9. Father's sister's daughter	<i>kūmo</i>	<i>amo</i>
10. Father's sister's son	<i>akū</i>	<i>oku</i>
11. Father's brother's daughter	<i>adi</i>	<i>aaya</i>
12. Father's brother's son	<i>adi</i>	<i>aadi</i>
13. Brother-in-law	<i>kūmo</i>	<i>amo</i>
14. Sister-in-law	<i>akū</i>	<i>oku</i>
15. Son-in-law	<i>kumlak</i>	<i>anük</i>
16. Daughter-in-law	<i>kūmo</i>	<i>amo</i>

**Generation next above ego:**

1. Father	<i>aba</i>	<i>aaba</i>
2. Mother	<i>avi/ala</i>	<i>aaja</i>
3. Father's elder brother	<i>aba zūmba</i>	<i>tambu</i>
4. Father's younger brother	<i>aba nuzaba</i>	<i>tanubu</i>
5. Father's elder sister	<i>adi</i>	<i>onü</i>
6. Father's younger sister	<i>adi</i>	<i>onü</i>
7. Mother's elder brother	<i>akū</i>	<i>oku</i>
8. Mother's younger brother	<i>akū</i>	<i>oku</i>
9. Mother's elder sister	<i>avi zumvi/ala zumvi</i>	<i>tantsü</i>
10. Mother's younger sister	<i>avi nuzavi/ala nuzavi</i>	<i>tanutsü</i>
11. Father-in-law	<i>akū</i>	<i>oku</i>



There is no particular term for the husband and wife to addressing each other. They normally addressed each others by name, but if they have a child, the husband would address his wife as 'mother of that child' (name) and vice versa (teknonymously).

Brothers and sisters have got particular terms of address to each other based on age and sex. But there are no terms of address for younger sisters and brothers. They are addressed by name only.

Age distinction is maintained by kinship lines. Father's brother if they are elder they are addresses as *tambu/aaba zūmba* and younger to the father are addressed as *tanubu/ aaba nuzaba*. However father's sisters are addressed by same term *onū/ adi* regardless of being elder or younger. For mother's brother same term is used to address i.e *oko/akū*, whereas different terms are used for mother's sister depending on whether she is elder or younger to her/his mother. Mother's elder sisters are addressed as *tantsū/ avi zūmvi* and younger sisters as *tanutsū/ avi nuzavi*.

Distinction is also made for in-laws by age and relation. They give respect *akūm tsūbo/ akūm tsūba* to their in-laws. For husband and wife in order to show their respect to their in-laws, they address their father-in-law as *oko/akū* and mother-in-laws as *onū/ adi*. They address their sister-in-laws as *amo/kūmo* and for brother-in-laws they use the same terms that is use to

address their father-in-laws. Relationship between couple and their respective in-laws are generally cordial. It is expected of a girl and boy to have learnt their respective roles in life before marriage.

Respect is showed to all the father, grand father, mother, and grandmother and to all elderly people in the village even if they are not related. The genealogically appropriate term to address grand-father is *obu/avo* and grand-mother as *otsü/azü*.

In the behavioral pattern, juniors should not address their seniors by name. If a person does address their seniors by name it implies that he does not respect his elders. With the elders the relation is expected to be one of respect. Another expression of respect is addressing the elders with appropriate kinship terms.

An important role of kin group is mutual help among kindred during agriculture season, construction etc and in times of crises whether social or political, kin groups support if any of the one another. In the olden days the kin members help and support one another in times of sickness or death in the family. However this kind of practices is not as strong as before. Today with growing emphasis on commercial activities; the coordination in agriculture work within the kin members is gradually weakening and usually labourers are employed.

Owing to patrilineal nature of inheritance, property moves down the male line. Properties are of two types: ancestral and self-acquired properties. Ancestral property includes ancestral land, weapons like spears, shields, etc. Acquired properties are personal properties of the father acquired by his own labour e.g. house, furniture etc. The eldest son is the heir of the family and he inherits lion's share of the property and the rest are distributed among the younger sons. The eldest son is not only heir of the family but has many responsibilities attached to him. Besides his responsibilities towards his parents, he is the guardian and protector of his sisters '*tayimdong*'. The ancestral properties which belong to the clan are jointly own by the members of the clan. No individual can sell any part of the ancestral properties. Normally a man having no male heir divides his property among his nearest male relatives. A mother's property goes to her children, her personal dress and ornaments always to the daughter. If the husband dies, as a temporary provision, wife is entitled to maintain her husband's property till her death.

The above discussion shows that there has been rather limited change in the family and marriage and the kinship system is still protected. The present study reveals that a typical Longkhum family is nuclear type, patriarchal, and patrilineal in form.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **VILLAGE ECONOMY**

The main occupation of the Nagas is agriculture which is practice in the form of jhum /shifting cultivation or terrace /settled cultivation or both. The Angamis, Chakhesangs and the Zeliangs etc are known to follow terrace/settled type of cultivation, while the Aos is basically known to follow the jhum/shifting type of cultivation.

In Longkhum village, the jhum type of cultivation is locally termed as *tekonglu* and is the main occupation of the villagers.

#### **JHUM CULTIVATION**

Under this type of cultivation, a fertile land on the hill slopes is cultivated by clearing the jungles. After clearing the area of cultivation, it is cultivated for the year and the next year they shift to another place and the same process is continued. This continued till about 20 years have lapsed, when the first plot is ready for cultivation. J. P. Mills remarked

.....the Aos is careful to leave enough trees standing to regenerate the jungle and thereby enjoys land which is no nearer being worked out known then it was at the beginning.....provided enough tress are left standing and the land is 'jhumed' at intervals of not less than ten years the jungle will grow up strongly on the abandoned 'jhums' prevent

the soil from being denuded by rain, killed out the useless weeds and deposit enough mould to keep the soil as rich as ever. (1926:107,108).

In the village however the cultivable area is divided into two categories- *arzen* and *luno*. For *arzen* the interval for cultivation is 20 years and for *luno* it is 10 years. The first year of cultivation is known as *lozen/ looti* and the next year of cultivation is known as *bün/ abün*. It is customary that the *Samen* (Village Council) demarcates the plots for cultivation every year.

In the village, the cycle of Jhum/Shifting cultivation begins from the month of December to January. First an area is identified and selected by the *Samen*. It begins with jungle clearing which amounts to intensive physical labour as thick shrubs and tress cover the ground. Large tress, a few of which are always left standing are salvaged and later sold to the people of the urban areas which are used as firewood. The cut fields are left to dry in the gradually warming sun of February and March until it is finally burnt for cultivation. Male members start preparing for the new fields by collecting bamboos and prefabricating it into mats and other structural parts which will be used in the construction of field huts (*alu chen/ alu thi*) in the fields. The villagers coordinate many of their agricultural activities and the burning is another instance, which demands coordination. Since all the plots are adjacent to one another it is impossible to burn one field without burning the neighbors as well. Just few days before setting fire, a mass social work is

organized where a representation of one member from each household is a must. Their task is to encircle the field by making a clearing path between the uncut forests to prevent the uncut areas from burning. After burning the field, the ground is cleared of charred woods with the help of a tool known as *keeya* which is made of bamboo with fingers like feature at one hand with a long handle.

It is observed that construction of field hut is a must even today. In the olden days rituals and propitiations are made in the new fields so that the evil influence of any animals burned in the jungle/field may be powerless and that bumper crops and good health may be granted. But, presently with the advent of Christianity such sacrifices are no more practice. It was also customary that the rich man's hut should be built first before the start of cultivation, as the villagers believe that they are endowed with prosperity (*aaren*). They also performed numbers of agriculture related rituals like *tenten*, *melong*, *jangpetmelep* etc (the details are given in the chapter 'Religious Organization'). Today such beliefs and practices are no more prevalent in the village.

Sowing of paddy is done in the month of March to early April. The method of sowing for the *looti* and *aben cultivations* is different. In the former the crops are drop in separate furrows and the displaced earth automatically covers the subsequent furrows. Normally 2 to 3 inches are kept in between

each furrows, so as to enable the grains to grow freely and healthy. In case of *aben* cultivation, grains are covered indiscriminately and cover with earth. Thus, many a times the grains are unevenly scattered making some area thick and some scanty and the production is less. They use different varieties of paddy in the two fields. In *lozen/ looti* they use bigger paddy known as *jakja* and in *bün/ abün* smaller paddy known as *manen* is used. They stated that *jakja* grows well in fertile soil, where as *manen* can be grown in less fertile soil also.

Once the shoots began to sprout out, the most important task is to initiate weeding. The first phase of weeding is called *manuya* which begins in the latter part of May, when the grains are grown about 2 to 3 inches tall. They consider this stage as one of the easiest in the process of jhum cultivation. A tool known as *alulum/ aya* is used for this purpose. Earlier it was bamboo made *aya*, but today they used *aya* made of metal, that are easily available in the nearby market. Removing of weeds demands considerable skills. They starts working from the bottom of the field and work up the hill side so that whenever the land is steep it is easier to work on the patch that is somewhat above the level of their feet. Rain become increasingly frequent through out the month of May and June, but work still continue even in the rain, in the heaviest showers they take refuge in the hut in the field.

The second phase of weeding begins in mid-summer when the weather is very hot and humid. They consider this period as the most difficult and labour intensive because if due attention is not given; there are chances of weeds overtaking the grains leading to poor production.

The third phase is simpler, as they remove only the leftover weeds to make harvest easier. The paddy harvest begins in early September. The grains are cut with a sickle known as *lai* and are placed in small bunches. These are immediately collected in large baskets called *malei chilmalei ki* and disposed in the hut. Once a huge amount is collected, they start separating the grains from the stalk by stamping or sometimes with the help of a stick. If the fields are not far from the village, the harvested paddy are brought manually or otherwise by hired vehicles in case of far off fields. Presently, the village is connected with roads which make life easier for the cultivators specially for bringing of the produce from the fields. They grow almost everything in the jhum field for their requirement. Paddy *tsük/ ajak* is their main crop besides, they also cultivate vegetables like *ami* (yum), *mafu* (pumpkin), *pento* (brinjal), *poka* (chord), *longkok* (bitter gourd), *lolee* (long beans), *pingana* (tomato), *merütsü* (chili), *süngmok* (ginger) etc. The paddy is stored in the granaries called *chen lati*. The villagers also cultivate fields near the village known as *Ongpanglu* where varieties of vegetables are cultivated.

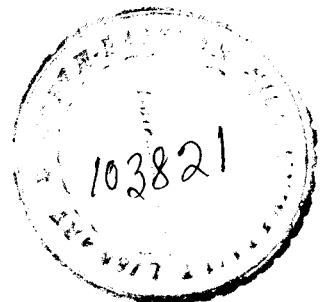


Table I shows the gender activities and participation in agriculture.

**TABLE I**  
**GENDER ACTIVITIES & PARTICIPATION IN JHUM CULTIVATION**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Participated by</b>
1	Clearing/cutting of the selected plot for cultivation ( <i>alu ajiba/ alu tsüba</i> )	Mostly by males though women also render their support.
2	Burning ( <i>alu arongba/ alu rongba</i> )	The entire male members of the village take part.
3	Sowing ( <i>tsük azüngba/ ajak lüngba</i> )	Both males and females participate though females participation is more required
4	Weeding ( <i>manuya</i> )	Both male and female participate
5	Harvesting ( <i>aluaruba/ alu zheba</i> )	Both males and females participate. It is the time when children participation is highly required.

Source: Field work 2002

Another important characteristic of the agricultural practice is the co-ordination among the villagers in the form of exchange of labour. It is interesting to note that if any families lag behind the rest of the villagers due to prolong sickness or death, the *kin* (clan) members initiate a collective work to enable the family to catch up with the rest. Another form of exchange of labour, they called *yangteba* is normally between friends. They work on each

others field alternatively and this form of labour is required most in the second phase of weeding and harvesting.

It may be noted that in the village there is no particular group specified as labourers, because labour is often combined with other occupation. Thus it is difficult to estimate how many households are engaged in labour occupation. The regular wage labourers are mostly from other tribes who are employed in agricultural activities. At present the villagers have the wage laborers from the Konyak tribes. Rs.100/- and Rs.70/- are paid for men and women respectively. However, the amount paid to the labourers varies according to the nature of work.

As far as land ownership is concerned, it may be broadly classified into three categories i.e. common village land, clan land and private land. Common village land is owned and managed by the village council, clan land owned and managed by a particular clan and individual land managed by individuals. The basis of decision-making regarding landholding, usage, management and inheritance of land is closely linked with the social and kinship structure of the village. About 70% of the total area constitutes clan land. The private land has also emerged within a broad framework of the clan land. The common village land constitutes those areas which are not suitable for cultivation. Any villager can use part of this land with due permission from the village council *Samen*. There are twelve areas demarcated as cultivable

area known as *chaok* and every year *Samen* indicate which *chaok* has to be cultivated. It may be stated that selling of the land to the outsiders is not known although it takes place within and among villagers. The tradition of sharing is so well established in the village that the landless people are engage in agricultural work on the land provided by the land owners and these constitutes the basis of economic and social ties between the different categories of the people. Mobility of landowners from the village has been taking place and today most of the landowners are settled outside the village. However, if any clan members stay away from the village, the remaining members looks after the land, and if any part of the land is to be utilized; the absentee landowners is being consulted.

It is observed that the villagers have also learnt the art of cultivating variety of cash crops. During the field work 40 families were enumerated to have engaged in passion fruit cultivation. Usually passion fruit are cultivated in the forest adjacent to the village, and the plot constitute about one acre. The seeds are sown in a small plot of land during October to November before it is being transferred to the actual plot for nurturing after the shoots sprout about five to six inches tall. The demand of labour is comparatively less and once the fruits are ripe, it can be sold out in huge quantity to the outside market. However many informants expressed dissatisfaction about the market prospect for passion fruits.

Tomato cultivation bring significant amount of income to many in the village. They stated that tomato cultivation is good income generating.

#### *Case study 1*

Aren age 50 has four children and all his children are studying in Mokokchung town. He stated that he prefers to cultivate other vegetables rather than paddy. As such every year he and his wife cultivate large plot of land exclusively for vegetables. He stated 'during mid-summer when there is flood in Assam the entire Mokokchung town people depend on local products. Thus income and demand becomes progressively high particularly at this season'. He stated 'accurate income cannot be figured out however, about Rs. 20,000/-Rs.30,000/ is benefited annually from tomato alone'.

#### *Case study 2*

This is a case of Atiba, a widower, age 50 years and a father of three children. His wife expired about ten years ago. He is IV grade government servant. He stated 'since the salary is very less so I decided to cultivate tomato as it demands less labour and is income generating. Seeds are procured from Mokokchung town. Tomatoes are in great demand during mid-summer when nothing can be brought from Assam due to flood'.

## **NON- AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY:**

### **ANIMAL HUSBANDRY**

The importance of animal husbandry in the economy of any tribal society is high and the Longkhum village is no exception. Almost every family rear pigs and fowls, however rearing of goats and cows are not common. During the field study 210 families reared pigs and 322 families reared fowls. Only 4 families are found to rear cows and 5 family's goats.

The traditional system of rearing pigs and fowls have changed. Today they no longer keep pigs in their house nor let them roam about in the village. The villagers build shed *ak ki/ aok ki* away from their houses for pigs and for fowls *anula ki /an ki* they build adjacent to their house. Fowls are feed on the grains produce in the field. Pigs are feed on the products like grains, yam and other wild products. They keep both local and hybrid breed of pigs. However hybrid breeds are more preferred as the demand for hybrid piglets are higher.

#### ***Case study 3***

Chuba, an IV grade Government servant and his wife Naro have four children. His wife is very hard working that every year they cultivate two fields of large plots. Besides they also rear pigs for commercial purpose. They sell piglets at the rate of Rs. 1000/- and also adult pigs are sold as per the rate fixed by Village Council. She stated 'rearing of pigs is very tiring task

specially having two fields to look after simultaneously, however having the two fields, we need not spend anything on fodder’.

In the olden days rearing of such animals were more of socio-cultural than economic purposes. For instance the socio-religious ceremonies related to birth, marriage, feast, death etc would not be completed without the sacrifice of domestic animals. A new house side or fields required the sacrifice of pigs and fowls; thus rearing of the animals was a must for every family in the village. Animals were also sacrificed in order to appease the concerned deity or spirit that causes illness, the details of which I have explained in the chapter ‘Religious organization’. However with the advent of Christianity, the villagers neither sacrifice pigs and fowls for one’s sickness nor do they sacrifice in the field for good and bumper harvest. Pigs are slaughtered in large number during Christmas, marriage etc. Dogs are also rear by some families particularly for guarding the house, hunting and also for consumption.

Today it is observed that animal husbandry brings significant amount of money to the family as these are reared mostly for commercial purposes. Domestic animals like pigs, fowl, cows etc plays a considerable role in the economic life of the villagers. Today piglets of one month old are sold at the rate of Rs.1000/- and fowls are sold between the range of Rs. 60/- to Rs. 150/-.

## **WEAVING**

Earlier one of the most important duty of a woman was weaving. Weaving is considered as women's work and every woman were expected to know the art of weaving and provide the needs of the household. Initially cotton was seeded by rolling a round stick over it on a flat stone. Later on they used a little seeding machine that was imported from Assam. The machine consists of two wooden rollers geared to revolve in opposite direction. After being seeded it is rolled and make ball for spinning. The spindle consists of a long pre-shaped piece of wood with a stone spindle whorl. The stones are ground to the proper shape on the other stones and bored with spear-bull twirled between the hands. The thread collects above the stone until the spindle is full. It is then taken off and damped with cold water and vigorously pounded and after being socked in starch, it is dried and rolled into a ball, making it ready for weaving. For dyeing they used an extract of leaves known as *strobilanthes flaccidefolius* locally termed as *mosak* Thus in the olden days women weaved cloths out of cotton yarn prepared by them for domestic consumption.

The present generation hardly grows cotton due to easy availability of varieties of yarn in the markets. They use ready made threads of varying colours, shades and quality. For warping they use well furnished timber-frame known as *takrotung*. The other tools used are *anem*, *sümlong*, *anet*, and *api*.

These are made of bamboo and timbers which are normally made by their male counterparts from the materials procured locally. The design of traditional shawl is simple which involve only two colors of yarn i.e. black and dark blue. However traditional mekhlas are rather complicated as the design are numerous and involves many colours.

It is observed that today, only few women involves in weaving as varieties of cloths are readily available in the markets. This has however resulted in increase of dependency. The traditional cloths are now largely replaced by modern dresses. Today the village has a Weaving Cooperative Society looked after by Village Development Board (Women). They weave all types of modern shawls and mekhlas. However today many women do not know art of weaving as varieties of shawls and mekhlas are available.

## **BASKETRY**

The villagers make baskets from the material available in the village vicinity. They make different kind of baskets for household and agricultural purposes. Normally basketry is considered as men's work however some women do know the art of basketry. Basket such as *chi/ akhi* which are used for carrying paddy and agriculture products are made of bamboos and canes. *Mülök* is a closely knitted basket for storing vegetables and carrying paddy too. *Kho/ akho* are also a basket made of bamboos and canes for carrying firewood and vegetables. They also make mats known as *pakti/ apak* out of

bamboo for drying paddy, *bür/ apa* for cleaning rice. It is observed that the contribution of basketry in income generation is less significant however, it suffice to meet their basic requirements.

## **CARPENTRY**

In the olden day people were skillful wood-worker. The conventional figures of men, tiger, hornbills, pythons, mithun head etc were very common adornment of the *ariju* (male dormitory) post. They use timber in construction of houses and do not require any special tool or training in carpentry. However through experience they have learnt the art of construction and other carpentry works. They also make agricultural tools and implements out of bamboos and wood. These kinds of works are expected to be known by all males. During field study only 29 men were found to the art of carpentry. With the change of time carpentry has become easier and less taxing. Today electrical appliance for cutting, carving and polishing are available in the markets. With the help of these machines the villagers are able to make beautiful furnitures, statuette etc. Today, though carpentry is not yet fully developed as an occupation in the village, yet it serves as an additional source of income to the villagers.

## **TRADE**

The establishment of Mokokchung as a Sub-Division in 1890 has opened up opportunities for trading. Prior to this trade was based on barter

system. The villagers bartered with other Ao village like the Changki, and other tribes like the Lothas, the Konyaks and the Phom. It may be worthwhile to examine briefly the exchange mechanism through which this is brought about. The agricultural product is exchange with other neighboring tribes such as the Semas and the Lothas and in return they get produces like soyabeans from the Semas, and dry bamboo shoots and dry chilies from the Lothas. The villagers used the currency locally termed as *Adongmia* and it is stated that 8 *atongmia* was equivalent to a rupee. Before 1940's a rupee could purchased 30 kgs of rice. During that time rice and salt were of same value and they could purchase 30 kilograms of salt for a rupee in Assam. One kilogram of dry fish cost only one *adongmia*. Thus, one rupee was sufficient for purchasing ample amount of salt, dry fish, tobacco leaves etc. The nearest market for procuring salt was Assam. It took about three to four days journey to reach Assam on foot which was indeed a difficult task for the people.

The villagers considered themselves incomplete unless they possess a spear ornamented with a red goat's hair, and these shafts were brought from Longla. The Longla people were known for repairing iron tools. The villagers exchanged their worn out doas with the Longla people and they in return provide new ones.

The establishment of Mokokchung as District headquarters which is 20 kms away from the village and the improvement in transport and

communication system has paved the way for trading which enabled selling and buying easier for the villagers. They are able to sell their agriculture products and fruits to the wholesalers at Mokokchung. It is surprising to see none of the villagers engage in the daily bazaar in spite of the village being near the district headquarter. One of the main reasons behind this is their reserved nature. On being asked as to why they are not taking advantage, most of them stated that engaging in such daily bazaar requires the art to sell and attract customers which they do not possessed.

#### *Case study 4*

Alemla age 48 said 'behaving and talking sweet languages to attract customer is a very difficult task for me'. She jokingly remarked 'if I sit in daily bazaar sweet vegetables may appear bitter and sour to the customer because of my language'.

#### *Case study 5*

Naro age 58 years is a hard working woman. Every year she cultivates two fields. She said 'vegetable produced in the field are huge enough to sell in the market however since olden days we have no such practices. So I feel awkward to involve in such activities. I sell off my products in bulk to the wholesalers'.

At present the villagers are engaged in different occupations, however agriculture continues to be the mainstay for many.

**TABLE II**  
**OCCUPATION OF THE VILLAGERS**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>No of families</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Agriculturalists	215	63.24%
2	Traders or business	30	8.82%
3	Government servants	95	27.94%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field work 2002

The above table shows the number of household engaged in different occupations. 27.94% constitute the number of people engaged in 'white collared' occupations. They are school teachers, dispensary staff, water supply staff, power staff etc. Some of them work in Mokokchung town while others in Alichen sub-division (about 5 Kms away from the village) or elsewhere. However, 63.24% of the family constitutes agriculturists who depend entirely on it for their sustenance.

The present study reveals that the form of cultivation has not transformed from shifting to settle. With regard to animal husbandry, in the past, keeping animals was mainly for food and sacrifices; today it is evident that its economic value has considerably increased. Besides agriculture, there are various sources of income which bring money to the family. It may be noted that village economy has improved with the change of time. In fact, today the village economy has changed from subsistence economy to cash economy. However, such change has brought certain change in the behaviours and relationship among the villagers. Traditionally, reciprocity between neighbours and kin groups was a common phenomenon. Agricultural surplus were shared among them but today due to high demands from the markets and the need for money, they have become more commercial.

With improvement in transport and communication, opening of markets in the nearby town etc, the village economy has improved to a great extent. However since olden days, the village economy has never been self-sufficient. They have to depend on other villages or tribes for one thing or the other. For instance, salt, earthen pot, iron etc were procured from elsewhere. Even today, inspite of so many changes and improvement, their economy is still far from self-sufficiency. The idyllic set up of the villages as self-sufficient is just a myth for the people of this village.

## CHAPTER V

### POLITICAL ORGANISATION

#### VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

The organization of village is based on two main principles. First the whole village is divided into age-groups to which the various communal duties are assigned. Secondly the control of affairs lies with a council. The system of age- group is described as follows:

The boys after attaining 9 years of age get registered in the *tsuir* which is the entry point. They are referred as the beginner, and helper of the *ariju* (male dormitory). The *tsuir* group is expected to behave well towards their seniors, failing which they are penalized. They are responsible for providing all the basic requirements for the *ariju* members like, firewood, water etc. They are also engaged in supplying torches in lighting the *ariju* and when the seniors are out to visit girls' dormitory at night, the *tsuir* group provide torches and escorted them to their destination. The seniors meanwhile share pleasantries with the girls of their choice; the *tsuir* group sits and waits until the seniors arrived. Thus, the first four years are spend in providing manual services to the seniors. The young men learn about the need to follow rules in order to survive in hostile surroundings. They are also taught the history, beliefs and practices of the village and also correct form of

address in an assembly, the right way of narrating stories, singing songs and ballads etc. Besides they are also taught basic arts, handicrafts etc.

After completing four years in the *tsuir* group they are promoted to the second group *tenapang*. By the time they enter this group they are equipped with all the basic knowledge of the customs and traditions, they are to supervise the junior group.

After they complete four years in this group *tenapang* they are promoted to *sangmen*. After the completion of four years they are promoted to the fourth and the highest group *juzen*. The moment they complete four years in the *juzen*, they form a *foso* (age-group). Thus whoever has registered in the *tsuir* during the completion of this process will fall in that particular *foso*. Therefore in one *foso* there is an age gap of 16 years between elders and the younger ones. The batch that registers in the *ariju* subsequent upon the formation of one *foso* are more privileged because, they will be the elders in their *foso* and similarly the moment they complete four years in the fourth step all the members in the *ariju* will form the next *foso*. This is a continuous process as every year new entrant's register in the *ariju* and follows the same cycle. There are five *foso*- *Medemjanger*, *Müjenjanger*, *Mevongjanger*, *Kochajanger*, and *Riyongjanger* and these five *foso* rules the village in a rotative manner. One *foso* rules the village for thirty years.

The members of the reigning *foso* are referred as *Samen* (Village Council). The *Samen* is in charge of overall administration of the village. There is no higher authority above the *Samen*. All the matters relating to law, justice, administration, civil, criminal, etc are taken care by the *Samen*. As there is no compartmentalization between secular and religion, people consider the *Samen* as sacred. In the *Samen* there is a group known as 'elders' and under their leadership the *Samen* rule the village. The 'elders' are designated on the basis of age, moral and ethical standards and ability for leadership and service. A man's social standings depended largely on his merits as a member of that group. As an individual in a family, he may not have much to boast of by way of worldly possessions, nor may he belong to the major clans. But if such a person had learned the art of social interaction, is articulate in public and knowledgeable in the lore of the people, then he is accorded with merit and recognition and is held in high esteem by his peers. Each clan therefore should choose members who would be able to safeguard their interest in the council and would be able to discharge their official duties in such a manner as to uphold the dignity and prestige of the clan. There is no greater shame than to be recalled on the grounds of being thieves, liars, and adulterers.

Each clan are represented in the category 'elders' and each clan unanimously chooses their representatives on the basis of age, moral and ethical standards and ability for leadership and service. Members to be

represented should have no physical deformities, should be trustworthy, hardworking and responsible. The fundamental principle of clan division facilitates the political organization of community life among the people and assured the smooth running of the village.

Among the 'elders' there is a kind of hierarchy, the highest in the hierarchy are called *Sami*. *Sami* will be represented by two members, one from the *atsüng* phratry and one from the *rapi* phratry. They are allotted the portion of the 'hind limb' of every kill of pig by the council.

The next in the hierarchy is the *Tütüm*. *Tütüm* will also be represented by two members, one from the *atsüng* phratry and another from the *rapi* phratry. They are allotted the 'fore limb'.

The third in the hierarchy is the *Tüküng* which is represented by three members, two from the *atsüng* phratry and one from the *rapi* phratry. They are allotted the neck portion.

The fourth in the hierarchy is the *rüdi*. This is represented by two members, one from the *atsüng* phratry and another from the *rapi* phratry. They are allotted the portion of the large intestine of pig killed by the council.

The fifth in the hierarchy is the *Rüza*. This is represented by two people, one from the *atsüng* phratry and one from the *rapi* phratry. They are allotted small intestine of pig.

The sixth in the hierarchy is the *pangmi*. This is represented by two members, one from the *atsüng* phratry and one from the *rapi* phratry. They are allotted the portion of the stomach, heart, liver etc.

The last in the hierarchy is the *yangar mendi* which is represented by a person, who is least fortunate. For example, he may be either an orphan, single, handicapped etc. The head of pig is allotted to him.

The Chairman and Secretary are selected from the 'elders' for a term of five years, taken into consideration both the *chungli* and *mongsen* group and all clans in the village. Thus, under their leadership the *Samen* (village council) rules the village for thirty years. After they complete thirty years of rule the next *foso* takes over.

The transition from one *foso* to another is a very well planned affair. The *Samen tsüngni* is the day considered significant for the villager as it marks the beginning of a new era in the village administration which is for a term of thirty years. Each clan selects its representatives well ahead of time. Meat and drink will be set aside for the day when the changeover would take

place. There is feasting and drinking and recounting of village history, important events are remembered, friendship and enmity with other villagers recounted. There is singing and general rejoicing. The reigning *foso* bless the new *foso* and the changeover takes place. The day is also marked by contribution and distribution of meats among the new and the outgoing *foso*. On that day the new *foso* bring a pig each and the *Sami* from *atsüing* phratry contribute a cow. The meat are distributed to the 'elders' as per the allotment as cited above. The remaining portions are distributed among the rest of the council members. It is customary that a cow and three pigs are given to their predecessor.

Girls also follow the same trend as boys and they are also part of the *foso*, however they have no direct role to play as far as administration of the village is concerned.

Even today the same tradition is followed, and the registration in the *ariju* is marked by paying Rs.20/- to the next *foso* who are in charge of it. Though *ariju* in practice is no more in existence in the village, however they continue to follow the tradition in principle. The tradition is such that whether a member of the village is in the elder group or middle, or younger in their *foso* they all will be part of the *Samen* during their reign. However thirty years of rule by one *foso* is too long for many people to wait and it is stated that many people die before their turn comes.

## **POWERS AND FUNCTION OF SAMEN (VILLAGE COUNCIL):**

The *Samen* (Village Council) is headed by a Chairman who is one among the 'elders'. And he will be assisted by a Secretary who is also chosen from the 'elders'. The Chairman is selected from the *chungli* and *mongsen* group alternatively for tenure of five years. Similarly is the case of the Secretary. The *Samen* performs the role of an elected assembly to look after the welfare and security of the people living in the village and ensure that friendly relations are maintained with the neighboring villages. The *Samen* enjoys a wide range of power concerning the running of the village affairs and is entrusted with a variety of duties.

The *Samen* act as court of appeal and all the council members pronounce judgment to decide over the case. It is the duty of the *Samen* to frame the rules and regulations concerning civil, criminal and tradition-related cases and also to ensure that offenders are duly punished. Since the norm regarding this is embodied in the primary tradition itself, there is uniformity in the dispensation of justice. It is because of this that the British administrators have recognised the validity of these laws. Mills records.....'but wherever possible the principle is strictly observed of interfering with local custom as little as possible. In dealing with disputes even the customary procedure is followed'. .....for instance, in an Ao village, cases, save

when so serious as to make an immediate report to the Sub-Divisional Officer imperative, are heard and adjudicate upon by the council of elders, a practice which helps to prevent the decay of their authority and sense of responsibility (1926:406). After independence under the constitution of India, provision for safeguarding social and religious practices, customary justice and landed property of the Nagas are included under Article 371 (A), one may add here that this greatly facilitates smooth administration at the village level.

It may also be noted that the system of administration through the *Samen* was such an ancient tradition that to upset it would have meant a serious dislocation of an entire system of life, and might have created an enormous problems for the British. Thus Mills' records 'The Indian Panel Code and the codes of Criminal and Civil procedure are not in force in the Naga Hills, the Magistrate being required to administer justice in the spirit of the codes and not by their letters' (1926:406).

Most disputes were settled within the villages by the village council according to the customary laws; however some cases may be appealed to the court of the magistrate. In order to adjudicate over such cases, the British appointed certain handpicked men to act as interpreters and were requested to advice the magistrate on custom. These men were called Dobhashis and they have a separate court called The Dobhashis' court. Besides, Headman or Goanburas were also appointed to act as go-between and the village.

However, it may be noted that traditionally, the village administration was carried out by the village council guided by the Ao Customary Laws.

The village administration is carried out by the *Samen* guided by the customary Laws. These laws encompass every aspect of village life. They deal with civil and criminal cases, land disputes within the village and between neighboring villages. Norms about marriage, divorce and inheritance are also encoded in these laws. Though there may be slight variations in the settlement of cases, there is fundamental uniformity on all vital issues. The laws are therefore valid even today and though people go to the court established under the constitution of India, by and large, village level cases are heard and adjudicate under these laws.

The executive and judiciary powers of the *Samen* in the village may be summarized as under:

### **EXECUTIVE POWERS**

The *Samen* controls the entire administration of the village which includes students union, youth organization and women societies. The *Samen* also supervises and controls the Village Development Board (VDB) to ensure that the VDB implement developmental works effectively. It also initiates audit on VDB's developmental works and for audition the *Samen* appoints auditors and the reports made by the auditors can either be

approved or rejected by the *Samen*. It is the duty of the *Samen* to frame the rules and regulations concerning internal, external and traditional related cases and also to ensure that offenders are duly punished. They are;

1. To examine village funds *yim saru*. *Yim saru* involved a contribution of a basket of rice by every family in the village.
2. Initiate collection of household tax *kilen saru*, water supply tax *atsü chen* collection of tax on council properties.
3. To formulate and supervise village development schemes and to supervise proper maintenance of water supply, electricity, roads, forests, education and other welfare activities.
4. To help various government agencies in carrying out developmental works in the village.
5. To pursue and request government to take up developmental works in the village.
6. To borrow money from government banks or financial institutions to initiate development and welfare works of the village.
7. To apply for and receive grand-in-aid, donations, subsidies from the government and other agencies.
8. To constitute Village Development Board.
9. To recommend for appointment of Secretary, VDB who is appointed by Deputy Commissioner Mokokchung on the recommendation of the *Samen*.

10. To lend money from VDB accounts to deserving permanent residents of the village and to obtain repayment thereof with or without interest.
11. To provide security for due repayment of loan received by any permanent residents of the village from the government, banks or financial institutions.
12. To enter into any loan agreement with the government bank and financial institutions or a permanent residents of the village.
13. To raise funds for utility service within the village.
14. To demarcate land for jhum cultivation (*jaok or long*)
15. Power to initiate preventive measures on the event of epidemic in the village.
16. Authority to accept or decline invitation of official guests from outside.

Besides having duties and responsibilities in the village, the members of the *Samen* have certain duties in the larger political network. Nine members of the *Samen* are chosen as Gaonburas who act as mediator between the *Samen* and the district administration. During the colonial period the Gaonburas were chosen by the Britishers on the basis of knowledge of customary laws. Today the *Samen* are able to choose their representatives which of course need the approval of the District administration. Gaonbura are identified by a red shawl which is specifically meant for them a tradition started by the British.

## **JUDICIARY POWERS**

Judiciary powers of the *Samen* include:

1. To settle all the cases effectively including criminal cases involving inter village feuds were settled amicably between the villages concerned.
2. It is responsible for maintaining law and order situation in the village and in serious cases offender may be arrested and handed over to the nearest Police Station without delay.
3. It also act as a court of appeal in which all council members pronounce judgment to decide over the case.
4. Matters relating to land disputes, robbery, criminals etc. are settled and adjudicated in the village court.

In the village court the *Samen* act as advocates. However, the cases which are beyond the jurisdiction of the village court are brought to the District Magistrate Court. Any disputes or fights are resolved at the *khel* level or the village level. The disputes which remain unresolved at the village level are brought to the District Court.

Before the establishment of the District Magistrate Court, the village itself settled all the cases. However, when people are not satisfied with Village Court verdict, an alternative measure was undertaken in presence of the *Samen*. The claimants perform a ritual in front of the court witnessed by

the *Samen* and based on the outcome of the ritual the judgment was given. A brief illustration of the ritual is given below.

They called this ritual *komatakba* where the claimants are asked to cut the neck of one fowl each in front of the village court. The fowl is then hoisted on a long and pointed stick for thirty days. Meanwhile the village court act as a watchdog and observe the happenings till the stipulated times. Following are the conditions on the basis of which judgment is given.

- Failing to cut the neck of the fowl at the first stroke
- Blood stains in the dao
- Fowl mauled by tigers or any animals within the stipulated time
- Untoward incidence like accidents or deaths in the family.

They believed that if any of the above mentioned occurrences is observed, they are considered the culprit and nobody dares to overlook this judgment. However such traditional practices are no more followed.

The *Samen* also has the power to impose fines on the following offences:

1. Delivering wrong version of the (*livok lisang*) origin of the village in the public.

2. If anyone speaks out of turn during a council meeting and shows disrespect to it by doing so.
3. For not attending a general meeting of the village without any valid reason.
4. Makes public announcement in the village without prior permission of the *Samen*.
5. Fine are imposed on those who violate or disrupt inter-village peace treaty. For instance during the head-hunting days they were not allowed to hunt head from those village which are under the peace treaty with the village. If a person violates which they called *Aotsū* he had to pay heavy fines in terms of house-site, land etc.
6. For petty thefts, cash fines were imposed. For *aotsū* and robbery, fines were imposed by the *Samen*.
7. For creating public nuisance in the village through open quarrel.
8. Fines also impose in case of land disputes *kimong lomong raktepba*
9. It also has to power to impose fines for thefts *aomet*.
10. For non- payment of village taxes.
11. For general misconduct in public and bringing bad name to the village.

## **FUNCTIONS OF OTHER LOCAL BODIES:**

Besides, the *Samen*, there are two bodies known as *Yim Mungdang* (Village Conference) and *Senso Mungdang* (General Village Citizens Conference). *Yim Mungdang* is held every year where only the residents of the village assemble. While *Senso Mungdang* is held once in three years where all villagers both residents and non-residents of the village get together.

*Mongsen langbajang* is the venue where both Conferences are held. It is located in the middle of the village. All male adults are entitled to participate in both the Conferences failing which fines are imposed. The Officers of the Conference includes President, Vice-President, General Secretary, and Assistant General Secretary who are chosen by the *Senso Mungdang* for tenure of three years. The Officers should not be a member of the *Samen*.

Agendas for discussion are introduced in the conference and the members attended are allowed to present their views. In adopting decision the consensus of all the clans are drawn forth. If any citizen has violated the norms of the village before or during the conference, such cases are discussed at length and appropriate actions are imposed. Enforcement of laws and orders including the functional actions undertaken by the *Samen* are presented in the conference for the endorsement of the entire village citizen.

They also examine the undertakings of the *Samen* and discuss about all matters relating to the welfare of the villagers.

## **RELATIONSHIP OF THE VILLAGE WITH DISTRICT & STATE ADMINISTRATION:**

The village administration basically looks after the welfare of the village, executes welfare and development scheme, advices and assists for promoting normalcy and settle inter-village dispute within its jurisdiction. The village administration maintains certain relationship with the District and State at large. With the implementation of development plans and projects by the State Government, the *Samen* approach the District Deputy Commissioner for approval and sanctioning of funds. It also assists and advice the Deputy Commissioner in matter relating to maintenance of law and order.

The village has representatives in the District administration. Nine members of the *Samen* are chosen by the council with the approval of Deputy Commissioner. They are referred as Gaonbura who act as mediator between the *Samen* and the district administration. For the selection of the Secretary, Village Board Development, the approval of Deputy Commissioner is required on the advice of the *Samen*.

Even in judiciary context, the village administration maintains considerable relationship with District administration. The *Samen* generally settles all cases effectively. Criminal cases involving inter-village feuds were settled amicably between villages concerned. However the disputes which remained unsolved at the village level are brought to the District Court.

The village, District and State government work side by side. For the development of the village, Village Development Board (VDB) coordinates with the State government. The State government provide fund to the VDBs in the form of grant-in-aid and matching cash grant and additional grant in aid. Grant-in-aid is allocated to every tax paying households. In this scheme the VDB (Women) gets 25% and the Youth Organization gets 20% from the total allocation of the VDB fund. It is mandatory to have fixed deposit at the rate of Rs.10, 000/- in the VDB account from villages having less than 50 households and Rs. 20,000/- from villages having more than 50 households. Another form of grant from the State government to the village is matching cash grant. In this scheme the VDB put money in fixed deposit for five years and the fund is to be raised by the village. The minimum year to attain maturity is five years. On the basis of fund raised by the village, the State government grant equivalent amount of grant to the VDB. This money is utilized as security for availing loans from government and other financial institution. Additional grant in aid is utilized for construction purpose, training and other VDB functionaries.

Though the village enjoys autonomy in many aspects, the influence of the larger political system cannot be undermined. Since British rule the village has been entwined with the larger political and administrative set up and after India attained independence, the participation in Indian politics become more prominent. Late Chubatemsu from the village was elected as the first MLA from Nagaland in erstwhile Assam Government. After Nagaland attained Statehood, the participation increased. So far three candidates from this village i.e Late Tiayanger Jamir from Naga National Organization (NNO), Late Dally Namo from United Democratic Front (UDF), and Late Nokyu Longchar from Congress I has represented as members in Nagaland Legislative Assembly.

The present study reveals that there have been some changes in the village administration. However the traditional village administration system still continues. The *Samen* (Village Council) headed by Chairman and secretary is considered to be the most powerful administrative body in the village. The *Samen* exercise both executive and judiciary powers in the village administration.

Though the village enjoys autonomy in many aspects, the influence of the larger political system cannot be undermined. Since British rule the village has been entwined with the larger political and administrative set up.

From the *Samen*, nine members are designated as Goanboras who will act as mediator between village and the District administration. In order to adjudicate over cases related on traditional and customary, the British appointed certain handpicked men to act as interpreters Dobhashis and were requested to advice the magistrate on customs.

Even after India attained independence, the village continues to remain under the administration of the *Samen*. However the village administration maintains considerable relationship with District administration. The *Samen* generally settles all cases effectively. Criminal cases involving enter-village feuds were settled amicably between the villages concerned. However the disputes which remained unsolved at the village level are brought to the District Court.

It may also be noted that today the village has become a part and parcel of larger political network. The village, District and State government work side by side. For development of village, Village Development Board coordinates with the State government. The State government provide fund to the village through Village Development Board in the form of grant-in-aid and matching cash grant and additional grant in aid. The participation of the villagers in the national and the State politics becomes prominent since attainment of Indias' independence and Statehood of Nagaland.

## CHAPTER VI

### RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION

#### TRADITIONAL BELIEF SYSTEM:

The traditional belief system of the village is based on the fundamental belief in the existence of supernatural powers. The belief in the existence of the God or gods forms the core of the belief system and it is the guiding principle of their conduct in life. Traditionally they believed in the existence of several gods or *Tsüngrem* who are associated with creation, keeper of the land of dead, mountains, stones, rivers, forests, etc. They believed that these gods are the fountain of all blessings for human beings and that he provides them protection and prosperity. Therefore each individual is enjoined to revere God and conduct his/her personal life to merit his blessings.

*Lijaba* is believed to be the creator of the earth and all living things and vegetation upon it. He is powerful and he causes natural calamities too when he is displeased with man. A person may earn *Lijaba's* blessings or incur his wrath according to his attitudes towards him. *Lijaba* is believed to reside below the earth and is responsible for everything that happens on earth.

*Tsüngrem* known as *Meyutsüngba* is believed to be the 'God of the land of dead'. He is considered to be the God of justice as he judges the souls when they reach his gate to enter the land of the dead. Every person is judged and awarded merit or punishment by *Meyutsüngba* according to ones deeds on earth. *Meyutsüngba* is the God of Righteousness and so he demands a just life, purity, high moral, ethical standards and honesty. That is why the qualities of honesty and truthfulness were so assiduously emphasized upon in the traditional society. The judgment of *Meyutsüngba* is final and at his gate there is no scope for forgiveness or redemption. He is implacable and therefore there is no form of worship which is offered to him. At the gate of *Meyutsüngba* every sin will be revealed and disclosed for shame and punishment.

Apart from these gods there are hosts of other gods worshipped by the villagers. They are *kini Tsüngrem* (Homestead God), *Tsutsung Tsungrem* (Lake God), *Tsutha Tsungrem* (Lowland/ stagnant water God), *Tekong Tsungrem* (Mountain God), *Along Tsungrem* (Stone God), *Mosakni Tsungrem* (Indigo Cultivation Site God), *Kiniou Tsungrem* (Deserted Site God) and *Longlangba Tsungrem*. It is believed that if anyone neglects or insults the deities; these *Tsungrem* could wreak havoc upon the people through their powers. For instance, it is believed that *Longlangba Tsungrem*, acts dangerously in the form of thunderstorms when insulted or stumped on it.

When villagers are about to undertake any venture they first and foremost worshipped the God of *Longlangba* for protection and prosperity.

### **TRADITIONAL RITES & RITUALS:**

The Longkhum people worshipped *Lijaba* every year at a place called *achendang*. The worship place being located at the *Longchar's* land, the senior most member of the *Longchar* clan was entitled to lead in worshipping *Lijaba*. Therefore even if the Priest fell sick and was bedridden, his clan members would carry him to the *achendang* to perform the rituals. Rituals involved a pig which was sacrificed to evoke blessings of *Lijaba* for abundant rainfall to enable crops to grow healthy.

Besides, they also worshipped public wells especially when the water becomes scarce. Any ordinary persons cannot perform the rituals except a Priest. They offered the best fowls available in the village. There is sanctity attached to the Priesthood and the Priest is obliged to lead an ideal, moral life failing which it is believed that great calamities would befall to the entire village.

The cycle of worship and sacrifices mostly revolved around agriculture and forest as the people depend on natural environment for their daily requirements. Some important agriculture related rituals are given below:

**Melong:**

The ritual was performed the following day after burning the field for jhum cultivation. An egg was sacrifice to evoke blessings by all the families in the village in their respective fields. After performing the ritual, they are taboo from going near dead bodies or visit dead man's house for six days.

**Tenten:**

The ritual was performed by the village Priest on the onset of sowing where a cock was sacrificed. None of the villagers were allowed to initiate sowing prior to this ritual.

**Jangpet melep:**

The ritual was performed in their respective fields. After performing the ritual they established the worship place *apuo* in their fields. The *apuo* was made in front of the field house where 6 bamboo posts were erected for performing rituals. All rites and rituals related to the field were performed in *apuo*. The feathers of the sacrificed fowl were placed in the bamboo and two plates of meat (six pieces in one plate and 5 pieces in the other) were first sacrificed in the *apuo* and the remaining were shared and exchanged among the relatives. However the ritual was not compulsory as it involved the sacrifice of one pig and a fowl which many poor families in the village could not performed. Those families who could performed the ritual placed a leave

called *jangpet wa* at the door of their house. It signified that the family had performed the ritual.

Mountains are also worshipped by the villagers. There are five major mountains worshipped by the villagers in the olden days. Those were: *Longzaktejak Tenem* in the eastern side, *Sangpursokong Tenem* in the western side, *Inikong Tenem* in the north-east, and *Lailakong & Jangmetsükong Tenem* in the south-west of the village. Usually they worshipped these mountains on the eve of war for victory. They offered eggs to the first three mountains and fowls to the last two.

*Yim Külem* (Village worship) was performed thrice in a year. All the villagers participated in the *Yim Külem* lead by the village Priest.

### **Ritual for Birth**

There are no particular rituals or ceremonies related to birth. However, certain taboo is to be observed by both husband and wife when the wife is pregnant. They believed that a woman must be very careful when she is pregnant and abstain from all food forbidden to her. If she finds a tasty beetle in the fields she should not tuck it into her mekhla at the waist otherwise her child will be born with a birthmark. Pregnant women neither kill a snake nor a slow worm, as they believed that if they do so the child born will have deformities. It is also believed that both husband and wife should

abstain from eating or killing tortoise. A pregnant woman and her husband are debarred from eating twin bananas, or any twin fruits or vegetables for fear of birth of twins. It is observed that even today this believes continues.

Normally delivery of a child takes place at ones own house or at the parent's house. Usually a female companion assists the woman and those women who had complication during delivery are not allowed to visit, as they believed that the same might happen to expectant mother. As soon as the child is born the umbilical cord is cut by the female attendant and tied with a thread specially prepared for this. The placenta, *nuchem* is then buried with due care in the outskirts of the village. It is considered most important that the father should be present at the birth of the child or else delivery becomes difficult. Therefore, if husband happened to be away from home, he rushes back home as soon as he hear the news and be there for the delivery. On the second or the third day the child is given a name. If the child cried after the name is given, it is believed that the child does not agree with the name given to her or him. Thus an alternative name is given. The name should either be a name of an ancestor or new name, *naroküm*. A living relatives' name cannot be given nor would give the name of a person who had died at a young age or who had died of *menen* (unnatural dead). It is believed that if child becomes weak and ailing, it signifies that the name given to her/him is too great to bear and as such an alternative name is given.

### **Rituals for illness:**

Before Christianity, every sickness was considered due to the influence of evil spirits. When a person falls sick, the family in consultation with diviners *Rachenlar* *Arasentsur* offered pigs, fowls, dogs, eggs and drinks to *Tsüngrem*. They categorized sickness into names according to the nature and offer sacrifice accordingly. When a person suffers from a protracted illness, it is believed that the soul of the patient is captured by evil spirit of the place where he or she had explored and offerings of eggs, cocks and pigs were made to appease evil spirits.

The following are the rituals related to illness.

#### ***Renten:***

*Renten* is the first ritual performed for any prolonged illness. Before initiation of the ritual they first approached the diviner *rachenlar* to make sure about the place from where the sickness had been inflicted. Further, the family also asked the *rachenlar* who should perform the ritual. They referred this as *folang emvi*. The family would suggest some names and the *rachenlar* choose the person from the names suggested by the family. The performer will be accompanied by few people. They would go to the place as directed by the *rachenlar* and made *apuo* (ritual place) where six bamboo posts would be erected if the sick is a male and five bamboo posts for a female. This ritual involved a cock, an egg and a pig. In the *apuo*, they killed the animals and shells of the egg and the basket in which they brought the pig are all placed

on the bamboo erected in the *apuo*. The cooked meat was then offered to the *Tsüngrem* pleading for the early recovery of the sick. After performing the ritual, the food is shared among themselves while the remaining portion is given to the sick family.

***Rakie:***

After performing *renten* if the sick shows no improvement, they perform the next ritual *rakie*. In this ritual they follow the same procedures as that of the *renten*, however, in case of the *rakie*, the remaining meats are not given to the sick family as a sign of giving away all they have to the *Tsungrem*.

***Kitsüng Külem:***

The ritual does not involve the *rachenlar* or any other relatives except the family members. The ritual is performed when there is constant illness in the family though may not be very serious, *shilu manem*. The family would kill a pig and prepared a meal for the family. On that particular day, the whole family members remained indoors and were allowed to come out only after sunset.

Illness such as stomach pain, stomach upset, diarrhea or indigestion are considered due to the influence of the evil spirits in the house-site called *kitsüng Tsüngrem* (house-site deity). For such sickness, house-site

deity is pleased by releasing a cock or hen in the jungle on behalf of the victim. Every sicknesses and misfortunes were considered as the handiworks of the evil spirits and deities which cause sufferings to the villagers.

## **Medicine**

Today people prefer modern methods of treatment as it ensures more accurate diagnosis of various diseases, and moreover the healing process is faster. They no longer sacrifice animals for sickness; instead it is used to provide nutrients to the sick as well as those who are nursing. However, indigenous medicine like *nangbūra*, *tangma* etc are still used by the villagers for mild stomach upset, vomiting etc.

### *Case study 1*

This is a case of Alila, 20 years of age, who had stomach upset during Christmas. She stated 'due to excess consumption of meat I had diarrhea. So I boiled *nangbūra* leaves and added a tinge of *tangma* and consumed the preparation. This healed my stomach upset. I always believed in the efficacy of these indigenous medicines'.

With regard to certain cases like bone fractures they still follow the traditional methods of treatment, however this is done without any rituals. When people gets their hands, legs and other portions of their body fractured or dislocated they go to those experts, locally termed as *kobiraaz*. *Kobiraaz*

are able to know whether the bone is fractured or dislocated, and if the bone is fractured, the patient is taken to the hospitals for proper medical care. Both men and women could be a *kobiraaz*. At present there are about 9 to 10 *kobiraaz* in the village. Thus, it may be noted that people still adhere to indigenous treatment though without any rites and rituals.

### **Ritual for the Death:**

People believed in life after death. They believed in the existence of a place called *Asū Yim/ Diphu Lima*, which may be literary translated as the 'place of the Dead'. When the soul leaves the body, it is believed that it journeys towards the land of the death. They believed that the soul of the dead lingers near the body for six days in case of men and five days in case of women. Therefore, relatives of the dead offered food and drink to the dead in order to make him or her happy and contented to take the journey. Till today this belief still continues and the relatives never finished up everything that has been cooked in the house as they believe that the spirits of the dead would feel dejected when nothing has been left for them at home. On their way to the land of dead it is believed that they took bath in a stream called *Longritsu Enden*, which is just 2 or 3 kms away from the village. In the stream there is a huge flat stone and smaller one are placed on top of it which is believed to be used by the dead souls for grinding nuts (*külüng/sheing*) used as soap. It is a general belief among the Aos that every soul has to cross *Longritsu Enden*, and they believe that if someone other than this villagers

see Longkhum in their dream they would die soon. It is stated that even today people of other villages are reluctant to visit this village, as there is a general believe that if a person fails to visit the village three times consecutively their life gets shortened.

Having crossed the *Longritsu enden*, carrying ones load, which may be heavy or light depending on ones ethical and moral life, the dead man reaches the gate of *Meyutsungba*. Every soul has to walk down the streets of *Meyutsungba's* gate carrying the load of ones earthly deeds. It is believed that the good people's load is light while for the thieves and dishonest man the burden becomes heavy and faces difficulty to reach the destination.

In the olden days they kept the corpse rolled in a bamboo mat *abak/bakti* on a raised platform, four to eight feet high called *Lepchang*. They kept the dead bodies for six days in case of male and five days in case of female after which they are buried in the village cemetery. The corpse was kept in such a way that when the bamboo post gets rotten, the limbs should fall on the ground first. But if the head falls first on the ground the man is declared to have lived a dishonest life. Thus this grave falling *Leptsü* revealed whether the dead had lived an honest or dishonest life. Children who died during infancy are always put on a platform close to the relatives so that they would not feel lonely. They observed mourning period *Lükümong* of six days for men and five days for women.

No particular rituals are performed for the dead. However, when a child dies, the father would shout and cried aloud calling the child's' name. If any of the family members died coinciding with the felling and cutting of the jungle for the jhum cultivation, the villagers were refrained from going near the bereaved family as it signifies bad omen. It may be noted that the person who performed the rituals *tsüngliba* is given a house site or a plot of field by the bereaved family and relatives. The performer may either be a relative or a best friend who was very close to the death during his lifetime. Normally such kind of commitment is made between friends during lifetime. The one who performs the ritual kill a chick and put in the armpit of the death, facing the cemetery and uttered his final word of and wish him happy journey to the land of the death.

### **Superstitions**

The villagers were very superstitious about certain deaths and they performed all the necessary rituals no matter how hard it may be in order to avoid unpleasant consequences. Death caused by mauling by a tiger, falling from trees, or cliffs, drowned, burnt, death on delivery etc are all considered as *menen* (unnatural death). The names of those who died of *menen* are not even uttered. Instead they refer to such the persons as *tiamakasang*, which literally means 'unlucky ones'. The name of the person who died due to unnatural death was not renewed by his/ her clan. If a man is killed while assisting the village against an enemy it is considered not fully *menen* but his

body is disposed without ceremony. Another case is that of a man falling from a tree, a fowl was speedily sacrificed at the foot of the tree so that the responsibility for the man's death is shifted to the animals. If a person dies due to the strike of lightning, it is also considered as *menen*.

The worst case of *menen* is the dead caused by a tiger, as it leads to many unpleasant consequences. For instance the spot from where the tiger carried its victim to the place where it ate its kill became prohibited areas, locally known as *tamachidak / teme chayin*. This has caused many cultivable areas to be abandoned for example, there was a ferocious tiger by the name of *Chensangla mela / Chensangla nūla*, (named after a woman *Chengsangla* who practiced witchcraft) which lived in the forest near the village. It is believed that the tiger had killed four villagers. The four spots or area where the tiger had carried the victim are all considered as prohibited places. The four prohibited areas are *sūngilong, longmenden, jangpojangtsü,* and *aküchemein*. The villagers believed that once in a year, a deadly disease called *kūra* breaks out, which may be equated to cancer. It comes swirling like a cloud and is considered very unfortunate if a person happens to be in the prohibited place on such fateful day as they are engulfed by the disease. The villagers never cultivated these areas nor collect vegetables and fodder even for the animals from these prohibited area as they are scared of *kūra*.

The present generation no longer believes in these superstitions, however, some people are still reluctant to cultivate these areas till today. They still have the fear for *kūra* and if a person falls sick after exploring the prohibited areas, they believe that the sickness may be due to *kūra*.

If any one died within 30 days after falling from a tree or a cliff it is considered as *menen*. But any died after 30 days it is not considered as *menen*. However, the cliff or tree from where the person falls is not prohibited in contrary to the place from where the tiger mauled its victim. Similarly in the case of drowning, burning or death on delivery are considered as *menen* if the people die within 30 days. However, the pond or lake from where a person is drowned is not prohibited but in the case of a person, scorched by fire in the house, the house site is considered prohibited site locally termed as *menen keni /menen kimong*. If any of the family members died of *menen*, the entire family had to undergo purification from the defilement by abandoning all their belongings and property.

Here I would like to explain in brief, the process of purification. It is a norm that the family members should exit from the back door while the clan members hit the house with stone as a sign of chasing the evil spirit. They then proceed to the jungle and stay there for 3 days in the hut built by the clan members. During their stay in the jungle, their relatives supplied foods and clothes although they are to refrain from talking. After three days, they return

to the village and begin a new life in a new house constructed by their relatives. It is stated that the entire process is very painful and difficult. However, they believed that those who adhered to this custom lived a prosperous life generation after generation.

### *Case study 2*

This is a case of Asangba, whose father died of *menen* (unnatural dead) in 1912. He said 'though I was still a kid I clearly remember my family undergoing purification from defilement. We had to live in the jungle for three days leaving behind all our belongings then after we returned we lived in a new house constructed by our relatives'. He said 'It was a painful experience and the agony still lingers in my mind till today'.

### **TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS:**

The two major festivals of the Aos are *Moatsü* and *Tsüngremong*. The villagers referred these festivals as *Moyatsü* and *Asemni amu* respectively.

*Moya tsü* is a festival of evoking blessing for healthy crops and good health which is observed for three days after sowing every year. On the eve of the festival the villagers would clear the field path starting from the village vicinity. From the first day till the last the village priest and members of the *anjju* are taboo from having physical intimacy with their wives. The families

who reared pigs and cattle meant for the festival should also maintain chastity.

On the first day of the festival a group of *ariju* members are engaged in collecting pigs from those families who have volunteered to rear pigs for the festival. Meanwhile these families lavishly served rice beer, with a sense of competition among themselves. The pigs are then taken to the *ariju* where the priest offered rite and initiate the ceremony.

The cut meats are distributed accordingly. The head and leg are given to the priest while the remaining meat are cooked and served during the community feast. It is customary that serving should start from the eldest to the youngest. Community dancing *yar tsüngsang* is a special attraction of the *Moya tsü*. Young and old men cooperate and dance along the footpaths of the village in traditional dancing attires and ornaments, singing of folksongs. Themes of life such as head hunting, war and heroism, love and romance are associated with *Moya tsü* festival.

*Asemni amu* festival is another major festival of the village. It is celebrated just before harvest every year. *Ninang tsüteba* (tug-of-war) is one special feature of *asemni amu* festival. On the first day a pig is sacrificed and meats are distributed to every household in the village. They believe this as offering to *Lijaba*. The remaining meats are relished by the village elders. In

the evening every family makes offerings at their respective hearths and on that night the man and his wife are taboo from having physical intimacy. The next day they are prohibited to go anywhere beyond the village or do any household chores. In the evening men are not allowed to visit the girl's dormitories and the houses of widows. They spend the following day in the same manner. However, the villagers are allowed to go to the fields or do household chores. It is customary that on the third day all the villagers should take bath and in the evening visiting of girls by male counterparts is highly prohibited as they believed that *Tsungrem* visit the village on the third day and that everyone must avoid loitering in the footpaths. Rice beer (*vü/ ayi*) was an essential drink during these festivals.

### **Feast of Merit:**

In the olden days it was an ambition for any able people to perform the feast of Merit whereby gaining the coveted right of wearing certain shawls and ornaments, and being able to decorate his house in a particular way with the skulls of the sacrificed animals at the front side of the house. No one but a married man could give the feast, for the wife played an honourable and conspicuous part throughout. For every mithun sacrifice she gained a *wazami* (feather) in her headgear which was not possible for any ordinary women.

The *Chungli* and the *Mongsen* groups have different stages of performing the feast of Merit. For the *Chungli*, three stages are required to

attain the status of the 'giver of the feast of merit'. However for the *Mongsen* they have only two stages.

For both the *Chungli* and the *Mongsen* the first stage is the same. *Chungli* called the first stage as *kika* and the *Mongsen* called it *akikaba*, where three to four pigs are sacrificed.

The second stage for the *Chungli* is called *nafü atsüba*, where a cow was sacrificed, where as the *Mongsen* group need not have to sacrifice a cow.

The last and the most important stage for both the *Chungli* and the *Mongsen* is the mithun sacrifice. *Chungli* called it *sü atsüba* and the *Mongsen* called it *atsü tsüba*. It is customary that the actual killing is never done by the host of the feast, and he is not allowed to taste the meat of the animals sacrificed. The management and distribution of meat was done by *temlaker*.

During the feast all the villagers in full traditional attires showed up at the host's house and uttered aloud solemn prayers. They called this custom *azü koaba* which is done to evoke god's blessing to the family, prosperity and long life of the host.

This has been in practice till late 1970s by the *limafor* (believer in traditional religion). About 45-46 families are accounted to have given the feast of merit in the village. The feast of merit latently ironed out the disparities in wealth. The rich, in their passion to acquire prestige and honour spent a large part of their incomes in giving this lavish feast.

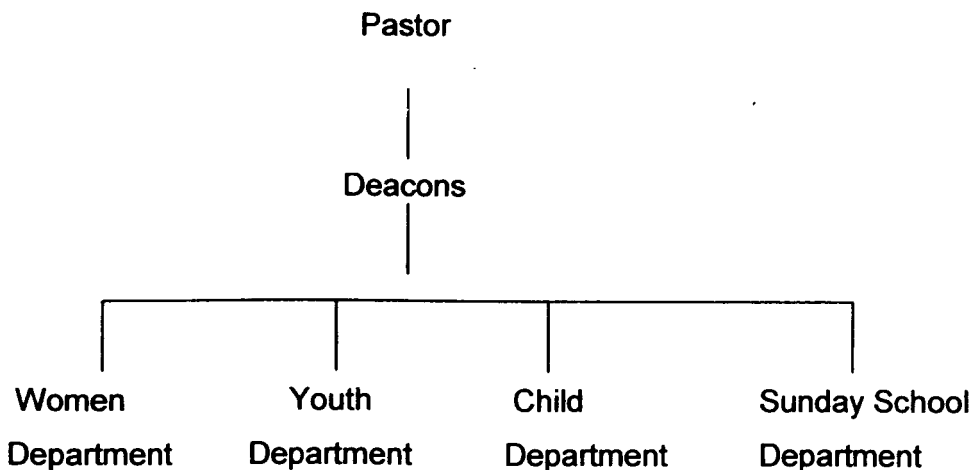
## **CHRISTIANITY**

The first group of American Baptist Missionary made their first appearance in the Naga area around 1830 and the mission work started in 1881. The first American Missionary to visit was Dr Clark who visited Longkhum in 1885. The villagers were reluctant to accept Christianity initially with a fear that it would alienate them from their age-old beliefs and practices. They believed that the alien culture would engulf their beautiful tradition; however they were also aware of the positive side of the new religion, as it was contrary to the extreme and expensive sacrifices involved in the old religion. Christianity as a religion was formally established in the village in 1903. Longritemjen Namo was the first person from the Longkhum village to be ordained Reverend. Today the village has produced five Reverends, The Longkhum Baptist Church has celebrated Centennial Jubilee (100 years) in 2003 and the Revival Church is yet to celebrate the Centennial jubilee.

At present the village has two churches of different denominations, i.e Baptist and Revival churches. 308 families belong to the Baptist

denomination and 29 families belong to the Revival. In both the Churches, Pastor officiate the services and performs baptismal and confirmation rites. In the absence of the Pastor one of the seniors known as Deacons takes over the charge of the Pastor. Woman service is officiated by a Pastor (Women). In the weekdays, evening service is held twice i.e on Wednesday (*Bodbar*) and Saturday (*Honibar*). Women service *tütsür sentep/ aniti sentep* are held on Thursday (*Bisdibar*). The Pastor is assisted by Deacons and Assistants *Mapangchar*. Numerically Baptists are larger but Revivalists are closely knitted and they consider all the church members as a family. Both the Baptist Church and Revival Church have separate organizations and it cannot be denied that there are attitudes problems between these two denominations. As far as pattern of organization is concerned both Baptist and Revival follows the same pattern.

**Fig: 3 CHURCH ORGANIZATION**



Women Department is headed by a *Pastor ni* (Pastor Women) who is assisted by *arogolar* (assistants). Youth and Child Department is headed by the Youth Director and Child Director respectively. Sunday School Department is headed by a Deacon who is assisted by the Sunday school teachers.

Pastor, Deacons and *Pastor ni* are appointed by a nominating committee constituted by *Arogo Mungdang* (Church Conference). They are appointed for tenure of five years; however, their tenure may be extended.

Youth Director, Child Director and Sunday school teachers are appointed by the Deacons for tenure of five years however it may be extended if necessary.

### **TRANSITION IN RELIGIOUS LIFE:**

Christianity as a religion was formally established in the village in 1903. Since then there has been gradual change in the religious life of the villagers. Today there are only three families that continue to follow the old religious ethos. Out of three families only one has both husband and wife, while the rest constitute of a widow and a widower. They have strong faith in the traditional beliefs and have refused to change their faith.

### Case study 3

This is a case study of a *limafor* (non-convert) Meya age 79. He and his wife (age 70) still follow the old religion even though all his children are Christians today. On being asked as to why he is reluctant to convert, on this he cited some personal opinions: Firstly he noted that he cannot abandon the beliefs and practices which he has followed throughout his life. Secondly he opined that as long as he remained honest and faithful, what religion he follows is not important. Another personal view includes the unconvincing life style of the Christians. According to him, it is apparent that many Christians do not strictly adhere to the teaching of Christ. However he made himself clear that he is not against any religion. He believes in honesty and truthfulness and expressed that he would rather remain a *limafor* than being just a nominal believer of a new religion.

To the question as to whether there is any pressure from his children and Church members, to this he replied that initially there had been immense pressure from his children and from the Church members as well, saying that if he die before conversion he would suffer after death. To this he opined that he does believe in life after death as the old religion does have similar teaching. He said that their God *Meyutsüngba* would judge a person and award merit and punishment according to a person's deeds on earth. According to him, their God demands a just life, purity and high moral and ethical

standards and honesty. Therefore he believes that whether he remained *limafor* (non-converts) or Christians, the life after dead would be determined by his own deeds on earth. Hence he always insists his children to lead a just life as being a Christian would not award them a better life after dead.

His wife also has the same opinion as that of her husband and she stated that she and her husband are determined to follow the old religion. They still continue to perform agriculture related ritual like *melong*, *tenten*, and *jangpetmelep* etc, however in times of sickness modern medicine are also used. They still brew rice beer for their consumption; however they keep in a small room behind the kitchen as they feel that it is improper to keep in common place, being exposed. Even today they perform all rituals although they have reservation about going to the field on Sundays because if anything happened to them on that day there would be no one to help them.

With the coming of Christianity, the villagers have adopted new ways of worshipping. Instead of worshipping *Lijaba* in *achendang* they worship the 'Trinity of God' in the Church. The mode of offering animals has been replaced by prayers. They have also adopted new ways of curing illness yet use of indigenous medicines like *nangbūra* and *tangma* is very common among the people. However, they no longer follow the old practice of performing ritual like *renten*, *rakie* and *kitsung külüm* for curing illness; instead they would prefer to go to the medical dispensaries for modern facilities. They

also no longer make expensive offerings in times of sickness or abandon their houses and wealth in case of unnatural death. However they still adhere to certain traditional practices of 'mourning period' (six days for men and five days for women).

Even today traditional festivals like *moyatsü* and *asemi amo* are still observed with great gaiety although without any traditional rites and rituals. During these festival different functions are organized every year. Sometimes *samen* organized programme in commemoration of these festivals where Ministers and MLAs are invited to the village as Chief Guests and the youths organized inter-zonal or inter-village tournament etc.

Christianity has brought certain amount of privilege to the women as far as religious life is concerned. For instance in the olden days women were not allowed to perform rituals, however in the new religion women plays an important and active role in the Church services. Thus gender bias is observed to be less apparent in the new religion.

With the advent of Christianity, the village has become a part of the larger religious organization. *Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang* (ABAM) is the apex body of all the Baptist Churches in the Ao villages and the Revival Churches are under the apex body of Nagaland Christian Revival Church. *Ao Baptist Tetsür Mungdang* (Ao Baptist Women Association) is the largest and

strongest Church based women's organization in Nagalang. This organization was started forty years back to encourage women's participation in the Church. In the olden days the villagers had their way of perceiving things and worshipped accordingly. It is observed that with the change of time the village is marching towards greater religious mobility and network.

The present study reveals that the advent of Christianity has resulted in the rejection of many of the old beliefs and practices of the people in the village. Christianity has created disunity through the coming in of different denomination in the village and has also resulted in the erosion of the rich traditional culture. However Christianity has brought much to the village, it has brought education, which is the backbone of all development. Christianity delivered the villages from the bondage of superstitions, the villages believed in the existence of supernatural powers and spirits for which particularly during sickness, when the villagers have nothing much left yet they have to offer as a living sacrifice whatever they have and people also led life in constant fear of such supernatural powers and spirits.

Christianity has also introduced hygienic living. People in the long run became cleaner and sanitation in the village became primary focus. A clear example today though people rear pigs, the pigs unlike the olden days have to be confined. Christianity created awareness and this has motivated

the villagers for better living and for various development activities in the village.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **CONCLUSION: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE**

The objective of this chapter is to present a resume of the preceding chapters and highlight the factors responsible for continuity and change in the village under study.

The first two chapters do not naturally contain any findings for summation here. The main body of this thesis is constituted by the four subsequent chapters dealing with social organization, economy, political and religious organization. Therefore the summation relates to these four chapters only.

#### **MAJOR FINDINGS:**

##### ***SOCIAL ORGANIZATION***

A typical Ao family is nuclear type where the father, the mother and the unmarried children together form a family.

The family being patriarchal, the position of the father in the family holds great authority, prestige and responsibility. He assumes the leadership role in the family. Though both mother and father share responsibility over their family, the father has certain rights and obligations. In any decision

relating to family matters both wife and husband deliberate on the issues together, however, the father's decision became final. The father has absolute power over the family property. Although patriliney places husband at a higher pedestal wife displays a strong will and character. All the matters relating to domestic life are decided on the basis of mutual consent. Relations between the couple grow stronger with the length of time they have been married, mutual respect, ability to discharge one's duty and economic stability. Relationship between couple and their respective in-laws are generally cordial. It is expected of a girl and boy to have learnt their respective roles in life before marriage. With elders the relation is expected to be one of respect, which is expressed by addressing them with appropriate kinship terms.

The residence is neolocal in nature. After marriage the parents of the bridegroom construct a new house and set up household for them.

Owing to patrilineal nature of inheritance, property moves down the male line. Properties like ancestral land, house, furniture etc are inherited by sons. The eldest son is the heir of the family and he inherits lion's share of the property and the rest are distributed among the younger ones. The eldest son is not only the heir of the family but has many responsibilities. Besides his responsibilities towards his parents and brothers he is considered as the guardian and protector of his sisters. Normally a man having no male heir

divides his property among his nearest male relatives. However, father may gift a house site or plot of land to his daughter with the knowledge of his male relatives. A mother's personal properties like dresses and ornaments go to her daughters. However lion's share of her personal property is given to the eldest daughter. If the husband dies, as temporary provision, wife is entitled to maintain her husband's property till her death.

The present study reveals that the family structure, role of parents, and role of children have undergone certain changes whereas some aspects of the same have continued. Family played an important role in providing education. However certain kinds of education in artisanship, training for warfare, custom, beliefs and practices etc were provided by an institution known as *anju* (boys' dormitory) and *zuki* (girls' dormitory). Disintegration of this institution has led to some change in the basic role of the family particularly the parents.

It is observed parents desires for lesser children to enable the parents to provide better education to all the children. These trends had given opportunities to both sexes to become educated and be economically independent.

Thus, it may be noted that a typical Ao family is nuclear type, patriachal, neolocal and patrilineal in form.

It is observed that the rules of clan exogamy, monogamy and incest taboo are still strictly adhered to by all. Longkhum is broadly divided into two groups i.e *Chungli* and *Mongsen*. Under this, the clans are broadly divided into *rapi* and *atsüng*. These two are further sub-divided into different sub-clans.

In chungli group, *rapi* is sub-divided into two clans i.e *Jamir* and *Pongener* and *atsüng* is constituted by one clan i.e *Longkumer*. *Longkumer* clan is further sub-divided into *Soyah*, *Müsütoba*, *Azüsentak* and *Mosümbö*. *Rapi* and *atsüng* are intermarriagable.

In Mongsen group, *rapi* is divided into two clans i.e *Jamir* and *Longchar*. *Jamir* is further sub-divided into *Ani* and *Ngümbö*. *Atsüng* is constituted by *Imchen*. *Imchen* is further sub-divided into *Yar*, *Mongro*, *Alang*, *Pangchen*, *Iota*, *Sangtsüng* and *Arong*. *Rapi* and *atsüng* are intermarriagable.

In both *Chungli* and *Mongsen* group, all clans are placed under common terms i.e *rapi* and *atsüng*, however it may be noted that between *Chungli* and *Mongsen* group *rapi* and *rapi* are intermarriagable and similarly is the case between *atsüng* and *atsüng*. The main reason for such practices is because of the fact that *Chungli* and *Mongsen* belong to different dialect

groups. It is also believed that *chungli* and *mongsen* are the descendants of different ancestors.

It is customary that formal proposal is initiated from boy's side after negotiations between the two concerned parties and the date of marriage is fixed.

Persons who are widowed and divorcees are also allowed to marry and this kind of marriage is generally very simple and no special feast is given. Levirate and sororate marriages are not encouraged due to the belief that they may not bear normal child and it is not proper to replace his/her sibling's place. Marriage between maternal cousins up to third generation is not allowed though they belong to different clans because they are closely related by blood.

One of the most remarkable features observed is that unlike in other Naga tribes, women after marriage continue to retain her clan even though all their children take the clan of the father. Women have a certain degree of freedom after marriage; they do not have to submerge their clan identity, and their maiden name continues, which indicates their higher gender status than other Naga tribes.

Marriage within the village is still preferred due to familiarity of a person's line of descent. However, marriage outside the village becomes inevitable due to interactions with different people and cultures while venturing outside the village in search of education, jobs and other avenues.

Marriage for both men and women is not only considered normative but also much more acceptable than being single (unmarried). Though those who could not get married are not ill-treated they are looked down upon by the society. Earlier people normally got married soon after they attained puberty. But today the scenario has changed; most of the girls and boys normally get married after 21 years of age.

With the coming of Christianity, the practices of traditional marriage system have changed. Both bride and groom wear modern dresses and get married in the Church. However they still adhere to some traditional practices regarding management and distribution of the wedding meat. During the wedding feast, a group of people referred to as '*tümlaker*' played an important role in management and distribution of the meat. There are two categories of *tümlaker*; *soden tümlak* (constitutes those men whose mother belong to groom's clan), and *jala tümlak* (men who have married women of groom's clan). Thus, once men get married they become important members of their wives' clans. This practice continues till today.

Kinship plays an important role in the regulation of marriage and avoidance of incest. They trace their descendants only through father's side. As far as kinship is concerned it is still protected.

## **VILLAGE ECONOMY**

The main occupation of the people is agriculture which is practised in the form of *jhum* cultivation. Agriculture is based on simple technology, primarily using simple implements like big knife (*dao*), hoe and sickle which are employed for cutting, weeding and harvesting purposes. In the village the *jhum* cultivable area is divided into two categories- *arzen* and *luno*. For *arzen* the interval for cultivation is 20 years and for *luno* it is 10 years. The first year of cultivation is known as *lozen/ looti* and the next year of cultivation is known as *bün/ abün*. It is customary that the *Samen* (Village Council) demarcates the plots for cultivation every year.

In the village, the cycle of *Jhum/Shifting* cultivation begins from the month of December to January. First an area is identified and selected by the *Samen* and begins jungle clearing. Sowing of paddy is done in the month of March to early April. The method of sowing for the *looti* and *aben* cultivations is different. They use different varieties of paddy in the two fields. In *lozen/ looti* they use bigger paddy known as *jakja* and in *bün/ abün* smaller paddy

known as *manen* is used. They stated that *jakja* grows well in fertile soil, where as *manen* can be grown in less fertile soil also.

The first phase of weeding is called *manuya* which begins in the latter part of May, when the grains are grown about 2 to 3 inches tall. The second phase of weeding begins in mid-summer when the weather is very hot and humid. The third phase is done just before harvest to remove weeds to make harvest easier. The paddy harvest begins in early September.

An important characteristic of the agricultural practice is the co-ordination among the villagers in the form of exchange of labour. It is interesting to note that if any families lag behind the rest of the villagers due to prolong sickness or death, the *kin* (clan) members initiate a collective work to enable the family to catch up with the rest. Another form of exchange of labour, they called *yangteba* is normally between friends. They work on each others field alternatively and this form of labour is required most in the second phase of weeding and harvesting..

It may be noted that in the village there is no particular group specified as labourers, because labour is often combined with other occupation. Thus it is difficult to estimate how many households are engage in labour occupation. The regular wage labourers are mostly from other tribes who are employed in agricultural activities. At present the villagers have the

wage laborers from the Konyak tribes. Rs.100/- and Rs.70/- are paid for men and women respectively. However, the amount paid to the labourers varies according to the nature of work.

At present 63.24% of the families are agriculturalists. In the olden days, their economy was based on simple barter system and agriculture products and handicrafts were used as mode of exchange with other villages and neighbouring tribes. Traditionally, reciprocity between neighbours and between kin groups was a common phenomenon, agricultural surplus was shared among them but today due to high demands from market they have become more commercial.

Besides agriculture there are various occupations which bring money to the family. Production of horticulture has been taken up in large scale. Passion fruit, chili, tomato etc. are produced in large amount which are in great demand from the wholesalers in Mokokchung town. In fact, today the village economy has changed from subsistence to cash economy. Some villagers own shops in the village and 27.94% are government servants employed in different categories of jobs. Animal husbandry also brings significant amount of money to the family as these are reared mostly for commercial purposes.

However in spite of these changes, landholding is one area that remains untouched by the changes. Even today, 70% of the land belong to clan and remaining land belongs to village and individual. It is very significant to note that the villagers still feel strongly about their land. Selling of land to the outsiders was not known and till today not even a single plot of land has been sold to outsiders.

### ***POLITICAL ORGANIZATION***

The political organization of the village is connected with the concept of clan. The village is ruled by five age groups, 'foso'. These are *medemjanger, mevongjanger, müjenjanger, kochajangerr and riyongjanger* and each foso rules the village rotatively for 30 years. The members of the reigning foso are referred to as *Samen* (Village Council). In *Samen* there is a group known as 'elders' and under their leadership *Samen* rules the village. Each clan is represented in the category of 'elders' and each clan unanimously chooses its representative on the basis of age, morality, ethical standards and ability for leadership and service. Members to be represented should have no physical deformities, should be trustworthy, hardworking and responsible. The fundamental principle of clan division facilitates the political organization of community life among the people and assure the smooth running of the village.

The chairman and secretary of the village council are selected from among the 'elders' for a term of five years, taking into consideration both the *chungli* and *mongsen groups* and all clans in the village. Thus, under their leadership the *Samen* rules.

Besides having duties and responsibilities in the village, the members of the *Samen* have certain duties in the larger political network. Nine members of the *Samen* are chosen as *Gaonburas* who act as mediators between the *Samen* and the district administration. During the colonial period the *Gaonburas* were chosen by the British on the basis of knowledge of customary laws. Today the *Samen* members are able to choose their representatives who of course need the approval of the district administration. *Gaonburas* are identified by a red shawl, which is specifically meant for them, a tradition started by the British.

The *Samen* enjoys both executive and judiciary powers. *Samen* controls the entire administration of the village, which includes students union, youth organization and women's societies. The *Samen* also supervises and controls the Village Development Board (VDB) to ensure that the VDB implements developmental works effectively. It also initiates audit on VDB's developmental works for which it appoints auditors and the reports made by the auditors are either approved or rejected by the *Samen*. It is the duty of the council to frame the rules and regulations concerning internal, external and

tradition-related cases and also to ensure that offenders are duly punished. Though women have no direct role in village administration, their welfare is not neglected by their male counterparts. VDB (Women) gets 25% and youth organization gets 20% from the total allocation of VDB fund.

Besides the *Samen*, there are two bodies known as *Yim Mungdang* (Village Conference) and *Senso Mungdang* (General Village Citizens Conference). *Yim Mungdang* is held every year where only the residents of the village assemble, while *Senso Mungdang* is held once in three years where all villagers both residents and non-residents (those in urban areas) get together. It needs to be stated here that in spite of the physical distance, the villagers residing in urban areas continue to maintain their membership in the *Senso Mungdang*.

All male adults are entitled to participate in both the Conferences failing which fines are imposed. Agendas for discussion are introduced in the conference and the members attended are allowed to present their views. In adopting decisions the consensus of all the clans are drawn forth. Enforcement of laws and orders including the functional actions undertaken by the *Samen* are presented in the conference for the endorsement of the entire village citizen. They also examine the undertakings of the *Samen* and discuss about all matters relating to the welfare of the villagers.

The present study reveals that age group system and clans continue to be the core of the political set up of the village. With change of time the village has been drawn to the larger political network through certain institution and political organs, which operate at various levels in relation to the larger political set up. For instance, after the inception of Nagaland statehood in 1963 there are certain linkages between the village and the wider political system. These linkages assume particular importance at certain crucial periods as during the general election. The village council plays a crucial role as its approval is required in order to contest in the General Election. By doing so, the candidate has chances of winning the entire electorate of the village, as he becomes the official candidate of the village. Hence the political parties connect the rural electorate to the state legislature and the government.

## **RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION**

The traditional belief system of the village is based on the fundamental belief in the existence of supernatural powers. The belief in the existence of the God or gods forms the core of the belief system and it is the guiding principle of their conduct in life. Traditionally they believed in the existence of several gods or *Tsüngrem* who are associated with creation, keeper of the land of dead, mountains, stones, rivers, forests, etc.

*Lijaba* is believed to be the creator of the earth and all living things and vegetation upon it. He is powerful and he causes natural calamities too when he is displeased with man.

Another *Tsüngrem* known as *Meyutsüngba* is believed to be the 'God of the land of dead'. He is considered to be the God of justice as he judges the souls when they reach his gate to enter the land of the dead. Every person is judged and awarded merit or punishment by *Meyutsüngba* according to ones deeds on earth. *Meyutsüngba* is the God of righteousness and so he demands a just life, purity, high moral, ethical standards and honesty. At the gate of *Meyutsüngba* every sin will be revealed and disclosed for shame and punishment.

Christianity as a religion was formally established in the village in 1903. Since then there has been gradual change in the religious life of the villagers. The villagers have adopted new ways of worshipping. Instead of worshipping *Lijaba* in *achendang* they worship the 'Trinity of God' in the Church. The mode of offering animals has been replaced by prayers. They have also adopted new ways of curing illness and they no longer follow the old practice of curing illness like *renten*, *raki* and *kitsüng külem*; instead they go to the medical dispensaries for modern facilities. However, use of indigenous medicines like *nangbüra* and *tangma* is very common among the

people. With the coming of Christianity, the people have given up certain beliefs and practices. They no longer make expensive offerings in times of sickness or abandon their wealth in case of unnatural death. However they still adhere to certain traditional practices of 'mourning period' (six days for men and five days for women).

At present 99.97% of the people are Christian, and during the course of fieldwork, only three families belonged to their traditional religion. The village has two churches belonging to Baptist and Revival denominations. In both the churches, pastors officiate the services and perform baptismal and confirmation rites. The pastor is assisted by deacons. Baptist and Revival churches have separate administration and it cannot be denied that there are attitude problems between these two denominations. Numerically Baptists are larger but Revivalists are more closely knitted and they consider all the church members as a family.

With the advent of Christianity, the village has become a part of the larger religious organization. *Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang* (ABAM) is the apex body of all the Baptist Churches in the Ao villages and the Revival Churches are under the apex body of Nagaland Christian Revival Church. *Ao Baptist Tetsür Mungdang* (Ao Baptist Women Association) is the largest and strongest Church based women's organization in Nagaland. This organization was started forty years back to encourage women's participation in the

Church .In the olden days the villagers had their way of perceiving things and worshipped accordingly. It is observed that with the change of time the village is marching towards greater religious mobility and network.

### ***THE CHANGING SCENE***

The introduction of Christianity, monetization of economy, education and improvement in the communication system have transformed the village. The villagers have adopted small family norms which have positive impact in the economy as well as living standards of the people. Their expectations and aspirations have undergone certain change. Agriculture and horticulture products and also products like rice plates, bamboo spoons, and mugs etc which were hitherto produced to meet daily requirements are now sold in the markets in other towns. Monetary surplus generated by such process is channelized in various directions like purchasing television, installing telephones, educating children in reputed schools, college and universities etc. Since 1903 there has been gradual expansion of educational facilities and at present the village has three primary schools and one middle school.

Modernization has many positive impacts in the life of the villagers particularly the life of the youths. Students' organizations like Longkhum Students Union and Christian Youth Endeavor impart Christian values and beliefs and also provide a platform for the young girls and boys to utilize their

talents. However, the negative impact of modernization cannot be denied. The superficial westernization in matters of dress, food habits, music and other activities becomes popular among the younger generation. And such development has seriously challenged the traditional ways of life. Moreover, the disintegration of the institution *ariju* (boys' dormitory) and *zūki* (girls' dormitory) has certain negative impact among the younger generation. These institutions played an important role in moulding a young member's personality. It was the place where traditional values, behaviours, beliefs and practices etc were taught. Thus the present generations know very little about such practices and about their ancestors and local history.

Longkhum village reveals dual characteristics; one adopting modern culture and the other following traditional practices. For instance, the very basis of political organization is interconnected with the concept of clan. The age-old traditional practices of age group system which was initiated in the institution of *ariju* is the basis of present political organization in the village, though *ariju* no longer exists in the village. Although they have embraced Christianity and believe in the teachings of Christ certain traditional practices still find place in the social, political and religious life of the people. For instance, people still fear to cultivate the areas that were demarcated by their forefathers as prohibited areas with a fear that the evil spirits might harm them.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is observed that there are three agents that have brought changes in the village and they are British rule, Christianity and modernization. With the coming of the British rule the tribal areas were systematized and classified for administrative reasons, though this agent did not have much impact at the village level. The major changes in the village have been brought through Christianity and modernization.

One of the changes brought about by Christianity is that it tried to do away, with greater or lesser success, with superstitious beliefs, animal sacrifices and rituals. It also encouraged cleanliness and education.

Modernization has led to changes in social organisation, political organization and village economy. Further, the national and state politics have entered the village politics and now they have become a part and parcel of the larger politics. Subsistence economy has been changed to cash economy.

However, in spite of so many changes there are certain aspects which continue. For instance, kinship system, marriage rules like clan exogamy, monogamy, incest taboo etc are still protected. Traditional festivals are still observed with great gaiety although without traditional rites and

rituals. Even in agricultural practices, certain rituals and practices function even if they do not have the same meaning as they used to have once.

Thus it is observed that the villagers have the capacity of adapting to the changing environment and at the same time maintaining certain traditional practices.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **FOLKTALES**

#### **Longkhumi Nokrang amakba otsü**

**(The story of Longkhumi struggle against Nokrang)**

Longkhumi Nokrang amakbaji leptsüngtepba rongnung kanga züngshir, iba mapangi tsükchir nungi temeket yimtem mesüra Ao Ima wazüka kümzüka aru ibayongji Longkhumi nem Aofonemro ta agütsü.

Iba tongpangya Nokrangtsür tepur tajung aeir ka aser Longkhumsü tepur tajung aeir ana tepsetba ajanga adok. Alemli Nokrangya kanga tashitait yim liasaü, par Aor masü aser Aor sobaliba nungi kenyongi balaka liasü. Nokrang yimya tenemkolak nung liasü, yim meketa sung, long agi atsü atsür aser ali nung aso songer tsükchir maitetsüsa liasü. Ano ibajiang masü azü tesashi mesüteta yim meta liasü. Nokrang Tongtibar jalaji aeir tepur tajung ka liasü aser la tepur ajungji kenyongi bnalaka , temeket nung alirtem ajaki angshib aser prokshia asü. La tepur ajungji Assam nunger Chubaia angshia aküm.

Chubai par nütsüngtem la tepur ajungji shitak asü masü aji metettsü asoshi Nokrang Tongtiba ajurutsü yok. Nütsüngtemi la tepurji junger C huba dang osang bener aru aser Chubaji kanga pela aser pai Tongtibar jalaji agitsü asoshi tasüngtangi Tongtiba dangi yok.

Saka Nokrang Tongtibiai par jalaji alima talangi kibong küma oa alitsü memulong. Iba tamakok osang angashia Chubai ano nütsüng kar rongsen den yok. Tongtibiai metet Chubai pai meshiba ajak agütsütetsü anungji pai Chubna dang Tenem ozü teben nung ayak ana aliba meshi aj bener arutetra par jala ki-i yoktsü nangzük.

Chubai aji angashia ozü apur ajung telok ka ja-a Tenem ozü aputsü yok. Chubai Tenem ozü teben nung rong agi ayak ano ka teploker bener oa Tongtiba nem agütsü nung pai aji ngua aoksa. Tatem nung pai kechas mesütet saka par jalaji temelung shiranga jala den atem o jembir tetiasoshi yok. Par temeim jala melen tenem ozüji dang ta repranga jashi, anungji pai ozüji asangur ka nem mesütsü asoshi agüjatok ozüji küm aika ozü ki nung dang mesüa aru aser joko kima ajak nung jioka mesü. Anüngdangbo arem nunga senzüli nikongdang meyipasa aruli ta mapang talangka aru, kenü anogo Longkhum leni ao saka meyipa maru.

Iba mapang Longkhum Tongtibar kidang kilir aika liasü, pamok rongnung Mezabang ta sür sarishi nung kanga teyakyak balaka ozü aputsü kanga dang yakyak. Pai kenü ayak anati temtanger aliba Tenem ozü ka apu. Aji ngua yiomertem süngmanga yabo koaklar ozü ta belem. Yimertem sentepa ibna ozüyabo balaka, anungji Ao lima ajunga sema sayutsü asoshi lemtyet. Iba mapang Longkhum nung aeir tepurkaqnga tajung ana tenüng agi ka Acharongmang aser Jaksüngnaro na Aori tena tepur ajungbaji kanga tetshia liasü, anungji tenati iba Tenem ozü tebenji sayutsü asoshi tena mulong nung tepela pela ano tejashia jashia Longkhum nungi apuso. Tenati anogo ainü senzür kelen Mopungchuket yim ajang dang panü par yimer ajak Khar yimlen Sher Talen merüka monga liasü. Tenatiji ngua par yimertem tekola ana atangtsü asoshi kanga pelatep. Tena iba loktiji koda koma kumzúa ajangtsü ta merandang tenati pamok sanga ken mejema aten. Yimertem tenati atenba ken jagi temulong nung kongshia tena yimjong nungdang kecha mesüi yok.

Tatensa tena Nokrang yim atong, Nokranger Tongtibar jabasoi par indang Tenem ozüto ngua tebu dang ashi. Idangji Tongtibai par yimertem jatena tena pudaktsü aser koda koma ozüji apuba aji kecha osang maghitepi paonungji kanga kangashia merenshia, yin merem merema mi nung ronger tena shi nung toa kangshir

tasangnepbaji tena sūdaksü idakji Longkhumtsür naro tajumgtila anaji long agi nangpanga sūdaksü.

Tena yimdoktsür joko ita ana tashi kecha osang mali, anungji yimertem sendena osang agitep nung, Nokrangeri tena ibnaama reshikangshia tepsetbaji angazük. Anungji yimertemi Nokrang yimji amaktsü lemtet iba mapang Longkhum arrsher tenüng agi Pentochepchep ta sür liasü. Pa leniba nung arrsher tajung tekolak aika agir parnok 29 Nokrang amaktsü asoshi shimtet. Parnoki chiyongtsü anogo ainü asoshi renema ayu, Pentochepchep tebur ka asoba ajanga parnok anogo 30 nü menür kelenang tasangnüang apuso. Paonungji pai kinungtsü dang tanurem aser alu anepalua reprangang aser parnok meyipa maruyonga kecha teindok mali kechiyong yimer asoshi parnok taküm aor ta ashi. Paonungji pai pumang majung ta kinungtsüdang ashi, pai pumgang nung pa tenarong anaprongla nung naro temesüng anor tsükcher lushi nung alidang rüjep aser anentzü arua par yim ponger oadok ya pumgang ta ashi, Pa ama tasütait arresher tajungi pumgang dak mamang saka pai pumgang janga metet pa meyipa marutsü. Kinungtsüi pa meyoknü saka pa temelungtetpaji menoktangtet nisung kaji anaben masor anungji tsükcher lima nung kum dangtsü asoshi dang shir yok.

Iba mapangya April aser May ita mapang ka liasü. Par telok Changkikong atong aser Nokrang tenem aser lushi ajakji reprangshim. Parnok yim lushi nung amongdang azüi menemteta asang nung parnok longpok ka nung atsüka, longpok anasa moti nungji parnok tanüla ngua azü jagi tesasashiba tesashiba asang saka Nokrangertemi aruli azüji yimdaki aner tokoadokli ta ainü asü. Anogo ainü süir saka kecha mesüteter aser chiyongtsü joko ishiba akumer te akum, meyipa or keln noknü tajung renemshir kelenang ano meyipa arudi ta parnok karibo ashi, saka Pentochepchepi parnok tasüitdakja ashi kenü ana nü lir kelenbo langkabosa metetsü

aji sü kelenang tarutsü atemajibo jembiti. Pa oji ajaki agizüka parnoki ano Nokrangleni took saka azüi sashia asang, anungji parnok longpok nungtosa asükadok. Azüi asangbaji ngua tambur kati reprangdang nung moti nungji parnok tanüto angu. Pai yimer dang aji shia Nokrangertem meja ama atenshia parnoki kümja agi lemsa kari aou bener aru, kari aouji ajur ta ola agitsüa longpoki atsüngketa yokmeso.

Nokrangeri aouji longpoki metitemi yok aser Pentochepchep aser par retsüng ka ken ka ken ta aou jagi atsüngzük. Pentochepchepi parnok tasüaittsü atema o ashi, Parnok ajak yangji süadok nungbo osang abener makatsü anungji meranga Nokrangeri aou longpok telongi atsüketa yokbaji leptokang. Parnoki tasüngnü nüngdang tashi aouji leptok, joko Tzürang ayongto aou agi sümetema ato. Parnok joko zübu agi süngadoker aser zübu nungi azü alur aser parnok kanga anipelemadok anü tao meta ka ka ken ka ken ta atsüngsetadok. Tatem nung Pentochepchep aser Toshiba na dang anüng. Pentochepchepi Toshiba dang ashi, na kinük keleni iang aser nai nü tashi ajak agi aouji leptokang. Pa kodang aniadok Toshibai pa melena tatem makai aouji alep. Iba mapang ozü ka pa anasai yima aruaser pai ozü den jembi, 'O, Longtrok ozü, nai metet onok osang abener mali, anungji nai iba osang kü kinungtsü aser yimer yimsanger dang shijang.' Longkhum nunger 28 tashi tepseter kelen Nokrangertemi ano longpok nung karbo lirta jembi. Pentochepchepi Toshiba tatem o ashi na dang anüngtsü aser kenü na tanisher ka akümtsü nai tasüitang aser pei nüpur dang meimba nisung ka asütsüla aser kodang Longkhumi Nokranger mangko ( kolak) aika bener arua benjong lidir idangji yangi onok asürtemi menerema reprangtsü. Toshiba dang ano pai ashi, parnok asüba jakaya kodanga tamatok ta shir pai longpok nungji avometang oa ola agütsür aouji alep tenzük, anü aiba mapang pa tashi temadoker aouji memeleptet. Kodang pa Nokranger ket nung tsük idangji pai arloktsüa ashi Longkhum nunger ano lanu asensor aika lir itemi iba mangayangtsü nungji nenok

kangabo tepela. Lanur ka longpoki tudang Toshibaji kinük ka nung menür angu aser ano tila tanur ka lir ta ashi. Toshibaji tapu dang apur Tongtibar kidangi anir tuko. Ajisüaka Toshiba apubaji Nokranger tashi tatembang tenzükba ka liasü.

Longkhum nung par telok mapang talangka meyipa maruba jagi nütsüng nüpur ajak tamang agi süanga liasü. Iba mapang tesüngmangtsü ka ozü ka yim meketa, 'Pentochepchep süko' ta ken tena yimzü. Iba ozü ya Pentochepchepi osang bener yokba ozüto liasü. Ozüi abenba osangji shitak ta yimertemi amanga iba anogo nungi tasütait retsüng bendanglen asür loko among.

Ajisüaka Longkhumi Toshiba Tongtibar kidang alar ayubaji kenyongi metet. Alar ka dang süaka pai par tesayur (kibur) pa inyaksangshi ajaki peladaktsütsü merang. Ita ishika tsüngta pai Tongtiba mulong alet aser Tongtibai pa nem tanga alar aser mapa ajak repranga inyaktsü nüngloktsü. Liyonga ao dang pa kanga tepur junga sempet tajung keta ain. Kiburi pa joko senzü senpongtsü mela ajisüaka pa temulong taroktiba nungbo pa tasoli yimi jena aotsü teti belem. Nokrang yimji atsü agi jung junga arangpanger aser ali nung aso agi songpanger aliba yim liasü. Iba nung jagi kenübo pai ajentsü sendong yur pai teti alemshi alema liasü. Nokrang yimdak aeirtem aser kijongtsüria dena pa dak salok adok. Pa jakla liro tajung aser temulong atenbaji ngua Tongtiba aser kinungtsü tenatia pa dak keta sena adok. Aji ngua yimdak teburtemi pa dak tenük merema pa tepsettsü arishi aser Tongtiba aser pa kinungtsü na dang Toshiba ya yimtak mapang taklang ka lidaktsü nungbo pai Longkhum dang osang abentsü aser mangayangtsü aser pa senzüsenpong melaba yagi tamajung ka bener arutsütsü. Aser ano pai kijong araktsü, anungji pa tepsetsüa indoktsüla Tongtibai parnoki ashibaji mamang aser pa tepseta indoktsü mejembi. Saka yimer telongjem aser yim kümzüka alitsü kecha tanga inyaktsü mali Toshibatepsetsü mela. Toshibai pa

tepsetsü tasa atongba ajak pa meimer nungi meteta adok. Pai teti meta ali aser alemshi alemtsü tasaji meima ayu.

Pa tepsetsü tasaji parnoki kenyongi balakati pongpapongpa pa tang ashi, na kanga dang tepur tajung aser kanga dang junga tsüngsanger anungji yimer ajonga pai tsüngsangba jagi peladaktsütsü. Pai pa tepsetsü merangbaji kecha metet amai sayua aji kanga mulongsbur seoagizük. Aeirtem aser tetsürtem aika Toshiba atema shisapuludaktsü kechiyong pa panü tepsetsüta metet. Saka parnoki yamaji aria belemtsüaka pai pa meim tasaji mashi aser aji ashitsü melena iba ama maongka mapang mepaidoktetsü ta langzü. Paonungji paiTongtiba aser kinungtsü tena den otzü talang ka atongtep, saka pai meim tasaji meshipok. Tasüngnepji yakta dang saaka yar-tsüngsang sübutsü Tongtiba dang meshio aser pelaseta pa nem sübutsüji agütsü.Yimr ajak yimtung nung atenshi aser kanga yongya pa arulen repranga ata alidang Toshibai pa ama nem iba ama bejong tulu nungmaongka mapang agütsüba ashoahi pelaba metetdaktsü. Telok shingaia pai aashiba oji shidakbai meyiptetb aser kanga dang pongba agüzük. Pai ola tulu agütsü aser luli atuli ta yimtung nungji tsüsang tenzük. Pa tenetbenbuba nung parnoki pa tepsetsü ata-a litsü ta renem nung ta meteta liasü. Pai terokbenbuba nung pa tashi ajak agi asem aser milak amai tenetbenbuba nungjibo süngkum aremer mangui oadok. Toshibai ola tulu agi ashi, 'O, Nokranger Na tebur süra Ni aputsü merangang, Ni Mongzü Toshiba Longkhumi yima atur.' Tashi ka ajaki pa arishia par lushi matentem tashi aria ao saka mangu oadok. Nokranger telemtetbaji idakji tembang.

Mopung amai Toshibaji Warongmong lushi atong aser taoba tatalokba par retsüng aser Pentochepchep asüdak aser Pentochepchep tatem o belemtet. Pai pa jenbobaji shitak asü masü mamang. Warongmong yim tonger pai metongmetonga tambur Tongtiba, Lonlyangpong kidangi ao. Pa aser kinungtsü Akangla tenati pa aniok

aser pa meima anepalu. Toshibai Longkhum o Nokrang na kechi kong nungi rara adok aser pa koma Nokrang nung liasü aser koda jenbo tazüng nungi tatongi atong. Longkhumsür tepur tajung ana tepsetbaji Akangla tanur asüdang angashibadang ibaji ano odang raradar tasübaji mamang. Parnoki tamakok alubindang tongpang kuliji azü tesashitem ajanga kecha mesütetba Toshibai ashi, Akanglai pa dang shisatebulu azü atemjibo lai koma inyaksü aji meteta lir ta ashi. Toshibai aji mulunga agizük lai dang azüji koktetra nisungjibo kecha shisabulutsü mali pa küm aika Nokrang nung lirji parnok tashijibo meteta lir ta langzü. Yamaji Akanglai azü atemajibo lai lai inyaksü ta nangzük saka koma inyaksü ajibo mashi. Toshibai par nisung anir ano arutsü ta nangzüker parnok kangaemulung yuteper shinshi.

Anüngdang aser onung metidai pai tekaratiba nung senzür pumang amai pa Longkhum atong. Par medemer Nokrang nung asür aser kinungertem koda ajurutsü ta shisabulua belema liasü. Paonungji Toshibai yimertem atenshitsü ashi aser par retsüng koda kechi ajanga yamaji atalok aser Pentochepechep tatem o aser pa koda Nokrang nungi jenbo item ajakji tatongi ashi. Tatem nung pai yimer dang par retsü mangyangtsü asüngdang, yimer tamburtemi Nokrangerji putu pezü tashi mekokteter anungji ano tarutsüjia kecha teimla maka ta nungnang. Talangka jembir kelen tatembangsa mangmangtsü lemtet.

Lanurtem aika kin ajak nungi aotsü shim aser asüng aotsüba anogo nungji Longlangba tsüngrem yimertemi tenüngsanga külem. Telok tulu ka nütsüng nüpurtemi pelatepa yok, parnok Waromong yim tonger par yimertemi pela agizük aser parnok akümtsübuja benjong tulu ayongzüka monger tasüngji Akanglai ashi yimer tetsür ajaki tekolak loker küo ajak bendentsü aser kar dang mapok chi suroa iba küo den meyokteper telong tilala aika alungtsü ashi.

Tasüngji Akanglai kar nem iba mapok chi telongji kuo nung sünga inoker agütsü la tasaji kodang azü agi sangtir aji agütsütsü aser parnok tepangaser terok nung ananger ola matoktet dang azüji tepsetsü idangji parnoki akoktsü ta shir yok. Parnok Tzürang ayong tonger Pentochepchep retsüng asüdakji jashia repringteper paonungji arem min nungji yipzüker tesangnepji Nokrang lush-i took. Parnok tashi kar aser tasütait ajak agi 823 liasü aser kati ka dak mulong lemtepa liasü. Parnok Nokrang yim matong dang yim temeket nung alidang tzüden mongertemi parnok arubaj tangzüka süngkong tema azü chiok Longkhum nungertemji jong, nok nü sentsü anü pang nung perangshibajitanen maka tsüngla amai perangshi. Parnoki mete Longlangba tsüngrem parnok den lir.

Tamasa parnok amaktsü asoshi azü yok, azü nem mapok chi telong agütsü aser idangji azü♀ itemji ka ken ka ta lepset. Parnoki atsü ajak raksaja ali nung aso ajak indoktsü. Joko azü ola mali Nokrangerji süngmanger parnok azü dak dang temulong lemer aliba. Parnoki atsü raksadang parnok dak nü agi atsüngtsü yoker aser long agi tepi ta parnok aritoktsü merang. Kecha mesükshi-i parnok yim telongi ia Nokranger dang parnok tasütaitji sayu aser mi sünoka rongdaktsü aser shimok atsüka ali arishia apu aser tepokya nung tepsetli ta asü. Idangji Nokrangertem tasümitertem Assami alu aser yangji liadok. Longkhum nungeriNokrang yimji raksatsü aser nisunga melitetsüsa makdoka yur shilang. Parnoki Nokrang tesama yim nungji nokdaker parnok kanga dang pelatep aser tasürtemia menerema repringa alitsü ta belem. Nokrangerji jaka balalai jenshi.

Parnoki tesama Nokrang yutsür Waromong atong aser idakji paonungji yipzüka, parnoki takok angubaji Akangla aser Loyangpong tena tasa ajanga dang ta pela aser Waromong nütsüng nüpuria parnok takok anguba atema pelatep. Tasüngnep parnok Longkhum yim bushia atutsü ayamso aser parnok Mangmetong

tonger kelen ola tulu yokbaji Longkhum nungeri angashi. Yim tonger tzüden momngertemi süngkong tema benjong monga pelatep.

### **Alima Akümba Otsü (The Creation of Earth)**

Aor tetsü tebu otzü nung tsüngremji aeika lir ta amanga aru, Ali tsüngrem mesüra anüng tsüngrem. Tsüngrem rongnung Lijabaji takoksang aser tashi tulutiba tsüngrem ta manga liasü. Alima aser müketa aliba kechisarena ajakji pai yanglu, pai alima yanglu tenzük dang kanga sümetema yanglu. Tamasa alimaji lenden yanglur kelen aji tenemtem tilala ägi meketa yanglutsü tenzük dang Leplo kati arr sangoktsü, "Kümdangshiang! Kümdangshiang! Tsükchirtem tonga arur." Iba osang angashia Lijaba kanga aoksa-a, anünga aliba alimaji mashimashi ajenzüa yanglur pa jena oadok. Anungji Ao limaya tekong tenem, teburjunga lenden, aser ayongtem meyanglutet ta Aor-i jembir.

### **Aor poktetba otsü (The myth of origin of the Aos)**

Aor tetsü tebui meimchir Poktetbaji Longterok nungi ka ken ka ken ta poktet ta jembir. Item Longterok nung poktetertemji tebur asem aser tetsü asem liasü. Teburtem tenüng ägi Longpok, Tongpok aser Longjakrep. Tetsürtemji ka Longkapokla, Yongmenala aser Elongse liasü. Tongpok aser Elongse na tamasa lempoa liasü iba sullen Longpok aser Longkapokla tena lempo aser tasembuba nung Longjakrep o Yongmenala tena lempo.

Item kibongtem yagi yim aküm koba dang Chungliyimti ta ajar, Kong Aortem putu aeika lia aru aser lokti libaliro, yimtsüng temzü ozüng aser tamangba

nung külem kücha item ajakji iba Chungliyimti nung tenzük. Tanü tashi Chungliyimti yim (tanga Dikhu ayong anasa lir) nung item longtemji karbo angur.

### **Tüsangwa o tamang na lemsapa otsü (Division of Day & Night)**

Alemli mapang koda tesangwa aser tamang na bendangtsü ta kanga shisabulua, alima nung taküm shiruru ajak sendena iba ya koda lemsatsü ta jembitep. Idangji Pokpo ozü-i ashi, tamang süra teti dang amangdaksütsü tesangwa süra teti dang sangwadaksütsü ta ashi. Iba tamachi oji angashia pa dak kanga mejungi tanga ozütemi azük, anungji ajagi Pokpo ozüya tekolak apakadok ta jembir. Aji dang masü tanga ozütemi ozü kidong nungi aritok, anungji Pokpoya aonung dang angur aser senzür. Parnok mapang talang ka jembirteper kelen, tatesa Jempangmejempong ozüi ashi, tesangwa aser tamang na melentepa teti asünung ajungtsü ta bener aru. Iba shisatsü tajung telemtetbaji kanga junger ta parnok ajaki agizük. Iba anogo nungi alimai tesangwa aser tamang na melentepa teti asür ta Aor-i jembir. Iba tashitetmetet shisatsü tajung jagi Jempangmejempong ozüya nungtoko aküm aser ajaki pa sanga pa dak memshi memshia tila ka dang kümadok ta jembir.

Koda ibaji bendangtsü ta jembitepdang, Antipongi pai aji inyaktsü ta langzü aser anü adokleni oa zoni (anü) ajurua iba tebilemstüji yamai bendangtsü. Tamasa ni (zoni) sakdang nai (Antipong)i kongang aser shiruru ajak aremi senoka aitsü renemang. Tanabuba nung, zoni-i kodang kishi lapokdir Antipongi kongang, aji angashili shiruru ajak aremi aitsüla. Tasembuba nung zoni kodang ki doktsüdir Antipongisa kongang aser alima nem tesangwa agütsütsü. Panü nung jagi tamangji shiruru nem lezmüktsü aser tesangwaji meimchir nem lezmüktsü ta jembir.

Antipongji zoni-i ashiba osang tajungji bener pelaseta shilang aser iba anogo nungi Antipongi anü madokdang asemben akonger aser shiruru aser meimchir naprongla tesünep aser tepela nung alir.

### **Ak o Azü na otsü (The Story of Pig and Dog)**

Alemli tamunger otzu nung tambur ka (Sangremer) Ak ka aser Azü ka parnok asem liasu. Alu mapa nung meranga yaritepa inyaka aru. Kenü anogo tampusangi Ak o Azü na lemongi (alu) yok tena alu tonger tentaki oa alu inyaktsu tenzük Ak-i kangadang meranga anogo peyong alu inyak saka Azübo jenkidang mejanga dang kazü, anungji Ak-i jashiseta Azüdang ashi na alu meinyaki mejaanga dang kasürsera ni taongnung kidangi toker obula dang ashitsu ta ashi, saka Azü-i kecha masü shiang da langzü.

Anogo tepiyong Ak kangadang belemseta alu inyaker nekongdang kidangi meyepa tokotsü mapang atong nung Azü kidangi tokoti arung ta ashi, saka Azü-i na tokoya atang ta sür ak pa kija yok. Ak aposoa toker mapang tatsüka ata lir, Azüji alu ajak nungji asemzúa senzü Ak tetsüngjanglep ajakji pai ajempangtsü pa tetsüjanglep atoktakja alu ajak nung asemzúa senzür menur kidangi shilang. Ak-i ki donger anüngdang kechisa atalok item otzü ajak tebu dang rasa shia alidang Azüdo asema belemseter atok idangji tebui ya koda asü na anogo tepiyong mejanga kazü yamai belemseter arur na ta asüng tang nung, Azü-i masü ni dang alu ajak inyak, Ak-i kecha meinyak pa-ang anogo tepiyong mejanga kazü ta ashi ibai angshia Ak kangadang jashi masü ni dang alu inyak ta tena asatepa aliba ngua tebui kecha masü nenabo chiongang aser anesüngzükang mejangang ta ashi aser ni asüngnepalui oa reprangdangti shiba shitak idangji metetsü ta ashi.

Tanünep tebu kera alui oa ajak nung Azüjanglep angu, aser Ak janglepbo maliasü anungji aongnung meyepa atoker tena ja-a ashi ni ajak metetoko tangnungi Azü küden kidangsa mejangang aser Ak na azümesen kima lua mejangang ta ashi. Iba mapang nungi tangtashi Azü nisung den külemi kidang alir aser Ak kima ayur ta jembir.

### **Müsü Tongpang jakrepa otsü (Crushing of Deer's ornaments)**

Alemli kenmapanmg ka nung Lijabai shiruru ajak par kimai tsü asoshi ayongzük. Iba mapang nungji Mesüatebur kimai yari aotsü asoshi subotsü bushia aoba mapang nung tongpang mengui alidang Shirong kati Soang meong tongpang auyar Mesü nem agütsü. Kechiaser Mesü o Shirong naji aki nungi tembar tajung liasü. Mesüji pa tenüngdaksü ngutet nung joktena pelaseta or tongpangji jungjunga meyushir longma nung anüdak pua yur kanga dang pelaseta tebur kimai yari aotsü asoshi bilema liasü. Saka Sosangbo pa meyong tongpangji kong samaba agi kanga dang jashiseta sumngkolak nungi pa meyong tongpangji kong ali aji bushia senzüdang pai longma nung paliba tongpangji pa meyongto reprangtet, pai jashia azük nungjagi sunglak ka tsükdak-ja tongpangji jakrepdaksü.

Mesüji tebur kimai yari aotsü asoshi tongpang bushi nung jakreper angu, onsara jasahibaagi pai joktena aodang Tzüla ka teyongi ajemdanga yutsü. Tzüla ni tasü marem ateptendang Omechi entsü jakreptsü. Omechiji tejashi marem ali anaktena sosa-a aodang Lijabai ashi, na kechiba alu sosatsü ta artsü. Idangji Omechi-i ashi, obu kü indang entsü Tzüla ka ateptena arua jakreptsü ta langzü. Ano Lijabai Tzüji pua asüngdang, Tzülai langzüa ashi Mesü ka arua ni teyongi ajemdangtsü. Iba oji angatetaano Lijabai Mesüji pua asüngdang, Mesüi-a langzü obu ni yari arutsü asoshi

tongpang ka Shirong dang meshi, Sosang kati tongpangji jakreptsü. Ano Sosangjia pua arua asüngdang, nia nür kimai yari arutsü asoshi tongpangji bushi nung Mesür kima liasü, anungji nia jashiseta pongzüdang sünglak ka tsüka jskreptsü.

Tesüsa Lijabai Mesü dang asüngdang, Tongpangji kong nungi bener aru Mesüi langzü, Shirongi agütsü. Tatemsa Lijabai Shirongpur, na aurji temerenshi making nung sepa yur, tzü agi aletsü ta shir Lijabaj tzü moloi ao. Lijaba maru dang Shirongiayimdena asaa, 'O' shi ango chinürbo ajak sentenang, aji angshia Shitsükka aru Shirongi asungdang na kechi shisa chinür, Shitsük-i langzúa shisa techinüba. Sürabangla nabo yongrak ajak salajang, Shirong adoker Shitsüjiang makang nung shibang yutsü.

Tatsüka lir külen Lijabaji tzümolo tatsük bener arua meküploktsü. Talet marem Shitsük-i asa, idangjiang Lijabai par semchir Shitsükjiang leter angu. Lijabai ashi, tanüa Shirong ashikülakba to masü semchirang asü no ta sür makangji lapoka chiok.

### **Temeimteper ana otsü (A story of two lovers)**

Mapang ka nung asangur tajung ka tenüng agi Mangchanger aser aeir ka tenüng agi Tsügenrongmang liasü. Tenaji lanuwa nungi kanga dang meimtepa liasü, aji tsüburi meteta aküm. Saka tebursanger aeirla nüpuji kanga dang memerai liasü aser aeirlaji oda kanga sempaa aküm. Saka asangubaibo kanga sakloka meima aküm. Oda tsüburi iba amai tena lempotsü memulung süra nibo tasüang tajungba ta sür soseta asütsü lemtet. Pabo joko mapang talangka malitsü ta sür kanga dang menungraseta mena otzü atonga tsüki amen aser aeirla dang ashi, tasünepbo külemi alui aotsü o züngtepa ay

Tenaji ajurutepa külemi atongsema otzü atonga ao. Pabo tasütsüji ta sür menüraseta temenüngra o dang jembia ao. Iba iba amaji lemanng piyong or joko tenaji lemur pelatsüsa aküm. Asangubai ashi, nai benüra sung koa yutsütsü aser naroa zükzüka yutsüdi na kidangi tukodang iba lemjem nungi anguoka repringdang itemji bener tukoangma ta ashi. La tatoki repringdang nung lai meimsang sür angu. La kanga dang ajeb aser menungraseta kidangi meyipa adok.

Mangcahnger kidangi ishi nü meyipa marunung, par tsürabur kanga dang shisabulua bushidang saka mangu. Tsüsa tenu tanubusang tsetsürta ayipdaki oa asüngdang aser lai ken ka dang tenloktsü. Tebursanger kinungertem lai ashiba jakai oa repringdang nung par jabaso idakji sür liasü. Tetsü kanga sasa ajeb.

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