

CULTURE CHANGE AMONG THE LOTHANAGAS:
A CASE STUDY OF WOKHA AND AKUK VILLAGE
IN NAGALAND

By

MYANBEMO KIKON

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

THESIS SUBMITTED IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

TO



NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
SHILLONG
2002

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CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled **Culture Change Among the Lotha Nagas: A Case Study of Wokha and Akuk Village in Nagaland** submitted by **Myanbemo Kikon**, is in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology** to the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. It is based on first hand investigation carried out under my supervision.

He has been duly registered and thesis presented is worthy of being considered for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology**. This work has not been submitted for any degree of any other University.

Date:

11/10/02



11/10/02

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CONTENTS

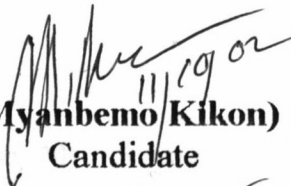
	Pages
Declaration	i
Acknowledgement	ii
Map	iii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1-19
CHAPTER II LAND AND PEOPLE	20-39
CHAPTER III TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF THE LOTHANAGAS	40-92
CHAPTER IV CULTURE CHANGE OF THE LOTHANAGAS	93-156
CHAPTER V THE WIND OF CHANGE	157-188
CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION	189-202
REFERENCES	203-207
BIBLIOGRAPHY	208-215


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DECLARATION

I, **Mr. Myanbemo Kikon**, hereby declare that the subject matter of the thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis of 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 being submitted to the North-Eastern Hill University for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology**.


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I am also thankful to Mr. Joseph F. Khongbuh for typing my manuscripts with utmost care and sincerely to bring out the thesis in time.

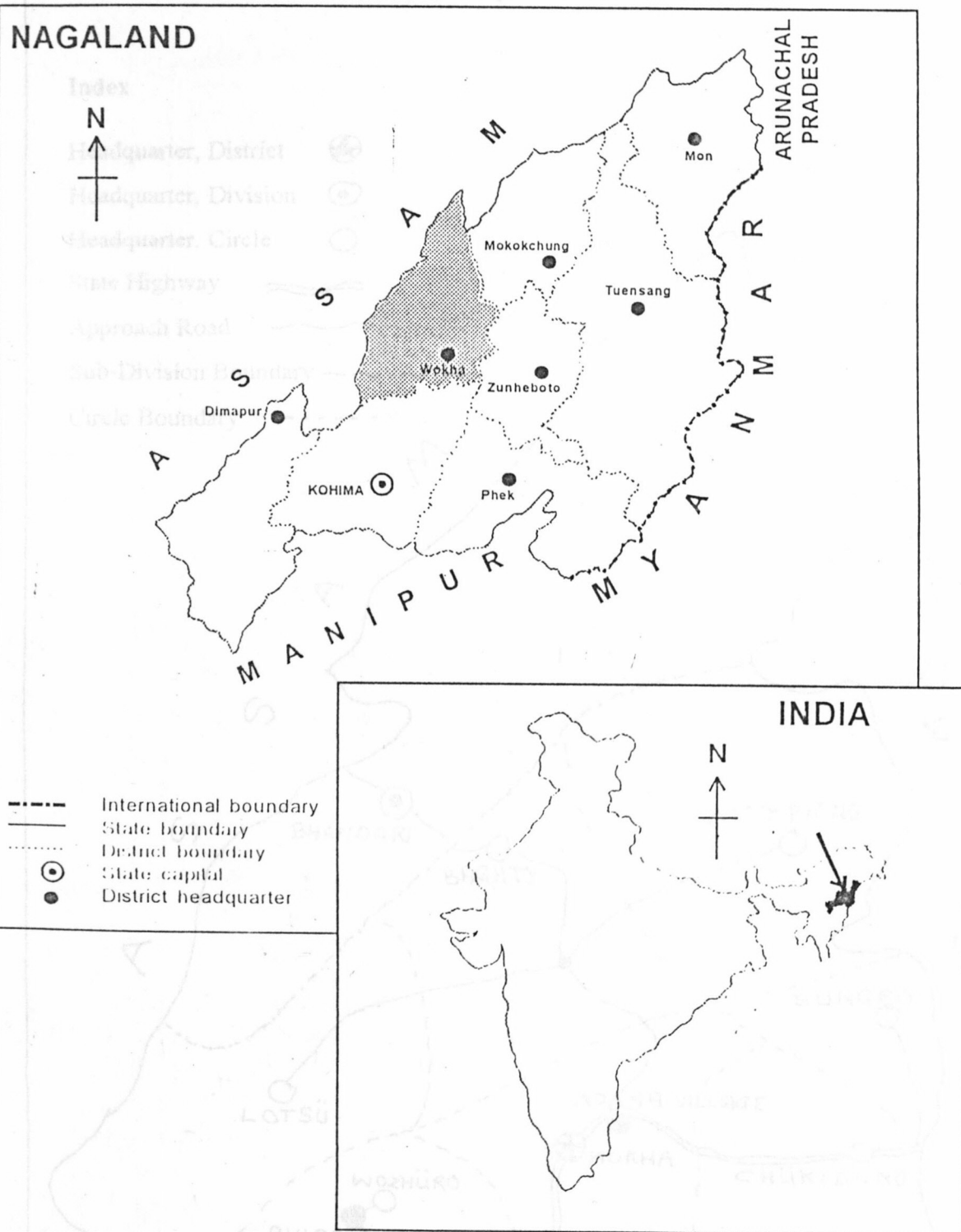
Finally, I extend hearty thanks to my beloved wife, Nyanpeni and children for bearing with me all the hardships and at the same time encouraging me to complete the work.

Shillong

The 11th Oct. 2002


(Myanbemo Kikon)

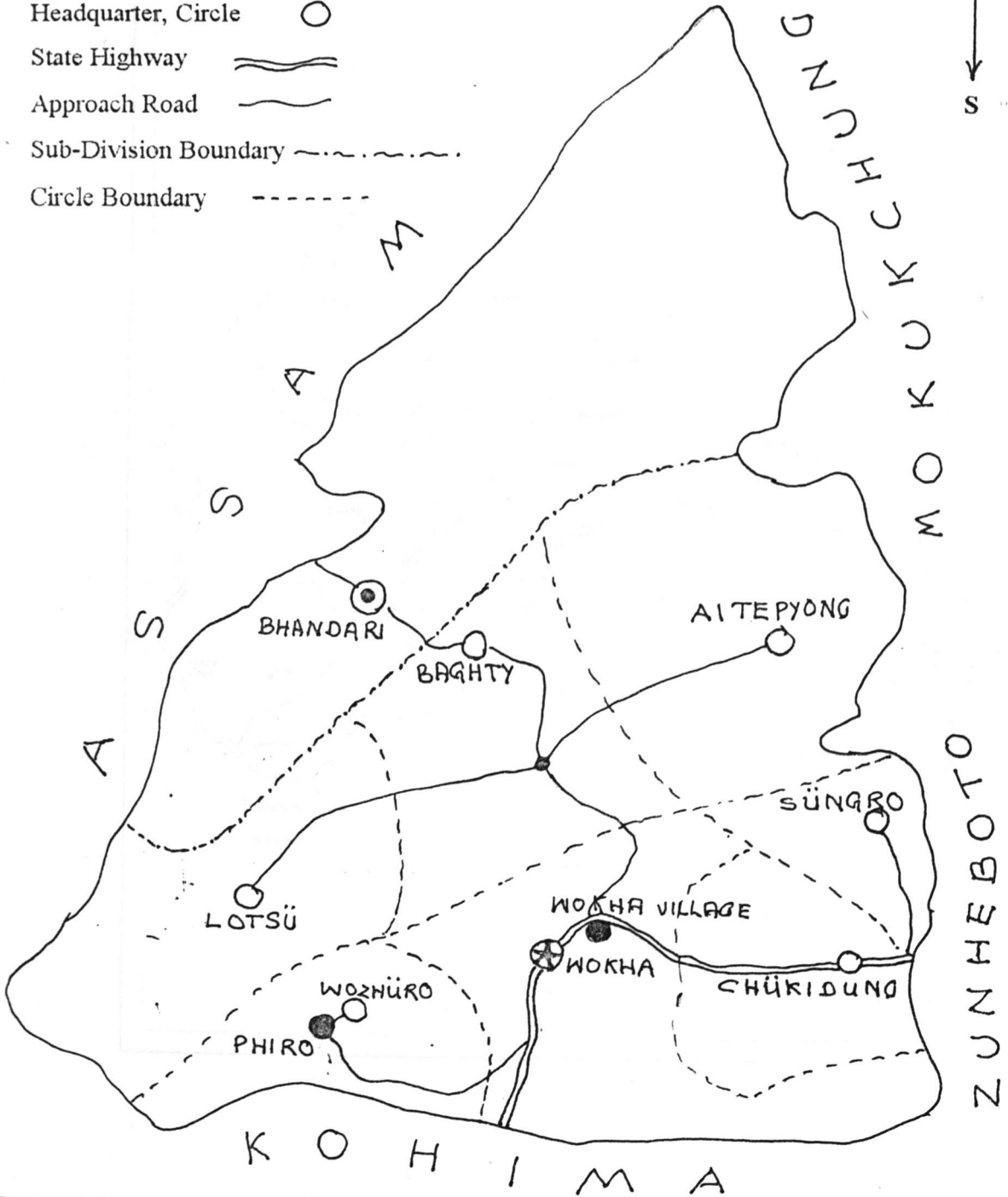
Figure 1.1 : Map of Nagaland (India)



SKETCH MAP OF WOKHA DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION, 2002 (NOT TO THE SCALE)



























Index

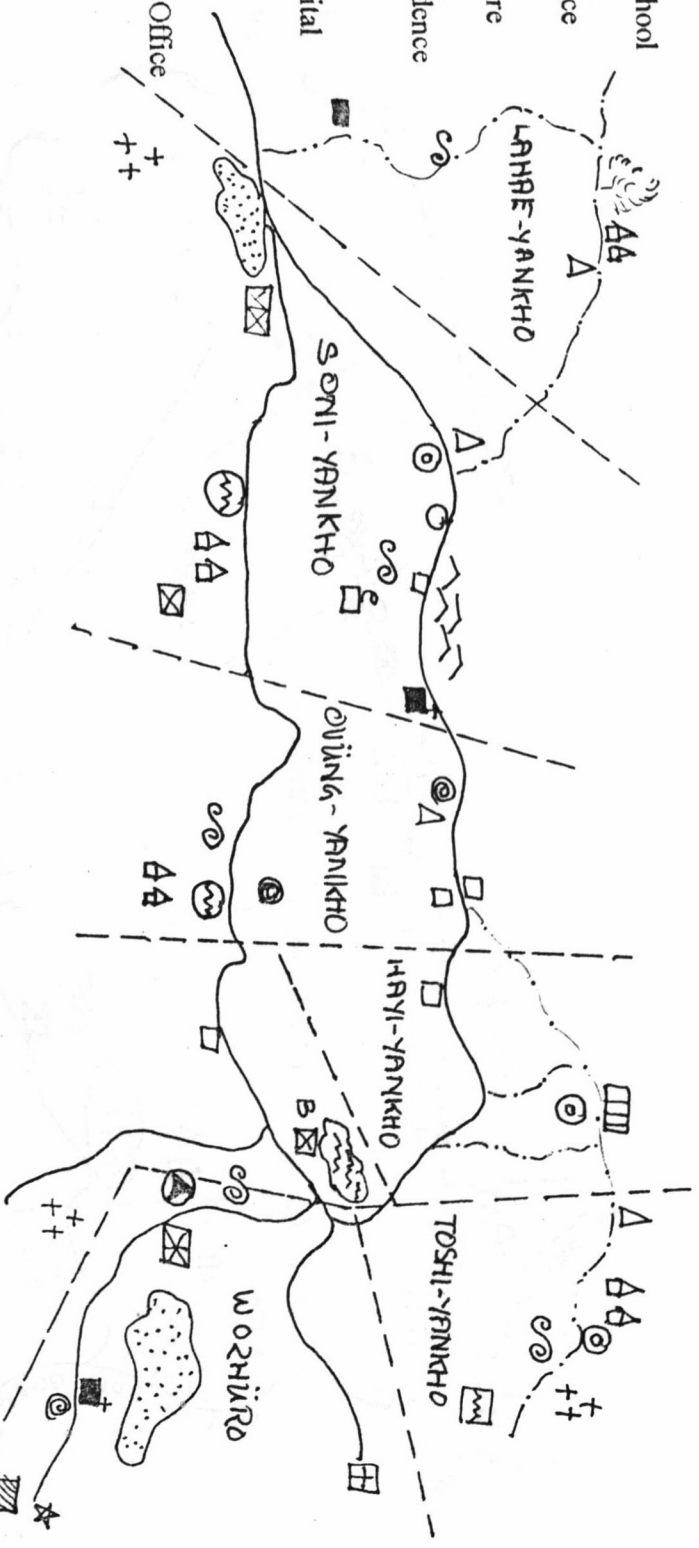
- Headquarter, District ✱
- Headquarter, Division ●
- Headquarter, Circle ○
- State Highway
- Approach Road
- Sub-Division Boundary
- Circle Boundary



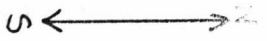
SKETCH MAP OF PHIRO VILLAGE, 2002 (NOT TO THE SCALE)

Index























-  Head Tree
-  Govt. Middle School
-  Church
-  Pastor's Residence
-  Rice Mill
-  Anganwadi Centre
-  Shop
-  Head GB's Residence
-  Rest House
-  Water Reservoir
-  12 Bedded Hospital
-  Primary School
-  Public Ground
-  Lake
-  Students' Union Office
-  Pond
-  CDPO Office
-  Panchay Hall
-  Weaving Centre
-  Community Hall
-  EAC Office
-  Veterinary Colony
-  Granary
-  Cemetery
-  Footpath
-  Moring Spot

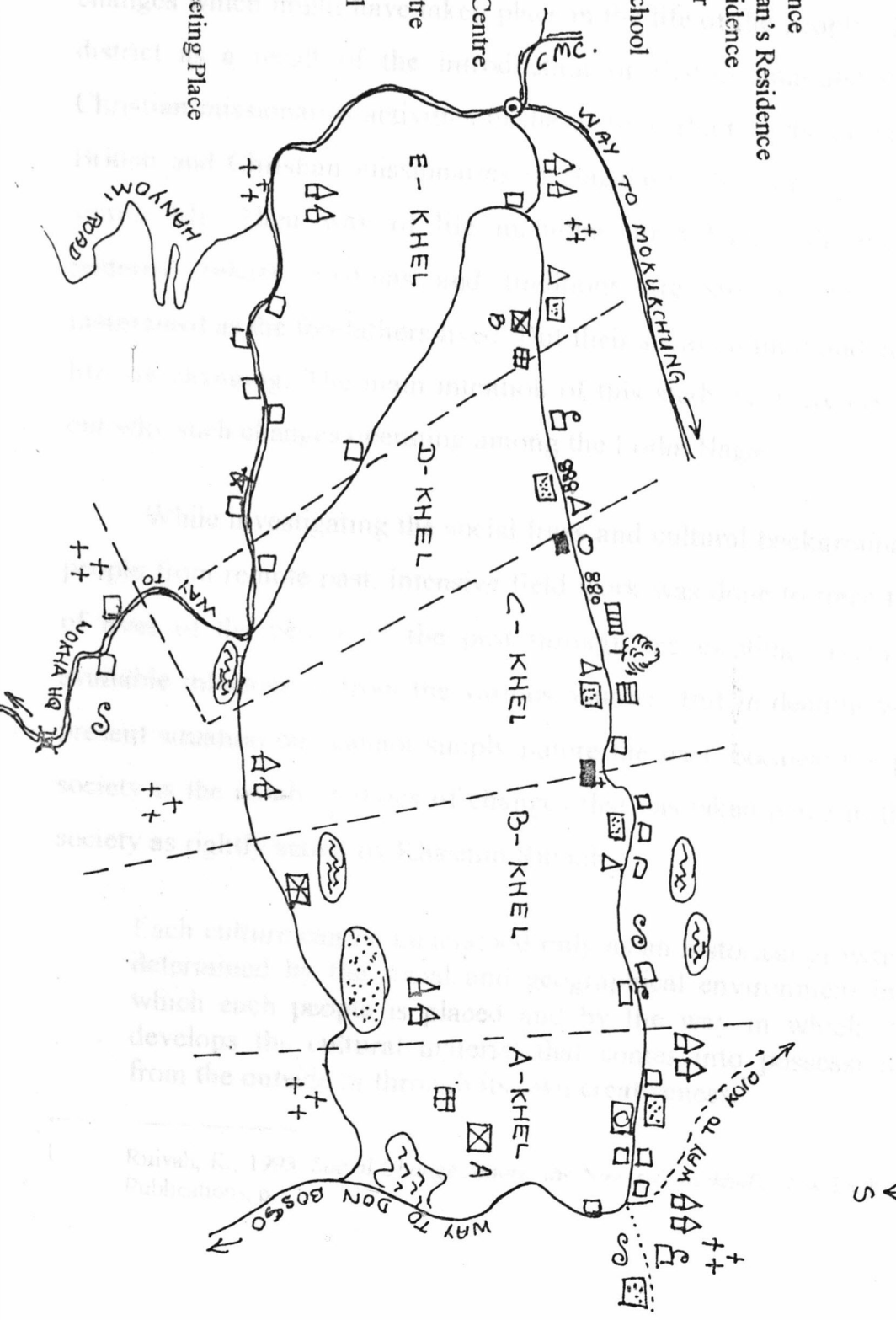


SKETCH MAP OF WOKHA VILLAGE, 2002 (NOT TO THE SCALE)



Index

-  Head Tree
-  Church
-  Pastor's Residence
-  Village Chairman's Residence
-  Head GB's Residence
-  Water Reservoir
-  Public Ground
-  Govt. Middle School
-  Primary School
-  Shop
-  Lake
-  Pond
-  Youth Welfare Centre
-  Village Court
-  Anganwadi Centre
-  Dispensary
-  Community Hall
-  Rice Mill
-  Blacksmith
-  Granary
-  Cemetery
-  Public Open Meeting Place



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The present study was undertaken to study the socio-cultural changes which might have taken place in the life of the people of Wokha district as a result of the introduction of British administration and Christian missionaries activities in the district. Prior to the arrival of the British and Christian missionaries in Nagaland, the Lotha tribe lives a simple life. Their way of life including food habits, dresses, house patterns, beliefs, customs and traditions are strictly observed and maintained as the forefathers lived. But their socio-cultural and economic life are changing. The main intention of this study is, therefore, to find out why such changes operating among the Lotha Nagas.

While investigating the social lives and cultural background of the people from remote past, intensive field work was done to trace the way of lives of the people of the past through the existing practices and available information from the various sources. But in dealing with the present situation one cannot simply ignore the past, because the present society is the result of series of changes that has taken place in the past society as rightly stated by Khashim Ruviah:

Each culture can be understood only as an historical growth determined by the social and geographical environment in which each people is placed and by the way in which it develops the cultural material that comes into possession from the outside or through its own creativeness.¹

1. Ruivah, K., 1993. *Social Change Among the Nagas (Tangkhu)*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, p. 2.

Many scholars and renowned anthropologists have conducted research on primitive tribes and culture in various senses and one of which the most influential is, of course, that of E. B. Tylor. In his famous book, *Primitive Culture*, it is written:

Culture or civilization taken in its ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society (Tylor, E.B., 1971).

This definition of culture is rather vague, but words like 'acquire' and 'complex whole', which were the key words of the definition means that culture is the product of the social learning rather than of biological heredity. It also means that it includes all social learned behaviours.

In his definition Malinowski also referred culture as "an instrument reality, an apparatus for satisfaction of the biological and derived need." (Malinowski, B., 1960). In this context, culture operates as means of response for the satisfaction of biological derived need. He emphasized on the biological aspect of culture and explained the biological characteristics of human behaviour. However, Radcliffe Brown did not agree with him when he used the word "social structure" for culture, a wider perspective of culture, in analyzing social organization. He refers culture as a process by which a person acquires from contact with other person or from such things like books, or works of art, knowledge, skill, idea, belief, sentiment etc., (Radcliff Brown., 1952).

Now culture is understood as the whole human reactions and responses to existence. In other words, culture is all that a man creates in order to adapt himself to the environment for survival, which includes customs and traditions, beliefs, ideas, social institutions, habitual attitude of mind, artifacts and techniques etc., that can be transmitted from one person to the other through speech and symbolic actions. However, it is a product of social learning rather than biological heredity. All these acquired products serves man to maintain in the struggle for existence.

Culture is dynamic and rapidly changing. Thus any modification or change in the life of the people, material or non-material, whether consequent innovation and acculturation can be termed as culture change. In the process of culture change, however, only some aspects of cultural traits may be changed or it may even take another form of modified cultural pattern, but retains the basic elements of the original cultural traits which may remain unchanged.

Sometimes culture change is closely related to many social change and their distinction is very crucial. But culture change is the conceptual formulation that refers to the many ways in which societies change their patterns of culture. It mainly refers to the change in cultural meaningful symbols produced by human being whereas social change refers mainly to the change in actual human behaviours and relations (Moore, W.E., 1968).

In the study of culture change anthropologists like Tylor, Morgan and Frazer tried to explain the origin of culture and made simplistic

attempt to understand change. They believed that the primitive societies had already experienced dramatic change in the past.

Malinowski also talks about social change by stating that change is created primarily due to external pressure of colonial rule (Malinowski, 1960). His main argument was that primitive tribe must be studied as a unit actually functioning under present day but not as a reflection of their own past history. Malinowski's main theoretical contribution was functional analysis of culture into a series of interacted aspects, and later he adopted to form the basis more dynamic type of study of culture contact by which it would follow the introduction into a primitive society of programmes of change.

The British social anthropologists seem to have more concern with the social consequences of change, in terms of structural adjustment. American anthropologists, on the other hand, were more concern with process and agent of changes. While Britishers were primarily concerned with the problem of culture change due to colonial rule and trade, the Americans were more concerned with the study of change as an outcome of better communication and economic development.

We can also approach the study of change in a society in two ways, first, change as a juxtaposition of circumstances unique for each culture, second, change as a regular phenomenon in each society having some regularity in the pattern of change.

One of the crucial problem areas in contemporary anthropology is that of culture change. Therefore, to understand the sphere of problem of

change in the social activities and human relations, it is necessary to investigate the social lives and actual background of the people in the past through the existing practices and available information. If we know the condition under which a culture operates then we can understand what form of and direction culture change takes place as it has been quoted by Ruivah the words of Gillin:

If we know the conditions under which a culture operates and lives of its internal integration and coordination, we are able to predict within certain limits what form and direction culture changes will take. As we perfect our knowledge and our techniques for specifying the condition of compatibility and consistency, our predictions become possible, so control and manipulation of changes are possible.²

Therefore, in considering social change it is also important to keep in view whether the change is even in all aspects of life or change is rapid in some aspects and slow in other aspect or aspects.

Now, study of culture change has becoming more important or significant in the post Second World War as evidenced by Lester's (1944) study of the effect of war on Fijian society, Brown's (1949) study of missionaries and cultural diffusion and Benedict's (1947) study of Japanese culture and personality, with special reference to the problem of stability and change. Thus, the above theoretical background study of culture change help us to understand the importance of the study of culture change.

2. Ruivah, K., *Op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

Nagas In the 19th century a significant landmark has been continued in the history and of the tribal people of the North-east India, particularly to the Naga society. It witnessed the transition from tradition to modernity. Prior to British arrival to this region the people remained almost segregated. The Nagas lived in their isolated lives in their respective villages, which were more or less like village republics. There was little scope for mixing together with other people of the country. However, it was during the year 1832 the British made their first entry into Naga Hills. But the first mass contact of the Nagas with the people living outside was made only during the Second World War (Sema, Hokishe., 1986).

The entry of the British administration brought along the Christian missionaries, of course, it was mainly coincidence of time rather than coincidence of intentions between the British rulers and the Christian missionaries. The British intervened with the traditional political institutions and later they also introduced change in the subsistence activities of the people. The missionaries who came at the same time as the British colonizers, brought change in the indigenous religious beliefs and practices and many other aspects of life of the people like education, style of personal life etc. Thus the impact of westernization and modernization on the Naga society and culture during this period has a tremendous impact on the socio-economic, religion, education and cultural field and eradication of some evil practices like head-hunting and superstitious beliefs. Further, it leads to the gradual decline in indigenous arts, crafts, traditional system of administration, customary law and justice and indigenous industries. The British policy of introducing to the

Nagas about the apparatus of western civilization led to the crises in their faith, traditions and cultural values.

The second phase of socio-cultural and economic change was noticed during the post-independence period. From 1947 onwards the government of India introduced a series of developmental programmes in the country and as a result of which hardly any aspect of life of the people remained untouched. Thus, there was total transformation in the way of life of the people of Nagas due to the introduction of western cultural elements into the Naga traditional way of life.

The Lothas, like any other tribes of Nagaland, has been traditionally living within their own territory in almost relatively isolated from the rest of the civilized world. They led a simple life according to their own way of life, following their own customs and traditions in all matters of socio-political activities. But now things have drastically changed. Culture and traditions of the Lothas had undergone a tremendous change owing to the coming of the Britishers and the Christian missionaries to this region in the year 1841, and more so after independence.

The whole attitude and the life style of the Lothas have considerably changed in recent times as observed by A. P. Sinha:

A modern Lotha boys and girls can easily impress anyone that the people of this region (Naga Hills of yesteryear, Nagaland of today) are in no way different in their food habits, hair-style, in their total appearance, from the people

of other parts of the country, and who are known to be modern.³

Thus cultural change has come about as a result of experiences initially due to contact with the western civilized world and adaptation of a new religion and various relating aspects to style of life and more so after 1947 with improved economic development, communication, transportation, contact with people from other cultural group. Anthropological enquiry into the pattern and extent of such transformation, therefore, become quite relevant and appropriate. This brings us the need of proper understanding of socio-cultural structure as well as their problems of changes that have taken place within the Lotha community. The main purpose of the present study is, therefore, to examine the changes that have taken place in the socio-cultural and religious aspects of the Lotha people.

Review of Literature

Some of the works of the social anthropologists, sociologists and other thinkers of the social and cultural change among the Indian tribal societies provides some theoretical approaches to the study of culture change.

Furer-Haimendorf (1942) analyzed the gradual changes of the culture of the Chenchu. He enumerates the type of culture borrowing and discussed the nature of change caused in original culture owing to their

3. Sinha, A. C., (ed), 1986. *Changing North-East India*, Ludhiana: Gagan Publishers, pp. 88-89.

contact with the forest contractors, road labourers and local peasant population.

Kessinger (1974) selected a single village in Punjab and conducted a case study and deal with migration, commercialization and agriculture, differentiation of occupation and population growth in rural Punjab from the time of British annexation in 1948 till 1968. He combined the perspectives and method used by the historian to trace the situation of rural Indian economic and social position to study the aspect of change that have been left out previously. His main intention was not to show the changing state of village life in Punjab but to find out the development over extended period of time and to discover the factors responsible for it.

Roy (1989) conducted a study on the Khond tribe of Orissa and said that in the initial stage of existence, the Khonds were basically a hill nomadic race with self-sustained economy. But the British administration policy had affected the socio-cultural and economic life of this important section of the tribal of Orissa that in due course of time, these aborigines resorted to their shifting cultivation which supplemented their means of subsistence and economy.

Chaudhuri (1992) in a series of survey on the tribal transition in India found that the traditional economy of the Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh were such as agriculture, trade, sheep and goat rearing. But now their economy has shifted from its past tradition. The factors like enclosure of the border with Tibet, opening of modern commercial and transport system, introduction of modern education and new

administrative system have made people of this district inclined towards diversification of occupation like agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry.

Jain (1995) conducted a case study on social change among the Bhil tribe of Rajasthan and found that a number of them have already embraced Christianity. They ceased to practice polygamy and also condemned bride-price among Bhil Christians. There are also other factors like diversification of economy, implementation of massive development plans, opening of tribal territory and provision of infrastructure facilities which were responsible for bringing about changes among the Bhil community.

Burling (1963) did an intensive village study on the Garo village. In his work, Burling found that the major factors causing change among the Garos of Meghalaya are not the adaptation of wet paddy cultivation and better contact with the outside world. Adaptation of the permanent cultivation by itself caused no other change except changing some principles of ownership of land as historical evidence shows that the Garos had started wet-paddy cultivation there as early as the early part of the 15th century AD (Borah, 1936). But overwhelming changes started to show their impact on all aspects of Garo's life, in their material culture, social organization and their world view.

In K. S. Singh's (ed.) 1993, *Tribal Ethnography Customary Law and Change*, S. K. Pal made analytical studies on the Rabha community and said that the Rabhas of Assam followed the matrilineal principles in respect of descent, residence and inheritance. In the pre-independence

period Rabhas were relatively isolated from the main stream of Hindu's ways of life and maintained their cultural homogeneity as an integrated harmonious whole, but in the post-independence period the improvement of education and integration of tribal areas resulted into a closer interaction between the Rabhas and other communities like the Hindu caste groups. As a result of a closer contact with the neighbouring Hindus, the Hindu culture elements have penetrated the traditional structure of Rabha's society. Thus, the Rabha society now is in transition from matrilineal to patrilineal social structure.

Snaitang (1993) studied the Khasi-Jaintia societies of Meghalaya and found that three important changes have taken place among the Khasi-Jaintia tribes. One of the most significant changes noticed was the life style of the women. Under the impact of missionaries influence and the modern culture, the women were more free in their movement and even participated actively in political and social affairs. The impact is also found in the material culture where the old traditional houses were redesigned. Age-old taboo on drinking of milk and rejection of previous food such as chicken and eggs were removed. Drinking of country liquor or rice beer were replaced by introducing tea drinking among the Khasi-Jaintia Christians.

Furcr-Haimendorf (1976) restudied the Konyak Naga tribe of Nagaland after a gap of thirty four years (1936-1970). In his analytical studies he found that a drastic change has taken place in the socio-cultural and economic life of the Konyak people within the period of thirty four years. Under the changed political conditions, the tradition of

autocratic chieftainship is undergoing transformation, even though some of the chiefs may retain part of their wealth and privileges. Traditional political structure of the village based on the closed association of the "Murong" had already been replaced by modern form of political system. The introduction of Christianity has led to the abandonment of many customs and traditions. Many have totally abandoned their old tribal religion and have embraced Christianity. Even the house-type and household materials have been replaced by new items of furniture and equipments like table, chair, metal-utensils and cups.

Horam (1988) made an analytical studies on the Naga tribes in general and said that one of the most remarkable changes that have taken place among the Naga society was the transitional from old beliefs to new beliefs, animism to Christianity. Beliefs in the old gods and family-cult are slowly passing away but these have been firmly replaced by Christianity. Another aspect of change is due to the yielding of old things to new ones as being introduced by Christianity.

Saleh (1989) made an analytical study on the transition of Nagaland's economy from a primitive to a modern economy. During the pre-independence period there had been no developmental programmes in Nagaland. Education was confined mainly to a few missionaries schools. But it was only after the formation of state, the administrative machinery had to be built up to bring about peace in the area. Thereafter various infrastructures development was made. The main factors of economic transition in Nagaland was mainly due to the introduction of 6th and 7th plans in the country where main emphasis was made for

development of infrastructure by providing medical hospitals, schools, drinking water supply, construction of approach road, improved seeds and agricultural tools and implements etc. Such development brought about changes in the ways of life and attitudes of the people from a traditional tribal society to a modern way of life.

Ruivah (1993) in his ethnographic account on the Tangkhul Nagas, one of the major tribes of Manipur, made a microscopic investigation on the Tangkhul society and found that the social life of the Tangkhul has been undergoing a rapid transformation as a result of the introduction of a new way of life mainly due to the impact of Christianity, contact with outside world, formal education and the imposition of a new political system etc. The most important factors of social change among the Tangkhul was proselytization which began after the occupation of Manipur by the British in the last part of 19th century. With the advent of Christianity social transformation of the Tangkhul society has taken place in numerous ways, viz., by the introduction of many new things, many indigenous social practices and aspects of culture were abolished and many modifications were made in the traditional social customs and practices. He analyzed the traditional culture and social system which were rapidly vanishing under the impact of modernization and Christianity.

In Ganguly's (ed.), 1995, *Urbanization and Development in North-East India (Trends and Policy Implication)*, Saikia conducted a case study of two urban towns such as Kohima and Dimapur in Nagaland. His main intention was to study the process of urbanization in Nagaland. He

found that the growth of urbanization in Nagaland has been very fast and it is even faster than in some other states of North-East India. Kohima being the capital of the state has been growing fast on account of expanding administrative and political activities. Dimapur, on the other hand, has been spreading fast due to the development of business, industrial and civic and educational facilities. In both of these towns, commercial, educational and administrative functions have been expanding very fast. As a result, the old town areas are expanding in all directions, mainly along the National Highway No. 39. Another factor leading to the fast growing of Kohima and Dimapur was due to the migration of the educated people to these towns for employment in government service and business enterprises.

Mills (1922), in his monograph on *The Lotha Nagas*, made an effort in investigating on socio-cultural life of the Lotha Naga people and put them on record, which was the first book on account of the Lotha people. He made an elaborate studies on the original form of the Lotha's customs and traditions. He also traced the origin and migration of the tribe. Mills' account on the Lotha tribe was written in the form of monography and yet it provides us the situations prevailing before the changes have taken place in the socio-cultural life of the Lotha people.

In the Wokha District Gazetteers, Ghosh (1979) reports that the transition of dress from the old dress like "lengta" and mantles to other attires like pants and shirts is significant transformation in the dress culture among the Lotha Nagas. Owing to the advent of modern

education and Christianity such a radical and tremendous change on dress culture has taken place among the tribe.

So far any exhaustive review of the work done on social and culture change have not been tried here. But the main purpose of review of literature done here is to show the trend and development of researches done in culture change.

A number of study on social and culture change among the Nagas have been done by some researchers. However, it may be pointed out here that no study has been done so far among the Lotha society as culture change is concerned.

Scope and Objectives of the Study

The present study is entitled as a *Study of Culture Change Among the Lotha Nagas: A Case Study of Wokha and Akuk Village in Nagaland*. The main intention of this study is to find out the changes that are operating among the Lotha society.

Prior to the arrival of the British colonizers and the Christian missionaries the Lotha lives a simple life. Their customs and traditions are strictly observed and maintained. But now these things have been changed and a new way of life has been experienced by the people of Wokha district. Of course, culture change is an ongoing process and any society may experience it at any stage. As for the Lothas, rapid change of culture begins from the time when they had come into contact with the British and missionaries in the earlier time and with the various developments in economic opportunities in the post-Independence period

at the later stage. With the coming of Christianity and formal education, the Lotha society went for a greater change. Therefore, the present study purposes to find out why such change operating among the Lotha Nagas.

Keeping in view of the above purpose of the study, the present study proposes the following objectives so as to make the study more meaningful and manageable:

1. To review the traditional Lotha culture,
2. To investigate the culture change of the Lotha Nagas,
3. To find out the main factors responsible for the culture change,
4. To observe the process of change, and finally to analyse and summarize the findings of the thesis.

Methodology

Selection of the Village

After much consultation and a careful spot verification of the two types of Lotha typical villages such as Akuk and Wokha have been selected for intensive field study.

The Akuk village, which is one of the most traditional and historical villages in Lotha area, represents the traditional Lotha village at the time when the British and missionaries made their first contact with the Lotha people during the later part of the nineteenth century. The selection of the other two villages such as Wokha and Phiro represents a village that have been already affected by the present trend of culture change due to their contact with the British and the Christian missionaries, and the development of various economic opportunities

during the post-independence period. The purpose of selecting Wokha and Phiro villages is to have a better comparison of the data collected from these two villages for the present study.

Wokha village is about one and a half km. away from the district headquarters. This is one of the advanced and leading Christian villages in Wokha district comprising 679 households with total number of 3776 population. The attitude and life style of this village have considerably changed as a result of the introduction of modernization brought by the British administration and missionaries and also economic development in the village. Now, most of the people of this village could hardly follow their traditional ways of life.

Phiro is about 35 km away from Wokha town, the district headquarters. This village has 306 households with a total number of 2375 population. Christianity came to this village earlier than as it was introduced at Wokha village. But the growth rate of Christianity in this village was rather slow and at the same time their acceptance of alien culture was comparatively slower. This village still retains some of its traditional cultural traits. Yet majority of the people in this village have also changed their way of life.

For a better comparison of the information these two villages have been selected. Today, though almost all the population of these two villages have become Christian some of their ways of life are still influenced by their previous background in all the two villages. In this study, special emphasis was made to the kind of indigenous institutions of socio-cultural and their response to the changing situations are

carefully examined. The data so collected from these two villages generally reflected the characteristics of the entire Lotha society. The main intention of the present study is, therefore, to present a total picture of the traditional culture of the Lotha society and also to examine the changes that are taking place in various aspects of life of the Lotha people through a minute studies of these two typical Lotha villages.

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

The data for the present study was collected during the trips made to the field search work between the month of December, 1999 and April, 2001. Prior to the actual investigation begins a thorough survey of the two selected villages was made. Some of the important persons like Village Council Members, Chairmen, elders, pastors, women leaders, students leaders etc., were also contacted in order to get the preliminary necessary information. Before the schedules and interviews were served to the respondents, preliminary contact was made in order to get acquaintance with the people and informed them about the purpose of the study. Then indepth study was made by collecting data for the entire household census. Thus completed the first enquiry about the general information of the two villages.

The present study being an empirical study, the primary data were collected through schedules and interviews supplemented by participant observations. Besides, secondary data were also collected from the various available sources like books, journals and reports or records.

Comparative methods were used to understand the trends of culture change that are being taking place among the Lotha Nagas. Such techniques help to understand the trends of culture change that had started from the time when the Lothas had come into contact with the Britishers and the missionaries in the earlier time and with the development of various economic opportunities at the later stage to the present time. It also further helps for a better comparison of the information collected from the two different villages such as Wokha and Phiro.

Random sampling method was also employed. The sampled respondents were drawn through random sampling method from the two selected villages. Out of 679 households with total number of population of 3776 from Wokha village, a sample of 206 households were selected while 123 sample households were selected from Phiro village which has 306 households with total number of 2375 populations. The sample respondents so drawn from these two villages includes all the different categories of the people in the village and thus represents the whole universe of the present study.

CHAPTER II

LAND AND PEOPLE

Nagaland is the sixteenth state of the Republic of India. The former Hills District of Assam and the Tuensang Division of the North East Frontier Agency were merged to form the State of Nagaland. The Lok Sabha of Indian Parliament officially announced the formation of Nagaland state on August 1, 1960. The Prime Minister of India introduced the State of Nagaland Bill on August 21, 1962. The Lok Sabha passed the Bill on August 29, 1962. Nagaland State became a reality on September 4, 1962, when the President of India gave his consent to the State of Nagaland Bill and Constitution Amendment Act. The State was officially inaugurated on December 1, 1963 at Kohima by the then President of India Dr. Radhakrishnan (Philip, P.T., 1976).

It is a land of exotic charm and diverse culture, the homeland of the Naga people, a family of Mongolian race.

Nagaland is indeed a beautiful and long narrow strip of hill country with high rugged mountains, hills studded with villages, slopes, narrow deep valley, dense forest, wild beasts and rushing streams. Most villages stand at three or four thousand feet above sea level.

The state is situated on the north-eastern part of India, bounded by the plains of Assam in the west, Tirap Frontier of NEFA in the north, Burma in the east and Manipur in the south.³ Geographically, the regions of Nagaland in its original state, as it was before its disintegration under

the British and Indian administration, covered a wide range bounded by Hawtong valley in the north-east, China to the north, the Brahmaputra valley on the north-west, Manipur to the south and the valley of Chindwin river on the west. Thus, the Naga inhabits an enormous tract of mountainous country occupying the entire hill country bordering the plains of Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur in the north, crossing over the great main watershed between Irrawady river and the Brahmaputra in the south, and extended into the valley of Kainwin or Ningthi to the north-eastern corner of Manipur to the Patkai range (Ao, Tajen., 1986).

The State of Nagaland lies between 25°60' and 27°40' latitude north of Equator and between longitude lines 93°20' E and 95°15' E having an area of 16,579 sq.km. The altitude varies between 194 metres and 3048 metres (Government of Nagaland, 2000).

The population of Nagaland, according to the 1991 census is 12,09,546. Out of this, 82.78% of the population is rural. The average density of population is 73 per sq.km. Workers constitute 42.68% of the total population of the state, 61.65% of the population is literate (Government of Nagaland, 2000).

Kohima is the administrative headquarters of Nagaland. It is about 4800 ft above the sea level (Philip, P.T., 1976). The capital town of Nagaland is witnessed by the battle of Kohima fought between the allied forces and the Japanese army, during the World War II. Kohima is also known for its common wealth war graves of the Second World War, in memory of the soldiers who gave their lives in defending the country.

Nagaland has a very pleasant climate in summer, cold in winter and windy especially in the higher hills. Days are generally bright and clear. Nagaland has an abundant rainfall which averages about 100 inches per year (Philip, P. T., 1976).

The State of Nagaland comprises of eight districts namely, Kohima (state capital), Mokokchung, Wokha, Zunheboto, Tuensang, Phek, Mon and recent upgradation of Dimapur. The main Naga tribes residing in the state are Angami, Ao, Chakesang, Chang, Konyak, Khiamungan, Lotha, Pochury, Phom, Rengma, Sema, Sangtam, Yimchunger and Zeliang (Government of Nagaland, 1981). There are also some non-Naga tribes like Kuki and other communities inhabiting the state, but overwhelming majority of the people in the state are the Nagas.

Before the Naga country has been bifurcated by foreign invasions there are altogether about 50 different tribes residing in the Naga inhabited areas. However, out of which only 14 tribes are found in actual state of Nagaland (Imchen, Panger., 1993).

Originally, inhabitants of Nagaland were known as 'Nagas'. However, the origin of the word 'Naga' is obscured. Some thinkers hold that the word 'Naga' means a 'snake race' for 'Nagam' in Sanskrit means snake. But this cannot be accepted for the Nagas eat snakes. It is a delicious food for some Naga tribes.

It is not supposed that the Nagas are of serpent or scythic descent. The name was more probably given to them

originally as being best expressive of their character, for all wild tribes they are held to be most subtle and treacherous.¹

The word 'Nagam' is another Sanskrit word which means 'hill'. Some think the word Naga may be derived from this Sanskrit word to mean 'hillsman' or the inhabitant of a hill. The Kachar people called the hill people 'Nahngra'. This word means 'warrior' or 'fighter'. Assamese pronounced the word as 'Nugha' or 'Noga'. Probably English people found it easier to say 'Naga' which could denote their characteristics as warriors (Verrier, Elwin., 1969). As for J. P. Mills, the expression 'Naga' is a corruption of the Assamese Naga (pronounced Noga), probably meaning a 'mountaineer' from Sanskrit 'Nag', a 'mountain' or 'inaccessible place' (Mills, J. P., 1922). According to A. Z. Phizo, the legendary Naga leader, the most closely related meaning of the word 'Naga' could have been derived from the Burmese word 'Naka'. In Burmese 'Na' means ear, 'Ka' means pierced; i.e., one whose ear is pierced (Imchen, Panger., 1993). In fact, among the Nagas a man who does not have lobe in the ear is considered inferior in social status. Thus the word 'Naka' in Burmese is the closest meaning related to the word 'Naga' for the Naga people.

Lotha Naga

The study of the Lotha Naga was first taken up by the British who undertook various expedition into the Lotha territory or were assigned administrative work therein. The earliest account was given by members

1. Verrier, Elwin., 1969. *The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Oxford University Press, 98.

of the first topographical survey like Robert Brown (touring among the Lotha, 1874). R. G. Woodthrope (visit to Wokha, 1874) and A. W. Davis (The Lothas in 1891). By the second decade of the 20th century, J. P. Mills brought out the first monograph entitled, *The Lotha Nagas*, which was a compilation of the work on the Lothas initiated by J. H. Hutton, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills in 1922. Verrier Elwin in his writings on *The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century*, 1969, inserted all the pre-independent publication and provide a dependable source book to know the past work on the Nagas including the Lothas. *Wokha District Gazetteers*, 1979, by Dr. B. B. Ghosh is a work exclusively on the Lothas. But these works do not focus on tradition and change in different aspects like society, political institution and material life of the people pertaining to be colonial and the post colonial period.

Location and Area

Wokha district which is the homeland of the Lotha Nagas, prior to 1973, was a part of Mokokchung district. During the year 1957, when the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA) was formed, the present Nagaland was divided into three districts such as Kohima, Mokokchung and Tuensang, and Wokha became one of the sub-divisions of Mokokchung district. On 1st December 1963, Nagaland became the 16th state of Indian Union and in December 1973, Nagaland State was further divided into seven districts and recently the eight district of Nagaland, Dimapur, was upgraded. Thus Wokha became one of the eight districts of Nagaland (Ghosh, B. B., 1979).

Wokha district is situated on the mid-east of the State of Nagaland. The district is intercepted at the middle by $26^{\circ}8'$ north latitude and $94^{\circ}18'$ E longitude. It occupied an area of about 1300 sq.km (Ghosh, B.B., 1979).

The district is bounded by the Mokokchung district in the north, Zunheboto in the east, Kohima district in the South and the State of Assam in the west. There are more than 95 Lotha villages within the Wokha district. Almost all the villages are situated on the top of the hills. The two important factors taken into consideration for locating a site for settlement are, one from the Naga point of view that it must be easily defensible from enemy, second it should be located near a spring.

Ranges

The Wokha district consists of three ranges. Wokha range falls in the upper area of the district lying in the western and northern parts of the district. It is also called upper range. It is a long chain of ranges and has emerged from Rengma area in the Kohima district. Wokha, the district headquarters, is situated in the middle part of this range.

The Sanis range is also called Middle Range. The middle range comes in between the Bhandari sub-division and Wokha district which appear to have merged up with the Changkikong range on the north in the Mokokchung district.

Bhandari range is the outer range which is also called lower range. This range extends upto Japukong range of Mokokchung district in the

north and in the south-western side, the range gradually slopes down to the plains of Assam.

Mountain

The mythological mountain called *Tiyi-elong* is the highest peak in the district. Wokha, the district headquarters is situated at the foot of this mountain. The altitude of this peak is 1,969.61 metres (Ghosh, B.B., 1979). This peak is believed to have been the repository of the deceased ancestors of the tribes like Lothas, Semas and Aos. On its summit, it is said, lies a fine and mysterious fruit garden. The summit of the peak is thickly wooded with ever green vegetation. The lower portion of the hills have been deforested owing to the practice of jhum cultivation.

Valley

There are not many valleys in the district as it was a hilly region. However, bordering to the plains of Assam where hills are low, there are a few valleys which are found useful for terrace cultivation. The most important of them are Baghty valley of Jürang valley. The Baghty valley is comparatively big and the land is fertile. It adjoins the plains of Assam state. The Jürang valley lies in Akuk and Mekukla village area.

River

The district is drained by several hilly rivers of which *Pofü* (Doyang), *Chübi* and *Nzhü* are more important. The *Pofü* is the biggest and also largest and most important river in the district. It flows across the entire district of Wokha. It flows from the western part to the southern part of the district and finally falls in the Dhansiri river. Many hill streams from other districts fall into the *Pofü* (Doyang) river. In the

valleys along the Doyang river the modern system of cultivation like terrace cultivation is being carried out successfully, especially in two particular areas near Pangti village called *Pofü-hayi* and *Jürang-hayi*. The Jübi is the second largest river in the district. It flows southward from Mokokchung district and joins Doyang in the south of Pangti village in this district. *Nzhi* is another important river in this district. This river rises from the Nerhuma area in the Kohima district and flows through Miphong village in Rengma territory. This river covers the whole south-eastern portion of the district. This river is also one of the most important tributaries of Doyang river.

However, no river of this district is navigable in any season. In dry season they become almost dry and in rainy season they become torrential. Moreover, due to rocky nature of the terrain and deep valleys navigation is not possible.

Mineral Wealth

Geographically, Wokha district is rich in mineral resources like petroleum and coal. This district has been surveyed by Assam Oil Company and subsequently geological and geophysical surveys have been carried out by the ONGC. The result of this survey revealed that there has been a good deposit of petroleum and coal in this district (ONGC, 1975). Coal deposits has been located in different places such as Leo-Longidang and Yanpha village of Wokha district. Some amount of the clay deposits are also found in this district. Sandstone suitable for road and metal also occurs in abundance in the district.

Climate

Wokha district enjoys monsoon type of climate with a difference. Winters are cold, but summers are warm. In winter night temperature drops down to 4°C to 2°C in December. January and February are the coldest months of the year. During the hottest part of the year (July and August), the temperature is in the range of 27°C to 32°C (Ghosh, B. B., 1979).

Rainfall in the district is on the average 2000 mm (80") and it falls from about six months of the year with greatest concentration in July and August (Ghosh, B. B., 1979).

February and March are the windiest month in the year. This time high wind blows almost throughout the day and night. The wind generally blows from south-west and at times its velocity rises upto 100 km per hour. But towards the end of March the wind dies out. The monsoon sets in from the month of June. South-west monsoon sets in the middle of June and the same continues upto the middle of September. During the summer season the average relative humidity is 85% which goes sometimes upto 95% to 100% and as such is very damp in this district (Ghosh, B. B., 1979).

July is the hottest month but due to heavy rain it is not very hot. The pleasant season starts from the month of October. Then the winter sets in by November. From December to February are the coldest month of the year.

Vegetation

The average altitude of the Wokha district is 1200 m. The Wokha district consists of both deciduous and ever green forests. Most of the trees are deciduous. They shed leaves from November onwards and grows again in March. But some trees do not shed all their leaves and thus keep green all throughout the year.

In the lower altitude the trees are more ever green than deciduous. Thus, we can say that the district consists of the following kinds of forest:

- (1) Ever green up to the altitude of 1000 m, and
- (2) Mixed deciduous and ever green from above 1000 m.

Besides these vegetations, the district is rich in a collection of varied and rare orchids and other species of flora in the jungle which bloom on all the seasons of the year.

Various species of trees are found in this district. Some of the important trees and their uses are given below.

1. Champa (*Michelia champa*) -- Used for plywood furniture making, house construction, planks, doors and windows.
2. Bonsum (*Ploebe goalparesis*) -- Mostly used for building construction and bridges.
3. Amari (*Amoora wallichii*) -- Used for construction of houses, furniture, doors, windows, weaving industry and pencil slit.
4. Simul (*Bombax ceiba*) -- Used for plywood, match boxes, match splint, ceiling etc.

5. Sam (*Artocarpus chaplasha*) – Used for building, construction, carpentry work.
6. Gamari (*Gamilina arborea*) – Used for carpentry, boat making and post.
7. Am (*Magnifera indica*) – Plywood, packing boxes, match boxes, cheap furniture.
8. Hollock (*Terminoha myriocarpa*) – Used for building construction, furniture, doors, windows, post and beams.
9. Bagra (*Shima wallichii*) – Recently used for plywood, also used for post and pencil slit.
10. Walnut (*Guglans regia*) – Used for making gunboat, ornamental, furniture, pencil slit.
11. Jamille (*Syzygeum cumini*) – Used for building and agricultural implements.
12. Urium (*Bischofia Javanica*) – Used for all sorts of constructions, boats, building, railway sleepers etc.
13. Bagipoma (*Chikrassia tabularis*) – Used for construction of cheap furniture.
14. Koroi (*Albizia procerra*) – Used for paper pulp, sugarcane crushers, rice pounder, wheels, agricultural implements, electric post.
15. Owtenga (*Dillenia indica*) – Used for poles.
16. Khokan (*Duabaga Sommeratioles*) – Used for plywood.
17. Jia Poma (*Lamea coromandelica*) – Used for ordinary purposes, timber mostly.
18. Helika (*Terminiolia cetrina*) – Used for furniture, carts, agricultural implements, house buildings.

Fauna

The district of Wokha has the sub-Himalayan, Indian, Chinese and Burmese types of fauna and therefore it is much varied. Wild elephants are found in lower range of the district at the foothills but elephants are not domesticated for any purpose of transport.

Tiger has its lair in the dense forests. The deer family comprises the barking deer, sambas and serow. The monkey and jackal are also found but sparsely distributed. Other species comprise wild mithun, wild buffaloes, wild pigs, wild bears, wild dogs, squirrels, bats, musk-rats etc.

Among the reptiles mostly found are vipers, kraits, rat snakes, grass snakes, cobra, lizards, pythons etc.

The lower region of hills have very few birds and fowls but the best species are found in the higher altitude which include partridge, night jar, warbles, robin, quail, wood pecker, hornbill, pheasant, swift, hawk, crow etc. Even the lower hills are a home of mynah, cuckoo, sparrow, sunbird, parrot, parakeet and other colourful wrens.

PEOPLE

Origin and Migration

The early history of the Nagas is obscure, so also of the Lothas. The early history can be constructed mainly on the basis of the oral tradition collected from different villages.

The problem of the ultimate origin and composition of the Naga tribes still awaits solution. There are various traditions as to how the Lotha tribe of Nagaland migrated to the present situation.

One of the traditions states that, the Lothas and the plainsmen (Assamese) were once one people who migrated from a place called *Lengka* somewhere north or north-west of the Naga Hills, the exact site being unknown. They soon split up into two bodies, one of which became the plainsmen of the Brahmaputra valley and the other the Lothas of the hills. This tradition is not the commonest. The curious long-hafted dao called '*Yandüng*', which is still kept as highly-prized heirlooms at Akuk village, has a special connection with this tradition, and are said to have been given to the Lothas by their 'brothers' of the plains.

Another tradition says that the Angamis, Rengmas, Semas, Lothas and Ao migrated together and occupied the present habitat. These tribes maintain that their paternal ancestors were brothers of the same parents.

The first to set off, according to this tradition, were the Aos who, the story says, went out of north-west trail as far as Mokokchung (but the Aos have also a separate tradition of their ancestors emerged from the '*Longtrok*', meaning six stones, which is not accepted by all the Aos). Next came the Lothas. They were followed by the Semas who were in turn followed by the Rengmas. The Angamis and the Chakesang tribes were the last to come and they settled in the adjoining Mao area.

Yet another tradition says that the common ancestors of the Lothas, southern Sangtams, semas and Rengmas came from somewhere

near Mao. The first to split off were the Sangtams with whom the Lothas claim close affinities. From the Mao the ancestors of the Lothas moved towards a place called '*Phitson-long*' where they halted. There they used a stone for basking paddy. It is said that the paddy so basked over this stone became double at sunset when the household came to collect the paddy. Other tribes such as the Angamis and Maos also have a similar tradition of magic stone at Khezakenoma in Mao area. According to this tradition, they moved from '*Phitson-long*' to '*Merang*' (somewhere in Mao area) where they halted again. Later on they left Mao area and travelled along the foot of the '*Japfu*' mountain and slowly migrated towards Kohima. On their north trail, they halted at '*Khayima*' (the present Kohima). At this place, the Lothas were many in numbers. They were so many in numbers that the chief could not enumerate them and so called as '*Khayima*' which in Lotha means uncountable. From there the tribe reached the neighbourhood of '*Lozema*', where the Semas are said to have split off. Hence the Lothas moved slowly on till they reach the hill known as '*Hono-ho-yonton*' (Fowl-throat-cutting-village). At this point the Rengma split off and occupied the present territory, while the Lothas pressed on till they settled at a huge village called '*Tiyilongchüm*'. Here the doubt begins to clear as most Lothas claim to trace their descent back through nine or ten generations to some ancestor who lived at '*Honohoyonton*'. As they pressed on, one group went through *Phiro* and *Shaki* villages towards the lower '*Pofü*' (Doyang river) as far as *Koro* village, and the larger group towards Wokha hill (Mount Tiyi), where a huge village called '*Tiyi-longchüm*' is said to have been found a little to the north of the present site of *Niroyo* village. So vast was the crowd of warriors that at feast and 'Gennas' there was never enough '*Soko*' (rice

beer) to go round. So they began to split up the crowd and founded villages. Also another reason of abandoning this village was due to scarcity of water in the area. That way the Lothas had travelled and finally settled down in their present territory.

Physical Appearance

The Lothas like other Naga tribes, have Mongoloid features. In skin colour, it varies from light to medium brown, the inhabitants of the lower ranges tending to be darker than those of high villages. The complexion even of the fairest girls is sallow, and the almost rosy cheeks one sometimes sees among the Angamis, and more rarely among the Semas, are unknown in the Lotha country. Majority of the Lothas have high nose, oblique eyes and straight hairs having no beard. They are generally slim and moderately tall and women as usual are a little shorter than their male counterpart. Though all the Nagas have Mongoloid features there are differences in minute details between one and the other tribes. The difference is so explicit that the people of one tribe can easily be distinguished from others by facial appearances and physically structure, not to speak of dress and language.

Baldness and grey hair are both uncommon and disliked. All children have the lobe of the ear pierced at the conclusion of the birth 'genna'. At the first '*Ramvüa*' genna, a boy who has a hole pierced in the upper part of the helix. This is done with a pointed piece of bamboo, and no special ceremonies are attached to the operation. Among the southern Lothas, and occasionally among the northern, another hole is pierced in the middle of the concha at the next '*Ramvüa*'. The holes in

the helix and concha are for the cotton wool with which ear is adorned and often become much distended in the case of elderly men.

Demography

The Lotha population showed a downward trend before 1940. In 1941 they numbered 22,000 but dwindled to 18,000 in 1931. In 1951 their numbers rose again to 22,392 with 11,102 males and 11,290 females. In 1961, they numbered 26,327 and in 1971 it was 36,000. In 1981 it became 57,583. Finally in 1991 it became more than 82,612 with decennial growth of 43.47% (Government of Nagaland, 2000). It may be noted here that the Lotha population and the population of Wokha district are not the same because other people also live in this district besides the Lothas, as well as some Lothas live outside the district. Details of the present population of this district is not yet available. However, on the basis of 1991 census, which is the latest available information, the total population of this district is 82,612.

Language

The Lothas have got only one language which is called '*Kyong-yi*' by themselves. Unlike Aos in the adjoining Mokokchung district the Lothas are not having any difference among the Lotha between upper and lower Lothas except some slight differences in accent.

Nagamese, a form of broken Assamese which is used in other districts of Nagaland is also used here as a medium of expression and also as a means of communication between the Lothas and non-Lotha speaking people in the district. Nowadays broken Hindi is also

commonly used in the district. English, the official language of the State of Nagaland, is generally used among the educated Lothas.

The Lothas, Aos and Semas believe to have possessed in the past a Naga script which is said to have been written on dried skin of an animal and it was carried by their forefathers during migration through the Patkai ranges. But as the script was not kept under proper custody, a time came when it was eaten up by a dog. Unfortunately owing to the loss of memory, the script could not be written again. However, it was towards the end of the 19th century that the Lotha language was reduced to writing in the Roman script.

According to different philologists, the language and dialects of the Naga belong to the Tibeto-Burman and not to the Siamese-Chinese or the Sino-Tibeto language spoken by the Phakials, Khamtis and a few Ahoms or Tibeto-Chinese speech family.

Society

Being the fundamental basis of society, the Lotha family comprises of father, mother, sons and daughters living together in the same house. Among them father is the head of the family who also performs certain political, social and religious duties.

A son sets up a separate family after getting married whereas daughter goes to another clan leaving her original clan or marriage. The clan comprises of a group of consanguineous families descended from a common ancestor by whose name the clan is known. The tribe is segmented into phratries and clans. There are three distinct phratries

which are divided into '*Jibo*' (clan). The '*Jibos*' are further split into '*Mhitso*' (kindreds). The three phratries are the '*Tonphyaksü-rüi*', the '*Ezomontsü-rüi*' and the '*Miphongshan-rüi*'. Under the phratry of *Tonphyaksü-rüi* we have clans like *Kikon*, *Patton*, *Ovüng*, *Tsopoe*, *Jungi*, *Jami* etc. Clans like *Ngullie*, *Shitiri*, *Humtsoe*, *Kithan*, *Mozhüi*, *Tungoe*, *Enie* etc., come under the phratry of *Ezomontsü-rüi*. The *Miphongshan-rüi* consists of clans such as *Ezung*, *Yanthan*, *Odyuo*, *Murry*, *Süngphi*, *Khuvüng*, *Tsanglac*, *Lapon* and *Echungmong rüi*.

The three phratries, *Tonghyaksü-rüi*, *Ezomontsü-rüi*, and *Miphongshan-rüi*, are said to be descended from the three brothers such as *Limhachan*, *Limhathüing* and *Rakhandan*, who were the first men to come out of the earth.

Some clans remain undivided. Others have split into two kindreds which intermarry and call themselves 'big' and 'small', i.e., *Ezung-tsüphoe* and *Ezung-Teriwoe*.

The Lothas consider marriage as a vital institution of the society. Through marriage legitimate children are obtained which contributes to the continuation of social unit. The boys and girls have a considerable freedom in choosing their lifelong partners. Marriage within the same clan is strictly forbidden.

Dormitory or '*Chümpho*' is considered to be an important educational, political and social institution mainly for the unmarried men. All the unmarried boys in the village, say from seven to eight years onwards till they marry and set up their own houses, sleep in the

bachelor's dormitory. Every Lotha village, except the very small ones, is divided into two or more '*Khels*' (*Yankho*). In every '*Khel*' there is a common bachelor's house or morung (*Chümpho*), a building which plays an important part in Lotha life. In it no woman must set her foot. At the '*Chümpho*' raids were planned and discussed, and to it all heads taken were first brought. It is the sleeping place of every Lotha boy from the time he first put on his dao-holder till he marries, this rule being only relaxed in the case of boys who are allowed to remain at home and nurse an ailing and widow mother or when the '*Chümpho*' falls into such a state of disrepair that it is no longer habitable.

Character

The Lothas, like any other Nagas, are by nature free and independent, scornful of control, impatient of criticism. By appearance the Lothas are reserved type and do not readily open their hearts to a stranger, but they are a fine people, friendly and cheerful with a keen sense of humour. Their sense of humour is well developed and they are always ready with a laugh, but, like all Nagas, they hate being laughed at and believe that misfortune or sickness is likely to fall upon anyone who is the object of derision. Though the tribe contains a few habitual criminals they are, on the whole, very honest. Petty theft is rare, and a man can leave his spear and cloth by the side of a village path knowing he will find his property untouched when he comes to pick it up on his way home. In warfare they were probably no more cowardly than their neighbours, and when hunting tigers and other dangerous game they show extraordinary courage. The standard of morals varies from village to village, but the Lotha husband does not imitate the habitual

unfaithfulness of the Aos, nor does he, like the Semas, boast of his immoralities and decorate the grave of a deceased person (Mills, J. P., 1922). Children as they grew up and marry leaves their old parents but they are usually ready to help to support them.

CHAPTER III

TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF THE LOTHAS

During the early part of nineteenth century some of the British colonial administrators such as T. C. Hudson (1911), J. H. Hutton (1921) and J. P. Mills (1922, 1926) made the first ethnographical account on the Naga society. It appeared to them that the Nagas were beginning to lose their distinctive features and were in danger of assimilating their traditional ways of life to certain aspects of western culture. Probably the emergence of such situation motivated them to record, each in his own way, the ways of life of the Nagas which are doomed to vanish.

J. P. Mills selected the Lotha Naga tribe and recorded their traditional way of life in origin as minutely as possible in 1922. Of course, previously an account on Lotha customs had also given by J. H. Hutton on pp. 362-370 of *The Angami Nagas* (Macmillan, 1921) and Dr. W. E. Witter on *Outline Grammar of the Lhota Naga Language* (Calcutta, 1886). This account provides us the traditional way of life of the Lotha people before the change has been taken place. A rapid change of culture among the Lothas begins from the time when they had come into contact with the British and Missionaries in the earlier time and with the various development opportunities in the post-independence period at later stage. Hence, the previous work been done by J. P. Mills on the Lotha tribe in 1922 is considered as the basis of the present study of culture change among the Lotha Nagas.



LOTHA WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL DRESSES
(To face p. 41 f.)



A LOTHIA COUPLE IN CEREMONIAL DRESS
(To face p. 41 f.)

The following brief account on traditional Lotha culture helps us to understand the customs and traditions of the Lotha people in the past.

Dress and Ornament

Dresses

The traditional dress like *rive* (commonly spoken of in Naga-Assamese as '*lengta*') and mantle called *sürhüm* were the only garment in the past days among the Lothas. The *rive* consists of a narrow piece of cloth ending with a broad flap. While putting it on, the narrow piece is wound once around the waist and joins at the back to form a sort of belt. Then it is brought through between the legs from the back, and up through the belt, allowing the broad flap being hung down in front. The flap is slightly broader. The *rive* is either white or dark blue with horizontal red stripes. It was the only garment for a man, but for boy's first garment is the flap of one of his father's discarded *rive* hung from a bit of string tied around the waist.

The *sürhüm* worn by the women is bound slightly around the waist and the overlapping top corner is tucked in front of the right or left hips. The edge of the overlapping of *sürhüm* is often ornamented with yellow orchid stalk. Among the Northern Lothas the *sürhüm* is of black cloth with three narrow horizontal red stripes and a band of light blue embroidered with the red running across the middle of the cloth. The Southern women's *sürhüm* have no red stripes and the light blue band is broader and nearer to the top of the cloth. A girl attending five or six years may put on her first *sürhüm* called *Konrostü* of white cloth with

dark blue border and a little red embroidery (*Lümthen-etssuk*) in the middle.

The Lotha body-cloths or shawls are of various patterns which indicates the number of 'gemma' performed by the wearer. The first shawl of man is called *sütüm*, for both boys and men who have not performed any social 'gemma', but a man who has performed the first social 'gemma' may wear the *Phangrhüp-sü*. It is a dark red cloth with broad stripes of red with a broader strip of white cloth, embroidered with very narrow black stripes, running across the middle of cloth parallel with the broad black stripes. Among the Southern Lothas the black stripes are narrower and a light blue band takes the place of white band. A Northern Lotha who has performed both social and head taking 'gemma' wears a cloth called *Jümthe-sü*. Among the Southern Lothas, after performing the third social 'gemma' is allowed to wear a shawl called *etha-sü*. A man who has completed the series of social 'gemma' by dragging a stone wears a handsome cloth called *Longpen-sü*, a black cloth with bands of light blue about one inch broad, and three narrow lines of light blue at the top and bottom. A man of high status by dragging a stone more than once has four or five narrow lines at the top and bottom of his cloth, which is called *eshüm-sü*. A very rare and prestigious cloth called *rüküyü-sü* (enemy-frightening-cloth) is worn by a man who has taken enemy's head and has performed a series of social 'gemma'. It is a dark red cloth with six broad red stripes, set close together at the top and bottom. The median band of white cloth is ornamented with a indigenous design representing human heads, mithun horns, elephants and tigers.

Unlike men, women clothes are rare. In putting of body-clothes of a woman, it is allowed to flung closely around the body so that the top outer corner lies over the shoulder or around tightly under the armpits. Unmarried Lotha girls usually wear a plain dark blue called *mok-sü* or *stipang*. On the night of her marriage, however, when she goes to her husband's house, she puts on a very pretty cloth called *loro-sü*, a red cloth with a dark blue stripes, embroidered with big square of narrow white and red lines, giving a sort of tartan effect. But when her husband has dragged a stone called *long-zü* she if may exchange her *loro-sü* for a *longpen-sü*.

Ornaments

A part from the body-cloth a man wears an ornament on any occasion when he wishes to be well dressed. In the hole of the helix of his ears a tuft of cotton wool are worn. Some other ornaments such as brass wire spiral, porcupine quills and yellow orchid stalk are also worn in the lobe of the ear. Armlets (*Khoro*) consisting of sections sawn from an elephant's tusk is worn by man above the elbow. A man who cannot effort real ivory will sometimes wear *khoro* made of white wood, an imitation of the real *khoro*. Wristlets (*khekhüp*) of cowries sewn on cloth is worn by a man who has done head-taking '*genna*'. A red hair fringe (*khezü*) is also worn on the wristlet.

Among the Lothas, a necklace composed of several strings of black beads made from the seeds of wild plantain called *eshe* and pendant of a red bead is commonly used by men. Sometimes cowried apron is also used by men for dancing purpose.

Lotha women's ornaments are few and simple. Earrings are of plumes of pheasant bounded round with red or yellow orchid stalk. Necklaces made of plantain seeds, sometimes length-wise cut pieces of big conch-shell called *laküp* in front, are worn around the neck. Just above each elbow a thick round pewter armlets (*tivü*) and on each wrist a number of small flat brass bracelets (*rümbüm*) are worn by the women. However, these ornaments are not indigenously made. They are brought ready made from the plains.

The full dress of Lotha warrior includes a wig, king-crow's and hornbill's tail feathers, pads of cotton-wool, sash, little basket and leggings. Lotha warrior wears on his head a wig (*dungkho*) made of either hair of the Himalayan black bear or the fur of the arms of male gibbon. The king-crow's feather (*wotsü-emhi*) fixed on his wig signify the wearer's status if he has done the head-taking 'gemma' once, or if he has done it more than once, one hornbill tail's feather (*Rüjüng-emhi*) is affixed for each occasion. A big pad of cotton wool is hung on his ears, and sticks in the lobe of his ear an ornament (*thera*) of scarlet-like feathers. Across the chest a sash (*Ryutsen*) is worn, but if he has dragged stone, two sashes are worn. A small basket attached with human hair called *Tssikyip* or *Tssükyip* in which the hair falls straight from the little basket, formed a tail-like dress is hung behind. The cowrie apron called *filfo-rive* (cowrie-apron 'lengta') is also worn. An old ceremonial apron preserved as a heirloom by an old man of Akuk village is probably a specimen of the original type of this garment (Mills, J. P., 1922). The leggings called *Jori* or *Jorü* of plated red cane with a design in yellow orchid stalk is worn by a man during dancing ceremonies.

Weapons

The main weapons of the Lothas are made of wood. One of the most essential Lotha weapon which is used for various purposes. It is used for falling trees as well as various other all purposes weapon. *Lepok* is a straight edged blade sharp at both ends twelve inches long and four inches broad at the top, narrowing down at



A LOTHIA WARRIOR IN FULL DRESS
(To face p. 44)

covered with red pine for about a year. Another type is called *Jotemo*. It is made of a fringe of dyed red hair. However, none of these are manufactured. They buy theirs from the Ais and Poro. Pear is specially useful in warfare and tiger hunting. The Lothas also used bow and arrow. The bows are mainly used for shooting of birds and monkeys. The arrows are pointed slips of bamboo.

Weapons

The main weapons of the Lothas are made of iron. Dao (*lepok*) is one of the most essential Lotha weapon which is used for every different purposes. It is used for falling trees as well as weapon in warfare. It is an all purposes weapon. *Lepok* is a straight-edged blade weapon of about twelve inches long and four inches broad at the top, narrowing down an inch or less at the base. The weapon is fitted into a bamboo handle which is tightly bound round with cane. Lothas have an obsolete type of dao. One of the most obsolete type of daos of the Lotha is known as *Yandüing* (king-size-dao). The most famous *Yandüing* is that of the Lotha hero *Ranphan* which is still preserved at Akuk village (Mills, J. P., 1922).

Another important Lotha's weapon is the spear (*Otsso*). The spear is at the shaft decorated with a red dyed goat's hair and sometimes human hair of a victim of head-hunting was also used in the past. There are different kinds of decorated shaft. The ceremonial spear carried by the religious officials is covered, almost the whole of its length, with long black and red dyed hair. One type of spear is called *Tanro* of which shaft is covered with red pile for about a foot of its length from the top. The other type is called *Jovemo*, the bottom shaft of which ends are in a deep fringe of dyed red hair. However, none of these shafts are of Lotha's manufactured. They buy theirs from the Aos and Rengmas tribes. The spear is specially useful in warfare and tiger hunting.

The Lothas also used bow and arrows. The cross-bow (*olo*) is mainly used for shooting of birds and monkeys. It is made of hard wood. The arrows are pointed slips of bamboo with a little bit of hair-brush-

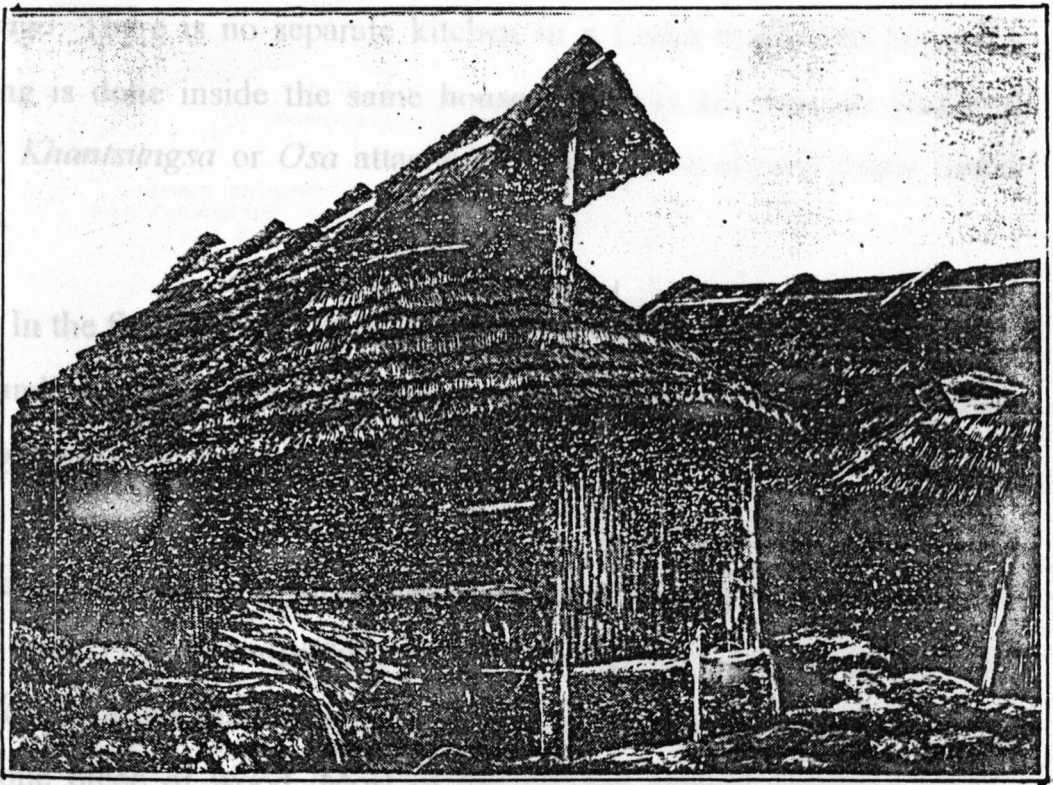
palm (*shavo*) fixed in a slit at the end as a feather. This weapon is effective upto about eighty metres. Lothas never used poison in their arrows.

In the olden days a shield called *Otssing* is always carried in war and at tiger and leopard hunts. It is made of a strong bamboo, sometimes a piece of buffalo's skin dried in sun. Sometimes a piece of bear's skin is stretched over a bamboo matting foundation. Lotha's shields are of two types. The Northern Lotha shields are about four and half feet long and twenty inches broad with a rounded top and parallel sides but those of the southern Lotha's are about same size with a square and broader top. The battle shields were held firmly away from the body in order to check enemy's spears which pierced them to prevent its reaching the body.

A strong cane war-helmet called *Kiven* are worn by the Southern Lothas as a protection for the head at tiger hunts and also at dances, which they often ornamented with various horns. But such helmets are not common among the Northern Lothas, except worn by the priests and a very senior warriors at the dance associated with the building of a new 'morung'.

THE HOUSE

The Lotha houses are similar to each other. The walls are generally of bamboos and the roof of thatches (*lishii*) or palm-leaf (*oko*). The front portion of the house is semicircular with a door in the middle. The topmost roof of the house which slopes down the roof is bounded by several circlets of strong thatch fastened to the ridge pole, from where



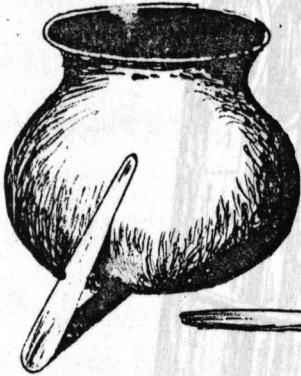
A TYPICAL LOTHHA HOUSE
(To face p. 57)

layers upon layers of thatch, sometimes dried palm leaf, are spread throughout the roof. In the middle of the projected roof is the bamboo post, which support the roof of the apse to meet the projecting roof of the main building. The porch (*nmpung-ki* or *kitajo*) is generally double roofed. The lower roof is like a special catchment for the porch and is separated from the main roof which projects upward. A Lotha house contains three sleeping rooms. The cubicle nearest to the porch is called *Lhurhyui*. The middle is called *Olungo* and the back cubicle is called *tachungo*. There is no separate kitchen in a Lotha traditional house as cooking is done inside the same house. There is an open air platform called *Khantsingsa* or *Osa* attached in the rear in almost every Lotha house.

In the first chamber of the Lotha house are kept heavy articles such as pounding table (*Tssümpho*), liquor vat (*Ojen*) and pig's feeding trough (*Wokojakpfü*). On the wall of the front room are hung the feet of games which the owner of the house has killed. Spears are kept stuck in the ground at the main post. Along the sides of the inner cubicle are the small plank beds (*Tssüngtso-pilüing*) of the households. Around the hearth (*nehükvii*) are the small wooden stools (*evan*) about six inches high cut from one piece of wood. Most of the kitchen articles are kept on the bamboo shelves called *Pfüki* which is fixed to the beams of the house. Here are kept bundle of salt wrapped in leaves (*ma-khüing*), earthen pots (*Chonpfü*), basket of yeast (*Vümhi-nkhüip*), traps (*tsürhi*), mat (*ophük*), carrying basket (*Phari/Okhüing*) and many other things. Lotha house contains very few drinking cups. Lotha cup is a folded plantain leaf or a bamboo mug. The usual type of dish is a shallow wooden one, with no

HOUSEHOLD IMPLEMENTS

HOUSEHOLD IMPLEMENTS



EARTHEN COOKING POT
WITH BAMBOO RICE HANDLER
AND SPOON



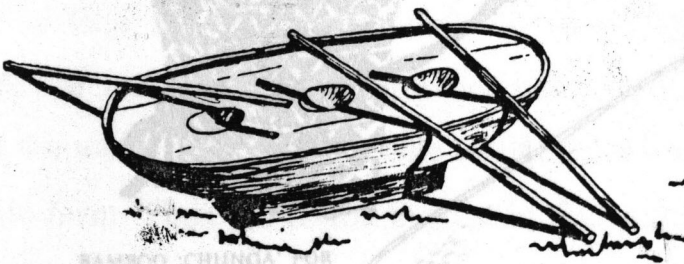
WOODEN PLATTERS



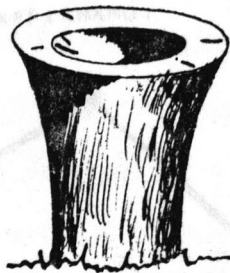
WATER HANDLER



BAMBOO
MUGS



BAMBOO CHUNGA
CARRYING WATER



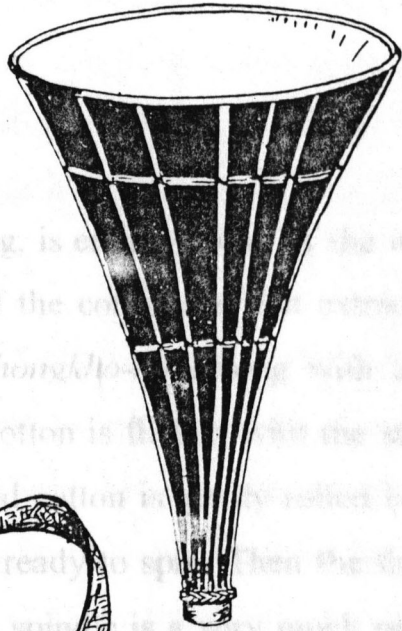
POUNDING TABLES

TO FACE P. 47

HOUSEHOLD IMPLEMENTS



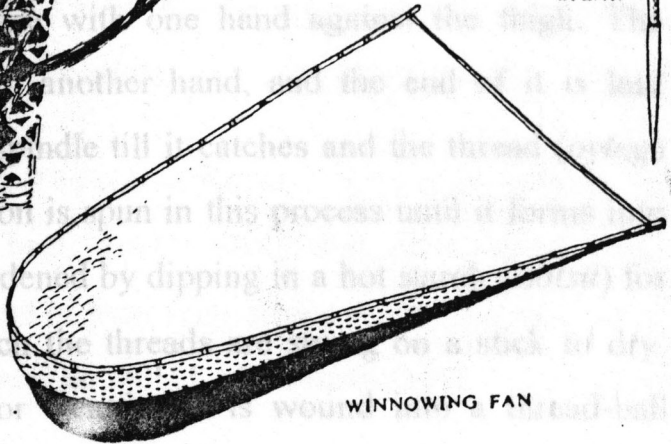
BAMBOO 'CHUNGA' FOR
CARRYING WATER



BASKET (KHANG)



SPEAR



WINNOWING FAN

leg, called *Ophi*. Some households also use a wooden dish on a raised stand called *Phikhyu*. In the bamboo matting of the walls are stuck daos and bamboo spoons called *Yenkuk* or *Otsip*. The hollow bamboo, *Jüthi* or *Othi*, in which water is carried up from the spring or pond are kept leaning against the walls. Over the hearth is a suspended bamboo platform (*tsaphyoro*) on which dry meat and stuff and things as are in continual use are kept.

MANUFACTURE

Spinning

Spinning, like dyeing and weaving, is entirely done by the women. In the process of spinning, the seeds of the cotton are first extracted by being rolled on a flat stone called *Khongkho-nhyaklong* with a small stick, used as a rolling pin. The clean cotton is flicked with the string of an instrument called *loko* and the fluffed cotton is gently rolled between the hands into "sausage" and thread is ready to spin. Then the thread is spun on a spindle (*hümtsi*). The Lothas spindle is a very much primitive type. To spin the thread, the tip of the spindle is wetted with tongue. The spindle is then spun clockwise with one hand against the thigh. The 'sausage' of cotton is held in another hand, and the end of it is laid against the wetted tip of the spindle till it catches and the thread (*oying*) begins to form. Thus the cotton is spun in this process until it forms into thread. The thread is next hardened by dipping in a hot starch (*tsotsü*) for about five minutes after which the threads are strung on a stick to dry. When the thread is ready for weaving it is wound into a thread-ball (*Yingchü-Kholong*).

Dyeing

The Lotha way of dyeing is done in a more primitive way. Generally, three colours such as red, dark blue and light blue are used for dyeing by the Lothas. Red dyeing is considered as a risky job for it is likely to bring on dysentery. Therefore the industry is carried on by only a few Lotha villages such as Akuk, Changsü and Okotso (Mills, J. P., 1922). To make red dye, the root of *Rubia sikimensis* (Karung) is pounded up with another leaf called *ntawo*. They are boiled in water and the thread is put in for a while in the boiling mixture. The thread is kept for three days in the pot and after which it is allowed to take out and dried. The result is red-dyed thread.

Dark blue dye is made from the leaf of *Strobilanthes flaccidi-folius* (*Khyimvü-vo*). The leaves are pounded and boiled with water. The thread is dipped in the mixture for about half an hour then is allowed to dry. The result is a navy blue-like colour. To make light blue colour the leaves which have been already boiled and used for making dark blue dye are drained and dried and kept for a year. They are then broken up and mixed with cold water and white ash and kept for overnight and after which the thread is put in and left for a day or more days if the dye is weak.

In the process of dyeing it is restricted for a woman to indulge in sexual intercourse or to eat beef, goat's flesh, dog meat, dried fish, fermented soya bean or any sort of food with strong smell. If a man or a boy were to dye a piece of thread he would never again have any luck in fishing and hunting.

Weaving

Weaving is common among the Lotha women for every woman is expected to be able to weave cloth for her husband and children. The weaving apparatus are made of wood and bamboo called *Tsirho-Chunglung*. A beam (*tsikhüm*) of bamboo of about three feet long is firmly fastened to the wall of the house or any other suitable support in a horizontal position and at a height of about two feet from the ground. On this are slipped two loops (*tsisü*) of bark string, in which is put the other bar (*ncho*) of the loom. The loops are set apart at equal distance to the breadth of the piece of cloth to be woven. The lower part is attached at both ends of the weaving belt called *ephi*. A thin stick of bamboo put across the strings is put in position. Then, towards the weaver, the lease-rod (*chunglung*) is put in close to the thin stick. Below the lease-rod the beating-sword called *tsitüm* is inserted. The twine which is to form the heddle-loops (*ena-zhü*) is then tied closely onto the left end of the beating-sword and laid along with it. Having arranged the apparatus in proper position the cloth is woven by following the weaving procedures.

Pottery

The Lotha traditional pot is round, and slightly contracted at the top, with a curved rim to facilitate being lifted off the fire. It is shaped by patting gently the pot while still wet with a flat piece of wood. The clay is usually obtained from the side of small streams. The clay is properly broken up and kneaded on a flat stone with a little water. After being left overnight it is moistened again and kneaded properly. The process of making pot is simple. The round base is first formed and on top of it a wall of clay is built and gently patted well on the base with one hand. The



SPINNING
(To face p. 48)



WEAVING
(To face p. 50)

pot is then shaped with the help of a small piece of flat wood (*Pfütümphen*) held in the other hand. The pot is then put to dry in the sun while other pots are being made.

Having being dried, the pots are carefully taken to the platform of wood which is usually built outside the village or in the fields. The pots are then laid upside down on the platform of wood with twigs and hays piled on them and burnt. While burning the pots, the potter must maintain certain precautions, that is, she must not indulge in sexual intercourse and must not eat any sort of food with strong smell. If the procedures are not followed strictly, it is said, the pots being fired will go damaged. Among the Lothas, pot manufacturing is exclusively or preferably done by a middle aged woman.

Blacksmithy

Among the Lothas blacksmithy, which is a part time vocation for some of the people, is regarded an unlucky occupation. It is believed that no blacksmith lives long enough after he stops work. The vocation is, therefore, restricted to the family members of which have been blacksmith in the past and as a result of which the Lotha blacksmiths are few and far between.

Forges where agricultural implements and ceremonial weapons are made still exists in almost every Lotha village in the district although their number is disappearing. Though implements and weapons like spear-heads, daos, knives, scrapers, hoes are still produced in the villages for self consumption, some weapons and implements so required by the

Lothas are also produced and supplied by the neighbouring tribes like Aos and Rengmas.

The Lothas used only soft iron which is usually obtained from the plains of Assam. The finished product is tempered by dipping in salt or bamboo juice water.

The tools of the Lotha's blacksmith are simple. It consists of two sections of bamboo set up perpendicularly side by side in a clay base. Then into each of these is jotted a piston bound round all over with feathers. The bamboo-tubes, which is emerged together at the fire, are attached at each of the hole of the bamboo piston case. Then with the help of these pistons an efficient valvular action is performed by the assistant who holds one in each hand.

So attached in beliefs of misfortune with the whole trade of blacksmith that no house is ever built on any site of an old forge. To bring a piece of dross from a forge into a house would amount to cause illness to the households.

Basketry

The Lothas are expert in making basket of various types. Bamboo and cane work is an important industry which the Lothas inherited from their forefathers. Thus every Lotha is capable of making basket for the household, but the work of tougher things such as cane helmets is left to experts. Parts of their ornamental dresses such as fillets, leggings, head-gears woven of cane have a great artistic significance. Basket and mat in wide range are made of bamboo slit (*omvii*) for various household

purposes. For rough basket stripes of fresh bamboo is used but can is considered more valuable and is reserved for further use for making of articles which are meant to last longer time. For rough work a chequer pattern is used, for shield, cane helmet and grain basket a twill pattern is used. For Lothas no women are allowed to perform any basket work of any kind.

Wood Carving

Usually rough planks are hacked out with a dao. It is quite wasteful method as the whole thickness of a tree has to go to make each plank. Pounding table is made of solid tree trunk. Most artistic such as dishes with legs, saucers, platters and mugs are manufactured out of wood. The main post of 'morung' is carefully carved with conventional representation of hornbill's and mithun's head.

Beads

The Lothas are expert in making of traditional black beads (*eshe*) made from the seed of a particular species of wild plantain (*sheyu*). This kind of job is particularly confined to women and exists chiefly among the Southern Lothas. Both the ends of the seed are chewed off. Then the seeds are pierced with a bamboo needle and strung, and the strings are rolled on a flat stone till the bead becomes cylindered and polished.

LIVESTOCK

Mithuns (*tssiro*), which are regarded as a sign of wealth are no longer kept in large number by the Lothas. Large numbers of ordinary cattle (*mangsiü*) are brought in from the plains. They are usually kept for

meat and breeding but Lotha never milk his cattle, simply, because it is not the custom to do so. However, he will drink milk if it is offered to him. The black and black-and-white breeds known as *Süphi* and *Phyantso* are regarded by the Lothas as indigenous to their country. Buffaloes (*zhüzhü*) are sometimes brought in from the plains but they are never bred by the Lothas and are useless for sacrificial purpose, as they are regarded as 'stupid' big beast. The cattle are not reared at home but allowed to run loose in the jungle. Every house has got pigs and it is meant for meat and sacrificial purposes as well. Goats are not reared in large number. White goats with long hair are considered valuable as this hair is sold to be dyed red and used for all kinds of ornaments. Dogs are reared mainly for two purposes, for pet as well as for meat. However, hunting dogs are never eaten by the Lothas. The Lotha fowls are of much resemblance to the red jungle fowl (*Yipyä*). It is also reared for home consumption and sacrificial purposes as well.

FOOD AND DRINK

Rice is the staple food for the Lothas. Meat is preferred if obtainable, but the Lothas will eat most things in a little quantity. Their diet includes the meat of all domesticated animals and most wild animals, birds, fishes, bees and hornet grubs, large spiders, a kind of beetle, white ants, cultivated plants and innumerable jungle leaves and berries. Certain birds, animals and fishes are forbidden. The main reasons why certain birds, animals and fishes are not eaten are that either they are obviously unclear or because they are thought likely to impart their properties to the eater or to his children. But such type of tabooed foods are not restricted to the aged people and people who had no more children for it does not

matter what happens to them. Eating of wild dog may also cause raging thirst. There was a case in Akuk village of a man who could never sit without going out for a drink after being eaten just a little of the skin of such animal (Mills, J. P., 1922).

Lothas do not have much items in his food menu. The normal food item consists of rice, vegetables, bamboo shoots, dry fish and occasionally meat. The most favourite food is bamboo pickle (*rüjon-machihan*) made out of the hearts of young bamboo shoots pounded with water then dried and boiled when required.

Generally, meal is taken thrice a day. The first meal (*enyathüng-etso*) is served early in the morning, that is, before or at sun rise. At noon the lunch (*nshi*) is served. The evening meal (*mmyu-etso*), the third meal, is served again at sun set. All the meals consist of the same food items as it was served in the morning.

Usually tea is not taken but instead *soko* or *züttsü* (rice beer) is drunk. He drinks rice beer both at meal and between meals. However, he may drink only water if he can get nothing else. Lotha drinks two kinds of rice beer, *Züttsü* and *Chümcho*. The purest form of rice beer which is extracted from the fermented staff inside the liquor-vat itself is the *züttsü*. The fermented rice from which the *züttsü* has been drained off is put again into a pot and hot or cold water is poured into it. Then it is kneaded, and the result brew is *Chümcho*, a light beer.

The process of preparing rice beer starts with yeast (*vümhi*) which is mixed with the boiled rice to ferment in a basket lined with leaves.

Next day the liquor begins to run off and is collected in a hollow-bamboo (*jüthi*). This is the most potten form of rice beer called *zütsü*. The fermented rice beer from which the *zütsü* has been already drained off is mixed with hot or cold water and extract a lighter brew called *chümcho*. Thus prepared the rice beer by the Lothas.

MEDICINE AND DRUG

According to the Lotha traditional belief, when a person is ill it is generally ascribed to evil spirits (*Tsüingrham*) or the wandering of a patient's soul (*omon*). In such case a medicine man (*ratsen*) is called for to extract the foreign matters which are believed to have been introduced by evil spirit into his body and caused him sick.

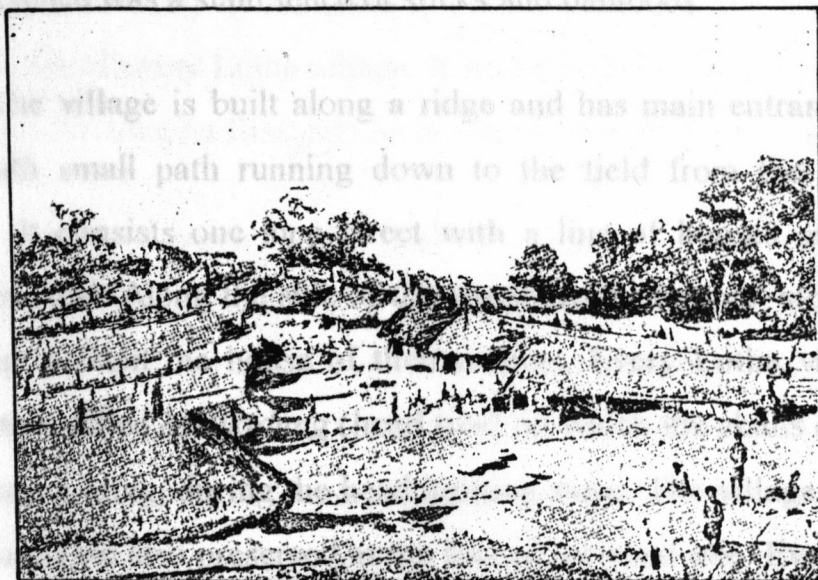
For other physical illness the following remedy is applied. Fat pork is eaten as an aspirin. For an emetic, chicken dung and rat dung are whipped up with water and the mixture is drunk. For diarrhoea the roasted goats' hoof or the gall of either cow or pig is taken. For stomachache and intestinal worms an infusion of the *nshidong* (*stereopernum-chelonoides*) is drunk. For indigestion and stomach trouble a juice of wild lemon leaves (*tssoshü-vo*) is used. For cough the green pentagonal-shaped berries (*yenkhothi/yingkhothi*) are chewed. Bat's flesh is used as a tonic for sickly children. For headache the leaf of *Bischoffia jaramia* (*Kizhü-vo*) is laid on the forehead. For minor wounds and cuts particular plants called *yanpyaro* or *mhatsyurhyu* leaves are crushed and the extracted juice is applied to the wounds. For stomachache, chickenpox, and smallpox the juice of a particular berry called *Thümpak* is used. A lotion made from *Khvürozhü* bark is used to

disinfect wounds. Soot is also applied for skin diseases. For burns the ash of the leaves of the *Woropendung* is applied. For dog bite a whisker of the dog which bit the man is burnt and put on the wound. To bring a boil to a head a little yeast is damped and rubbed over it and when ready it is lanced with a sharp splinter of bamboo. To get rid of warts a black and yellow beetle called *Potso-tssiro* (God's mithun) is crushed on them. For a sprain of any kind the common remedy is to draw blood at the affected area, but for more serious sprain the swelling is cupped and the contaminated blood is drawn out.

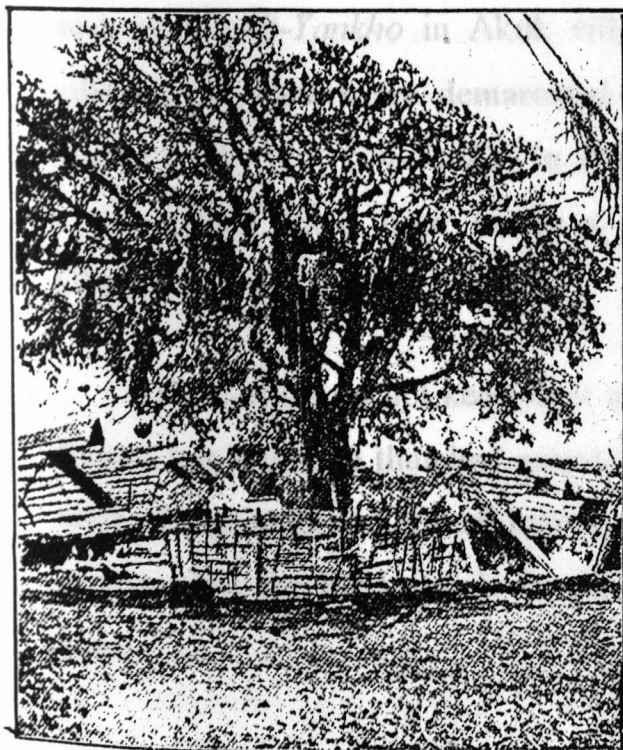
As far as drug is concerned the Lothas do not have much varieties. Home-grown tobacco is preserved by drying the leaves in the sun for three or four days. Then they are stamped and rolled dry again. The result is a coarse smoking tobacco. The stuff is put in the short pipe called *mikhvükvü*. Sometimes it is also smoke in a big pipe called *miru-mikhvükvü*. In this process all the smoke is drawn through the water, which becomes nothing but very dirty diluted nicotine. This liquid is carefully kept and sipped. Using of opium is unknown among the Lothas. Poison is extracted from the root of a common flowering plant called *Rhyuza*. It is also used as rat poison by mixing it with the boiled rice.

THE VILLAGE

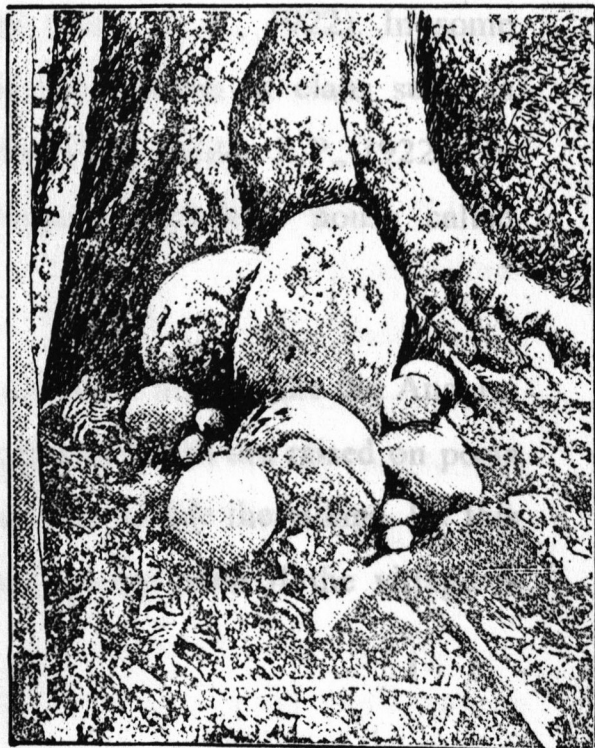
A Lotha village is generally built on the very top of a ridge. The site of the village must be easily defensible from a Naga point of view, and near a spring. To defend his village the Lotha used to dig a deep ditch cut across the ridge in a conveniently narrow place. The bottom and



A TYPICAL LOTHIA VILLAGE
(To face p. 57)



THE HEAD-TREE (MENKIDUNG)
(To face p. 58)



VILLAGE LUCK STONE
(OHA-LONG)
(To face p. 69)

the edge of these were studded with sharp bamboo spikes (*otssi*). The inner defence was a stout fence of sticks and bamboos.

The village is built along a ridge and has main entrance at either end, with small path running down to the field from the side of the village. It consists one long street with a line of houses on each side facing inward. Along the side of the street are the 'genna' stone (*longzii*) standing in front the house of their owners. Every Lotha village has a sacred tree called *Menkidung* (head tree) on which the skulls of the killed enemies are hung, during the head hunting stage. The village luck-stones (*Oha-long*) are also preserved at the foot of the head tree. Every village is divided into two or more sectors called *Yankho*. Sometimes demarcation of the sectors are made according to the feature of the site of the village such as *Hayili-Yankho* in Akuk village (Mills, J. P., 1922). In some villages the sectors are demarcated by the division of clans such as *Murry-Yanko* or *Kikon-Yankho* in Wokha village (Mills, J. P., 1922). In every village there used to be a common bachelor's house called *Chümpho*.

The Lothas do not keep their rice in their houses like the Angami Nagas, but in a little thatched granaries (*oson*) which are raised on posts above the ground and in neat little group just outside the village. By this arrangement the food supply is generally saved even if the village is burnt.

THE MORUNG

The “morung” (*Chümpho*) is a common bachelors’ house found in each sector of every Lotha village. It is the sleeping place for every Lotha boy from the time he first puts on his dao-holder till he marries.

The front porch of the Lotha “morung” is well decorated with figurines like birds and animals. The roof is low in the middle and curved up to join at the front and back. The roof is thatched with either thatching grass (*lishü*) or palm leaf (*oko*). The eaves reached almost to the ground and brought forward in a semicircle in front to form a sort of projected porch roof. The front post called *Hümtsen* is elaborately carved with conventional representations of mithun heads and hornbills. Behind it is another carved post called *Hümtsen-Tachungo*. The ridge of the “morung” is projected a few feet in front, and is ornamented with small straw figures of men and tuft of straw placed at regular intervals.

The inside of the *Chümpho* is not pleasant at all. It is rather dark, dirty, smoky and stuffy. The floor is leveled with earth and sometimes with bamboo platform. It has no window but on each end of the house is a door and a passage. On either side of the passage are cubicles with bamboo partitions, along the side of which are sleeping benches of rough-hewn planks or bamboos. Fire place is made in the middle of the house.

Outside the “morung” is a large platform of solid wood and on which the young people and their friends sit and relax.



A LOTH A MORUNG (CHŪMPHO)
(To face p. 59)

For the Lothas “morung” is the centre of all the village activities. Originally the “morung” was the fortress of the village where the warriors used to sleep and guard the village. It also served as a training centre for warfare as raids were planned and discussed in it. Besides, the young people also learnt the art of crafting and socialization during their ‘morung’s life. Traditional customs and norms of the society are imparted during their stay in the ‘morung’.

AGRICULTURE

The Lothas in general are agriculturist. Jhum is the main form of activation among the Lothas. The selected piece of jungle is cut and burnt, and the cultivated land for two years is allowed to go back to jungle, under which it remains for a period varying from four to fifteen years. But a man in short of land may cultivate each piece at short intervals. On average among the Lothas a piece of land is cultivated once in nine or ten years. The whole village cultivates in one block, each man having his own piece of land. Usually the jungle is cut between December to January. The creepers, bushes and saplings are cut close to the ground. Big trees are left standing, but branches are trimmed so that they shall not shade the crops of the field.

The field is left till March to let it dry. On the appointed day a man who is to start the fire is selected. Then the chosen person makes fire with a fire stick and sets the dry jungle a light. After which everyone joins in and sets fire the fields in a long line and allow it to sweep the whole field from bottom to the top. The next day is *emung*. After that the process of clearing of the field begins. The unburnt twigs are removed



A JHUM FIELD IN WOKHA DISTRICT
(To face p. 60)

while logs are collected to build a little barrier (*Oli-ejo*) to prevent the fertile soil from being washed away. The field is hoed with the help of digger (*Chukchü*) and is ready for sowing.

Before the first seed is sown a ceremony called *Rhyuven* is performed by the village priest (*Oyamo-Pvüti*). Having done the seedling ceremony, the villagers start sowing seeds in their fields. The process of seed sowing begins with a little digger (hoe) in one hand and a little hole is scratched in the ground and seeds rice holding in another hand are allowed to fall four to five seeds rice in the hole, which is filled in with a stroke of the digger. In this operation everyone helps each other on reciprocal exchange of labour. From the time the seed is sown and till the crops are ripened the farmers are kept busy all round the year fighting the weeds in the fields with the help of scrappers (*ehe*).

When the crops are half grown another ceremony called *Mvüthan-ratsen* is performed by the priest to prevent the crops being damaged by a small white grub (*ora*).

When the rice crops come into the ear a series of ceremonies are performed again to ensure a good crop. The ceremony of *Amungkhüm*, *Ronsyukhüm* and *Likhüm* are performed in a series by this stage. In Akuk village *Ronsyukhüm* ceremony is performed after the *Lanvon* "genna", but in other Lotha villages it may be done either before or later.

When the crop begins to ripe the farmer is kept busy protecting it from the ravages of beasts and birds. Wild animals are driven away by

shouting or clapping two pieces of bamboo together or blowing a bamboo trumpet (*Pvü-Pvü*). Sometimes scarecrows are hung in the field to scare away the birds from eating the crops.

Just before the crops begins to ripe the ceremony of eating the first fruit (*ethan-etso*) is performed by the priest first, and after him other households in the village. This ceremony ushers in the harvesting of the new crops. As soon as the crops are ripened about August another ceremony called *lirithing* is performed in honour of *Ronsyu* (God of blessing).

The crop is harvested with a sickle (*Vekvüro*). The harvested crops are held together by one hand while the other hand cut the plants just below the ears. Then the ears are thrashed on mat outside the field-hut (*liki*). The grains are temporarily stored in the field-hut. Then the grains are carried up as fast as possible. If the fields are a long way from the village, small temporary granaries (*echen-ranki*) are built half way the field and stores the grains till the field-hut has been emptied. The grains are carried up in a carrying basket called *Okhyak* and brought them home to be stored in the granaries.

Besides the rice, there are also a number of subsidiary crops like maize (*Tsüngonrho*), millet (*oden*), chilly (*machi*), job's tears (*omiim*), yam (*mani*), lentil (*orho*), soya bean (*lünkyimtsüing*), gourd (*shümo*), cucumber (*lishakthi*), oil seed (*pentsü*), black sesame (*penjüng*), brinjal (*khonthyu*) etc., are generally sown along the edge of the field or in patches among the rice.

Thus the agricultural activities come to an end by the month of November with the annual festival called *Tokhvü-emong*. This festival marks the end of the Lotha's agricultural operation for the year until the next round comes again about December.

RELIGION

The religion of the Lotha is of that type which is vaguely termed as Animism. He does not believe in Supreme God and hence he has vague concept about Supreme Being. However, the deities called *Potso* to whom he believes and sacrifices are some of them neutral and benevolent, but if they are not kept in good temper with proper sacrifices they are malevolent. He sincerely believes on what he conceives to be his religion and he cheerfully devotes to it and meet his end like a man when time comes. He considers these *Potsos* as nearest equivalent to High God. The *Potsos* who effects us resembles men in appearance.

Divine Visit

The *Potsos* are believed to have visited the earth from time to time and holds converse with the village seer (*Ratsen*). These High Gods comes down to the village at least once in a year and conveys the events that year the village is going to enjoy. Before the divine visit the attendant is sent a head who appears to the village *Ratsen* in a dream and tells him that the High God will be visiting him on such and such a day. On receiving the warning the *Ratsen* prepares for the forthcoming of *Potso* visit and refrains himself from eating of flesh of anything killed, though he eats meat dried before. On the night when *Potsos* are expected to come everyone in the village is advised to go to bed early and remain

silent. That night the *Ratsen* sleeps in a separate room in his house. Then the same night the *Potsos* comes and converses with the *Ratsen*, who was in a trance stage, in a language unknown to human and shows him symbolic articles such as tiger, yarn and rice etc., from which the future can be foretold. The symbol of tiger would mean the farmers fight with weeds of the field, yarn would mean entanglement or trouble of various kind, and if the yarn is red then it would mean that the village will experience bloodshed during the year. Rice symbolized a good harvest for the farmers.

In the next morning, after the divine visitors have left, the villagers would go to the house of the *Ratsen* to see the marks of the spear butts left on the floor of the house. They are easily distinguishable, it is said, from the ordinary marks of spear butts, for they are much deeper and smaller. The day after the divine visit is kept as *emung*, a day of rest from works, as a mark of respect of that event. In the same way all the Lotha villages would keep a day of rest from works as and when news of the divine visit reaches them.

The Lothas believes in the existence of several deities parallel to High God (*Potso*) and the harmful deities represented by the *Tsüngrham*, a demon. He categorizes the deities according to their nature and functions, some of which are discussed below:

Ronsyu (Field spirit/Spirit of harvest)

It is the godling of the agricultural realm. This godling is responsible for the fruitful yield of the field and is adored with praises

and sacrifices. Hence every village and every man is attached a *Ronsyu*, by whose favour the crops of the field are good and fruitful. It is believed that the *Ronsyu* may become stingy at times and withhold blessing if he is not pleased. Adoration with a pig and chicken sacrifice is made to this *Ronsyu* during seed sowing time and harvest, and also at mid year to invoke blessings for the year.

Sükhyingo and Ngazo (Jungle spirits)

These godlings are another benevolent gods. *Sükhyingo* and *Ngazo*, another jungle spirit who is practically identical with *Sükhyingo*, are the keepers of all the animals and birds. They grant and withhold the games to the hunters and food gatherers. *Ngazo* is said to have a twisted and stiff neck which cause him to look in one direction only, neglecting the others. Hence a person to whose direction the *Ngazo* turns is said to have blessed. One important characteristic of *Sükhyingo* is its association with the unseen spirit in all living beings. Therefore it is also believed that all living beings, whether human or animals have their *Sükhyingo*.

Jüpvüo (Water master)

Jüpvüo is the lord of water. This godling is believed to have a being like human with hairs of enormous length, who lives at the bottom of deep river or pool and uses human skulls as hearth-stones. Small offering is made at least once in a year to invoke its blessing for *Jüpvü* withholds or grants the fishes of the water to the fishermen.

Lüŋkumvü (Fairies)

The *Lüŋkumvü* are a group of jungle spirits who are believed to have been inhabiting in a very dense and foggy jungles. They can be seen with human eyes in some occasions, and their speeches are often heard by human being. It is also said that these spirits speak all types of languages and dialects. The jungles are believed to be hunted by these wailing *Lüŋkumvü*. A famous haunt is below the village of Akuk on the northern slope of the range (Mills, J. P., 1922). Men are often tempted to follow the wailings of these fiends. If they do will be affected with such madness that they think level ground is steep ground and steep ground level ground. These spirits carry human beings away from their homes to unknown destinations in the jungle and river. They never allow human being fall or injure while carrying them across deep ravines or mountains. They travel from one place to another carrying their victim for a number of days without food and drink but never allowed to die in their hands. *Lüŋkumvü* are believed to have possessed a magical bag, which when seized from them they would become ineffective and would implore the man to return it and keep on insisting till it is returned.

Tsüŋrham

The *Tsüŋrham* are the evil spirits or demons who cause every sickness to human being. These invisible fiends who out of sheer malice causes sickness to men by detaining their souls or by intruding foreign objects like hair or bits of wood or small stones into their bodies, making it necessary to call in a *Ratsen* to extract them. These evil spirits are believed to have dwelled a remote uninhabitable places like spring, empty and hollow places and appears to man in the form of different objects

such as birds, animals or snakes and then disappears. A person who happens to encounter such spirits generally returns home sick and sometimes dies if proper sacrifice with chicken, egg, ginger and charcoal are not offered to redeem the soul of the victim.

Beliefs and Practices

The religion of the Lotha teaches no moral code. The blessings it offers to him are material but not spiritual. The virtue in this world is vaguely believed to be returned with joy and happiness in the next life. Yet many Lothas lead a clean, straight, honest and virtuous life.

Divination and Omens

The Lotha has different methods and devices to perform divination. He has several means to consult the omen. Killing of chicken by strangling is one way of performing divination as it is said to have furnished the means of reading the omens. The diviner seeks to know the will of the deities by way of reading the position of the entrails and position of legs etc. Another way of divination is to read the omen from the skins of pieces of ginger when it is cut off and fell from the hand. Breaking of egg is said to have furnished another means of divination, the omen being indicated from the falling of the shells. Omen is also read from the fire-thong. It is believed to be the most effective means of getting the omen, the answer being rendered by the nature of its bustings. Any happening associated the head-tree also provide an omen to the village community. If the tree grows well it would mean increase of population of the village, but if the tree withers, it would mean the reverse. Unusual falling of the branch is a sign of calamities or death

within the village. Therefore, for a Lotha by divination he seeks to know the will of the deities and assess whether an undertaking such as hunting, fishing is worth performing. This shows that reading omens play an important part in any expedition or venture in life.

Dream

Dream has a great significance and meaning in Lotha's life. He believes that the souls of the dead spirit visits and communicates him in dreams, and his own soul leaves his body and wanders. Thus, if a man dreams that he is in a certain place he knows that his soul is under the influence of some evil spirits that it needs to appease them with sacrifice. To dream of carrying a child along the Road of the Dead would mean the child will die, and the dreamer may die too. But to dream that he is driven back by the dead men means that he will live long life. To dream of dead men is unlucky for it means that the dead men have come to call the dreamer. If a man dreams a successful hunt just the night before the hunting it is considered to be unlucky attempt for it means that the dreamer's spirit has been out in hunting and driven all the games away. To dream of digging earth would mean death among the close relatives of the dreamer. In the same way every dream carries a meaning and predicts the future of a man that is to come.

Among the Lothas many dreams are believed to have certain symbolized meanings. For example, dreaming of water symbolizes real crops and plenty of harvest. Dreaming of fire symbolizes clear and sunny weather. To dream anything red such as red cloth or red spear symbolizes bloodshed and means that some one will get hurt.

Luck Stone

The *Oha-long* (luck-stones) are smooth, shiny, water-worn stone and varying in sizes. They are believed to have possessed certain supernatural powers for bringing good fortune to the keepers. *Oha-long* are of two types: village *oha-long* and family or private *oha-long*. Generally, village luck-stones are kept under the head-tree or at the foot of the main post of the 'morung'. Individual or family luck-stones are properly kept inside the house or granaries. Those kept under the head-tree are usually large, and on them the fortune of the whole village depends. The distinguish mark of luck-stone is that it should be round and smooth, and be found resting on the ground in little nest it has made for itself.

The private *oha-long* are of different kinds: fertility of offspring-*oha*, rice-*oha*, and money-*oha*. The fertility-*oha* which is kept at home by the family is meant to favour more family members rapidly. The rice-*oha* is kept in the granary. A good crops of the field and plenty harvest depends upon this particular *oha-long*. For a successful trade depends on the money-*oha*. The possessor of such stone which bring good luck in trade keeps it under his money.

The luck-stones are treated with great respect. They are carefully maintained and small offering is made to them during every harvest and *Oyan-tsoa* "gennas". During the *Pikhvüchak* "genna" all the possessors of rice-*oha* inspects theirs with washed hands – both before and after.

Soul and Life after Death

Lotha considered that a man has two distinct souls called *Omon* and *Müngyi* respectively. The *Omon*, which is visible in the form of the man's shadow and shows its good sense by disappearing into him when the sky is cloudy. It leaves a man sometimes before death in cases of serious illness. It may just wander about, in which case it is often induced by the proper ceremonies to return, or else it may go straight along the Road of the Dead to the next world, in which case the man dies. The *müngyi* leaves a man at the moment of death and go straight along the Road of the Dead, where it joins the *Omon* which has already gone ahead except in case of very sudden death.

The soul leaves a man at the moment of death and goes straight to the World of the Dead. The World of the Dead (*echüli*) lies under our earth. Here the dead lives like the living people. Those who had done good during their life time, leads a prosperous happy life and those who are not leads a life of poverty and misery. The entrance to the World of the Dead is through a cave called *echükvü* on the precipitous eastern face of the mythological mountain of Wokha hill called *Tiyi-Phonglan*. It is believed that every dead spirit or soul goes to the World of the Dead through this cave. Life in the land of dead is certainly not regarded as everlasting, but the Lotha do believe that there is life after death, though he is vague as to what the next stage would be. There are also some people who believes that man die again and become flies. Some other think every man passes through nine successive lives and then cease to exist.

Religious Officials

Every Lotha village has their own priest. This priest, besides performing the sacrificial rites of the household and village, is the custodian and interpreter of religious beliefs. He is also a fortune teller; the secrets are made know to him by the deities. Falling into a trance, a priest may experience some acquaintances with the spirits and convey the divine message to the people.

There is a distinction among the priests, sacrificers, sooth-sayers, diviners and medicine men in the sacredatal aspects. The priest (*Pviti*) is the priest of the village. He must be without blemish in all respects. The office is either hereditary or charismatic, but once filled it is a life long position. He is the highest religious official of the whole village. He wields spiritual influence. He belongs to the priestly clan with a long standing repute in the society. A principal priest is associated by a junior priest called *Yinga*. He succeed to the office in the event of death of the senior man or priest of his own paternal lineage, the investiture being governed by colourful ceremonies. The priest performs important ceremonies such as inaugurating harvest undertaking, inauguration of sowing, founding of a new village and holding of other festivals. He is maintained by the seasonal gifts from the people during the religious ceremonies.

Ratsen (village-seer) is the medicine man or woman of the village. The post is hereditary or charismatic in nature and is held for life. He or she is the medium of divine communication to the people, as in the case of God's visitation as well as predicting events and diagnosing illness. He

or she also treats sickness and interprets dreams. In some way he or she acts as prophet, a surgeon and counselor of the village. He or she prescribed fees for the service to the people.

Ha-vae is another religious official who mediates dead spirits and their living relatives. This post is usually held by women. In the evening of a person's death the family would prepare a sacrificial food and keep for the night at the house of the *Ha-vae*. The spirit of the dead person would tell his or her wishes to the living family, and the medium would pass the message along to the bereaved family.

Besides this religious officials, there are also other minister of lower circles, like those in charge of funerals, child initiations and family rites. Such minor officials are not appointed by the people formally but the persons concerned volunteer by virtue of their experience and age. They receives light fees in kind from the people served.

Life Cycle Ritual

In the olden days when a child is born in a Lotha family a "genna" sort of ceremony is observed by members of the family for six days for a male child and five days for a female. During those days they are restricted to go for any field work for themselves, but they can go to other's field for work if required. The mother is also restricted to go out of the house or walk with people other than her family members.

Soon after the birth, the mother is given chicken soup and rice. This continues for about a week or so, till the mother was physically quite fit. In the case of a boy on the sixth day and girl on fifth day the

ears were pierced and a name is given to the baby. This ceremony is called *Ngaro-Mvüchuk* (child naming ceremony). During this ceremony a formal dress or head-gear is given to him or her.

As and when death occurs of a human being in the village a sacrifice of a chicken is immediately followed which is then hung above the corpse on the position of its head toward the corpse and it is necessary that its wings are kept on the walls of the house until after burial. If the deceased was an influential person then a dog tied with a string or rope is brought to the apartment where the deceased lies and the string or rope is tied to the hand of the corpse and the dog is killed and removed.

The corpse is then decked with full robes and enmeshed with precious ornaments and is kept inside the coffin. The coffin is hued out a tree. In some cases, the deceased is armed with weapons to be capable of fighting against evil spirits which seek to obstruct the soul in its journey to the land of the dead. The custom of killing a dog is to give the soul a companion and killing of the chicken is to scratch the path. The grave is fenced. Then over the grave the belongings of the deceased are kept or displayed by supporting them on a strong laid crosswise against the weight. Food is offered to the deceased in a basket. Torches of fire are kept on the grave at night time for six days for a man and five days for a woman.

CEREMONIES

Public Ceremonies

Among the Lothas the agricultural year begins with a ceremony called *Pickhvüchak*. Both the Southern and Northern Lothas observes this ceremony just before clearing the jungle in their fields. As soon as the *Pvüiti* (priest) announces the day on which the ceremony is to be held, each "morung" boy prepares meat and cooked for it to be sacrificed. The night just before the ceremony is a restricted night and sexual intercourse is forbidden. On the day of *Pikhvüchak* ceremony every man of the village assembles at the place where the *Ophya* (a kind of ritual apparatus) is set up. The *Pvüiti* puts an egg on the ground with a leaf on each side of the *Ophya*. Having placed ten little bits of pork and ten little bits of ginger on the *Ophya* the *Pvüiti* would recite a prayer holding a cock in his left hand and a dao in his right hand. The prayer being ended the *Pvüiti* cut the cock's throat and takes the omens from its entrails and ties them on the *Ophya*. The rest of the day is given up to feasting. The next day is observed as *emung*, a day of rest from works. This ceremony is performed to ensure good crops and plenty harvest and also a high birth rate for the village.

The Lotha's agricultural year is closed with the *Tukhvü-Emung* ceremony. The *Tukhvü-Emung* is an annual festival which usually lasts for nine days. Five days after he has given the notice of the ceremony the *Pvüiti* with his associate called *Yinga* goes round the village and collects unhusked rice from every household. With some of the unhusked rice he makes *Soko* (rice beer) and with the rest he buys a large pig. The eight days from that on which the unhusked rice is collected is known as



**THE TWO PVÜTIS OF AKUK COLLECTING RICE
FOR THE TOKHVÜ EMUNG CEREMONY
(To face p. 74)**

Kichan. The *Pvüti* speared the pig at the *Ophya* on the *Kichan* and the meat is distributed among the villagers. From the day when the unhusked rice is collected to the *Kichan* nothing must be killed or sold in the village and no stranger must be brought in. The day after *Kichan* is called *Rümphi* or *Tukhvü-nchuk*. On this day, animals and fowls are killed and the whole day is given up to feasting, visiting the houses of the different members. The next day is *emung*. On this day, all the ornaments and erections on the graves are thrown away. Thus ends the Lotha's agricultural year with the *Tukhvü-Emung*.

Individual Ceremonies

Individual ceremony begins with *Potsokhüm* (Present to God). It is performed by the household every year, the regular time being just before the "jhum" are cut. On the day of *Potsokhüm* ceremony a small pig is killed inside the house by the owner of the house. A mixture of *Soko* and a few blades of rice collected from the granary is wrapped in a leaf and tied on one of the main pots of the house. Then sixty small pieces of meat are cooked and wrapped in a *Yotso* leaf and kept at the centre post with a pray that there may be no sickness or misfortune in the house. After that two leaves containing six pieces of meat each and two leaves containing four pieces of meat each are prepared for the dreamer. Then the next day the dreamer comes back to report what vision he has had and counts the pieces of meat. If the full number is found and the leaf is wet all is well, but a deduction in the number of pieces foretells evil. If a little rice is found mixed with the meat, it is regarded as fortunate, for this is considered as a gift from the dead and ensures good crops.

The next individual ceremony is the *Epoetha* ceremony which is performed inside the house itself. This ceremony is performed by an old man on behalf of the household addressing to a particular deity called *Khyuham*. To this deity he offers twenty three little pieces of meat and an egg along with a handful of rice, little *Soko*, and prays for the household that no sickness be fall upon the family members. Having done this he takes a little brand from the hearth and carrying basket containing the sacrificial articles, and goes out, of the house, calling on all evil spirits to follow him. As he goes out the household throws after him ashes and burning brands and shuts the door quickly and keeps it for a few minutes or else the evil spirits may come back and enter the house again. The old man goes outside the village fence and lights a small fire and spills a little *Soko* on the ground. Then he splits the bamboo hollow (*Rapvü*) in which he carried *Soko* and watches how the two halves falls. If both falls inside up or outside up the omen is good, but if one falls one way and one the other then the omen is bad.

Ceremonies for Illness

To the Lotha almost every illness is attributed to the malice of an evil spirit called *Tsingrham*, who has either introduced some foreign matters such as hair or a little stone into his body or has caused his soul to desert him at a certain place. In such case, to enable the sick man restore his soul, a soul-caller (*montsae*) is required. For this matter a dog is sacrificed. Then the *Montsae* and the sick man, if he be well enough, go down to the spot indicated by the *Ratsen*. If the sick man be too ill then a near relative goes. On arrival on the spot the *Montsae* lights a fire

and a dog is sacrificed. Then they go back to the village, repeatedly calling the sick man's soul by the man's name to follow him.

When the *Ratsen* says that it was at some places in the jungle or village path that the patient's soul left him and is being kept away by *Tsingrham* then things like pork, ginger, wild mint (*rarakhiim*), *soko* and chicken are offered to the spirit. Then six times, if the patient is a man or five times if she is a woman, he drops the two halves of the splited *Rapvü* (bamboo-hollow) together onto his dao, asking each time, "will he live or die?" If both the halves come to rest on the same side of the dao the illness will be a long one. If one falls on one side and one on the other the patient will either die or get well soon. Next, having tied the chicken's wings together over its back and fastened a cowrie onto its legs, he tosses it up and catches it six times for a man and five times for a woman, then releases its wings and let it go into the jungle. Finally, he calls out the name of the patient eight times. On his way back to the village he keeps on calling the soul by the sick man's name. The *montsae*, that night meets the patient's soul in his dream and tries to persuade it to return home. If it cannot be persuaded to return then the patient die.

A person suffering from intermittent fever or some similar slight ailment gets rid of it as follow: He gets up from his seat in his house and puts any bits of rubbish, such as sticks or leaves, into an old carrying basket. Taking up this load he says a load, "I am going out to get somethings." Having reached the outskirts of the village he hangs his load on a bush and says, "watch this; I am going to come back soon". He then leaves the load with the illness watching it, as he thinks, and returns

home by another path. By this, it is believed, the illness leaves the patient and he gets well.

AGRICULTURAL CEREMONIES

Rhyuven Ceremony

The *Rhyuven* ceremony is the first ceremony associated with agricultural activities. This is performed before any farmer in the village has sown seed in the fields. The *Pvüti* will perform it first and next after everyone follows.

The *Pvüti* goes with his wife to the ceremonial spot and offers things like chicken's meat, boiled or cooked rice, ginger, rice seed, seed of plants and *Soko* to the field spirits. Next morning the *Pvüti* sows six seeds of rice in his garden plot. Sexual intercourse is forbidden the night after this ceremony. When the last man has finished sowing the seeds the whole village observes one day *emung*.

Mvüthan-Ratsen Ceremony

A yearly ceremony called *Mvüthan-Ratsen* is performed by the *Pvüti* and his associate, *Yinga*, when the crops are about half-grown to prevent them being damaged by a small white grubs. This ceremony is performed only by the *Pvüti* and *Yinga*. On a certain day of which he has given previous notice the *Pvüti* with his associate collects unhusked rice from the whole village and with some of it he buys a pig. This he kills on the day of ceremony and going outside the village he lays ten pieces of meat and ginger placed on *Yutso* leaves to his right and nine pieces of meat and ginger to his left. The next day is *emung*.

Ronsyukhüm Ceremony

Ronsyukhüm ceremony is performed in mid-summer of the agricultural season. During the *Ronsyukhüm* ceremony the field owner, along with his family, leaves for the field early in the morning, taking with him a live hen and a new earthen-pot. Having made a fire inside the field-hut (*Liki*) and after being eaten his mid-day meal with his life and family, he holds the hen by the wings with his right hand and walks around the outside of the field-hut, swinging the hen and calling out the names of all the different varieties of rice he knows, and asking the *Ronsyu* to bless him a good crop of them. He then strangles the hen and takes the omen from its entrails. The hen is plucked and cooked in the new earthen pot. This is not eaten by the members, but is taken back to the village and given to an old man of his clan. The entrails are put in the pot and buried behind the field hut. All then washes their hands and the proceeding ends with a meal that has been brought down previously.

Lanvon Ceremony

The seventh day after the *Amungkhüm-emung* is set aside for *Lanvon* (path clearing) ceremony by the whole village. During the six days proceeding the *Lanvon* day nothing may be sold or killed within the village or perform any "genna" such as *Potsokhüm* or *Echüi-enyi*. On the seventh day each working company (*Yingaden*) will kill a large pig. The next day is a general picnic and the whole village turns out to join in the clearing of the jungle from the path. There is much feasting and drinking on this day. The next day is *emung*.

Eating of First Fruit Ceremony

Just before the crops begin to ripe the ceremony of *Ethan-etso* (eating of first fruit) is performed by the *Pvüti* first and after him by all the other households in the village. During this period no stranger may enter the *Pvüti* house, and selling and killing of domesticated animals and also bringing of meat into the village is prohibited. On the day of *Ethan-etso* ceremony the *Pvüti* kills a small pig outside his house. He does not eat this meat but distributes it to all the houses in the village in which there has been a death during the year. These portions are offered to the dead during the *Echüi-enyia* ceremony. After killing the pig he goes into his house and in the presence of his family strangles a hen with a prayer to the *Ronsyu* that there may be good crops, no accident, no raids by the enemies and no prowling tigers. He takes the omen from the excreta and entrails in ordinary way. After that he cuts the rice sown in his garden plot during the *Rhyuven* ceremony. This the *Pvüti* husks in silence. He puts a little of the grain on the sickle, on both his feet, against his forehead and on the hearth-stones. During the next day or two everyone goes down to his own fields and brings up little rice and with it he performs the same ceremony, except that no hen or pig is killed. A little of this rice is preserved and kept wrapped in a leaf at the bottom of the bamboo container. Such was the custom of the Lothas.

Harvesting Ceremony

On the day when he first go down to reap his crops each man performs at his field-hut a ceremony called *Lirithing* in honour of the *Ronsyu*. He takes down with him the *Ronsyu-ha* (*Ronsyu's* load) containing a cooked pig's head, a gourd of *Soko*, an egg, a little salt, and

some cooked rice. Having arrived all the members of the working company (*Yingaden*) at his field he lights a fire with a fire-stick, takes four blades of thatching grass (*lishü*) and places six grains of rice on the threshold of the field-hut. He then cracks the egg over the six grains of rice and pours the contents into the leaf in which he wraps and ties it to the centre-post of the field-hut. Then he lights the thatching grass and prays to all the *Ronsyu* of the hill side to come and help him, and the reaping begins.

SOCIAL "GENNA"

The social "genna" is a public feast in which the whole community attends. Generally, it is termed as "*Osho*" (feast of merit). Social "genna" plays enormously an important part in Lotha's life. Starting from the first small "genna" they are increased until the ceremony reaches at which two stones are dragged. Every "genna" entitles the performer to wear a certain distinctive cloth. The wealth and status of a man encourages one to perform a series of social "genna". It is therefore the ambition of every man to perform the full series if he possibly can. The process is that at the first stone-dragging ceremony one stone is dragged, and the second, third and so on till two stones are dragged. The whole series for a man to perform such "genna" is to give a final feast, to which even birds and beasts are invited. Rice and food were scattered on the ground for the village pigs and chickens, and a special share of meat and rice is taken down to the performer's fields and left there for the crows to eat. But it is so rarely reached by a man that it practically exists only in theory. This highest "genna" is called *Hono-sho* (chicken's "genna").

Usually in social “genna” a mithun is sacrificed, but sometimes a black bull may be sacrificed as a substitute, which is invariably spoken of as mithun. The following defects make an animal unfit for sacrifice – a hole in the horn, one horn deformed or shorter than the other, one horn missing, the teeth missing or broken, white mark on the body, white on the tail or forehead, deform hoof and white on the leg unless all four are white. It is believed that a man dare not sacrifice such blamish animal from Lotha point of view otherwise he may die. Under no circumstances may the flesh of an animal which has been sacrificed be eaten either by the performer or any of his household. It is believed that anyone who breaks this rule may go mad.

The series of social “gennas” performs by a Lotha are as follows:

The First “Genna”

The first social “genna” called *Wozütana* or *Ozhüiyua* is usually performed during the season when there is certain amount of leisure from work in the field. It is a simple “genna” which is performed by a man before marriage. He invites all the men in the village who have done *Wozütana*, and kills a bull of any colour and distributes among the guests. Little present of such meat is also sent to the fellow-clansmen in neighbouring villages. The head of the sacrificed bull on such occasion is not kept. The man who performs this “genna” is entitled to wear a certain cloth called *Phangrhüp*.

The Second "Genna"

The second social "genna" is called *Shishang* or *Shishangyua*, but the Southern Lotha calls it *Wozüyua*. It is performed only after marriage. This "genna" is administered by the priest associate called *Wokjung* (pig-killer). On this occasion, a pig and a bull are killed in front of the performer's house. Part of the meat is divided up among the religious officials and the rest is given for feasting. The night is passed away with much eating and drinking, and singing of songs in which good wishes for the sacrificer are expressed. Next day about mid-day two small pigs provided by the sacrificer are speared by the *Wokjung* outside the house. The hindquarters of one are the prerequisite of the parents of the sacrificer's wife. The rest of the meat is eaten in the evening by the relatives in the village who have done the *Shishang* "genna". The *Wokjungs* each holds a cock and sing songs in which the good fortune of the sacrificer is desired. The cocks are then killed and the meat divided among the guests. The rest of the night is given up to singing and drinking.

The Third "Genna"

The third social "genna" is called *Ethayua*. Nowadays the tendency is to combine it with the fourth social "genna" at which a mithun is killed, or even omit it all together. The procedure is much the same as that of the *Shishangyua* "genna". This "genna" entitles the performer the wearing of a certain cloth called *Etha-sü*. A sign kept at the granary also indicates that the said "genna" had been performed by the owner.

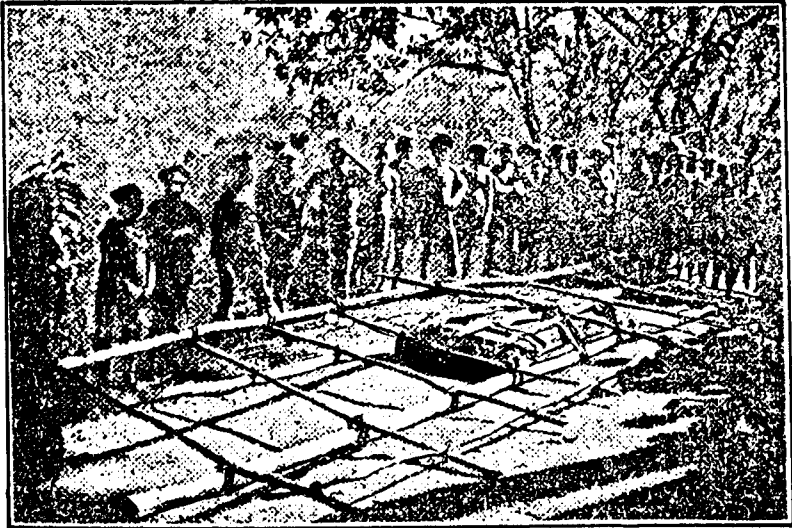
The Fourth "Genna"

The fourth social "genna" is called *Tssirotsoa* or *Tssiro-sho*. A person who proposes to perform this "genna" sounds the matter to the announcer call *Wotüng*, who in turn gives public notice in the village. The rice is pounded with much singing and plenty of *Soko* is prepared for the occasion. On the day of the sacrifice a bull-mithun without blemish is tied up in front of the sacrificer's house with its horns decked with a kind of leaf called *Reziyu*. Having recited a prayer by the *Wokjung* for the welfare of the performer's family the mithun is speared by an old man and killed. The meat is divided as follows: the chest to the clans of the performer of the sacrifice, the hindquarters to his wife's clan, the forelegs to the husbands of women of his clan (*ejanphyoe*), the meat of the head to the *Wokjung*, the tongue to the man who helped to buy the mithun and the lower part of the stomach to the old man who killed it. The performer must on no account eat any of this particular meat. The skull and the horns are kept in the "morung" till the sacrificer has dragged a stone (*long-zü*).

The Dragging "Genna"

Before the ceremony begins the man who proposes to drag a stone builds a temporary shed at the back of the house for the whole households to stay till the ceremonies are over. All being ready and stone selected, the *Wotüng* announces the date of the ceremony on behalf of the performer, who must remain chaste till the completion of the ceremony.

On the appointed day rice is pounded in front of his house by the *Ejanphyoeden* with much singing and rice is prepared for the occasion.



**“GENNA” STONE (LONG-ZÜ) TIED ON A BAMBOO
FRAMEWORK READ TO BE CARRIED UP TO THE VILLAGE
FOR THE STONE DRAGGING CEREMONY
(To face p. 85)**

Then a path is cleared for the stone, the workers being fed on a large pig. The next day an old man kills a little chicken in front of the house by cutting its throat with a sharp piece of bamboo and prays that the stone may be carried up safely and unbroken. Then the *Wokjung* kills a small pig (*wokoro*) which is cooked by the performer's *ejanphyoe*. Every man is given a piece of meat to eat but the younger men may only touch theirs and throw them away or else, it is believed that they would become weak and unable to lift the stone. Then all the men of the village go down to the stone and make a strong bamboo frame, on which the stone is placed and bound with cane and strong creepers. When all is ready the *Wokjung* sprinkles *Soko* on it then a mixture of *Soko* and *Rarakhtim* (wild mint) is sprinkled in all directions and makes a pretence of lifting the stone.

Having done the preliminary rites the stone is carried in the frame with *ho-hoing* and placed on the half-way path. There they were met by a procession of men in full dancing dress. After the interval for eating and drinking at the half-way path a senior *Wokjung* sacrifices a chicken and egg and the stone is brought in the village. The whole evening is spent in feasting and singing. The next day the stone is erected, covered with mats, and the rest of the day is spent in much feasting and gaiety. In the next morning the mats are removed and the ceremony comes to an end. This ceremony entitled the performer and his wife to wear a most prestigious cloth called *Longpen-sü*.

MARRIAGE

There is no specific set rule of age for marriage that the Lotha should follow. One can marry at any age as and when he or she attains

marriageable age. But generally Lotha girls marry between the age of fourteen and eighteen and boys between seventeen and twenty-two (Mills, J. P., 1922).

The Lotha traditional marriage has a number of formalities of which one is required to follow. The procedures and formalities of a Lotha traditional marriage are as follows.

The Negotiation (Eloe-eng)

A man when decided and wishes to marry a girl, tells his parents and either his mother or some elderly female relations goes and sounds the matter to the girl's parents. If they are agreeable then she goes again with a *Soko* in a bamboo-hollow (*Jüthi* or *Othi*) and offers it to the girl's parents. Then the marriage price is discussed and settled between the two families. Having done this the bridegroom gives the girl *Pvücho* (rain-shield) and *Nhyaping* (dao-handle).

The Engagement (Tsoyuta)

After the preliminary formalities of negotiation is done, at the next *Pikhvüchak* "genna", the ceremony of *Tsoyuta* takes place. Then accompanied by an old man and a boy from his clan, the man takes a cock, which he had killed and cooked himself, and rice to the girl's parents. The rice of the two families is mixed and a brew prepared from it by the girl is drunk by all except the would be couple. The would be couple are made to sit side-by-side of the old man, who are holding in each hand a plantain leaf containing sixteen pieces of meat. Then the old man swings his hands back and fro eight times praying for the would be

couple, who by this ceremony are made husband and wife, for along and happy life together. From this time on the bridegroom will work, as a part of paying marriage price, in the father-in-law's house for a complete one year. On completion of one year's time the groom will present five bundles of firewood to his bride to display on both of the bride's door and it signifies that the girl is officially engaged. The most important part in Lotha marriage is groom's slave-like work called *Lomyaka* in his father-in-law's house for one complete year. This is the sign of proof that he is capable of maintaining a wife.

The Wedding (Yanpiyanthan)

The part of ceremony of making them husband and wife had already been done by the time of engagement ceremony. Now, four or five days later, after the engagement ceremony, the *Lantssoa* ceremony (road-making) takes place. In this ceremony the *Ejanphyaedden* (the husbands of women born in the bridegroom's clan) and their wives fetch up all the fire woods which are left stacked in the jungle and heaps them up in front of his father-in-law's house. The bridegroom kills a pig and gives about 14 Kgs of meat as bride's meat (*Hanlam*) to his father-in-law to be distributed among the close relatives of the bride. This part is considered the most important Lotha's custom during marriage time, for without which a man is not entitled to receive any *Hanlam* from his clan members. That night chicken is strangled and carefully observed how the excreta falls. If any remains in the vent it is bad omen indicating that the wife will die in child birth. The entrails also indicate which will die first, whether the first child will be a boy or a girl, and so on. Next day the fire wood heaped up in front of his father-in-law's house is distributed among

the bride's close relatives along with the portion of *Hanlam* given by the bridegroom as a present.

On the wedding day the groom builds a small house called *Kithanro* (a new hut) and kills a large pig and takes it to his father-in-law's house. The head goes to the bride's father, who also shares with other members of his clan the left fore- and hind-quarters. The chest and the right fore- and hind-legs are laid a side. The bride collects cotton from all married women of her clan, and gives them shares of meat from the chest in exchange.

The Lotha marriage procession takes place at night in absolute silence. That night the newly married couple along with his relatives proceeds for the newly constructed *Kithanro*. The marriage procession begins as follows: first the wife of a man of the bridegroom's clan (*Orhamvü* or *Omi*) then the bridegroom in full ceremonial dress, followed by the bride in her *Loro-sü* (kind of marriage cloth) wearing for the first time, with the wife of another man of the bridegroom's clan. Then the marriage party proceeds to the *Kithanro*. The couple sleeps in the *Kithanro* but sexual intercourse is restricted. The next day is restricted day and neither of the couple may go to the wife's father's house. On the third day they may go with a present of meat and are feasted there in return.

Three or four days later the ceremonies of marriage are completed by the *Poniro-Ratsen* (man-and-wife-priest). The *Poniro-Ratsen* use to be two elderly women, wives or widows of men who have dragged a

stone. A series of marriage rites are performed by these *Poniro-Ratsen*. They make four little parcels of leaf each containing eight pieces of meat, four each containing ten and finally two each containing thirty. These little parcels they put them in a little basket with *Zütsü* (purest form of rice beer). Then a cock is strangled and observed the position of its legs when it dies. If the right leg is down and the left up the husband will die first. If the right is up and the left down the wife will die first. If the legs are crossed the couple will quarrel. The excreta and entrails are also examined in the usual way. Then the *Poniro-Ratsen* puts eight narrow stripes of plantain leaf over each ear of the couple. Then the elder of the *Poniro-Ratsen* next takes a small basket and puts in it a pair of pewter bracelets and waves it in front of the couple and prays that the couple may be happy and have many children. From the house the old women will go to the *Poniro-Ratsen-dung* (*Poniro-Ratsen* tree), taking with them the basket containing small parcels of pork, chicken and *soko*, and leaves there.

Next day the *Poniro-Ratsen* comes again and takes the omen in the same way, except that hens are used instead of cocks. After swinging the basket containing the bracelets the elder *Poniro-Ratsen* observes an omen on the egg as she rolls it on a mat. Omens are drawn from the direction in which the pointed end lies when it comes to rest. If it points towards a hostile village the husband will get heads, if towards the plain money, if towards the house rice and if towards the Road of the Dead bad omen. The process is repeated eight times. A sickle is then slide along the mat eight times and omens are taken from the direction of its point, just as

they were taken from the direction of the pointed end of the egg. With this procedure the marriage ceremony comes to an end. The Lotha regarded the ceremony of the *Poniro-Ratsen* as a sort of initiation into marriage life.

The Marriage Price (Loroe-man)

The money which is paid by the husband for his wife is known as *Oman* (marriage price or *Loroe-man*). In average the Lothas have around eleven marriage price, which are divided into a number of items. They are paid in instalments. The first payment of all is known as *Chika* (Re. 1), paid to her mother's father or mother's brother. The second item is *Ünzityi-man* (Rs. 8 to Rs. 10), paid to the girl's parents as the cost of bringing her up. The third is *Ünvoyi-man* (Rs. 2), the price of not working in his father-in-law's house. The fourth is *Kitsso-man* (Rs. 2), the price of not building his father-in-law's house. The fifth is *Hanlam*, the cost of pork given to the father-in-law at the *Hanlam* ceremony. The sixth is *Tssingchü-man* (Rs. 2), paid in case where the bridegroom does not distribute wood to members of his father-in-law's clan. The *Sontsso-man* (four annas), paid if the bridegroom does not build a granary for his father-in-law. The eighth is *Tsoro-man* (Re. 1), the price of the bride's breasts. The ninth is *Lentamo-man* (Re. 1), the price of intimacy with the bride. Man with land usually let the girl's parents cultivate a plot of land once. If not, a tenth payment of one rupee or two rupees is made instead. The eleventh is *Otae-etsso-man* (the price of feeding the bride's brothers), the marriage price proper. This price is shared by the girl's father and brothers. If she does not have real brother then it may be enjoyed by the cousin brothers. This price amounts to about two hundred

and fifty basket of rice or thirty rupees if paid in cash. The rice or money is paid in instalments, often at long intervals.

Divorce

There is no ceremony attached with divorce among the Lotha Nagas. If the wife leaves her husband with no fault of his, and runs away to her parents, then the full amount of the marriage price which they have received up to date, plus a fine of ten rupees should be paid to the husband. If she runs away to some admirer, then the aggrieved husband shall recover the full amount of marriage price, plus compensation amounting to fifty to hundred rupees, from whoever marries his run-away wife. In case if the husband turns out his wife with no fault of hers, then he cannot recover his marriage price. In such case he has to pay a fine of ten rupees to her parents or heirs. She can also claim the thread and the chicken she had brought with her at her marriage or their equivalent, together with her clothes and weaving apparatus. Any ornament given to her by the husband must be returned to him.

FESTIVALS

As far as general festivals are concerned, the Lothas have only two main festivals such as *Pichvüchak-Emung* and *Tukhvü-Emung*. The year officially opens with the *Pichvüchak* festival. This festival marks the beginning of the agricultural year. This festival is observed before the rice is sown. It is usually attached with ritual ceremonies by prayer and cutting of fowl's throat. During this festival the whole of the day is given up to feasting. The next day is kept as *Emung* and no one goes to the fields.

Then the agricultural year is closed again with *Tokhvü* festival. It is the harvest festival of the Lothas. The harvest is done, the grain full, and there is now time to enjoy the fruits of one's hard labour. Friends and relatives are invited on this festival. Mithuns are killed, past offences are forgotten and ties are re-established and bonds of closer intimacy are discovered. This festival stretches for nine days. On the appointed day announced by the priest the whole households in the village contributes unhusked rice. Then a pig is killed and the day is given up to feasting and merry making. The main features of the festival are such as community songs, youthful dances, feast and fun. Young boys and girls engaged during the year are happily married after the *Tokhvü* festival. It is also time for renovating village gate, clearing roads, cleansing wells and repairing the houses.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURE CHANGE OF THE LOTHANAGAS

Culture change is the conceptual formulation that refers to the many ways in which societies change their patterns of culture. Internal factors such as new inventions may lead to an increased food supply and population growth or external factors such as conquest by other society may bring about culture change. The patterns of culture of every human society are rapidly changing but the rate and type of change may be slow or gradual.

In dealing with culture change of any society some of the basic questions which one has to deal with are: (i) What are the internal or external factors that are responsible for culture change? (ii) What is the process by which culture change takes place?

Any change in ecological niche occupied by a society influences culture change. Such a change may occur as a result of either natural environmental change or migration of a society from one ecological niche to another. Also changes may occur due to any contact between two societies with different cultural patterns influences change in both societies. It may also occur as a result of any evolutionary change occurring within a society.

The study of the process of culture change refers to the actual social mechanism by which the change takes place. Some scholars are of the opinion that the basis of all culture change is located in change in the

attitude and behaviour of individual members of a society. Yet, other takes the point of view that although individuals are the carriers of a culture, there are processes of change in social and cultural system which have dynamic properties of their own that can be isolated and studied. Yet, still there are others who believes in dialectic materialism and think that change takes place according to definite laws. They believe that material life is primary and the rest is dependent on it. From these came the idea of structure and superstructure and their interrelation. Thus one can study the mechanism of change in different ways by different emphasis depending upon what theoretical framework one would like to use.

In this study the position that I have taken is to observe the factors like the colonial administration and Christian missionaries activities in the district as primary factors for the cause of cultural change among the Lotha people. The change in one sector is likely to influence the other sectors and aspect of the society. In human society it is not possible to control other variables and therefore it is not possible to show in mathematical precision as to how one factor is influencing the other but by surmises one can indicate the possible interconnection. This is exactly what will be attempted here.

In this chapter, I will discuss the change of culture under the following aspects: Occupation, source of income, agricultural programmes and their implementation, method of cultivation, implements, animal husbandry, landholding, wages, standard of living,

dress, ornaments, food and drinks, houses, consumer goods, religious beliefs, festivals, marriage and education.

Occupations

In the past generation people of this district solely depended on agriculture for their livelihood. There was no other means to adopt for their sustenance. Therefore, one has to devote most of his time and energy on agricultural activities throughout the years. Service under government had little attraction for him. Even if he took a job he often throw it up after a year or two and said he would rather go back to his native village and cultivate his land. This shows how much these people have keen interest in agricultural activities rather than government services. Every family had to put in all efforts towards agricultural activities as it was their main sustenance. The larger a plot of land a family is able to cultivate the more prosperous rich that family be. The result of this was that few people could be spared for some other works other than agriculture. Even if a person did engage himself in any other work he considered it as a subsidiary occupation. But now things have changed.

In Wokha district quite a good number of people have changed their occupations. Yet the majority of people are still engaged themselves in agricultural activities. For instance, in Wokha village out of 206 households interviewed, 89.31 per cent are found engaged in agricultural activities. While out of 123 households 91.12 per cent are cultivators in Phiro village. This indicates that the people in general are cultivators, but there are some, who, besides cultivation, engaged themselves in other

vocations like blacksmithy, contract work, carpentry, bamboo and cane works etc., as subsidiary incomes.

A period of rapid agriculture growth in small developing economies is usually followed by the establishment of service facilities. Nowadays, many young people are coming up and many of them get employment in various fields. There are altogether 196 government employees from Wokha village, employing in different services like police service, school teachers, compounders (medical) and miscellaneous government jobs such as clerks, drivers, peons and chowkidars in various offices. In Phiro village also there are already 52 government employees serving in different offices as police personnel, school teachers, clerks, drivers, peons, chowkidars etc. Besides the government employees, there are also some other people who are engaged in contract works, carpentry, masonry, and labourers who earn main income of their families.

In Wokha village alone eight shops have come up by the road side. These shops were generally run by those villagers who do both cultivation and business simultaneously. These shops mostly deal in goods of domestic requirements such as sundries like country cigarettes, cigarettes, matches, candles, sweets, soaps, salt, oil, betel-nut with leaves. The greater number of shops coming up in the village is one visible sign of increased wealth of the villages in the district.

Those people who could not pursue higher studies or one school-left-outs and drop-outs usually join police service or become automobile drivers. In Phiro village at least 15 are in police service employing

outside the village and 5 drivers as against 35 police servicemen and 19 drivers in Wokha village. The rapid increase of numbers of drivers in Wokha village was mainly due to recent introduction of commercial taxis and auto-rickshaws in the area.

Many women engaged themselves in weaving and knitting as profession and a number of them are also serving as school teachers, and clerks in different offices. These are signs of change in respect of women's role. A few years back there was not a single woman in both Wokha and Phiro who would go for a job. But now a number of them choose a career for themselves.

Source of Income

The colonial administration did not bring about much major change in their economy of the district. However, the nature of their control over the tribe combined with limited changes in the method of agricultural production and in communication etc., has a certain impact on economic life of the people.

The traditional village communities that the British encountered were in the main primitive economic units with a system of subsistence agriculture which provided them with barely enough for their needs. The economic condition of the people that prevailed during the early decades of the colonial rule provides a clear picture of the pre-colonial administrative economy as it was quoted by Allen:

Most of the people of Nagas have a sufficiency of food and clothing, but there is little accumulated capital, and some villagers are said to have experience difficulty in raising the

very moderate revenue imposed on them. Apart from cotton, chillies and pan exported to Golaghat, there is nothing grown for sale, and cash is generally obtained by working for the Public Works Department, and occasionally on the tea gardens in the winter time. The cash expenditure of the people is, however, very small, and generally they seem fairly well-to-do.¹

Although agriculture was their principle occupation as an additional source of income, these farmers have also engaged in other part time activities. Of course, there was no separate artisan class but many are experts in making their own ornaments and handicrafts such as basket, mats, wooden plates, benches, bed, earthen pots and all household needs produced according to their domestic requirement (Hutton, J. N., 1921).

In Wokha village, out of 206 households, 89.21 per cent depends on agriculture for their livelihood and the rest are either in government services, business or contract works. In Phiro village it was found that out of 123 households, 88.21 per cent are cultivators and the rest are in government services or business. This indicates that the main source of income of the people in both villages is agriculture. But these days more and more people are being attracted towards other occupations besides agriculture. Now Wokha village has 10.09 per cent, out of 206 households, people engaged in different government offices. In Phiro village out of 123 households, 11.78 per cent are being employed in

1. Allen, B. C., 1905. *Gazetteers of Naga Hills and Manipur in Assam District Gazetteers*, Shillong: Assam Secretariat Press, Vol. IX, p. 55.

various government services. Consequently, majority of the people in the district are now depending on combination of more than a single source of income. The pattern is that during the agricultural season, people engage themselves in agricultural works but during agriculture off seasons quite many are engaged in other occupations. Even those people who are in service and are posted in the village also engaged themselves in agriculture or other business. The main interest is to earn more cash which also indicates that the economy has radically changed from barter to cash.

Implementation of Agricultural Programme

During the pre-colonial period the economy of the people in the district was solely depended on the agricultural products only. Hence, people were largely engaged in agricultural activities. The means of production were decentralized and therefore the relations of dependence were not created within the system of production. Their household economy was self-contained, and the foodgrains produced were largely consumed at home. Therefore, the productivity in the agrarian sector was low and production was not sufficient to build stocks, and thus the economy remained fragile. Except for occasional exchanges, the tendency was to produce for the direct consumption of the producers. Surpluses were exchanged between groups or members of groups. Control of the means of production and labour was exercised by the producers themselves, and exchange was an exchange of labour and its products. Everyone worked for an immediate need and that was all. Thus the pre-colonial economy had not progressed appreciably from the subsistence level (Hutton, J. H., 1921). While appreciating the effort

made by the British, B. B. Ghosh summed up the progress of agriculture in the district during the period as being "practically nothing or very little" (Ghosh, B. B., 1979). On the whole, the government's policy and efforts for the promotion of agriculture in the district did not lead to major transformation in the agricultural economy of the district.

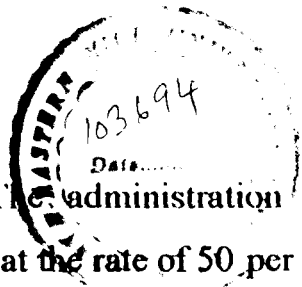
Method of Cultivation

Previously, people were dependent solely on agriculture. But now the situation has changed considerably both in respect of agriculture and other means of livelihood. In the field of agriculture a number of development measures have been adopted in the district. Practically, nothing or very little was done before independence to introduce any significant change in respect of agriculture. Around the time when the British administration was about to come to an end, a few demonstration plots were made in the district but there was no much progress. Only after the formation of the interim government, Nagaland, the Directorate of Agriculture at the state level came into being. At the time when Wokha was made a sub-division under the Mokokchung district, it had only one Extension Officer at Wokha. But after Wokha was made into a district one District Agricultural Officer has been posted there (Ghosh, B. B., 1979). He looks after the needs of the farmers by supplying improved seeds, fertilizers etc. He also recommends financial assistance for opening new terrace field and farms. He helps the peasants by providing demonstration to improve farming on modern method.

Hence notable efforts have been made by the administration to encourage terrace cultivation which is a new type of method of



A TERRACE FIELD IN WOKHA DISTRICT
(To face p. 100)



cultivation being introduced in the district. The administration has, therefore, offered to extend assistance to farmers at the rate of 50 per cent subsidy of the expenditure (Ghosh, B. B., 1979). Moreover, technical advice is given by demonstration to ensure a successful undertaking. Many farmers have utilized such help and have made terrace fields.

Another measure is the distribution of fertilizers such as ammonia sulphate, sulphur phosphate, urea of potash and bone-mealate to the villagers for use to increase the output of crops. Proper demonstrations are done so that effective use of such fertilizers may be implemented in the district.

Insects and pests cause some damage to plantation from time to time. The people formerly used traditional remedies against pests by performing sacrifices and offering prayers to the spirits. But now, particularly among the Christians, such practices have been abandoned. Now people utilize the service of the agricultural department and use scientific chemical remedies such as ammonia grammexane, DDT powder, nicotine sulphate etc., which have been found to be very effective.

Demonstration has been done on the use of improved seeds of potato, vegetable, paddy, hybrid maize seed and sugar cane cutting etc. Other seeds, seedlings and crops such as orange seedlings, pineapple, plum, pear etc., have also been introduced on 50 per cent subsidy basis. Hybrid seeds of wheat, maize, paddy are also distributed. Fruits cultivation is being encouraged and reviewed in Wokha district. For such

purposes the government of Nagaland is paying Rs. 2,500/- in cash and kind, per hectare for orchard plantation (Ghosh, B. B., 1979).

Agricultural loan is also extended to the farmers who show good results. It was also proposed to the farmers on 50 per cent subsidy basis for draft animals for cultivation in the field of the plain areas where ploughing is possible (Ghosh, B. B., 1979). However, owing to the sloping land no farmer could use draft animals for ploughing and hence was not eligible for the loan.

The administration has been encouraging local farmers to adopt new tools and implements and in order to improve the farming operations such tools are sold to the farmers on 50 per cent subsidy. Many farmers, particularly of Wokha village area, have made use of such schemes.

Implements

Formerly, people of Wokha district used traditional types of agricultural implements. Even at the beginning of this century, iron implements were rare, but with the advent of modern civilization things have improved and improved iron agricultural implements are used in the district these days.

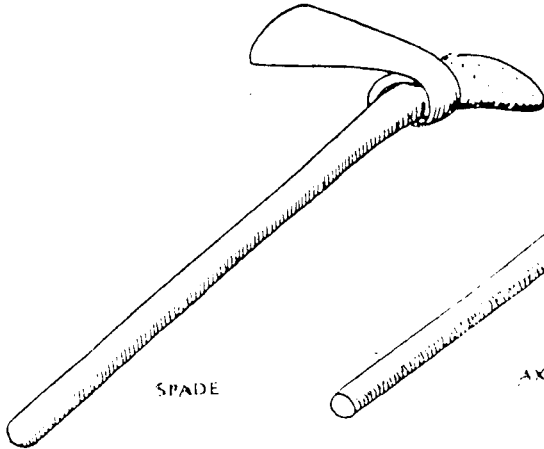
As it has been mentioned earlier that the main form of cultivation in the district is jhum and on account of slopes and hilly conditions of the land the plough cannot be used in the area. The tilling of jhum field is done with the help of spade, hoe and scraper and that of terrace is done with spade only.

At present most of the agricultural implements are made of iron and the rest are made of bamboo and wood. A list of agricultural implements and their uses are given below.

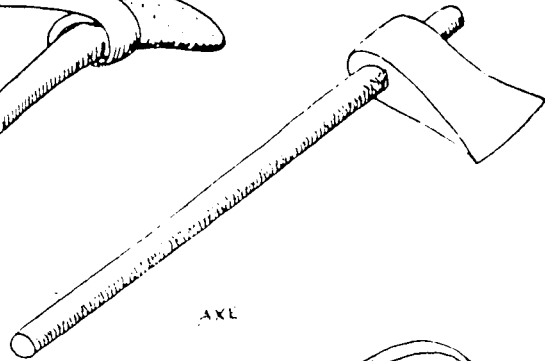
<u>Implements</u>	<u>Materials</u>	<u>Obtained from</u>
Dao (Lepok)	Iron blade with bamboo Handle	Self-made
Axe (Opvü)	Iron with wooden handle	Market
Hoe (Chukchü)	Iron with wooden handle	Market, self-made
Scraper (Ehe)	Iron with bamboo handle	Self-made
Sickle (Vekhvüro)	Iron with cane handle	Market
Mat (Ophük)	Bamboo stripes	Self-made
Winnowing (Mvüro)	Bamboo stripes	Self-made
Basket (Lüksa, Phari Okhyak, Khüngro)	Bamboo stripes	Self-made
Mortar and Pestle (Tsümpfo & Menki)	Heavy log	Self-made

Dao is the most important of all the implements. It is a life long companion for an ordinary villager because wherever he goes either to the field or to the forest or to a friend, he carries his dao. It is an all purpose implement because with it the jungle is cleared, the branches of jhum trees are slashed, the medium size trees are felled. Lots of other

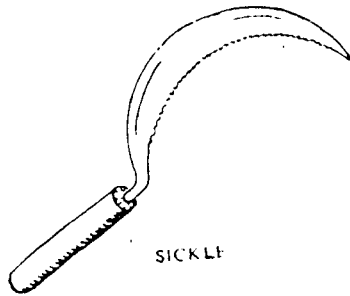
AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS



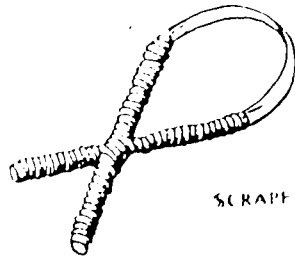
SPADE



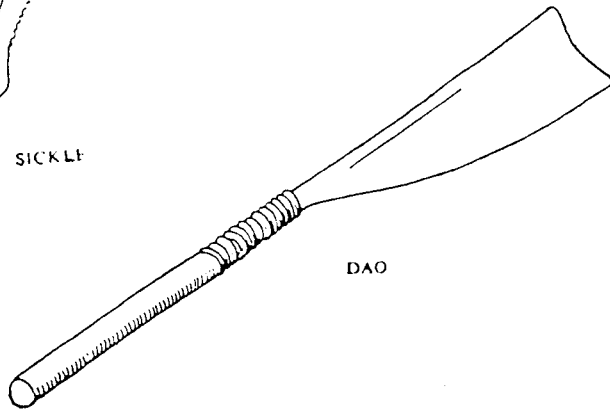
AXE



SICKLE



SCRAPER



DAO

works are also done by it, such as slaughtering animals and dressing them up and cutting vegetables.

Axe is used mainly for felling bigger trees and making firewood from heavy logs. With it they make *Tsimpho* (Mortar). Formerly, all the works which are now done by dao are done by axe. It is a tool which did not exist earlier among the Lothas. Likewise spade, is also not a traditional implement in this area, but is found to be useful for tilling the fields. For earth cutting the spade is most convenient.

Hoe is used more for tilling jhum field. It is also used for weeding. It is more used than spade in jhum cultivation. When the plants are grown, scraper is used to weed out the unwanted grasses. Weeding is done two or three times in the jhum field with the help of scraper.

Sickle is used only when the paddy is ripened and is used to reap it. The Lotha sickle is of Assam type, that is, almost straight with curved working end.

Mat is made of bamboo slit stripes and is used in the field to thrash the paddy. It is also used for drying any other things.

The winnowing fan is used to winnow the paddy and rice. It is made of bamboo stripes (slited). It is round or rectangular in shape with rounded corners.

The basket is called *luksa*, *phari*, *okhiing*, *okhyak* etc. It is also a multipurpose item like dao. It is generally used during harvest time for

bringing the paddy home from the field. Carrying firewood is also mostly done with basket.

Paddy is husked in pounding table called *Tsümpho*. It is made of solid log. The pounding table may have several holes. Generally big pounding tables are found in the house of the chief or some other rich men. Paddy is put in the pounding table hole and pounded by the pestle or *Menki*.

Landholding

Among the Lothas a piece of land is cultivated for two years and then it is left for a period varying for four to fifteen years. However, if a person is short of land he obviously has to cultivate each piece at shorter intervals. A large portion of the land is clan land (*Wopan-li*), which is held in common by all members of that particular clan in the village. For instance, in Wokha village the clan land is more than the private land for every kindered (*Mhitso*) must have clan land (*Motsü-rüi-li*). A man who leaves a village loses right to clan land in the village. Every year the members of the clan meet and allotted a portion of the land which each is to cultivate that year, the senior men getting bigger share.

In connection with landholding, Mill's description of Lotha landholding may be found interesting.

A very large portion of the land in the Lhota country is clan land, which is held in common by all members of that particular clan in the village. A man who leaves a village loses all rights to clan land in the village, a far better system than the Sema system by which a man claims through usually in vain, ancestral right of clan land in the village in

which his great-great-grand father was the last member of the family to live. Every year the members of the clan in a Lhota village meet and apportion out the land which each is to cut that year. The senior men getting the bigger share. Strangely enough, this delicate operation never seems to result in a quarrel in Lhota society. Strictly speaking a man may not sell land which he has inherited. When direct heirs fail, the land becomes clan land. Were this to go on indefinitely, the whole of the land in a village may in time become clan land, and no one would ever be able to buy or sell land. To prevent this, from time to time, when the amount of common land becomes unwieldy, the clan meets and divides it up amongst the members who thus each becomes private owners of a portion of it. The process then begins again.²

However, a man who is short of private land (Kija-li) may cultivate others' land for period of one or two years on rent basis.

Land is the basis of Lhota's economy because most of the inhabitants derive the major part of their incomes from the cultivation of land. Prior to agricultural development in the district the economy of the people was predominantly subsistence: household produced most of their own needs. But now situation has began to change. People no longer produce the major parts of goods they consume but began to grow more cash crops and with the cash earned from such cultivation they buy things of their needs. Cultivation of cash crops brought Lhota's economy to market. Farmers sell vegetables in the market and there they purchase their groceries, clothes and household articles. Nowadays, people of this

2. Mills, J. P., 1922. *The Lhota Nagas*, London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., pp. 97-98.

district takes more interest in growing more of cash crops for sale outside the district like Kohima, Dimapur, Golaghat and Mokokchung. They are also exploiting other natural resources, especially timbers.

The traditional barter economy which was monetized some decades ago by the British, is being commercialized by the people. At the village level also some significant social structure changes are now taking place. Consequently, a new section of neo-rich people are emerging in the village, which is the emergence of new status symbol in the society.

Prior to agriculture development in the district the price of land was fairly low. For example, before the introduction of such facilities the price of land was between Rs. 500.00 to Rs. 1000.00 per acre and Rs. 400.00 to Rs. 800.00 per acre in Wokha and Phiro villages respectively. By contrast, in Wokha village price of land has now gone up to Rs. 15,000.00 to Rs.20,000.00 per acre while Phiro village, the price is about Rs. 10,000.00 to Rs. 15,000.00 per acre. Land price in both villages have been raised steadily during the last few years but as various developments began to spread to these lands, particularly to Wokha land, prices began to rise rapidly (Wokha Village, 2000, Phiro Village, 2000).

Animal Husbandry

Unfortunate the people of Wokha district have not yet turned their attention towards the scientific method of animal husbandry, most probably because there are other more lucrative economic fields of attention such as contract works and supply works, besides the

agricultural activities. However, though not scientifically done, every household has got some domesticated animals for home consumption.

Formerly, quite a few families could hardly keep pigs and fowls for home consumption purposes. But many families are now keeping cows, fowls, ducks and pigs. Some people rear goats and sheep but such practice is not common to all the villages. They are reared mainly for its meat.

The introduction of development in various fields in the district have enabled them to have more spare time to attend to their domesticated animals. Now, almost every household have got all kinds of domesticated animals like cows, pigs, fowls, goats, bull, both for home consumption and for commercial purposes as well.

For instance, in Wokha village alone it was observed that out of total households of 679; 54.34 per cent are keeping fowls and 46.83 per cent are rearing pigs while 6.30 per cent are rearing cows. Rearing of other domesticated animals such as goats and bulls are rather few as 0.88 per cent and 0.14 per cent are keeping goats and bulls respectively.

Animals reared for market are mostly chicken, piglets and cows. Nowadays, in both the villages, such animals are reared for home consumption and for commercial purposes as well. Pigs are reared for both breeding and meat but piglets are usually reared for commercial purposes only. Formerly, cows are also reared for breeding and meat, but not now because keeping cows for milk is quite expensive. It involves time and labour and remuneration is not enough. Even the initial

expenditure is relatively tough. Besides, they have other more remunerative activities, particularly agricultural activities. Therefore, it is observed that only those people who have enough resources to make the initial investment and supply of labour keeps cows for commercial purposes. In Wokha village, at present 13 households are found rearing cows for such purposes.

Traditionally, domesticated animals, specially fowls and pigs, are mainly reared for sacrificial activities and also for home consumption. But the practice of such sacrifices is already abandoned by the people due to the introduction of Christianity in the land. Therefore, people have no longer attachment to such kind of indigenous beliefs and practices as the entire population of the district have embraced Christianity. Besides, with the improvement of economic stability in the district, people have more spare time and enough resources to attend to their domesticated animals.

Wages for different economic occupations

In the olden days wages were not paid in cash but in kind only. In most cases wages are not paid because every cultivator used to help each other on reciprocal basis. This old tradition was very prominent among the Lothas in the past. But now, with growing number of people working in different vocations there is a marked scarcity of labourers.

It is true that with the increase of price index in the market, the demand for increase in daily wages also increased in all other occupations. Thus the general economic trend of the region correspondingly determines the wages of the labourers also. In the first decade of nineteenth century the average wage for labourer was 4 annas

per day (Bhosh, B. B., 1979). But after the Second World War there was a sharp increase in the price of the commodities as well as wages of labours. The institution of barter system has been virtually disappeared. The price index as well as wages kept on upward trend and it again shot up after Nagaland became full fledged state in 1963. Nowadays, for any kind of work, labourer earns cash wages only.

With the enlargement of various opportunities in different vocation a remarkable changes have taken place in the district. Now there is no exchange of labour. Any kind of work has to be paid in cash only. During 1970s the daily wages for an agricultural labourer varied from Rs. 6/- to Rs. 10/-, depending on the skill of the labourer. For agricultural operations the wages of men was Rs. 10/- but for women it was Rs. 6/- to Rs. 8/-. Wages for house building was Rs. 8/- to Rs. 10/- for unskilled labourers. But for skilled labourers it varied from Rs. 15/- to Rs. 20/- per day. Skilled labourer engaged in carpentry, masonry etc., also got Rs. 15/- to Rs. 20/- per day on an average. The average wages of unskilled labourers for carpentry, masonry, earth cutting, breaking up stone chips and chopping logs for firewood it was Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/- per day (Bhosh, B. B., 1979).

At present, the daily wages have become comparatively higher than the last few years. Now an agricultural labourer wages for men is Rs. 80/- to Rs. 90/- per day and for women it is Rs. 70/- to Rs. 80/- per day. For children below the age of 15 years is Rs. 30/- to Rs. 40/- per day. Men labourers engaged in works like carpentry, masonry and earth

cutting etc., is Rs. 80/- to Rs. 100/- per day but for skilled labourers it is Rs. 150/- to Rs. 200/- per day.³

The increase in daily wages is a clear indication of economic development in different occupations but on the other hand it has led to the breaking down of the age-old traditional practices of paying wages on reciprocal exchange based on kinship obligations.

Standard of Living

Generally, the standard of living of the people refers to the economic condition, mode of dwelling, diet and dress etc., of the people. The standard of living of the people may vary from one family to another, depending upon what are their resources and what they earn.

In the beginning of nineteenth century the living standard of all the people of Wokha district was more or less same because rich people were negligibly few. But it was after the Second World War that changes have taken place in multifarious ways. The standard of living of the people also began to differ according to the economic condition and status of the people. Rapid developmental works after the creation of Nagaland as a state in 1963 has brought far reaching changes in the economy of the district. It affected the lives of the people greatly and the distinction between rich and poor began to emerge (Sinha, A. P., 1986).

3. The present daily wages of labour for various economic occupations in the district have gone up to almost ten times as compared to the previous daily wages in the last few decades. This information is collected from different labourers in the districts.

Before the introduction of colonial administration and the advent of Christianity, the people of this district were living in a simple life. The general living of the people were poor and not so healthy from hygienic point of view. They have been living for centuries being away from outside influence. But it was only after the coming in contact with the modern civilization and the two great world wars that the Lothas began to search for education and better living, materially, intellectually and spiritually. The creation of Nagaland as a separate state in 1963 and consequent sprut in agricultural and other developmental activities have brought about significant changes in the living standard of the people. The living standard of the people has gone up but one can also notice the distinctions in the economic level of the people which were not existed before.

In the past the cultivators usually lived in thatched houses, consumed traditional food and wore traditional dresses. But now their houses are different, the traditional diet is supplemented with new items and they dress themselves to look modern. Shirts, pants, blouses and foot-wears are now very common. Many of them try to keep more than a pair of shirts or pants. Wearing of coat is also a common thing particularly among those who are in services. A number of people in Wokha and Phiro also wear modern dress. But such trend is limited to those who are in services or business or young. School going children also wear school uniforms.

The introduction of agricultural development programmes in the district has also helped the people in many ways. Such developmental

programmes in agricultural activities provided them better yieldings and thereby enhanced their incomes. Now they are able to send their children to different schools. Normally, the tuition fees of private schools in Wokha district ranges from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 200/- per month. Yet many are able to send their children to such schools in the hope that they may get better education. For example, at present, more than 250 children have been sent from Wokha village to different feed schools. Phiro village has about 96 students studying in such schools.

Traditionally, people had no household furniture except some wooden seats called *Evan*. They used to sleep on a wooden planks called *Tsüingso-pilüing*. But now this has been all substituted by wooden bedstead though of simple type. Of course, in Phiro village still some people use wooden planks. Nowadays, chairs and tables are found in most of the houses. Some of the well-to-do people have sofa seats and other pieces of furniture. For instance, Mr. Yankhomo of Wokha village, who is a contractor-cum-businessman, keeps modern furniture such as sofa sets and a variety of tables in his sitting room. Similar facilities are also found in Phiro village in the house of Mr. Chamikhon, the headmaster of Government Middle English School, Wozhüro. The old type of earthen pots have been replaced by aluminium and steel utensils. These are some of the visible signs of increased wealth in both the villages.

In both villages, there are some people who not only cultivate land but also engage themselves in business, contract works and other project works. Besides, many who are employed in government services as

school teachers, clerks and Dobashis etc. They generally live in the village itself but they carry on all other businesses.

Their standard of living and financial position is, therefore, better than the rest of the cultivators. Such people live in improved houses. Their houses are tin-roofed with separate sleeping room, bathroom, and latrine. Kitchen is attached in the main house. In a few houses it is constructed outside the main house. They keep modern furniture such as tables, chairs and cupboards. Many of them own radios, tape recorders and bicycles, but only few of them own vehicles. They wear all kinds of modern dresses such as shirts, pants, blouses, jackets, coats, trousers, sweaters and shoes. They usually eat better quality food.

Generally, the monthly expenditure of the family indicates the standard of living of the people. Majority of Phiro people spend between Rs. 1500/- to Rs. 2000/- per month on their daily domestic needs as against 2000/- rupees to 2500/- rupees per month in Wokha village. Those people who depend on cash earning like the government servants and businessmen usually spend much more than the rest of the people in the village. Their monthly expenditure ranges from Rs. 2500/- to Rs. 3000/-.

The coming in contact with the modern civilization and the introduction of agricultural development programmes in the district has been the important factor for such changes in the standard of living of the people, though the role of other factors cannot be undermined.

Dress

The traditional dress like *Rive*, commonly spoken of in Naga-Assamese as '*lengta*' and skirt called *sürhüm* were the only garments in the past among the Lothas. The '*lengta*' is a long narrow piece of stout cloth ending in a broad flap. In putting it on, the narrow piece is wound once round the waist so that it joins at the back and forms a belt. It is then brought through between the legs and up through the belt, the broad flap being allowed to hang down in front. The result is a garment which is both serviceable and entirely decent. The skirt (*sürhüm*) worn by women is bounded tightly round the waist and the overlapping top corner tucked in front of the right hip. The edge which shows is often ornamented.

The body clothes are of various patterns which indicate the number of social '*gennas*', ceremonies performed by the wearer. The first is *Sittim*, a white cloth with broad dark-blue horizontal stripes. This is worn by both boys and men who have performed no social '*gennas*'. A man who has performed the first social '*gennas*' may wear the *Phangrhüip*. This is a dark-red with a broad stripe of black, with a broad stripe of white cloth running across the middle of the cloth parallel with the black stripes. A man who has completed the series of social '*gennas*' wears a handsome cloth called *Longpen-sü*, which is a dark-blue with five bands of light blue about one inch broad, and three very narrow lines of light blue at the top and bottom. It is a very prestigious shawl which is worn only by a man who has performed *Tssiro-tsoa* and *Ozü-süa* ceremonies by feeding the villagers at his own expenses. The most prestigious shawl is the *Rükyn-sü* which is worn only by the man of high status and a man who has taken enemy's head. It is a dark blue with six



MODERN LOTHIA BOYS
 (To face p. 116)



MODERN LOTHIA GIRLS
 (To face p. 116)

broad red stripes, set close together at the top and bottom. The median band is about two and a half inches broad, and ornamented with a conventional design representing human heads, mithun horns, hornbills and tigers. An unmarried girl usually wears a skirt called *Konro-sürhüm* and a plain dark blue cloth called *Muksü* as shawl. But on the night of her marriage, however, when she goes to her husband's house, she puts on a very pretty cloth called *Loro-sü*. When her husband dragged a stone ceremony she may exchange her *Loro-sü* for a *Longpen-sü*.

With the coming of the British rule, Christianity and modern education a drastic and radical change on dress has taken place among the Lothas. The age old traditional dresses have lost its importance and been replaced and supplemented by other dresses like pants, skirts, skirts and blouses. The effect of colonialism on the Nagas became evident in their dresses as well. With the influence of colonialism, changes took place in the ordinary dresses of the people. Half-pants, long pants, peti-coat – gradually replaced the indigenous dresses (Sema, Piketo., 1992). The use of such items of western dress had become increasingly popular and fashionable not only in towns but also in villages. However, during British rule, such items of foreign dress largely remained the luxury of a small section of people especially school teachers, government servants, pastors and secondary students. The use of western dresses was objected by the British government who insisted Nagas on conforming to their national dress. But nowadays even in the interiors, there will be only a few people who still use those old dresses. Many are found using foot wear too. Such change in dress is also visible in both Wokha and Phiro villages. Majority people of these villages are now wearing modern

attires like pants, shirts, coats, jackets, blouses and shoes. Some well-to-do people keep more than a pair. Coat is commonly used specially among the people who are employed under government services. Young people of Wokha village wear all kinds of modern dresses.

Among the man's traditional shawls there are some which imply rank and status. The most important and prestigious shawl called *Rükyu-sü* is usually worn by a man of high status and a man who has taken enemy's head. Next is *longpen-sü* which is also worn only by a man who has performed *Tssiro-tsoa* and *Ozü-süa* ceremonies by throwing feast of merit at his own expenses. The next prestigious shawl is *Phangrhüp-sü* which is also worn by a man who had accomplished certain distinction for obtaining higher social status. But now such distinction is not very important and practically every body is using every kind of cloth if he can manage to get one. Factors arising out of administration, Christian conversion and economic development have caused such change in all aspects of living.

Modern transitional phases in socio-economic, religious and other spheres have their impact in the society. New township and advanced villages have sprang up. Village economy has changed over to complex, education has made tremendous progress and far reaching effect have occurred in the district. However, in spite of such changes, the traditional habits are still valued by the peasantry. Traditional dress is still loved by the rural section of the population but a considerable section of men-folk have however changed their dresses to modern dresses. Modern women have also changed their form of dress in town and advanced places with

latest fashion of blouses, coats, scarves and sweaters etc. They also wear footwear. Still then they use their indigenous skirt side by side with modern dress. Lotha shawls for men and for women are commonly used in the district. Non-Naga shawls are also widely used by modern women.

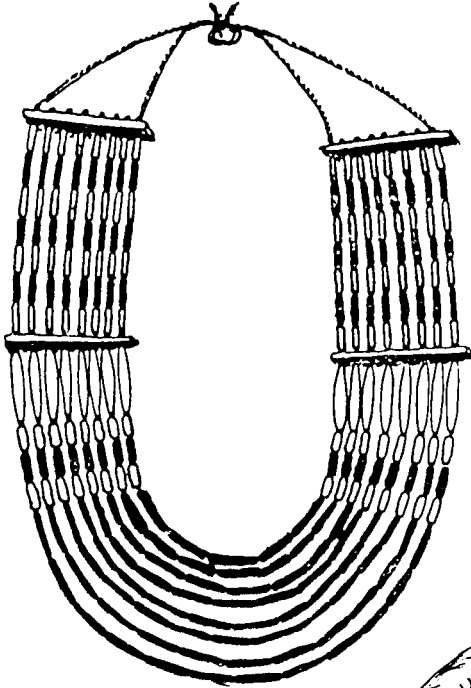
Ornaments

Dress without ornament is incomplete. Ornaments which the men wears are derived from metals, bronze, bones, cowries, shell, cane, leather, orchids, feathers and wood. Earring comprises of cotton wool and occasionally brass ornaments. Men further used ivory armlet or imitation of wood. Wristlets of cowries sewn on cloth is also worn by a man who has done head-taking ceremony. Necklace made of wild bear's tusk hemmed with red cane and pendant of a red bead are much loved by men.

Women's ornaments are few and simple. Among the tribe, women's ornaments are earrings, wristlets and bracelets of brass or copper, but sometimes of lead or silver. The earring is made of a bunch of the bird feathers bounded round with red wool or yellow orchid stalk. Lengthwise cut pieces of conch shell as well as beads are used as necklace. A thick round pewter armlets (*Tivü*) are used above each elbows and on each wrist four or five small flat brass bracelets (*rümpülni*). Both male and female use further personal decoration of wild flowers.

Dancing dress is yet more colourful. A man wears on his head a wig (*Tongkho*) either of the long hairs from the neck and shoulder of the Himalayan black bear or of the fur of the arm of the male gibbon. In his wig he may wear three king-crow feathers (*Votsüm-emhi*) if he has done

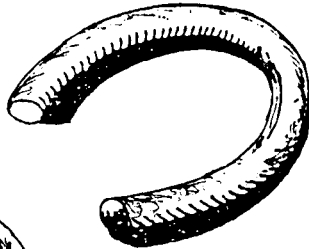
ORNAMENTS



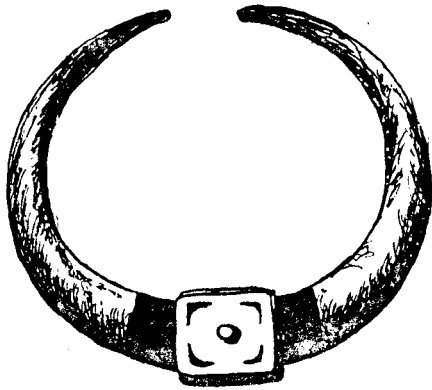
LADIES NECKLACE



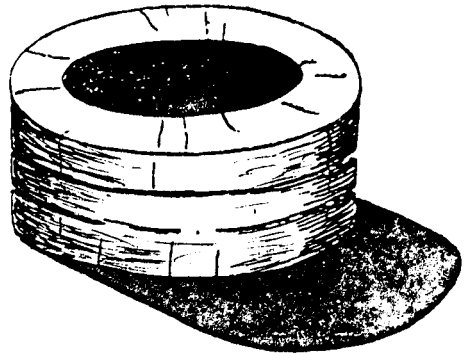
LADIES NECKLACE



LADIES ARMLET



GENTS NECKLACE
(WILD BOAR'S TUSK)



GENTS ARMLET
(IVORY)

the head-hunting 'genma' once, or if he has done it more than once, one hornbill tail feather (*Rhüjüng-enhi*) for each occasion. On his ears he hangs big pads of cotton wool and sticks in the lobe of his ear a *thera* (ornament) of scarlet feather. Across the chest he wears *ritssen* (baldrick or sash) which usually strings together with the little basket (*Tssikyip*) behind. A pair of *jori* (legging) are used at dances on ceremonial occasions. In both Wokha and Phiro, traditional ornaments have been changed to modern types of ornaments such as brass or actylic necklaces, jinger-rings and earrings, watches and modern fashion and styles of dressing. Yet traditional ornaments are still loved by the elderly people.

Ornament is meant for personal decoration. It indicates the social status of the wearer as well. But such value and importance are disappearing gradually owing to the introduction of modernization. Now, most people have given up the old habit and custom of using traditional ornaments yielding to the new things of modern affluence. Hence, there is hardly anybody now using such type of ornaments except those few people in the village. For town dwellers it has become a thing of show-piece in their setting room.

House

The Lotha houses are similar to each other. It varies in size from a small house of some old widows to the house of a rich man. Most of the houses are roofed with *Lishü* (thatches) and *Khomo-vo* (palm leaves). The walls are generally made of bamboo plaited called *Okyim*. The *mpong-ki* (porch) is double roofed, roof is like special catchment for the porch and is separated from the main roof which project upward. In the

middle of the porch is a bamboo post, which carried through the roof of the apse to meet the projecting roof-tree of the main building. The roof is supported on the centre-post (*Terhyu-pvit*). The floor is at the ground level and around the house a drain is dug to prevent the rain water getting in. There is no separate kitchen but cooking is done inside the same house. There is no chimney and the smoke finds its way out as best it can. Almost in every house there is an open air platform called *Khantsingsa* for basking, washing and sitting etc.

The old type of houses still exists in the villages. However, with the advent of modern civilization and techniques in various fields the economic condition of the people have raised and their housing materials and designs have also widely changed, specially the villages near the town. Most of the houses are now roofed with tin or plain sheets and the way of construction of the building is modern. Even in the villages many building are now found constructed in the modern ways with modern amenities such as sanitary arrangements, electric fitting and other modern appliances.

For example, in Wokha village out of 679 households 91.26 per cent are modified traditional type of house with tin-roofing, 7.88 per cent Assam-type houses and 1.45 per cent of traditional houses. Out of 250 households, Phiro village has 73.17 per cent of modified traditional type houses with tin-roofed, 24.39 per cent of traditional houses and only 4.45 per cent of Assam-type houses. Majority of houses in both villages are found already electrified. These are a sign of change that has been taken

place in the Lotha's house patterns which did not exist before the arrival of colonial administrators and missionaries in the district.

Consumer Goods

In the past days things like mortar and pestle (*Tsümpho & Menki*) and liquor-vat (*ojen*) were commonly used by the villagers. But now in its place rice mills have been introduced in the villages. Therefore, the age old mortar and pestle have ceased to perform its function these days. In Wokha village alone 5 (five) cottage rice-mills have been introduced. Liquor-vat is no longer used by the villagers for they no longer drink liquor or rice beer (*soko*) instead things like cans and barrels are used. Bamboo shelve (*Pfiki*) in which all the kitchen articles are kept, are no longer hung in the kitchen. Now they use wooden boxes as cupboards. Some well-to-do people use modern cupboards in their kitchen. A folded plantain leaf was used as cup in the olden days. These days modern porcelain cups and glass tumblers are commonly used by the people instead of traditional vessels. Things like Naga made earthen pots and a shallow wooden dish (*ophi*) have all been substituted by aluminium and steel utensils.

Besides the kitchen articles, many more modern consumer goods such as radio, tape recorder, bicycle, television and furniture are used by the people. The case of Nyamo Tungoe of Wokha village who was the Chairman of Village Council and also occasionally engaged in business, illustrates the attitudes and interests of Wokha men in material possession. He lives in an Assam type building with modern amenities. He keeps modern furniture and also other things like radio, tape recorder

and television. Jamikhon Odyuo of Phiro village, a school teacher, also keeps the same modern facilities as Nyamo of Wokha village. These two examples show the economic position of the villages in Wokha district.

With the coming of the British rule, western influence gradually penetrated into every aspect of the people's life in the district as stated by Piketo that the ground replacement of the indigenous dress and household article is an example of such western influence (Sema, Piketo, 1992). The use of modern dresses thus have become increasingly popular and fashionable not only in towns but also in the villages. Now, particularly in the household sector, steel utensils of various kinds replaced the exclusive reliance on indigenous pottery and wooden crafts of various kinds. Foreign goods such as tailored clothes, bicycles, sewing machines, lamps and other minor gadget of western civilization gradually become household necessities for some of the Lothas (O'Mallay, L.S.S., 1942).

Food and Drinks

Rice is the staple food for this district. Generally, rice is taken three times a day. It is taken along with meat or fish and vegetable curries.

The Lotha people relish meat, for which reason animals are kept both for food and sacrifices. Pork is the most relished meat. Cows are also kept by many people but mainly for meat, not for its milk. Milking has started just recently. Mithun which is said to have been common in the olden days, has become very rare these days. As far as fish is concerned, both fresh and dried are taken. But since the quality of the fish in the hills is so less, it is not dried nowadays for preservation.

Mostly it has to be brought from Assam. Pork, beef, chicken, fish and mutton are prepared into various curries both in the indigenous and modern ways. Meat boiled with vegetable or herbs are the favourite traditional dishes. They relished cooked, smoked or boiled meat. Games including wild birds, animals and fowl are taken. Bear, deer, hares, elephants and boars and indeed almost all available species of animals including dogs are taken. However, the normal food item consists of rice, vegetable, bamboo shoots and juice, dry fish and quite occasionally meat. A very favourite food is bamboo pickle (*rüchon-han*) are made out of the hearts of young bamboo shoots pounded with water then dried and boiled when required.

Generally, meal is taken thrice a day. The first meal (*enyathing-etso*) is usually served early in the morning between 5.00-6.00 a.m. At noon, the lunch (*Nshii*) is taken which consists of the same items as those of the morning meal. Then the evening meal (*nmyu-etso*) is served again in between 4.00-6.00 p.m. However, there is no specific order of time to when the meal should be served, specially the evening meal, for it depends on their convenience of time. Therefore, it varied from family to family.

Usually tea is not taken but instead rice beer (*soko*) is drunk. Formerly, the people in the villages used to take meal thrice a day: early in the morning, at noon and in the evening. All the meals contained the same items such as rice, vegetables, meat and dry fish and curry.

Now the food items of those people who are in higher economic group shows that they consume such food which have better food items such as fried food, frequent tea, snacks and bread. Such people consume tea and bread at lunch time instead of rice.

In Wokha village, for example, it is observed that out of 206 households, 71.35 per cent consume other subsidiary foods such as tea and snacks and occasionally fruits. In Phiro village, such food is consumed by 49.20 per cent only. However, as far as the method of cooking and meal timing are concerned, there has not been much change in both the villages as majority of the people are still practising the traditional way of cooking food, that is, boiled food and smoked food. But occasionally some people, particularly those who are in government services and business, do take fry food also. So far their food items are concerned, many people are now consuming more varieties of food items. Both Wokha and Phiro shows about 60 per cent to 80 per cent households consuming an additional food items like meat, fish and occasionally dal, other than rice and vegetables, in their daily food. Such situation taking place among the Lotha people of Wokha is a clear indication of changes that are taking in their food pattern.

Religion

The religion of the Lotha is that type which has been vaguely termed as animistic. He believes in no Supreme Being who rewards the good and punishes the evil. The deities for whom he makes sacrifices are some of the neutral, if kept in a good temper with proper offerings and some of them are also definitely malicious. A Lotha cheerfully carries

out what he conceives to be his religious duties and meets his end like a man when the time comes.

The nearest equivalent to gods is an order of being called *Potsow*, who lives in a world like ours, of the earthly floor of which our sky is the underside. The world of *Potsow* in turn has a sky which supports yet another *Potsow* world and so on for an unknown number of layers. The *Potsow* who affect us are those in the world immediately above our sky. They resemble men in appearance and have hosts of attendants who sometimes regard as their servants and sometimes as their relations. *Potsow* are believed to visit earth from time to time and hold conversation with the *Ratssen* (village seers) and bring articles with them and which indicates the fortune the village is going to enjoy during the year.

Besides the *Potsow*, he also believes in some other deities such as *Sukhyingo* (god of wild animals), *Ngazo* (jungle spirit), *Ronsyu* (god of blessing) and *Jüpvito* (water-master). The *Tsüngrhamo* is believed to be the evil spirit who causes almost every kind of illness to man.

The Lothas usually consider that they have two distinct souls called *Omon* and *Müngyi* respectively. The *Omon* leaves a man at the moment of death and goes straight to the world of the dead. The world of dead (*Echüli*) lies under our world. Here the dead lives exactly like living people. Those who had done good deeds during their life time, lead a prosperous happy life and those who had indulged in evil deeds lead a life of poverty and misery. The entrance to the world of the dead is through a cave (*Echükvü*) on the precipitous eastern face of the

mythological mountain of Wokha hill called *Tiyi-phonglan*. It is believed that every dead spirit goes to the world of dead through this very cave. Life in the land of the dead is certainly not regarded as everlasting, but the Lothas do believe that there is life after death as once stated by Ezamo.

One of the two souls of a person left the body as soon as the person died and entered the abode of the dead in the underworld, through the caves on the mythological Tiyi Mountain at Wokha. All Naga believe their souls come to this mountain at death. The other soul remained with the family, at least up to the last funeral rite conducted on the twelfth day from the day of death. At all family meals, food for the deceased was kept in the usual plates until that final rite, the day of release (*vachi*). Within that twelve days period, no insect, bird or animal entering the house of the deceased would be killed. Otherwise, the soul of the deceased visiting the family in such forms might be killed in the process. The soul on its way to the world of the dead had to undergo various hurdles and tests before it could reach the place. The soul had to take gifts to the ruler of the underworld, who was a woman with breasts and hair of enormous length. No souls of those dying by accidents could enter the abode of the dead. Those souls were left wandering on earth, scaring the living who wandered outside alone or stayed alone at home. These spirits of the deceased had a strong influence on the lives of their living relatives. These dead spirits were vigilant of what their living relatives did on earth. Such spirits blessed or cursed their living relatives. Therefore, the spirits were occasionally appeased by sacrifices.⁴

4. Murry, Ezamo., 1995. *Tribal Spirituality Reconsidered (A Psychological Study of Religion)*, Delhi: Navdin Prakashan Kendra, p. 137.

There are also some people who believes that men die again and become flies. Some others think every man passes through nine successive lives and then cease to exist.

The religion of the Lotha teachers no moral code. The blessing it offers him are material, not spiritual. Yet many Lothas lead clean, straight and honest life. It is true that virtue in this world is vaguely believed to be rewarded with happiness.

(a) Religious Officials

Every village used to have their own priest. The priest, besides performing the sacrificial rites of the household and village, is the custodian and interpreter of religious beliefs. He is also a fortune teller, the secrets are made known to him by the deities. Falling into a trance, a priest may conjure some acquaintances with the spirit and the people hear a divine message from his lips. Thus he is believed to imbibe esoteric knowledge of many things and capable to cope into the recondite mysteries.

There is a distinction among priests, sacrificers, sooth-sayers, diviners and medicine men in the sacredatal aspects. The priest is the priest of the village. He must be without blemish in all respects. The office is either hereditary or charismatic, but once filled it is a life long position. He is the highest religious official of the whole village. He wields spiritual influence. He belongs to the priestly clan with a long standing repute in the society. A principal priest is associated by a junior priest called *Yinga*. He succeeds to the office in the event of death of the senior man or priest of his own paternal lineage, the investiture being

governed by colourful ceremonies. The priest performs important ceremonies such as inaugurating harvest undertaking, inauguration of sowing, founding of new village and holding of other festivals. He is maintained by seasonal gifts from the people during the religious ceremonies.

Ratssen is the medicine man or woman of the village. The post is hereditary or charismatic in nature and is held for life. He or she is the medium of divine communication to the people, as in the case of God's visitation as well as predicting events and diagnosing illness. He or she also treats sickness and interprets dreams. In some way he or she acts as a prophet, a surgeon and counselor of the village. He or she prescribed fees for service to the people.

Ha-vae is another religious official who mediates between dead spirits and their living relatives. This post is usually held by women. In the evening of a person's death the family would prepare a sacrificial food and keep for the night at the house of the *Ha-vae* (mediator between dead spirits and the living relatives). The spirit of the dead person would tell his or her wishes to the living family, and the medium would pass the message along to the bereaved family.

Besides these religious officials, there are other ministers of lower circles, like those in charge of funerals, child initiations and other family rites. Such minor officials are not appointed by the people formally but the persons concerned volunteer by virtue of their experience and age. They receive light fees in kind from the people served.

The functions of the traditional religious officials has now come to an end as almost the entire population of the Lotha villages have embraced Christianity. Nowadays in every village the whole affairs of the religious activities is dealt with by the church official such as the pastor, elders and the deacons. The pastor administered all the ritual ceremonies but in his absence the associate pastors or the elders of the church may substitute him to initiate the church affairs. Besides the deacon board there are also various departments within the church organization. For instance, in Wokha village there are five branches or departments such as women fellowship, youth fellowship, Sunday school department and evangelistic committee within the church organization. Each department has a standing committee through which the whole affairs of the department is dealt with.

(b) Life Cycle Ritual

In the olden days among the non-Christians, when a baby is born in a Lotha family a *gemma* sort of ceremony was observed by the members of the family for 6 days for a male child and 5 days for a female. During those days they did not go for any field work for themselves, but can go to other's field for work. The mother also did not go out of the house or did not walk with people other than her family members.

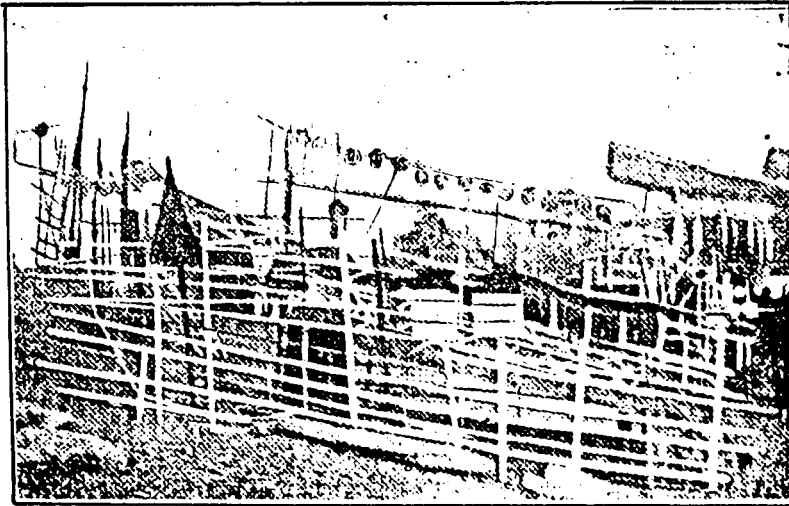
Soon after the birth, the mother is given chicken soup and rice. This continues for about a week or so, till the mother was physically quite fit. In case of a boy on the 6th day and in case of a girl on the 5th day the ears were pierced and a name is given to the baby. This ceremony is

called *Ngaro-Mvitchnuk* (naming ceremony). During this ceremony a formal dress or gear is given to him or her.

Christians do not observe all these *genmas* or rules and do as they like or observe the naming ceremony in a Christian way on the 6th day in the case of male child and 5th day in the case of a female. In this naming ceremony the church pastor and deacons are invited to the house and they pray for the welfare of the child and name him or her according to the parents' choice. It may be noted here that most of the Lothas are now Christians and therefore the non-Christian practices are practically given up.

As and when death occur of a human being in the village a sacrifice immediately follows of a chicken which is then hung above the corpse on the position of its face and it is necessary that its wings are kept on the walls of the house until after burial. If the deceased was an influential person then a dog tied with a string or rope is brought to the apartment where the deceased lies and the string or rope is tied to the hand of the corpse and the dog is killed and removed.

The corpse is then decked with full robes and enmeshed with precious ornaments and is kept inside the coffin. The coffin is hewed out a tree. In some cases, the deceased is armed with weapons to be capable of fighting against evil spirit which seek to obstruct the soul in its journey to the land of the dead. The custom of killing a dog is to give the soul a companion and killing of the chicken is to scratch the path. The grave is fenced. Then over the grave the belongings of the deceased are kept or displayed by supporting them on a strong bamboo laid crosswise against



**GRAVE OF A LOTHIA WARRIOR DECORATED WITH HIS
ORNAMENTS AND A TALLY OF THE HEADS HE HAS TAKEN
(To face p.13)**

the weight. Food is offered to the deceased in a basket. Torches of fire are kept on the grave at night time for 6 days for a man and 5 days for a woman.

Changes brought by Christianity are now to be surveyed. In place of bamboo hanger where grave gourds and skull are displayed, we see a cross planted over the grave, while a stone tablet laying opposite perpetuates the cherished memories of the deceased. Rich people build a masonry memorial over the grave. They also perform the death anniversary, sometimes by keeping a bunch of flower over the grave. They regard their dead and maintain the grave yard properly. Christian burials are therefore different and governed by Christian ceremonies.

This new order ushered in a period of tremendous change. The main agent of change was the government itself. Christianity provided the means whereby the people of the region (at least some of them) were able to accommodate themselves to the new world brought in by the British.

But after the assumption of colonial administration in Nagaland, the British did nothing directly to disturb the traditional religious beliefs of the people. It was seen to be inexpedient to interfere with the Naga customs and beliefs. The policy and attitude of the government towards the Nagas and their culture was one of the prudent caution. Accordingly, the administration intentionally remained accommodative to the cultural practices of the Nagas so far as they could be compatible with the smooth administration of the district (Fairer-Haimendorf, 1939). Except head hunting and slavery, the British did not interfere much with the Naga way

of life. To quote Elwin: "Up to the time of the Japanese invasion in 1944 the Nagas had lived in an age of almost uninterrupted continuity with past."⁵ The British administration cautiously intervened the native way of life. Thus it was with expressed motive of affecting slow and indirect change that the government encouraged the missionaries to preach the Gospel and along with it to introduce western education.

Christianity was introduced to the Nagas only in the later half of the nineteenth century by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (Kanito, V. C., 1980). The condition prevailing among the Nagas, so also the Lothas, was under neurotic fear created by the belief in harmful spirit. They were constantly longing for relief from such fear and insecurity as that posed by these spirits. Kanito, a Naga scholar, also speaks of the Nagas suffering from "hope mania" and that a psychic approach would be the best (Kanito, V. C., 1980). Therefore, it is believed that such longing of salvation from harmful spirit is undoubtedly the main factor preparing the people for the Gospel of Christ. But for F. S. Downs, it was modernization and Sanskritization which forced the Nagas to make their escape to Christianity (Downs, F. S., 1983). But whatever the case may be, when Christianity came with its teaching about law, sacrifice, reward and punishment, it appeared to the Nagas as another set of law and ritual akin to those they had in animism. They immediately caught hold of religious aspect of Christianity rather than spiritual aspect of it. Consequently, Christianity became another system to ward off life's problems or a human means to work out their own salvation.

5. Verrier, Elwin., 1961. *Nagaland*, Shillong: Adviser's Secretariat Press, p. 71.

During the initial period of introduction of Christianity the response of the Nagas to the Gospel was rather unreceptive. It was due to the alien nature of the Gospel and their devotion to their own animistic beliefs (Hunter, W. W., 1908). Lotha's strong attachment to their old beliefs and sets of social norms remained strong and that contributed to the set back to the missionary works. Even after a lapse of two decades of evangelistic work in the whole Naga Hills, nearly 96 per cent of its population remained faithful to their animist religion (Hunter, W. W., 1908). However, consistent labour of the missionaries bore fruit in time. By the early twentieth century, acceptance of the Gospel made headway. Encouraged by the rapid acceptance and positive response to the Gospel, S. A. Perrine enthusiastically remarked:

The Naga mission must not be looked at simply of and for Nagas, but rather as a part of a great system to reach the Mongolian people of Asia.⁶

With the increasing labour of the missionaries and their converts, a significant progress in proselytization was made. Thus over a period of seven decades, the Christian missionaries had an amazing success in converting the animist Lothas to Christianity.

The deepest impact on the Lotha society was made by the missionaries, because they were active and most closely in contact with them as observed by Haimendorf when he said:

6. Government of Assam., 1981. *Assam Census Report, Table III*, Gauhati: Government of Assam, p. 46.

The more closer and intimate contact with the people which was affected by missionaries enterprises – through preaching of the Gospel and schooling – not only proselytization the Nagas, but also interrupted the flow of their indigenous culture as well.⁷

They interfered in the social and cultural practices of the people to a greater extent than the government did. They insisted that a convert restricted himself to one's wife, and he was not permitted to eat the flesh of animals associated with sacrifices at 'heathen festivals'. The missionaries also stopped the great feast of merit. They even stopped dancing which was regarded to be a part of ancient or heathen practices. Thus, significantly, with the gradual and progressive acceptance of Christianity, the shift of cultural loyalty from animism to Christianity began changing the outlook and living culture of the people. The process of proselytization has significantly followed by changes on the Lotha indigenous culture. The response to such impact was remarkable that a Lotha converts could no longer observe the rituals associated with so called "heathen worship". They had also stopped tribal songs, dances, sacrifices and celebration of various kinds such as connected with cultivation, construction of houses, founding a new village, feast of merit, use of Morung or Bachelor's house etc. They were slowly removed among the Christian.

The most remarkable result of such contact was that the abandoned animistic practices were all replaced with new practices acceptable to the

7. Furer-Haimendorf, C. V., 1939. *The Naked Nagas*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., p. 50.

Christian norms of life. The old dormitories where youths practiced their heathen culture associated with singing of songs, telling of traditional stories were substituted by new building of separate Christian youth dormitories where songs of praises, prayer meetings and other spiritual values were encouraged (Clark, M. M., 1978). Even the rice beer, the most popular drink of the tribe, was replaced with tea, Christmas feasts replaced the feast of merit and total abstain from rice beer became a basis of church membership. It was also true that the later missionaries prohibited all culture songs, dance, stories, folk-lore and festivals on the ground of immoral behaviour such as excessive drink and waste of wealth and energy (Imchen, Panger, 1993).

Now, people are so attached to the western culture and hymns. English songs have completely replaced Lotha in church services, youth gatherings, conferences and social occasions. The younger generation even go to the extent of ignoring their parents or elders or any lover of indigenous culture by saying that they are modern people and the later are old fashioned as remarked by M. Horam:

... One can also find the beginning of the defiance of parental authority and rejection of their advice as an old fashioned, but mostly among the modern homes impatiently dismissing their parents with the wethering comments: "You don't know anything," "You are too old fashioned." These young people tend to blame all family discord on the 'generation gap', the result are unhappy in the family.⁸

⁸ Horam, M., 1988. Naga Religion: A Case Study, in *Religion and Society of the North-East India*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p. 17.

The introduction of Christianity and the active missionary venture also created some social tensions in almost every village in the district. The consequent of conversion was social and cultural conflicts between the new converts and the animists. Their co-existence in the same village with parallel religious affiliation and practices could not go along smoothly. Christians' refusal to observe the animist observance and vice-versa created social problems in many villages. Speaking on the impact of Christianity in the tribal society of India, Hutton also wrote: "Christianity has too often brought not peace, but a sword dividing father against son and a household against itself."⁹ Whenever Gospel was preached, some people appreciated and embraced it and yet many other strongly object to it. Such kind of situation was usually created everywhere in Naga Hills wherein the same village, people were divided into two communities – Christians and non-Christians.

The experience of the early Christians in Lotha area gives us an eloquent insight as to how the spread of Christianity had created tension among the people. When they became Christian the early Lotha converts were driven out from their villages. In Okotso village the early Christians were made to construct a church outside the village because the villagers were afraid that the church bell would disturb the spirits of the crops (Lotha Baptist Association, 1998). Bad crops that year was all the proof required. Even parents of the early Lotha Christian students also made

9. O'Malley, L. S. S., 1942. *Modern India and the West*, London: Oxford University Press, p. 439.

remark that if they study well they would be able to go on for further education elsewhere that their children would be forced to leave home, never to return. Other thought that Christians singing, like the ringing of the church bells, was a form of demon invocation (Lotha Baptist Association, 1998).

After a bare six month stay at Dekhahaimong, as he won a new converts, Dr. Clark also faced strong opposition and disunity among the villagers. This situation was the beginning of division and split of Ao village society, the first Christian community among the Nagas. Later he wrote to the Home Board in March 1887 saying:

Their village government is a government much higher even from the civilized nations. To build another village separate from the others for the sake of the Gospel creates division. "This religion", he says, should not disturb their village government system ... had I know it before I would never have built a new (Molungyimsen) village.¹⁰

The religious system of the Lotha Nagas in which they had reached the point of change from their constant fear of evil spirit, made them embrace Christianity as a refuge (Murry, Ezamo., 1995). This might have made them discard their old religion along with their traditional way of living, including even helpful values. It is true that the Lothas, at the time of the new encounter were all literate and mere simple than they are today. They did not have sufficient perceptive understanding to choose

10. Baptist Church, Molungkimung. 1982. *Centennial of Town Church, Molungkimung*: Baptist Church, Molungkimung. p. 15.

what values might be of lasting importance and what values might be replaced with high values. As a result of which they “throw out the baby with the bath water” (Murry, Ezamo., 1995).

However, in spite of the effort to abstain from the practices of animistic culture, the Lothas have not been able to shake off their old superstitious beliefs. In a sense, they have a double-tired system of beliefs (Murry, Ezamo., 1995). They seem to have believing in two kinds of deities, benevolent and malevolent. When Christianity came they adapted themselves to two types of beliefs - the old animistic belief and the new belief in the benevolent God of Christianity, living practically in the former and theoretically in the later. Therefore, it is clear that they did not hesitate to use any means which they thought appropriate to gain divine favour, means like consulting fortune tellers, retaining propitiatory attitudes in religious acts, and continuing magical associations of holy objects and religious places, though this may be done unaware.

But whatever may be the case, one thing is certain that Christianity has overturned the total aspects of indigenous life of the Lotha people, including their religious beliefs and practices, to a new turn of life which they have never experienced before.

Festivals

As far as festivals are concerned, the Lothas have only two main festivals such as the *Pikhvüchak-Emong* and *Tokvü-Emong*. The year officially opens with the *Pikhvükhak* festival. Therefore, this festival marks the beginning of the agricultural year. This festival is observed before the rice is sown. It is usually associated by observing ritual

ceremonies such as prayer and cutting of fowl's throat. The rest of the day is given up to feasting. Next day is kept as an *emung* (restricted day) and no one goes to the field.

Then the agricultural year is closed again with *Tokhvii* festival. It is the harvest festival of the Lothas – the harvest is done, the grains full, there is now time to enjoy the fruits of one's hard labour. Friends are invited. Mithuns are killed, past offences are forgotten and now ties are established and bonds of closer intimacy are discovered. On the appointed day announced by the priest the village contributes unhusked rice from every home. Then pig is killed and the day is given up to feast the whole village. The main features of the festival are community songs, youthful dances, feast and fun. Young boys and girls engaged during the year are happily married after the *Tokhvii-Emung*. It is the time for renovating village gate, clearing roads, cleaning well and repairing the houses.

But people no longer observe such traditional festivals and ceremonies any more for they have been all replaced by the Christian festivals such as Easter, Christmas and New Year. However, it was realized that it is necessary to preserve the old customs and traditions as cultural heritage of the tribe. Therefore, recently the Wokha elders decided to celebrate *Tokhvii-Emung* on a fixed dated by all the range in order to carve unity and uniformity in celebration. Following this *Tokhvii-Emung* was celebrated on 7th November, 1978, at Wokha Town. Ever since the *Tokhvii-Emung* is celebrated by all Lothas on the 7th November every year.

The Lotha traditional religious activities have undergone considerable changes during the last few decades as a result of the spread of Christianity and introduction of modern educational system in the district. Now, majority have embraced Christianity. These days, on account of Christianity, almost all the festivals are no longer observed. The religious usages governed by divination system, animal sacrifices and other features are no longer important. There are few non-Christians in some of the villages in the district but observance of these old ceremonial activities are no more seen in the area.

Marriage

Generally, the Lothas follow monogamy but there is no bar for polygamy. As a result some rich men occasionally have more than one wife. Polyandry is not practiced in this area. The rareness of polygamy before their conversion into Christianity might be due to economic factors as well as their unwillingness to have more than one wife. At present, however, polygamy is strictly prohibited among the Christian ethics and accordingly no husband is permitted to marry second time unless the first marriage has been dissolved by death or divorce according to the legal procedure, approved by the Christian principle. Christianity is, therefore, supposed to have controlled polygamy and any illegal sexual relations.

With regard to the age of marriage there is no fixed age of marriage among the Lotha society. In the past, age at marriage for boys was between 17 to 22 years and the girls between 14 to 18 years (Mills, J. P., 1922). The British Government also objected to such practices.

particularly the practice of marrying of minor girls.¹¹ In a bid to stop this, the government served a warning notice to the parents that they risked the forfeiture of bride price in case they gave in marriage minor girls. The Government accordingly disowned the responsibility for suits, which might be arising out of marriage price such as the payment of *Losü-man* (fine for divorce), in case of the marriage of minor girls (Sema, Piketo., 1992).

Now, it is found that the age at marriage has been raised. For example, in Wokha village the average age at marriage for boys is between 21 to 30 years and girls between 15 to 25 years. Phiro village also the average age at marriage for boys is between 21 to 30 years and the girls between 15-25 years as indicated in the age variation table shown below.

Table – I: Frequency of mean for individual's age by age group at marriage.

Age Group	Wokha Village		Phiro Village		Total		Mean	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
15-20	5	72	5	69	10	141	25	35.25
21-25	70	118	47	32	117	150	29.25	37.50
26-30	110	12	41	15	151	27	37.75	6.75
31-35	21	4	30	7	51	11	11.75	2.72
House hold	206	206	123	123	329	329		

The Table I shows that there has been a remarkable increase of age at marriage for both boys and girls in Wokha and Phiro villages.

With the introduction of formal education there is no fixed age group for marriage in Lotha society today. Some got married at the early age and some late.

A man in search of a bride naturally thinks first of a girl marriageable age in the neighbourhood of his home. However, strictly speaking a man ought to take his wife from phratry of other than his own. When a man decides to marry a certain girl he informs his parents about his intention. Either his mother or some elderly women relatives goes and sound the matter to the girl's parents. When they are agreeable the two families discuss and settle their marriage. But these days such procedure is not followed by many young men. Most marriages are arranged by the boys and girls themselves. In most cases negotiation of marriage and making of decision for marriage is left to the individual concern. This clearly indicates that the commonly acceptance type of marriage among the younger generations of the Lotha community is more of love marriage rather than parental arrangement. This is true for both Wokha and Phiro villages. The following table shows the percentage of the individuals for negotiation and making of decision at marriage.

Table II – Percentage frequency of individuals by age group for negotiation and decision making at marriage.

Village	Household	Self	%	Parents	%	Relative	%
Wokha	206	160	77.66	40	19.41	6	2.91
Phiro	123	76	61.78	45	36.58	2	1.62

Table II indicates that in Wokha village, that out of 206 families, 77.66 per cent practices self negotiation and decision making for marriage as against 19.41 per cent arranged by the parents for marriage. Negotiation and decision for marriage done by the relatives shows only 2.91 per cent. In Phiro village out of 123 families, 61.78 per cent practices self negotiation and making of decision for marriage, 36.58 per cent are negotiated and decided for them by the parents and only 1.62 per cent by the relatives.

With the introduction of formal education and improvement in standard of living these people have become more free and liberal in their attitudes and approaches towards the style of living. Now, they no longer follow the traditional way of life particularly with regard to negotiation and making of decision at marriage.

In the past, the economic status of the family for marriage was a minor point to be taken into account but now it is the most important point to be considered. For most of the parents, particularly the girl's parents, they try to arrange marriage with a boy whose economic status is higher. The parents first observed how much land, both cultivable and reserve forest for collection of firewood is possessed, they also take family homestead into consideration along with the number of domestic animals of the family and their incomes. Besides economic status, the girl's parents also find out the number of sons of the family. If there are many brothers, such a family is regarded as one of the best families and is termed as a good brothers' family. In the olden days such family was regarded as a good family from the security point of view as well as from

the economic point of view. A man who did not possess such status may be considered as unmatch for the girl. In which case the girl's parents may disapprove the proposal of their child to such person. But the situation has changed now.

For instance, Abemo of Wokha village proposed a marriage to a girl whose parents' status was higher than his. Hence, the girl's parents did not allow their daughter to marry Abemo. But as both of them have decided to stay together, Abemo has no other option except to elope the girl and stay away from the village. This situation shows that the kind of consideration which did not exist in the traditional society have cropped up in Wokha village these days.

Formerly, expenditure at marriage was small and manageable. It was only the close relatives who were fed on such occasions – a pig and a fowl was just enough. The distribution of marriage meat, which is also considered as bride's price, was done among the close relatives of the family. The amount of meat required as *Hanlam* (bride's meat) was about 16 kgs of meat which is distributed among the heads of the family and the close relatives only. Though theoretically still maintained the traditional system of distribution of the bride's meat, practically people no longer follow it. Now, the bride's meat is distributed among all the clansmen and friends within the village. In Wokha village out of 206 households it was found that 83.49 per cent are practicing the system of distributing the bride's meat to all the clansmen and friends in the village and 16.50 per cent distributed the meat to the close relatives only. In Phiro village, out of 123 households, 73.17 per cent distributed the

bride's meat to all the clansmen and friends and 26.82 per cent distributed to the close relatives only in the village. This observation indicates that the traditional practice of distribution of bride's meat still exists but in practical majority of the people do not follow it in a traditional way.

The cross expenditure during the marriage has been rising and became a great concern of the people today. The following table shows the percentage frequency of households according to different levels of marriage expenditure.

Table III – Percentage frequency of households according to different levels of marriage expenditure.

Cross expenditure during marriage	Wokha village		Phiro village	
	Household	%	Household	%
Rs.5000-Rs.10000/-	35	17.00	27	21.95
Rs.11000-Rs.20000/-	57	27.66	35	28.45
Rs.21000-Rs.30000/-	48	23.30	34	27.64
Rs.31000-Rs.40000/-	29	14.07	22	17.88
Rs.41000-Rs.50000/-	27	13.10	2	1.62
Rs.50000 and above	10	4.85	3	2.43
Total	206	99.98	123	99.97

The Table III shows that out of 206 households in Wokha village 17.00% could afford to spend between Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 10,000/- at marriage while 27.66% and 23.30% could manage to spend between Rs. 11,000/- to Rs. 20,000/- and Rs. 21,000/- to Rs. 30,000/- respectively. Also 14.07% and 13.10% could spend between Rs. 31,000/- to Rs. 40,000/- and Rs. 41,000/- to Rs. 50,000/- respectively, but only 4.85% could afford to spend Rs. 50,000/- and above during marriage time.

In Phiro village, out of 123 households 21.95% shows total expenditure incurred at marriage as between Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 10,000/-. As far 28.45% and 27.64% the total expenditure was between Rs. 11,000/- to Rs. 20,000/- and Rs. 21,000/- to Rs. 30,000/- respectively. 17.88% also shows the marriage expenditure as Rs. 31,000/- to Rs. 40,000/- while only 1.62% could afford to spend between the range of Rs. 40,000/- to Rs. 50,000/-. Only very few people, 2.43% could spend Rs. 50,000/- and above. As a whole, in both the village, the total marriage expenditure has been remarkably increased during the last few years.

Such increase of expenditure incurred during the marriage was mainly due to the introduction of economic developmental facilities in various fields and job opportunities in the district which was further affected by the trends of present market price index. This indicates that the emphasis on economic factors in marriage has increased while significance of rituals in marriage appears to have gone down.

Prior the advent of Christianity traditional system of marriage was strictly observed. Marriage ceremonies vary from village to village. The Lotha traditional system of marriage seems to have been governed by a number of formalities which are necessary to be followed strictly.

Marriage by negotiation is an accepted rule among the Lothas. During the first visit of negotiation, a go-between, often the mother or any women, goes to intimate the proposal to the girl's house. When she goes for a second time, she presents rice beer to the members of the girl's family which, if it is sipped, means that the boy's proposal has been accepted, and after that the boy and girl keep in contact.

The acceptance of the proposal is followed by the preparation of rice beer. The boy is accompanied by one elderly man and a young friend. Every member would drink the brew except the couple. The elderly man sits with the couple and offers prayer on behalf of the couple. This toasting symbolizes the real engagement between the boy and the girl after which the boy is obliged to work in his father-in-law's house for one complete year or he is bound to fulfill other obligations in lieu of it. On completion of one year's time the groom presents five bundles of firewood to his bride to display on both of the bride's door and it signifies that the girl is engaged. The most important part of the engagement is the groom's slave-like work, *lo-myaka*, which literally means bride's engagement, in his father-in-law's house for one complete year. This is a kind of marriage price as well as to judge his ability to work hard to maintain a wife.

Then construction of a new house follows for the would be couple. The new house is opened by a pig killing ceremony where appropriate portion is presented by the groom to his father-in-law. Meanwhile the bride receives gifts of cotton thread and rice beer from her clan's women. Marriage takes place in the day time in the house of the bride's father and is followed by feast there. Later, at night the marriage party sets off in a procession for their new house. A customary practice, the groom before leaving for the new house, waves his spear three times round the fire. They leave the house in an absolute silence, the bride taking her thread, while the groom holds a spear. On reaching the new house, water is poured into the hands of the couple. The rest of the night is passed by them in company with two boy attendants from the side of the groom.

During the second day, it is genna and so the newly married couple are not allowed to visit either of their parent's house. The new couple may visit the wife's house on the third day.

Some sort of magic-like religious practice follows during the following days. This practice is preceded by ceremonial bringing of leaves by the couple. Then divination is conducted for seeing the fate of the couple on two cocks. Also a traditional prayer is offered by an old woman for the welfare of the couple. After that, another divination is conducted again on two hens and egg. Thus ends the ritual formalities of marriage among the Lothas.

Some instalments of marriage price use to be cleared at the time of marriage itself by the relatives of the boy and the rest are kept to be paid by instalments later on. The last instalment of marriage price is to be paid later on for that is required as the by-tie between the relatives of the couple. Marriage customs are seen vary from village to village in the district especially in giving marriage price.

Prior the advent of Christianity traditional system of marriage was strictly observed. But now with the coming of Christianity giving of bride price to the girl's family became a decadence among the Lothas. Now in place of it the parents of both the parties simply discuss their mutual demands for the welfare of the newly married couple's future and try to refrain from demanding for the bride price and for the presentation to be brought by the bride to the groom's house at the time of marriage. But the matter is left to the capacity and economic condition of the family

concerned. Therefore, today, bride price and bride's presentation or dowry have no place in Lotha's marriage (Ruivah, 1993).

Christian marriages are different. Today church pastors, elders, and deacons are invited to the engagement party as a witness in the name of God and the engagement ceremony is conducted by these church officials. In this party, no exchange of gifts is made. After this date is fixed for solemnization of marriage. The wedding ceremony is held in the church or elsewhere. On this occasion the couple receives blessing from the priest as well as from all the participants by swearing in the name of God that they will remain as husband and wife and never will be parted till death makes them separate. The priest then offers them special blessing and issue a marriage certificate.

Like any other agrarian society, traditionally the Lothas also have a specified season during which a new couples are allowed to perform marriage. Usually it is done towards the end of the year, which is after the annual festival (*toklu-emma*), the most suitable season to celebrate the marriage ceremony. During this off time season for agricultural activities people can relax and enjoy their lives to the fullest extent. Performance of marriage ceremony means an extra source of merry-making and enjoyment for the relatives, friends and to the entire village community.

Christian marriage have no specific time to perform marriage ceremony, one can perform marriage at any season according to the conveniences of both the parties.

DIVORCE

Among the Lothas divorce is less common. Divorce may be on any ground, such as infidelity, barrenness, disharmony, quarrel or simply incompatibility. What may be the cause of divorce, it is intimately connected with refund of the bride price depending on the merit of the case.

If the wife goes away for no fault of the husband, she will have to repay the cost of marriage to her erstwhile husband. If the wife goes back to her parents, they will have to make the payment. But if she goes with her paramour, naturally will have to pay it.

If the wife leaves her husband due to his infidelity or incompatibility or in any way, not of her fault, she will get back her personal properties such as clothes, ornaments, weaving apparatus, agricultural implements etc, but not any other property.

If the husband drives away his wife because of her infidelity, then she will get only rupees ten from her husband as divorce cost, but the husband will get back a part of his marriage expenses which is generally paid by her paramour.

Since marriage is a difficult and costly affairs for a man, generally a husband does not desert his wife. And since re-marriage of a wife is not very easy, the wife generally does not take initiative for separation.

Most people are Christian now, they do not go in for divorce so easily. Re-marriage on the part of the divorce, husband or wife, is more

difficult, because in that case he or she will be excommunicated from the church if the divorce is on the ground of infidelity.

Re-marriage is permissible in the Lotha society. There is no social discrimination in the matter of re-marriage between man and woman. He or she is free to marry again with a virgin one. But only after the death of his wife or her husband.

After death of his wife the prevailing custom permit a man to marry his dead wife's sister. In such case it is expected that the sister of the wife may be married only when the latter has died. But it should be also noted here that the deceased wife's sister is not regarded as a substitute and also not compulsory. But to look after the fate of the motherless children and to extend their love and sympathy, both the members of the families persuade the concerned person to fill the vacant position.

Christian has a great impact on the traditional marriage system. It concerned more on spiritual aspect than material or physical well being of the people. With the coming of Christianity in the land most of the traditional marriage formalities had disappeared. People are no more observing the traditional system of marriage. But no matter how much it has affected the traditional form of marriage, still the inner core of the Lotha's traditional marriage system remained unchanged. The present practice of negotiation for marriage, marriage engagement, divination conducted on slaughtered animal (though it is done in a casual way these days) and the system of giving and distribution of marriage price are some of the elements of modified form of traditional marriage system.

Education

Formerly there used to be a *Chimpho* (bachelor's dormitory) in each *Yankho* (sector) of the village. Generally, the *morung* or the bachelor's dormitory was the fortress of the village where the young unmarried men used to sleep and guard the village. It was, in fact, a training and learning place for the young unmarried people in every aspect of life. Therefore, there used to be one *morung* for each sector in the village. In the olden days when head hunting was prominent the *morung* was the centre of all the village activities.

However, owing to the spread of Christianity and other modernizing factors like education *Chimpho* or *Morung* has almost become disfunction. *Chimpho* is nowhere to be found in any village these days except in some villages where it is built for memory's sake only. Nowadays *Chimpho* has been substituted by organizations like Christian Youth Fellowship, Youth Club, Town Club and various students' organizations in the district, ranges, areas and villages. In both Wokha and Phiro villages such organization exists.

Education as one of the most powerful agents of British colonialism began with the Christian missionaries. It may be noted here that from the very beginning of their contact with the Nagas, the British officers perceived the necessity of introducing Christianity and education among the Naga tribes, for they considered education as the best agency for modernizing the Nagas. With this viewpoint, the colonial education policy was mainly directed to the extension of grants-in-aid to the missions in Naga Hills. In Naga Hills District, although government

largely depended on missions' schools for the education of the Naga people, it was also opened school on its own. For example, on 31st March 1904, the district had six Lower Primary Schools maintained by the Government and sixteen mission schools were receiving grants-in-aid from the government (Sema, Piketo., 1992). However, by 1930's the general policy of the government was to take over the responsibility of education from the missions as early as possible. In 1937, the government stated its view on mission school:

While acknowledgement must be made of the debt owed to the missions for their works as pioneers in the field of education it must be also recognized that the missions have interested themselves in education fully with object of Christianizing the children. Portion of some of the hill tribes have refused education because it brought about Christianity with it, and it is unfair that they should be deprived of education because they are unwilling to abandon their tribal custom.¹²

Meanwhile, during 1930's, Government schools had significantly increased.

In Wokha district, for the first time, an informal education was started by Rev. W. E. Witter and his wife in 1885 (Witter, W.E., 1886). It was Rev. Witter who first reduced the Lotha language into writing in English script. In 1887, there were 9 (nine) boys in the Wokha station school. However, Witter encountered difficulties and the Mission dropped the scheme of educating the Lothas for time being. Later, in

12. Sema, Piketo., *op.cit.*, p. 77.

1905, it was started again at Wokha. It was only in 1941 one Government Middle English Schools was opened at Wokha Town (Ghosh, B.B., 1979).

Prior to Colonial administration and introduction of Christian mission in the district, there was no written form of any script among the Lotha Nagas. They solely depended on oral tradition only. Every household in itself was a teaching institution for educating the children in the way they should grow up to be a good and successful housewives and warriors. Home schooling was mostly supplemented by their dormitory experience where both boys and girls learnt social norms and customs of their own. Such traditional learning process was simple yet practice oriented.

The introduction of colonial education, however, disrupted the indigenous system of learning and redirected them to the new pattern of modern education. With the increasing acceptance of colonial education, indigenous system learning was gradually diminished. Thus modern education had substantial influence on the socio-cultural life of the Nagas (Verrier, Elwin., 1961). The education which the British rulers largely entrusted to the American Baptist Mission had a revolutionizing impact on the Lotha society. It affected their religion, customs and traditions. The British Colonial education not only revolutionized the culture ethos of the Lothas but also led them to a new dimension of value system of life. Such development of broader and healthier outlook of the people enabled them to accept the new trend of change in their society.

As a consequence of the growth of modern education, the Lotha society witness gradual tendency of social cohesion the characteristic of which was conspicuously leaking among them in pre-colonial period as observed by Piketo, a Naga scholar, "It was the educated Nagas who spearheaded the formation of Naga Club, Tribal Council and Naga National Council."¹³

The standard of living of the people have changed notably as a result of the effect of modern educational system. The impact of education on the socio-cultural life of the Lothas was in fact the impact of Christianity, for it permeate their culture through the agency of colonial education. They are passing through a period of transition of their history and culture, and in the process of which they are faced with a problem of readjustment to the new situation. In fact, the present problems are caused by a distortion of modernization or western culture by the younger generation who are the products of the in-between cultures, that is, those who are born in a time of transient society who explain their behaviour as a modern wave.

It is now significant that the Lothas are changing fast towards a better society. In this regard, Elwin observes;

In some ways, however, the last few years have witnessed a revival of Naga culture. Even the Christian Nagas are showing a new interest in their traditional dances, they want to build up their own literature in their own language, to record their epics and stories.... They are in fast beginning

13. Sema, Piketo., *op.cit.*, p. 92.

to feel that there is less conflict between yesterday and tomorrow than they had once feared. Their innate essence of beauty (sic) their good taste, their own self-reliance will probably maintain ... but with new motives and a new direction.¹⁴

These days, mass education has provide a culture revival for the younger generation. This has been emphasized at conferences, seminars, churches, student's meeting and public gathering where the good things of the land and beautiful cultural heritage are discussed and means sought for its preservation.

14. Dalle, Namo., 1987. *The Prisoner from Nagaland*, Tuli: Labon Press, p. 15.

CHAPTER V

THE WIND OF CHANGE

As change is the law of nature, society also undergoes changes. In this process of change every society is characterized by both continuity and change. Of course, continuity is maintained by social control, child rearing and education which transmit the acquired cultural traits to the younger generations. Therefore changes or modification in the cultural set up of any given society is necessary for without which society cannot progress.

In every society, there are some conditions which make for CULTURE change. The important factors which caused changes can be such as the occurrence of social conflict and contact with other groups of people.

Social conflict, either it be tribal or non-tribal, conflicts between petty kingdoms or conflicts between groups of nations has been responsible for tremendous change in given society. Such conflicts have led to social stratification and change in social structure.

During the last few decades European nations like France, Germany, Italy and England established their colonials in all the continents of the world and brought about many changes in the social stratification of each colony. For instance, abolition of Sati system in India by William Bentinck and cultural diffusion like the introduction of Christianity, English language, printing press and new means of

communications and transportation systems have brought about much change in their social and cultural set up of many societies in many parts of the world.

In the nineteenth century a significant landmark of change have been noticed in the life of the tribal people of north-eastern part of India. It witnessed a change from traditional to modernity.

The Nagas, so also the Lothas, are undergoing a transitional phase and their culture is also in a process of flux and change. In response to such change they are adapting to a new way of life, disregarding their old way of life. A new set of values are thus emerging in their society in which the old is disappearing, making a room for new ones. Such changes taking place in socio-cultural life are clearly noticeable in their attitudes of life, family life, social life, customs and traditions, religious beliefs and practices, food patterns and dresses etc.

Thus cultural change have occurred among the Lotha Nagas as a result of a new experience initially due to the contact with the western civilization and adaptation of a new religion and various aspects of style of life and more so after 1947 with improved communication, transportation, various development opportunities and contact with people from other cultural groups.

A brief historical account of the British colonial administration, the Christian missionary activities in the North-Eastern part of India and development programmes during the post-independence period as the

main factors of culture change among the Lotha Nagas society are discussed below.

British Rule in the North-Eastern Part of India

At the time of British arrival the North-Eastern regions of India were divided into a number of monarchies, kingdoms and village states. By this time the British had already occupied Assam, Manipur, Cachar and was proceeding towards Jaintia. However, in spite of their policy of non-intervention, the British discarded war against them in March 1824 (Sanyu, Visier., 1996). The Burmese were defeated and the British emerged as the most dominant force in the region by the Treaty of Yandabo (1826).

Formerly, the British had been drawn into this region not for any other purposes or attraction, but because of their strategic interest. Later the occupation of the neighbouring tribes of Assam became important to the British from various points of view. As J. B. Bhattacharjee puts it:

Ever since their ascendancy in Assam valley, the British aimed at using the tribe of eastern fringes as a screen between the newly acquired territories and the Kingdom of Burma.¹

A part from this strategic position, it was important for commercial reasons as well. Feeling insecure at the British advancement the *ex-rajah* of Upper Assam granted the territories of Gabharu Hills in Upper Assam bordering Naga territory to the British. The British took the advantage of

1. Sanyu, Visier., 1996. *A History of Nagas and Nagaland*, New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, p. 87.

it to penetrate and make further attempt to subdue the Naga tribes.

The Treaty of Yandabo had an immense impact on the tribes of north-eastern part of India and underwent a significant change in the history of the whole region as the British became the sole authority of the whole region by the terms of peace treaty. Simultaneously the British established their position in Assam, Cachar, Manipur and Jaintia. Thus the whole region of North-Eastern part of India came under the direct influence of the British (Chakravorty, P. C., 1964).

British Occupation of Nagaland

It was only in the year 1832, marked the more direct confrontation of the British with Nagas. In fact, the necessity of safer road communication between the state of Manipur and the Brahmaputra valley through the Naga Hills and the alarming problems posed by the Naga raids on the British subject of the Cachar and Nowgong frontier, attracted the immediate attention of the British towards the Nagas. The British, however, could not follow any regular policy to maintain peace and security in their controlled district until 1881 when the Naga Hills were brought under regular system of administration (Sema, Piketo., 1992).

The first British contact with the Nagas was made in 1832 by Francis Jenkins and R. B. Pamberton who travelled through the Angami Naga territory in search of road communication between Manipur and Assam (Allen, B. C., 1905).

In order to maintain peace and security the British adopted a policy of two periods of time towards the Nagas. the first period covers 1832-

1877 during which they tried to ward off the Nagas from raids into the administrative district of Assam and in the second period, which covers 1877-1880, the government followed a 'Forward Policy' leading to the final merging of the Hills into the British India system of administration (Sanyu, Visier., 1996).

Prior to 1877 the task of all the British officials had concentrated much on the interference in feuds concerning various tribes. It was during the year 1877 a thorough topographical study was made and Kohima was considered to be the most suitable centre from the point of view of a British outpost. The following year Kohima was made as the main administrative centre of Naga Hills with a sub-centre at Wokha, a strong police force was posted in the interior, and a house tax of Rs. 2/- (Rupees two) was taken (Mackenzie, A., 1884). this was the beginning of an effective administration in the Naga Hills, which was established as district in 1881.

British Occupation of Wokha District

As for the Lothas the first encounter with the Britishers was made in 1842 when Captain Brodie, during an inquest of Naga raids, passing through the Lotha territory. This marked the first British contact with the Lothas. In 1842 Brodie had travelled in Bhandari range in Wokha district and settled some disputes (Ghosh, B. B., 1979).

It was during the end of 1874, while the British survey party was conducting its work in Lotha area, the party met with obstructions in Lotha soil more than once.

The people of Wokha village were first to stage resistance. On approaching Wokha on January 3, 1875, the British survey team was attacked by the Lothas, resulting in killing of one Kuki porter. In response to such situation the British soldiers fired at the warriors who were soon dispersed. They were chased to the village gate and were hurled with spears and stones from the village walls and as a result of which Wokha village was burnt.

In December, 1875, on approaching Pangti village a more serious opposition was experienced. Captain Butler who came in advance, with smaller party, leaving Wardthrope with the rest of the soldiers at some distance behind, approached the village. Taking advantage on the smaller party of negligible in number, they were ambushed by the villagers on the way and Captain Butler was badly wounded. It is said that a conspiracy had been hatched by the village of Pangti and Lakhuti to resist the British survey party, but when the time came Lakhuti withdrew back and it fell upon Pangti alone to fight the survey party. The Pangti was punished and burnt for this hostility to Britishers. This incident marked one of the worse antagonistic attitudes shown by the Lothas towards the Britishers (Ghosh, B. B., 1979).

Frequent harassment given by the Lothas bringing about Butler's death, compelled the government to establish a regular administrative centre in Lotha area. Prompt and decisive action was taken on the proposal and the first headquarter of Naga Hills district was set up at Wokha in the year 1876 (Ghosh, B. B., 1979). Wokha was occupied as District Headquarters and roads were built. Finally, Wokha was made an

official administrative centre for the Naga Hills District and a house tax was enforced. The first administrative centre in the hills was opened at Wokha in 1876 and it was the first centre in the first District headquarter to be situated inside the hills.

British Policy and Administration in Nagaland

1. Defence Policy

The British policy of controlling the Nagas was primarily guided by defence policy. In course of time, this policy underwent changes from time to time but its goal of achieving control over the Nagas remained effective throughout the period, 1839-1877.

The period from 1839-1951 witnessed the first phase of British policy to check the Naga raids. This marked a peaceful relations with the Nagas. This period did not only witnessed the British government's efforts to suppress the Naga raids into British territory but also antagonism attitudes of the people to the control of the British, resulting in killing, burning down of the villages and taking them prisoners. However, such expedition and punishment could not succeed in bringing the tribe to order.

The government thus changed its policy to promote friendly relation with hill tribes. While dealing with the situation to bring the Nagas into friendly relationship, the government sent officers to visit the Naga villages and tried to induce their chiefs to enter into peace agreements and abstain from attacks on British subjects. As a measure of peace, government offered peaceful attractions such as trading facilities.

specially for the essential commodities so needed by the Nagas like salt, dry fish, steel utensils, oil, clothes etc. (Sema, Piketo., 1992).

However, Government's peace efforts could not stay long as the Nagas did not keep the agreements. Therefore, with the conclusion of a series of expedition, the Government changed their plan and followed the policy of non-intervention towards the Nagas. Accordingly, in March 1851, the government withdrew its troops to Dimapur. But soon after the withdrawal of the British forces, to maintain their policy of non-interference, the Nagas began fresh attacks on British subject in increasing numbers.

When the policy of non-interference proved to be failure, the Government followed another policy of non-provocation of the Nagas. However, this policy appears to have been interpreted by the Nagas as a sign of weakness on the part of the British Government and continued their raids regardless of the defence measures taken by the Government.

In 1866, taking a firmer step in the direction of control, the Government agreed to the proposal of establishing the district of Naga Hills. Accordingly, a new District with its headquarters at Samaguting was formed. An European officer was deputed at Samaguting to invite the Naga chiefs to submit to the British government.

The establishment of the British administrative post at Samaguting was a landmark in the history of Anglo-Naga relations. It signified the Government's decision to control the Nagas effectively. Initially, the intention of the Government was not to rule out the possibility of further

expansion of administration but to concentrate on security of the areas under their administration. Accordingly, Captain Gregory, an experienced officer of the frontier, was appointed to take charge on the New District, headquarter at Samaguting.

2. British Administrative Policy

Since the inception of active administration in 1881 to the transfer of power in 1947, the British administered Naga Hills as a frontier district of Assam. During this period British administration concentrated on the maintenance of law and order in this frontier district. The existing native institution which has no concentration with their policy and interest were left undisturbed (Verrier, Elwin., 1963).

The post 1881 colonial administration policy in Naga Hills was divided into three administrative zones: Administered areas, Political control areas, and areas beyond political control (Shakespear, L. W., 1980).

In the administered areas, the Government assessed annual house tax at the rate of Rs. 2/- (Rupees two) per house and appointed village headmen for collection of the house tax and carrying out the orders of the Government at the village level. The government maintained law and order in this zone.

In the political control areas zone the Government conducted annual military promenades and, with it, the Deputy Commissioner had the discretion to settle cases of disputes. Besides, the Government had the power to punish raider depending on proximity and convenience.

In the areas beyond political control the government followed a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the native people. However, the Government had the power to punish the tribes in cases of raids of a serious nature.

3. Constitutional and Administrative Change

With the passing of Assam Scheduled District Act 1874, Naga Hills was governed under the direct charge of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The main purpose of such act was to enable the Government to provide an administrative measure to the “undeveloped tracts” and to extend to them any enactments in force elsewhere. Thus in accordance with the provision of Clause 5A of Scheduled District Act, 1874, the Government passed in April 1884 the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation II of 1880 as amended by Regulation III Section Clause 2 of 1884, and extended it to the Naga Hills District (Hunter, H. W., 1884). By virtue of this Regulation, Naga Hills were excluded from the operation of enactments relating to elaborate Code of Law, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Civil Procedure Code were never in force in any Hill district. On the other hand, Naga administration continued to function under their chiefs and headmen free from alien legal technicalities.

The next important change came with the Government of India Act, 1910, Section 13, 52-A(2) of the Act categorized the Naga areas within the Naga Hills District as ‘Backward Tracts’ and the Governor of Assam governed it as the agent of the Governor General. In accordance to this amendment the Governor of Assam administered the Naga Hills

through his administrative agencies such as the Deputy Commissioner, his assistants and the Gaonburas and Dobashis (Verrier, Elwin., 1963).

Another constitutional change made was the Government of India Act, 1935, which was implemented in April 1937. This Act classified Naga Hills, Lushai Hills and NEFA Tracts as "Excluded Areas" of the Government of Assam and under Section 91(i) of the Government of India (excluded and partially excluded areas order, 1936). The constitutional position as it stood in 1937 in respect of Naga Hills Districts continued till 26th January, 1950.

4. Administrative Post Policy

Along with the establishment of these administrative centres at different strategic regions of Naga Hills, the British followed simple administrative arrangements for the districts. The administrative policy in the district adopted two-tier systems, viz., the village and the district. The Gaonburas were the heads of the administrative unit in the village level, sub-divisional officers at the sub-division level. The Deputy Commissioner was at the apex of the district administration.

The British adopted simple administrative policy towards the Nagas with no significant basic changes in the native administrative system. Nagas were mostly left to continue to rule and administer their villages according to their respective customs and traditions with only 'Lose-Control' by the Government. Accordingly, the British reinforced traditional forms of administration which well-suited the peculiar conditions of its people and society. This system ensured social continuity and facilitated the acceptance of British rule as well. In

pursuance of this policy objective, the Government used the existing institutions based on local customs and traditions. By recognizing the traditional leaders and elders as "Chiefs and Gaonburas" they tried to integrate the existing leadership into colonial administrative framework.

The power and functions of the village chiefs as representative of colonial administration were directed by the Government. They collected the annual house tax for the Government, settled cases of civil and criminal nature according to their respective tribal customs, and were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the village jurisdiction.

Another institution that served both as an instrument of pacification of the Naga and as a native team of intermediaries between the Britishers and the villagers was that of Dobashi. The word "Dobashi" was derived from "Dobhashias" which etymologically means two languages. Literally a man of two languages. This institution is meant to serve the purpose of establishing of a healthy relationship between the British and the different Naga tribes. The institution of Dobashis was an integral part of British administration and as such its personnel were paid colonial employees. As native administrative assistants, the Dobashis were the right hand men of the colonial administration in the district.

The overall administration of the district was, however, under the efficient supervision of the Sub-Divisional Officer and the Deputy Commissioner. The executive officers were exclusively manned by Europeans. As an executive agent the district officials exercised a wide range of powers and functions.

5. Judicial Policy

In matter of administration of justice, the High Court of Calcutta had no jurisdiction on the Naga Hills except in the case of criminal relating to British subjects. The Indian Code and Code of Civil and Criminal Procedure were not in force. The magistrates were advised to administer justice in the light of code and not by their letter (Bengal Judicial., 1972).

Although it was a policy of the Government to interfere as little as possible with customs of the Nagas for the settlement of disputes, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills and his assistants exercised judicial functions as well.

6. Educational Policy

Although educational policy was one of the main functions or agencies of British administration, initially government did not directly shoulder the responsibility. Naga education was, thus left to the care of the American Baptist Missionaries. However, later in the first decade of the twentieth century, the Government gradually took over some of the Mission schools and opened new schools on its own.

Education was used as an instrument of pacification as well as civilization. The objective of introducing modern education in Naga Hills was to train the native people for service to the colonial administration. Hence, with this purpose, education was encouraged and schools were established in Naga Hills.

7. Public Health Policy

British colonial administration followed both a policy of suppression and attraction. In order to win over the confidence of the native people, the Britishers extended humanitarian service to the villagers. It was done in a way to project the British influence as a source of blessings to the native people with whom they had come into closer contacts, so that this would have a remarkable impact on the rest of the tribes still living independently of their control. Accordingly, the British adopted a policy to convince the Nagas to their benevolent attitude and good intentions.

By 1866 medical facilities were provided to the Nagas with a well-equipped dispensary. When Wokha was made the first district headquarter in hills itself in 1876, a 4 bedded hospital was also opened. Soon after it, probably in 1878, when the district headquarter was shifted to Kohima, a 12 bedded hospital was set up there (Ghosh, B. B., 1979).

Missionary contact with North-Eastern part of India

The first missionary's significant contact with North-eastern part of India was made by the Serampore mission of the British Baptist Missionary Society in the early part of nineteenth century (Lal, Dena., 1980). Surprisingly enough, the initiative of this mission for starting missionary enterprises came from the Government officials felt that what could not be achieved by the military power could be gained by the power of the Gospel. They also felt that Assam and its hills tribes who were not in the least influenced by the Hinduism offered the most promising field for the spread of Christianity (Barooh, N. K., 1970).

Therefore, in order to achieve this objective, they emphasized the need for the spread of Christianity and education among the hills people.

Accordingly, on the invitation from the British magistrate of Sylhet, William Carey of Serampore mission sent Krishna Chandra Pal, to work among the Khasis in Sylhet in 1813 (Downs, F. S., 1971). Krishna Chandra Pal remained in Sylhet for 8 (eight) months during which two Khasis and five natives of Assam were converted. Later these newly convert Christians brought to Gospel to Cherrapunji.

In the mean time, David Scott, Chief Commissioner of Assam, in his letter to Bayley, Secretary to the Government of India, on 27th April 1825, suggested to invite the missionaries to start humanitarian activities among the hill tribes of Assam, for he was convinced that nothing permanently good would be obtained by other means than Gosselling. Having sure about the success of missionary work, David Scott strongly decided that even if Government's support was not immediately extended, he himself would personally finance the missionary venture. The Government apparently gave Scott the necessary permission to contact missionaries in his private capacity. Deeply impressed by the prospect of missionary work among the hill tribes, Fort William instructed the officials in Assam to invite missionaries to undertake their mission to the wild tribes of the North-eastern part of India and stated that the Government would not only give financial assistance but also salary to the people who might be employed as missionaries (Barooh, N. K., 1970). Having desire to communicate the saving knowledge of Christ to the millions of people that dwelt in "darkness", the missionaries took

the advantage of the given opportunity and without hesitation they cooperate to the Government if such cooperation would enhance the extension of the Kingdom of God.

The American Baptist Mission, accordingly, accepted the offer because they saw in it the prospect of opening the "gateway to the celestial Europe" at no distant future. Thus the proposed station was hoped to be a gateway to Tibet and western China, which would enhance its value from a missionary as well as from a political and commercial point of view (Dana, M. A., 1935). It was this double interest both in the China Mission and Shan Mission which finally compelled them to open a station at Sadhya at the extreme eastern end of the Brahmaputra valley.

The Naga mission which was abandoned in 1841 was also revived by F. W. Clark among the Ao Nagas in 1871. Godhula Brown, an Assamese evangelist, was instrumental in the preparation of the ground work for the plantation of Christianity in Naga Hills (Clark, M. M., 1978). Following their baptism, Clark decided to open a permanent centre among the Ao in Naga Hills. He brought the permission of the Government of Assam, who was a bit reluctant to recommend the case due to the recent enactment of the "Innerline Regulation Act". For this reason, the British officer did not encourage even the penetration of British traders into such areas. Therefore, at his own risk and with no assurance of protection from the British, Godhula Brownson and Clark made several mission trips to Ao region and won 9 (nine) people from Dekhahayimong. Later F. W. Clark was joined by two families, Rev. & Mrs. Perrine and Rev. & Mrs. Haggar in 1892-1893 respectively at

Molungyimsen (Imchen, Panger., 1993). Finding this village to be unfavourable for evangelism among the rest of the Nagas they moved to permanent site at Impur. Thus established the mission centre for the Naga people in October 1894.

Simultaneously, Welsh Mission started operating in Khasi region at the time of the British Baptist Mission's decision to abandon their Khasi field. At first, Dr. Wilson of Scottish Presbyterian Church, who had already been in India, suggested Gujarat, whereas Jacob Tomlin, an ex-missionary of London Missionary Society in India, suggested three places such as Khasi-Jaintia Hills, Manipur and Malour in central India, of course, given the Khasi Hills as priority. It was Jacob Tomlin, who planned to go to China through Assam and on failing to do so, went to the Khasi Hills and stayed at Cherrapunji. When the capital of Assam was officially shifted to Shillong in 1866, the Welsh Mission was also brought to the new capital. It was partly because of the generous help from the government in the form of financial assistance and partly because of friendly attitude of some Khasi rajas, the plans gradually were set up to extend the mission's area of operation even beyond the Khasi Hills. One such field was the Lushai (Mizo) Hills which eventually became one of the major fields of Welsh Mission after the former had come under the sway of British imperialism in 1891.

Early Missionary Contact with the Nagas

Grasping the opportunity of the Government's invitation, the American Baptist Mission sent two missionary couples to the mission field in the North-eastern part of India (Downs, F. S., 1971).

Accordingly, the two missionary couples, Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Brown and Mr. & Mrs. Oliver Cutter, arrived at Sadhya on 23 May 1836. Later they were joined by Mr. & Mrs. Miles Bronson and Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Thomas on 17th July 1837 (Puthenpurakal, J., 1984).

The Bronson's family moved to the hills in March 1840. Though a plan was to open a school by February 1841. The Bronsons had to rethink their Naga programme. In the mean time the Baskers who had come for the Naga work had changed their mind in favour of the Assam work, Miss. Roda Bronson who became ill had passed away in December 1840, and above all, the Bronsons and Cutters were more and more convinced that the Naga work was not worth at all that trouble in comparison with a possible future harvest among the Assamese. Therefore, N. Brown informed the Board in America the matter and at the close of his letter, he advised the board strongly not to send any more missionaries to the Nagas until at last the mission 10 (ten) more missionaries could be added to the work among the Assamese. Brown's letter to the Board had a decisive influence.

By the time, the Naga mission which had appeared to N. Brown as not-worth-the-trouble had become the place of hope for another American Baptist missionary, Rev. E. W. Clark. On 20th October 1869, Rev. & Mrs. Clark set sail from Boston for Assam and arrived at Sibsagar on 3rd March 1869, where he was given the charge of the mission press and relieved Mr. & Mrs. Ward.

Clark determined to put all efforts to "better against the heathen rock" and to press home to the poor natives the truths of Christianity, so

that the cross may “triumph” over “idolatry”. He promised to do it with “Preserving labour and firm faith”. But with more than one factor Clark’s missionary career at Sibsagar had to abandon in favour of the Nagas. At once he made up his mind to reach the Naga people and settle among them. At one time he even willing to cut off all his connections with the missionary union, and join some other society or even to work all by himself.

In 1873, Clark reviewed the work done in Assam plains for the last thirty seven years and found that there had been only about hundred converts together, which means three converts per year to a station. Therefore, to Clark Assamese mission appeared to be a desperate task.

As his zeal for the Assamese slowly diminished, there arose in its place a growing fascination for the hill tribe, especially, the Nagas.

The reasons for Clark to move forward his plans to the Nagas were:

First, that the tribal formed a vigorous race of people. Second, that they were large in population; third, that the climate of the hills were good and not enervating like that of the plains of Assam, lower India or Burma; and fourth, that once they were Christianized and united on important questions of life, they would help to push forward the cross of Christ in other part of India.²

2. Puthenpurakal, Joseph., 1984. *Baptist Mission in Nagaland: A Case Study in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective*, Shillong: Vendrame Missiological Institute, p. 59.

At the advice of Clark, towards the end of 1871 Mr. Godhula Brown, an Assamese evangelist and teacher, made his visit to a Naga village and reported to Clark about the great prospects of organizing a mission among the Naga people.

Our ardent Godhula, Assamese evangelist and teacher, full of tact and courage, caught the spirit of advance and volunteered to make the first venture.

In April 1872, Godhula and his wife, Lucy, started for the hills to remain through the rains. This was a brave venture of which no one from civilization had before attempted it.

With the arrival of Rev. Clark in Naga Hills, the work of Christian mission started off with dynamism. He lays down the initial missionary network and strategy in Naga Hills. On his initiative and strong suggestion, in 1878 the American Overseas Mission Board at Boston appointed Rev. C. D. King as a missionary to Naga Hills. Leaving his newly married wife, Anna Sweet, at Calcutta, Rev. C. D. King proceeded his missionary journey to Naga country on 25th December, 1878.

Mrs. King, Anna Sweet, joined her husband on 27th June 1879. With the help of one Assamese teacher, Punaram, the school work commenced at Samaguting. It was only in 1880, Rev. King received permission to enter the hills, and he proceeded directly to Kohima where he established a new mission centre there. Similarly, in 1885, the Government granted permission to the American Baptist Mission to open another centre at Wokha.

Missionary Contact with the Lothas

Besides the mission stations that were started at the Ao region in Molungkimong, Molungyimsen and Impur, and among the Angamis in Kohima, the American Baptist Mission also opened two mission-centres in Naga Hills. They were Wokha among the Lotha Nagas and Aizüto among the Semas.

English political control had just been extended over the Lotha tribe and a Sub-Divisional Officer with a native force was in command, making this comparatively a safe place for mission work. Besides, Wokha has a connecting link between Angamis and Aos with Kohima, also a grand trunk line of missions to the Nagas would thus be opened. The importance of an early occupation of this field had already been pressed upon the mission union. Accordingly, the missionaries in Assam took an independent decision to transfer Rev. & Mrs. W. E. Witter from Sibsagar to Wokha on an emergency basis.

Accompanied by several sepoy and 100 (hundred) coolies, on the evening of April 9, 1885, after varied and exciting experience of mountain journey, the group reached Wokha station where an old rest house was placed at their disposal by the Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills (Witter, W. E., 1886). They were made to occupy one old thatched hut as described by Rev. W. E. Witter:

We have only two rooms, mud walls, earth floor, so dirty that the mud falls off, the dirt sifts through the walls, and there is no ceiling, only the grass roof over our heads ... over wardrobe is but a rope, over which we hang our cloths. It is a puzzling question where to store all our things. This

miserable little hut is too insecure to withstand the fierce wind and fearful rains...³

For the first time on Sunday morning, August 2nd, 1885, Mrs. Witter gathered several boys about her and began the first formal teaching of Christianity to the Lotha Nagas (Witter, W. E., 1886). They found the native people quite interesting and helpful as once said by Mrs. Witter: "It will be a pleasure to work among these peoples if we are permitted to remain."

The important landmark of this beginning was the coming together of a few children on Sunday and Wednesday for singing class conducted by Mrs. Witter on 18 September, 1886 (Clark, M. M., 1978).

Assamese was used as the medium for scripture reading, prayer meeting, singing class, etc., at the initial stage.

Besides, Rev. Witter also made typewritten primers from which the Lotha boys learned to read and Mrs. Witter translated the Assamese catechism into Lotha, and it was she who began the first formal teaching of divine truth to this people. She also translated the first hymn, "There is a happy land." Afterwards Rev. Witter translated several hymns, of which were greatly enjoyed by the people even to these days. He also translated portion of New Testament, which were typewritten, but not published. After spending some times in Kohima and Nowgong, the Witters left for America in March 1888. There followed a very long gap

3. Clark, M. M., 1978. (Reprint), ed., *A Corner in India*, Philadelphia, p. 153.

before Wokha could get an American Baptist missionary designated for the Lotha work.

The long interval in the Lotha mission from the departure of the Witters in 1887 to the arrival of the Houstons in 1947 was filled by Haggard for about one year, 1896-1897 (Clark, M. M., 1978).

The missionary vision, however, being straightened financially, asked Haggard to return to work at Impur, and thus the Lothas were left for second time with no Gospel heralds.

When Longwells returned to India at the end of October 1923, they were designated to Golaghat temporarily where they opened a school with 20 (twenty) Lotha boys. In 1924, Mr. Ibonsao, a Lotha christian, who had finished his school at Impur in 1907-1908, was made the first licensed preacher among the Lothas. At the end of 1925, there were 12 (twelve) pupils at Furkating, 3 (three) at Jorhat and some 30 (thirty) in a village school.

The year from the departure of the Longwells to the arrival of the Houstons at the close of 1947 were marked by more Bible classes, Scripture translations and an increase of more converts. During this time the work of translation were done mostly by the school boys under the supervision of Anderson and Tanquist. The New Testament in Lotha was made available in 1944. A Bible School, the earliest regular Bible School in Naga Hills, was started in Vankhosung (the present mission centre) (Puthenpurakal, J., 1984).

They worked among the Lothas from 1948-1953. When they left the Naga Hills in 1953, the Lotha Baptist numbered over 4000 (four thousands) (Puthenpurakal, J., 1984).

The growth and development of Christianity in Lotha area

The Lotha Church was formed in 1923 (Downs, F. S., 1971). Evangelistic work was introduced among the Lotha community soon after the Molung centre (in Ao area) was established and between the year 1885-1887 the Witters had lived at Wokha but no converts were reported until the end of the century.

According to local tradition, Mr. Mnhomo Tungoe of Wokha village was the first convert among the Lothas (Lotha Baptist Church., 1998). He was converted during 1880s but does not seem to have been baptized nor did he establish contact with other Christians in the neighbouring Ao areas. Mr. Mnhomo and his wife considered themselves Christians, and were so considered by their fellow villagers. When he died he was buried by three Ao Christian students from Impur who happened to be passing by (Downs, F. S., 1971).

The first converts from the Lotha tribe mentioned in the record of the Platinum Jubilee History of the Lotha Baptist Churches, Vankhosung, were Mr. Nkhao from Yikhüm village and Mr. Shanrio from Tsüngiki village, who were baptised by Rev. Haggard at Impur on 2nd October 1898 (Lotha Baptist Church., 1998). During the next two years another four more Lotha boys were baptized at Impur. One of which was Mr. Shanchamo Jungio of Yikhüm village, who played a vital role in early history of Lotha church. Later he became the first Naga to visit Palestine

and America (Lotha Baptist Church, 1998). He was followed by the conversion of Mr. Chichamo of Pyangsa village.

In 1904, the first Lotha church was established at Okotso village. The evangelization of this village was, however, done both by two Lotha Christians, Mr. Shanchamo and Mr. Shanrio, and member of the village named Mr. Etssisao who had been converted in 1904 through contacts with Aos. Rev. Longwell came from Impur to formally organize this first Lotha church.

Initially, the progress of Christianity among the Lothas was rather slow. When people did become Christians they were driven out from the villages. There was much misconceptions about the nature of the new religion. For instance, in Okotso village early Christians were made to construct a church outside the village because the villagers were afraid that the church bell would disturb the spirits of the crops. Bad crops that year was all the proof required. Interestingly, they blamed the church bell rather than the Christianity itself. Parents of the Christian students also made remark that if they study well they would be able to go on for advanced education elsewhere that their children would be forced to leave home, never to return. All students were apparently withdrawn from the mission school. Others thought that Christians singing, like the ringing of the bells, was a form of demon invocation. For all these reasons the progress of church was made slow (Lotha Baptist Church, 1998).

In spite of such difficulties by 1923 six churches had been established at Mekukla village, Changpang village, Lakhuti village,

Pangti village, Okotso village and Wokha station. Until then these churches had been part of Ao Baptist Churches Association. On 21st May, 1923, representatives of early churches met at Okotso village and formed association of their own. Thus the Lotha Baptist Association traces its origin to the Okotso meeting of 1923 (Downs, F. S., 1971). In 1923, the mission decided to establish a separate centre for the Lothas work. But due to Government's opposition the mission was able to purchase a plot of land at Vankhosüng only in 1928 (Lotha Baptist Church, 1998).

Significant progress began to make among the Lothas in 1930s. From then onwards the church grew rapidly. By 1926, churches has been established in 37 of the 76 Lotha villages it was estimated that 10 per cent of the tribe belong to Christian community. In 1950, there were 72 churches with 3000 members. Within eight years after that all Lotha villages had churches. During 1940s progress was made in literature and leadership training. In 1943, the complete New Testament was printed. A number of students were sent to Jorhat Bible School and soon after the Second World War a Vernacular Bible School was started at Vankhosüng mission centre (Downs, F. S., 1971).

Government Policy of Development Programme

The concept of community development programme in India can be traced back to Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. The former started experiment of rural development in Sevagram while the later started a programme of development for the people at villages at Sriniketan. These were integrated approaches for rural development and their basis was moral.

All the schemes of developmental work undertaken from time to time during the pre-independence and post-independence periods were a continuous process. The community development programme started in 1952 was an evolutionary outcome of various trials and experiments carried out for the upliftment of the rural during the post-independence period.

The central objective of planning in India was to initiate a process of development which could raise the standard of living and open new opportunities for a richer and varied life. With these ideas the planning commission was set up in March 1950.

The community development project administration was established in 1952, directly under the planning commission. Fifty five community projects spread all over the country were established.

As the programme expanded and attracted the attention of Members of Parliament it became necessary for the administration to have its own spokesman in the house. Besides, it was decided to cover the whole country by a network of Community Development and National Extension Service Block by the end of Second Five Years Plan. Thus, the Ministry of Community Development came into being in the year 1957.

The Community Development Programme was first introduced in terms of 55 (fifty five) project located in different parts of the country in October 2, 1952. Each project consisted of 3 (three) development blocks and each development block covered 100 (hundred) villages. Further

each block was divided into units of five villages and each unit was served by a village level workers (VLW). The development programme was to cover all aspects of rural life, such as development of agriculture, communication, education, health, medium and small industries, housing, social education and panchayat.

In India, main objective of the Community Development Programmes were to provide employment opportunities, increase production in the areas of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries etc., and the establishment of cottage and subsidiary industries.

Launching of Rural Developmental Programme in Nagaland

Rural Development in Nagaland is divided into three zones. The first zone covers Kohima and Phek districts including the sub-division of Dimapur (recently upgraded district) and Peren. It includes two blocks in Phek district and four blocks in Kohima district. The second zone covers three districts such as Mokokchung, Wokha and Zunheboto. It also includes three blocks in Mokokchung district, and two each in Wokha and Zunheboto districts respectively. The third zone covers Tuensang and Mon district, considering Mon district as one of the most backward areas in terms of development in the state.

Once in a year trainings on such programme are given to the Village Development Board Secretary, Village Council Chairman, Area Council Chairman and all the officers of district development departments. Such training facilitates them to cope with the new programmes and its methods introduced by the Ministry of Rural Development from time to time.

Launching of such developmental programme by the Government and the introduction of British administration and Christian missionary activities in the state caused a diversion of the traditional way of life of the people.

Culture change can be product of a number of factors like innovations, external and internal influences and contact with different ways of life culminating in economic growth. But the factors of culture change, as in the case of the Lothas, are mainly the introduction of British administration and spread of Christianity and education by the Christian missionaries in the district during the later part of the nineteenth century. It was further more affected by the launching of developmental programmes during the post-independence period. Thus changes have occurred among the Lotha society in various aspects of life. It is true that change in one sphere leads to concomitant changes in other sphere, that is, if a society has been subjected to culture change it is found that to a certain extent it affects the socio-economic and other social fields as well.

The most important factor of culture change among the Lothas was, of course, the proselytization which began after the British and missionary occupation of Wokha district in the last part of the nineteenth century. With the advent of Christianity transformation of culture was taken place in numerous ways, viz., by the introduction of Christianity and education much of the customs and traditions were abolished and many modifications were made in the traditional customs and traditions.

Before the arrival of Christianity the Lothas were illiterate and there was no written form of any script of their own. In the midst of such dark situation education was introduced by the Christian missionaries and later by the British administrators. The first formal education among the Lothas was started by Rev. W. E. Witter and his wife in 1886 (Clark, M.M., 1978). Thus the indigenous system of oral tradition was replaced by the formal education. In the pre-Christian era the dormitory system played an important role in the Lotha society. As a result of the introduction of formal education and Christianity such importance has become non-existence. Today organizations such as churches, schools, youth elites, students' organization etc., have substituted it.

Drinking of rice beer was common and the only drink among the Lothas. The Christian missionaries forbidden the drinking of rice beer and tea was introduced as a substitute for rice beer. Today it has become a social habit among the Lothas to offer tea to the visitors instead of rice beer.

Ever since their first contact with the Britishers and missionaries people have more or less continuous contact with the outside world and now they are not immune from the dynamic of changes.

The most remarkable change among the Lothas was the change from animism to Christianity. With the gradual and progressive acceptance of Christianity they began to abandon their animistic practices and were replaced by the new practices of Christian norms of life. Before their conversion into Christianity their beliefs and practices were all firmly associated with traditional sacrifices and rituals in every aspect of

life. These things have been given up by the people themselves after their conversion into Christianity. With the coming of British administration and Christianity the practices of head-hunting which was predominant among the Lothas in the past has become totally extinct. The psychic change that removed the deep rooted traditional practices was, indeed, the most remarkable change that has taken place in the Lotha ways of life.

With the coming of Christianity the traditional festivals associated with rites and rituals have been given up by the people. Instead, celebration of Christmas, New Year's Day and Easter have gained predominancy over the traditional festivals.

The Lotha traditional marriage is much associated with rituals and formalities which are strictly to be followed. Now Lotha Christians no longer observed such traditional rites and rituals any more. Christian marriage is conducted in the church by the church officials and all those traditional practices in marriage have been replaced by the Christian ways of ceremonies and norms. However, with the introduction of various economic development the emphasis on economic factors have increased while significance of rituals in marriage have gone down.

Another important agent of change in agriculture activities among the Lothas was the introduction of various developmental programme launched by the government to improve the traditional agriculture system. Of course, the practice of jhum cultivation is still in common and practices by the people. Yet many have also availed the system of terrace

cultivation which is a recent development and new type of agricultural system being introduced by the state government in the district.

Improvement of building materials and patterns, food patterns, kitchen articles and other consumer goods are another result of the introduction of various development opportunities in the district. Many people have also changed their occupations to government services, business and contract works. Such change have improved the standard of living and life style of the people. Thus, one can say that the life of the Lotha people has been tremendously affected in various aspects as a result of the introduction of western cultural elements such as Christianity, education, dress etc., being introduced by the British colonizers and the Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century and more so after the post-independence period with more developmental opportunities in various fields.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Arnold Toynbee, a British historian, writes that all culture grow and break down and decay. Culture is responsive to challenges and become sterile. In the process of change, those culture that can cope with a changing environment can survive but those cannot they break down. Whether one can accept Toynbee's view on change of human culture or not this observation has a great relevance to the contemporary Naga situation.

The Naga society, so also the Lotha, is undergoing a rapid change in their cultural set up. In response to such situation they are adapting to a new way of life and in certain cases disregarding their old way of life. A new set of values are thus emerging in their society in which the old is disappearing, making a room for a new ones. Such changes taking place in the cultural set up of the Lothas are noticeable in their attitudes of life, family life, social life, customs and traditions, religious beliefs and practices, food patterns and dresses.

In the nineteenth century a significant landmark has taken place in the history of the Lotha people. It witnessed a change from traditional to modernity. Prior the arrival of the Britishers the Lothas lived relatively in isolative lives in their own respective villages. There was no scope of mixing up with other groups of people. During that time the British made their first entry into the Naga Hills in 1832, but to the Lothas the first contact was made only in the year 1841.

The entry of the British administration brought along the Christian missionaries. The British intervened with the indigenous political institutions and later they also introduced changes in the subsistence activities of the people. The Christian missionaries who came at the same time as the British colonizers, brought changes in the indigenous religious beliefs and practices and many aspects of life such as Christianity and education.

The impact of westernization and modernization on the life of the Lotha people has a tremendous affect which, in the long run, led to the gradual decline of traditional system of village administration, religious beliefs and practices, customs and traditions. Such transformation in the way of life of the people was due to the introduction of alien cultural elements into the Lotha's traditional way of life. Thus changes have occurred as a result of a new experience initially due to the contact with the western civilization and adaptation of a new religion and various relating aspects of style of life and more so after 1947 with improved communication, transportation, development opportunities and contact with people from other cultural groups.

The Christian missionaries not only changed the faith of the people but also brought along with them an important factor of modernization and that is education. The missionaries goaded the people to give up their tribal practices and encouraged them to take modern education and other modern practices. Education is not an independent variable. It is interlinked with economic factors. Therefore, if people have only subsistence economy then they cannot make much use of schools and

teachers etc., though it is quite possible that if people are educated then economic development may be accelerated and may readily accept an innovation.

More rapid changes taken place during the post-independence period. From 1947 onwards the Government of India launched a series of developmental programmes in the country and as a result of which hardly any aspect of life of the people that remained untouched. This brings us the need of proper understanding of socio-cultural organization as well as the nature of change that have been taken place within the Lotha society.

So far we have been saying that changes begin to take place ever since they had come into contact with the British and missionaries in the later part of nineteenth century. They had moved towards greater change at the later stage during the post-independence period. The Lothas, though not highly developed, have attained certain degree of modernity and pressing towards greater change in various aspects of life.

In this study the ethnographic materials of the previous work done by the British administrators and the missionaries are considered useful and carefully examined in the discussion of the Lotha traditional culture.

In the light of such discussion an attempt has been made, as far as possible, to present the traditional culture of the Lotha society and the new ones which have been incorporated into it. Further, an attempt has been also made to trace out their persistence of change of culture through the ages in the process of acculturation.

Thus, by studying the traditional way of life of the people we may be able to understand the dominant value of a society and the way in which changes have taken place in those dominant values and the modification or replacement by some other values. Keeping all these in view the Lotha traditional culture and the existing state of affairs are discussed.

In this final chapter an attempt was made to summarize the main factors responsible for the culture change and the existing state of affairs.

Now, with the spread of education, economic development, a new horizons and a new outlook in life, the standard of living of Wokha people have been remarkably improved. People have changed their life style by giving away their old habits and customs in pursuit of new things of modern affluence. Many people have changed their occupations. The Lothas, in general, are cultivators but there are some people who do carpentry, contract works, basketry, blacksmithy etc., besides cultivation. Consequently majority are now depending on a combination of more than one source of income. The pattern is that during agricultural seasons people engaged themselves in agricultural activities, but during agricultural off season many of them engaged themselves in other occupations. Their main interest is to earn some more cash which also clearly indicates that the economy has drastically changed from barter to cash.

In agricultural field a number of developmental projects such as distribution of fertilizer, scientific chemical remedies and demonstration

of using improved seeds have been adopted in the district. Improved tools and implements are being sold to the farmers on 50% subsidized rate and many farmers have been benefited by making use of such opportunities. Improved tools like iron agricultural implements are also being used in the villages now.

Prior to the introduction of agricultural development in the district Wokha economy was predominantly subsistence economy: household produced only for their own consumption. However, people are now tend to grow more of cash crop and the result of such cultivation of cash crops have brought Lotha's economy to market. The price of land have been steady during the last few decades but now with the introduction of agricultural and other developmental programmes in the district the price of land has also began to rise rapidly.

Unfortunately, the people of Wokha district have not yet turned their attention towards the scientific method of animal husbandry, most probably because there are other more lucrative economic fields of attention such as contract works and supply works, besides the agricultural activities. However, though not scientifically done, almost every household have got all kinds domesticated animals for both home consumption and for commercial purposes as well.

With the enlargement of various opportunities in different vocations a remarkable change in daily wages have taken place in the district. The institution of exchange of labour has virtually disappeared. Now any kind of work is paid in cash only. The present average of wages paid for any kind of work in the district ranges from Rs. 80/- to Rs. 100/-

for men and Rs. 70/- to Rs. 80/- for women but for skilled labourers it ranges from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 200/- per day. The increase of daily wages is a clear indication of economic development in various occupations but on the other hand it has also led to the breaking down of age-old traditional practices of paying wages on reciprocal exchange of labour based on kinship obligations.

Generally, the standard of living of the people refer to the economic condition, mode of dwellings, diet and dresses etc., of the people. Owing to the spread of modern education, developmental programmes in various fields and increased of income facilitated the people to improve their standard of living significantly. Their way of life has been affected and their way of traditional dresses have changed into western dresses to a great extent. Now wearing of modern dresses has become more common in the district. Traditional beds and wooden seats have been replaced by modern furniture. Even the age-old earthen pots have been substituted by steel and aluminium utensils. Now people live in tin-roofed houses. Many have owned radio, tape recorder, bicycle etc. This shows that the economic status of the people have gone up and the process of acculturation has been at work among the Lotha people.

Among the Lothas social institution like marriage is considered as one of the most important for the continuity of human society. Generally, the Lothas followed monogamy but there is no restriction for polygamy. As a result some rich men occasionally have more than one wife. Polyandry is not practiced in this area. At present, however, polygamy is strictly prohibited among the Lothas by the Christian ethics and

accordingly no husband is permitted to marry second time unless the first marriage has been dissolved by death or divorce according to legal procedure, approved by the Christian principle.

In the past, age at marriage for boys was between 17 to 22 years and girls between 14 to 18 years, but now it has been raised to 21 to 25 for girls and 26 to 30 years for boys. With the introduction of formal education there is no fixed age group for marriage in Lotha society today. Some got married at the early age and some later.

Traditionally, among the Lotha society, negotiation and decision making for marriage was done either by the parents or relatives. But such procedure is hardly followed by the younger generations as most marriages are taking place without the concern of the parents but it is arranged by the boys and girls themselves. In most cases negotiation and making of decision for marriage is left to the individual concern. This shows that the commonly accepted type of marriage among the present younger generation of the Lotha community is more of love marriage rather than parental arranged marriage.

In the past days, economic status of the family for marriage was a minor point to be taken into account but now it is the most important point to be considered, for most of the parents, particularly the girl's parents, try to seek for a marriage with a boy whose economic status is higher. Therefore, a man who did not possessed such status may be considered as unmatched for the girl. Such situation contributed to the increasing number of eloping cases in present days.

Generally, expenditure at marriage was small and manageable in the past days. It was only the closest relatives who were fed on such occasion – a pig and a fowl was just enough. Distribution of bride's meat, which was about 16 kgs of meat, was done among the closest relatives of the family only. Nowadays, the bride's meat is distributed among all the clansmen and friends in the village. It is observed that theoretically people still maintains the traditional system of distribution of bride's meat but practically they no longer follow it. The rapid increase of expenditure at marriage, due to the introduction of economic development and job opportunities in the district, indicates that the emphasis on economic factors in marriage have been increased while significance of rituals in marriage appears to have gone down.

Prior to the advent of Christianity the traditional system of marriage rituals and formalities were strictly observed. With the coming of Christianity giving of bride price to the girl's family became a decadence among the Lothas. Now bride price and presentation or dowry have no place in Lotha's marriage. Christian marriage systems are different. Today Church officials are invited to administer the engagement and marriage ceremonies. Wedding is held in the church or elsewhere. Christian marriage have no specific time to perform marriage ceremony. One can perform marriage at any season according to the conveniences of both the parties.

Christianity has a great impact on the traditional marriage system. With the coming of Christianity the traditional rituals and formalities at marriage have disappeared. But no matter how much it has affected the

form of marriage, still the inner core of the Lotha customary system of marriage remained unchanged. The present practice of negotiation and marriage arrangement, divination conducted on slaughtered animals and system of giving and distribution of bride meat are some of the elements and modified forms of traditional system of marriage.

In the pre-Christian era the dormitory (Chümpho) system played an important role among the Lotha society. But with the coming of Christianity along with modern system of education the importance of this age-old system has become non-existence. Now it is nowhere to be found in any of the Lotha villages except in some villages where it is built on certain occasion for memory's sake only. Nowadays, Christian organizations like Church, schools, clubs and students' organizations etc., have substituted the traditional dormitory system and have become the centre for the activities of youths and some play as much parallel educational role in the village life. The colonial administrations and missionary's educational system not only revolutionized the culture ethos of the Lothas but also led them to a new dimension of value system of life. Such development of broader and healthier outlook of the people enabled them to accept the new trends of change in their society. The standard of living of the people have also changed notably as a result of the effect of modern educational system. These days, mass education has provided a cultural revival among the younger generation.

The old-age traditional dresses and ornaments have all changed to modern ones. With the influence of the western cultural elements indigenous dresses have been replaced and supplemented by modern dresses like pants, shirts, blouses, coats, shoes etc. The use of such items

of modern dresses have become increasingly popular and fashionable not only in towns but also in villages. Traditional shawls which imply rank and status have also lost its significance. Yet traditional dress is still loved by some section of the people. Traditional ornaments such as earrings, wristlets, armlets, bracelets, necklaces, and dancing dresses have been changed to modern type of ornaments such as brass necklaces, finger rings, ear rings and watches. Hence, there is now hardly anybody using such type of traditional ornaments except those few people who are in the villages. For town dwellers such things have become a mere show-piece in their setting rooms.

House building materials and designs have changed but some old type of houses are still existing in the villages. With the advent of modern civilization and techniques the economic condition of the people has been raised and their housing patterns have also widely changed, specially the villages near the towns. Most of the houses are now roofed with tin or plain sheets and the way of construction of the building is modern. Even in the villages many buildings are now found constructed in modern ways with modern amenities such as sanitary arrangement, electric fittings and other modern appliances.

In place of traditional mortar and pestle there is rice mill in the village. The age-old pounding table or mortar and pestle have ceased to perform its function these days. Liquor vat is no more used by the villagers for they no longer drink liquor or rice beer (*soko*) instead things like cans and barrels are used. Bamboo shelves in which all the kitchen articles are kept, are no longer hung in the kitchen. Some well-to-do

people use modern cupboard in the kitchen. A folded plantain leaves which were used as cups have been replaced by modern porcelain cups and glass tumblers. Things like Naga made earthen pot (*Chonpfu*) and shallow wooden desh (*Tssingphi* or *Phi-Kyu*) have all been substituted by aluminium and steel utensils. Besides kitchen articles many more modern consumer goods such as radios, tape recorders, televisions, bicycles and furniture are used by the people. Foreign goods such as tailored clothes, sewing machines, lamps and other minor gadgets of western civilization gradually became household necessities for some of the Lothas.

Traditional food items contained rice, vegetable, bamboo shoots and juice, dry fishes and occasionally meat. Now people takes more of additional food and drinks like meat, fish, dal, tea, snacks and breads and tea. The food patterns of those people who are in higher economic group shows that they consume those quality food like fried food, fruits, milk and tea, snacks and bread. Some people consume tea and bread at lunch time instead of rice. As far as the method of cooking and meal timings are concerned, there has not been much changes taken place as majority of the people are still practicing boiled and smoked food for both morning and evening. Such situations taking place among the Lothas are clear indication of changes that have been taken place in their food patterns as a result of the introduction of modernization and economic development in the district.

The condition that was prevailing among the Lothas, at the time of arrival of the Gospel to them, was under neurotic fear created by a belief

in harmful spirits. The religious systems of the Lothas in which they had reached the point of change from their constant fear of evil spirits, made them embrace Christianity as a refuge. Their old beliefs and practices were replaced by a new doctrine of Christian faith. The converts no longer observe the ritual associated with so called 'heathen worship'. With a gradual and progressive acceptance of Christianity, the shift of culture loyalty from animism to Christianity began changing the outlook and living culture of the people. It was a drastic change from animism to Christianity. As a result of such change, the abandoned animistic practices were all replaced with new practices acceptable to the Christian norms of life. The age-old dormitories have also lost its relevance among the Lotha society and been replaced by a new building of a separate Christian youth dormitories where songs of praises, prayer meetings and other spiritual values were encouraged. Now, people are so influenced by to the western culture that English songs and hymns are commonly used even in church services, youth gatherings and social occasions.

But no matter how much effort they have made to abstain from the practice of animistic culture, the Lothas have not been able to shake off their old superstitious beliefs. Yet in a sense, they have a double-tiered system of beliefs. Even the religious festivals are no longer observed as they have been replaced by the Christian festivals such as Easter, Christmas and New Year.

So far we have been saying about the factors like colonial administration, Christianity and also economic developmental projects in

the post independence of India as the main determining agents of culture change among the Lotha people.

These factors ushered in a tremendous change in the life of the people and caused the Lotha society to move towards modernization. Of course, complete secularization which is the ultimate stage of modernization is yet to come. However, an urban version of Lotha culture had already grown. Now many are living in an area where urban conditions such as modern facilities for technology and education are found. Therefore, one can assume and visualize that after having come across such changes for the last few decades the Lothas will be fast advancing towards modernization and freely assimilating themselves in national mainstream of politics, economic enterprises, cultural affluence and standard of living. But, at the same time, some of the material cultural aspects of the Lothas have been rapidly changing and replacing by the new ones for, in the process of acculturation, they are more easy to assimilate to the new ones. But it is also true that some aspects of culture traits may take another form of modified cultural pattern but retains the basic elements of the original culture traits which may remain unchanged. For example, the existing practice of distribution of bride-meat at marriage by the Christians is the modified form of the Lotha tradition system fo marriage. Today, the Lotha society is struggling consciously or unconsciously for its survival by retaining the old as well as incorporating the new values. It can be also assumed that further more changes will take place and if changes are fully accepted, a time may come that some of the Lotha traditional practices and material culture as well, will be forgotten in the process of change. Therefore, the present

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