

**FOOD, CULTURE AND SOCIETY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF
TANGSAS OF CHANGLANG DISTRICT
OF
ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

BY

MALAYA MAZUMDAR

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, N. E. H. U.
SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
OF THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

To



**NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
SHILLONG, (MEGHALAYA)**

JUNE, 1995

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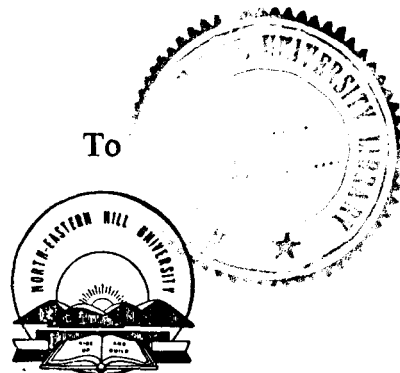
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the subject matter of this thesis entitled *Food, Culture and Society Among the People of Tangsas of Changlang District of Arunachal Pradesh* is a record of work done by **Ms. Malaya Mazumdar**. The content of this thesis did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to her, or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis had not been submitted by her for any research degree in any other University. She has carried out this work under my supervision.

In habit and character **Ms. Malaya Mazumdar** is a fit and proper person for the consideration of the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**.

P.K. Misra
(Supervisor)

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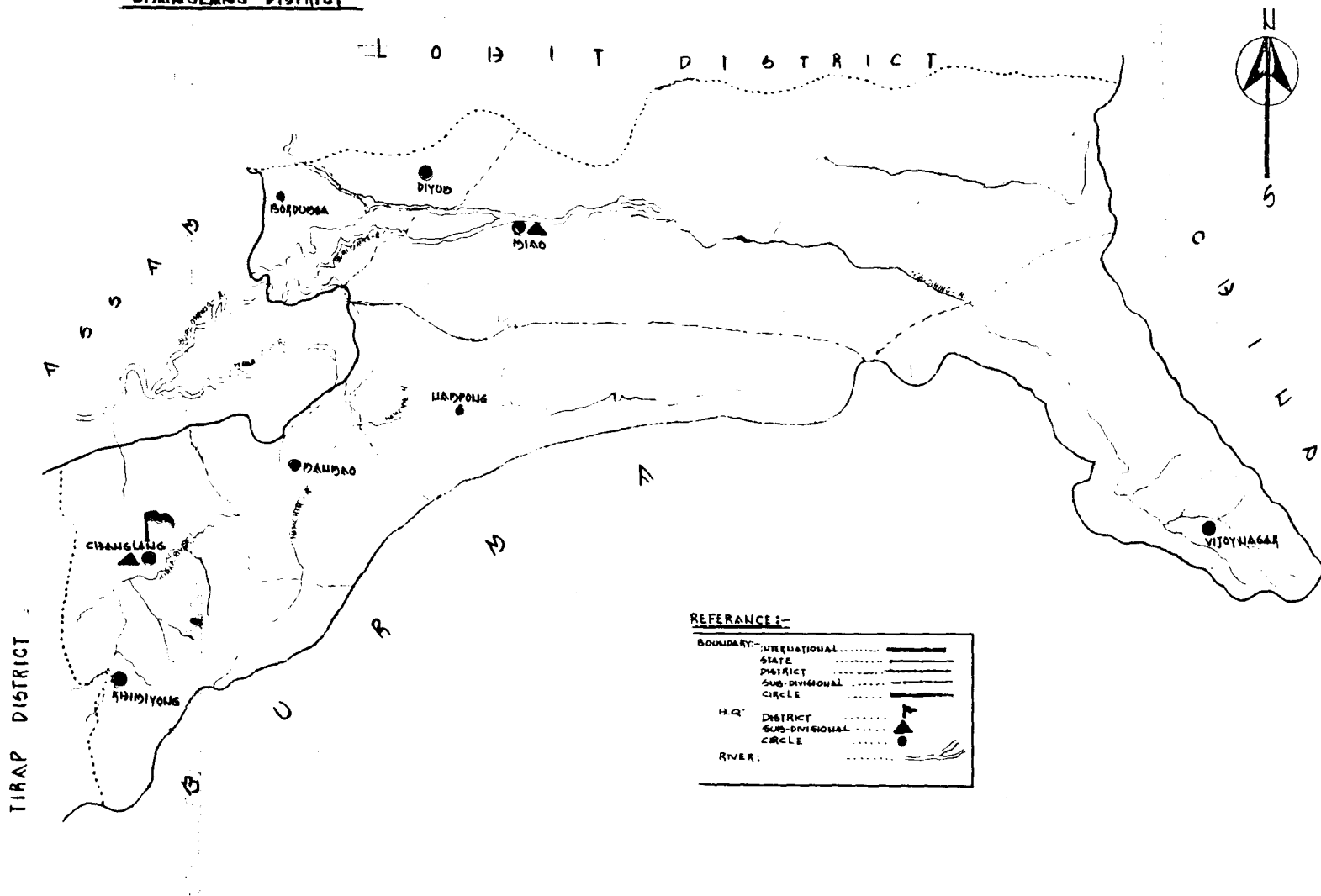
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M. Mazumdar
(Malaya Mazumdar)

NATIONAL MAP OF
CHANGLANG DISTRICT

L O B I T D I S T R I C T



REFERENCE:-

BOUNDARY:-	INTERNATIONAL	—————
	STATE	—————
	DISTRICT	—————
	SUB-DIVISIONAL	—————
	CIRCLE	—————
H.Q.:	DISTRICT	▲
	SUB-DIVISIONAL	●
	CIRCLE	○
RIVER:		~~~~~

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Food is a very convenient and exciting entry point to understand the culture of a people. It is one of the basic needs of human beings. Unlike other needs, food need is recurrent. The need for it is several times in a day. It is the source of energy and absolutely essential for the continuation of life. Food consumption of the people is dependent on what is available and what the people themselves can produce. For example, people in arctic region cannot but be meat eaters, whereas, in tropical areas the diet of the people can be highly diversified.

Food is intricately connected with the culture of the people whether they are advanced or less advanced or members of the post-industrial society. Although food meets the common need for all the people, food habit are infinitely complex being derived from man's earliest experiences and being influenced by his family as well as by the social, economic, geographic and religious environment. It must be remembered that the same food may have quite different meaning to different groups of people. For example, beef is a taboo for the Hindu, whereas for the Muslim, beef is an important item of food. Food not only satisfies hunger but also regulates in maintaining social relations. It also carries with it various kinds of

meaning. People may refuse food even during acute hunger, if there are religious or cultural taboos over the food given to them. Food habit is certainly a cultural dependent component which also expresses symbolically. For example, when a new kind of food is introduced, the normal practice is to transform that food in such a manner that it would look and taste familiar to that group of people. Again for some, meal is not considered to be a meal unless specific items of food are there. For example, for the Assamese a meal without rice will not be considered a meal, irrespective of whatever has been served in the meal. A group of people may take an item of food from other people but the way it is processed, cooked, flavoured and mixed with other food items may change the items they had borrowed. For it is only the human beings who consume food by processing it. And the processing is culturally conditioned. Cultural conditioning is a concept that needs to be answered over and over again in order to understand its mechanism and the principles on which it functions.

There are rules as to how the meal should be served and the persons who are to serve it are also defined. These rules have encoded messages about the various aspects of the society like hierarchy, exclusion boundary maintenance and social events. Food intake is a compulsive thing and it has to come in some order. It not only satisfies hunger and

regulates the material aspects but it is also important enough in maintaining social relations. By offering food, people express their social ties with one another. Among most of the societies friendly relations are established by offering food to individual or family.

Thus food acquires various functions and roles. It helps identification of the groups. It allows a glimpse into the structure of the society. It is one of those links which might have led to the development of culture right from the earliest of time. Throughout the world, there has been large scale migrations in history for new pasture for the people, as a result of which, people have borrowed cultural practices adding further complexities to their behaviour as well as concepts. All this includes food. Even today, some of the most interesting and complex aspects of human life are the food habits.

a) It allows to understand the different aspects of social and cultural life.

b) A detailed cultural description of food habits and rituals connected with food would enables one to raise certain question like the message conveyed symbolically and significance of the message.

Objective of the Study

In the present study, the researcher is basically concerned with the cultural dimension of food specially the ritual food among the people of Changlang district and the role it plays in their society. Our quest has been to find out how food is handled around the Changlang household and the process that makes food culturally meaningful and acceptable to them.

For the purpose of this study, our question will be under the following broad categories :

- a) Food relating to family.
- b) Food relating to meet reciprocal obligations.
- c) Food relating to life cycle ritual and other special occasions.
- d) Food relating to culture, belief, attitude, preference and restrictions.
- e) Food procurement.

The study deals with the following two broad points:

- a) Daily food and b) Ritual and festive food cycle.

a) Daily Food

i) Types of Food Taken Daily

Since household is the unit of our observation, an attempt has been made to cover different types of households to get a representative picture. Under this, we propose to

discuss the frequency of meals in a day and whether such a frequency is same to every member of a household. How food is served and peculiarities in mode of eating or drinking.

ii) Cooking Method and Technique

The cooking method and technique used for processing and cooking food and also the members of the family involved in doing these, will be studied in detail.

iii) Cooking Implements and Utensils

Cooking of each recipe requires specific implements and utensils. These will be studied and attempts will be made to find out whether the same are fashioned by the people or brought from outside.

iv) Recipe

Recipe is a very important aspect of culinary process. Recipe is not just the items, which of course, are important, but the order and proportion in which they are mixed to produce culturally acceptable final product, called food. Attempt will be made to study the recipe of each item prepared and eaten.

v) Cooking Crew

Cooking is one of the central household chores. Who generally cooks the food? If there is any division of labour and whether there are any taboos imposed or to who can be member of the cooking crew. These aspects will be studied in detail.

vi) Food Serving

Under food serving, we propose to discuss if there is any special way of serving or distributing pattern, who is served food first and if there is a particular place to serve food.

vii) Food Consumption

Each society has its own pattern of food consumption. Attempt will be made to find out as to what is the pattern of food consumption among the people of Changlang district, how the food is consumed, what is consumed first and last, the combination of the courses of meals.

viii) Rank Order of the Food

Attempt will be made to find out if there is any rank order of their food. Whether there is any food which is served first and which food is served last. If there is any restriction on the particular place where the food is cooked and how they maintain cleanliness.

b) Ritual and Festive Food

There are many socio-religious occasions where food has its special importance, under these following aspects will be taken into account.

i) Types of Food Taken and their Recipe

Attempt will be made to find out what types of food are taken on different festivals and ceremonies and whether there are any special food associated with each. Further, attempt will be made to study whether any special article of food is prescribed, restricted or prohibited by custom and whether taboos and restrictions apply to individuals either permanently or in crisis such as pregnancy, death ritual, etc.

ii) Cooking Method and Utensils

We propose to discuss what cooking method and utensils are used for ceremonial foods.

iii) Involvement of People and Hierarchy Projected

Rituals usually mark a change whether it is of seasons, work or social relations. For example, there may be a ritual to mark the beginning of a rainy season. It may indicate a new cycle of agriculture activities and responsibilities. Similarly, rituals observed on the occasion of marriage, indicates a new set of relationship, somebody has become a wife, somebody has become mother-in-law and so on. All these indicate new set of rights and obligations, as a result of which, some people get precedence over others. Attempt will be made to study how all this is indicated through food.

Further attempt will be made to find out :

iv) who are the people involved in processing, cooking and serving of ritual food.

v) what are the dominant symbols in the sphere of food.

vi) how food travels from one set of people to the other and how their mutual rights and obligations are expressed through food.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A quick glance on a food related subject like this, would indicate that there are substantial writings on food, their nutritional value and on its cultural dimensions in various societies.

Diet of the people largely depends on the ecology of the people, the local condition of soil and climate, the density of population, extent of urban contacts, local religious customs and tradition, relating to fast, feasts and taboos. Their diet is limited to certain extent by the environment in which they live. The Eskimos of the Arctic live almost exclusively upon meat and fish in contrast to many Mexican Indian people, whose diet is based on cereals and vegetables. Fish is used as a food by many American Indian tribes while Navajas of New Mexico and Arizona consider it unfit for human consumption (Beals and Hoijer 1953, 1971).

Though the people of Islands of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, India, do not produce any food, their staple diet is rice, and is consumed throughout the year. The indigenous population of this island are Muslims. Beef and mutton are taken during occasions like marriage, Ramjan, Milab Nobi, etc. Occasionally, they take drumstick, fruits and leaves, papaya, bread, fruits, etc. There are special

preparation during festival and ceremonial occasions. Mutton curry, *biryani* and *cheroni* are served on all special occasion like marriage religious ceremonies like *Mouloud-id* and *barjad*, plain rice mixed with ghee, beef, sweets are served during religious functions as well as during marriages. Obviously, the food habit of the people in the Lakshadweep Island suggest that they have adopted food of the people of the neighbouring mainland and they have also been influenced in their choice of food by what is produced in this the island (Das 1982). We would like to examine if the food habits of the *Tangsas* have been influenced by any other major community living near their land.

// Onges of Andaman and Nicobar have three or four meals a day. Pork and fish are reported to be taken with all the meals in combination with roots, tubers and honey depending on the availability (Swaminathan et al 1971).

The staple food of the Garos is rice. They also eat millet and maize. Tapioca is another main article of food of the Garos. In the times of scarcity, they take jungle yams and roots found abundantly in the forest. They eat almost any kind of animal food - goats, pigs, fowls, cows and they also eat non-poisonous snakes and lizards. Dry fish is one of the most favourite food items for the Garos. Their *jhum* fields and the forest provide them with vegetables and roots. Bamboo-shoots are eaten as vegetables. Generally,

they are great consumers of chillies which they grow in abundance. The country liquor plays an important role in the life and culture of the Garos. It is prepared from rice, millet, maize, etc. (Sangma 1979).

The food of the Khasis ordinarily consists of boiled rice, *kikpy* (cakes) and tuberous roots which are eaten raw. They are fond of all kinds of meat especially pork and beef. The Khasis, except some of the Christians, do not use milk, butter or ghee as articles of food. Their staple food are rice and dried fish. They also eat field rats and one kind of monkey called *U Shrieh*. Although the Khasis are such varied feeders, there are some classes amongst them which are prohibited from eating certain articles. The Khasis in general drink considerable quantities of liquor. Rice beer is a necessary item for practically all the Khasis and on religious ceremonies of importance the custom for the officiating priest is to pour out liquor to the gods on the occasion (Gurdon 1976).

✓ The Gadulia Lohar are one of the major nomadic communities of northern India. The principal item of food of the Gadulia Lohar is bread. Breads are made out of the flour of wheat or wheat mixed with millet. Bread prepared out of wheat flour is considered to be a superior food item. Breads are taken with curry made of pulses, vegetables or mutton or simply with salt and ground red or green

chillies. Cereals are used for other preparations. Pulse curry is often replaced or supplemented by some preparation of vegetables. The choice of the vegetables largely depends upon their availability. The Gadulia Lohar are generally fond of non-vegetarian food and alcoholic drinks. Some of them, however, have given up the consumption of non-vegetarian food and liquor under the influence of religious preachers and in an attempt to raise their status in the eyes of their own, as well as other castes (Misra 1986).

// Rice is indeed the cultural super food of the people of Bangladesh. It is the dominant staple and the main source of calories. Production and consumption of rice occupies a major part of the agricultural domestic work time, and the question 'have you had dinner' is expressed in Bengali as 'have you eaten rice'. Present day food groupings in Bangladesh are often said to consist of 'rice plus trimmings' which are curries of fish, meat, vegetable, fruit and sturdy roots (Nutritional Survey 1977;). Many Bangladeshis regard rice and dal (*dalbhat*) as basic foods and rice has an aura such that rice with potato (as filler) is still considered to be "rice" (Lindenbom 1986).

The most important item of food is bread which is central to the Sardinian economy. For centuries, peasant man devoted much effort to growing, shifting and baking it. These were three or four principal every day types of food

in their diet and item of special, symbolic and pictorial ones for holidays and rituals. As the Sardinian staple food, bread is symbolic of life. Canbasu reports the peasant proverb "chick hat pine indonu" bread in home (Pinna 197 :86). Minimal well being, has been expressed in the words "at least we have bread" (*Pane nemi bin amus*) and poverty as "they do not even have bread" (*mon b'ama mane pane*) (Wilson 1984).

The above brief review indicates that there is a vast variety in consumption of food. It is the rice which is the dominant item of food in Bangladesh, it is bread prepared in different ways in northern India . The Khasis and the Garos appear to be quite versatile when it comes to eating food from animal source.

Each region has its own method of blending flavour. Technology is one of the factors which influence food in many ways. Any technological change, howsoever beneficial will not be easily accepted unless it is culturally reinterpreted and transformed.

The Bemba tribe of Africa, have a number of different ways of cooking relishes. The kitchen equipment of the native women only permits her to boil or stew, and the different dishes used as relish, which she distinguishes with separate names usually have the same composition but one stewed for a shorter or longer time, with addition of

more or less water. Ukuipika the word for "stew" is in fact the general term used for cooking. The art of good cooking among the Bemba is to have sufficient groundnut sauce to add to other relishes to make palatable. To make the sauce, the nuts are pounded into shreds in a mortar and these shreds constantly taken out in the hand and squeezed into a small bowl of water so that the white oil from the nuts makes a milky fluid. The residue is then returned to the mortar and pounded again until the last drop of oil is extracted and thickish cream results. The sauce is then ready for use. It is poured on to any cooked relish, and the whole stewed up again for a short time with the addition of salt.

The Bemba have normal method of baking or roasting, but they occasionally cook foods in the ashes of open fires, and prepare sweet potatoes, maize cobs, or meat skewered on stick in this way when on a journey (Richard 1939). Abors of NEFA, do not wash cereal/milletts before cooking, nor drain the water after cooking (Rao 1971).

✓ Onges of Andaman and Nicobar Islands have a peculiar way of cooking pork. It is wrapped between leaves and then boiled or roasted on red hot stones placed in a hole. The hole then is made airtight by mud plastering and opened after 3 or 4 hours. The pork thus cooked is consumed without seasoning by salt or spices, pig fat is reported to be extracted by prolonged cooking of pork which is used as

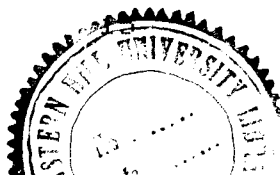


subsidiary dish by the Onges (Swaminathan et al., 1971). Cooking of rice in butter milk instead of water is reported to be practised by Toda herdsmen where milk supply is abundant (Raj and Rao 1962; Rao 1971).

Among the Garos, method of preparing rice, millet is by boiling with water in earthen or aluminium pots (Sangma 1979).

Thus it is seen that each region have their own ways of cooking and blending to produce culturally acceptable food. To produce culturally acceptable food, people have devised various kinds of techniques, tools and utensils. Even a group like the Onge which is pre-agricultural group has an elaborate way of cooking pork. Seasoning play no part in their cooking but it is important for many groups.

Serving and eating play an important role in Kanya Kubja Brahman of North India. The eating starts in the serving areas, especially when there were several members supposed to eat in one sitting. The ritual ranks of the servers and eaters in the serving area have to be appropriate. The first food plate is served to the family deity. A few morsals of food are dropped in the fire of the hearth (as a sacred daily sacrifices) a piece of bread is set apart for the cow and an offering is made to the hearth that the cook manages. However, before starting to eat, several old members of the household also offer food to the



personal deities. The orthodox eaters wear only hand-washed clothes after bathing, wash hands and feet before entering serving area, sprinkle water where they are going to sit, and carry their drinking water with them (Khare 1976).

For the people of Island of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, India, food is prepared and served by female members. But generally food is first taken by the children, next by the adult male members and lastly by the female members (Das 1982).

In Gadulia Lohar's family, food is first served to men and children of the household, and then the women consume the remaining food. Generally, people squat near the hearth to consume food but food can be taken anywhere near the household bullock cart. The utensils in which the food has been cooked and the plats in which the food has been eaten are cleaned with the ashes from the hearth and washed with water. The same process is repeated again for the meals in the evening. The Gadulia Lohar make very clear distinction between hearth and forge. No cooking of any sort is done on the forge in the same way as no blacksmith work is attempted on the hearth (Misra 1986).

The cooking area for a Hindu should be free from any contamination. In North Indian Brahmin kitchen, two types of meals are produced namely - *kachha* and *pakka*. *Kachha* literally means unripe, uncooked but in their parlance, it

means food boiled with water, which is the daily food. It is highly vulnerable to pollution and, therefore, there are strict codes of cooking, serving and eating it. It cannot be taken out of the kitchen. It is consumed there only. The *pakka* food is fried food. It is not so vulnerable. It can travel across different ranks (Khare 1976).

In all societies serving and eating play an important role. Serving involves the sequence of whom to serve first, what to serve and when to serve. Similarly in eating, there are certain spaces which are strictly demarcated for eating purposes. The same may be the case with Tangsas.

The Hindu food like any other has rank order. The highest ranking food is the purest. The concept of "purity" and pollution in the Hindu society is central and permeates not only the food area but also interpersonal and intercaste relationship. Purity is highly vulnerable. It can be distributed by physical contact, a mere sight or thought.

In Assamese community, the manner in which cooking makes food permeable to impurity varies according to the method by which it is prepared and these prepared food can be divided into three classes.

Boiled rice (*bhat*) and the dishes eaten with boiled rice. The person who cooks food according to the existing custom should be of equal or higher status and should also

maintain ritual purity. For this purpose, while cooking food, the cooks generally wear a particular coloured dress (red cloth) and the dress is kept separately to maintain its purity. All other food except *prasad* categorized as *jalpan*, can be cooked by any other member of the family and there is no ritual purity or any other formalities. *Prasad*, the food offered to God are sweetmeat and various kinds of fruits, occasionally, the rice cooked in milk, is also offered to God. Strict ritual purity is maintained with due care to cleanliness in preparing *prasad*.

Assamese community, the purity of food is also effected by sexual maturity. A boy upto the age of ten or twelve, and a girl before her first menstruation are not open to contagion and can participate in kitchen activities. For instance if a woman is preparing breakfast in the fire room in the morning and if she wants something from the kitchen (the place where main meal is cooked), she cannot herself enter into the kitchen if she had not taken bath. Her body is *bahi* (stale). But she may ask a young child to take off his clothes and fetch what she wants. It shows that the place where food is cooked is considered pure and its purity can be defiled if proper rules are not followed. It also shows that the body of a young person is not *bahi* (stale) but his clothes could be. If that be the case, he

takes off the clothes and can enter into the kitchen without defiling it (Cantile 1984).

// In the Kanya Kubja Brahmin of North India, food area is always located in an interior part of the house. It is accorded a definite priority in the planning of the domestic spaces and its place and orientation is guided by certain cultural rules (Khare 1976).

The above studies show that serving of food, the place where the food can be served, the person who can serve food and who cannot are important considerations. Hierarchy and exclusiveness are important aspect in caste society. This is very clearly reflected in giving rank order not only to food, but the place where the food is cooked and also who cooks the food. In Assamese society if a lady has not taken bath, her ritual rank order is low and she is not entitled to enter the kitchen. That is the food reaffirms the basic principles on which the society is organised. On the basis of this it may be hypothesized that the societies which lack the principle of social stratification would also not have the concept of ritual purity or impurity of food, the place where the food is cooked and the person who cooks the food. This aspect will be examined among Tangsa.

Sharing of meal is found in all societies, but it acquires a special significance in the societies where an explicit institution of power is non existent.

In Assamese community food can be exchanged between equals, and it can also be given to lower and received from the higher. For the food flows between individual and groups indicates contribution of happy and appropriate relations. Its stoppage indicates some kind of pollution or strained relations (Cantile 1984).

In most societies first crops are obtained and are offered to deities. This is because the sacrifice acknowledge the overlordship of the Gods, and it bargains protection of future harvest for the honour paid.

In Bisa districts of Africa, a special rite of thanksgiving as distinct from the Ukuposela is performed in August to September or after the main millet harvest has been reaped. This is known as 'Ukuperlo bwalua Kulimfumu', to give the (dead) Chiefs, beer, special fire stands (Onafwasa) had been built in the open near village spirit shrines especially for the heating of water for this beer. The villagers gathered round the shrines, men on one side and women on the other, and the headman began to call on the chiefs of the land : "Ya sa matipa, Sir Maluma Lubande you, the owner of the chief of the Bisa, you know your compassion all the other chiefs call them that they come to drink our beer" (Richard 1939).

During the feasts, the Garos eat and drink to excess. The preparation and arrangement having been made

well in advance, the guests are made to sit in rows. Before taking their food they first offer some grain of rice and pour out some of the liquor as a libation to God. The country liquor plays an important role in the life and culture of the Garos. It is prepared from rice, millet, maize, etc. (Sangma 1979).

Rice beer is a necessary item for practically all the Khasis and on religious ceremonies of importance the customs for the officiating priest is to pour out liquor to the Gods on the occasion (Gurdon 1976).

In most of the societies the first grain from their agricultural field, or the first morsel or a few drops of drinks are offered to the deity or dead ancestors. Giving food/drink first to deity/dead appears to be a matter of showing respect/honour to them. But the caste Hindus have a principle of "jutha" (left over) which is a ritually impure and therefore inferior food and cannot be offered to equal or higher ranking people least of all to deities or dead ancestors. Thus in any case, it appears that the principle that offering of food/drink first is an acknowledgement of priority is a wide spread phenomenon. How does it work among the Tangsa? This is an important question because the Tangsa though is non-stratified society observes a number of rituals.

All societies discussed above show some restrictions about food. These restrictions are used as identity makers and may also be useful in restricting competition for the same kind of food within a region. Such restrictions, thus are valuable not only in maintaining harmonious relationship, but also ecological balance, wherever such restrictions have broken down ecological disaster is a possible outcome.

The tribal population of Arunachal Pradesh have not been studied from their perspective. There are some story articles about their food and drinks but no full length studies on their food habits has been attempted.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Our study was based on the preliminary investigation that were conducted in the month of November and December, 1989. The second phase of data collection was started in May 1990 and ended in August 1990. Again for the final revision of the data, we went to Changlang in the month of May 1994 and also visited Changlang whenever required. Before embarking on the mission, mixed feelings of apprehension and fear regarding the people, their cooperation and attitude towards the researcher was experienced. But, the one consolation was the familiarity with the places, as the researcher's father had served in Arunachal Pradesh for a number of years. So their manners and customs were not totally unknown to the her. Even then, she as an alien among them, very often they would eye her suspiciously, whispering among themselves and so on. After the initial awkwardness, the researcher felt quite at home. The researcher had spent a considerable time amongst them conducting a door to door survey and in some special cases, a single person had to be pursued in order to get a complete understanding.

For the study, the researcher had selected two villages from Changlang district. They are Changlang village inhabited by the Lungchang section of Tangsas and Thomlom village inhabited by the Moklom section of Tangsa.

Observation

Observation is probably the oldest method used by the anthropologist which suggests observation of the respondent in a given situation. The advantage of this method is that data can be collected to some extent without disturbing the person.

Observation in this context is not only limited to the visual aspects of the situation but also involves a full range of sensual experience including smelling and tasting wherever appropriate. Besides, the researcher has also participated in most of the harvesting festivals which are considered central in the festival calendar.

Interview

As the term implies, interview is an interactional process. It provides a mutual view of each other. By interviewing people, one can get the information, as desired to the extent it is required. Interview data may include information of what the informant knows, believes, expects, feels and wants to know in course of the proceedings. Interview method is complementary to observation. Interview can also give additional information on the related matters, which may allow to see the inter-relationship between the various aspects of life.

To substantiate the material recorded through observation, the researcher used two basic types of interview techniques namely, structured and unstructured. In the structured format, the researcher had prepared a list of questions which served as a questionnaire and a schedule depending on the literary status of the informants. In the unstructured technique, it was mainly free flowing discussion.

Case Study

Apart from these, the researcher used case study technique too for detailed probing of some selected cases. She also tried to supplement her data through secondary sources as far as possible.

Field Experience

On November 24, 1989, the researcher started the preliminary studies on the "Food Culture and Society Among the people of Tangsas of Changlang District". For that purpose, the researcher had been to Changlang district with her father. Since Arunachal is a restricted area, an inner line pass from the liaison officer (Arunachal Pradesh) had to be obtained at Guwahati. The journey started on the 22nd evening by bus, reached Dibrugarh the next morning at about 5 a.m. and halted there for the day and the next morning

started for the destination with a lot of hope and expectations. They reached there at about 12 noon. Thereafter, they met the Deputy Commissioner. It was a coincidence that Shri N.S. Myan, A.D.C., Changlang, who happened to pass by the corridor, saw the researcher's father whom he knew well. The purpose of their visit was explained and he promptly arranged for some officers to help the researcher for the work and also arranged for their lodging at the circuit house. The researcher was introduced to Mr. Kengsang Kenglang, Socio Cultural Organizer of Changlang district who belonged to the Lungchang tribe of Changlang village, Mr. W. Rekhung, Language Officer, belonging to the Moklom tribe of Changlang district and Mr. Metcha, Circle Officer belonging to the Moklom tribe of Kehmiyang village. The researcher had initial discussion with Mr. Kengsang Kenglang regarding the interest of visiting the tribes. Mr. Kenglang suggested the name of some villages and sub-tribes for the study. From the Deputy Commissioner's office, which is located at a certain height, Mr. Kenglang pointed out the New Changlang Village nestling below, which is adjacent to the circuit house.

On the next day, a round of Changlang town (both new and old Changlang villages) was undertaken and the library was also visited. The researcher stayed there for a couple

of days and returned to Guwahati with a variety of first hand impressions of the land and the people.

What struck the researcher most during the visit was the warmth and hospitality of the people, their simplicity and enthusiasm. The people were spartan in their habits. Their sense of involvement and oneness made the researcher feel at ease and quite comfortable, which gave great boost to the spirit to pursue the work.

On May 7, 1990, the researcher started for Changlang to begin the research work and reached there on 8th May, in the evening. After putting up in the circuit house, the researcher met the Additional Deputy Commissioner (A.D.C.) and informed him about the programme. Accordingly, the A.D.C. made some plan to enable a visit to the Changlang village. Co-incidentally on that day, the Minister for Research, Arunachal Pradesh, Shri W. Pongte was on a visit to Changlang which is his constituency. The researcher was introduced to him and he enquired about the mission. He was quite pleased and offered to take the researcher along with his partymen to the villages. The researcher went first to the Changlang village. They were welcomed by the village head along with the villagers. Soon, the headman invited them to his house and the researcher was introduced to him and also with some other villagers. The researcher was standing there amidst strangers in a strange place with

mixed feelings. Soon, they were served with rice beer and fowl meat packed in a leaf. The researcher was in a dilemma regarding the rice beer and was debating whether to have it or not. The reluctance to take came about because she had never taken it before. So she asked for a glass of water. The Minister who was sitting next poured out the water. He then filled the glass with rice beer. He informed her that refusing it would be an insult to their hospitality, and an act of displaying disrespect to them. So for the first time in her life she tasted rice beer, she was so excited that she could not make out the taste. It was neither sweet nor bitter. Soon she noticed something - she saw the minister and the partymen poured down a few drops of rice beer along with other food items on the floor. On enquiring the reason behind this practice, she was told that it had some special significance in that there is a staunch belief that by doing so the spirit of unity remain intact and it was also believed that evil spirits will not harm them.

Meanwhile, the village head with whom the researcher was introduced earlier spoke at length to the villagers about the nature of her work. The researcher then took the opportunity of going round the house. There she met the womenfolk who were busy preparing rice beer for the coming (*Moh*) festival. She noticed that the Cheng house is a rectangular one. Except for the sitting room the other

portions of the house are divided into a number of small rooms or compartments. Such rooms are partitioned by bamboo mat. Each room has a fire-place.

From the 14th May, the *Moh* festival of the Lungchang tribe of Changlang village started. The researcher was supposed to be accompanied by the Socio Cultural Organiser (S.C.O.), Mr. Kengsang Kenglang to the Changlang village where the festival was held. As he was not there at that time, on the direction of the Additional Deputy Commissioner a girl peon hailing from the village accompanied her. While travelling in the jeep, she learned from her about the Changlang village and its people. Initially, she was talking, but then she requested the researcher not to question her about anything in connection with her work and the festival as she would not be able to give much information. The S.C.O.'s house was then visited but he was not there. Thereafter, she was taken to a well-to-do family, related to the S.C.O. Meanwhile the *Moh* festival was going on in full swing. The people were rejoicing, dancing, singing, drinking, etc. A dancing party went house to house enjoying the rice beer. In the evening, the Deputy Commissioner along with other officers had come to witness the festival. Besides the usual dancing, singing, etc. they were entertained with rice beer. The researcher was also offered rice and pork meat.

The joy of these village people knew no bound during *Moh* festival. During the days of the festival, they liberate themselves from the humdrum of day to day life and from all worldly tensions. As the village people consume a large quantity of rice beer during festival days they seem to remain intoxicated for most of the time. The researcher was impressed by their simple behaviour since she had been introduced to the village people for her mission; they were quite helpful in her work. The researcher spent a considerable time in the Changlang village studying, observing and interviewing the people. Gradually, her nervousness and apprehension started diminishing and she began to feel at home. On the other hand their response to her was improving day by day. Although it was a bit problematic to find people to answer her questions as they were very busy with their cultivation and other activities. The researcher used to feel bad that she was taking precious time for her interest. While going to meet them, at times she even felt as if was not welcomed by them. At times it seemed as though she was interfering or rather disturbing their normal pattern of life. It could also be felt that on seeing her, they started whispering among themselves. Specially it seemed to her as if the womenfolk were withdrawing away from her. But even then, the researcher had to carry on relentlessly to fulfill the objective of her

visit, oblivious of their feelings and reactions towards her. Realizing this difficulty, the researcher accompanied some of them to their paddy fields. This enabled her to talk to them for a longer time and also observe what they do in their fields. During the course of her work the researcher was informed by the villagers that there was an old man who would be of great help to her in giving information about their customs, legends, etc. The researcher approached him. He agreed to help her provided she was agreeable to give him a bottle of good quality rice beer and packet of biri each day. He had similar deals with other visitors like her who were eager to get information. The researcher readily agreed and she also gave him an Assamese *gamosa*. He was very pleased and became a willing person to talk to her and communicate whatever he knew about the community. However, he could not explain to her about the Wangjang ritual which is observed individually. This ritual is an expensive one, generally only a few people of the village can afford to observe it. There are several restrictions for observing this ritual. The old man himself knew to recite the hymn of the ritual. He informed her that he could not tell her the hymn as it is. As per his belief, he was afraid to chant the hymns in his own house. So he came to the researcher's camp in the evening to explain in detail the implications of observing the *Wangjang* ritual.

The first impression, the researcher had of the old man was that he was a jolly good old fellow. He was of medium height, with a round face, small eyes, and was suffering from goitre. He was wearing a lungi and a shirt and was smoking a biri at his neighbours' place. To the researcher it appeared that the old man was a simple ignorant villager. The villagers then informed the researcher that he had no family and was a solitary man. Being alone, the villagers had a great sympathy for him. Very often he had his meals at his neighbours' place; he occasionally cooked food for himself. Most of the time, he drank rice beer and smoked. This is how he spent his time. His simplicity seems to draw a lot of people to him. Moreover, being a priest he was respected by the people. With the researcher he became friendly very quickly and made her feel at ease. In the course of the researcher's interaction with him, she realized one thing that he was a short-tempered man. Very often when she asked him a question in between he used to get annoyed and sometimes refused to talk. The researcher then would pester and plead with him. He would then slowly resume the conversation. The researcher was able to get a lot of information from the old man. She also visited a number of villages there, namely, Thomlon, Khemiyang, Yanman.

The first visit was to New Thomlom village. Mr. Rekhung the District Language Officer accompanied her. It is situated 5-6 kms. away from the district headquarters, inhabited by the Moklom subtribe. First, the researcher was taken to a relative of Mr. Rekhung. There she was offered rice-beer and boiled eggs. Later, she was introduced to other villagers too. From the next day onwards, the researcher ventured out alone in the village walking around, taking her own time, interviewing the villagers and so on. She visited nearly all the households. Sometimes she got a very enthusiastic response and sometimes rather cool.

While staying at the Changlang circuit house Sri T. Ngenmu, Minister of Arunachal Pradesh called the researcher to meet him, on hearing that she had come to Changlang for research work. He was very pleased and thrilled at the idea that the researcher being a girl and that too all alone had come for research work to Arunachal Pradesh. He gave a lot of encouragement to pursue her work. He then asked Sri Tangha, Assistant Engineer of P.W.D. (of Moklom tribe) to accompany her to Khemiyang village to see their *Moi* festival. They first visited the house of Mr. Phoshum Khomhun's who was a political leader. The researcher's meeting with him proved to be very fruitful as he helped her a lot. His mother, sister and other family members gave a lot of valuable information. The researcher took part in

the *Mol* festival there. During the course of her visit she stayed at Mr. Phushum Khem^hum's relative's house. There she also met an old man who intimated her regarding various aspects of their custom. After spending a couple of days, the researcher returned to her headquarters.

Yanman Village

On the 27th May, the researcher went to visit Yanman village to see the *Mol* festival. There she visited the village home of the minister Sri T. Ngemu along with some other officers. She stayed there with Mr. P. Khem^hum's sister and got quite well acquainted with the family.

During the day, the researcher was taken round the whole village by Mr. Khumhum's sister. Going around with her proved to be very helpful as she acquainted her with the surroundings and the culture. The researcher saw the *Mol* festival which is celebrated during the harvesting period. In the evening gathering took place in the minister's house. The minister was sitting by the fire-place along with all the villagers. They were then offered rice beer. The minister then asked her to question the village elders and also others present there for her research work. Some of the villagers spoke in their dialect and the minister was kind enough to interpret what they said. It was a kind gesture on his part. The whole night ended in eating,

drinking and talking. In the morning, the researcher noticed that a variety of insects had feasted on her, then she realized why the people were constantly in the habit of slapping their body while talking at night.

Next morning the Researcher took a walk and came across a ruined hut. On enquiring about the hut they told her a peculiar aspect of their life. In their community, birth of twins is considered to be inauspicious. As soon as twins are born they are taken to a jungle and killed. The inmates of the house then desert the house and build a new one for themselves.

After collecting some more information, the researcher returned to Changlang. Thereafter, she again visited the adjacent villages of Changlang and Thomlom to collect more data and become conversant with their different facets of life.

In the course of her visit, the researcher had become acquainted with a particular Longchang family called the Taizus. Within a short time span, the researcher had developed a close relationship with the family to such an extent as to leave a permanent impression on her memory. Some other people with whom the researcher had a close relationship is Mr. Kamtu Mamai (District Statistical Officer) belonging to the Longchang tribe and also with Mr. Rekhung (District Language Officer). As a whole when,

looking back upon her visit, she realize that apart from the above mentioned persons, the researcher had friendly relations with a number of people. Interacting with them, interviewing them and observing them under various situations of day to day life helped the researcher to collect a lot of data. Without her realizing so, she had become an observing participant. The most important thing was that her continued presence - 'a hang on' technique. There were moments when the researcher felt depressed for being let down and ignored. But since she was 'hanging on' she got involved in something else. But all this would not have been possible if people would not have been friendly. Their friendly gesture gave her moral strength to go on and on. Reflecting back on the situation, she cannot deny that she being a female and alone did help her a lot. Though now they are somewhat exposed to the role of data collectors of social events in a limited sense, they do not have any idea as to how to fit females into that role. They were ofcourse rather over protective about her and tried their best to provide what she needed. In this respect the minister, bureaucrats and people were all very helpful. The researcher became a learner, and the people became her enthusiastic teachers. Her initial hesitation and fear turned into a rich experience. Whenever she was bored, the scenic beauty of this area kept her totally absorbed.

On her recent visit, the researcher was very sad to learn the shocking demise of Mr. Mian, A.D.C., Changlang. It was a personal loss to her as he was the person who was the moving force behind her pursuance. She is very much indebted to him for his help which enabled her to collect data. He guided her through the proper channel and introduced her to a lot of people who were of great help to her. Another shocking news was the death of the old man who can be called a store house of information relating to all the customs, practices and traditions of the Changlang tribe. He had the confidence and appeared to know all cultural practices and tradition of the Changlang tribe. His death too was a great loss as she was looking forward to meet both Mr. Mian and the old man. The purpose of her visit was to make sure that she had not over-looked at any information and to refresh her memory and get hold of any information which may have escaped her attention on previous visits.

Limitation of the Study

For the study, the researcher decided to project the food habits of the Tangsas of Arunachal Pradesh. The Tangsas are comprised of a number of sub-tribes, of which, she has selected the Lungchang and Moklom group of Changlang and Thomlom villages. Her universe is the complete study of

two villages and she also gathered information from two more villages comprising of Lungchang and Moklom subtribe to support her data. In her thesis the local terms that have been used are both from the Lungchang and Moklom dailects.

In the next chapter, introduction to Arunachal Pradesh, Changlang district in particular along with the origin, the social life and cultural life will be discussed.

C H A P T E R - I I

SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE OF THE TANGSAS
OF THE CHANGLANG DISTRICT OF
ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Arunachal Pradesh became a full-fledged state on February 20, 1987. Till 1972, it was known as NEFA (North-East Frontier Agency) comprising of five districts - Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap - named after the major rivers flowing through each of them. It has been given the Union Territory status on January 20th, 1972 renamed as Arunachal Pradesh. The capital of the state is Itanagar. The name of the capital is derived from the historical 'itafort' meaning 'fort of bricks' built in the 14th Century A.D. (Dutta 1992).

Arunachal Pradesh is bounded by Bhutan, Tibet, China and Burma in the north and north-east and spreading over an area of 83,743 sq. km. along the southern slopes of the Patkai Hills around the Brahmaputra Valley, Arunachal Pradesh stands like a sentinel of the country in the north-east. For effective administration, it was divided into eleven districts namely Tawang, East Kameng, West Kameng, Upper Subansiri, Lower Subansiri, East Siang, West Siang, Dibang Valley, Lohit, Changlang and Tirap with administrative headquarters at Tawang, Seppa, Bomdila, Daporijo, Ziro, Pashighat, Along, Anini, Tezu, Changlang and Khonsa. Recently, on September 22, 1992, the Lower Subansiri district has been divided into two districts. The six circles viz., Itanagar, Doimukh, Sagelee, Mengig, Kimin and Balijan are bifurcated from Lower Subansiri district and

are included in the new district called Papun Pare with its headquarters at Doimukh.

The People

The inhabitants of the state can broadly be classified into the Indo Mongoloid racial group. The major tribal contributors to the great association in the state are some twenty five groups namely :

- 1) The Monpas, Sherdukens, Akas, Khowas, Mijis, Nishing (Bangnis) and Sulungs of Tawang, East and West Kameng districts.
- 2) The Nishings, Apatanis, Hill Miris, Tagins and Na of Upper and Lower Subansiri districts.
- 3) The Adi groups, Membas and Khembas of East and West Siang districts.
- 4) The Mishmi groups, Khamptis, Singphos, Meyors or Zakharrings of Lohit and Dibang Valley districts.
- 5) The Noctes, Wanchos, Tangsas and Lisus of Changlang and Tirap districts.

The Geography

The horse shoe-shaped territory of Arunachal Pradesh located in between latitude 26°.28'N and 29°.30'N and longitude 91°.30'E and 97°.30'E is a beautiful mountainous area with high hills and valleys. The heights of the mountain peaks show a great variation ranging from 6400

metres to 1829 metres in the Tawang District. The highest peak is Kangte (7090 metres) in the Tawang District.

Five major rivers - Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap with a large number of tributaries have drained the water of this vast area to empty in the Brahmaputra. The main sources of these rivers are the Himalayas in the north and Patkai Hills in the South. These rivers besides providing food to the people in form of fish have of late provided hydel power projects to illuminate the hitherto formidable land.

The climatic condition prevailing over the entire area of Arunachal Pradesh is highly influenced by the extremely variable nature of the terrain. The vegetation of the whole of Arunachal Pradesh varies greatly in relation to the respective elevation of the different regions. Forests of Arunachal are the most important wealth. Wild banana and bamboo grow abundantly throughout the state. Some of the tribal communities use the banana leaves for roofing their houses. Besides serving as building material the varieties of bamboos have help the people of Arunachal in developing a wide range of basketry for their household and other needs. The local people of Arunachal Pradesh thrive on many forest products.

The History

Till the advent of the Ahoms in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh was an unknown country to the historians and the travellers. For the first time in the history of the area, mention of Arunachal Pradesh appears in the Ahom chronicles and the Muslim accounts of the 17th Century. Much earlier to that in the epic age, Arunachal Pradesh has been mentioned as the abode of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses (Dutta 1992).

Archaeological evidence has shown that palaeolithic as well as neolithic men did inhabit this region. But after that follows a long gap in the knowledge till 10th Century A.D. when the cultures from the Brahmaputra Valley began penetrating these hills. Thus the foothills of Arunachal are studded with ruins of forts, temples, etc. belonging from the 10th to 16th centuries. The 17th and 18th centuries saw the rise of Buddhist cultures in the Western and Eastern flanks of the territory.

Three categories of sites/monuments are found in Arunachal Pradesh. Firstly, are the traces of the political and cultural forces from the Brahmaputra Valley that extends themselves into the hills. Among these falls the ruins of forts, temples, ponds and roads. Secondly, are the Buddhist cultures of stupas, chortens, monasteries and other structures. Thirdly come the stray traces of past events

from local history. Among them fall some stokades, canals, carved stones, walls, etc.

The widely scattered archaeological remains which bear testimony to the rich cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh are gradually being brought to light. The ruins so far brought to light are Bhismanagar palace in Dibang Valley, Malinithan in the foothills of West Siang, Itafort in the foothills of Lower Subansiri and Noksa Parbat in the foothills of East Kameng. Besides, there are few other sites of importance such as Parasuram Kund, Mudfort and Siva Linga in Lohit, a Buddhist stupa in Tirap district and Bhalukpang in West Kameng, Tamreswami temple in Dibang Valley.

Origin and Migration

The people narrate their origin on the basis of myths prevalent among them though no written records are available. Adi myth and belief about the first man on earth and his struggles for life says that "*Pedung Nane*" the great spiritual mother of the millions, gave birth to millions of children and released them on earth to find their own fortunes. Her youngest and the last issue was a human body" (*Dshang Ering*). That first man was later known as *Tani* the ancestor of the Adis. He had to struggle a lot for survival and establishment of human supremacy on earth. Similar

mythological belief exists in the society of Apatanis, Nishings, Hill Miris, Tagins, and the Miris of Brahmaputra valley. All these people feel very proud of calling themselves the descendants of the first man *Abo Tani*.

Similar to the myths of origin, the stories of migration are also varied and many. The tribes to the north of Brahmaputra Valley point towards north for their migration while those in the south say that they have migrated either from Upper Burma or from Hukong Valley across the Patkai Hills (Dutta 1992).

Language

Linguistically, Arunachal Pradesh may be called the Paradise for the linguist. The major tribal groups with their sub-groups speak some 60 to 70 dialects independent of each other, although they all belong to the Tibeto-Burmese branch of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. None of the tribes have any script for their languages except Khamti who has its own script and a relatively important literature. Although the people do not have written literature yet the oral literature is quite abundant in mythology, folk lore and folk songs. They can express many shades of meaning by the elaborate system of modes and aspects, necessary for their concept (Dutta 1992).



Plate I
A view of Changlang town.

Introduction of Changlang District

This study is focussed on the Tangsas of Changlang District of Arunachal Pradesh. The Changlang district is situated in the south-eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh. It is surrounded by the State of Assam and Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh on the north, on the south by Burma and on the West of Tirap district and on the east by China.

Meaning of Changlang

The original word "*Changlangkan*" is normally used as "*Changlang*" only, in normal course of talk. The very meaning of the original word "*Changlangkan*" is as follows:

Chang - a species of poisonous herb/wild walnut generally used for catching fish by mixing it to river water.

Lang - represents cutting of the branches for the above species of herbs to set its fruits as well as its leaves for using it in the river to catchfish.

Kan - is the top of the hill.

As such the general meaning of the word *Changlang* is that a hill top where the people discovered the poisonous herbs and cut and collect the branches, fruits, etc. for using it in the water to catch fish.

The particular *Kan* is, however, located 10 kms. away from present Changlang near 17th Mile in Margherita Changlang Road (Kenglang, 1989).

The tribes inhabiting the district are known as the "Tangsas". The meaning of the word "Tangsa" is "Tang" meaning hill and "Sa" meaning children. Therefore, literally, it means "children of the hills" (Kenglang 1989).

The Tangsas are a group of scheduled tribe Changlang district in Arunachal Pradesh. The main sub-tribes of the Tangsas are :

1) Lungchang; 2) Moklom; 3) Tutsa; 4) Yogli; 5) Lungris; 6) Mosang; 7) Ron-Rang; 8) Taipis; 9) Kheming; 10) Tikhak; 11) Have; 12) Ponthai; 13) Langphis; 14) Sangwal, and 15) Mongrang.

The Lungchang are mostly inhabitants of Changlang and Miao - Circle and the Mokloms are inhabitants of Khemiyang. Some of the Mokloms have migrated to Miao Circle in 1968 and 1969.

The Tangsas mostly reside in the Manmao and Nampong circles. They are few in number. They have settled in Miao and Bordumsa circles also. The "Tikhaks" mostly reside in Nampong, Manmao and few places in Miao circle. The "Tutsas" are a small group of Tangsas. They are the inhabitants of Changlang circle along Changlang - Khonsa road. Recently, in 1990 the Tutsas have been recognized as a major tribe and they are no longer considered under the Tangsas. Each sub-tribe speaks a dialect of its own distinct from the dialects of the other sub-tribe.

The Tangsas are medium stature and well-built. Their features are decidedly Mongolian. The younger generation crop their hair but the older people wear their hair long, tied into a bun at the top of the head.

Origin of the Tangsas

The Tangsas' common belief is that they originated in a hill called Masai Sinrapum, which is supposed to be somewhere in the east beyond Burma. In other words they consider themselves as a migrant population wherever (in search of cultivable lands for their livelihood) they may be living at present (Dutta 1992).

Trade in the Village

Inter-village trade is common among the Tangsas. The Tangsas chiefly trade in handloom products, tea-leaves, salt and beads for daos, fishing nets, spears, pen-knives, and opium.

These articles are sometimes purchased with money and sometimes even barter system is practised to a certain extent. There is no particular medium of exchange but bamboo tube of tea-leaves is counted as one unit. For example, a fishing net of medium size is exchanged for eight tubes of tea-leaves and a dao or a spear for four. Money,

however, is gradually replacing their indigenous medium of trade.

Village Councils of Tangsas - Continuity and Change

The village councils in Changlang district of Tangsa tribe signifies its age old traditional custom carrying a promising preservation of its endless tradition in continuity with time bound changes. The changes that have taken place are economical in nature.

The village councils of the Tangsas are popularly known as "*Khaphung*" which means settlement of a case while "*Mingphung*" symbolizes a settlement of dispute of two or more villages. On the other hand *Mingphungwa* refers to the council members who settles the disputes of the villages (Rekhung 1993).

Selection or Ineligibility of Phungwa

The *Phungwa* or Council members of "*Khaphung*" are generally constituted of one member from each clan of the village. To be a *Phungwa* one must have age old experience and should have the memory of past events of the village or society. According to the tradition, Tangsa women are not entitled to be council members though they may have better experience than any male council member. But it is not a direct attempt to lower the status of women within the

Tangsa society as Tangsa women have ample rights of claim and place their grievances before the court of village councils in the nick of time. On the other hand the Tangsa women have an important role to play during the festivals so far as traditional songs and dances are concerned. They also play an active part in household activities and social welfare.

The *Phungwa* in Tangsa society is neither selected nor elected by the community. It is purely on the basis of their merits (Rekhung 1993).

Head of the Village Council (*Khaphung*)

The "*Lungwang*" (Chief) is the Head of the '*Khaphung*', i.e. the village council. There is a pertinent reason to have a *Lungwang* or Chief right from the origin of the Tangsa society. The practice of having a *Lungwang* in the Tangsa society exists even today and the main role of the *Lungwang* is to lead the whole village in every sphere of social and cultural life. The *Lungwang* has to perform a great deal during war and peace. The *Lungwang* can be compared to any present day political administrator. The *Lungwang* is the real commander of the village and is assisted by *Ngungwa* of the village, who also enjoys a high status and respect from the villagers. He performs special rituals on the occasion of hunting a tiger or hornbill and

in return he is offered with fine teeth of tigers or the longest fur of hunted hornbills.

The *Lungwang* is neither selected nor elected by the villagers or village councils, but enjoys or holds the post traditionally on the basis of hereditary from the forefathers. The *Lungwang* should be active, well-trained and well-experienced in village affairs. The post of *Lungwang* is not terminable even if he is not active or under aged. In case he is under aged he has to perform as a *Lungwang* and he must attend the "*Khaphung*", i.e. village council till he attains the right age (Rekhung 1993).

Powers and Functions of the Village Councils and the Role of *Lungwang*

According to tradition, before the proceedings of "*Khaphung*" (Settlement of case) the *Phungwa* and *Lungwang* offer prayers by pouring fine rice brew into the hearth of the *Lungwang's* house three times in the name of "*Khothak Rang*" (deities) for just and fair decision of a case.

The *Tangsa Khapung* (village council) is believed to be supreme even today except for a few disputes and minor incidents amongst the younger generation. The decision of the village councillors (*Phungwas*) in presence of the *Lungwang* is final and the punishment or fine imposed on the guilty/culprit cannot be challenged or appealed before the

court of other village councils or local administration (Rekhung, 1993).

The village councils of *Tangsas* commonly function and proceed on the following subjects, which are a regular occurrence in the society.

Thanglam (Bride price of a woman)

According to the tradition of the *Tangsas*, in a marriage the bride price is to be borne by the boy's parents. When a boy and a girl fall in love and decide to get married, the parents of both the boy and the girl call on some members of the village council to fix the day for settlement of the bride price. The bride price of *Tangsa* woman is two buffaloes, one male and one female, two cows, one male and one female, five pigs and rupees three hundred in cash. On the day of the marriage ceremony, at least, one buffalo, one cow, two pigs (one for the maternal uncle of the girl) and rupees three hundred is to be paid to the parents of the girl. The remaining part, in kind or in cash, shall have to be paid in due course. But when there is a delay in the payment of bride price the parents of the girl inform the village council to look into the matter. The *Phungwa* then calls the bridegroom/or his near relatives to explain the cause of delay in making the payment and ask them to take steps for immediate payment of the remaining

part of the bride price. When a boy's parents cannot afford to pay the remaining part of the bride price the *Phungwas* may ask some well-to-do person to make the payment on the condition that the boy's parents will repay the amount along with interest in due course of time (Rekhung 1993).

***Jungnam* (Divorce) System of the *Tangsa* and Its Price Thereof**

Incidences of divorce in the *Tangsa* society are very few. Divorce by a boy or a girl is never appreciated in the society and it is looked down upon by the people. Hence, there are not too many divorce cases in the *Tangsa* society. When a girl is divorced a heavy fine is imposed on the husband which he has to pay either in cash or kind. Whenever, there is an incident of divorce the parents of either the girl or the boy immediately inform the village council members. The *Phungwa* on receiving the call or information request the *Lungwang* to settle the case which is done at the residence of the *Lungwang*. When the divorce is from the girl's side one of the *Phungwa* members, makes enquiries from the girl to find out the reason for her decision to divorce her husband. The *Phungwas* then discuss the matter and during discussion the parents of both the girl and the boy and some villagers are allowed to interfere in the discussion to a certain extent. The decision of the

Phungwas is placed before the *Lungwang* and the *Lungwang* gives the final verdict which has to be accepted by all. The verdict of the *Lungwang* is in the following way :

1) Return of the two buffaloes given as bride price or the price of the buffaloes in cash.

2) Return of three pigs or the price of the pigs in cash.

3) Return of one cow or the price of the cow in cash, which may be excused if the statement of the girl is found satisfactory.

4) Return of rice used during the marriage ceremony.

5) Children will remain with the father. However, cases of divorce are usually not seen in the *Tangsa* society.

In the case of a husband divorcing his wife the proceeding is the same. However, in this case the return of cash or kind does not arise as there is no system of groom price. But if a boy divorces his wife in order to marry another girl, then a fine is imposed on the boy (Rekhung, 1993).

Hah Kha/Land Dispute

The land dispute between villagers is very common in the *Tangsa* society. Generally, land disputes take place during the *Jhum* cultivation season as well as wet

cultivation season when a farmer is unable to locate boundary marks of his land and encroaches upon others land. Often physical conflicts take place and in such disputes the *Phungwa* plays an important role in bringing about a settlement. However, in land disputes the *Phungwas* approach the village people instead of the *Lungwang* to help them in settling the disputes. The villagers help the *Phungwas* in locating the demarcation lines and the disputes are settled by imposing a fine of one pig on the defaulting farmer. The *Phungwas* also erect stone pillars on the demarcation lines in order to avoid future land disputes (Rekhung 1993).

***Likanam Kha* or Property Dispute within Family**

Property disputes are very common in the *Tangsa* society. Most of the property disputes relate to domestic animals, traditional gongs of their forefathers, guns and money left by the deceased father. The disputes take place because of the unequal distribution of property between the brothers. According to the tradition of the *Tangsas* the eldest son has the right to acquire more than the other sons. Sometimes the eldest son acquires every thing and refuses to share the property with his younger brothers. The younger brothers would then approach the *Phungwas* to settle the dispute. The *Phungwas* settle the disputes according to the oral traditions of the *Tangsas*, where the

eldest son gets a larger share than the younger sons. The eldest son will also get a bigger share of the bride price of their sisters, but the bride price of the mother or grandmother if left unpaid by the father or forefathers, will have to be paid by the eldest son. Land disputes are also very common among the brothers of a family of the *Tangsa* society and these are also settled by the *Phungwas* in the same way (Rekhung 1993).

Method of Cultivation of the *Tangsas*

Each village comprises of a number of houses called *Jum*, *Jin*, *Him* and so on. Besides the dwelling houses there are other such houses such as the *Sam-tap* (granery), *Pik* or *Pik-tap* (farm house). Each village has its own field for cultivation either in the vicinity or in the far distance.

Shifting cultivation is the traditional method of sustenance. They are primarily agriculturists. The output of the fields is the chief means of their livelihood. Recently, some of the people have tried to adopt permanent cultivation in those areas where suitable land is available.

Paddy, millet, maize and arums are the major crops. They also grow winter and summer vegetables of several varieties. The indigenous vegetables are sweet potato,

brinjal, ginger, chilies, pumpkin, cucumber or local coupea. Other vegetables are also grown in their fields.

The Dress Habits of the Tangsas

The Tangsas have a fairly elaborate style of dressing. The dresses of the men are generally home made checked lungis with red, yellow and white yarns and ready made shirts. The original dress of a Tangsa man consisted of a loin cloth, sleeveless shirt open in front and a piece of cloth for the head. All these items were made by the Tangsa themselves. The Tangsa women also have their own dresses. The skirt is a single piece of cloth of about 37 inches in length and 12 inches in breadth, with beautiful geometric patterns, such as zigzag band with internal repetition, rectangular cross-hatching, checked skirt which are worn round the loins reaching down to the knee joint.

The researcher has carried out her field investigation among the Lungchangs and Mokoloms, who inhabit the valley of Tirap. Tirap is the name of the river that passes through the district, i.e., Changlang. Moreover, the Mokoloms and the Lungchangs live in the close vicinity of the district headquarters also named Changlang.

The Settlement and the People

The Lungchangs who call themselves "*Lamphok Jamrok*" which means 'originating from stone or from the leg of an orphan lady', are one of the major sub-tribes of the Tangsa (Rekhung, 1988). They are mostly the inhabitants of the Changlang village, which is situated at a distance of one kilometre from the district headquarters.

The total population of the village is 451. The new Thomlom and Khemiyong regions which are 5 to 6 kms and 34 kms away respectively from Changlang are inhabited by the Moklom tribe. The total population is 126 and 140 respectively. They also inhabitate the village like Yanman which is 18 kms away from the district headquarters. The Mokloms are one of the major sub-tribes of the Tangsas. They belong to Indo-Tibeto-Burmese race who migrated from Burma sometime in the sixth century A.D. and settled in the village, named Tutnu, now in Tirap district. It is not exactly known to them as to how the human races came into being prior to their existence, but there are many legendary tales regarding the origin of the human being with special reference to Moklom sub-tribe of the Tangsas of Changlang district.

According to the Moklom legend, at one time there was no difference between monkeys and human beings. Man also had tails in the past. Both men and monkeys lived in

dense forest and ate fruits, leaves, crops, etc. But as time passed one group of monkeys separated themselves from the others. According to the legends this group of monkey, gradually started to lose their tails and started living on the ground instead of the trees. They also started to walk on their legs and moved from one place to another in search of food. It is also believed that fire and drums also originated from the time, monkeys came into existence which are now used as drums by the Moklom people during the Mol festival and fire fiction of cane rope on a piece of dry wood to perform "Chamrom", a ritual on the festival ground. During the festival folk singers narrate the origin of human being, fire and drums through their songs.

There is only one primary school in New Thomlom village. For further studies the students are required to come to their district headquarter, i.e., Changlang. The Changlang village is situated adjacent to the district headquarter. They have got the advantage of getting the benefit of the schools, hospitals and other activities which the district headquarter has. In the district there is one higher secondary school, 4 middle schools, 28 primary schools and 6 pre-primary schools. Hostel facilities are also available for students in some schools.

There is one public health centre. Most of the villagers have to travel to the district headquarter for

medical treatment. The district medical officer is the head of the medical organisation in the district. He is assisted by medical officers and other subordinate staff. He is also the inspecting officer of all Government hospitals and dispensaries in the district.

There is a co-operative society in the headquarter of Changlang which is subsidised by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh. It caters to requirement of various articles of the people living there. There is a Post Office, a Branch of State Bank of India, a district library with community club and a video parlour. In order to accommodate the village people to attend the various functions held in Changlang town, there are community halls. The Government has provided tube wells in the village for supply of drinking water to the people.

The craft centre run by the Industrial Department of the Government provide employment to the local tribals in various trades which have also helped in preserving their original crafts. In the Changlang village there is also a saw mill run by the local people. Most of the shops and markets of Changlang town are managed by local people themselves. One important feature is that the women folks have been engaged in various jobs in Government offices.

The district is administered by a Deputy Commissioner. At the headquarters, he is assisted by

A.D.C., E.A.C. and circle officers. Each circle is under the charge of the circle officers. At village level, there exist a district, a regular system of self-Government which is constituted by the tribal village councils. These councils consist of village elders and they traditionally enjoy a good deal of autonomy in judicial, administrative and developmental matters. The *Gaonbura* is the head of the village council and acts as a representative of the administration at the village level.

The Lungchang and Moklom social structure are based on patriarchal system. Their society is a male dominated world, following the laws of primogeniture in succession. People live in joint families and the common house is shared by a whole family consisting of parents, married sons and unmarried daughters. Even after the death of the father the family does not break-up but continues to live in the same house. A Lungchang family sometimes consist of more than 25 members in a single house. There is, however, a practice that some individual members cook their food separately. Similarly, the paddy lands are divided amongst the members of the family for cultivation. While surveying the Moklom villages some incidence of nuclear families were also noted.

The Lungchang and the Mokloms of Tangsas are divided into a number of exogamous clans. Marriage within the same clan is prohibited. The clan organisation regulates their

marriage but does not play a significant role in the political field. They reckon their relationship through the male line. Their kinship is established through birth and marriage. Age is recognised and honoured. Their kinship terminology may be called classificatory as they use certain common terms of address both for lineal relatives and

<u>Moklom</u>	<u>Lungchang</u>	<u>English</u>
<i>wa</i>	<i>wa</i>	father
<i>wau</i>	<i>nyu</i>	mother
<i>tak</i>	---	aunt
<i>na</i>	<i>phu</i>	brother (elder)
<i>haca</i>	<i>nau</i>	brother (younger)
<i>te</i>	---	father-in-law
<i>wi</i>	<i>tai</i>	grandfather
<i>ha</i>	<i>wi</i>	grandmother
<i>tak</i>	<i>wang</i>	mother's brother
<i>nica</i>	---	mother-in-law
<i>ni</i>	---	paternal uncle
<i>neo</i>	<i>nya</i>	elder sister
---	<i>yung</i>	sister (same mother and father)

certain colateral relatives. Some terms of the kinship relation are given above.

The Lungchang and Moklom societies of Tangsas believe in the Supreme Being who is invisible. They have many other spirits and deities. The Supreme Being is always believed to be benevolent, the spirits and deities are grouped under two classes - benevolent and malevolent. The traditional religion of the people can be more conveniently understood as a cultural system since it is one of the aspects of the cultural tradition in continuity which makes the people live their life with unquestionable belief and with a sense of absolute dedication to the supernatural being controlling their destiny. All good influences and benedictions are believed to be caused by the benevolent forces while all evils, tragedy and disaster are attributed to the malevolent influences. The influences of the malevolent forces are sought to be changed into benevolent through prayers, rituals and sacrifices. At the time of propitiation, a particular spirit is pronounced by the priest to ward off calamities and miseries.

In the continuation of the traditional religion of the people, myths play a very significant role. The story of the origin of the world, origin of Gods and origin of man are all transmitted through myths, like other cultural traditions, the religion of the people is carried from one

generation to generation through myths and performance, of the rituals. All ritualistic parts in religious practices are performed by priest and ritual experts. These officials have a special status. It is interesting to note that even without any written religious scriptures the village priest and ritual experts very smoothly play their role in the society.

The profession of a priest or a divine person is not hereditary, any one having acquired sufficient knowledge of the procedure and paraphernalia can perform these rituals.

When a person falls ill, the priest must first discover the particular spirit responsible for the disease and give directions about the ritual, and the ritual is then performed by the priest. Pigs and fowls as well as local beer in all rituals performed for the deities and spirits, are indispensable items of offering. The number of pigs and fowls necessary for each sacrifice is propitiated by the priest, for example in the ritual performed for *Longsakting* a small hen or a cock is kept inside a stone cave just below the root of a banyan tree in a jungle. In this, hen or cock is freed alive.

The House - Each village comprises of a number of houses called 'jim', 'him' and so on. Besides the dwelling houses, there are other houses such as *samtap* (granery), the *tik* or *pik-tap* (farm-house).



Plate II
Decoration of the front wall with the heads of the sacrificed
animals which are regarded as household deities.

The houses are of the usual *chang*-type built on stilts, rectangular in shape with a double sloped roof of *jangupat*. The common room in front is open and has only side walls. The open *pongrun* (platform) characteristic of the tribal house is found in almost in every house.

The house is divided into three main parts. The front part is used as a common room. The middle one with a number of small compartments is called *hammong* and the back part where generally the paddy pounder is kept is called *himkha*.

The front room has a *tap* (fireplace) located almost at the middle of the room but slightly to one side. Besides being used as a common room, it is also used as a *hamran* (guest room). The *chingtengkha/wangthak* (walls) of the room are decorated with heads of buffaloes, skulls of pigs and other animals killed on various festive occasions.

The number of animal heads decorated on the wall is a symbol of their status and a proof of their heroic achievements. The more the number of skulls the higher is their status. They even offer prayers to these skulls. The middle room is divided longitudinally into two parts, one of which is used as a long corridor running along the whole length of the room and other is divided into a number of small compartments with a *tap* (fire-place) in each. The number of *kha* (compartments) varies from house to house

according to the number of members in each family. Sons and their families, unmarried young girls and the old parents, if alive occupy separate compartments. The back part of the house has space for a toilet in case of emergency. Usually they go to the jungles. They take a bath near a stream or any other source of water. There is no separate cook shed but one of the compartments is utilised for this purpose. In this place food for the whole family is cooked. The hearth (kitchen) is made of wood or bamboo which is filled with soil and is called *hamongtap* or *hamongthamthah*. Female members, generally the mother cooks the food in this hearth. The spaces between the kitchen and the sleeping place is demarcated by a small half wall called *chingkhubang*.

Hearth

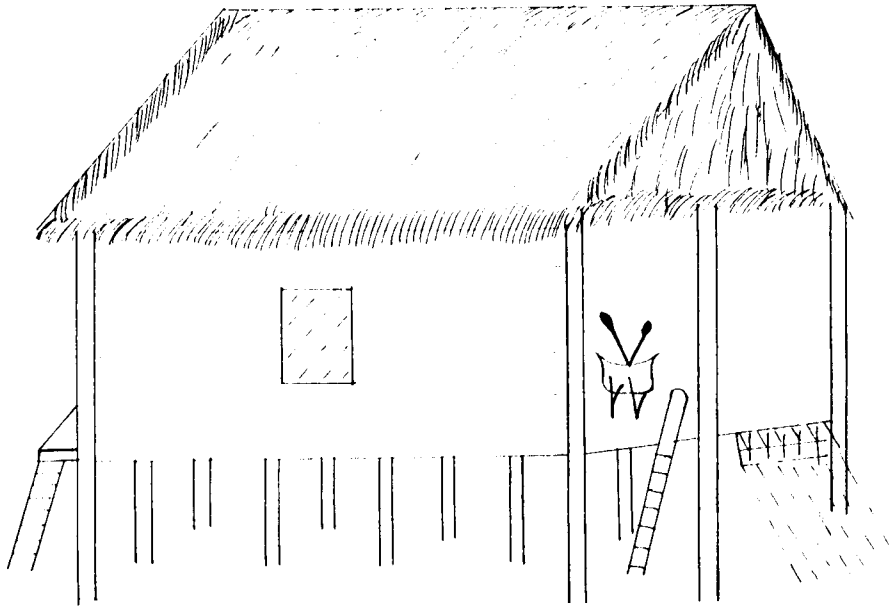
The wooden frame of the hearth is square in shape. In the middle are placed a number of wooden or bamboo sticks plastered with mud. Three stones are used (now-a-days iron frame has replaced the stones) to balance the utensil. Cooked food is kept by the side of the hearth within the wooden frame to keep the food warm. The uncooked food on the other hand, is kept nearby or kept in baskets. On the top of the hearth they have a bamboo rack on which is placed the raw food for preservation. Raw food is also kept inside the baskets which are hung from the rack. The personal

belongings are kept near the bed in one corner.

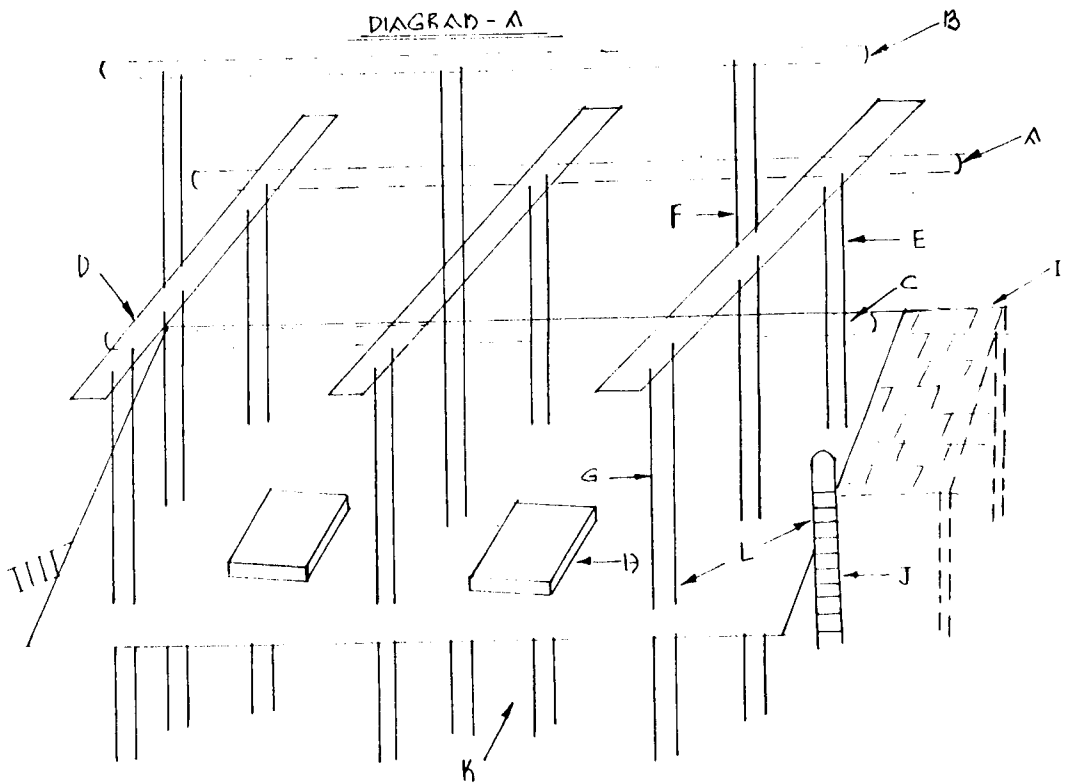
The long corridor serves many purposes. Running parallel to the corridor is a long rack on which utensils are kept. On one corner they keep their *bookhamrong/zungtophang* (bamboo water tubes), in the other side they clean their utensils. In some of the houses the paddy pounder is kept in the middle of the corridor. The rear side of the house which is called *himkha*, is used mainly for housing the paddy pounder. Garbage is usually kept in an old basket in the corridor. When the garbage basket is full they dispose it off in a proper place. There is an open varandah or chang called *pangran* where paddy and clothes are dried and is also used for sitting. The granery is a small square house with sloping roofs on two sides built on fairly high stilts. It not only serves for storage of paddy but is also utilised as a store house for other provisions. Each family has its own granery constructed either near the house or at the paddy fields.

The farm house is constructed in the pattern of the dwelling house. It is also used as temporary residence during the cultivation season. The cowshed lie adjacent to the farmhouse.

All the houses are constructed on a co-operative basis. The building materials are collected from the adjacent jungles by the owner of the house. Rice beer, rice



LUNGCHANG HOUSE



STRUCTURAL FRAME-WORK

and pork are served to the people who help in the construction of the house. They use *kara*, *jatshap*, *lolak*, *sijak*, leaves for thatching and wood, bamboo, and cane are the materials used in the construction of the houses. Bamboo sticks are also used to measure the house. The size of the house depends on the number of people.

Diagram-A

<u>Lungchang</u>	<u>Moklom</u>	<u>English</u>
A - <i>Pangsak-sarin</i>	<i>Kamtang</i>	Right side wooden supporter of the roof
B - <i>Lokung</i>	<i>Wakong</i>	Middle side supporter
C - <i>Pangka-sarim</i>	<i>Kantang</i>	Left side supporter
D - <i>Kantang</i>	<i>Kanwang</i>	Pieces of wood (approx. 5 ft. in length)
E - <i>Pangka-sarimsong</i>	<i>Kentane-hung</i>	Right side post
F - <i>Lakung-song</i>	<i>Thong-hung</i>	Middle post or main post which considered to be sacred and at the same time it is worshipped
G - <i>Pongkhasarim song</i>	<i>Kantang-hing</i>	Left side post
H - <i>Thamtha</i>	<i>Tap</i>	Hearth
I - <i>Pongran</i>	<i>Kal</i>	For drying paddy, cloth etc.
J - <i>Halichang</i>	<i>Khir</i>	Step made of wood to climb up on the chang
K - <i>Sangtu</i>	<i>Toja</i>	Post below chang
L - <i>Chang</i>	<i>Wangdan</i>	Floor made of bamboo

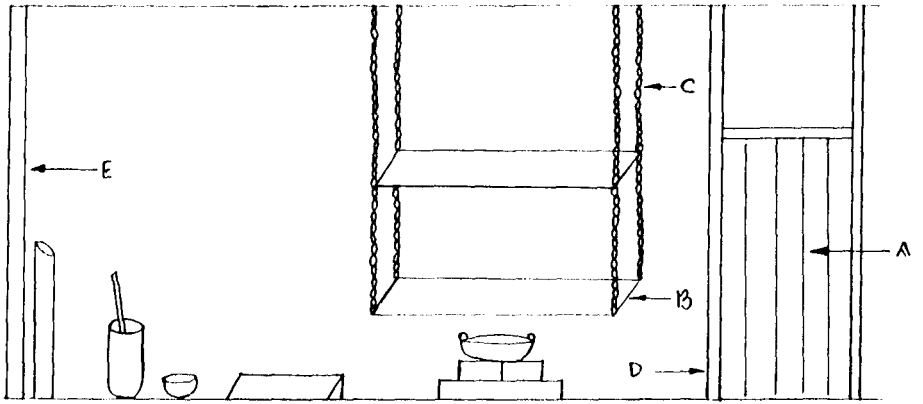


DIAGRAM - 13

LEFT



RIGHT

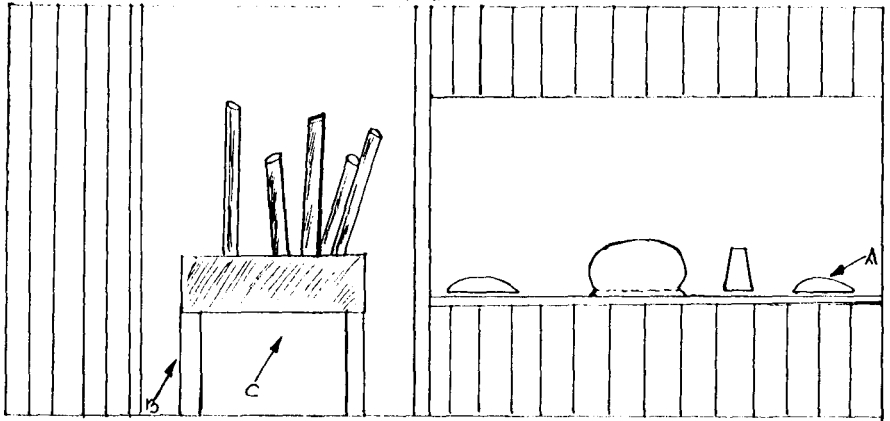
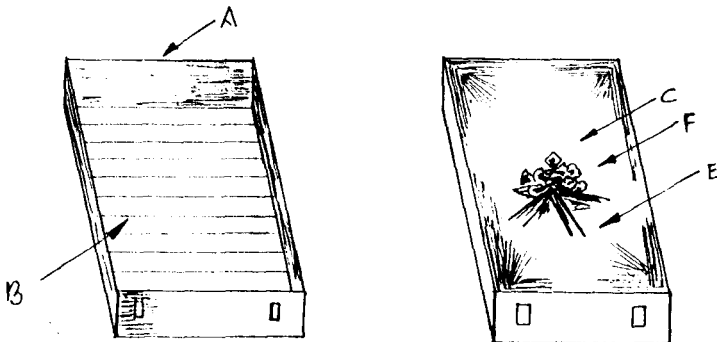


DIAGRAM - 14
INTERIOR HOUSE STRUCTURE



HEARTH
DIAGRAM - 15

Diagram-B

A - <i>Chin-hai-kho</i>	<i>Wangthuk</i>	Half wall between hearth and bed
R - <i>Kharang</i>	<i>Kairang</i>	Chang on top of hearth
<u>Longchang</u>	<u>Moklom</u>	<u>English</u>
C - <i>Kharang pak</i>	<i>Kaipak</i>	Cane ropes to tie the chang
D - <i>Wahching</i>	-	Bed room
E - <i>Chingtong-kho</i>	<i>Wangthuk</i>	Wall compartment to divide the long corridor

Diagram-C

A - <i>Rangkai</i>	<i>Turom</i>	Bamboo chang to keep empty vessel
B - <i>Khamrong</i>	---	For washing utensils
C - <i>Khamrong</i>	<i>Zungtophang</i>	For keeping water

Diagram-D

A - <i>Tapdap</i>	<i>Taptang</i>	Wooden boundary frame of the heart
B - <i>Tapfan</i>	<i>Sol-ting</i>	Small bamboo sticks placed in the wooden frame
C - <i>Lang song</i>	<i>Chickja</i>	Three stones
D - <i>Hibot</i>	<i>Tapbot</i>	Plastering of the hearth.

The diagrams above show the total description of the house structures of the Lungchangs.

The crops grown by the Moklom people in process of *jhum* cultivation are *hemi* (millet), *hela* (bajra), *pungbang* (maize), *saro*, *sazong* (paddy), *minchi*, *shohtin*, *chinki* (ginger), *tung* (arum), *shingtom* (french bean), *thasim* (sweet potato), *kholik* (a kind of potato), *jungkhong* (green leafy vegetable), *dongrak*, *khupan* (kind of garlic), *singsa* (corriander leaves), *makat* (chillies), *bauti* (papaya), *kinchoi* (cucumber), etc.

The Lungchang village which has limited cultivable land has come in contact with the people of the plains and are being encouraged by the Government to take up wet rice cultivation and terrace cultivation.

Throughout the year, these tribes live on their paddy and sometimes substitute their diet with arum and other edible jungle products.

Having discussed the general crops grown and the social structure of the Mokloms and Lungchangs, it will be appropriate now, to discuss the daily food habits of these group of people in detail, which is the main emphasis of our study.

C H A P T E R - I I I

F O O D I N D A I L Y C Y C L E

Food in Daily Cycle

In the last chapter, introduction to Arunachal Pradesh and Changlang district in particular along with the origin, the social and cultural life has been discussed.

In this chapter, daily routine of the meals, i.e. staple food and other items of food taken commonly, food cooking, preparation of food, different techniques and utensils for cooking, serving and eating, will be discussed.

The Lungchang and Moklom group of Tangsas have a daily routine of work. All men wake up before sunrise and start for their fields after finishing their morning work. During the full working seasons, none, with the exception of very old aged persons, invalids and children, remain idle in their houses.

The women soon after they wake up in the morning, get busy in clearing and tidying their house and looking after their children as well as start preparing the daily meals. Apart from the household chores the womenfolk are also expected to lend a helping hand to the menfolk in their work. Men before leaving for the field drink local beer or red tea which is served by the women. The womanfolk then fetch water and cook for the entire family and after having meal hasten to the field and return home in the evening, with basketful of vegetables, paddy and fuel. On reaching home, they feed the pigs and prepare the meal for the

family. They also spend a few hours in gossiping round the fire place.

Generally, men rise later than the women. It is they who are served with rice beer, tea or meal by their women and they go to the fields and return in the evening along with the women. Men's work become harder during the time of jungle cutting and the clearing of fields. In the day time a Tangsa village appears to be deserted except for the young children and old people.

1) Staple Food and Sequence of Meals taken Commonly

The people of the new and old Changlang village and the Thomlom and Khemiyang villages of Changlang district generally take three meals in a day which are as follows :

	<u>Lungchang</u>	<u>Moklom</u>	<u>Time</u>
First meal	- <i>Rangnapdaong/ Cham</i>	<i>Rangnaptil</i>	5.30-6.30 a.m.
Second meal	- <i>Rongneitdaong</i>	<i>Rongneitil</i>	12 noon
Third meal	- <i>Ronapjadoong</i>	<i>Rongjatil</i>	6.00-7.30 p.m.

Out of these, two are the principal meals of the day. One is taken early morning before going to the field and the second is taken after sunset. Cooking is done twice, once in the morning and the next in the evening.



Plate III
Moklou Hamong Thamtha (Interior hearth)



Plate IV
Lungchang pik-tap (Temporary shed) in the field.

This is done because the female members of the household go to the field daily. The food which is taken in the field is either cooked in the field or carried from home. When the food is carried to the field it is usually cooked along with the morning meal. The meals taken in the field is not considered an essential meal. Sometimes as a substitute they have a light meal which consists of sweet boiled ^(Potato) *thansim*, *toong* (arum), etc.

In the early morning at first they drink *phalap* (tea) or *Kham* (local beer). There is no specific time for local beer and red tea taken in the early morning. Moreover, it is not taken by all the members of the family. Local beer is taken by only aged and grown up men and women members. Red tea is also used by only those men and women who are habituated to it.

After that they prepare the first meal. The contents of the meal are as follows : *dung/ulimvong* (boiled rice), or *himivong/himaidung* (millet), *tung*(arum), *pasau/paru* (vegetables), i.e. *mahai* (bamboo shoot), *thah/Khahlak* (potato), *Patting/bankha* (tapioka), *sithu* (chutnies) made out locally available vegetables, i.e. *namsing/damrik* (local onion), *maddu/makat* (local chillies), *sim* (local salt), *Khohmen* (turmeric), etc. Sometimes they also take *ngam* (meat), *nga* (fish). It depends on the availability of these items. The principal item in all this

are rice or millet or arum and the locally available vegetables. It is described as a *til/dung* (meal) only when the meal consists of rice or arum. The colour of each item is as follows : Rice is white, millet is yellowish, arum is off white/brown, bamboo shoot is off white and the vegetables are green. Rice and millet are taken in the form of *akhot* (semi solid), arum (solid form), vegetables in the form of *ajang* (liquid) and chutnies in *anel* (semi liquid) form. Cooking starts at about 4.30 a.m. and the meal of the household is ready by 5.30 a.m. It is cooked in the *hamong tap* (interior hearth). After cooking of meal is completed the children, the men, the women all family members partake their share and are ready for their daily activities. The little children are left behind in the house under the care of the old men and women. Their second meal is the same as the first one. Of the meal prepared in the morning, a certain portion is kept aside which is consumed at noon time.

On reaching the field they at once start their round of daily routine. After working till late in the afternoon they take a break and sit in the *piktap* (temporary shed) which they build in the field. It is here that they eat the food which they have brought with them from home. The food is packed in *namjack* (green leaves) and water is brought in *khamchung/wathong* (bamboo) pipes. In case if they have to

cook, it is done at the *piktap*. The cooking normally starts at 12 o'clock and gets over within an hour. It is cooked in a *khamchung/wathong* (bamboo pipe). At first they tie rice on leaves and then it is kept inside the bamboo pipe. After that they pour water and then heat it on fire. Vegetables are also cooked in similar manner. In a pipe they put vegetables, salt, chillies and water and then these are heated over fire. After the food is cooked it is served on *namjack* (leaves). After a hard day's work both the male and female return home with vegetables, fuel, etc. After returning home the males relax. It is called (*namtong/awarak*). While relaxing, they sip local beer or red tea. On the other hand, the women start cooking for their last meal of the day which is taken at about 6.30 to 7.30 p.m. There is generally, no difference between the morning and evening meals. They also take the food left over from the morning meals in the evening and left over of the evening is eaten the following morning. The vegetables which they eat depends on their availability and also the season. The children pass their time in fun and frolic, while the youths normally form their groups and visit their favourite places.

2) Method of Cooking

Cooking represents the usual course of domestic activities and as such, it is forbidden when the society is in a state of a disruption. Cooking among these people are

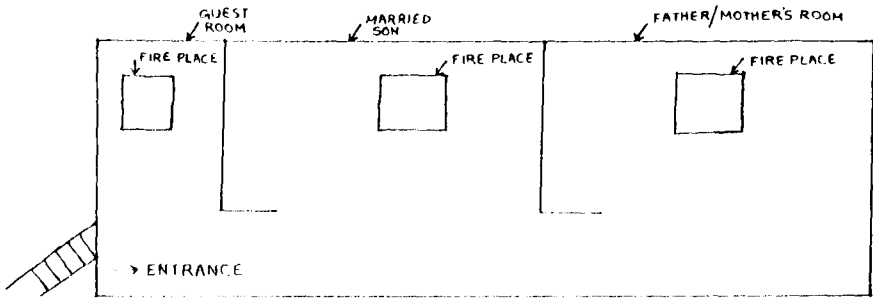


Fig (I)

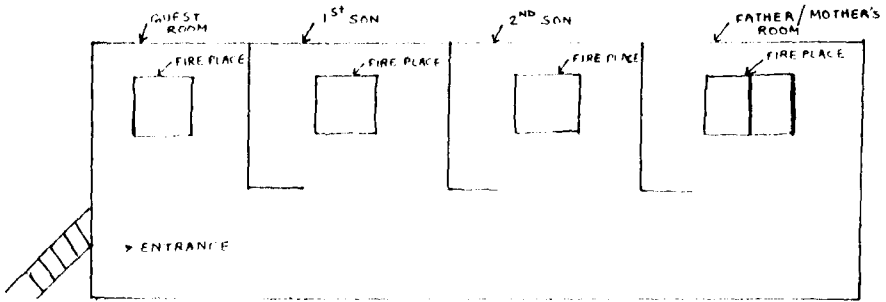


Fig (II)

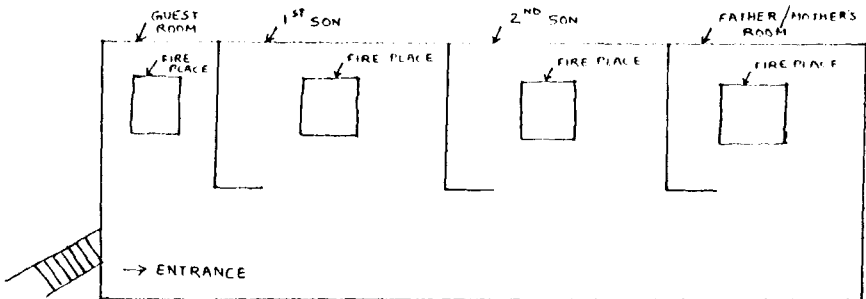


Fig (III)

almost exclusively a women's job although there is no specific taboo on men cooking food. In all household all meals are cooked in the *Hamong thamtha* (inner hearth) which is separated with a *chingtongkha/wangthok* (wall) from rest of the other hearths in the household including *Hamran thamtha* (guest hearth). But there is no separate place for cooking. The cooking area is marked by hearth, cooking vessels, water containers and the presence of the women cooking the food. For example in Fig. I 'A' has only one son who is married. Generally, a married son occupy the compartment next to the guest compartment, father and mother stay in the last compartment. In this case cooking is done in the son's compartment.

In Fig. II 'A' has two married sons. Relationship among them is cordial and they used to take meal from the same kitchen. Meals are cooked in the compartment used by the first son. they cultivate the fields together.

In another example, in Fig. III the relationship among sons is not cordial. They take meals separately and cultivate separately. If their father had wet rice cultivation field then it is distributed and the cultivation is done separately. In this case they cook food in their respective compartments. Father/mother/unmarried brothers/sisters are free to join any one of the married brothers whom they like. The cook sits facing the hearth and her

back is towards the household. The cooking of food marks the household routine and the lighting of the fire initiates domestic life in the community. Fire, is a symbol of their social life. When there is a break in the daily routine the fire is extinguished. For example, when a birth takes place in the family they light a new fire.

The hearth area is rectangular in shape. It is usually built slightly higher than the normal floor level. This area is usually plastered by a mixture of mud and water on which they place three stones in a triangular pattern so as to balance the utensils. Sometimes instead of stones they also place iron frame for balancing utensils. Over the hearth there is a *kharang* (bamboo) shown in Fig. on which they keep meat, fish, arum, etc. This is actually done to preserve food in a natural way so that the insects/housefly etc. can be kept away from the food stuffs. The heat and smoke generated from hearth protects food from insects and also preserves it. On one side of the hearth there are racks on which utensils are kept. On one corner the raw vegetables are kept in a *kong* (basket). Water container is usually kept near the place where the utensils are washed. The washing area lies opposite the hearth (Fig.). To eat food they sit on the ground around the hearth.

The floor near the hearth is always kept clean and is regularly swept with a *tumway/ujum* (broom). It is a

central requirement to start the process of domestic cooking by sweeping the floor. Traditionally, they believe that in the kitchen fresh food is cooked so it is to be cleaned. It is not necessary for the cook to take a bath before cooking or wear fresh clothes. There is no restriction for a woman to cook during menstruation.

3) Preparation of Food

Preparation of Plain Rice/Millet - Rice/millet is measured with a bamboo tube or with a lid of the container of rice according to the number of family members. The amount of water used depends upon the quantity of food being prepared and which is enough to cover the rice. At first they place the utensils on the hearth and pour water. When the water becomes warm they put the rice/millet in it which is allowed to boil for about half-an-hour. Additional water is added to it if the rice has not become soft enough. The starch is not separated and the pot is covered with a *sapjack* (leaf) to protect dust from falling into it and is kept near the hearth. Generally, hand pound rice is not washed before cooking.

For preparing mixed food of rice and millet it is not necessary that both the items should be in equal proportion. One may take more rice or less millet and vice-versa. But rice is boiled first. Because rice is harder than millet. After boiling for about 10 to 15 minutes.

Millet is poured and mixed properly. The amount of water used depends upon the quantity of food being prepared.

They cook rice in a bamboo tube when they cook in the field. It is not possible every time to carry utensils from home to agricultural field for cooking. Therefore, bamboo tubes and leaves are used as a substitute for utensils. Moreover, in some places/fields there is problem of water. In such places water is carried from home in bamboo tubes for cooking/drinking/washing. At first the rice is packed in leaves and placed inside a tube and water is poured into the tube and placed on a fire for about half-an-hour until the rice is tender.

In the field vegetables are also cooked in a similar manner. But in case of vegetables, salt and chillies are added to enhance the taste. They cook the vegetables until it is tender and soft.

Rice/Millet Mixed with Tapioka/Arum/Potato : Sometime they boil rice/millet together with tapioka or arum or potato.

Occasionally rice and millet are cooked by steaming process. In this process two pans are used, one is a barrel-shaped pan, *Munkha*, made of bamboo/wood and the other is a saucepan made of clay/metal. The barrel shaped pan is placed over the saucepan in which water is boiled. The vapour passing through the perforated base of the barrel

shape pan boils the rice kept inside it. The open mouth of the barrel shaped pan is firmly covered with a *sapjack* (leaves). Rice cooked in this process is very tasty.

The vegetables consists of *Kimke* (pumpkin), *Kimchel* (cucumber), *kamkae* (white-gourd), brinjal, mustered leaves, *Iaisak*, various types of green leaves, *mahai* (bamboo shoot), etc. At first they peel off the unwanted part and cut into pieces. After that it is boiled with water. Sometimes the vegetables are washed to remove dirt. The use of oil for cooking food is not in vogue. For preparing the vegetables, they add salt, chillies and a kind of sauce (optional) called *mihi* made of bamboo shoot. They also add local *chuka cherang* (spices), *kanka*, *fanchi*, *sekuat*, *bichana*, *chinki*, *khokmen*, and local *sim* (salt).

Chutney - In order to prepare chutney they first collect the chilli and local spices. This is then placed in a hollow bamboo mug along with salt. It is then grinded with a pounding stick and made into a paste. This is taken very often as a side dish.

Preparation of Nqa (Fish) - Both fresh and dry fish is taken by the people. Generally, in the case of fish, except for the pancreas and big bones, nothing is thrown away. They take scales, fins, tail, stomach too. Stomach is taken out

and preserved in a bamboo *chung*a for many days. In this process only little amount of stomach is mixed because stomach is generally bitter in taste. If they put entire stomach then it will be too bitter to take.

There are different methods for preparation of fish:

Alam (boil) - At first the scale and pancreas are removed. Then it is cut into pieces, it is then placed in a pot with water (double the amount) and boiled along with salt, chillies; locally available spices, bamboo shoot (optional) until it is tender and soft.

Ashut - Sometimes they prepare dry fish along with locally available spices and salt which is made into paste by pounding in bamboo/wooden *kailang/kaithung* (mortar) with a *ashut-kang* (pestle) made of hardwood and it is served raw. It is quite unique to them.

Await - First the pancreas are taken out. Then it is washed. The fish is then cut into pieces and placed on a leaf and salt and local spices are added to it. These things are then packed with the leaf and red hot charcoal is placed on the top of it for 10-15 minutes. After that the red-hot coal is placed on the reverse side for another 10-15 minutes. The fish is then ready to be taken.

Atok - At first the fish is cut slightly so that cut marks are left behind. It is then boiled and after that it is cut into pieces. Three leaves are taken which are placed in a criss-cross manner. The fish along with salt and spices are placed on it. Then two/three stones each weighing 100 grams are heated in the fire and when the stones become red hot, they are placed directly at the centre of the fish pieces. The leaves are then tied properly and placed near the side of the fire from time to time they change the portion of the packet so that the fish is cooked properly. In this method rotten fish is also prepared.

Sometimes instead of fish *pongto* (soyabean) can also be prepared. In case of soyabean first it is boiled with water and then packed with leaves. After that it is kept on a rack, which is placed directly over the fire for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks it is taken out and grinded with spices, salt and then placed on leaves and tied. It is placed near the fire-side and from time to time the portion of the packet is changed so that the food is properly cooked.

Preparation of Meat - Just like fish, meat too is prepared in different ways. Generally meat is cooked in a similar way like that of vegetables, without using oil or any sort of fats.

Allam (First Method) - At first the meat is cut into pieces. They also remove the pancreas. To remove dirt sometimes they wash meat in water. It is then boiled with water, salt, chillies, bamboo shoot, and other indigenous spices in lieu of condiments. Sometimes plantain, sucker or white gourd is added to the meat dishes. In the language of the Tangsas meat curry is called *ngamchu*. Meat is taken both fresh and dry.

Await (Second Method) - Sometimes raw meat along with chillies and salt are packed in leaves and directly placed on the fire until the meat is tender. Then it is ready to be served.

Attasam/Ngamsam (Third Method) - In the third method meat is taken dry. If they wish to preserve meat, at first they boil it and keep it on the bamboo rack directly over the fire to dry. This preserved meat is then again boiled for consumption. In order to preserve fish and meat, sometimes the meat and fish are kept on an iron rod which is hanged over the fire place. This is taken after few weeks or months or whenever they feel like.

Tea is a favourite beverage among them. No Tangsa hearth is seen without a hollow bamboo container and a *phalap-kak* (bamboo tea cup). They drink tea as often as

possible. There is no specific time fixed for tea. They may take tea after a meal in the morning and before they set out for work. Whenever a guest pays a visit, the first thing they offer is a cup of tea. Tea is the primary item with which they welcome a guest. It is a token of their hospitality. They do not add sugar or milk to their tea. It is not known since when the practice of taking red tea came into being in Tangsa society. But it is sure that the practice is quite old. Their ancestors also planted tea. Even today there are local small garden in many villages. Particularly the Lungchang people never buy tea leaf from the market. They have their own garden.

Sai (local beer) and Iaho (spirit) are also important drinks. Laho is a little stronger than sai.

Preparation of Tea - Tea is cultivated by the Tangsas on a small scale only to meet their house-hold demands. It is one of the most popular drink and the Tangsas are more fond of their home made tea leaves than the factory made tea leaves. There are two methods of preparing tea. The first method is very simple. In this method they first pick the suitable green leaves and directly boil them with water in a bamboo tube or any other container like kettle, etc for about 5-10 minutes. Only liquid is taken. The boiled leaves can be reboiled for second time by using a little

water. But the liquid drawn after subsequent boiling is not strong and delicious.

The second method is a long term method. In this method the tea leaves are boiled in a container and then dried on the fire. Then it is rubbed vigorously with the hands to crush it properly. After crushing the leaves, it is kept in a bamboo tube and then it is heated again on fire. After heating it properly a heavy stick is used to simmer it until the tea leaves turn into a hard lump. In this method the tea leaves can be used for 2-3 years.

Preparation of Khamthol : In the beginning rice is boiled in a pan and the boiled rice is spread out on leaves. Four kinds of special leaves are used. Namely :

- 1) *Napkhamjak* (like banana leaf but one side is white).
- 2) *Napkhijak* (banana leaf).
- 3) *Phokbanjak* (round leaf and seed of that is used for eating purpose)
- 4) *Napphanjak*

Among the above mentioned leaves any one can be used. When it cooks, a kind of fermenting material called *pi* is used. This is obtained from a particular creeper (mentioned in the story behind the origin of rice beer). This *pi* is mixed thoroughly with it. The mixture is then

wrapped tightly in the leaf. These bundles are kept like that for about three days to ferment. The fermented mixture is then emptied into a water-proof bamboo basket and water is poured on it. It is kept in this condition for two or three days with the mouth of the basket tightly covered with leaves. After three days it turns into rice-beer. Before serving, the rice beer is strained through a bamboo strainer or a funnel-shaped cone strainer.

Khamti is brewed from the rice beer by the process of distillation.

The rice beer is first boiled in a pan, on which a water-proof basket is set up side down. A small hole is then made on one side of the basket. One end of a bamboo tube is next fixed into a bottle or some receptacle kept outside. Now the vapour passes through the bamboo tube into the bottle and this distilled liquid is called *khamti*.

Beer from Tapioka

At first the bark of the tapioka tree is taken and it is allowed to be dried properly on a *chikchat* (mat made of cane). After drying the bark properly it is boiled with water until it gets cooked. It is then left to be cooled. Thereafter, *pi* is added and it is then kept in a basket for about two nights. Then the entire thing is transferred into a bamboo basket and squeezed properly so that the juice

comes out. The juice which comes out is the beer and it is ready to be served.

By following the above mentioned process beer can also be made from *charo* (bajra).

Other Recipe

Dish from Tapioka : In the beginning the outer layer is peeled and kept inside the ash of fire for half-an-hour or at the most for one hour, until the outer layer is soft and tender. Then it is cleared with dao or knife and becomes ready for consumption.

Preparation of Arum : First the roots, stem and leaves are removed from the arum. Without washing, the arum is boiled overnight with water. The following day, early in the morning the boiled arum is kept in a basket. After sometime the arum is taken out one by one and the upper layer is peeled off. To enhance the taste, salt and chillies are added which is optional.

In another method the boiled arum is grinded with salt, chillies and local spices.

Preparation of Bangwang : To prepare *bangwang* the most important ingredient is rice. Rice is soaked in water for 2-3 hours. The water is strained and the rice is left to be

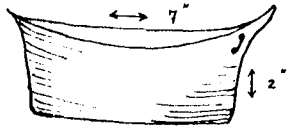
dried for 20 minutes. It is then grinded into powder and mixed with water and salt to form a dough. After that the dough is tied in leaves and kept inside the fire until it is cooked and ready to be eaten.

Preservation of Tapioka : First the tapioka is peeled and cut into pieces and left in the sun to be dried. When the tapioka is completely dried it is kept on a *juk* (bamboo basket). It can be kept for a year like that. But before preparing the preserved tapioka, it is first soaked for about half-an-hour in water. It is then washed for about 4 times in water. It is then boiled in water for about two hours until it becomes soft and tender, thereafter it is ready to be consumed.

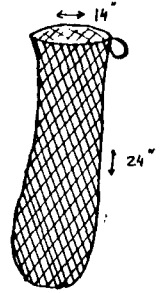
Another method, first the tapioka is peeled and then cut into pieces of 2"-3". Then it is boiled with water and salt is added to it. When it is properly boiled, roasted season seeds is added and grinded together with tapioka. Adding season is optional. After grinding the tapioka, it is ready to be served.

Preparation of Arum : In order to preserve arum they first boil and peel off the outer layer. This is kept in a basket directly above the fire place for two to three months. This

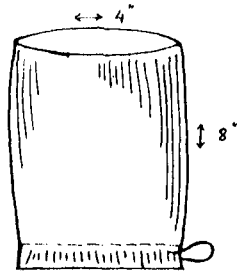
TOOLS, DOMESTIC UTENSILS & APPLIANCES.
(APPROXIMATE SIZE)



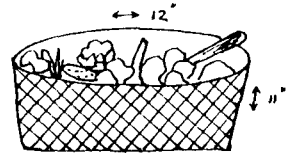
PANWA/TILKHUNG
A BAMBOO PLATE



LIK-LOK
BAMBOO STRAINER FOR
SQUEEZING RICE BEER.



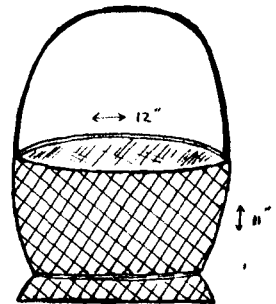
WATHONG/PIALAPKHAP
MADE OF BAMBOO AND
CANE ROPE FOR DRINKING
TEA.



KHONGI
BAMBOO BASKET FOR
KEEPING RAW VEGETABLE.

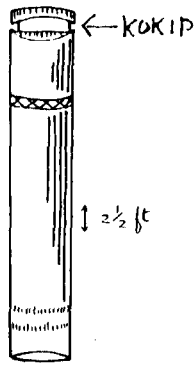


LOK/KHAMKHAP
BAMBOO MUG FOR
DRINKING WATER OR
RICE BEER.



LOFUN
CANE AND BAMBOO BASKET
TO KEEP RAW VEGETABLE.

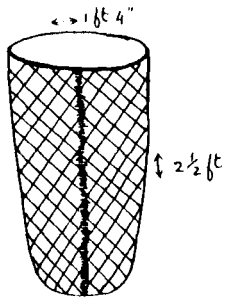
TOOLS, DOMESTIC UTENSILS AND APPLIANCES (APPROXIMATE SIZE)



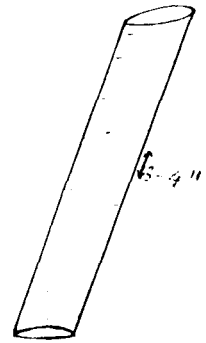
NONGSIM / WANTUNG
BAMBOO TUBE FOR
STORING RICE



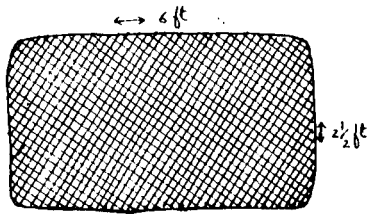
SALICHUNG
BAMBOO BASKET FOR
KEEPING BEETLE-NUT.



BORANG
BAMBOO BASKET TO
CARRY FIRE WOOD



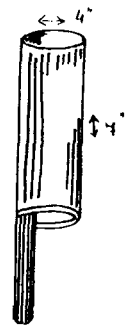
KHAMCHUNG / JUNG TUNG
BAMBOO TUBE TO CARRY
AND STORE WATER.



KHEM
BAMBOO AND CANE MAT
TO DRY PADDY



JANKOE / JANKHI
KNIFE



WAHLOK / CHANG SAH
TO KEEP SPOON

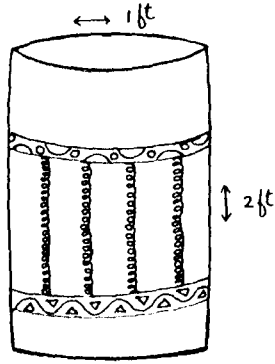
Preparation of Soyabean (Pongtup) - First the soyabean is boiled in water. It is then taken out and packed with leaves and kept on the rack which lies directly over the fire for 2 weeks. After that it is grinded together with local spices, and once again packed in leaves and is placed near the fire until it is cooked properly and then it is served for consumption.

Use of Different Implements and Utensils for Cooking (Diagrams illustrated):

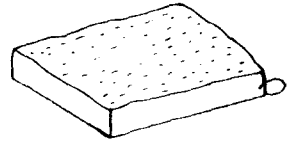
The implements and utensils which an average Changlang household uses are simple and are few in numbers. Domestic utensils are carrying and storing baskets, mats, bamboo and brasspot, cooking implements, husking and grinding implements. Basket and mats are generally made by the menfolk of the household and are also purchased from the local market. *Jungtung* (bamboo tube) usual size is 3-4 ft. made out of bamboo with curved mouth. It is used for carrying and bringing water from the nearby spring or tap for storing. Round brass pot *mokhang* used for cooking rice and aluminium pot *molan* for vegetable. The Changlang household eat their food in *tilkhung/panwa* made of bamboo or leaf.

The other utensils are *khamkhap* for drinking rice beer, *phalap khap* for drinking tea, *samlak* (rice spoon), *likong* (vegetable spoon), *jankhi* (knife) for cutting

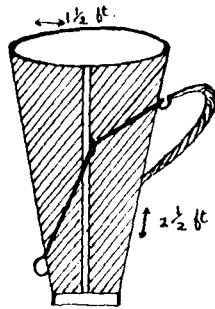
TOOLS, DOMESTIC UTENSILS & APPLIANCES
(APPROXIMATE SIZE)



SAN
BAMBOO, PLASTERED
WITH FRUIT JUICE TO
KEEP RICE BEER.



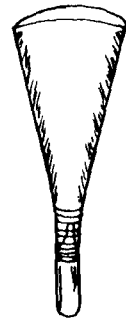
KENG / HUNG DUNG
WOODEN BOARD TO CUT
VEGETABLE, MEAT ETC.



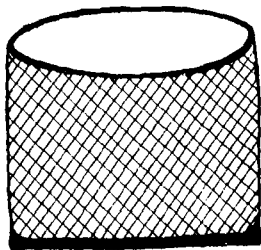
JING / KHIM LOK
MADE OF BAMBOO
TO CARRY PADDY.



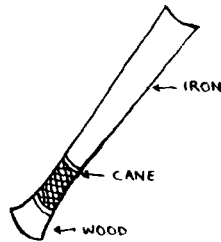
SAM CHUNG / WAHRUK
BAMBOO TUBE TO
KEEP SALT, TURMERIC
ETC.



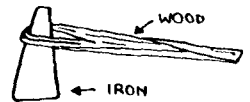
HI - HOI
MADE OF WOOD.



CHIKO
BAMBOO AND CANE
BASKET TO MEASURE
PADDY.

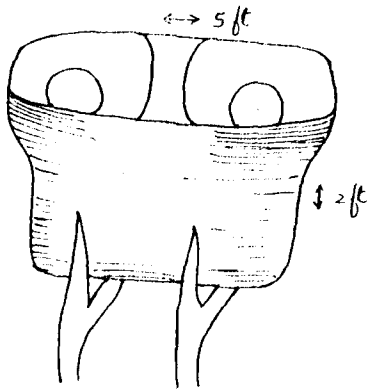


JANG
DAO

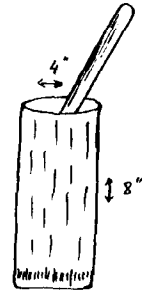


LEKHO
AGRICULTURAL
IMPLEMENT.

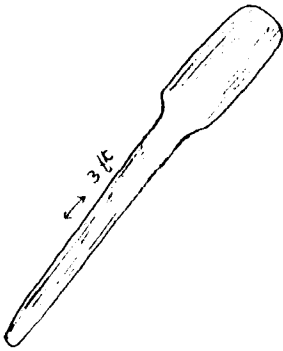
Tools, DOMESTIC UTENSILS & APPLIANCES
(APPROXIMATE SIZE)



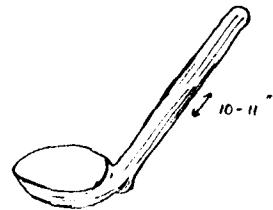
SOM / THOM
WOODEN PESTLE.



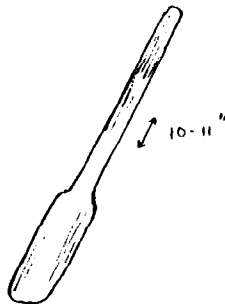
KAILANG / KETHIMTUNG
WOODEN GRINDER



SOM-TAM
WOODEN MORTAR



CHOK LAK / LIKONG
BAMBOO SPOON



SAM LAK
BAMBOO OR WOODEN
RICE SPOON.

vegetable, *changsah* made of bamboo for keeping spoon, *shan* made of bamboo for keeping rice beer, *chikuk* made of bamboo for keeping paddy, *khong* made of bamboo for keeping vegetables, *makachong* made of bamboo for keeping chillies, *khalsak* made of bamboo for keeping miscellaneous items, *wantung* made of bamboo for keeping raw rice. The lid of the *wantung* known as *kokip* is used for measuring rice and the *hungdung* is used to cut meat pieces. *Kethimtung* and *kthurkan* made of bamboo are used for grinding and pounding of chillies, *chamrok* made of bamboo is used for keeping mug, glass, etc. *san* is used for keeping rice beer and is made of bamboo and plastered with fruit juice *koikhung* made of wood for sleeping, *wahruk* made of bamboo for keeping sali, tobacco, lime, etc. *Khimlok* made of bamboo to carry paddy from field, *thom* made of wood for husking paddy, *suk* made of bamboo for keeping waste materials etc.

Food Serving and Eating

Serving and eating plays an important role among the Tangsas.

In Changlang village, Thomlom village and Khemiyang village, there are some beliefs which should not be overlooked during serving. While serving food on a plate the food should be served on the rightward direction. If they do it on the reverse direction, it means something

different, it means that food is offered to the dead persons. The term for serving routine food are *tiltik/dungsa/wangho*, etc. All the meals are served near the hearth. They sit on the floor to take meals. They keep their plate on floor. Generally, male members are served first then children and women later. As the women too go to the field but unlike in the house they take their food alongwith the menfolk in the field.

Eating starts in the serving area, the serving is done with *samlak/likong* (spoon) and order of serving is generally first rice and then vegetable, chutney, fish or meat etc. The vessel in which the food is served, is called *tilkhung/paruktung* made of bamboo or sometimes even of leaf. But now-a-days they use metal plate. Before eating they generally wash their hand. No special garments are worn during eating. After the meal is over, they set aside the plate. Hands and mouth are washed after meal and the plate on which food has been consumed are washed with water. The place where food is taken is cleaned with broom and sometimes with water. Cooking area is also cleaned after the meal. The preliminary rituals are not compulsory for the daily meals. But the guest keeps aside a little bit food to ward off any evil spirits.

Further, the left over food is utilised on the basis of whether it was laid in the plate or not. If it is left

over from the plate, it is collected and given to the pigs. And the food which remain in the cooking vessels are kept near the fire place for the next meal.

Hunting : Hunting and fishing are the major means of supplementing their diet. They carry out these operation on a community basis. It is not confined to a definite period of the year, though the summer is considered to be the best season.

The hunters use spears, daos and guns and surround a part of the forests. Two or three persons search the animal with the help of dogs. They search in from their hiding place and the others wait at certain definite points through which it is likely to make its escape. Before going for hunting they see the omen. One particular man is chosen to take the lead. Others follow him. In the forest they sit around the hiding place of the animal. The persons carrying gun on one side and person carrying spears on one side. All of them get equal shares of the game, but the person who leads gets the head in addition to his regular share. The person who first kills the animal get the meat from tail portion. For village headman and his subordinates the waist portion of the meat is kept. While coming back from forest after the hunt the man who had lead earlier will be again at the head of the returning party. They shout from the jungle

as a sign of rejoicing after a successful hunt is over. Besides community hunting, individual hunting is also done with cross bows and guns.

Fishing : No definite season is set apart for fishing. Usually people go for fishing after the completion of the agricultural work.

A common method is to poison the water with a creeper called *song*. The young boys of the village collect the creeper with its leaves from the jungle, and extracts its juice by pounding it with stones. They then block the river with stones, earth and grass and then throw the poisonous juice into the water.

Individual fishing is generally done by means of a fish trap, *chan* (fishing net), *pan* (fishing hooks), etc. The fish caught individually is not divided amongst the villagers but a share is given to the near relatives when the catch is large enough.

Fishing is done generally by men, women do not go for fishing. They believe that if the women accompany they will not get any fish.

Indispensability of Rice : Rice is a staple food of the Tangsa. It grows abundantly in their region. It is easily available to them, and therefore plays a vital role in

almost every occasion. The ideal geographical condition which are required to grow rice is available. As a result there is a smooth supply of rice and it is cheap too. Rice, therefore, plays a vital role in almost all occasions. So also it is the case with arum.

There is an interesting anecdote behind the use of rice, rice beer and the system of offering arum to the dead person. The story is as follows :

Once upon a time the creator of the universe visited the earth, with the motive of knowing about the real intention of the people. He then came in the guise of an ugly man and wore two earthworms in his ears. He then went from home to home asking for shelter. But everywhere he went he was disappointed as the people were unwilling to give him shelter. At last, he came across a small hut where lived two orphans. He then requested them to give him shelter. They gladly welcomed him but apologized at their inability to offer him food as they had none. The man was very much impressed at their hospitality. He then told them that he did not require food but only shelter. He asked for one bamboo mat and placed it on the floor of the hut. He then shook both his ears and to their amazement some grains of millet and arum fell on the mat.

In addition, he also gave them two birds in a cage and told them that there will be a great disaster on earth

if the cage was destroyed, all would die. He told them that if that disaster strikes they should dig a ditch and stay there under the earth. He also said that as a signal of the disaster one of the birds would cry. They should then immediately go underground when the disaster would pass by them as a signal the other bird will cry. Saying so the man disappeared. Even since then, the people believed that paddy and other crops have appeared on earth. Therefore, there are rituals at the time of sowing paddy and again at the time of harvesting.

Rice beer is part and parcel of the Tangsa tradition. It is not only merely a refreshing drink for them, but is used socially and ritually. It is made from rice and is widely used item. It is a valuable source of vitamin-B in which the diet is otherwise deficient. Rice beer allows them to relax in the company of friends and relatives and fulfill many of their social obligations. Offering beer to a person means that the person is being honoured. Its partaking together indicates friendly relation between relatives, friends and neighbours. Beer is offered as a sign of gratitude, respect and acceptance. It is carried to chiefs as tribute. It is given to labourers as reward. It is offered to spirits. Beer is the glory of a commoner's hospitality, without it any sort of ceremonies is incomplete.

There is a story behind the origin of rice beer, how it came into existence amongst the Lungchang and Moklom society and also why arum must be offered to the dead ones.

Long ago, there was a woman in a village who lived with her two daughters. One day while going to the paddy field she gave a toy to her daughters to play with. Soon both the sisters started quarelling over the toy. The elder sister then thought of a plan. She along with her younger sister came to the riverside. The elder one got hold of a creeper and told her sister that she would swing from one bank to the other. After swinging for some time the elder sister got tired and asked the younger to stop the swing. The younger one did so and handed over the toy to her. The younger sister then started swinging from one bank to the other, soon she got exhausted and asked her elder sister to help her stop the swing. The elder sister then pretended as if she did not hear what her sister was saying and continued to play with the toy indifferently. She did not bother to stop the swing. The younger sister became helpless and ultimately she fell into the water and was drowned. The elder sister returned home. Soon the mother too had returned from the field and enquired about the younger sister. The elder sister promptly said that she had gone to her maternal uncle's house. The mother ran to her brother's house and reaching there she was informed that her younger

daughter was not there. She immediately come home and on further questioning her elder daughter came to know that her younger daughter had drowned. Their mother was heart-broken. Sorrow and grief had surrounded her and she became quite desperate. She thought of her little daughter and imagined that she might feel hungry. She then came to the riverside and threw arum into the water so that she could eat it. Hence, started the practice of offering arum to the departed soul among the Moklom society.

The following day, she carried cooked rice in a leaf for her child. She rolled up the leaf and hanged it to the creeper of that tree. Her motherly affection drew her to the river every day and she used to stand near the tree from which her daughter had swing. One day she looked into the leaf bundle, to check if her daughter ate the rice. She got a scent from the bundle and noticed that some sort of juice was falling from the rolled up leaf through the creeper of the tree. She then tasted it and found it sweet. The juice was quite refreshing and she realised that her mind was quite relaxed and the effect of the juice had helped to get rid of her anxieties and worries for a temporary phase. It then dawned upon her that this could be served as a drink to guest. She came home and informed the villagers of that incident. The villager tasted the juice and found it quite delicious. The people then concluded that rice could be

turned into rice beer by mixing the juice of that rope with rice powder and prepare yeast and thereby brewed rice beer. Since then the practice of taking rice beer became popular.

Summary and Discussion

The cooking and serving of meals are the most recurrent household activities in any community and play a prominent part in the village life of the Tangsa tribe too. The sequence of meal is the day's essential routine. For the sake of convenience food must be taken at a more or less fixed time. The cooking and the serving area is located in certain fixed areas in house or village and placed under the direction of different members of the community appointed for the task. Meals make the frame work of the daily programme and become fixed as the habit of household life. Food also plays a symbolic role and helps in the establishment and continuance of a well-ordered village existence.

The Lungchang and Moklom group of Tangsas have a daily routine during the full working season. The men wake up before sunrise and leave for the field, drinking rice beer or red tea which is served by the women. Apart from the household chores, she is also expected to help the menfolk in their work.

The people of the old and new Changlang village and Tholam and Khemiyang villages of Changlang district generally take three meals. But the principal meal of the day are two. Cooking is done once in the morning and in the evening as the womenfolk go to the field daily. The principal item is rice or millet or arum and the locally available vegetables.

Cooking represents the usual course of domestic activities and as such, among these people it is almost exclusively a women's job, although there is no specific taboo on men cooking food. The cooking area is marked by hearth, cooking vessels, water containers and the presence of the women cooking the food. The hearth area is rectangular in shape and usually slightly higher than normal floor level. It is usually plastered by mixture of mud and water, they place three stones on iron frame in a triangular pattern to balance utensils. Over the hearth, there is a bamboo pitcher to keep meat, fish, arum, etc. The heat and smoke generated from the hearth protects food from insects and also preserves it. These utensils are arranged in a particular manner on the side of the hearth, with raw vegetables in a basket and water container near the place where the utensils are washed opposite the hearth. To consume food they sit on the ground near the hearth which is always kept clean. The cooking of food marks the household

routine and the lighting of the fire initiates domestic life with community. Fire is a symbol of their social life (Chapter III, ref. (76)).

Tea and rice beer are the favourite beverage among the Tangsas and no Tangsa hearth is seen without a hollow bamboo container and a bamboo tea cup. There is no specific time fixed for tea and rice beer. Tea and rice beer are the primary items with which they welcome a guest and show their hospitality. It is not known since when the practice of taking tea came into being in Tangsa society. But they have their own small garden to meet their household demands.

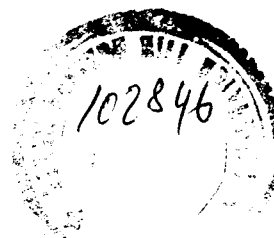
The implements and utensils which an average Changlang household uses are simple and few in number. Domestic utensils are carrying, storing baskets, storing baskets, mat, bamboo and brasspot, cooking, husking and grinding implements.

In Changlang, Thomlang and Khemiyang villages, there are some beliefs which should be maintained during serving food on a plate the food should be served on the rightward direction. If it is served on the opposite direction, it means that the food is offered to the dead persons. The preliminary rituals are not compulsory for the daily meals, even though the guests has to keep aside little bit food to ward off any evil spirit.

Hunting and fishing is carried out on a community basis, even though individual hunting is also done with cross bows and guns. Hunters use spears, daos and guns and surround a part of the forests. Before going for hunting they see the omen and one particular man is chosen to take the lead while the others follow him. All of them had equal share of the game, but the person who leads get the head in addition and the person who first kills the animal get the meat from the tail portion and the village headmen and his subordinates the waist portion of the meat. While coming back from the forest, they shout from the jungle as a sign of rejoicing after a success hunt is over.

For fishing, the young boys of the village collect poisonous creeper from the jungle and extracts its juice. They then block the river with stones, earth and grass and throw the poisonous juice into the water. Individual fishing is done by means of fish trap, net and hooks etc. and is not divided amongst the villagers but shared with the near relations when the catch is large enough.

There is an interesting anecdote behind the use of rice, rice beer and offering arum to the dead person. It so happened that God came down to earth to test human nature. He came disguised as an ugly man, wearing two worms on his ears. He then moved around in search of shelter, ultimately two orphans gave him shelter. They, however, apologized



their inability to offer him food. He was then given a bamboo mat, on which he shook both his ears and to their amazement four grains of millet fell on the mat. From then onwards, they started cultivating millets. Consequently, agriculture had introduced cultural stability into the lives of the Tangsas.

The discovery of rice-beer unfolds a tragic story. A certain mother had two daughters. One day, when she went to the fields she gave a toy to the daughters to play with. The elder daughter who wanted the toy for herself made a plan. She told her younger sister that they would play with a creeper and swing over the river. When the younger sister was swinging over the river, the elder sister refused to stop the creeper. Soon the younger sister got tired and ultimately she fell into the river. When the mother learned about it she became heart broken. Thinking that the dead daughter would be hungry, she offered arum into the river and tied a packet of boiled rice to the creeper. After a few days, some sort of juice began to fall which when tasted was found to be sweet and refreshing. Thus, started the vogue of preparing and drinking rice beer. It seems that the tragic story has a symbolic meaning, i.e. the discovery of rice beer liberates men from momentary tension and sorrows in life. It indicates that pathos led to the origin of rice beer.

"A"
FOOD IN DAILY CYCLE

FOOD GROUP	LUNGCHANG DAILY.	MOKLON DAILY	SOMETIMES	VERY OFTEN	OCCASIONALLY
RICE	+	+	-	-	-
RICE POWDER	-	-	-	-	+
LOCAL BEER	+	+	-	-	-
RED TEA	+	+	-	-	-
MEAT (BUFFALOE)	-	-	-	-	+
MEAT (COW)	-	-	+	-	-
MEAT (PORK)	-	-	+	-	-
MEAT (FOWL)	-	-	+	-	-
FLSK	-	-	+	-	-
EGG	-	-	+	-	-
VEGETABLES	+	+	-	-	-
SALT	+	+	-	-	-
OTHER SPICES (LOCAL)	+	+	-	-	-
SWEETS	-	-	-	-	-
MILK & MILK POWDER	-	-	-	-	-
BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL.	-	-	-	-	+

Common Food Items . Rice Vegetables , Local Beer And Tea.

C H A P T E R - I V

**FOOD ASSOCIATED WITH RITUALS
AND FESTIVALS**

FOOD ASSOCIATED WITH RITUALS AND FESTIVALS

In the preceding chapter, the normal food and process of cooking and serving has been focused. In the following chapter, the different religious festivals relating to the Lungchangs and Mokloms will be discussed.

It was observed that all the festivals of the Lungchang and Moklom groups of Tangsas were associated with agriculture. However, the names of the festivals differ from tribe to tribe but they have a common name amongst themselves.

In the agricultural based festivals the respective deities of prosperity are worshipped by offering rice beer, blood of cock and pig along with the chanting of prayer so as to procure blessing for the entire society for bumper harvest. Tumblers after tumblers of indigenously prepared rice beer are served to the guests. Young boys and girls dance continuously to the beating of drums and go round the villages for three or four days. Dancing and beating of drums are an important part of the Tangsas rituals.

For the Tangsas the drum is regarded as a sacred instrument. The following story reveals the importance of the drum in their ritual life.

It so happened that once upon a time some monkeys were beating drums near the banks of a river. The fishes in

the river started dancing along with the rhythm of the drums. On hearing the drum beats, the curious villagers went towards the direction from which the sound of the music was coming. On reaching the banks of the river they saw the monkeys on the drums and the fishes dancing to their tunes. As soon as the monkeys saw the men approaching they ran off in panic leaving behind their drums. From then onwards the villagers too tried playing the drums. In the past the drum served various purposes. For example, they could even keep off the animals from entering the fields.

There is another story about the use of drums in festivals. In the olden days people cultivated collocasia in the field. But the pigs used to eat up all the yam causing great hardship to the people. The people used to have a hard time chasing the pigs. They used to chase them off with a cane rope. That was a daily nuisance and one day while chasing the pigs, they reached the banks of the river and there they heard the sound of drum beats from a distance. A monkey, a porcupine and a water mongoose were playing on the drums and in the river the fishes were dancing. The animals got frightened and fled when the people approached them. The people could not get a better look at the whole thing. In order to get a better view, they tip toed to the river one by one where they saw the drums on which the animals were playing. From that day they got the idea that

to frighten the pigs they could play the drums and the pigs would run off and keep off the fields. Since the drums became their saviour they gave it a great importance. It became an indispensable instrument in every festival.

The Lungchang have a particular house where the drums are kept for three years. For this period, this household is called *nongrumham* (nong - drum; rum - to worship; ham - house), i.e. the house where the drums are worshiped. If they propose to shift the drums to some other house, it could be done only after completion of three years. At the time of festivals before and after using the drums, they worship the drum by offering local beer, rice, ginger, meat etc.

Celebration of Moh Festival

This festival is performed by the Lungchang. It is celebrated in the month of May/June every year. The exact dates of the Moh festival are decided by the village elders after seeing the moon and is celebrated on a full moon. In the year 1990, Moh festival was performed from the 15th. May.

After the announcement of the dates, the village women start preparing local beer. This festival is celebrated to bid farewell to the old year and to welcome a happy and prosperous new year with prayers for bumper

harvest and to protect human beings and domestic animals from disease etc. Another purpose for performing this festival is to get together all friends and relatives living nearby and in far flung areas. Their believe is that this is the only chance in the year to meet each other because after that the rainy season will set in and there may be obstacles owing to floods and landslides.

The festival lasts for a period of six days. The first day is called *niyapsiksa* (niyap - leaf; sik - cut; sa - day). The second is *romromsa*, the third is *wanwang*, the fourth is *mohcham*, the fifth is *nongbat* and the sixth is called *wanshang riang*.

For performing rituals on the first day, the old men, women, young boys and girls whosoever wants to dance remain busy in arranging their traditional costumes like lungis, blouses, caps, ornaments, drums etc. The gongs which are generally kept in the granary, are brought to the house in the evening. This day may be called the day for preparation.

The second day is the most important day. The villagers wake up early in the morning and light a fresh fire, removing old burnt charcoal and ashes from the fire place. Then follows an important ritual called *kom-khan* in each house. *Kom* means a kind of metal and *khan* means to cut. With the help of a knife, few dust/particles are cut out

from the metal (kom) and kept over the leaves with a little piece of locally produced salt. Then one egg is broken and kept on a leaf which is made in a cone shape and dried on the fire The number of eggs depends upon the number of jhum fields. For example, if there are two fields, then two eggs will be required but will be dried separately. Then a little amount of rice powder and local beer (juice only) are kept separately in little bamboo chungas. Carrying these items, i.e. bundles of leaves (kom-nyap) containing kom and local salt, roasted eggs, rice powder chungas, local beer chungas, and cooked rice in a bamboo basket called zing, one or two members of each household go to their respective paddy field to perform a ritual called *rom-rom*. In the middle of each field, women of the house clean small patch of land. All these articles of offering are kept there, and the chanting of the following prayer begins -

*kuk-amoh; ahu-jangku; pharwaro;
mancheto; remkoho; tung-cham;
thamu-kuho, naw sha; thabaima;
pharana-le, ahu-ha; remkaholo;
remkaholo.*

The chanting means to get good crops for the coming year and bring prosperity for the new year.



Plate V
Tying of cone-shaped leaves on the sacred post and other usable things during the Moh festival.

After performing the ritual in the field, they return back to the village and start drinking local beer, and then they also start dancing. The dancers are required to dance in the foreground of each house. The number of rounds to be danced through out the village differs from village to village. In some villages, they dance for only one round, while in others a maximum of three rounds are made. The dance starts around 12 noon. After completion of the dance, another important ritual is performed by each house in the evening. It is generally conducted by the head of the house. All the members of the household gather on the spot of the ritual. They utter the names of their ancestors upto nine generations. As this ceremony is considered to be auspicious, the presence of all members of the household is considered to be important. For this, first they tie those cone shaped leaves on the sacred post (inside their house), on the heads of buffaloes and cows in the walls of the front room and in all the usable things. The front room which serves as the common room or sitting room is decorated with hunting trophies, heads of mithuns and other animals sacrificed on different occasions are fixed on the wall and which are regarded as household deities. On those cone shaped leaves, they put *dung* (cooked rice), *sim* (local salt), *chinki* (ginger), *zhou* (local beer) with recitation of their gospels-

hamrom ngaba musing umrongthalatma

kataklala yakpgle

yakpham tharangholo jasem tahanghalo.

This recitation means that they appeal to God that they are praying to Him each year to seek His blessings so that God protects them as well as all their domestic animals.

They take their food after offering some grain of rice on the tap (hearth). Their prayers to God is that they always get food like this. Thereafter the ritual of worshipping of the drums commences. In a particular house, the head of the family performs the ritual for the drums. It is performed near the sacred post where all people gather. The drum beaters also come and climb up the *chang* (bamboo platform) one by one where the drums are kept and the head of the family offers the drum ginger, cooked rice, pork while reciting some hymn -

paramnogle jingathamn kakulo

rangjathamin kakulo kailap

ranglap takinkakulo

This hymn means that the coming year can be overcome without coming across any impediments.

In the evening of this day friends, relatives and guests from other villages also arrive to enjoy the festival.

All men and women, boys and girls dance day and night without interruption for two to three days. According to their custom, they go from house to house, dancing and singing (traditional folksong). At the time of their visit, the members of the household offer local beer to the members of the visiting troupe. Friends and relatives coming from different villages who participate in the celebration are also offered local beer, rice, meat etc.

On the third and fourth day of the festival, no special ceremonies are performed. The days are spent on feasting, drinking and dancing by both the guest and villagers together. The guests generally depart on the third day. However, there is no restriction if they like to stay till the end of the festival.

On the morning of the fifth day of the festival, the dancers make one round of the whole village and come to the last house *nongbat ham* (a house that has been selected for the purpose of keeping the drums years ago) where they dance three rounds on the floor. Here again, the worship of drums known as *nongrom* is performed by offering to it pork, ginger, cooked rice, local beer etc. The drums are kept at rest and the dancers are offered local beer by the ladies of the house. The celebration comes to an end and the villagers then disperse to their respective homes.

The sixth day is actually observed as a day of farewell to the evil spirit. It is not treated as a part of the festival. Observance of the sixth day differs from village to village. Some villages observe this ritual after the Moh festival while others after the Parong festival. Moreover, this is not the day for merry making. After performing this ritual some people even stop visiting other houses in the late night thinking they might meet some evil spirits on their way. Young boys and girls may roam around but singing and dancing is not allowed.

Therefore, it is not treated as a part or continuation of the festival rather it is a kind of ritual observed after the festivals are over. They believe that evil spirits also come along with those villagers who come to participate in the festival from other villages. In order to drive away the evil spirits they pretend that they are going to the market but go to a particular jungle singing and blowing the gong. They keep their houses open and the whole village remains silent for a few minutes. While going to the jungle they carry *borangs* (baskets), a bamboo pole containing rice powder, salt, chillies, pig etc. along with another sharpened bamboo in the other end.

They make a *chang* (bamboo platform) in the jungle in order to perform *Hakusum* which means worship for the Goddess of earth. On the *chang* they keep hen, pig, salt, chillies,



Plate VI
Dances of the Moh festival.



Plate VII
The liver of the sacrificed animal is being taken out to read the omens during the Moh festival.

local beer etc. The priest sacrifices a hen, twisting its neck and at the same time reciting the following hymn -

*haiwanchangrang machumen hakmule
rongkhulu sakpongsaku wakngi
sasuhoholo rimbakulalo kawarma
param thnkulolo samkuhoho
saremtuhuna saremtuhuhu no kuthung
khumimolo.*

This hymn means that they pray to God that the year passes without any form of epidemic or other natural calamities. And also they pray to get good crops in the coming year so that they might be able to celebrate the festival.

He holds the dead hen up hanging from his hand in order to find out in which direction the legs of the hen are pointed. Good or bad days for the farmers are predicted on this basis of position. The pig is then sacrificed by the priest. Before that, the legs of the pig are tied with ropes made of bamboo. Then the pig is cut with a dao. They look at the liver of the pig to read the good and bad omens for the villagers. On the basis of these predictions, a number of rituals are performed by the priest so that no harm comes back to the people.

Thereafter, they cook rice powder, pork, chillies in a hotch potch and eat. Then they silently walk back to their

homes. Even next day they do not go out of their houses. There are no visitors on that day.

Parong Festivals

This follows the Moh festival and commences in the next full moon period of the Moh festival. In the year 1990, it commenced from 20th. June. This festival is performed after harvesting millet to satisfy *Hakhu* (the protector of the village). The belief is also that *Hakhu* will protect them from diseases and calamities.

This festival is known as *Parong* (pa - earth; rong - worship) and the place where it is performed is called *Pasong* (place), i.e. entrance of the village gate.

Preparation for the festival starts one week ahead. For this, they collect paddy from the village who contribute according to their capacity and might. In return they obtain pig and chicken. They also instruct the villagers to prepare local beer.

The ritual for the Parong festival starts in the afternoon in the presence of the village headman. In connection with the preparation of food for the festival, the young boys collect firewood, rice, chilies, salt, local turmeric, local beer from house to house.

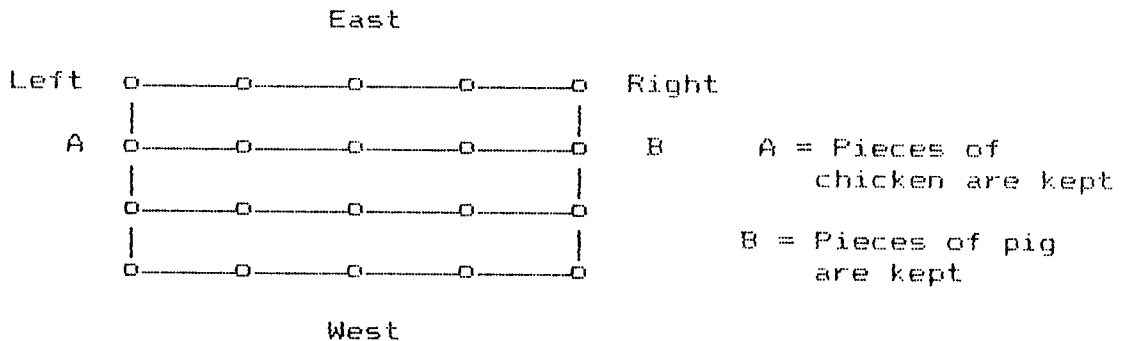
The *Hakusomwa* (priest) then comes in. At first the priest along with some elderly man makes two *chamiam* (chang). For this, eight bamboos and four trees with leaves

(particularly the tree *Zinghong*) are required. The upper portion of the eight bamboos are sliced and pushed to the ground and made to appear like a flower. The main portion of the bamboos are then rooted into the ground, four on the left side and the other four on the right side. Out of the four trees, two are pushed to the ground on the east direction and two on the west direction. Two changs are prepared supporting on this bamboo and trees.

After that the priest sacrifices chicken in the same manner as for the sixth day observation of Moh festival. He also reads the omen for the welfare of the people.

After this the pig is sacrificed by the village headman. Before that, the legs of the pig are tied with ropes made of bamboo. Then the pig is cut with a dao. They look at the liver of the pig to get an indication about the welfare of the villagers. They also get an idea whether their next crop will be good or bad. They cut small pieces of meat from every part of the sacrificed pig and chicken and keep them on clean leaves placed on the top of the bamboo platform. The parts of different token pieces are placed in such a manner that it appears as the whole chicken and pig is being offered. The pieces of the chicken are kept on the left side of the bamboo platform which is also the left direction of the village. The pieces of the pig are kept on the opposite side indicating the right direction of

the village. They put cooked rice and local beer in a *chunga* made of leaves and place it on the two bamboo platforms. They pour the pure local beer three times on the *chunga* in their customary way.



the special invitees who hail from the neighbouring villages.

After this they come back singing and dancing to the village headman's house. The songs are specially meant for the invitees as a token of remembrance and sense of good feeling and relations -

*wangha wangha dangha dangha lumlong
hongjung on soi anungnabo anbangnabo
waknoi nakthap setnoi noisa
waknoi nakthap setnoi wakthap
annu ngoi-ngoi a nba noira.*

Thereafter they go to the houses of other villages to sing and dance. They are offered local beer, meat and other eatables, i.e. available in the host house. In this way they visit all the houses throughout the night.

Next day they do not go anywhere particularly in the jungle and paddy fields. They believe that if they go out on that particular day some inauspicious events may take place. They can go to the houses of others to have local beer if any more is left. But they cannot sing and dance which is totally restricted on that day.

This Parong festival is celebrated for one day and one night (for example, if it starts today, then it ends next day). The guests who arrive on Parong day depart on the next day.

Mol Festival of the Moklom

Mol festival is celebrated by the Mokloms. It is celebrated in the month of June. In 1990, it was celebrated on the 20th. June before harvesting of millet. The exact date of the festival is fixed by the village elders. The festival also marks the celebration of the last food offering to the dead. This is also celebrated to bid farewell to the old year and to welcome a happy and prosperous new year with a bumper crop.

The custom among them is that the members of a bereaved family offer a small portion of each harvest first at the grave of the departed soul. The day before Mol, the bereaved family members sacrifice a pig/cow/buffalo (whatever they can) in the name of the departed soul and offer it along with other food and intimate the dead that henceforth no food offering should be expected from the living relatives. All the articles used by the deceased person are used as grave goods and are kept hanging on a post near the cremation ground.

The festival is celebrated for three days. The first day is called *Lumkhat*, the second *Lumbil*, and the third is called *Lumnut*.

On the morning of the first day they perform the household ritual *him-rom* by offering rice on cone shaped leaves *kukdang* and hang those on the sacred post, on the

head of cows and buffaloes as well as in the shed where these animals are kept and also on all other usable articles. While doing this, they chant ritual hymns. The ritual is performed by the head of the family.

They offer local beer to the visitors and this continues the whole day.

In the afternoon, Mol dance starts with men and women wearing colourful traditional costumes accompanied by *nong* (drum) beating and mythical songs which relate to the origin of the society and civilization.

Before they start dancing, they perform some ritual rites to the drum and it is performed by a particular man (in the Kemiyang village it is done by a person of the Rekhung clan). This is in vogue since his forefathers's days.

After that they start dancing and at first they dance on the chang of Rekhung's house. Both men and women dance together. The widows also dance thereby wearing man's dress to satisfy their dead husband.

Then they come down to the ground and dance three rounds there (the male members stand in the middle row and the female on both the left and right side). Rekhung leads the dance. From there they come to the North, from the North to the Rekhung's house and repeat the dance thrice. Again they go dancing to the South from the Rekhung's house and

repeat the dance three times. They dance three rounds again in the Rekhung's place and the old man holds a flattened bamboo *wanhop* (tray) *khang* (bucket like basket made of bamboo) and welcome the good harvest through singing and dancing -

wakhodotsa; sisipsaoi.

When it is being performed the female members are not allowed to dance. The visitors as well cannot participate in the dance till that time.

The dances come to an end for a while. During that time the participants go back to their respective houses.

In the evening the dancing starts again in which all the persons including guests can take part. The dancing continues till next morning and a particular house is selected for three years for this purpose. The dancers are offered local beer by the members of that house. Those who come from different villages are offered rice, local beer and meat.

On the second day, only the boys dance to the beating of drums. In the evening the villagers (from each family, one or two members) go to the jungle and collect sacred leaves from some particular trees, i.e *satibang*, *suka* leaves for arum, *saral* leaves for millet and *balla* leaves for paddy and with these only the male members perform

romthong hum (rom - ritual; thong - sacred; hum - post) by reciting the following hymn -

tungnalaru samnai wangphu

The meaning of the hymn is that the new paddy should come for the new year.

Before departure to the jungle to collect the leaves there are some rituals which should be observed. All of them who go to the jungle have to gather in one house. From there they move to the jungle and collect the leaves. While returning to their village they sing a particular song on the way -

wangboa nangho

kheri aa-a tan chole

nang be-a wangho,

meaning,

come along, come along,

we worship you,

we've made the steps

and opened the doors

for you to come o' paddy,

come along, come along,

for you granary is there.

They then go to a particular house. The members of that house do not go to the jungle but they are given the leaves as their share. In turn the members of that

particular house offer sufficient amount of *ruhi* (a special type of local beer) to them. After that they go to another house, where members of the family accompany the party to the jungle and they also offer local beer to them. Thereafter they disperse to their houses and take their meals.

Before taking their meal on that very day, they offer little amount of cooked rice on *chikja-rom* (three stones) (*chik* - cooking pot; *ja* - stone; *rom* - ritual) in the name of *Him-Rom*. The offerings on the three stones are meant for three different purposes. One is for *Him-Rom* (God), one is for the *Hasong Mikhol* (owner/individual owner of each house) and the other for the *Ngungwa* (guests). On the third day, the dancing is to be finished before sunrise and the celebration comes to an end in the *Rekhung's* house (after dancing three rounds from the *Rekhung's* house to north direction). On the same day there is also a custom of tying a small piece of rope or a *jakrikhap*, from a particular tree called *rethingbang*, around the waist of the nieces and nephews by their maternal uncle singing a sacred omen that nobody can cause any harm to them nor can any disease attack them. They will be free from all danger and distress -

ekhicjong hortaa taatha

ngahomang ngapangang saka ning

Thereafter they offer local beer to their uncle. Next day is restricted from performing any activities and they do not go out and remain confined to their household work.

There is a belief that if they go to the paddy fields during that time, crops will not grow properly and it is also in honour of the drum. They feel that after beating the drum for so many days it has been exhausted and hence, to show honour and respect to the drum, they confine themselves to their homes.

Chamtuk Ritual

After five days of Mol festival, the Moklom celebrate the Chamtuk festival. It is just like the Parong of the Lungchang. The festival is held on the main road just at the entrance of the village.

In the morning the men folk go to clean the village surroundings and the paths leading to the arable fields. Thereafter they come and sacrifice cows and pigs.

Before they sacrifice an animal, they make a fencing and inside the fencing they arrange a spot with raised earth where *manrung bang* (three woods) are planted. Out of these three woods, two are left without leaves with pointed ends and one is with leaves. They hang livers of buffaloes/cows at the top. Along with these they also put cooked rice wrapped in leaves. At the time of doing all these, they

simultaneously recite hymns and the ritual is called *chamtuk harong* -

tungbangkhalpho chambang kholpo.

This means that they are praying to God to bless them with a good harvest (at the same time chanting the name of their own place). The children of the village collect salt, chillies, firewood and then cooking is done. Both old men and children eat together on that spot. Others take their share of raw meat etc. to their home. This ritual is performed exclusively by the male members only.

The womenfolk also observe a ritual the same day at home which is called *chamrom*. For this the ladies go to the millet field during the day time to collect the leaves of millet, arum and keep these on a flattened bamboo tray. In the evening they perform the ritual (with the things brought from the field) near the sacred post of the house by reciting a hymn -

tungbang chambang khalpho

rekhung rethak wangho

wangpho.

This means that the crops, i.e. millet, arum etc., should get well.

While taking their dinner, they offer a little quantity of rice on the three sides of the hearth imploring that God will never allow their stones to be empty. They do

not wash the utensils that evening as they usually do on other days. This is because they believe that if they clean the utensils then God will vanish from their house.

The sixth day is considered to be an inauspicious day. Restrictions are imposed on going to the jungle or paddy fields. They cannot even pluck leaves of trees.

On the seventh day, the menfolk go to the river under the pretext of going for fishing. There is a belief amongst them that while the guests come from the distant places to participate in the festival they may bring contagious diseases and evil spirits along with them. In order to get rid of these they take bath in the river with a kind of poisonous leaf and come back silently to their homes.

Hemiwan Cekholi

Hemiwan Cekholi is a festival celebrated by the Lungchangs before the sowing of seedlings of crops. On the day before the festival begins, they burn and clear the jungle in order to sow the seeds. The next day, they worship the deity near the main post *hemongsingrang* blessing for a good harvest. This is usually performed by the head of the family in every household. They sacrifice a pig/hen and chant the following hymn -

nginyam pusong

batkulo mukong

halang wakilo.

This means the seedlings have been planted, make the roots go deep into the soil and become firm.

After the ritual is over, the pig is roasted, washed and then cut into pieces. It is then boiled with some other vegetables and salt is added to it. They also cook rice. The cooked food is served by the mother, sister or sister-in-law to the family members. Both men and women then pack the cooked food in leaves and carry it to the fields. In the fields they first plant the millet. After the planting is over they enjoy themselves by singing and dancing. Finally they sit together and eat the food which they had carried with them and then return home.

Haikaulam

The festival is celebrated by the Lungchangs after harvesting the crops. After a successful harvest, it is time for them to rejoice with their neighbours. Pigs, hens or cocks are sacrificed during this festival. They pray to God for the protection of the crops in the granery against pests and insects.

The head of the family performs the sacrifice at the door step in order to welcome God. The following hymn is chanted while performing the sacrifice -

*karaikunglo kareisa-wanglo
kusuphu-wanghalo rusunanghalo
mainatakio ngama-asalo
jasno-anakwanglo winosuk-wangle
wanghalo saphurohip-wangle
rakhiro ashkwagle-rekaitopanta bhang
pakpan-waghala kasemlakrong-singbangkhala.*

The meaning of the hymn is "Oh God of wealth, you are welcome. Bless our crops and let us reap the best harvest. Please forgive if I have unconsciously stepped on you or have said anything against you. Protect our harvest from all sorts of insects and small animals. I hope you'll be satisfied and stay back to bless me and also to keep a watch on my granery." After performing the sacrifice, they try to read the omen after seeing the leg of the hen and the liver of the pig. After that food is prepared for the invitees and the members of the family. Before serving the food, local rice beer is served which is a compulsory item. Before drinking, they throw a little amount of local beer as well as food on the ground. This is done as a means to give little amount to the spirits. The food is served by the female members of the house. males usually sit in the front room near the hearth and the females sit inside near the place where the food is cooked. The food is served on a leaf and water on a bamboo *chunga* (tube).

Kungtom

Kungtom is celebrated by the Mokloms in the month of July/August after the harvesting of maize and millet is over. This festival is celebrated for two days and the main participants are the young boys. On the first day of the festival, which is called *kungtom kaino*, the young boys sing and clear the road to the paddy fields. Young boys of the neighbouring villages are invited who come and take part with the same gusto and spirit.

They then visit the houses of the *Lungwang* (village headman). The *Lungwang* welcomes them and asks them to sit in the sitting room in a row. The ladies of the house offer them local beer. After drinking the local beer they perform a dance with sticks by which they actually plead to the women in the kitchen for some more local beer -

rung-rung nako-nako tap-ban

nasao chem-lang neto.

The young boys are then offered rice and meat. Before taking the food, they pour a little local beer on the ground as offering to the *Rongphara* in order to get his blessings so that they will be able to meet again the following year with the same spirit.

The boys of the neighbouring villages receive special treatment. The host has a separate store of local

beer and chicken which are taken home by the young boys. After leaving the house of the Lungwang the young boys visit each and every house in the village dancing and demanding local beer. Along with the local beer the young boys are also offered money. A peculiar aspect of this festival is that the household having chicken must voluntarily offer it to the young boys. If anybody refuses to offer, then the young boys take the chicken by force.

The festival is celebrated in the same manner on the second day also and then they bid farewell to the young boys of the neighbouring villages.

The food taken on festivals is the normal food which they eat daily. Process of cooking is also the same. After observing all their festivals it can be concluded that food is prepared by two methods - boiling and fermentation. Rice and meat are mainly boiled. Local beer is prepared by fermenting rice. It takes about a week to ferment the rice.

During festivals, another technique employed for cooking meat is roasting. However, this process is not very common except for one or two festivals. During the festivals, food is also distributed among the invitees according to their rank of order in the society. For example, in the Parong festival, the backbone of the sacrificed animal is offered to the village headman, again the invitees of the neighbouring village are also given

special attention and they too are offered the backbone of the animal. Again in the Kungtom festival of the Mokoloms, the boys of the neighbouring villages are given special treatment. The host stores a large quantity of local rice beer and chicken for the young boys to be carried home.

Discussion

The rituals performed during the festivals can be looked from several angles. At the professional level, the significance of the festivals can be stated as follows:-

It is to safeguard the health of family members, relatives and friends and to protect them from a variety of diseases. Also, it is to receive good crops, to protect them from diseases, pests and animals.

These professed objectives are based on the belief that there are some supernatural powers which protect the human beings as well as the animals and crops. They are also responsible for bestowing good crops. In order to seek favour from supernatural powers they have to be "properly invoked", that is animals will have to be sacrificed, local beer will have to be offered, drums will have to be beaten and men and women will have to dance till the festival is over. It is also noticed that while the festival is being performed, relatives and friends of the neighbouring villages too join in the celebration.

The special function of the festivities are clear. They reinforce the social relations. Rights and obligations of various kinds are reemphasised. They also educate the young about the customs and beliefs of the community. The solidarity of the community and a sense of friendly neighbourhood, intra-village and inter-village too get demonstrated and emphasised. It is seen that among the Tangsas, sacrifice during festivals play an important role. No festival is complete without sacrifice. This may be a symbol of their reverence to supernatural power to express their gratitude. This is done to please the supernatural so that he would continue to bless them and bring about their welfare. Rice and local beer are other symbols of importance. These are the main items served to the supernatural as well as to the neighbours. A noticeable fact is that dancing, singing and beating of the drums are very closely associated with the observance of the rituals. It seems that through these they try to draw the attention of the supernatural powers. The drum too is an object of respect. They offer rice, local rice beer, ginger and meat to the drum. they also give great importance to some particular places like the fields, sacred post (at home) and they consider these as a place of supernatural power. In the performance of the rituals, a certain kind of order is maintained. First they chant hymns, followed by sacrifice,

and then serving and distribution of food. Raw meat is offered to the invitees. As a sign of gratitude they offer certain parts of the animal which are considered to be of a higher order to the persons who have higher social ranking. That is one of the ways by which this social rank of the person is recognised through the kind of food that is offered to the person.

It has also been noticed that in the Parong festival, the hen and pig which are sacrificed, are offered to the supernatural in a systematic order. The animals are arranged in such a way that it seems as if the whole thing has been offered and that too live.

In the Kungtom festival, the young boys are the chief participants. It is so because it involves clearing of the jungle on the way to the fields. The young boys, being physically stronger, are able to perform such hard tasks without much difficulty. In return for their hard work they are specially offered local beer, rice and meat. They even have the right to demand from the host, things like local rice beer, hen etc. After any festival, the day following is considered to be inauspicious and they abstain from work. Actually this is nothing but a day of rest after dancing, singing and merry making. They have their own explanations for whatever they do during the festivals.

Food in all festivals play an important role. Rice, local beer and meat are some common items which are offered to the supernatural and the invitees. These are the staple items in their diet and, therefore, vital. Their continued supply means well being of the community. Since they believe that there is some such power which controls these things and without his/her help the supply of these items cannot be maintained even when adequate human input is there, animal or disease can destroy them. Further, it is considered that the needs of such powers are the same as that of human beings. So they get the same food which is inspired by them and they get in this procedure in the sense that they are offered first. Again food has a cultural significance. Before consumption, it goes through a number of processes. For example, first comes the chanting of hymns, then comes sacrifice, followed by reading of the omen, offering of some parts to the supernatural and then in the final stage, it is cooked and then it becomes suitable for human consumption.

In the next chapter, food associated with life cycle rituals will be discussed.

"B"
 PRESCRIBED ITEMS OF FOOD DURING FESTIBALS.

	LUNGCHANG					NOKLON		
FOOD STUFF	MOH FESTIVAL	PARONG	HEMOINAN CEKMOLI	HAIKULAN	NOL	CHANTUK	KUNSTON	
RICE	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RICE POWDER	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
LOCAL BEER	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
GINGER	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
MEAT (BUFFALOE)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
MEAT (COW)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
MEAT (PORK)	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	
MEAT (FOWL)	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	
FISH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
EGG	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
VEGETABLES	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	
SALT	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
OTHER SPICES (LOCAL)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
SWEETS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
MILK & MILK POWDER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	
CHUTNEY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

COMMON FOOD ITEMS : RICE, LOCAL BEER, MEAT, VEGETABLES,.

SIGNIFICANT ITEMS : EGG, RICE POWDER, GINGER, SALT, BLOOD OF SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL.

CHAPTER - V

FOOD IN LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

Food in Life Cycle Rituals

In the previous chapter we have discussed the normal food cycle and the food taken during festivals. Now we are going to discuss food during life cycle rituals.

Pregnancy and the Rites Among the Tangsas

The Tangsas regard the period of pregnancy as a delicate period and a number of restrictions are laid down which have to be followed. This is done so that the women has an easy delivery and is protected against evil spirits.

The Lungchang group of the Tangsas, perform certain *Nobo* (ceremonies) when a women is pregnant. This is done in order to ensure a smooth and easy delivery. This ritual is, however, not done at one's home but in the jungle and that too under a particular tree called "Pamthom". In order to perform the ritual they require a number of things. These are an egg, a little uncooked rice, one dog, a small piece of cloth which is torn from the dress of the pregnant woman, some thread, wooden reel and a batten hat.

First, they make an image out of the cloth, resembling a baby which they offer in the name of the God "Pamthom".

Before going to the jungle the priest goes round the pregnant woman nine times holding the items of the ritual.

She in turn touches the articles and requests the priest to carry it to the Pamthom tree in the jungle sincerely praying that the God in the Pamthom tree may bless her with safe and easy delivery.

The priest then goes to the jungle to arrange the articles of ritual in the following order :

a) The dog is tied to a wooden post which is fixed adjacent to the tree. The dog is tied in a standing position with its face turned upwards so as to expose only the front side leaving the backside opposite to the village. Then the dog is sacrificed. All other things are left behind in the place of ritual.

b) Salt as well as uncooked rice and an egg are kept in a "Kaupat" under the tree.

c) The other articles are arranged and placed under the tree.

After arranging the articles the priest recites certain hymns under the tree and then returns to the house of the pregnant woman and the articles mentioned above are left behind. After this a pig is sacrificed at the house of the pregnant woman reciting certain hymns at the same time. The meat of the pig is then boiled in water with other locally available spices, salt and vegetables. Rice beer, meat and rice are then served to the members present there.

Pregnancy Among Moklaas

In the advanced stage of pregnancy the Mokloms perform certain rites called "vokap". It commences in the morning after arrival of the priest. First, the priest takes a *wohang* (brown coloured hen), some rice powder packed in a leaf, cooked rice and rice beer which they arrange neatly on a bamboo tray or basket. These articles are then taken to the forest and placed under a tree and some rituals are performed in the name of "Vokap". After performing the rites they leave behind the things and let loose the hen. They then come back home, and cook hen and the rice. The cooked food is then served among the people present there. This marks the closure of the ritual.

Thus the main items offered during pregnancy are a dog, an egg, salt, uncooked rice and rice beer in the case of the Lungchang, and fowl, rice powder and cooked rice and rice beer in the case of the Moklom. The animals offered are simply left in the jungle along with rice and rice beer for the spirits. A pig (Lungchang)/fowl (Moklom) is also sacrificed at the house of the pregnant woman and after some rituals, the pig/fowl is boiled in water along with vegetables, salt and locally available spices and then served with rice and rice beer to the people present there.

Observance of Birth Ceremony

Birth of a child is an important social occasion and is usually marked by the performance of some rituals. Among the Tangsas birth of a child is followed by celebration and is an occasion of rejoicing. Birth of a child is considered to be a heavenly gift. According to the Tangsas birth, growth and death lies in the hands of God.

Birth Ceremony of the Lungchang

The Lungchang have an elaborate birth ceremony with certain rites which are to be zealously celebrated. As soon as a couple is gifted with a child, they first remove the old firewood from the *tap* (hearth) and clean the *tap* properly. They then bring in new firewood and light the fire. On that fire, *wong* (rice) is boiled. After preparing the *doong* a small amount of it is placed on a plate and this *doong* along with *kham* (local beer) is then taken near the mouth of the new born child. Next the mother is offered *doong* and *kham*. This is done because the mother goes through a lot of pain and hardship during the process of delivery of the child. The food served to her is considered to help her get rid of her weakness. On the first day of the new-born child they pierce holes in its ears. On the second day they try to read out the omen and find whether the child will be fortunate or unfortunate. For this

purpose, a hen is sacrificed in case of a female child and a cock in the case of a male child. The father does the sacrifice. He observes the position of the leg and accordingly find out whether the omen is good or bad. It is seen that even among the Hill Lalung of Assam sacrifices are common. In case of a male child twelve pairs of cocks and in case of a female child six pairs of cock are sacrificed in the alter of the courtyard containing twenty-one sheets of banana leaves (Sharma Thakur, 1985).

On this occasion they invite the parents and relatives of both sides and also the neighbours. They are invited in order to bless the new born child. The invitees are also offered food consisting of meat, boiled rice and rice beer. The cooking is done in the normal style. The male members are served food in the outer room near the hearth, while the female members sit around the inner hearth. Serving is generally done by the females (family members or members of their clan). Food is served on leaves and rice beer on a bamboo mug. The rice beer is served first followed by rice and meat. Food is first served to the old and children and then to the other men and women.

A remarkable feature of the food habits of the baby is that, from the first day itself the baby is given rice. The process of feeding the baby is quite similar to that of birds. First the mother will take a morsel of cooked rice

in her mouth and make it into a pulp and then the baby is fed mouth to mouth. Breast milk is also given to the child. Gradually the child's daily diet will be the same as that of the other members.

Chungrong (Birth Ceremony) of the Moklom

Among the Mokloms the birth of a child is considered to be fortunate. But the birth of a twin is considered to be unfortunate and they kill the twins. They even go to the extreme point of destroying the very house by fire in which the twins were born. They believe such a house would bring bad luck to them.

Soon after a child is born, it is given breast milk. On the very first day itself some rites are performed. On this day, rice will be offered to the child. They believe if the child is not offered rice it may develop cough later while visiting others. On this ceremony fire is considered to be a sacred symbol. Rice on this day is cooked on the firewood of a special tree called "Sakhang" which is generally used for ritual purpose. A temporary hearth is made outside the house for this purpose. A little amount of rice and water is packed and tied with a leaf and is then burnt on fire. After cooking the rice, the mother first chews the rice and makes it into a pulp and then feed the child mouth to mouth. This is repeated three times. After

this, the child can take its food anywhere. While performing this rite they do not invite any guests.

On the third day *minghom* (name giving) ceremony is performed. For this the maternal uncle is specially invited and also they invite the parents of both sides as well as neighbours.

They have a special way of finding a suitable name for the child. First they take six sprigs of the paddy plant. Then they place a plate with water on it, and take two grains of unhusked paddy and hold it with the thumb and middle finger. After that they propose a name and drop the grains into the water. As the grains float on the water, if they meet head to head, the name is considered to be suitable otherwise they go on repeating the process suggesting new names until the two grains meet head to head. After a name is given, [oo] beer is served to the invitees followed by rice and meat which are compulsory items. The food is cooked in the normal style and is served by the family members. The male members are served in the outer room around the *tap* and the female members around the inner or main *tap*. At first *kham* (local beer) is served on *tungpak* (bamboo tube) which is followed by *till* (rice) and *ngam* (meat) on leaf. After eating is over the plates are collected and stored in one place.

To sum up, for the Langchang and Moklom, fire plays an important role in maintaining the social relation. Again food takes a special meaning in specific occasion. Soon after the birth of the child, the mother is offered rice and rice beer and this is done to provide energy. Rice, rice beer and meat plays an indispensable role in their food cycle. Similarly the best part of the meat, goes to the maternal uncle and parents. Before taking their food they always keep a portion of food aside and also drop little rice beer to keep away the bad influence of the other world.

Marriage

The Tangsas give great importance to marriage. For them like any other group, marriage is a social institution and they give great sanctity to marriage. It is the accepted form of union between man and woman. For them marriageable age is attained soon after puberty. Usually boys marry between the age of eighteen to thirty and girls marry between the age of fifteen and twenty.

The clan exogamy is the general rule which regulates the marriage system of the Tangsa. In most cases marriage takes place within the village itself, but inter village marriage is also not uncommon.

Monogamy is the most widely practised form of marriage. Generally polygamy is not practised, but in

exceptional cases, a man can have more than one wife, provided the first wife agrees to it. Cross-cousin marriage (MBD), livirate and sororate are also noticed in their society. In the cross-cousin marriage, the mother's brother's daughter (MBD) is considered to be the potential wife of father's sister's son (FSZ).

Marriage System in Lungchang

At first the proposal goes to the girl's place. The message is carried by the elder family members or relative or any other person (chosen by the boy's parents). But a person who does not have any child is forbidden from going. Such a person is not considered to be a good omen. They carry *Kham* (local beer) in a *tungpak* (bamboo tube) when they go to propose for marriage. They consume the *Kham* (local beer) in the girl's place if the marriage proposal is accepted. Similar practices are observed among the Purum tribe of Manipur. A man who wants to negotiate, regarding matrimony of his son to a certain girl takes a present of rice beer to the girl's father, and appeals to him not to be "angry" and if the latter agrees to the proposal he drinks it. This has double meaning that of the character of the person, and also of the wife-taker acknowledging humbly his inferiority by taking the initial step in the process of negotiations, which may not be accepted sometimes. During

the marriage ceremony rice beer is taken from the groom's father and given to the wife's father, together with pig meat curry just as mortals do to the Gods. Thus it can be seen that the wife takers are regarded inferior to wife givers (Needhan, 1960).

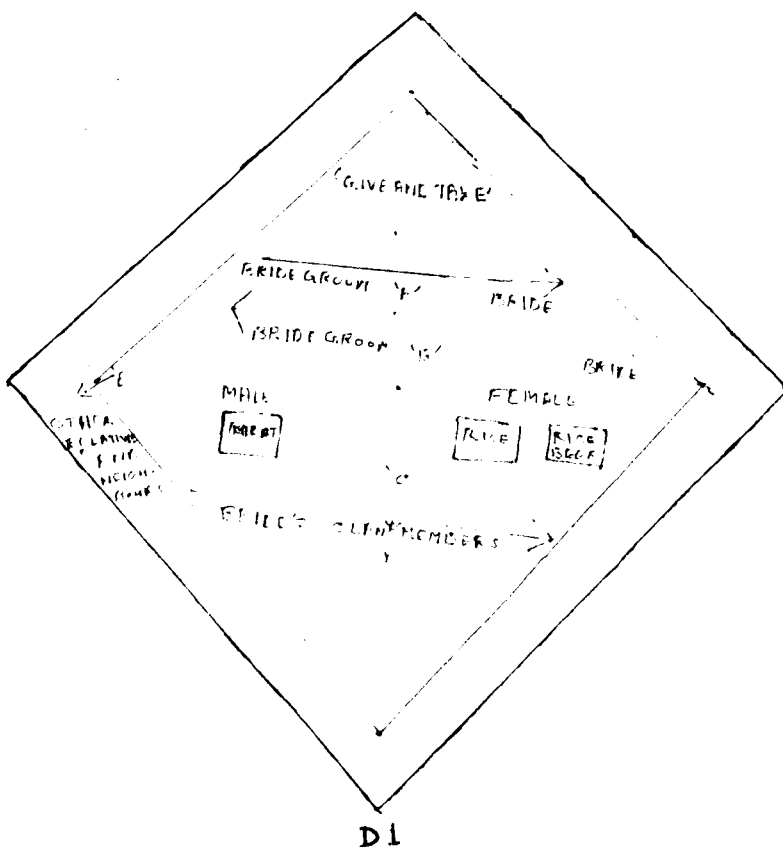
After proper negotiation, if both sides come to an agreement, then the girl's parents invite the boy to come and stay with them for a period of one or two years. During the period the boy is required to work in their fields and perform other duties as well. After staying there the boy returns to his house and starts preparing for the marriage.

A day before the marriage the following items are to be given to the girl from the boy's side :

- 1) *ngam* (fish) - 99 pieces
- 2) *wang* (raw rice) - 3 baskets (11 kgs/baskets)
- 3) *dung* (cooked rice) - the maximum they can give
- 4) *Kham* (local beer) - 5 numbers (the length of the bamboo tube should be 5 ft., 4 ft., 3 ft., 2 ft., 1 ft. respectively).

The *dung* (boiled rice) is carried on leaves. As per the existing customs the first packet of rice is tied with three leaves and the rest are tied with one leaf. All the packets are then tied together by a rope.

The articles are delivered in a systematic manner. *Kambe*, the man who had first gone with the proposal to the



The above diagram shows obligatory gift and return.

"A" indicates bridegroom's side giving a pig alongwith fish boiled rice, raw rice and local beer to the bride's side. This shows the female's primacy.

"B" indicates obligatory return of the neck portion to the bridegroom, to carry it back. This shows the relationship of reciprocity between the two families.

"C" shows that during special occasions, meat is prepared by the males, while rice and rice beer are prepared by the females, which indicates the clear cut division of labour.

"D" indicates the tail portion of prepared meat alongwith rice and rice beer which are served first to the close members of the bride, which symbolizes the honoured guest status of the bride's side.

"E" indicates that the other portions of prepared meat are served to the other invitees who are present, which shows the importance of hospitality as a way of promoting goodwill within the community.

girl's house carries the basket of *dung*. He is then followed by the *bangwang*, the man carrying the *wang* (raw rice). *Wakpaiben*, the last person carries the *wak* (pig).

On the day of the wedding, 5-15 pieces of *nga* are carried by the bridegroom's side. Out of these pieces, 5 pieces are given back to the person who first carried the proposal for marriage. The rest of the items are then cooked in the bride's place, which is cooked by the young boys and girls from both sides. The *ngam* (meat) is usually cooked by the boys and *dung* is cooked by the girls. The girls also prepare the *Kham* (local beer). When the *wak* is cut, the neck portion is given to the groom to carry it back to his house. Cooking is done in the normal style. The only difference is that meat is prepared by the males and rice and local beer by the females(D1).

System of Partaking Marriage Feats

When the meal is served the clan members of the bride's family take the meal first. They are given the tail portion of the pig. The rest of the invitees then start taking their meal. While taking food, first of all they pour some beer and also a little bit of rice on the ground. This is done to get rid of the evil things which may be associated with food.

After having food the boy along with the other members of the family return back to their respective houses. Sometimes the bride comes with them and if she does not wish to come together she can come afterwards. There is no hard and fast rule as such. A *wak* is slaughtered when the bride comes to her in-laws' house and a grand feast follows. It is the custom that whenever a bride comes to her husband's house there is merry making and feasting in the groom's house. For this the special invitees are those persons who carried the articles to the bride's house and the married sister(s) of the bride. In case of a well-to-do family other guests are also invited. In this feast the neck portion of the *wak* is served to the married sisters of the bride as a gesture of respect and importance. The other items of food consists of *doong*, *ngam* and *kham*. Food is served on leaves and rice beer on bamboo tube. The rice beer is served first then rice and then meat.

In conclusion from the above description, it can be observed that during marriage, food plays an important role in maintaining the social relations. Prior to marriage, the boy's side offers fish, rice, rice beer, pig to the girl's side in odd numbers. The girl's side as an obligation, returns the neck portion to the bridegroom. Again when the bride comes to the bridegroom's house there is merry making and feasting in the groom's house. It is an act of honour

and importance shown to the bride as she is considered to be an important person. Again in this feast the neck portion of the pig is served to the married sister of the bride and it is seen that gifts are exchanged between both the families during marriages. During marriage feasts, the clan members of the bride's family takes the meal first and they are given the tail portion of the pig which is supposed to be the most valuable portion. During such occasion boys prepare meat while girls prepare rice and rice beer. That is a clear cut division of labour on the basis of sex.

Salwang (Marriage) Ceremony in Moklom Society

The marriage system in a Moklom society is performed on the basis of some traditional procedures. When a boy reaches the age of 17 proposals for his marriage are made. In case a boy falls in love with a girl and wants to marry her he informs his parents. If they approve, they appoint a *kamwa* (mediator) who should be their relative. The *Kamwa* then approaches the girl's parents to seek their permission who normally give their consent for the marriage.

Even in arranged marriage the boy's parents will send a relative as a *Kamwa* to the bride's house. The *Kamwa* then puts forward the proposal in the presence of both the parents and the bride. If the bride agrees to the proposal, the *Kamwa* will then give Rs.30/- to Rs. 50/- to the girl as

an engagement gift. After the *Kamwa* wholly confirms the engagement, the boy's parents will fix a date to solemnize the marriage. Then the parents of both sides discuss the plans of the marriage and the number of invitees.

On the day of the marriage the boy's side prepare *vong* (rice), *kham* (local beer) and *ngam* (meat) according to the number of invitees. Sometimes the elder sister and aunt of the bride offer meat and rice beer to the boy's family. But it is not compulsory from the bride's side. If the boy's side is rich they offer a *lie* (buffalo) which is highly prestigious and valuable in the *Moklom* society. If the boy's side cannot offer buffalo they offer 2(two) *waks* (pigs) in lieu of buffalo. One of the *wak* is for the maternal uncle of the girl and the other one for the girl's parents. In case the boy's family is not in a position to afford two *waks*, only one *wak* is offered in which case one leg is offered to the maternal uncle of the bride and one leg to the bride's parents.

On the day of the marriage the *Kamwa* goes to fetch the bride who is accompanied by her friends and her *junnu* (best friend) who leads the way. As they progress and reach the mid point between the brides house and the bridegrooms house the mediator then plants 3 sticks in a criss-cross manner which is actually the branch of a particular tree

called *Manrung bang*. While planting the sticks the *Kamwa* chants certain hymns in order to bless the couple.

<i>Tunliking</i>	<i>Chamliking</i>
<i>Hikantio</i>	<i>Hisolio</i>
<i>Runklamking</i>	<i>Kiklamking</i>
<i>Khopungna</i>	<i>Pasangna</i>
<i>Chamtong</i>	

The girls from the bride's side carry bamboo tube containing local beer which they drink on reaching the midpoint.

Then they proceed to the boy's house. On reaching the boy's house the bride enters the house through the newly constructed *Kheri* (steps) made out of a particular wood called *Tokhibang*. As soon as she enters the boy's house she is given a warm welcome and good wishes. After welcoming the bride, a grand feast takes place. The head of the boy's family invite the *Lungwang* (village head) and his subordinates and three persons who are the head of different clans. As a mark of respect these people are served first. They are also given special rice beer. They pour little rice beer on the floor and *runtam* (bless) the couple, and then the actual feasting takes place and all the invitees are served food. The distribution of food is generally done by the members of the boy's family. The rice and meat are served on a *napjack* (leaf) and rice beer is served in

tungpak (bamboo mug). The male members take their food on the floor around the hearth of the main room and the womenfolk usually sit in the kitchen. Before taking their food they wash their hands. After the feast is over the bride along with her friends go back to her house. After keeping the bride her friends return to their respective houses. The next day a feast is given in the bride's place. All the villagers are invited. Here also the village heads are called and given special treatment and rice beer is offered to them. Simultaneously a pig, is sacrificed at the bride's house by the boy's side and the members who had actively participated in the marriage along with the *Kamwa* are specially invited. They are offered food. Raw meat is also given to be taken home. This is done so that they have bumper crops of rice, millets in the coming season. On the day of marriage the villagers do not go to the fields, but attend the marriage.

To sum up, a kind of bride price is offered to the bride's parents, which consists of a buffalo and a cow. In case these cannot be given, cash is offered in reciprocal to the price of a buffalo and a cow now-a-days. Thus the marriage comes to an end.

Observation of Rites Relating to *Rie/Tik* (Death)

The Tangsa believe that death is not only the result of diseases caused by the evil spirits but also an outcome of the natural phenomenon. Death owing to old age is regarded as natural. But premature death is thought of as an unnatural event and the evil spirits are held responsible for it.

When a person dies, as a matter of rule, the relatives are informed and they are expected to arrive for a condolence before the dead body is disposed off.

The method of disposal of the dead body is different amongst the different Tangsa sub-tribe. The Lungchang have cremation ground, but the Mokloms cremate the dead body near their house (in front of the house).

After that all the household belongings are taken out of the house, as they think that these would become *anan* (impure), particularly, the seeds *tungli/chamli* for the coming year. They then strangle a hen or a cock. After cooking the meat it is placed near the dead body along with boiled rice and rice beer on the plate in which he used to eat when he was alive. A small bamboo *chunga* is taken on which a single hair of the dead body is kept. It is followed by firing the guns three times. Hearing the gun shots the villagers come to know that someone has died. Soon all the villagers and relatives assemble in the dead

persons house. After the arrival of people a pig is sacrificed and is cooked. After cooking, the head and tail portion of the meat is placed on a plate near the dead body along with steamed rice and rice beer. It is believed that by offering the head and tail portion of the pig to the dead body it would think that the whole pig is being offered to him and thereby he would be satisfied. The food which is offered to the dead body is given by the father or mother or the eldest son and sometimes even by a close relative. The person who offers the food chants certain hymns, the meaning of which, is that "we are offering you food and hope that you will be satisfied and do not haunt us or disturb us latter on." After that all the people who had assembled there, are offered food. The next day, the villagers go to the forest to collect firewood, bamboo etc. in order to perform the *mangsat* (last rite) of the dead person. On that day, again a buffalo or cow is sacrificed; then they cook rice and meat. The food is first served to the dead body along with rice beer. Thereafter, food and rice beer is served to other people.

On the third and final day preparation to perform the last rites start from the morning. First they build *satang* (wooden platform) on the front side of the house and a tree is planted adjacent to the wooden platform. The tree is planted with the belief that it will provide shade to the

dead body and protect it from the rays of the sun. They also dig a temporary pond near the wooden platform so that in the course of burning of the dead body they can occasionally pour water on the dead body to relieve it from the heat of the fire. When the *satong* is ready they bring out the dead body which is carried by four persons (relative). Prior to that, they have to perform another ritual. First they clean the *tap* (hearth) and cover it carefully with a basket and a stone is placed on the basket. The old man of their clan will take a *biluk* (shield), now-a-days *wan* (winnowing fan), in one hand and a *pa* (spear) in the other hand. He then makes three rounds in the funeral pyre. An old lady from their clan will then collect the food offered to the dead body in a basket and all the articles which were used by the deceased in his life time are offered as grave goods which are kept suspended from a post near the funeral pyre. Apart from these, rice beer, cooked rice and drinking water are put on the ground near the grave. Finally, the dead body is placed on the bamboo platform with its face upwards. The body is covered with leaves after removing the clothes, and the eldest son or a close relative lights the fire. During the process of burning, water is sprinkled from time to time and the position of the body is changed with its back facing upwards. After the body is completely burnt, the family

members go near the pyre, and the person who lit the pyre will bring a burnt out wood and place it on the head of each member assuring that the spirit of the dead person will not haunt them. The members of the family will then enter the house and check the hearth, to see if it has any marks or impression on it. If there are some signs, these signify that someone else from the village would die, but if it is spotless they presume everything to be alright.

After this the person who had assisted the family to perform the last rites are invited to a feast. In case of a well-to-do family, the whole village is invited. The feast consists of boiled pork, steamed rice and rice beer.

Their normal food (*Jakha*) is served on leaves. But on this occasion, the food is served only on the *jaknil* (reverse) side of the leaves. On such a feast day, the entire house is properly illuminated throughout the night. The next day the villagers do not go to the field as it is regarded as an inauspicious day. Normal life begins on the fifth day. They have a custom, of keeping one piece of raw food from their meal for one year upto the *MoI* festival. This food is stitched into a garland or in a bamboo tube or basket and is kept for the dead person. The last ritual of the death ceremony is completed only after one year just before the following *MoI* festival. They make an image out of bamboo and cloth representing the dead person, 2-3 days

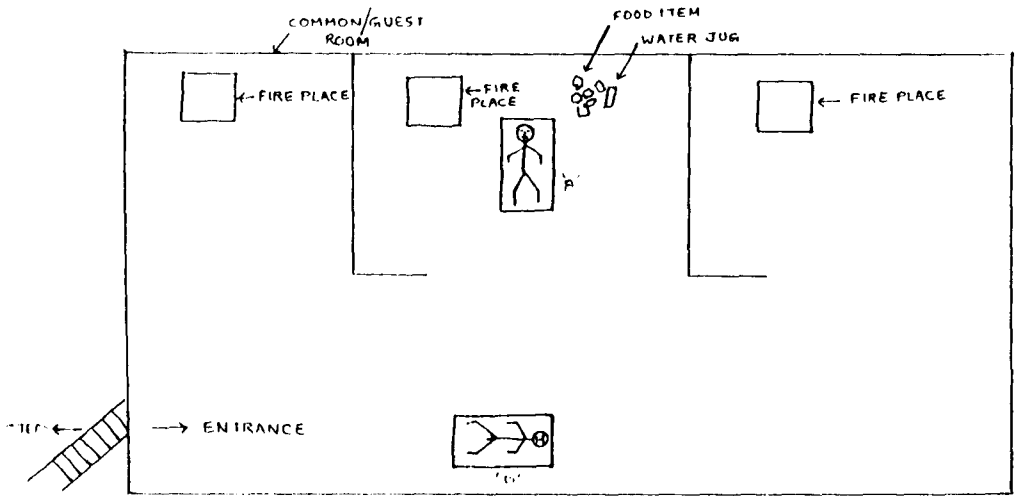
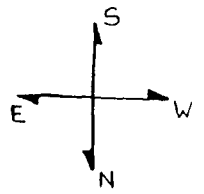


Fig IV

before the *Mol* festival. The image is placed inside the house and is offered meat, rice and rice beer. The family members sit near the image and sing songs narrating the incidents of the dead person life and also cry at the same time. They then have their food in front of the image. The following day the family members carry the image and make three rounds in the village. They then come back home and offer food to the image and also take their food. On the third day, the image is placed on the village compound and the vegetable tube along with the articles which he/she used during his/her life time are placed near it and this marks the conclusion of the death ceremony. On the death ceremony day they do not invite any particular guest but whoever comes is offered food.

Among the *Lungchang*, immediately after death, the dead body is washed with warm or cold water. Then dressed and placed on a mat made of bamboo.

Immediately after death the dead body is kept in the position and place shown at Fig. 1A. The dead body is kept for a maximum of two days to enable relatives from far away villages to pay their last homage. In the early morning of the day on which the body will be cremated the position is changed and kept at the place shown in B.

Besides the dead body all the articles which he used during his life time are placed on a plate rice and chicken

are offered and on a bamboo mug, water and rice beer are offered to the dead person. The next day the dead body is taken to the cremation ground where a shed is built. Inside the shed, they keep the articles used by the dead person during his life time.

As a custom, the dead body is first lifted by family members from the position at B to C (ground). From C it is generally carried by the villagers. However, if there is no grown up person and if all are very young or too old in the family then one member (not small boys and girls) will simply touch the dead body. Then it is carried away by the nearest relatives of the same clan. From the ground to the place of cremation it can be carried by any able person irrespective of clan.

For cremation no such bamboo platform is prepared. Actually a large quantity of firewood is collected by the male members of the village and the pyre is prepared in a systematic manner by the elder persons who know the method. The height of pyre is 1½ metres to 2 metres depending upon the size of the dead body. The pyre is lit up by a family member, generally by an aged person. They also sprinkle water from time to time as they believe that the dead person might feel thirsty. After completion of cremation, the villagers return to the village. Before entering their houses they wash their face, hand, feet and daos used at the

cremation ground. On reaching home they are offered rice beer. On the night and the following morning the family members are forbidden to take any vegetables with their food. They are only allowed to take steamed rice that too without salt. They also offer rice on a leaf for the dead person near the place where the dead was kept. But the plate is kept on the side, in which its legs pointed. They then clear the hearth and get rid of the old firewood and new firewood is lit. After this chicken is cooked and if there is no chicken, fish is cooked. They offer meat, steamed rice and rice beer to the dead person. For the next two days the family members are forbidden to go to the field or to visit anyone in the neighbourhood and they also cannot eat anything in any one's place. The other villagers also do not come to their house or eat anything in the house.

After two days, a feast is offered to the people who assisted them in performing the last rites. Food items consists of meat, rice and rice beer or whatever is possible within their capacity. From the next day onwards normal life begins. As a mark of final farewell to the dead person, they sacrifice a pig and invite the villagers. This is done during the *Moh* festival. Here again *doong*, *ngam*, *kham* are offered in the name of the dead person and after food is served to the invitees.

"C"
PRESCRIBED ITEMS OF FOOD ON LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

	PREGNANCY		BIRTH		MARRIAGE		DEATH	
	LUNGCHANG	MOKLON	LUNGCHANG	MOKLON	LUNGCHANG	MOKLON	LUNGCHANG	MOKLON
FOOD STUFF								
RICE	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RICE POWDER	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
LOCAL BEER	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
MEAT (BUFFALOE)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MEAT (COW)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MEAT (PORK)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
MEAT FOWL	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
FISH	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
RAW EGG	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
VEGETABLES	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
SALT	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
SPICES	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
SWEETS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MILK & MILK PRODUCTS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RAW RICE	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-

COMMON ITEMS : RICE, LOCAL BEER, MEAT, VEGETABLES,.

SIGNIFICANT ITEMS : EGG, FISH, RAW RICE, RICE POWDER.

C H A P T E R - V I

ROLE OF ORACLES AND WORSHIP

ROLE OF ORACLES AND WORSHIP - WANGJANG WORSHIP, KHOLIC WORSHIP, OBSERVATION OF RITES DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOUSE, CULTURAL BELIEF AND ATTITUDE

Ritual is the core component of all religions. The rules governing ritual behaviour are transmitted orally or through the liturgical texts of a formally organised religion. Through ritual action flows the well-being not only of the performer but also of the performing society. The social world is thought to be protected by ritual. Hence, ritual is, by definition an obligatory social behaviour prescribed for occasions that have reference to belief system. It is also a symbolic act that holds the ritual participants together as a community of belief and community of action. Ritual provides a system of meaning which validates both social world and the cosmic world. Sharing of ritual experiences generates a deeper feeling, a truly human bond - intimate and personal.

Omen and performance of rituals amongst the people of Tangsa is a common feature. The stated objective in observing the rituals is to cure the people suffering from any type of disease. They believe that these rituals can protect them from all sorts of spirits, wild animals like tigers, bears, birds like hornbill. They also perform the ritual to prevent the spread of epidemics. But before performing the rituals they have to determine the cause of

the illness. They believe that as there are a number of evil spirits prevailing on this earth who are responsible for the different kinds of diseases. First task, therefore, is to find out through the process of identifying the omen the cause of the problems. More specifically which evil spirit is responsible for the problem.

Role of Oracle and associated Rituals: Belief in Omen and Oracle

The system of omen in the Tangsa community is an age old tradition. A Tangsa is concerned to procure a good harvest, success in hunting wild animals and protection against all sorts of diseases.

A *samal/sama* is approached when a family member suffers from some unknown disease. They go to him along with the person who is sick with a roll of thread and a small bundle of banana leaves, broom sticks on which the omen is to be seen. The *samal/sama* then recites some hymns and tears the leaves into ten strings and thereby seek the opinion of the evil spirit or the heavenly spirit alternatively to forecast the type of rituals to be performed. First of all the *samal* will try to seek the opinion of the evil spirits on earth to forecast their demand through the omen and then seek the opinion of the

spirits of heaven. A peculiar thing about this ritual is that both the spirits are not called on the same day, either the spirit of heaven is summoned or the evil spirit of earth is summoned.

The general notion among the Tangsa community is that the *limthong* (spirit of heaven) does not inflict much harm through diseases on the human race. It is the evil spirits on earth who inflict untold miseries on the human race, sometimes even resulting in death. According to the *samaI*, the spirits of the evil or demons are believed to have been formed from the spirits of human beings after death. The causes of death of such human being are unnatural. For instance, death due to drowning, falling from a tree, accidents caused by vehicles or even death occurring in the process of delivery, etc. After determining the evil spirit that is responsible for the problem, a person is suffering with, the *samaI* looks for remedies.

Performance of Rituals

As per the prediction given by the *samaI* through his omen the people of the Tangsa community performs the ritual in various ways in order to get rid of the problems. If it concerns the spirit of the river, a river worship is performed called *jungseting*. Necessary arrangements are made and, ^{the} priest is called to perform the ritual. In this

ritual either a pig or a matured dog is sacrificed because a mere hen or cock would not be sufficient to satisfy the river evil spirit.

The priest on arriving at the victims house makes a plain bamboo basket. A pig is brought and its legs and mouth are firmly tied with cane-strips. With the help of a sharp bamboo spear the pig is pierced through the heart repeatedly until the pig dies. Thereafter, the priest decorates the basket with blood of the sacrificed pig, local beer, a little bit of cooked rice, flour, placed on a leaf and small pieces of meat about sixty to seventy pieces. The patient is then made to sit near the central post of the house and the articles mentioned above are placed near him which he touches. Then some hymns are chanted. Chanting the hymns the priest appeals to the evil spirit to accept the offerings and leave the sick man. For example, the following hymn is chanted, if the suspected devil is a river devil :

Su-ah, su-ah.

ah; ha ----

ah, chingkhim tanal singku ma sejo ---

tashat shingku na sejo.

tatat shingku na sejo.

Go away, go away, hey go away
the evil spirit that you are
still in the body of the sick
Chingkhin (name of sick man) let
him be cured, leave him to be
refreshed and let him get up
from the sick bed.

oh, ha piklam tanningka-eh,

nintu thima ira se shumhung jo ---

oh, yes you (evil spirit)
you might have caught
him while he was on his way
to or from the river and caused
him ill, so here is an offer for you

a- ah; til sah -a to ninhu

thima sejo-

khan linga the nintu thima sejo

ngam phak -a ta mintu thima

ira sejo

if not, you (evil spirit) might
have seen him eating rice, drinking
rice beer, eating meat and caused him
ill but all are now already offered to
you.

su-a ah, nang maira se thikjukphiyo
chingkhin xapshing ku nu sejo
tatat shing ku na sejo
tahsat shing ku na sejo.

devil go away,

I am offering you in huge quantity so you
must be out from the body of Chingkhima
and he should be cured, afreshed and
leave his sick bed.

su- a ah; ira sejo
xe seat wa thaji sejo
Samat wa thagina sejo
bang xat wa thaji na sejo
tikshuh, wa thaji na sejo

all devils go away, with these offerings,
those who fell from the bridge and
got drowned in the river, and those who
fell from the trees and also those
who died during the course of delivery.

su, a-a ah, chung wang
luh, na sejo
Jungwang luh na sejo
su- ah; su- ah;

go away go away to
your destination, there's
nothing more for you
to get and now let
Chingkhin be cured.

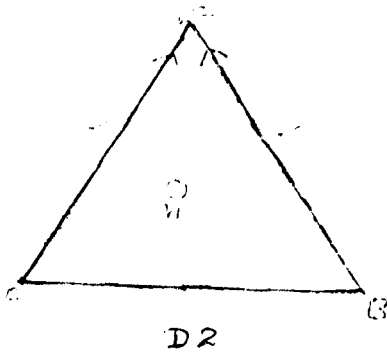
After that, the priest takes away the articles to the jungle. The priest takes his meal consisting of rice beer, boiled rice and meat which is also offered to the patient and to the other members present.

Wangjang Worship

Wangjang worship is an important ritual performed by the Lungchang group of Tangsas. It involves much expenditure along with a number of restrictions which have to be strictly followed. It is generally performed by the well to do people as it is not possible for the common people to offer such a ritual.

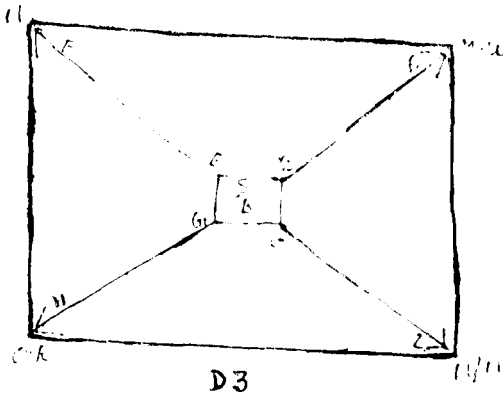
The *wangjang* worship has a special significance and it is done with the objective of achieving certain things. These objectives are the welfare of the family members, procuring good harvest for the coming year and also to seek protection against various diseases.

The *wangjang* worship is a day long affair, but the actual preparation starts one day ahead.



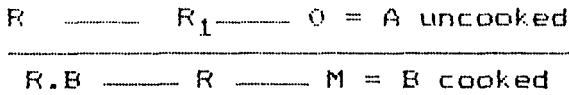
- W = WANGJANG RITUAL
- C = HOST
- C' = RICE BEER
- A = MARRIED SISTER
- B = NIECES/NEPHEWS

The above shows the host receiving rice beer from the married sisters and nieces and nephews to celebrate Wangjang ritual.



- SB = Sacrificed buffalo.
- AB = Leg portion of raw meat.
- CD = Neck portion of raw meat.
- MU = Maternal uncle.
- N/N = Nieces/Nephews.
- CF/GH = Other portions of raw meat
- N = Neighbour.
- OR = Other relatives.

The above shows the special distribution pattern of the sacrificial animal according to family designation.



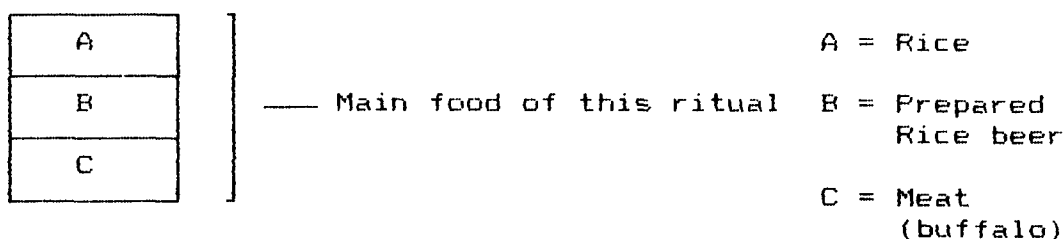
D4

"A" represents the distribution of raw meat to carry home.
 "B" represents the cooked food to be served on the spot.

- R = Neck portion of raw meat given to nieces and nephews.
- R₁ = Leg portion of raw meat given to the maternal uncle.
- O = Other portion of raw meat given to relatives and neighbours.

- RB = Rice beer
 - R = Rice
 - M = Meat
- | Partaken by all present on the spot

In the ceremony they sacrifice buffaloes the number of which is always odd like 5, 3, 1. In order to carry out the process of sacrifice they use a special kind of wood which is called *tangchasah*. This wood is derived from the sacred *tangchasah* tree. Another interesting feature is that the number of wood pieces used are always even in numbers. Suppose if they sacrifice one buffalo thus they use two wood pieces. If the number of buffaloes are three, the number of wood pieces are six and so on. This is so because they tie the front foot to one wooden piece. On this occasion they prepare rice beer and rice to feed the invitees. The rice beer that is served should come from the niece (sisters daughter) and the married sisters(D2).



On the day before the ritual, they raise earth to plant a wooden post. The next day members of the family or clan will plant the wooden post. They tie the buffaloes to these posts with ropes and prepare them for sacrifice. To tie a buffalo they use pieces of ropes. For this purpose they use a special kind of rope which is derived from a particular type of "bet" (cane) brought from the hill side.

They tie the neck, horns and legs of the buffalo to the post so as to balance the animal properly. After this, the priest recites certain hymns (which is reproduced below).

The hymns -

Jangsung-hah Longchang-hah.

Tokung-hah Ranghang-hah.

Narao-hah Nanang-hah.

Ratao-hah Lakphi-hah.

Longlung-hah Jungbang-hah.

Longbu-hah Songjun-hah.

Riju-hah Rama-hah.

Rataw-hah Kamnai-hah.

Chaman-hah Rash-hah.

Kap-haloh Haphaluh.

Jak-phum-tharong haloh Jacen-tharong-haloh.

Warog-hah Changbong-hah.

Changton-hah Thambe-hah.

Ngaichang-hah Janghan-hah.

Kambong-hah Kanglang-hah.

Jungpak-hah Junghong-hah.

Changlang-hah Changkan-hah.

Kap-haloh Hap-haloh.

Jak-pam-tharong haloh Jacem-tharong-haloh.

Longran-hah Changkoi-hah.

Woorai-hah Changphang-hah.

Changram-hah Tinrin-hah.
Woolung-hah Jang khai-hah.
Shangsai-hah Shoilang-hah.
Longpha-hah Warang-hah.
Phongpang-hah Phungseng-hah.
Wawah-hah Samo-hah.
Longrok-hah Lambeen-hah.
Lungbha-hah Changjung-hah.
Longrang-hah Zankang-hah.
Salom-hah Chamzung-hah.
Loilung-hah Ngaichang-hah.
Washo-hah Thamchang-hah.
Longrang-hah Kamchang-hah.
Khampang-hah Kangjang-hah.
Jangshung-hah Longchang-hah.

These carry significant meanings regarding the background of their ancestor's, past history, original settlements and their subsequent settlements at various stages. The frequent changing of their settlement was owing to the fact that they were in the habit of practicing Jhum cultivation. Their settlement in the Longchang village, where they started the system of wet cultivation, had put an end to the nomadic pattern of life they used to follow. It was this step which led to a sedentary life.

The priest of the Tangsa tribe are very particular about maintaining the sanctity of the hymns. They would never chant the hymns without making any sacrifice or even inside their homes. They would never chant the hymns nor narrate the significance of the hymns to any inquisitive stranger, as they believe that if it is done it could bring some disaster to their family. In case someone wants to know the significance of the hymns, the priest would then say some prayers to god and offer some sort of sacrifice.¹

After the sacrifice is over, the meat is distributed but the striking feature of the sacrifice is its peculiar distribution pattern. Some parts of the sacrificed animal is cooked and some left raw to be carried home. The different parts of the animal is distributed among the relatives and that is done according to the importance of the relatives. The neck portion of the animal goes to the niece and the nephew and the leg portion goes to the uncles (mother's brother¹³). After distributing the raw meat, rice beer is served. It is first given to the uncle. The uncle after

1. When I insisted on the priest to explain the significance of the hymns, he agreed to do so on a certain condition. He told me that he would do so only in my camp and not in his place, as it might bring some disaster. Accordingly, he came to my camp in the evening to narrate the hymns. Before doing so he offered some prayers and started explaining the hymns.

accepting the beer would pour a little quantity on the ground and then he notes the direction of the flow, which if it is lengthwise indicates good omen, and if it flows breathwise it indicates bad omen. After this, the girls and women carry the raw meat to the uncle's place. They also distribute the raw meat in the neighbourhood. After distribution, they start cooking the meal. The meat is exclusively cooked by the menfolk. The preparation of the rice beer usually starts 3-4 days before. In preparing the rice beer they observe strict regulations - it can only be prepared by their clan members and they also take care to see that other clan members do not touch it. For preparation of the food on the spot, they light the fire afresh. They prepare rice and meat there. The food is then served on a leaf⁽²⁴⁾. After eating their food, the invitees go back to their homes. But the worker who help in arranging the ritual stay back for 3-4 days and take their food there. During those days they are forbidden to work in the fields. Even after the worship is over, the family members and the clan members are expected to observe some sort of restriction for a period of one month. They are not suppose to touch some food which remains as taboo for them. Such food are *kankai* (watergourd), *louri* (pumpkin), *arou* (any creeper), and *camsuri* (cucumber). They also do not visit the graveyard during that period. After completing one month they again

sacrifice a pig. Thereafter pork is cooked with watergourd (which is compulsory). Only after this they are free to continue with their normal function of daily life.

To sum up, the Wangjang worship is an indispensable social function among the Lungchang group of the Tangsas. From the functional point of view, it fosters a sense of unity. Every member of the society takes an active part lending a helping hand and contributing whatever is possible to make it a success. For instance, the rice beer is prepared by the married sister, niece and nephew and in return they are given a part of the sacrificial meat to be taken home. Sharing of food is essential. As the sacrificial meat is considered to be sacred, it is distributed among the neighbours so that they are not deprived of the sacred meat. Some amount of the sacrificial meat is also cooked and served to the invitees after the rituals are over. The distribution of raw meat is done according to rank and social position. For example, the maternal uncle is given the leg portion of the meat. The leg portion is supposed to be the most prestigious part and hence it is given to the maternal uncle. The neck portion of the meat is given to the nieces and nephews. Another important function of this ritual is that it gives the oral history of the Lungchangs.

For this ritual the sacrificial animal which is used is always buffalo as it is a prestigious animal. The post to

which the buffalo is tied is also derived from a particular sacred wood called *tangrasah*. Again, to balance one buffalo, two pieces of wood are used. In case of three buffaloes, six pieces of the sacred wood are required and so on. For this ritual, the number of buffaloes used is always in the odd number which is considered to be auspicious. It is also observed that for any ritual, rice beer, boiled rice and meat are compulsory items. After performing the ritual, the family and clan members observe certain restrictions regarding food. Some food are forbidden for a period of one month. After completing the month, to break this restriction, meat is cooked with watergourd and from that day, they can take any kind of food.

Observance of Kholick Ritual

Kholick ritual is observed by the Moklom's of the Tangsas. It is done by the people who can afford it and the stated purpose of the ritual is to ensure the general welfare of the family. Omen is read before the ritual is performed. If the outcome of the omen is favourable, then the ritual is performed. The articles required for this ritual are a buffalo, rice and rice beer. The number of invitees is not fixed - if the family can afford, they may call a large number of invitees. But the essential guest is the maternal uncle. At first they bring a special kind of

wood from a particular tree called *ketri* or *suppoi*. The piece is then cut in such a way that one end is slanting and pointed and the other end is blunt which is fixed on the ground. This wooden post is considered to be sacred. This ritual is performed in front of the house. The buffalo is then tied with a cane rope to the sacred post and the priest chants a hymn -

lipong jakhel chamwangphoo

wakia jakhel chamwangphoo

chamsai namkap jakhel chamwangphoo.

This means that we are offering this food in order to procure a good harvest and also to protect every family member and the domestic animals from all evil.

This is followed by the ritual sacrifice of the animal. The sacrifice is done in a peculiar manner. The priest takes a spear and pokes at the animal until it dies. Then it is cut into pieces and the blood is rubbed on the sacred wood. The liver is taken out and examined properly. If there are any spots on the liver, it indicates something bad, and if it is spotless, it is a good sign. This way of reading the omen is common among the tribes of North-East. During the "Baisak Bisu" festival of the Lalungs, fowls are sacrificed. From the manner of death of the bird the elderly villagers foretell the future of the village during the year. If the bird dies facing the sky then dry weather will

prevail. The weather will be favourable if the bird dies keeping the face towards the earth (Sharma Thakur, 1985).

The meat is cooked with vegetables and salt by boiling or roasting and the rice is boiled. Just before the serving of the food, the maternal uncle ties a thread obtained from the bark of a tree around the wrist of the niece and the nephew in order to protect them against all evil. The uncles are given special honour and privileges. They are offered the legs of the sacrificed animal as a token of respect to be taken home. The food is then served to the invitees. First the rice beer is served followed by rice and meat. Before eating the food, all the invitees and the host leaves aside a little food so that no evil befalls them.

In the following evening the head of the sacrificed animal is hanged on the wall of the outer room where similar other heads are already hung. This display of animal heads on the wall indicates the prosperity and the status of the family. Before putting the head on the wall, the head of the family chants some hymns. Some cooked and some uncooked rice and pepper are put on a leaf which is shaped into a funnel and this is tied to the head of the sacrificed animal. Some more hymns are chanted while pouring special rice beer three times. With this the Kholick ritual is concluded.

To sum up, the Kholick ritual is celebrated in order to get the blessings of the supernatural for their general welfare. To satisfy the supernatural they sacrifice a buffalo which is a compulsory item along with rice and rice beer. In this festival the maternal uncle plays an indispensable part and is considered to be the most privileged person throughout the ceremony. Thus it is seen that in most festivals the maternal uncle gets the most privileged honour which I shall try to explain in the next chapter.

Cultural Belief, Attitude and Preferences

In the Tangsa community, the people follow certain cultural and social beliefs relating to food. There are also different restrictions and rules regarding the taking of food.

Among the Tangsa community the custom of referring to pregnant women as unwell is an indication of the physical change occurring in the women. During this period, the pregnant women follow certain restrictions regarding the diet and other food habits. For example, they believe that if they take fish caught by a net, the child to be born will not have a very clear vision. They do not eat snakes because of the belief that the child to be born may have a tongue which would be protruding outside. Therefore, the pregnant woman and her husband will not eat or kill a snake during

that period. Flesh of the monkey is avoided as they believe that the child may be born like a monkey. Egg is also avoided because it might lead to the development of white eyes. Such beliefs are not only common among the Tangsa but also among some other tribes. For example, among the Koirengs of Manipur, during the period of pregnancy, the woman and her husband should not kill any living being as far as possible, especially a snake. If a snake is killed, it is feared that the child will have a tongue like that of a snake. The mother should not eat crab meat as the child will have saliva oozing out from the mouth (Kabui, 1987). Again in Nazma Rizvi's chapter on food categories in Bangladesh and its relation to food beliefs and practices of vulnerable groups, she has mentioned that in Bangladesh too, pregnant women are expected to avoid certain fish (mirka, gojan, baing, kalibaush and chitol) because the characteristic features of these fishes are believed to produce ill effects on the mother and the baby (Rizvi, 1986).

Certain combination of food too is avoided by the Tangsaa of Changlang district. They do not take food procured from land and water together. For example, fish and chicken are not taken together. They think that if they take these kind of food together, they will get allergy while they get down to the water. They also avoid taking two

bitter things together as they think that such a combination becomes poisonous and so on.

They have also classified food into various categories which are as follows:

Hot food - beef, mutton, black pepper, chilly and rice beer.

Cold food - any fruit.

Strength producing food - meat, fish, rice.

The following story illustrates the belief pattern among the Lungchang group of Tangsa.

Among the Lungchang, barking deer occupies a significant place having a direct bearing on the position and status of the maternal uncle. The maternal uncle occupies a significant position among the Lungchang tribe. The story behind this trait is related directly or indirectly to killing and eating of deer. One day a maternal uncle and his nephew went hunting in the jungle. During the hunt, the maternal uncle disappeared mysteriously and the nephew began looking for his uncle. He cried out desperately "Where are you, uncle?" As he was calling out, a barking deer suddenly appeared barking in its usual tone. The nephew thought that his maternal uncle had turned into a barking deer. Loosing hope completely, he came back to the village and informed the villagers about what had happened in the jungle. The villagers followed him to the jungle with

curiosity. They too could not find the maternal uncle but came across the barking deer. They then came to the conclusion that the maternal uncle had turned into a deer.

After the occurrence of such an unusual incident, the Lungchangs had imposed certain restrictions. They do not take the flesh of the barking deer and the maternal uncle and nephew do not go to the jungle together from that incident onwards. They believe that the maternal uncle might get lost again.

In Lungchang society, the maternal uncle has a special position and role to play particularly in relation to their nephews. However, it is not easy to establish a relationship between the barking deer and the maternal uncle, but the Lungchangs do not kill the barking deer and there is no question that they will eat its flesh.

Observation of Rites during the Construction of a House

Shelter is a basic need and every human being build their houses in accordance to what they consider to be comfortable, suitable for their environment and the availability of materials. For the Tangsas, building of a house is a sacred occasion. They perform some rites so that the house is free of all evil spirits and no harm befalls on them.

For the Lungchang, when the house is constructed, the performance of ritual is important. The family members

go to the jungle to collect bamboos, *satham* (wood), *rekoi*, *jangsi*, *lak*, *rik*, *hali* etc. and a kind of leaf called *shapjack*, *kara*, *jatshap*, *lolak*, *sijack* etc. These leaves are used as material for constructing the roof of the house. Ropes made out of soft bamboo is also used for the construction purpose. Before the construction starts, the foundation is laid after consulting the priest who selects the site and also reads the omen. For this they use a special kind of leaf. The priest then recites the hymns and prays to the God that the selected site remain safe and sound, and is protected from all evil things. Then holes are dug on the ground. Prior to this, an elderly person surveys the land and after making necessary adjustments in the measurement which will be suitable for constructing the house, rice beer is served to the labourers (the labourers are their family members/clan/villagers) which is compulsory. Before drinking, the rice beer is poured into the ground and the direction of flow is noted. On this basis they find whether the omen is good or bad. During the construction period, rice beer is served at intervals to the labourers and along with it, they offer boiled arum instead of rice. Another notable feature is that a special kind of rice beer is served during the period which is regarded as a prestigious drink. When the fire place is made and the roof is raised the women too render their help in carrying the

straw and handing it over to the menfolk as it involves less physical labour. The roof is made of bamboo and leaves. Soon after they start constructing the fire place in each and every room, due care is taken to see that the main fire place is built in a particular room where the fire is lit soon after completion. Here again they follow some rigid customs. When the fire is lit all the family members are present and in case of an absence, they replace him by bringing his garments near the fire place, as a token of his presence. They then sacrifice a pig by uttering appropriate hymns at the central post of the house which is considered to be sacred. They sacrifice the pig with a "dao" and examine the liver of the animal. If the liver is not damaged and is intact, it is considered to be a good sign and vice-versa. The wife of the head of the family then recites some hymns and pour some more beer on the three stands of the fire place. They do this and seek the blessings of the "Kawa" so that there will not be scarcity of food at any time and their granaries would always be full. Soon after that rice beer is served which is followed by the cooking of the rice and meat. They also preserve a portion of the raw meat for the next day. After the cooking is over, the invitees and the host take the meal. The invitees consists of friends, relatives and the people who helped in the construction of the house. The finishing touches to the

house is given in the next two to three days. In honour of the new house, a special worship is observed during the "Moh" festival. On this occasion too, a pig is sacrificed and shared by the invitees along with rice and rice beer.

The Moklom house building ceremony is almost similar to the Lungchangs. The Mokloms always build the house facing eastwards, and the main hearth facing westwards. Another unique feature present in both the tribes is that the head of the sacrificed animals are hung on the wall of the outside room. The head hanging on the wall should be properly smeared in blood. The number of animal heads displayed on the wall of the outer room is a symbol of their prestige and status and it also brings to light the hunting skills of the family members. The people take great pride in displaying the animal heads.

To sum up, it is seen that the Mokloms and Lungchangs follow some elaborate ceremony during the construction of their houses. They also follow a number of customs in order to keep the household free of all evils. It is also seen that the basic pattern of customs followed by both the Lungchang and Moklom are similar. It has also been observed that along with the family members, the helpers (other villagers) too are served with rice beer, rice and other foodstuff during the construction of the house. When finally the house is ready, another sacrifice is done and

all the people who were engaged in the construction are once again offered food as a gesture of goodwill.

In the next chapter (Discussion), the significant findings of each chapter will be highlighted and the inter-relations will be discussed.

DISCUSSION

Usage of different types of food in different societies for various social and religious activities is intrinsically embedded in the culture of the people. The usage get reinforced by myths. Exchange of food is a sign of social acceptance and the discontinuation of food exchange is an expression of social disapproval or breaking of ties. Food is the intermediary between the sacred and profane domains too. As in all societies, certain food is considered more sacred. This food emphasizes on social relationship and at the same time it portrays the cultural level of the society.

1) A perusal of the Table A (Chapter III), the prescribed items in daily food cycle indicates that the common items of food in daily cycle are rice, local beer, red tea and some vegetables. Very often the most commonly appeared the food item is *chutney* which is prepared with locally available items, i.e. *Phansi, namsing, namrop, tousing, phankhu, makat*, etc.

2) The items which sometimes find place in their normal cycles are meat (buffalo, cow, pork, fowl), fish, egg.

3) It appears that for both Lungchang and Moklom the first meal is important. The term for the first meal is

Rangnapdoong/Rangnaptil meaning primary meal. Having a first full meal signifies well being of the person and his family. The day begins with a sense of satisfaction.

4) The table B (Chapter IV) gives details about the prescribed items of foods on festivals. It is noted that rice, local beer, meat and some vegetables are the common items present on festival occasions.

5) The normal cycle of meals, barring the meals taken on festival and ritual occasions, is fairly standard. There are some variations in the contents of the meals owing to change in seasons, but cycle of the meals remain the same.

6) It is noted that some festivals are associated with some special items of food. For example in *Moh* festivals apart from rice, rice powder, local beer, pork and fowl meat, vegetables, various kinds of spices, roasted egg (number of eggs depends upon the number of the agriculture fields one possesses) and raw ginger must be present. The significance of the presence of roasted egg and raw ginger is not clear. But these are the essential items.

7) In *Parong* festival most of the items remain the same as *Moh* festival excepting that there is a conspicuous absence of rice powder, egg and ginger as the items of food. The significant aspect of cooking in *Parong* is that the meat

is cooked in the blood of the animal sacrificed for the purpose.

8) In Hemoiwan Cekhohi, the animal sacrificed is the pig but unlike *Parong* festival it is not cooked in the animal blood. In this festival, the preparation out of rice powder is missing.

9) In the Haikulam festival the animals that are sacrificed are pig and fowls. In this festivals too the meat is not cooked in the blood of the sacrificed animal.

10) Mokloms observe three major festivals, namely, *Mol*, *Chamtuk*, *Kungtom*, of which the first two are same as *Moh* and *Parong* festivals as observed by the Lungchang. However, one significant difference in the *Mol* festival observed by Moklom is that there is no significance attached to ginger. Rest of the items and the activities are same in the two festivals. In the *Kungtom* festival observed by the *Moklom*, the animals sacrificed are the fowls. There are no other special items.

11) The Lungchangs consider odd number as a sign of auspiciousness. During marriage ceremony the gifts offered to the bride side are always in odd numbers. The gifts are fish, raw rice, cooked rice, pig and local beer. In marriage the women come to the boy's side, gifts flow in the opposite direction.

In the life cycle rituals observed by the Lungchangs and the Moklom, the common items are rice, local beer, meat and some vegetables. For the Lungchang raw rice and fish are a must in the celebration of marriage apart from the other common items. Whereas for the Mokloms both these items are not essential. However, for them the priority is given to buffalo meat, but if they cannot afford it then pork is allowed.

12) For the Lungchang and Moklom the food takes a special meaning on specific occasion. For example soon after the birth of a child the mother is offered rice and local beer. This is done to provide some energy to the woman who has undergone a lot of pain during delivery, to enliven her and also to express a sense of joy.

Among the Lungchang they sacrifice a cock if a boy is born and a hen if a girl child is born. The Moklom also observe the same practice.

On the occasion of death, both Lungchangs and Moklom offer fowl and pig as part of the death rituals. The other items of food on this occasion too are the same. However, it is to be noted without any spices and they consume it without any vegetables or meat. But in the case of Moklom they cook normal food. The only visible difference that appears on this occasion is that they eat food by placing the leaf upside down.

14) Just before the delivery the Lungchang offer egg, dog and raw rice in the jungle (ref. Chapter-V) and return home.

15) It is only in the case of pregnancy that there are certain items of food which are prescribed for the carrying women. According to their belief the prescription are to ensure smooth delivery and the health of the coming child.

16) Food plays an important role in maintaining the social relations, in meeting the social obligations and in reciprocation. For instance in Wangjang ritual, local beer is contributed from the married sister, nieces and nephews. In return they are given a portion of the meat of the animal sacrificed for the occasion. Thus it is seen that there is continuous flow of food items to and fro between girl giving side and girl receiving side to keep a balance in the relationship.

In the Wangjang ritual the most essential part is that they put salt in the mouth of the buffalo they are going to sacrifice. This ritual is marked by the sacrifice of the buffalo.

It may be mentioned here that after performing this ritual they do not consume the following items for a month:

1. White gourd
2. Pumpkin
3. Cucumber
4. Any creeper.

In order to resume the consumption of the above items they have to perform a ritual sacrificing a pig (Ref: Chapter-VI).

18) It is seen that the festival and ritual food is marked by some special items. In none of the festival or ritual, sweet dishes or milk and milk product have any value for Lungchang and Moklom. It is not possible at this stage of our enquiry to indicate as to why the rice powder, egg and ginger are prescribed in the *Moh* festival observed by Lungchang and why the food has to be cooked in the blood of the sacrificed animal in the Chamtuk festival observed by Moklom. Similarly why a buffalo has to be sacrificed in the Wangjang ritual. It is also not possible to indicate as to why after the buffalo is sacrificed in the Wangjang ritual, all creepers and creeper vegetables are withdrawn from their daily meal. To restart their consumption a pig is required to be sacrificed. There must be some 'associate' between welfare of the family, offering a buffalo, prescription on creepers and pig sacrificing.

19) Although rice, local beer and meat are the common items of food in their diet but they are also

considered to be high ranking food. These are the items present in their normal cycle of meals as well as on the festive and ritual occasions. These are the items that are also offered to the spirits. It is one of the ways by which the world of the spirits get connected with the world of living through these items. Further, it is assumed by the people that the spirits too have the same dietary needs as human beings and their preference of food is also same. In this respect, local beer seems to have a very special place in the life of these people. First this is the only liquid item besides water which is an all time meal. Second, no propitiation of spirits can be complete without making any offering of it. Third, it is present on all festive occasions. It is liberally supplied to all the guests when they arrive on festival occasions. Fourth, local beer has an important place in marriage negotiation and marriage celebration.

20) In all festivals, partaking of the meat of the animal sacrificed on the occasion is essential. Meat may vary from festival to festival but the common aspect is the slaughtering of the living animal, offering it to the spirits processed and cooking it for human consumption. The over-riding believe is commonly held that spirits are all powerful and they have to be continuously kept satisfied to ensure the well being of the living. But the interesting

part is how a particular animal is associated with a particular festival. Although we have not dealt with this aspect, it is clear that there is a rank order of the animals. The highest ranking animal is buffalo which is specifically associated with Wangjang ritual. This ritual is observed for the well being of the family. Pig and fowl are the animals of lower rank associated with other festivals. Not only the animal but the various portions of the meat are also ranked. The high ranking portion is given to high ranking kin, specialist or guest according to the occasion.

21) The observance of rituals is accompanied with dancing, singing and beating of drums. For the people, drum is a sacred object. It is through the drum they draw the attention of the supernatural being. Thus the drum too has to be properly fed. They offer rice and local beer to drum too.

22) The Tangsa offer food to the dead daily. They believe that there is a world of dead. There the dead need food like any other living being and they have to be kept satisfied all the time. The food offered to them is same as the food for living in the normal cycle. That is, the food can travel from the world of living to the world of dead (unseen) and help in communicating the concerns, the fears and the prayers of the living to the dead.

23) The tables (A, B, C) (Chapters III, IV and V) indicate that there are some very special items of food which are specifically associated with a special festival or ritual. For example fish is strongly associated with marriage and offering of rice powder with Moh festival. Whatever may be the reason for such association, these special food items mark the occasions.

24) Food offered on various ritual occasions is also associated with the cure of various ailments. According to their belief the ailments are caused because the spirits are not satisfied for one or the other reasons. They have to be appeased by the sacrifice of the appropriate animal, the meat of which is cooked and eaten by the participants.

25) People learn about the food, the norms associated with it, the preferred and prescribed items, their rank order and the coded messages in it, in the process of growing up as a member of the family and larger society. These messages are continuously coded and decoded by the participants and act accordingly. The presence and absence of certain food demarcate one festival and ritual from the other. Whatever be the design at deeper level these demarcations break the monotony of existence, tie the members of a group more cohesively expressing a degree of

"A"
FOOD IN DAILY CYCLE

FOOD GROUP	LONGCHANG DAILY	MOYIOW DAILY	OPETINED	VERY OFTEN	OCCASIONALLY
RICE					
RICE POWDER					
LOCAL BEER					
RED TEA					
MEAT (BUFFALO)					
MEAT(COW)					
MEAT(PORK)					
MEAT(FOWL)					
FISH					
EGG					
VEGETABLES					
SALT					
OTHER SPICES(LOCAL)					
SWEETS					
MILK & MILK POWDER					
BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL					

Common Food Items - Rice, Vegetables, Local Beer, And Tea.

"B"
PRESCRIBED ITEMS OF FOOD DURING FESTIVALS.

FOOD GROUP	LONGCHANG				MOYIOW			
	NON FESTIVAL	FESTIVAL	PARADE	WEDDING CEREMONY	WEDDING	WEDDING	WEDDING	WEDDING
RICE								
RICE POWDER								
LOCAL BEER								
SUGAR								
MEAT (BUFFALO)								
MEAT(COW)								
MEAT(PORK)								
MEAT(FOWL)								
FISH								
EGG								
VEGETABLES								
SALT								
OTHER SPICES(LOCAL)								
SWEETS								
MILK & MILK POWDER								
BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL								
CHINNEY								

COMMON FOOD ITEMS - RICE, LOCAL BEER, MEAT, VEGETABLES.

SIGNIFICANT ITEMS - EGGS, RICE POWDER, SUGAR, SALT, BLOOD OF SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL.

"C"
PRESCRIBED ITEMS OF FOOD IN LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

FOOD GROUP	PREGNANCY		BIRTH		MARRIAGE		DEATH	
	LONGCHANG	MOYIOW	LONGCHANG	MOYIOW	LONGCHANG	MOYIOW	LONGCHANG	MOYIOW
RICE								
RICE POWDER								
LOCAL BEER								
MEAT (BUFFALO)								
MEAT(COW)								
MEAT(PORK)								
MEAT(FOWL)								
FISH								
NON EGG								
VEGETABLES								
SALT								
SPICES								
SWEETS								
MILK & MILK PRODUCTS								
RAW RICE								

COMMON ITEMS - RICE, LOCAL BEER, MEAT, VEGETABLES.

SIGNIFICANT ITEMS - EGG, FISH, NON RICE, RICE POWDER.

TABLE "A" Shows The Normal Cycle Of Meat.
TABLE "B" Shows The Prescribed Items Of Food During Festivals.
Table "C" Shows The Prescribed Items Of Food During Life Cycle Rituals.

- (1) From All The Tables The Common Items Are Rice, Local Beer.
- (2) For Ceremonial Occasions Meat Is A Compulsory Item.
- (3) For Some Rituals, Some Food Items Are Significant, These Are Shown In The Tables. "B" & "C".

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