# THE TRIBES OF MIZORAM A DISSERTATION

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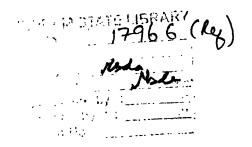
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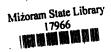
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First Publication: 1994



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### FOREWORD

Study of the socio-cultural life of different subtribes in Mizoram is one of the important works of Tribal Research Institute. In this book, 6 (six) selected sub-tribes are included. An attempt will be made to include more sub-tribes in their future projects.

I truly appreciate their sincere effort and hard work to bring out this book which is really praise worthy. I also hope that those people who are not very familiar with the people of Mizoram will be benefitted by this book.

Dated: Aizawl The 5th March 1994. Darchhawna
Director
Art & Culture,
Aizawl: Mizoram.

## PREFACE

This small book contains brief description six tribal groups who have been settling permanently in Mizoram. The book itself is named 'The Tribes of Mizoram A Dissortation'. As it is of the one-year projects of Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram and as it is a time bound project, all tribes in Mizoram can not be covered. Therefore, only six tribal groups such as Lusei, Pawi (Lai), Lakher (Mara), Ranglong, Riang and Chakma included in this book. Nowadays, there are a lot of conflicting views and ideas as to the use of the term 'Mizo'. Most people always put all the subtribal groups such as Hmar, Paite, Vaiphei, Pawi. Lakher etc. within the term 'Mizo' these groups of tribe do not agree to. But in the truest sense of the term, Mizo has a number sub-tribal groups and all these groups including Lushai are the different sub-tribes of Mizo. In this dissertation also, Lushai, pawi, Lakher and Ranglong, which have some what similar culture, customs, tradition and closely linked-dialect are stated as the sub-tribes of Mizo. The term 'Mizo' is therefore. a generic name for all those groups of tribes which should be termed as sub-tribes of Mizo. The tribes. Lushai, Pawi, Lakher and Ranglong which we can study within a short period of time are described here very briefly. Whereas the tribes, Riang and Chakma who, although have the some eth nical feature with that of the Mizo but have different culture and language, are described here more or less detail.

To carry out this difficult task in a short period of time, Pu Lianhmingthanga, Research Officer is

entrusted and he is also assisted by Pi K.Laldinpuii, Research Investigator. As already mentioned, detailed study of each tribe of this book can not be done as it is a one-year project, yet their finding is found to be exhaustive and authentic enough. It is only through their sincere effort and hard work this book can become a reality.

It is hoped that this book will depict a clear glimpse of the socio-cultural life of the tribes included in this small book and it will prove to be highly beneficial especially to those who are not familiar with these tribes.

Dated Aizawl, The 25th February, 1994

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# CONTENTS

\$	SUBJECTS		Page
1.	LUSEI	_	1-14
2.	LAI		15—25
3.	MARA		2634
4.	RANGLONG	-	3542
5.	RIANG	-	4388
6.	CHAKMA	e-species	89—116

The Lushai belong to one of the sub-tribes of Mizo and are the dominant inhabitant of Mizoram. Their inhabited area lies between 21 degree and 25 degree North latitude and longitude 92 degree and 94 degree East border by Cachar of Assam and Manipur on the North, Myanmar in the cast and south, Bangladesh and Tripura in the west. The area covers 21,081 Sq.km. The largest concentration of Lushai is in the capital District of Aizawl, the second is in Lunglei District and the third Chhimtuipui District where Pawi, Lakher and Chakma dominates. Previously the tribe called themselves 'Lusei'. Some writers and scholars attempt to define it in different ways. Some say the word Lusei is purely a Lushai language. Lu means head, sei means elongated, it therefore implies people whose head looks elongated because of the hair knot. Some says, Lusei is a Burmese word meaning people ten. And others make assumption that as the people were usually called after the name of their noted chiefs, these people must have had Lusei as their chief in earlier times. Whatever may be the truth, the term 'Lushai' has been popularly used and known by the administrators and writers to refer to these people. The term 'Lusei' was put to 'Lushai' by the British administrator to match their tongue. In the olden days, during their sojourn in Burma about 1000 to 1500 AD, the Burmese called them 'Chin' which means basket. And those who left Burma earlier than other groups of Lushai moved up to Tripura and Cachar of Assam during the later part of eighteen century where they are called and known as Kuki by their neighbouring Bengali people. The term 'Kuki' is a Bengali language meaning wild man. In Tripura they are later known and called as Halam under which there are as many as nineteen class. These people are known as old Kuki to the British, while the new Kuki are Thado, Changsen etc. The new Kuki moved out from Burma to Manipur, Mizoram and Cachar of Assam. The last batch of people who claimed themselves to be Lusei, came to Mizoram in the beginning of the seventeenth century A.D. In comparison with the other group of earlier immigrants, the Lushai groups were stronger and superior with their powerful chiefs. They were the subject of fear of their contemporanous tribal groups such as old and new Kuki who fled to the west and north of Mizoram.

Under the sub-tribe, Lushai, there are altogether eleven clans and under these clans there are several sub-clans. Of all the clans the Sailo clan maintained hereditary chieftainship. Immediately after their entry into Mizoram, the Sailo chiefs consolidated their rules and extended their domain and made many non-Lushai clans as their subjects. In such a way, the Lushai group made themselves an overwhelming majority in Mizoram which was previously known as Lushai Hills. The Lushai has a dialect which is also known as Duhlian and is now called Mizo tawng (tawng means language). It is closely similar with the dialects of other Mizo sub-tribes and is easily speakable and understandable by the laters. Grierson put the Lushai dialect to the Kuki-Chin group of Tibeto Burman family. Their physical appearance is short to medium stature ranging 5ft. to 5st. 10 inch, yellow skin colour, straight black hair, eyes slanting with Mongolian fold, broad and flat nose, prominent check bones, body long and short legs, scanty body hair. From the above features and as stated by various scholars they undoubtedly belong to the Tibeto-Burmen group of Mongolian race. Their short body built suitably afford to carry a heavy load in their territory which are mostly hill terrain.

The social structure of Lushai is segmentary. Since members of the Sailo clan belong to the ruling clan, they occupied the highest social status in their society and as such all their customs and practices are adopted by the other clans. Next to the Sailo clans, the chiefs council of Minister called 'Upa' occupied an important place in the society. The council of ministers assisted the chief in matters of administrative work. In the third layer of social gradation, there were the village priest called Sadawt, the blacksmiths called Thirdeng, hero hunters called Thangchhuahpa and an outstanding warrior. Then comes the laymen, the general people of the village. During the pre-British period, the Lushai society lived a life of fear and insecurity due to the prevailing situation of interclan fueds. So the men-folks who could go for war or resist the attack occupied an important place in their society. There was therefore, a customary institutions called 'zawlbuk' a bachelors dormitory near the chief's house where the grown up boys gathered and slept at night. This institution enabled the chief to call out his warriors at any emergent need. But this institution came to an end in the wake of Indian Independence when the chieftainship was abolished.

Family, the oldest and smallest institution in human society exist in the form of Patriachal society among the Lushai. A father heads the family and exercises arbitrary power. The lineage is traced through the male line and right to inheritance is reserved for paternal descent. In spite of being burdened with heavy load of household affairs and of

thum work, a wife has little or no power to exercise in the family. There is no strict inhibition as to the mixing of boys and girls. It is the custom of the Lushai society, that the boys goes to the girl's house for courting. In most cases, the boys selects a girl of his choice for life-partner. However, marriage is solemnised only after having a agreed terms through negotiation between the parents of the boy and the girl. Payment of a bride price is done at night before the wedding day in the bride's residence. In olden days, bride price was paid in term of mithun. The price of a Sailo girl was ten mithun while the price of a girl belonging to other clan was seven mithun. Now payment of a bride price is done in cash ranging Rs.300/- to Rs.400/- and all the performances of a marriage ceremony is done according to the Christian customs. The Lushai practise both exogemous and endogamous marriage. Previously, members of the Sailo clan desired and searched a wife from within their own clan members. But now the trend of endogamy is no longer in vogue among them. Since some years back marriage outside the kin members has been desired by the parents. This is due to the desire of extending kinship, outside the clan members. Among the Lushai kinship plays an important role and as such kinship bond is maintained among the same clan members. On certain occassions, such as time of misfortune or death, it is regarded as a must for the kin members to attend to the bereaved family as well as to the dead body.

The Lushai live mainly on jhum cultivation, a slash and hurnt method. A vast area of forest land is used for journing for a year and another, area for the mexty four lathie way jhuming is done in a cyclic

order over the areas of the surrounding village. As the ever increasing population demands more jhum land, the ihuming cycle becomes shorter and shorter, and the land cannot restore its fertility. As a result the ihum product decreases and the village people cannot maintain self sufficiency. Rice is the staple food of the Lushai and it is sown over their whole jhum land. Their other common crops are, maize, millet, cucumber, melon, chilli etc. Apart from lack of fertility of jhum land, poor productivity is sometimes caused by rats and insects. However, now, the Government makes scheme and various method so that the Lushai and all other tribes in Mizoram can maintain self sufficiency. The main bulk of Mizoram's requirement of rice is now procured from other States with the help of the Central Government.

Although the Lushai people know that jhuming is a bad process of cultivation they cannot but do it since there is no other alternative due to the fact that all the village surrounding areas are rough hill terrain. More-over the processes of jhuming cultivation have a deep connection with their customary and traditional practices. For instance, their greatest festival called 'Chapchar Kut' has to be observed when the first and most hectic task of jhuming processes that is, cutting of the thick jungle is over. Observance of this festival is organised in a grand scale in the Capital town of Aizawl every year in February or March till today. The other festivals are Mimkut which is however observed for the dead and 'Pawl Kut' which is a festival of harvest.

Before Christianity was introduced the social life of the Lushai was to a great extent dominated by their religious belief. Owing to lack of written records, it is not possible to highlight here the origin of their religion. However, the oral traditions and folk songs help us to have an idea on the Lushais concept of God. Though they believed in one supreme being called 'Pathian' who is omnipotent and omnipresent, they performed various sicrifices to appease evil spirits who caused harm very often. They also worshipped good spirit for asking fortune. Thus, it appears that there are some elements of polytheism in their religious belief. The religious life of the Lushai was also connected with taboos and superstitions. They were very superstitious minded not only in religion but also in their general life. They swore that two members of a family should not go out of the village the same day either for journey or hunting in opposite directions. As far as the concept of life after death is concerned, they believed the soul of a main left the body and went up to Rihdil and from there returned and stayed around the house for three lunar months. During which time, a ceremony in honour of the dead called Mitthi Thlaichhiah was performed. After three months they believed the soul to go to Paradise call Mitthi khua or Pialral. reach Paradise or Pialral the soul had to pass through various stages. After crossing different stages, they believed the soul to pass through a stage where there was a man called Pu Pawla, a custodian of Paradise, who was armed with bow and pellet. Pu Pawla shot his peliet at every soul as they pass by, except those who had died of hlamzuih (died during infancy), thangchinair couples (hero hunters) men and women who had sexual intercourse during their life time.

The Lusha had various forms of ceremonies and sacrifices. The greatest of all the ceremony was collect. Changein in which grand feast was proposed and algorithmentor of animals were killed.

In addition to this the other main religious ceremonies and sacrifices were, Dawino chhul. Sedawi, Sekhuang, Mitthi rawp lam, Zaudawh and Ngawn chawn. In every ceremony and sacrifices, they killed a number of domesticated animals and very often enjoyed feast with drinking liquor. The frequent performance of ceremonies and sacrifices with heavy expenses is one of the causes of their economic backwardness. Unless they did, they didn't feel secure and comfort for fear of evil spirit. For unately, when the British annexed Mizoram, Christianity was introduced to the Lushai people. The first christian missionaries to land on the soil of Mizoram was J.H.Lorrain and F.W Sividge who came on the 11th of January 1894. Since then Christianity spread far and wide over the whole of Mizoram within a few years and the whole Lushai abandoned their old religion and embraced christianity. The new fifth made them free from the bondage of evil spirit and all their primitive forms of religious and sacrificial performances were stopped and replaced by Christian festivals and ceremonies.

As the social life, tradition and customs are always deeply connected with the religion of a tribe, Christianity also brought tremendous change in different spheres of life to the Lushai. One of the most important factors of change in their society was education which was started by the British Government in November 1893 and later carried on by the Missionaries. The Lushai people from the beginning gave a well-response to school education and in turn the Missionaries took special attention to this field because the process of Christianisation was accelarated by education. Therefore the first task of the Missionaries was to reduce Lushai lan-

guage into a written form. Then they made the Lushai alphabets in Roman scripts which have been used without any addition or change till date. The progress of christianisation and education is illustrated as follows: As per report of the Superintendent of the then Lushai Hills 1890-92, over the whole Mizoram in 1901 there were 82,434 souls out of which 45 persons were Christians and 761 were literate the percentage being 0.05 and 0.93 respectively. And after four decades i.e. 1941 the population was 152,786, out of which 98,108 were Christians the percentages being 64.21 and literacy percentage rose to 19.5. According to the 1971 census report out of 332,290, the total population 286, 141 were christians literacy percentage was 53.79. Again. according to the census report of 1991. Mizoram state ranked the second highest in literacy rate in India i.e.81.23 %, the highest being 90.59 % for Kerela state. While dealing with the Lushai tribe mention of the whole population of Mizoram is made here on account of the fact that the Lushau group of people hold majority population in State. With this tremer dous progress of Christianity and education, their outlook was widened, they became aware of the life and style of the people in the other world. The Lushai gradually imbibed the sociocultural life of the western Christian society. They therefore, now live a mixture of the socio-cultural and religious life of the western civilised people with that of their own.

Prior of Indian Independence, the political life of the Lushai was centered mainly to the chief. As stated before, among the Lushai, a clan called Sailo was the chief clan, Chieftainship was hereditary and was passed on from father to son. According to

some historians and writers, the origin of the Sailo clan is traced back to Thangura, one of the six sons Zahmuaka, the progenitor of Sailo Thangura was believed to have been in existence during the second half of the fifteen century A.D. Owing to the emergence of clanism among the tribes of Mizo, the Sailo clan with their Lushai subjects happened to settle in seperate village called Seipuikhur. Likewise, other clan groups settled in seperate villages. On these days, inter-clan fued and intervillage war was very common and even after the Lushai group came settle on the soil of Mizoram in the beginning of the seventeenth century, such state of affairs still prevailed. The Lushai group with their strong and capable Sailo chiefs therefore, consolidated their supremacy over the other groups. earlier migrants to Mizoram such as the Hrangkhawl, Langrong, Darlong, Thado, Changsen etc. fled to Tripura, Bangladesh and Cachar of Assam and Manipur for fear of the Lushai group.

The Sailo chief enjoyed full power and authority over his village. To assist him in his administration he had council of ministers. No one could try for these post directly and the chief himself selected his ministers among his subjects. The chief was all in all in the village and no one could dethrone him. He lived mainly on the tribute paid by his villagers and even had a share of meat on every animal killed by any hunter in the village.

After the Lushai group had settled in Mizoram there were always inter-village feuds among themselves. They also frequently committed raids on villages in their adjoining western and northern territories. It was at the instance of their frequent raids on their surrounding territories that the British

first came to know that the Lushai were a very powerful, war like, set of people and also well-armed and independent. Reports of Lushai raids from various quarters like Manipur, Cachar, Tripura and Chittagong Hills were received by the Government during the first half to the middle of the 19th century. The Government employed various means to suppress the bloody raiding habit of the Lushai but to no avail. In January 1871, raiding were committed by the Lushai in Syhlet and Cachar areas including Alexandrapura tea garden where Mr. Winchester, a tea-planter was killed on 23th January and his little daughter was taken away by the raiding party. As a punitive measure the govornment therefore, decided to send an army military expedition into the Lushai country which took place in 1871-72. This expedition opened a new chapter in the life of the Lushai people because henceforth, they had been in constant contact with the Government. Some of the Lushai chiefs had to submit and surrendered to the Government since they know they were no match to the well armed forces of the government. Even after the military expedition of 1871-72, some of the Lushai chief still continued raids on the plain bordering areas defying the British administration. As a result, a second military expedition was conducted by the government of British. India in 1899-90 during which time the Mizoram was annexed to the British. For administrative purpose. Mizoram was divided into two parts, viz North Lushai Hills as a part of Assam and South Lushai Hills as a part of Bengal. A Political Officer was in-charge of North Lushai Hills District whereas the South Lushai Hills Dis-'Hilot' was 'under the charge of the Superintendent.

The District administrators therefore carried out administrative work but did not interfere much in the internal affairs of the Lushai. The Lushai chiefs carried on their rule in their villages under the guidance and instruction of the District administrators. For more administrative convenience the South and North Lushai Hills was amalgamated as one Lushai Hills District of Assam on 1.4.1898. Till the end of the 2nd world war the Lushai had no political consciousness. But when the second world war was over, the Lushai youth were politically awakened and at once disliked the idea that all powers handed over to the chiefs by the British. As a result, a political party called Mizo Union was formed in 1946 by R. Vanlawma. Mr. Pachhunga was elected as the first President of the party. Meanwhile the other sub-tribe of Mizo such as Pawi and Lakher became politically awakened and put a demand for seperate autonomy so that they could manage their own internal affairs themselves. In response to the pressing demand of the Mizo Union Partv a political status called Lushai Hills District Council was set up in 1952 for Lushai. A year later, in 1953, Pawi, Lakher Regional Council also came into being for Pawi, Lakher and Chakma. These political status deprived the chiefs and their Ministers of all their privilages and thereby abolished the chieftainship in Mizoram. The District administration of the Lushai Hills was in the hand of the Mizo Union Party and the name 'Lushai Hills District' was changed to Mizo District in 1954. The first demand for a higher political status, i.e statchood was also initiated by the party in 1963.

As a result of the outbreak of famine in Mizo District during 1959, a political party called M.N.F. was born which was initially formed as a Mizo Cultural Society, then to Mizo Famile Front. In December 1965 and 1966 the M.N.F. with its volunteers started their activities by collecting funds from the people. On the 28th February 1966 the M.N.F. volunteers started an open armed revolt againts the Indian Government demanding sovereign independent state for the Mizo. Since then the Indian troup moved into the District and the M.N.F. volunteers with their leaders went underground. In the wake of M.N.F. insurgency, no other political parties including the Indian National Congress which was set up in 1961 and headed by A. Thanglura could not make much head way. Fortunately when the insurgency in Mizoram was brought under control by the Indian Security Forces, the Mizo Union and the Congress party in Mizoram formed a new political body known as United Mizo parliamentary party with a view to making the demand for statehood more effective. Owing to the united efforts and political skill of the said parties the Government of India, in 1971 agreed the proposal to constitute the Mizo Hills District into a Union Territory for the time being which was materiallised on the 21st January 1972.

In the first general election to the 30 members assembly seat of Mizoram U.T. held on 28th April 1972, the Mizo Union party came to power with a thinkinging majority and Mr. Ch.Chhunga became the chief minister. In 1974 the Mizo Union was merged with the Congress headed by Mr. Lal Thanhawla and a coalition ministry was run by the two parties under the chief ministership of Mr. Ch.Chhunga. On the

28th April 1975 another political party called People's Conference was formed under the leadership of a retired Brigadier of Indian Army, named Thenphunga Sailo. Mr. Thenphunga Sailo rapidly gained popularity as he initially formed Human Right Committee to safeguard the right of the Mizo people who suffered excesses and atrocities committed by the operating arm forces in Mizoram. Then the People's Conference party won the Assembly polls of 1978 and the mid term poll of 1979 and Mr. T. Sailo became the Chief Minister. During his ministry, there were very often negotiation between the hostile underground M.N.F. leaders and the Government of India but no result came out. In the fourth election to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly held on 25th April 1984, the Congress (I) under the leadership of Mr. Lal Thanhawla rose to power securing 20 out of 30 seats and Mr.T. Sailo and his party suffered a great set back securing only eight seats.

Then the ruling Congress Party fervently processed negotiation for peace between the central government and MNF leaders. Subsequently, Peace accord was signed on 30.6.86 by the MNF leaders. the central government and the ruling congress leaders of Mizoram. Henceforth insurgency was stopped and normal life was restored in Mizoram. The underground M.N.F. volunteers with their leaders came overground, Mr.Laldenga became the Chief Minister while Mr. Lal Thanhawla stepped down to Deputy Chief Minister and the two run an Interim Government till the election to Legislative Assembly held in February 1987 in which M.N.F. defeated the Congress. But the M.N.F. ministry headed by Mr.Laldenga lasted for one and a half year only due to eight M.N.F. M.L.A's defection which was

followed by a President's Rule in Mizoram. In January 1989, the sixth General Election to the Mizoram Logislative Assembly was held and the Congress under the leadership of Mr. Lat Thanhawla defeated MNF and holds the reign of administration titl now in Mizoram which had its statehood status on 20th February 1987.



#### LAI

#### Introduction

'Tradition says that the Pawi came from the East and it is certain that they all came to their present habitat from different places in Haka (Halkha) and Klangklang (Thiantlang) sub division of the Chin Hills (Myanmar). It is accepted that the Pawi belong to the Tibeto-Burman race of Mongoloid stock. They do not called themselves Pawi but 'Lai'. The claim of being a 'Lai' tribe of Chins has some historical evidence. However, Pawi appears to be the name given by the kindred tribe of Lusei when they came into contact. Ethnically they are Lai but till this day they are called Pawi in the official use.

Geographical location, Population & Language:

The Pawi settled in the southern part of Mizoram around the Blue Mountain (Phawngpui) although a large number of them remained in the Chin Hills. Lawngtlai township is the headquarter of the Pawi autonomous District Council.

The population of Pawi tribe according to 1981 census is 25,531 as against 20, 441 in the census of 1971. There are over 166 clans and sub-clans among the Pawi tribe. The principal clans are Chinzah, Hlawncheu, Hlawncheing, Hhialum and Khenglawt.

Pawi has only four principal languages. Mr. Grierson in his Linguistic survey in 1904, classified the Pawi to belong to the Central-Chin Groups along with the Lusei, Eakher and Zahau tribes. The four principal languages or dialects are Khuofo and Thlantlang (Klangklang) which are mainly spoken in Mizoram;

Halkha (Haka) and Laizo are spoken in Myanmar alone. Khuofo dialects is spoken in the villages of Bualpui (Ng), Fungkah, Lungpher, Lungtian, Vartek and Rawlbuk. Thlantlang dialects is spoken in the villages of Niawhtlang, Lungzarhtum, Archhuang, Tialdawngilui, Pangrang, Thaltlang, Vawmbuk, Sangau, Pangkhua and Cheural.

# Social structure - kinship, marriage etc.

For all public purpose, whether of a civil or a religious nature, the tribal unit among the Pawi is the village rather than the clan. It is in connection with marriages, births, deaths and certain sacrifices of a private nature that the clan assumes importance. There are the royal clans, patrician clans and the plebeian clans. Each clan is said to have taken the name of its earliest ancestors, though they originated so long ago that it is impossible to trace back the founder.

There is a sharp division between the nobles and the lower classes. Noble birth is very highly esteemed. The rate for girls of noble birth being considerably higher than that for girls of baser lineage. There is deep social gulf between the higher and the lower clans. As such every man wants to raise his status by marrying wife from a clan higher than his own.

Social relations between the sexes are easy and natural, men and women meeting freely on an equal basis. The women are very far from being a mere household drudges. A married woman has a clearly defined position and inside the house she is supreme. The high marriage prices in force strengthens a wife's position.

As regard to inheritance the Pawi descent is patrificial and heir is his eldest son. The eldest son takes all the property and must pay up whatever dues his father had left behind. Women do not inherit, and if a man dies without any sons his brothers inherit his estates. Among the Fanai tribe the youngest inherits his father's properties. The personal belongings of a mother passed on to the youngest daughter. In practice the one who looks after his aged parents till they die generally inherits the property. The heirlooms of chiefs and nobles included necklaces of superior stone, gongs, guns and others.

There is no bar to marrying within one's clan. They can marry within or outside the clan. In actual practice marriages within the same clan seem less frequent. An exogamous system is in vogue. Chiefs and wealthy nobles prefer to take their wives from villages other than their own so that matrimonial alliance is extended.

As a rule a young man's bride is selected by his parents. It is only in comparatively rare cases that a min chooses his own bride. This does not mean that there is no love marriage. The system of courting is very much prevalent. Ordinarily, when the parents have found a girl they think suitable as a bride for their son, the first step is to send a female relative to the girl's parents to find out whether a proposal for their daughter's hand is likely to be welcomed. If this woman reports favourably the parents appoint an intermidiary, who they sent with a present of dao to the girl's parents which is supposed to bring them lucky dreams. If on the night after they have been given the

the girl's parents have lucky dreams, they will agree to the match, otherwise they will refuse to it.

The marital status for women is between the age of 15-20 and that of men 20-25 age of years. Girls marrying at the age of 10 is also not uncommon. The marriage prices are counted in terms of domesticated mithans. The daughter of if wiellshe fetch ten mithans while ordinary girls will price 7 mithans. One mithan is valued at Rs. 30/-. Besides the main price there are subsidiary prices and engagement fors.

Widow remarriage is allowed. A widow usually remains in her husband's house. However, no member of the family can put any bar in the way of her remarryi at aimild marriage is preva. Cyngh ent. lent. Dowry is seldom given. If a girl has any property, which is very rare, she takes it with her when she marries. It makes no difference to her price whether she has any property or not.

Divorce is easy. A man can divorce his wife at any time provided be complies with certain formalities. A woman can likewise divorce her husband. Divorces, however, are quite rare mainly due to the high rate of marriage prices. In case of divorce a woman has to refund her price. On the ground of a man being impotent the wife can claim a divorce. There are other forms of divorce too.

Making a living-economic activities, societies etc.

Being a war-like tribe, the Pawi always fenced their villages. While selecting a village site they give great importance to security and economic aspects of the location. They are cultivators by profession. They stayed in a particular village barely for 5-6 years and then shifted to another site. Frequent outbreak of epidemic and raids from the neighbour tribal clans also cause their village migration.

The main occupation has been cultivation of a shifting jhum cultivation. While making allotment of jhum sites, the chief make his first choice followed by his ministers. The village erier (Tlangau) then selects his site followed by the general public of the village. With the extension of British administration abother village official called Ramhual is introduced. The Ramhual is given priority to public in matter of jhum site selection.

Their livelihood depends on the production of their jhums. The many crops are jaddy, maize and millet. Rice is the staple food of the tribe. The subsidiary crops grown in the jhum are sweet-potatoes, arum, iobs-tears, cotton etc. They also make a subsidiary jhum to produce vegetables and domestic needs without growing paddy. Money is scarce and barter is the system of their economy. Each household producing their daily needs, excepting salt which they obtained from traders outside their sphere.

The life-cycle moves round the jhum. Felling of trees and bamboos are being done towards the last part of December and in January. When these are dried they set ablaze in the month of March - April. After clearing off the residue, sowing of seeds began. This is followed by weeding for three rounds or so. Menfolk and womenfolk are equal partners in these process till harvesting time. The cutting of trees and bamboos for the jhum, construction of house, making baskets and traps are generally done by menfolk. While womenfolk collects firewood, drin-

Ing water and eights and carries kitchen service. Hanting fishing lasing t ups are the favourite sports of the mentals.

belieft, rites & festivals ;-

The Pawi believes that there is one unknown supreme being whom they called 'Khawzing Pathian'. While Khawzing Pathian' is the supreme God, every nerson is believed to have a sort of tutclary deity or guardian angel, known as 'Zai leh Vai'. To propitiate this delty they performed a sacrifice. If the guardian angel is well pleased with the person it has charge of, it can make him happy, healthy, prosperous and grant him children and protect him from accidents. They do not worship the 'Khawzing Pathian' directly. They dreaded numerous demons that are causing sickness to man. In order to please these demons they performed certain sacrifices. To them the only means of averting or curing sickness is by performing the appropriate sacrifices and ceremonies. Such ceremonies intended to ward off sickness performed on behalf of the entire village included Khawhrum Chhiat, Mualhlawng, Tlangraithlah and others. There are other sacrifices related to ihum. house site and sickness. A village sacrifice is performed about in the month of October to the spirits of their ancestors for their blessings.

The Pawi tribe has fewer feasting and jolting occasions. The numerous sacrifices performed are not occasions for rejoicing. The two main events for feasts are weddings and funerals. A marriage feast is always a big affair. Many pigs are slain and gallons of rice beer (Zu) are consumed. Occasionally a rich man who has built a new house gives a house-warming feast to the villagers. They have two annual

festivals called 'Tho Kut' and 'Hlukhla Kut' similar to the Lusei 'Mim Kut'. These are not the occasions for joy but connected with the deceased persons in the village. It takes the shape of a condolence meeting resorting to a small feast along with drinks where the spirits of the deceased are supposed to share it.

The Pawi always buried the dead body. Death is accompanied by gun fire and beating of big gongs. Unlike the Lusei tribe, they seldom use coffins. The corpse being simply wrapped in cloth and burried in the evening in front of the deceased house. Unnatural deaths are buried outside the village fence. In course of time a village graveyard has been acquired near the village. The spirit of the dead persons are believed to go to the deadman's village. Rebirth its not generally believed but the spirit is transformed either into files or wasp. They believe in the rebirth of an infant child and deal animals reborn into human beings.

# Political organisation—Traditional and emerging:

The royal clans established a number of villages under different chiefs. The chief is the head of the village. He is the leader in war, the owner of the village land, the protector and father of his people. The chief is a despot and on occasions he can commit tyrannical acts but the basic relationship with his people is one of mutual benefit and help. The chief receives from his people certain dues, people rendered him certain service and come to his aid when called upon by the chief for assistance.

The chief appoints three or four Elder or Ministers to assist him in the disposal of matters relating to any dispute or other matters concerning the vil-

lage. Other village officials to assist the chief, in time of need are also appointed. Apart from certain dues and services rendered to the chief personally. Subscription are levied on the authority of the chief and Elders for villages purposes of a public nature. Work also has to be performed by each able-bodied member of the village for the benefit of the whole community. The unit in the village is the household, and not the individual. The rice due is levied on each household while services involving manual labour is responded by all able-bodied individuals of the village. The construction of the chief's house and the repair thereafter, are done by the villagers.

In course of time political turn took a different shape. The East India Company extended their influence as far as Mizoram in 1872. By 1898 the North Lushai Hills was amalgamated with the South Lushas Mills under one administration of the Assam Province. By October, 1901 the entire Lushai Hills (Mizoram) was divided into 20 circles and Circle Interpreters were appointed by the British Indian Government. By the introduction of circle interpreters the influence and powers of the local chiefs were gradually reduced. Capt.J.Shakespear who was the Superintendant of Lushai Hills exercised unlimited powers. He' demarcated the boundaries of each chiefs and even snatched some chiefs and appointed other thief in their place. However, the new admiinstration brought about settled life and inter-tribal wais and faids ceased. People began to progress under peaceful atmosphere and the frequent village migration came to an end leading to prosperous and without hild.

With India becoming independent in 1947 and the promulgation of the Constitution as "a sovereign

democratic Republic in 1950 the Pawi have been given constitutional safeguards in the Sixth schedule granting them an autonomous Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. An Advisory Council headed by the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei with two chiefs and six commoner as members of the council was formed. The Advisory council framed rules and mode of Elections and the Election to the P.L. Regioned Council was conducted on 24th April, 1954 the process of Elections were completed and the P.L.Regioned Council began to function with 9 members elected and three nominated. By April 1956 many as 50 Pawi chief were abolished by an act of the Assam State Legislature. The constitutional democracy was fully operative down to the village administration where people exercise their franchise both for Regional council and the village council elections. Political process thus grew and developed while the administration also took shape. However, the uprising of the Mizo National Front (MNF) Movements in 1966 which lasted 20 years icopardised the process of growth and development.

The government met the situation with strong determination and was able to extinquish the fierce flame though the movement continued in other forms. By an act of the parliament the North Eastern Area Reorganisation Act was brought about in 1971. By this Act Mizoram was made a Union Territory along with the formation of three new Autonomous District Council for Pawi, Lakher and Chakma in Mizoram. The P.L.Regional council seased. Thus, the semi-nomatic and a migratory tribe of Pawi achieved another landmark in their history with settled and autonomous council of their own ander the Sixth schedule to the constitution.

Social change-problems of survival & development: The British rule and the subsequent democratisation has removed fear, implanted a sense of security and enable the people to make the most of their simple pleasure. The chief's wealth and importance is reduced by the liberation of their dependents by payment of the forty rupees ransom. People came forward to sell their surplus rice to the military posts in order to make a little money which, otherwise, was not known until then. A more active instrument of change than Government is the Christian Mission.

The Mission introduced western education which, in turn, is supposed to have had profound effect on the life style and consumption pattern. They insisted on strick discipline in the learning process and on all their working in return for their education. They subscribe to wearing shorts and cutting off their top-knots (hair). It would have been better if the people are encourage to weave and wear their own beautiful cloths than to impose upon them the drab uniform of Khaki drawers and cotton shart. Their well-cared-for top knots of hair give scope for a display of lacquered and brass hair-pins and combs of great beauty.

The Mission prohibited the use of alcohol saying that no one can become Christian who ever touches slookel. But the people have few pleasures and after, strengus work a stimulant is rather a good thing. It would therefore be better to encourage temperance than to insist on prohibition. To quote N.B.Parsy, "...to make abstinence from drink an essential tenet of Christianity is entirely wrong, and is bound to lead to trouble". Almost the entire populations, has become Christians but alcohol has

not disappear and has been causing problems in the society and in the Christian Church.

Health is another field in which the Christian Mission brought about significant departure from the past traditions. The Mission introduced modern health care systems by the establishment of Hospitals at Durtlang and Serkawn for north and south districts respectively. Medical services is thus one of the most effective means of destroying the age-old traditional faith-healing through sacrifices an propitiations.

The spread of education and its subsequent development brought about rapid christianisation which is the leading factor in the socio-economic and cultural modernisation among the people. The literacy rate is well over 55 percent and over 95 percent are Christians. Schools and medical facilities served as agencies for saving souls and bodies which the people readily accepted and welcomed. The rapid socio-cultural changes that are taking place are deeply western influence and therefore needed tender care to keep the balance in tag.



#### MARA

The Lakher, who call themselves Mara are one of the sub-tribal groups of Mizo. They are the predominant tribal Community of the South-eastern corner of Mizoram State and are neighboured by Arakanese on the South, Chakma and Lusei on the west. Pawi (Lai) on the north and Chin people on the east. The geographical location on their inhabited area is between 22 degree N. Lat. and 28 degree N. Lat. and 93 degree E. Long. runs across the length of the area. Most of the Lakher villages are situated on the east of the Kolodyne River and on its west situated a few villages. In the earlier days, the Lakher were ferocious tribal group and carried on raids for human heads in their surrounding areas including the areas adjacent to the Chittagong Hill tracts. These frequent raids were followed by British army expeditions.

In 1860, the first Lushai Expedition took place and in 1871 two Columns of British army entered the Lushai Hills, one from Cachar and the other from Chittagong site, this expedition mainly dealt with the Lushai and left the Lakher untouched. But the murder of Lieutenant John Steward of the Leinstar Regiment, who was engaged in Survey work, provoked the Chin—Lushai Expedition which took place in 1888—89.

As a result of this expedition some of the Lakher villages were subjugated by the British and since 1924 all the Lakher had been under British rule. Since then, the process of Christianisation was carried on among them by the devoted missionaries. This accelerated the process of civilisation and now they are found to catch up with the mainstream of the State in every walk of life. As for their physical appearance, a good physique staut and strong built, high cheek bones, blunt and broad nose; straight hair, presence of epicanthic fold in the eyes, stature of 5'6" and yellow skin colour are the common feature.

They, therefore, without any doubt belong to the Kuki—Chin group of mongolian race. The dialect they use is quite similar with that of the dialect spoken by Pawi and George A. Grierson put it to the Kuki—Chin group of Tibeto—Burman family. There are still smaller dialects each of which spoken by different claus, but they can all understand each other.

The Lakher as a whole can be divided into six groups namely, Tlongsai, Hawthai, Zeuhnang, Sabeu, Lialai and Heima. These groups are further classified into three layers by social structure; the highest being royal clans, next comes noble or Phansang clans and the bottom, common people's claus called Machhi.

This classification of social structure is said by them to have begun when first men came out of an earth—hole, all were equal, but in a short while the cleverer men become Chiefs and nobles ruled over the less intelligent and energetic who become the lower orders. However, in general, the village is very important unit rather than the clan for all public purposes. Members of the same clan assumes importance in time of marriages, birth, death and certain ceremonies and sacrifices of a private nature. In the earlier days, much help was extended to fellow clan-men in time of difficulties. When a man was captured in war, his clansmen subscribed to ransome him, and when a boy was marrying his

clansmen contributed towards payment of a brideprice which vary in different clans. Formerly, the exogamous type of marriage prevailed among the Lakher although endogamous marriage was not in vague. As there was a snarp division between the higher and the lower classes, the Chief or the noble clans preferred their wife from other vitlages so that, they acquire influences in another villages and improve their position indirectly. And every Lakher aimed to marry a girl of higher clans than his own so that he gained better protection and influential relations through his wife and also raised his status in their society. Like their surrounding tribes the Lakher belong to the patrilineal jatrilocal society in which desendent is traced through the male line and the girl goes to the boy's house in marriage respectively.

In general a boy selects a girl for his wife courting is done in the same way the Lushai boy does. Though not very common now-a-digs child-marnage was in the past, practised among the Likher which must be due to the great aim to marry a higher clan from the lower one. Courting is done in such a way, that a boy goes to the girls' house and always had ample time for chitchatting with the girl. When the boy knew the girl's reciprocation positive, he promptly proceeded further and at the end solemnised marriage. Among the Lakher there is no bar whatever for a widow to remarry. Divorce is not uncommon among them and is easy to do so for husband or wife.

The Lakher live mainly on agriculture, a wasteful method of slash and burn method as practised by most of the hill tribes of North East India. A vaste forest land surrounding their villages are cutdown during January and are left to dry to be burnt during March. Immediately after burning, they start sowing of seed of variety crops like maize, millet, eucumbers, pumkins, melons and other vegetables and towards the end of April they sow paddy. On completion of each stage of Jhuming processes the Lakher perform sacrifices. When cutting of jhum is finished they observe Khulta sacrifice in which all the villages enjoy feast. Among the Lushei, a grand festival colled Chapehar Kut is celebrated at this time. The day after the hums have been burnt. the Lakher observe two ceremonics; Heisapana on the first day and Leuhrangna sacrifice on these days. And when the paddy is all sown Sachipachlaa sperifice as performed by the owner of each jhum near his ihum house. During the rainy season, the weeds grow and weeding has to be done two or three times before the paddy is harvested. From the end of October the viilages begin to harvest paddy. When all the paddy is collected and ready for threshing, each owner of the jhum performs sacrifice called Leuhmathawna to propitiate spirit of the paddy and maize. When all the paddy is collected, a small but is built half-way between the ihum and the village and stored there which is followed by a sacrifice called Sikisa. Harvest of all crops is done till mid January. The Lakher are therefore, busy with agriculture throughout the year. The same plot of jhum land is never used and they go to other plot of land the next year. Due to this jhumming cycle the fertility of surrounding land decrease and the jhum products become lesser. Since some years back, they have not been able to sell their surplus jhum products or even unable to maintain self-support from their agricultural products. They have therefore, been in a very difficult situation.

The Lakher believe in God called by them 'Khazangpa' the creator of the world. They generally believe him to dwell in the sky while some of them say that he lives on the high tains called Khisong. Khazangpa literally means the father of all, being derived from Khaj azcudua meaning everything. This God is omnipotent, and can make them prosperous or the reverse he likes. The most important Lakher sperifice called Khazangpina is offered to this God. Khazangpa is a just and benevolent being, who is to deal with men according to their works. He deals with those bad doers by cutting short of their lives and good doers rewarding long life and tichness. While Khazangpa is the supreme God, they believed every person has a guardian angel known as Zang who is believed to hover around the person it has charge of. If a Zong is pleased, it can make him harry, healthy. prosperous, grant him children and protect him from accident, and so the Zang has to be propitiated with sacrifices, lest it will neglect to keep watch over him and even punish him. The Lakher imagine the soul of a man to resemble his body and size which is an invisible being. It stays inside the body during day time and wanders about at night. There are two kinds of soul, one is 'thlapha' and the other is 'thlachhi'. When one falls ill, it is due to his soul having seized and detained by Khazingpa. So sickness is treated by performing sacrifice to appease the rit or God that is believed to have imprisoned the soul. In their religious observance, they have three types of taboo called Ana, Pana and Aoh. Ana means everything that is forbidden. When man performs a sacrifice he is pana from the beginning of the sacrifice till the end. In every unnatural death an Aoh must be held or else it is Ana. And when a man has performed a sacrifice. he and his family are pana from the time of performing till dawn the next day. These are nothing but a taboo in connection with their superstition. There are different kirds of sacrifice of which Khazangpina is the greatest and is meant for rresperous life of the sacrificer and his family. Zakhupa is a modified form of Khazangpina sacrifice. Zangda is a sacrifice offered to the guardian angel and is meant for ensuring happiness to a married couple. Khisongbo is a sacrifice and its object is to improve the land, the crops, the animals and also to ensure good health of the villagers. Theulia is also a sacrifice performed once in two years by the villagers for the good of the whole villagers.

The Lakher were ruled by their Chiefs. They had no single chief clan like the Sailo, each village had its own royal clan and Chiefship was hereditary. The Chiefs therefore ruled within the limit of their respective village only. The Lakher chief recei ed dues and services from their villagers and in the chiefs looked after their welfare and tratively decided all cases. But their frequent raids on the neighbouring tribes caused the British Army expedition which occurred during 1838--89, by that time the North Lushai Hills was already under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam and the South Lushai Hills took over by the governor of Bengal in 1895. However, for the sake of administrative convenience, the North and the South Lushai Hills were amalgamated into one unit known

as Lushai Hills District to be administered by the Chief Commissioner of Assam with Aizawl as its Headquarter on the 1st April, 1896. Even after the Britist Rule the Lakher chiefs carried on administration in their villages and disposed of cases except serious offences like murder or rape. In 1937, the Government modified some of the provisions and issued fresh order concerning the power and duties of the chiefs of the then Lushai Hills. The outbreek of the second World War enhanced the importance of the chiefs since they had to reaffirmed their loyalty frequently to the Government. In 1945, the Lakher chiefs made the first demand for the creation of seperate Lakher Hills District, the some in written was submitted to the then Additional Superintendent of South Lushai Hills, Lungleh. The same demand was again affected in 1947 to the Governor of Assam. In response to this, the Govt. India formed an Advisory Committee in the Lushai Hills District in which one allotted to the Lakher. But the Lakher were not satisfied with it and they continued their demand. In the wake of the formation of Mizo District Council, Pewi-Lakher Regional Council was set up in 1953 recognising the Lakher as one of the scheduled tribe of India. But the Lakher soon realised, that Council with limited power would not help them to grow and develop according to their own genious. In order to make their demand more effective they organised political party called Mara Freedom Party headed by Mr. Vanluaia Hlychho and Mr. Mylau Hlychho as its President and Secretary respectively. Their struggle for the political status was perturbed by the great political upbeaval in Mizoram where the MNF insurgency broke lout in 1966. After an elapse of six "years under insurgency, the Lushai Hills District later change to Mizo District was elevated to the status of Union Territory on the 21st January, 1972 under the Provision of North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation Act of 1971) with the formation of Union Territory.

Mizoram was divided into three districts namely, Aizawl, Lunglei and Chhimtuipui. Again, Chhimtuipui District was sub-divided into three District Councils separately for the Pawi, Lakher and Chakma. With this political status, the Lakher can now namage their own internal affairs. In the Mizoram politic also, the Lakher now play an important part as their leaders occupy an important positions in the present Congress Mini try such as Mr. S. Hiato as Minister of State in the state ministry and Mr. Hiphei as a member of Parliament.

Under the changing situation of their political life, the social life of the Lakher also suffered far reaching changes. Their previous habit of ferocious bloody fueds came to an end when the British consolidated its rule in Mizoram in 1851. The Chieftainship was retained with limited power and the government made use of them for carrying out its administrative policies. The change of administrative machinery that is, from dictatorial to the democratic form of colonial rule caused changes in every sphere of life. The institution of slavery among them came to an end. Among the Lakher there was no much change regarding mixing of boys and girls as they had no bachelor dormitory. The Government started formal school education which was later on taken over by the Christian Missionaries. Among the Lakher the first Christian missionary pioneer was Faxall, who with his wife, started missionary work in the year 1907 and made Serkawr as their headquarter. In comparision with the Lushai, the Lakher were slow to accept Christianity and reluctant to go for School Education. Ho vever, within half a century Christianity spread to every nook and corner of their area. With the coming of Christianity and Education, they could not retain their primitive forms of life. Previous religious performances was replaced by Church service. Various sacrificial performances were n longer needed. They felt free from the bondage of evil spirits.

However, in certain custom like marriage, change took place in such a way that is fitted the indigenous and Christian Customs. Drinking of wine, an old-age part of the Lakher life began to diminish and ultimately stopped. All their traditional festivals were replaced by the Christian festivals. As Christianity spread, education also spread. the former accelerated the spread of the Christianity and education tremendously moulded their day to day life and their social life too. And now many Lakher attain respectable status and position not only in the Mizoram Government services but also in some central Government services. The Lakher literacy percentage also contributes much to the Mizoram State position which is the second highest in India.



### RANGLONG

A small group of tribe, called Ranglong the tribe call themselves Langlong, have been settling in a small pocket of North West corner of Mizoram. Major ty of them are settling in the neighbouring state of Tripura and Cachar of Assam. It is not known exactly when and how they came to settle in these parts of the States. No history nor any detail record of the tribe in the name of Ranglong is available till now. However, some English writers who came for administrative purposes and military operation mentioned in their book A. Makenite, in his book mentioned and called them by the word 'Lamkron' and he stated to belong to the old Kuki group. C.A.Soppitt also stated in his book 'A short account of the Kuki-Lushii Tribes' the cotribe of Hrangkhawl is Biate and its offshoot are Sakechep and the Ranglong. He further mentions that the Ranglong are the Kukis inhabiting the Tippera Hills and are identical with the Hrangkhawl. It is, therefore, very difficult to say a full proof account of the tribes remote past.

The tribes themselves claim to have come out from a cave called Khurpuitabum. They also believe khurpuitabum must be locating somewhere in the East while some of them opined to be in the east of Manipur state. From the names of places given by their own dialect, it is quite believable that they moved westward across Mizoram state. The name of hills such as Hachhek and Jampui are Ranglong words. The name of village like Kawrthah, Rengdil and Hriphaw are also coined by them. Since they moved down earlier than the other groups of Mizo, the Ranglong called the Lushai and other groups of Mizo by 'Khawsak' which means easterners. The same name has been used by the other groups of

tribes such as Darlawng, Hrangkhawl, Kualthuam, Kaipeng etc for calling Lushai groups. All these groups of tribes are called and known as Kuki by the Bitishers. Though sucid account of their movement and history is not available it is likely that they moved out from Mizoram during the early or middle part of the eighteenth century A.D. and settled in the hilly areas of Tripura. The presence of a notable chief called Sibuta who proclaimed independence in the then Maharaja's kingdom in Tripura is still remembered by some o'd informants Kanchancherra in Triputa A. Mackenne mentioned in his book 'The North East Frontier of India' that in 1926 Lalsuttnlaha lilled Syldet wood cutters for withhelding the parment of revenue. Lalsutthlaha was the grandson of Sibuta He was tried and convicted in 1944 and his life ended while imprisoned at Syhlet Jail

The presence of Ranglorg tribe in 1900 and around Cachar areas is also menitoned by C A.Soppit. In the year 1921, the Maharaja of Tripura also recognised various tribal groups in his domain and accepted them as his subjects. The Ranglong, being one of his subjects accepted the Raja as their benevolent ruler who would act as his agent called Halamasa.

In the year 1821, the Raja of Tripura made a list of twelve trabal groups who had no capable ruler and chief of their own such as Ranglong, Kaipeng, Molsom (Mualthuam) Rangkhawl (Hrangkhawl), Koloi, Rupini, Bowngchai, Bawng, Saihmar Sakechep, Thangkachep and Morsephang

Besides them, now there are some more groups of tribes who are closely akin to the twelve tribes

mentioned in custom, culture and tradition. There are Khulong, Kawrbawng, Chadai, Dao, Lahean, Kohzri. In addition to these, a group of tribe which has close affinities with Ranglong is Darlong who also call themselves Kuki.

The Ranglorg, which we may say now a subtribe group of Mizo has as many as sixteen clan groups such as Ahep, Banmaher, Chawrai, Khawplapu, Langkai, Rara Tialakawi, Sanghuipu, Tansurai, Vangru, Zanglak, Vai, Twal, Khuangchawm, Kajari and Kamar.

The Ranglong have a dialect of their own which is closely akin to the dialect of Lusei and other Mizo sub-tribal groups. Among the different clans, the dialect is more or less the same and they can all understand each other. According to G.A.Grierson, their dialect belongs to the Kuki-Chin group of Tibeto-Burman family. Their physical appearance shows all the character of Mongolian racial feature.

As far as their village administration is concerned, each village is headed by one Kalim who does the administrative work under the control of Halamasa. The village head, Kalim is assisted by his subordinate staff mentions herewith in order of rank and file such as Kabur, Menktiar, Asoksenga, Khuangpu and Tlangau. Pety cases are tried in the court of Kalim whereas serious cases are tried in the presence of Halamasa. Over all these, there is one Rai who ruled and acted as an agent of Maharaja.

The Ranglong believe in the existence of supreme being or spirit which they believe regulate the life and soul of all human being. At the same time, there exists some elements of animism in their religious life. The spirits which they use to worship are Sakundrai and Bakundrai, Atarpa, Chemratngai, Sunrawlpu, Tangtarpa and Titarpa. These spirits were worshipped by performing sacrifices. These five main sacrifices Tawksairai-It is an opening part of every sacrifice and is performed with augury. Apuiasang-It consists of two sacrifices Apui and Asang which are performed on one occasion consecutively one after another. It is a sacrifice meant for recovery from illness. Dawmte-It is exclusively for chidren. Kumhuizandawi-It is a sacrifice usualy performed by every family once a year. In this sacrificial ceremony the priest chants the following:—

Aha gi saigi sai dawng mensai,
Savai nathan taia nathan,
Aring leh Adama nareraw
Awm rawng ana asa
Awm man rawng ana a sa
A thi asama rare noro
Adama nare raw
Oh God, be with us
We offer you something
Give us healthiness
Keep, us well and good
Dont let us die
We pray for healthiness.

When a new house is to be occupied they performed sacrifice to appease a couple of spirit called Pawrdan Raja and his wife called Khawlawngnia. This couple of spirits are believed to be the ruler of water, they have to do something good to the owner of the new house.

All these sacrificial performances are to be conducted by a priest called Asuchai who would be assisted by his assistants called Sanghuipu and Tansurai.

Among the christian, Ranglong traditional religious believe and sacrificial and ritual performances are now replaced by the Christian tradition and practices. Christianity first crept into them in 1940 from the Mizoram Welsh Presbyterian Church which sent two evangelists namely Saizinga and Lalbuaia to Koboicherra and Lokicherra. The work of Mizoram Welsh Presbyterian Church was carried on by the New Zealand Baptist Mission since 1943. During the year 1956--57 a good number of Ranglong embraced christianity and in 1960 there were as many as fourteen churches among the Ranglong people. Now more than sixty percent of them deserted their old religion and converted into christianity. settling in and around Muroi village are now having churches and following the christian practices in almost every way of life.

Christianity has done a great deal of changes in their social and cultural life. However, cert-in customs and practices are still adhered to their life and practices even after embracing christianity. While some forty percent of them who have their traditional religion strictly follow their customs and tradition as it was done in the past.

The Ranglong society is purely a patriarchal society and they practice only monogamous type of marriage. Any form of polygamy was unknown to them. There are mainly two system of marriage, one is by paying a bride price which may amount to Rupees seventy only. The other is, instead of paying a bride price, the groom stays in the house of the girl's parent for a period upto five years. In both cases of marriage the parents of both the boy and girl have to have settlement through negotiation. In general, the Ranglong prefer exogamous type of

marriage. Endogumous is not unknown an ong them. As far as the residence of the married couple is concerned, they follow patrilocal system of residence. When the married couple progreate children, it ey descrited the boys parents house and establish a nuclear family in a separate house. Their society, being patriachal and patrilocal, they follow patrilocal system where decendants are traced in the fathers line. The property of the father is also inherited by the sons and the youngest shares major part of the property. The youngest son is therefore, responsibled to look after his parents till their death.

The dresses of men and women are simple. The men wear shut made of coarse coaton woven by their women. Below the shirt is worn a fine thin cloth purchased from the market. Their head is tied with Kamsa. Women wear short shirt which hardly cover their chest. The neck of the shirt is usually long enough to fold or roll. A dark cloth with striped design at the ridge is used to cover the breast. The Ranglong women are very fond of metal ornaments. Even in a single year, three or four pieces of decorative ornaments including flower are used. The neck of a women has five kinds of coin necklaces such as Awlkhit, Rakapui, Mahawrmala, Dangkari, Chawndawrhalri. They also use copper er silver bracelet. The men rarely use metal ornaments except ear ring.

The Ranglong have a few indigenous games like,

(1) A Sepankai, which is more or less the same with a tug of war, (2) Kixa leh Beta-a race to run, (3) Khukpuisekhuk-a race to run for girls only, (4) Tueng-spining top for boys only, (5) Kekankains-a game among the Lushai is called inkawibah, and (6) Sakawake-a game for boys.

The Ranglong believe that all human beings have soul. When a person dies, they believe his or her soul to remain around the dead. And the soul follows the dead body upto the funeral place whereupon it goes and follows the smoke of the burning pyre. Dead body is burnt to askes, while the Ranglong christians bury their dead bodies.

Names of week days and months in Ranglong, English and Lushai:

S'	No	Ranglong	English	Lushai		
1.		Ninuni	Sunday	Chawlhni		
2.		Thapeni	Moi d. y	Thawhtanni		
3.		Mongalm	Tuesday	Thawhlehni		
4.		Nilaini	Wednesday	Nilaini		
5.		Thrampuni	Thursday	Nilaithawhtan		
6.		Rangkhani	Friday	Zirtawpni		
7.		Siarni	Saturday	Intioni		
MONTHS						
1.		Vatchangtha	January	Pawlkutthla		
2.		Masai	February	Ramtukthla		
3.	•	Martun	March	Vauthla		
4.	•	Duipa	April	Tauthla		
5.	,	Phurpa	May	Tomirthla		
6	•	Manpa	June	Nikirthla		
7.	•	Azing	July	Vawkhniakzawn-		
				thla		
8.		Aran	August	Thitinthla		
9	•	Ertha	September .	Mimkutthla		
11	•	Ruttlai	October	Khuangchawithla		
11	•	Biring	November	Sahmulphahthla		
12	•	Bualpa	December	Pawitlakthla.		
	W	hile making	dissertation,	it is not known the		

exact number of population because no record

thereof is available. However, on the basis of a reliable, information; it is estimated to be around six thousand. Of these about sixty percent, have become christian and the rest still continue to have their traditional religion. Now many of them have acquired education and knowledge of their outside world. Some have gone to Shillong for college education and obtained degree. While visiting Joitang village near Bagbasa one Similachuang (38) S/o Luahzawngal was met. He had his B.A degree and told that he was serving as a Pro-Pastor among his tribesmen at Joitang.

As stated earlier, the Ranglong scatter in the three different states Tripura, Cachar of Assam and Mizoram. Among these state, Mizoram has the smallest population who concentrated in the villages Murai-about 50 households, Momcherra (Bungthuam) Lokicherra, the inhabitants of these villages are now exactly like Lushai people, Luseicherra and Kanhmun-20 households.

Names of villages inhabited by the Ranglong tribe in Tripura are -

- 1. Enhawi 2. Laikhua 3. Tuivalian
- 4. Tisa khua 5. Ruat 6. Bagbasa
- 7. Joitang 8. Joinager 9. Sawrawspur
- 10. Jambir 11. Mokangtila 12: Norgong
- 13. Balukcherra 14. Khuri 15. Darmotilla
- 16. Pawikhua 17. Chorai Bari.

In Cachar of Assam state are (1) Pipla (2) Baliapunji (3) Baliatongia and (4) Nurka.



Origin of The original home of the linn Muian tlang (a hill) near Rangamati of Bangladesh. The history of their origin has not yet been fully It is, however, held by many that they established. originally belong to the Shan state of Burma wherefrom they immigrated first into Chittagong of Bangladesh and thence into Tripura during the 14th century A.D.. That the Riang had settled in Tripura is evidenced by the presence of two Riang commanders in the army of King Dharma Manikya during 1465 to 1515 A.D.. Some are of the opinion that the Riang formerly settled in some parts of Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh under their king Kachhok but were in course of time driven out by

the powerful Maghs. As a result they moved to the north to take shelter in Amarpur and Belonia Sub-

Division in Tripura.

It is accepted by all that the Riang moved from Bangladesh to Tripura sometime in the past and settled there for many years. Up till now majority of the Riang tribes are found to be settling permanently in Tripura. In the beginning, they were not well treated by the then Tripura Raja. Most of them were forced to fice to a deep forest not only in the hill areas of Tripura but also in the adjoining areas of Mizoram. Their migration from Tripura to Mizoram took place recently and it is held by some that their number in Mizoram appears have increased very substantially due to their uprising against the then Tripara Rija, under the leadership of Ratan Manikya in the year 1942. then their population in Mizoram is negligible till 1960 since the Census Report of 1960 shows no

mention of the Riang tribe, and only a tribe or community numbering over 1000 are shown there-in. However, the 1971 Census Report shows the population of the Riang in Mizqram to be 9828 souls.

#### The Sub-Tribes

There are two major groups or sub-tribes namely Mualsui and Meska. These are the names of two brothers. Mualsui has six number of siblings viz.

- 1. Apetaw
- 3. Raikachah
- 5. Tamayakchaw

- 2. Chorkhi
- 4. Chawpreng
- 6. Tuimaiafah.

And Meska has four siblings which are as follows:

1. Wairem

2. Msa

3 Yakstan

4. Nohkham

The significance of the clan names as noted by Dr. Jagadis Gan Choudhury are as follows:—

Apetaw: 'A' means fish. A Riang lady while crossing Karnaphuli river drank plenty of water and her abdomen swelled like that of a fish. She then gave birth to a child whose desendants are known as Apetaw. Members of this clan are expert in magic and spells.

Chorkhi: It means spinning wheels. Persons of this clan are expert in weaving clothes.

Raikachah: It is the clan 'named after a' soldier of the past.

Chawpreng - It means a guitar. Those belong to this clan are expert in playing guiter and other musical instruments.

Taminyakehaw: It literally means injury to leg. An ancestor of this clan might have suffered from a serious leg-lippay.

Tuimaiafak: Tuimai means tortoise. It ordinarily means offerings of tortoise.

Wairem: One peculiarity of this clan is that it has a comparatively large number of mad people within the clan.

Msa: It means Tiger. It is said that the ancestor of this clan, while still a beby was left in the forest by his mother. The baby was found by a tiger which gave him all motherly care and treatment.

Yakstan: 'Yak' means 'hand' while 'stan' means 'ornament'. Members belonging to this clan are fond of ornaments like ring, bracelet etc.

Nohkham: It means a burnt house.

All these clans come under the name of Riang. The word 'Riang' has been used in all government records and publications. Dr. Jagadis Gan Choudhury in his monograph 'The Riang of Tripura' stated that the word 'Riang' is a corrupt form of Biangma which is the name of a bird 'Gasur'. This bird hatched a stone from which came out a boy and a girl who were the ancestors of the Riang. The Riang call themselves 'Bru' which means 'Man' while the Mizo call them 'Tuikuk'. There is a story on how the word Tuikuk came into use. Once a Mizo while travelling happened to meet a Riang man who was taking bath in a river. The traveller asked him which community he belongs. Since the Riang man did not understand Mizo language, he thought the question made by the Mizo traveller to be what he was doing and said 'Tuikung mi' which means 'I am bathing'. Since the word 'Tuikung' was not familiar to the Mizo traveller he heard it as Tuikuk. Therefore, the Riang are known and catted as Tuikuk by the Mizo.

# Physical Features

Riang are short or medium stature with straight black hair, flat nose and face and prominent checkbone. Their skin colour are mostly yellowish and they belong to the Mongoloid racial stock. Their stout physique and body structure closely resemble the fibe in Mizoram and other state of North Eastern region. Riang women, though not very fair complexioned, appear to be more graceful and comely than their peers amongst the other tribes due to exuberance of their health and proportionate bodily development. They also appears to retain their youth much longer than others.

#### Dresses and Ornaments

The traditional dresses of the Riang are simple. Unlike the other tribes in their neighbouring areas, they are not accustomed shirt, coat and treusers till recently.

### Diesses of Men

The men's dresses country of mainly a long and broad loin cloth and pawndri, which is a small piece of cloth. The loin cloth is thick and coarse and is a comfortable garment for cold weather and winter season. It covers the upper part of the body, that is from neck to waist. The cloth is mostly whitish in colour or it may be stript with aross or parallel line by using dyeing material obtained from the berbal plants.

Pawndri is a tender and thin piece of cloth and is wern mainly for wrapping the private part and then the end is fastened to the back of the waist. The cloth is mill product and is procured from the malket. These two types of cloth are worn during

old seoson. But most of the time the Riang mense to remain naked and only their private parts
are under the cover of a small piece of cloth.
This cloth is smaller than pawndri and it can hardly
cover the private part. One end of the cloth is
tucked at the string which has been tied round
the waist and the other end is taken in between the
thighs and then fastened to the string at the back
of the waist. Their ability to work in the field
without any protective garment is noteworthy as they
have so much endurance and persiverance to work
under the scorching heat of the sun, rain, cold and
mostquito bites. A thick cotton shirt of handmade
cloth is also worn by their men.

#### Dresses of Women

The traditional dresses of their women are long pieces of cloth called 'rinai' which covers the waist down to just above the knee and a breast garment called 'risa'. The cloth rinai is woven by them with a black surface and a broad red and yellow border on the two edges. Besides these at one end, a vertical red and yellow border are sometimes found. This type of cloth is more or less the same length as those of the Mizo puans but in breath it is very much shorter and when put on it never goes beyond their knee. The breast coverer 'risa' is a long piece of cloth woven by them with beautiful embroiders. This cloth appears to be superior to and more artistic than that of rinai.

In comparison with the male folk, the Riang women are more sticking to their tradition in dresses and most of them are still found to wear their typical traditional dresses. However, these days some of them put on blouses of mill product or even the

latest fabric. And some of them are seen wearing Mizo puans which make them look quite similar with Mizo ladies. Many school girls also put on some skirt and blouses and they no longer desire to wear their simple traditional dresses. Although a few of them in the more interior places still wear their simple dresses many of them are found to put on dheli and kurta and sometimes, shirt, cort and trousers.

All their traditional dresses except pawndri are woven by their women. The Riang women expert and have their dresses like rinai and risa woven with beautiful embroidered work and their loom. The loom consists of spai, Khanthai, Beskesh and na and these implements are made themselves from bamboos and wood. They rarely weave mill made thread till recently. They knew well the art of spinning cotton into yarn with their spinning machine chawkhaseil. But as the time passed on they no longer like the coarse and rough thread made out of their chawkhasu. These days they purchase mill made thread from the market and weave for their garments. Some women weave cloth exactly similar to Mizo puans and put on as a special dress.

# Ornaments

Riang women are fond of ornaments and almost all their limbs and parts of their bodies are adorned with various kinds of ornaments. The most conspicious of these are silver necklaces which they wear in several number. Besides these, they put on many other smaller necklaces some of which are made of plaintain—seed.

Different types of necklaces are :-

- 1. Chandra: It is a costly one and is purchased from the market.
- 2. Rangbanhsana: It consists of a number of 25 (twenty five) paise and 50 (fifty) paise coins which are threaded together alternately. At the edge of each coin a loop is made with silver or other metal for threading.
- 3. Masa duli: In this necklace a number of only 50 (fifty) paise coins are threaded tegether.
- 4. Sarbu thun: This is also chain necklace made of brass or silver.
- 5. Dana: This is also chain necklace smaller than Sarbu thub and is made of brass or silver.
- 6. Chaima: This is also a small necktage and is of several small pieces of hard plastic which are threaded together.
- 7. Tambui: Generally a women wears 25 number of necklaces. Tambui is also a small recline which form one item of the necklaces worn by a women. It is made from plaintain seed which after boiling, are cut into pieces and a small hole is drifted at the centre for threading. A set of seven varieties of necklaces constitute a complete set of necklace which the Riang women wear at a time and it cover almost their whole neck and breast.

Ornaments used for the ear consists of mainly three pieces of silver. These are:—

1. Nabauh: It is a flat circular earring made of silver and is put on through a hole in the lower part of the ear. At the lower edge of the ring a number of twisted wises are suspended.

- 2. Waphawm: This is: bellow cylinder made of silver and is about 3/4 inches diametre and about 1 inch in length. One end of the hollow cylinder is slightly he, ped up which prevent the silver tube from falling when put on. It s put on in the upper part of the car through a hole drilled for the purpose. In this hollow tube another piece of silver ornament called Warih is inserted.
- 3 Warih: It is a piece of silver about 1 1/2 mehes in lenght. The upper part is slightly bigger than the lower part and is tappering towards both ends. At the pointed head there is a loop from which a small chain called phawrphawri is suspended. From the middle point also a loop is made for suspending two or three chains made of metals c lied Warihdu. The lower part of it is inserted into the hole of wakhawm that is put on by fixing it firmly into the hole of the upper part of the ear lobe.

# Bracelet

The typical Riang bracelet is a long flat piece of silver which is bended and twisted like a spring. The Riang call this silver ornament 'Yohsow' and when put on it covers from the wrist to half of the bicep. The Riang women also wear other kinds of bracelet which is also made of silver. Both men and women are fond of rings which are mostly ordinary ones purchased from the market. Superior quality or costly metallic rings like gold etc. are rarely worn by them. For adornment of lower limb the Riang women wear bangles which they called being. This kind of bangle is made of silver rad boots the size of a little finger and it is bended him both the ankles and while walking the

contacting metallic ornaments produce a sound which can be heard even from a distance.

Riang women are very fond of flowers and always put various types of flowers on their head and ears. They take good care of their hairdo by combing it properly a drake a knot which is fastened by clipping it with hairpin called 'Sangaidu nang'. Sometimes beautiful flowers are attached to this hairpin for decoration.

#### DIALECT:

As far as the dialect of the Riang is concerned it is closely akin to the dialect of various tribal groups of Tripura, such as, Deb Burma, Noatias, Jamatia, Uchais. Tipras etc. But G.A.Grierson in his linguistic survey of North East Irdia put it to belong to one group of the Non-Khmer Family. According to him, the Non-Khmer fimily is classified into five groups, such as, the first one includes a rumber of closely related forms of speech used by people in the lower and middle Me-kong, the second being the Mon or Talaing spoken in Pegu, the Assamese of Assam, the third group consists of various dialect of Khmer spoken in Cambodia, the fourth group consists of Palaung spoken in Mandalay, the language of the Was, Khamuk or Khemer, Le-met and Riang. The fifth group consists of various dialects of the Khasi language. On the other hand, Dr. Jagadis Gan Chowdhury stated that the language spoken by the Riangs is called Riang or Kak bru or Kak barak, of which the language like, Chinese, Burmese, Tibetan and Tai are popular. However, it is found that the language of Riang is very similar with that of the languages spoken by various tribes of Tripura

mentioned earlier For forming some ideas on the Riang dialect, some words are shown here with their equivalent words in English and Mizo.

English	Riang	Mizo
You	Nung	Nangmah
Yours	Nrau	Nangmahni
His	Brau	Amata
Father	<b>Impha</b>	Pa
Mother	Imma	Nu
Brother	Γakhu	Unaupa/nuța
Sister	$\mathbf{B} \nabla h \mathbf{u}$	Unaunu/farnu
Wife	Bihih	Nupui
Come	Phat	Lokal
Eat	Cha	F <sub>1</sub>
Sit	Achauh	Thu
Rice	Mai	Cnaw/buh
Rich	Jnang	Hausa
Hot	Ktung	S3/lum
Cold	Kchang	Vawt
Good	Kaham	1 ha
Bad	Hamia	Chhia
White	Kphuih	Var
Yellow	Kawrmaw	Eng
Red	Kohauh	Sen
Blue	Srawn	Pawi

# Location of villages

Most of the villages inhabited originally by the Risag are located at the low lying region between hill ranges, preserably near a river or stream. Seldom a villages purely inhabited by Risag are found up on the hill or top of the hill. Before the British period, Misoram remained purely under the control of Lusham chiefs with their separate jurisdiction of Lusham chiefs with their separate jurisdiction.

deep forest or jungle which could not be easily accessed by a few inhabitants of the region. Such places were therefore, free from the administrative control of Lushai chiefs. This had provided a safe settlement for the Riang immigrants. Besides this, the thinly populated bordering areas of Tripura has enabled the Riang immigrants to have a free place to accomodate themselves therein. They are therefore, found to have been settling mostly in the valleys of Karnafuli riverin the south western part of Mizoram bordering Bangladesh in Lunglei District. Not a single soul of Riang is found in the eastern side of Mizoram. This has clearly indicated that the Riang entered into Mizoram from Bangladesh, erstwhile East Pakistan as well as from Tripura.

The reason why the Riang use to select village site in low lying area is obviously due to their foundness of river, stream and brook from where they can easily procure fish, crabs, snails etc. for curry. Also a settlement in a low place gives them a less tiresome task of carrying jhum products and collection of daily needs like fire-wood, jungle fruits of village site, the Riang and M170 are quite opposite as the Mizo discarded low land and preferred the peak of a hill range for village site. The Riang do, not have any formal preceding required to be performed in settling down at any obscrved OF. place. Their frequent migration caused formation of small and new villages at various places. Normally the Riang move to their hum house immediately after finishing its construction and settle there temperarily. After harvest, they go back to their house in the village. The idea of a temporary sittlement in a thum house appears to be to avoid wasting of time and tiresome work of going and coming between their village and jhum. Generally a family stay in their jhum house from weeding season till finishing of harvest or sometime after consumption of the product. The late leaving of a ihum house is also an idea to minimise the load of ihum product which are being consumed at the ihum house itself. The more they ate up, the less they have to carry to their home. So during the period of their stay in their jhum house they vacated their house in the village and live in their ihum with all their cattle, fowls, pigs etc This state of living condition made them to live a sort of nomadic life and a condition in which no development scheme can be undertaken. It is therefore, required to make them aware of the necessity to having a permanent settlement so that any developmental scheme can be projected by various agencies of the government on their behalf.

# Construction of house:

The Riang do not worry much about construction of their house. As there is no formal arrangement or plan of a house site in a village, they built their house at any vacant place in a village, provided if the construction will not harm others property. There is also no site specially reserved for the village heads like Choudhury, Kharbari etc.

The Riang generally use bamboo for house building. Long listing materials like hard core wood are seldem used by them. This, is perhaps due to their tendency to live at a place for a few years only. They mainly used four different species of bumboo for house building purpose.

### These are :-

- i) Warnal (Bambusa Tulda)
- ii) Warmlih (Dendrocalamus)
- ifi) Warthui (Melocanna bambusoides)
- iv) Wartlau (Teinesta chyum dullova)

First, measurement of the lenght and breath are taken with bamboo pole. After this a middle post called Thungla, that is, the supporter of a ridge-pole is erected at one side. These two posts stand for the length of the bouse to be constructed. Another posts called kaytling thringla are erected at some distance at both sides of the middle posts. The space between the two side posts and a supporter of ridge pole in the middle i, the breath of the house. An ordinary Riang house is 15 to 16 ft, in width and 16 to 29 ft. in-length. For the posts mentioned in which are the main skeleton of the house, big and strong species of bamboo namely, Bambusa Tulda and Dendrocalamus are selected. Sometimes, two or three bamboo being tied together are used. After erecting the posts two strong bamboos are tied with cane, one againts each side post. These strong bamboos serve as a beam to support the floor. Upon these beams are placed regular interval a number of strong bamboos (Ohtung) and over these at a short distance many bamboos (taing beng) are placed. Then many split bamboos stang are placed on taing beng. are placed over all these and thus the floor is completed. In order to withstand heavy load of the house and storm the beams and all the posts are supported by another shorter post which are always erected slightly slanting. The roof consists of a ridge-pole on which a number of bamboo notches are tied which are fastened with split b, mboo with the help of canes. Both sides of the ridgepole slope downwards. Thatching of the roof is done with bamboo leaves, the stalk being fastened between split bamboo that are tied to the bamboo notes with canes. To prevent the roof from being blows away by hurricane strong bamboos are tied from above the thatch to the wall-plate. This is called Riks.

The Riang are sticking to their traditional method in respect of their house pattern which have undergone no much change. An ordinary house consists of two parts:--

- 1. 'Shangshi' that is, front house, and
- 2. 'Noshing' the main room.

'Shangshi' is without wall and is meant for keeping firewood, fowls and chiefly for retiring and lodging guest. It is also used for gossiping place by the mele folks. This part of the house is like a plaform facing the street and it is the level of the main room floor which is generally two or three feet high. An wooden or bainboo ladder is used for going up and down.

The main room, 'noshing' is fully walled and no window is made and the room always remain very dark. No partition are made and the room is multipurpose. A hearth is made at one side near the wall. On both sides of the hearth a rack of bamboo matting is made on which paddy to be husked are kept for drying. Some fire wood are also kept for drying. On the hearth only three stones are erected as a trivet. The Riang never used bed for sleeping. The other side of the house connecting the main room is a platform without roof but fencing is dans at all sides. It is used for exposing wet cloths and puddy in the sun and also for toilet purposes.

# Occapation

The Riang are laborous and hardworking people. They are purely agriculturists and practising jhum cultivation, also known as slash and burn metbod. Their efficiency in various jhum work is remarkably high. They are also strong in cutting or chopping down trees and bamboos which is the initial stage of jhum cultivation.

Their strengh in carrying head-load is also noteworthy. An ordinary man can carry a head load weighing more than 70 kgs for a long distance. For carrying head-load they use only a small strap that runs across the fore-head and down to oneside at the bottom of a basket. They never use yoke and strap made of cane which are used by the Mizos. They are also employed as labour and helper for jhum works by their neighbouring Mizo people:

The Riang are simple and kind hearted. They have immense hospitality to their guest.

The Riang are very good in basketry work. They have their own artistic skill in designing and decorating. They make various kind of baskets. Some for carrying head-load and others for keeping or storing household foodstuff like rice, vegetables etc. Two kinds of sieve, one with holes and the other without holes are also made by the Riang. They have a special skill in mat making also. Mats made out of bamboo canes are commonly used by them as well as by the Mizo for drying paddy in the sun. The work of pottery is unknown to them. But almost every family has at least one or two pots made of clay which are procured from the market. These pots are used either for keeping

drinking water or for brewing beer. Almost every women known the art of making liquor locally called 'Arauh' from a kind of rice called 'Maimi'. Although they themselves make liquor but hardly any of them are addicted to alcohol. They drink liquor only on certain occasion like ceremonies and festivals. This indicates that they are well disciplined people having a well defined social code of conduct. Every one of them is conscious of his duty in the society.

As stated earlier, their main occupation is jhumming which is their only food producing method. The process of cultivation is practised mostly in the hill slopes once for a year and another plot of land is selected for another year. All cultivable land around their villages are then used one after another in a cyclic order. The longer the land remain unuse the more fertile is the land.

The hardest task in jhum operation is cutting the forest which is done exclusively by the male folks with a sharp dao and axe. First they go to a prospective land and clear a small place. A piece of bamboo is splitted into two halves which are then held and dropped on the ground. It is a good sign if one half falls obversely and the other half reversely. The same process is done thrice if the bamboo pieces do not fall in the desired manner. In case anything contrary happen the site is abandoned and another site is sought. This performance is called Hook Oakha. After-selecting the side, all trees, bimboos, herbs, shrubs, climbers are indiscriminitely cut down. This operation is called 'Huh Hao' and is done in the month of January and first part of February. The land is then left to dry and in the month of March before the rain comes burning is done. The ashes of plants all over the land help the soil fertile. Immediately after hurning, they start sowing seeds of vegetables. Sowing of seed is usually done by women while the men are engaged in construction of jhum hut called Kaireng. By the middle of April, both men and women sow seeds which they call 'Maikai'.

The immediate work after sowing is weeding which is done by all male, female, boys and girls. This tedious work continues till the time of harvest. Generally, weeding of the entire jhum field is done thrice a year. Meanwhile the crops grow while the third weeding is over, rice becomes ripe and they begin to start the work of harvesting called 'Maira'. Like any other tribe, the Riang use sickle for harvesting and with it they cut the rice plan which are then held and tied with its leaves at the stalk and left elsewhere in the field for drying. After two or three days they collect all the bundles of rice and store at a place so selected for threshing. Threshing is done by beating bundles of rice one by one againts the inside wall of a big basket called Kalang. Paddy, after threshing, is brought to the jhum house by head-load.

The main crops of the Riang are rice, maize, millet, sesamum etc. These are the crops grown for their own consumption. Cotton, chilli, and jute are their cash crop and these are grown abundantly. Cotton and chilli are grown in the fields among the other crops and sometimes the seed of cotton and rice are sown together, whereas, a separate plot of land is spared for jute. The Riang also use to sell sesamum if they have surplus. They grow various kinds of vegetables like brinjal, pump-

kin, cucumber, melou, bean etc. and these vegetables are grown mainly for their household consumption.

Since the fertility of their jhum land gradually decreases, and also owing to increasing population, wider area of jhum land is required to be used every year and therefore the jhumming cycle becomes shorter and shorter and the land has no time to regain its fertility. So, due to the poor productivity of the land surrounding them, the Riang gradually march towards poverty and now they can be said to be the poorest tribal community in Mizoram.

Fishing and hunting also play a very important role in Riang economy since these activities not only give them a sport to enjoy but also help them to maintain their livelihood, as the fish caught or hunted animals are either sold or consumed. The Riang are as a whole very fond of fishing and almost all aquatic animals are either sold or consumed. Crabs, Snails, Tadpoles, Prawn etc. are all equally liked by them.

Hunting of wild animals and birds also does not only occupy an important place in their economic pursuit but it also gives them an interesting sport. Their method of hunting are tracking, stalking, snaring, trapping and shooting.

Cattle rearing also plays a significant role in their economic life. Their economy is based on the principle of self-sufficiency. They only sell their domestic animals when they have surplus or at times of serious necessity. Piggery and poultry are done by almost all families. Pigs are kept under their house with fencing all around the house. Pigs are reared mainly for their meat which they are found of and sometimes they sell to earn money.

Fowls are kept in a basket at night but during day time they are set free. Cettle 1 k covs. buffaloes and goots are also their common domestic animals. Cows and buffaloes are reared mainly for their milk. Sometimes these animals are also sold to their neighbouring Bengalee cultivators who use the cattle in ploughing and somtimes to the Mizo who are fond of its meat. Does are also their common demostic ammal and they are foun latmost at every house. The service of dogs is well utilised by the Riang to guard their houses as well as their domestic animals from the attack of furocious beasts. The service of dags is also employed in hunting. The dogs have a strong sense of small and they can easily track out the animals hunted for. Cats are also reared by many of them to devour rats and to ce which use to destroy and eut paddy

### Food and Drink:

The cereal staple food of the Ring is rice. For cooking purpose, they use an aluminium pot and rice is cooked in one pot while vegetables and meat are cook in separate pot. Bamboo tubes are also commonly used for cooking.

The Riang take three meals a day, breakfast i.e. full meal is taken in the morning at about 7 o'clock; lunch, sazamai is taken at about noon and an evening meal 'Samurai' in the evening at abo t sun-set. Plaintain leaves are spread on the floor and on these the cooked rice and curry are placed. After consuming the food, the plantain leaves are thrown away and at every meal new leaves are used. When they go out for jhum work or for hunting or fishing they carry the cooked rice wrapped up in plantain leaves for their midday meal.

The Riang are fond of hot curry and lot of chilli is added to every item of their curry. In the past they never used fat or oil for cooking and water was the only means of cooking. They have however, now started using mustard or rapeseed oil for cooking. Jhum products like brinjal, bean, pumpkin, arum are their main curry. Jungle products such as bamboo shoots, soft layer of plantain and its fruits buds, the shoots and leaves of various jungle plants are also caten by them. In times of famine wild yams and bamboo shoots are taken as food.

The Riang eat different kinds of meat. But they never eat the meat of cat and dog. Bear's meat is also never eaten. The meat of deer, wild pig, elephant and wild buffaloes are all favourite and palatable to them. Tortoise meat is very much liked by the Riang. Aquatic animals like fish, prawns, crabs, snails, tadpoles are all eaten by them.

The main drink of the Riang is 'arauh' which is a local made liquor distilled by their indigenous method. Almost every family distill liquor from rice and a particular kind of rice called 'Maimi' is prefered as more liquor can be obtained from it.

Drinking plays a very important part in their socio-cultural life as no ceremonial occasions are spent away without drink or should we say drinking is a part and parcel in their socio-cultural life. But in spite of their excessive indulgence in alcoholic drink, regular drinkers or real addicts are rarely found amongst them. It has clearly indicated that in their tooiety there is an existence of a well preserved discipline and code of moral conduct which every one of them is expected to follow.

Varietiesh of liquor: The Ring has six varieties of

Esquor which are listed down as follows:-

- chawhkhawmtui: Before adding water to the ermented rice there is some liquid extracted by the fermented rice. This is called 'Chawhkhawmtui'.
- 2. Goba: This is also a liquid extracted by the formented rice and it is collected just before processing distillation.
- 3. Arauh: This is the first product of distillation and it is the most common brand consumed by them. And as such the name is used generally for all other varieties also
- 4. Barandi: When Arauh is again distilled the product is called Barandi which is stronger than the previous one.
- 5. Jawr: Barandi is again distilled into a finer one which is called 'Jawr' and this is stronger than the former.
- 6. Ispirit: This is the strongest and the finest one. It is made or distilled from jawr. Preparation of this brand has rarely been done as it required a long process.

However, drinking of arauh which had played a very important part in their social life I as now almost completely replaced by consumption of tea. Like any other civilised society tea is commonly drunk by them.

## Village Administration:

In earlier days, the whole Riai g conn unity ves under the rule of a chief called 'Rai'. The people looked upon him as their own monarch whose word was supreme in all matters of internal dispute as well as disposal of all cases of crime. The position of Rai was quite respectable and dignified. Succession of this Raiship was not hereditary and was purely determined by the qualities of leadership and capability of a person.

Under the Rai, there is one priest, a clerk and other four personal attendants called chhatradari, whose duty was to hold umbrella over Rai, bansi badak, who was a drum beater and bandari who was a store keeper. The Rai also had some advisers and minister of whom one was appointed as chief minister called Rai-Kachak. The office of Rai-Kachak was privileged by the appoinment of some personal staff like an adviser, assistant, howers of wood and drawers of water. This system of administration had been in existence during their euriter settlement in Tripura where from, afterwards, they migrated to Mizoram.

To hold the office of Rai, the Riang community selected a person who has an immence personality and leadership quality. Once a person was selected. the whole community accepted him as their benevolent ruler and as a regulator of their dai'y life. There was no limited term fixed for the office of Rai and once a suitably person is selected he continued to hold the office as long as there is no complaint against his administration or if there is no move for his removal from the office. The Rai although ruled as a monarch and exercised the rower vested in his office as a dictator, all matters big-or small were always settled with his subordirate official. The Raja of Tripura had hardly any direct contact with them and however his administration over the Riang community was done through the Rai who enjoyed absolute autonomy in the inter-

nal affairs of the community. The Rai had therefore, acted 'as an agent of the Rais who ruled as an independent chief over the land of 10,066 square km of mountainous country now called the state of Tribura. After sometime, the relation between the Riang chieftain, and the R. ja vas no lorger cordial and subsequently there was an uprising against the Raja. The Riang people fled to interior places not only in the Lilly region of Tripura but also move further eastward up to the western part of the then Lushai Hills. Therefore, the Raiship could not be continued and then the earlier system of government ceased to funct'on. Sometime after their settlement in villages without pro, or administrative system, they felt the need of having a village head who would deal with all their internal affairs. Then the institution of Choudhury come into existence. Choudhury is the head of the village. In every village there is choudhury who widens his administrative circle by appointing one person amongst his administrative circle by appointing one person amongst his people as Kharbari and other limited number of persons as council of elders.

The appointment or election for Choudhuryship is made by means of male adult franchise. All adult made members of a village get together in a house and they elect and appoint one person of their choice as a Choudhury. Like the institution of Raiship there is no limited term fixed for holding the office of Choudhury and once a person is elected he continue to hold the office as long as the people are satisfied with his administration.

There is no system of payment in the form of salary to Choudhury, Kharbari and their council of elders. However, they have the privilege to share some part of the money being paid as fine or court fee. As for instance, Chaudiury and Kharbari have the power to impose a fine for punishment on any accused person amounting, up to Rs 120/\*. In the ease of adultery, a fine amounting Rs 40/\* to the women and Rs 60/- to her male partner respectively—are imposed. Out of the total amount one half is shared by the agrieved husband and the other half is distributed to Choudhury, Kharbari and council of elders. Serious cases like murder etc. are however, reported to the government.

## Religi 'n

The Riang in Mizorim have now been affected by the prosclytising activities of the Mizo Christians particularly the Synod Presbyterian Church and Zoram Biptist church, Now majority of the Riang in Aizaul and Lungici District are Christian by religion. However, there are still others who remain firm believers of their traditional religion.

The Riang are principally animists and their ceremonial and ritual practices are more or less the same with that of the Hindu practices. Greatest-reverence is given to 'matai kawtawr' which they conceive to be the chief of evil spirits. They also worship many gods, and goddesses. Of all the gods and goddesses Buraha and mahadeb are believed to be the most powerful ones. Huraha tules over one hundrad, and twenty demonstrated is capable to cause pain and sickness to be inner beings. They therefore, make smalle on heavy sacrifices. They believe mahade b to be superior and most powerful than Boraha. To promite this spirit they perform rites, by offering this spirit they perform rites, by offering this spirit they perform rites, by offering this spirit they perform rites, by offering

worship many gods and goddesses in ong Durga is also worshipped as one of the goddess is believed to dwell around Buraha. Under command of Durga, they believed the are as many as one hundred and eight evil fout. Dinga therefore, worshipped with offerings like mear with banana, betel nahricol etc. Worshipping of gods and goddesses, performance of rites and ceremonics are as a rule conducted by a priest called 'Ouchai' wlo is raid five rupees in the form of remunciation for one occassion.

The Riang famly believe in the existence of human soul during the life time and after the death of a rerson. During one's life time, they between his soul remains within the body and for deep his soul leaves the body and ascerds to leave along with the smoke of a burning pyre if a man does a good things in his life time, the blove. after death, the soul of the man will, than a like or better status and will live with ease and comfort in the next world. On the other hand, the coult of evil door will be thrown into hell or give heap of excrement and then remearate note a real like fewl or rig or deg.

The Riang are very conscious of superstition Particularly, when death occur to a person they are always frightened of the evil spirit which may come in any form or image near and within the bidy of surrounding the house of the decease. It a person dies, they believe, Buraha comes and exchanges the corpse with a chunk of plantain. It is because of this other believe, every dead bedy becomes col. Ceremonies and Sacrifices

The Riang have a number of ceremonies and

with the view to get blessing or to propitiate

the spirit concerned for curing their ailments. All these ceremonies and sacrifices have connection with their religious rites. The procedure and manner of these ritual ceremonies are akin to those practised by the Hindus . The Riang have their own way of performance, and all proceedings of their ceremonies and socifices are conducted by certain priest called 'Auchai' of all the ceremonies, Basi Puja is the biggest and is attended by a large number of people It is usually held on the river bank once in three or six years. It cannot be held every year because of its heavy expenses. The main purpose of this ceremony is for the well growth of crops. As the ceremony is attended by numbers of Riang society from various places, it is a sort of community ceremony. During this ceremony, besides worshipping of goddesses, they also perform dances and consume a lot of rice beer.

The Riang have various kinds of ceremonies which are required to be performed during their life time such as birth, death, sickness etc. Those ceremonies are summarised as follow:—

- 1. Suinai rau: The words literally mean writers. The Riang believe there are certain spirits who maintain the records of all human beings. As soon as a child is born, these spirits are believed to write down about the child in their record book. The ceremony is performed in the name of the new born child to propitiate the spirits. It is performed so that the child grows well with good health. It is usually performed in the street near the performer's house. Two red cocks, two eggs and rice are the essential items required to be offered.
- 2. Abgressment: The word 'abursumaw' means purffication. This is a small ceremony exclusively

for shildren. Two eggs and two fowls are required and offered to the spirit, suinairau, and another two fowls to this ungroug, one for tui and the other for sough This ceremony is held in the morning before the sun goes Ligh.

- 3. Bahkahchamaw: This ceremony is performed after the birth of a child, when the wound of the child's ambilical cord is healed. This ceremony is also held in the morning.
- 4. Khungchuhkamaw: This is also a small ceremony performed for the purification of a child, that is for the well-being of the child. A fully matured cock, a hen and a large quantity of rice beer is required for this sacrifice.
- 5. Nohkhoh Puja: This ceremony is performed as a prayer of blessing to all members of a family. It is performed in front of the performer's house. In this ceremony they worship sunnairau. Animals required to be sacrificed are a red he-goat, two fowls. Rice and two eggs are also necessary.
- 6. Tuitawrmaw: This ceremony is also performed in order to get health and blessings for all members of a family.

It is held in the river in which a small hut is constructed. The priest chants and kills the cock and let the blood coze out on the hut. Eggs and sacred meat are placed inside the hut. The meat of cock is consumed by all members of the performer's family and the priest.

Notice khemaw: This ceremony is performed the performer's house, This ceremony is also the purpose of a family's health.

The performer's house is tied round with a local made cotton thread. Animals required to be effered are a male pig and fowl. A bamboo tube is also required. The blood of these animals are offered and the meat are consumed.

8. Khung chahkamaw: Although this ceremony is performed after harvest, it is mainly for the safety of crops. Two mature pigs of both sexes are killed in the morning. On the day of this ceremony the priest and the performer must take bath in the morning and wear an outfit of new clothes. Both of them should keep on fasting from morning till the stars appear at night. In this ceremony seven fowls are required to be killed for worshipping seven goddesses.

Maikhlumaw: To increase the productivity of their jhum, a family may perform this ceremony in front of their jhum house. One pig and as many as 15 fowls are killed at the spot for sacrifice. In this ceremony their main endeavour is to propitiate the following gods by offering fowls and pig.

1. Thuhpairau -- · 3 fowls

2. Majnohma — 1 pig and a small hut.

3. Khunohma — 1 fowl
4. Maichama — 1 fowl
5. Motaisa — 5 fowls
6. Maromiaha — 1 fowl

7. Tuisongroug — 1 fowl 8. Songroug — 1 fowl

9. Chiahma – 3 fowls

10. Longdrai - 3 fowls,

Nor Kebeng Banna " This ceremony is performed fon secking arrevery from all kinds of ailment: 1 is inclorant with the performer's house

in which a small hut is constructed. Two fowls for Burairan and the other for Boniran and one pig for Buraha are required which are killed and the blood are poured on the hut. The meat of these animals are cooked and consumed by the priest, his associates and the performer's family.

- 11. Tanchawrawrimaw: This ceremony is performed in a river or stream on behalf of drowned children. A small hut is constructed on the water side in which one egg is kept. Two fowls are also required which are killed and consumed by the attendants at the spot. A river or stream last visited by the child is usually selected for the place of ceremony.
- 12. Longdrai: It is a ceremony performed for the welfare of all members of a family. It is performed in the outskirt of the village. Sacrifice of animals like two fowls and one pig is done. Besides this three eggs and three bottles of rice beer are essential items for the ceremony which are consumed by the attendants.
- 13. Katichamaw: This ceremony is performed in order to propitiate the evil spirit suihnairau to whom two fowls are offered, one young pig to Buraha and two fowls to Tuisungrong. These animals are butchered and cooked. The meat is consumed inside the performer's house.
- 14. Tuitaimaw: This ceremony is performed by a family and it appears to be a sort of ritual augury. One fowl and one goat are killed. The head of the fowl killed is kept on the head of the goat. The appearance of the goat's head then has a significance which augurs good or ill health to the family thembers. Ill health is indicated if the goat's mouth

appears to be thoming betels and if its ear lobe has a jerking movement. If such things are not found they will have a sound health. The meat is cooked and eaten inside the performer's house by those who attend the ceremony.

15. Phasaktham: The word 'Phasaktham' means three brothers and therefore, the ceremony is performed mostly for three brothers. It can however be performed for a group consisting of a father and his two sons or a group of three persons. The number of persons can not be two or four and it should be an odd numbers. In this ceremony they worship Buraha and Bonirau. It is performed in the jungle near a big tree where two bamboo posts are pitched, one for Buraha and the other for Bonirau. An empty bamboo tube is kept up side down there. Another bamboo post is pitched in the middle point between the two posts. After spraying rice flour around the bamboo post a young pig is butchered for an offering to Buraha. Two red cocks are also killed for an offering to Boborau. The entire meat of the pig and cock is consumed by the priest and those who attend the edremony at the spot. The number of persons who attend the ceremony is normally five or nine including the priest and under no orcumstances more than nine persons are allowed to attend the ceremony. If there is any surplus meat being left uneaten, it should not be brought to their house but be thrown away in the jungle.

16. Butche ba khawikmaw .: It means persons taken away by Buraha. Like the previous one, performings of this ceremony is done in the jungle. At the spot, backbap poles are pitched. An image made of throw is also placed there. The empits of

animals killed at the spot is taken to other place for consumption. While leaving the spot no one should look back and for certain period to visit the spot is strickly forbidden.

- 17. Tandaririmaw: This is a kind of sacrifice performed for the recovery of a person suffering from fever. In order to please the spirits believed to have caused the illness, one young pig and six fowls are killed for offering. Three fowls are offered to the river, two fowls to Bonirau and one to Tuisika. A pig is also killed and offered to Buraha. The meat of animals killed is consumed at the spot. Any surplus meat being left uneaten should not be taken to theirvillage and it should be thrown away in the jungle.
- 18. Taulaphuihmaw: In this sacrifice, a white cook must be killed for an offering. This sacrifice is also meant for curing persons suffering from any kind of fever and especially for patient with high fever.

## Customs and Traditions

## (a) Martiage

The Riang are an sendegamous tribal community athough there is no strong objection to marriage outside their tribe. In the earlier days, they were in favour of clan endogamy or marriages within the incentiers of near relatives. Now with the changes of time their population also increase and many changes take place in various social life. Marriages is also not ilimited within the members extincit; relative or clan members. Many Riang higher with got married with members belonging the life caribes like Change, Misos etc. Parallel

cousin or cross cousin marriage which were prevailing in the past have also gradually declined.

The marriage system of the Riang is more or less similar with that of the Tripuis. In general, the Riang have two types of marriage. These are:

- 1. Molseng: It is a system of marriage by giving a bride price.
- 2. Chamarui; It is a system of probationary marriage in which the groom steps among the baile's family for a fixed period. When a boy attains a marriageable age, his parents look for a suitable girl and when one is located, a person so engaged for the purpose called 'Andra' goes to the girl's parents and initiates the proposal for mannage. The word 'Andra' means go-between and to do this task they select a very trustworthy person. In most cases, the boy's father or brother do this task.

In the chamarui system of marriage, the boy does not pay a bride price, but he has to pay all the expenses incurred for the ceremony. After the narriage ceremony is over he has to stay in the bride's house as one of the family members for a period ranging three to seven years. Generally, five years time is demanded and if the girl is very beautiful, a longer period say, seven years stay may be demanded by the bride's parants. During the period of his stay in his in-laws house, the groom has to work very hard to the satisfaction of the bride's family. The couple live together as a man and wife and inay proceeds children. When the term of his stay in the groom gots but and start to live in a second want to his stay in his parants house before

bo arrange in which pips and other assimals are required to be killed.

In the case of marriage by a system of moiseng the groom does not have to try in the bride's he rebut has to pay bride price. The bride price in the Riang society should be fix due to 1/2 or Rs.66/2 or 80/2 and so on. It should not be fixed at Rs.36/2 or 50/2 or 70/2. This type of marriage has not been fivoured by many parents since a long time before and as such they prefer changem system of marriage.

Marriage by elopement also cometices occur. In this case, the couple secretly leaves the villey; and take their abode in the juncte or may observe where they will not be disturb by anybody, and after having a contrigal life for certain period they return to their parents who negotiate and to the their marriage either by a system of molecular or chamarun.

Among the Riving monogamy lab been considered the only desirence form of marriage. The Riang are although patriarchel in mature but the system of marriage by chamarui that has been adopted by most of them, is mere or less a form of Matriarchal. Divorce is very common, however, a divorcce is allowed to remain. A wonlan, who has been divorced twice is never given a bride Price at the third marriage. In case of the death of a husband, his wife cannot marry another man unless and until the disposal of the bones of her deceased husband is completed. A widower is also not allowed to remarry before completion of ritual ceremony on behalf of his deceased wife. Any one violating this custom can be punished in terms of membrary fine. Among the Riang child marriage is

2. Birth: During pregnancy a ceremony is performed so that normal delivery can be had well in time. In this ceremony the priest performs an augury to determine whether the baby will be male or female. The task of delivering a baby is done by certain persons who are now called kumaiuh. These persons receive Rs 5/- per delivery from the family of the baby. After getting healed of the mativ's umbilical cord they performs a ceremony known as Bakahchamaw. At childbirth if the placenta got struck off the mother's belly is tied with a midrib of a plantain leave. Then as a result the placenta comes out. For certain period after child birth, the mother is restricted to take heavy food and only simple food like rice and salt specially cooked should be taken by the mother. On the occasion of a child birth, a special oven is made for the mother and the child and this should not be damaged unless and untill the umbilical cord is healed.

Disposal of the Dead: The dead body is cremated by the Rieng. When death occurs to a person a long process of rite is performed till disposal of the uncalcined bones. When a person dies all relatives are informed and they assemble in the house of the decreased. Insmediately after death the wearing apparels of the decreased stripped off and the body is washed with water and then covered with ploth. Haft oil is applied to the hair of the deceased and properly combed. In case of male, a new disci and in case of female a new gloth realed fries' to cover the breast and other partners about this family and near relatives of the places of the family and near relatives of the places of t

which are then kept on the corpse that has been placed on a new mat. Like the Khasis, the Riang also offer different kinds of food to the departed soul. In honour of the dead they kill fowls and the meat with other edible food like tubers, maize etc. are placed on the dead body. These offerings are made out of pity on the dead and in order to console themselves thinking that the one who dies did not eat those food during his or her life time and it will be consumed by his/her soul.

Carrying the corpse out of the house, they go round five times in the street and then proceed to the place of cremation. The procession is led by the deceased father. All the way from the house to the cremation ground, rice, salt and cotton are spreaded. This is done so because they believed that the soul will not go astray but will trace out the path to the place of cremation. On arriving at the place of cremation, two persons carrying a fire torch move round the pyre two or three times, in opposite direction. Just before this, the priest (bawlpu) examines the dead body and determine the cause of death. After this, the corpse is laid on the pyre. The number of the layer of the pyre varies for male, female and children. Generally five folds of wood for man and seven folds for a woman respectively. While the priest chant the pyre is lit with the fire torch by close relatives of the deceased. If the corpse is not completely burnt away, persons engaged for the task can be fine mounting upto Rs 30/-. The next day, the bereaved family and their relatives visit the spot and look out if the fire cease burning and collect the uncalcined bones. Then they make a small house called smungnoh at a distant where the smoke of the bur-

ning pyre should have not reached. Inside the house the uncalcined bones which have been wrapped with fine white cloth are kept hanging. Every morning for the following three days, the bereaved family take fire torch to this small house. They put rice, home made cake and meat as an offering to the derarted soul. On the last and third day, fish curry is considered to be one of the item of the curry. If they find any footprint of human being on the road to smungnoh they conceived the soul of the dead has re-incarnated into human beings. In case of the dead of female, a basket generally used by the female folks containing rice beer, food materials etc. and in case of male a small basket containing various kinds of food are kept hanging inside the house of the bereaved family. This is done as a token of grief for the sad demise of their love one. To console the grief and sorrow of the deceased's family, young bachelors sleep in their house for about a week.

Another small house is also constructed beneath the house platform of the bereaved family. During three days, starting from the next day of cremation various kinds of food are kept inside this small house on behalf of the departed soul. Any one breaking this house can be punished with monetary fine. The matter is, however, to be reported to the head of the village, Chaudhury, who will try the case.

The uncalcined bones can be disposed off only after a week. Before the date for disposal of the bones is due, the bereaved family invite all villagers, friends and relatives from other villages also to attend the ceremony. They prepare a lot of rice beer and cakes in advance. On the day of the covernosy, they go to the river bank and select a

suitable place for the purpose of performing rites. A lot of people go to the ceremony.

At night before the day for disposal, the bones that have been wrapped are taken to the platform of the bereaved family. No sooner had they opened the wrapped bones than they began to weep and drink rice-beer and then dance. Every one present there is asked to dance. Towards day break, the priest killed fowl and takes out its intestine. On this intestine the priest performs an omen determining the future of the bereaved family whether it will be good or bad.

At morning rigs and more fowls are killed. Near relatives and the priest sit around and perform a lot of rites amidst chanting. After finishing rituals and feasting the boncs are taken and kept in a small bamboo boat. Various kinds of food like rice. cakes, meat etc. are also put near the bones, when the boat is taken by current of water for a long distance they let the bones and all the foodstuff spilt into the water. The tones are now disposed off, and the attendant return back to the house of the bereaved family while a group of persons called 'taukha' stay behind. The taukha party after consuming ricebeer, proceed dancing towards the house of the bereaved family and on their way they are intercepted by a group of persons who have gone ahead of them. A bamboo pole is then placed on the ground and serves as a barrier, that is, one party on one side and the other party on the other side. Dancing competition is held between the two parties. After this, they consume lot of rice-beer which is provided by the bereaved family and this is followed by feasting.

Disposal of uncalcined bones has a significant importance for a widow and widower. In case of a husband's death, his wife should strip off all her ornaments like bangles, rings, earnings, etc. and she is not allowed to sing. If she sings a monetary fine can be imposed on her. These restrictions are in force since the death and till disposal of the bones of her deceased husband is completed. Likewise, if a wife dies, her husband is restricted to sing or to have courting with a girl or woman. A widower who is found courting with a girl during the restricted period is treated to have committed adultery. A widow or widower under no circumstances can remarry unless and untill disposal of the bones of his or her spouse is completed. Any one who break this custom is punished by depriving of all his or her properties and he or she is not allowed to tend the ceremony for the disposal of the bones of his or her decease spouse.

## Free mixing of boys and girls

In earlier days, Riang boys and girls rarely indulged in free mixing. The parents as well as the society strongly dislike and felt obnoxious to find a boy and a girl to have courting in the absence of any other persons. A girl who was found courted by a boy always suffered a severe scold by her parents.

Among the Riang when a boy and a girl fall in love with each other, they use to have a go-between which the Riang call 'Andra' who conveys and does the talking about clandestine love affairs between them. If a boy really loves and wants to marry his lover, he would present her 'Nawkhai' (a comb)... as a token of genuine love. In some cases when the parents find them really its love

with each other they prepared them to match for a husband and wife, they allow free mixing of the two who go together to river or any place of their choice. There, they discuss and settle all about their marriage. After this, 'Andra' go to the giri's parents to initiate arrangement of marriage.

Although their society strongly disfavour free-mixing of boys and girls pre-marital sex-relation is not uncommon. However, cases of illegel pregnancy are very 'much look down upon by the society. If a girl get pregnant, the boy is pressed and deemed to marry her. Therefore, almost all cases of illegal pregnancy ended in marriage. If a boy does not intend to marry the girl who got pregnant by him he has to pay a fine of Rs 120/-, out of this, Rs 30/-will be shared by the pregnant girl and the rest will go to Choudhury and his council of elders.

## Dances and Music

Dances and musics are an integral part of the Riang. They are very fond of dance and have various kinds of dances. Jovial and emotional people as they are, they can easily dance any moment either for amusement or for a joke. Even when there is bereavement some of them perform dances but not for amusement nor for making merriment, it is rather to console the grief and distress of the deceased's family. Dances during this period are therefore, performed solemnly.

Like any other tribes, the Riang are also lovers of music. Without music they can hardly dance as some of the dances require the beat or a tune of music.

Various kind of dances are :-

1. Daile (Dal): In this dance the dancer moves

around imitating the movement of a stick or speon while in use for stirring dal while cooking. Both men and women dance together and sometimes men only perform this dance. Men and women stand in a row and move and dance together to the accompaniment of drum being beaten by two persons. This dance is usually performed on occasions of festivals like Buisu, during sacrificial ceremonies and at drinking place. The dance is quite enjoyable and is mainly for amusement.

# 2. Mairang Phawrmaw (Mairang-plate or dish : pháwrmaw-to warp )

It is a dance in which the dancer hold a plate or dish while he/she moves around. Although there is no specific time for performance of this dance it is performed during harvest. They dance together to amuse themselves and both sexes participate in the dance. Among the dancers, the best performer is selected to lead the party and only the leader here will carry and warp a dish while dancing, the other dancers need not carry plate or dish.

- 3. Malung tui taumaw: The meaning of the words Maiung tui taumaw is-Maiung is elephant; tui is water; taumaw is to wade. Here the dancer imitates an elephant wading water. This dance can be performed any time by both sexes except during sacrificial ceremony.
- 4. Huhlau baih Khlammaw: Here the performer dances and makes a move as if a gibbon is moving in a tree. There is no specific time for the dance and it is mainly performed by male folks. A group of dancers or say, performers of Goroia dance use to perform this dance.

- 5. A taut krai mai khuimaw: This is a kind of dance in which the performers move as if a group of parrot is hovering over the rice field. dance is usually performed by both sexes and also by Goroia party. The dance is mainly for amusement and is performed after harvest and also when there is less pressure for jhum work. An individual also may dance while enjoying drink.
- Kaiskau iauh: The meaning of the words: Kaiskau is village head; iauh is women. This is actually a dance for the women and is normally performed by female folks. Sometimes men also wearing women's dress use to perform this dance.
- 7. Slam or dishi Khuimaw: The words 'slam' is used by the Riang northerners and 'dishi' by the southerners for referring an implement used for catching prawns or fishes. While performing dance the performer moves and swings his or hands. head and as if body he or she is catching prawns or fishes with slam ordishi.
- Bawdawl sungmaw: The meaning of the words 'Bawdawl' means bottle and 'sungmaw' means to place on the head. Of all the Riang dances, this is the popular one. The dance is performed only by the ladies. As the name implies, in this dance, the performer, keeping a bottle on her head stands on a pot of clay that has been kept upside down on the ground, and also a lighted candle is kept on the bottle that has been placed on the head of the performer. Then the dancer, standing on the pot swings her hands and lip. This dance is normally performed during Buisu festival and also at coremonies in connection with disposal of uncalcined boncs. 9. Khamsumang: This dance is performed together
- by men and women. It is never perfomed indivi-

- dually. It is a dance which is always performed by a group of dancers called Goroia party.
- 10. Remsi Phawrmaw: The words 'remsi' means handkerchief and 'phawrmaw' means to wave. In this dance the performer waves handkerchief and then moves around. This dance is also performed by Goroia Party.
- 11. Churui mai chamaw: The words 'churui' is a kind of small bird and 'mai chamaw' is to eat food. So, the performer while dancing show the manner how the small bird takes its food. This dance is also performed by Goroia party.
- 12. Kerang Kauhmaw: The words 'kerang' means tortoise and 'kauhmaw' means cutting into pieces. This is a dance in which the performer while dancing shows an action of a man cutting the meat of tortoise into pieces.

### Musie

The Riang are fond of music too. Without the accompaniment of music no dance can be performed enthusiastically and lively. Unlike the Mizos and other sub-tribes they rarely use gongs of any kinds. They use and play musical instruments of their own indigenous made like kham, chawreng, srendra, sumu etc.

## Kham

Among these four, the most popular one is dram, which the Riang called 'kham'. It is made of wood. Some are barrel shaped while other may be slightly dappering toward both ends and slightly building at the centre: The wood about 20" long is milled hollowed out and the wall is made thin enough

y chopping off its layers. For the membrance oats skin is used.

## hawpreng

Chawpreng is a kind of guitar. It is one of he most popular musical instruments of the Riang. It is made of wood, one side is hollowed out and he other side is made almost round. The mouth of the hollow side is covered by tin or skin. While playing the player presses the string againts the wooden handle for tuning, something like a guitar.

#### Srendra

It is a sort of one stringed violin. The shape, size and how it is made is almost similar with that of chawpreng. For the string a kind of creeper obtained from the jungle is used. It is played by rubbing the string with another string tightened like a bow.

### Flute

The Riang called 'sumu' is one of the popular musical instruments played by them. Its lenght varies from 1 ft. to 1 1/2 ft. It is made of between two nodes of a bamboo. Flutes are played mostly by men at any time.

### **Festival**

The Riang do not have festival of their own origin except 'Buisu'. This is believed to have originated from Bengalee people as the festival comes on the Hindu new year day. The possible reason why the Riang have less occasions of festival is that they have too many ceremonies and sacrifices. It appears therefore, that festival have no place in their society. However, performance of some

ccremotics and sacrifices are more of less the same with that of observance of festivals. For instance, the ceremony in connection with disposal of uncalcined bones is done with dance, drinking of beer and a grand feast. Everybody, young and old in the village enjoy the ceremony. Large number of people from various places attend and enjoy the occassion with drinking, dancing and feasting.

To observe 'Buisu' rice beer, cake and ary other things, for the day are prepared well in advance. It normally last for two days, the first day being preparation for the second day which is the actual day of the festival.

The first day is called Hari Buisu on which all required animals are killed and collection of rice beer, cake etc. are also dolle and stored in the house of the village Choudhury (headman). In doing all these preparation, they may have sufficient time for dancing, drinking etc. on the actual day.

On the i second, actual day all collected beers, cakes and any other things and distributed to every one in the village.

# Customary Laws .:

All their internal affairs and disputes are settled according to their own customary laws. The enforcing agencies of their laws, are the Choudhury or Kharbaries, with, the Council of elders in their administrative unit i.e. in, each village. Amongst the Riang the most common cases are adultery and disputes between a husband and a wife. In case of adultery committed by a husband with a girl, at the time of trial he is asked to make decision whether he will marry, the girl, or continue to have his wife.

According to his decision, the amount or fine may varies. A widow or widower is also treated as committing adultery if he or she remarry before completion of funeral processes of her deceased's spouse.

Illegal pregnancy which the Riang called 'samtoh' is rare amongst them. In case the boy does not want to marry, the girl who bears his child he is inflicted a monetary fine of Rs. 60/- and a pig. In addition to this amount, a pig is also always imposed as a fine. If a man forcibly takes away the wife of another man and marry her, he is punished by imposing on him a fine of Rs 60/- and a pig. In this case, giving of a pig as fine is a must whereas in other cases, payment of Rs 5/- instead of a pig can be accepted.

Thurangkamaw is a case almost equivalent to 'Khumpui thebawlhhlawh man' amongst the Mizos which means defiling of one's bed. But the Riung generally do not use a bed for sleeping and their main sleeping place is on the floor opposite to the hearth. If a man in his attempt to make love on the bedsheets of the girl's family, he is accused of defiling the bed sheets. The offender is punished with a fine of Rs 30/- plus one pig.

Sikhau, which means 'theft' is also a common crime amongst the Riang. Most cases of theft are stealing of jhum product like cotton, rice, sesamum, etc. which can be easily sold in the market. Harvested rice stored in the jhum is also often stolen. All this cases are tried in the court of Choudhury and amount of fine for punishment varies according to the seriousness of the case.

#### Inheritance

Since the Riang belong to the Patriarchal society, inheritance of properties is also rackoned exclusively through the male line. Moveable properties like utensils, fowls and cattle are distributed by a father to his sons when they establish nuclear family. And also immoveable properties like land, garden are given by a father to his sons when they attain maturity and live in a separate house. Generally, the youngest of the brothers share more properties than the other brothers. The youngest son stays in the house of his parents and looks after them. When the parents died the youngest son automatically become the head of the family and all the properties left by the parents go to his share. In case a father has no son and all his issues are daughters his properties are shared equally by all his daughters. If the couple has no issue, after death, their properties are inherited by the husband's brother or father or the nearest male relative from the husband's side:

When a man dislikes his wife and divorces her, he will forfeit all properties and children which will go to the possession of his wife.



### CHAKMA

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND ORIGIN

The Chakmas are a community professing Buddhism and inhabiting the remote hilly areas in India's North East Viz. the States of Tripura, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh and Arakan in Burma. Over years due to their cultural interaction with the people of other races. mainly Bengalees, they have lost much of their original ethnic characteristics, and speak a Chakma dialect, which is almost as same as South Eastern Bengali, but there is much still which make them a distinctive cultural and ethnic entity. In Mizoram, the Chakma reside mostly in concentrations on the Western side of the state bortdering Tripura and Bangladesh. They are certainly a group of more recent immigrants into Mizoram, having moved mostly from the hill tracts of Chittagong. It is difficult to state authoritatively anything about the original stock from which they have come. But on the basis of their physiognomical features and their dialect, anthropologists and linguists appear to agree that they belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of Mongolian race. However, whatever might have been their origin, they do at present constitute a distinct tribal group inhabiting not only Mizoram but also Tripura, Bangladesh and Arunachal Pradesh. It is also accepted that they must have been residing in different regions of Burma, Arakan Hill, Tripura and Chittagong from a very early period and that small sections have moved out to the regions where they are now found in appreciable number. Theory as to their origin shall be thoroughly mentioned latters.

Some politicians and writers always spoke about when and how exactly Chakma began to enter into It is however, certain that their entry into this territory could not have taken place in substantial number till Mizoram was fully subjugated by the Britishers in the last decade of the 19th Century. One of the old Chakmas shri Jaiawdar Kharbari of Diblibagh stated that he, along with a batch of other Chakma, immigrated into Demagiri from Diblibagh and Tablabagh areas of adjoining British regions now Bangladesh. Subsequently, more of them came into Mizoram from time to time with the help of the local Lushai chiefs and settled in appreciable numbers not only in Demagiri but also in Marpara, Barapansuri, Tuipuibari and other areas on the western border of Mizoram. About the vear 1925 hundred and seventy five households appear to have settled in and around west Phuldungsei under the protection of its chief.

Many writers are of the opinion that the Chakma are undoubtedly of Arakanese origin. They immigrated into the Chittagong District where they inter-married largely with the Bengalees, for which their language is deeply influenced by Bengalee.

And some writers also put different possible opinions, but due to lack of historical records it is difficult to make a conclusive report of their origin. For example, Hutchinson recorded in his book, 'An Account of the Chittagong Hill Tracts,' that the Chakma belongs to the eastern group of Indian Aryan family and he further traced their origin to the Arakanese and the tribes of Bihar dating about 1630. And as traced by him the origin of Chakma is the product of a union between the soldiers of Nowab Shaistar Minus. Governor of Lower Bingal and the

hill women. But this theory is denied by the Chakma themselves. The other theories on the origin of Chakma are (i) The Chakma belongs to Assam and were driven out by the Ahom. (ii) The Chakma are the branch of Lushai-Chin-Thado group of tribes.

That the Chakma belong to the eastern group of Aryan Indian family is very deniable because, from their look and morphological appearance there is practically no sign of Aryan feature. That they belong to the Lushai Chin-Thado group of tribes as postulated by S.C.Dutta in his book, 'The Wild Tribes of India,' is somewhat acceptable because all these tribes belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of Mongolian race.

As commented by S.P.Talukdar in his book, 'The Chakma, Life and struggle,' in a bout 5000 B.C. Tibeto-Burman group and other Mongolian race like Monkhmer and Tai Chinese people fled from Central Asia and moved westward and settled down in The progenitors of the Chakma tribe called 'Shak' tribe moved westward reaching Central India about 2000 B.C. According to the Buddhist religious beliefs, a son of the King of Banaras, Sakkyawaddi, who later on was to be born as Gautama Buddha, established his kingdom at Arakan. though it is hard to believed to have been found among these people. And about 500 B.C. the chief of Thakya clan and Raja of Kapilavastu emigrated from Central India to live with the people of their clan in the upper region of Burma and established their kingdom there. The Chakma are called 'TUI-TEKH' by the Burmese.

Information handed down from father to son as stated by Capt. F.H.Lewin is that the Chakma ori-

ginally came from a country called Chain ango or Champanaugger, the location of this as said by some to be near Malacca whereas some said to be situated far to the north in the North-west Provinces of Hindustan. There is also a village named Champanagar, 28 miles on the east of Agartala, Tripura where, Pu F. Lianchhinga has stated in his book, 'Pheichham Man Chakma,' that the Chakma had settled there earlier. But it is hard to believe this village to be the original home of Chakma people because Agartala and the surrounding vast areas were ruled by the great Maharaja of Tripura since remote past.

Another theory put forward by C.Chawngkunga the then Deputy Speaker of Mizoram is that the Chakma belong to the Tai Group of Mongolian race and around 1200 A.D. they moved to urper Assam from Gukkwang valley via Burma. course of time they became Hindu and had Bengali for their royal and official language. But after sometime the Tais were conquered by the king of Arakanese who took them as his captives. Under such circumstances they were forced Buddhism as their religion. In 1418 A.D Jalal-ud-din (Nowab) of Bengal paid ta visit to Manekgiri Chakma ruler in Arakan and in 1666 A.D Dhabana, Chakma ruler surrendered to the Muslim General Shavestha Khan. This theory coincides with that of Hutchiuson's and it is quite believeable that the Chakma are the descendants of the unions between the Muslim Soldiers and the Tais Women.

As stated, there are different views, opinions and assumptions as to their origin, it is impossible to place here a conductive and lucid account of their

origin as such we shall have to rely on further research. However, it is a known fact that a good number of Chakma still live in Myanma while majority of them in Chittagong Hill Tract of Bangladesh and some of them in the state of Tripura, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. We can therefore, make assumption on the basis of views and opinions of different writers that the Chakma must have originally moved out from south China to Myanma and then to Brahmaputra valley wherefrom, they moved along the Lower Chindwin valley through Manipur to Arakan and therefrom they moved elsewhere in Tripura and Mizoram states of India. The influx of Chakma Community to these Indian States can be ascribed to ethnical and religious differences in the land where the mainstream belong to Aryan type of people belonging to Muslim ichgion. Politics can not safeguard their right of being the son of the soil. They have therefore been made to suffer since under Pakistan. Government till today under the Bangladesh Government. The misery and suffering of Chakma Community in Chittagong Hill Tract is studied and reported by an International Commission under the sponsorship of UNICFT. From 1964 a good number of Chakma left their home in Chittagony Hill Tract as their village the flooded water of Kaptai dam construction and entered Tripura. But, Tripura State Government did not allow them to settle in their state. Central Minister of Relief and Rehabilitation, Shri Mahavir Tyagi offered financial assistance in a lump sum for those who want to move to Bihar and settle there. This offer was turned down by the then Chakma leader in Tripura, S.K. Chakma, on the ground that the weather and climate of Bihar would not suit them. During that time, The Indian Government was planning to send some Sangma group of Garo tribe to unoccupied area in NEFA. Knowing this, the leaders of those Chakma Refugee in Tripura decided to go to NEFA. Now let us know the Chakma population in the State of Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.

The Census of India record shows the Chakma population in Tripura as follows:—

1931 - 5220

1961 - 22361

1971 - 28622

1981 — 34799

Therefore, taking together the Census Report in the State of Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh for 1981 and 1971 of Mizoram, the Chakma population in India is altogether 103,780. According to the 1979 Census Report of Zoram Baptist Mission, the Chakma population in Mizoram is 29,970 but still the Chakma themselves claim to be not less than 71,000. It is however, an undeniable fact that the Chakma population goes on increasing and as such amongst them political awareness also grew.

During the period while Mizoram was one of the Districts of Assam, the Chakma people formed a Chakma Congress Party under the leadership of Shri Kistomon Chakma from Nunburi village. As stated by some, the Chakma, who Came to Mizoram as foreigners were given the right to exercise their votes in the Election for District Advisory Council held in 1948. And in 1953, the Mizo District Council laid down Rules regarding collection of Taxes called the Lushai Hills District (Revenue Assessment) Regulation of 1953 wherein the Chakma were allowed to pay Rs. 2/-. This means that the

Chakma were no longer foreigner in Mizoram because, at that time they could enjoy the same status with that of Mizo in the matter of election for People Representative and payment of Taxes. As the time went by, their leaders become more and more aware of the need to fight the struggle for survival of their tribe. In the wake of a political upheaval in Mizoram in 1966, the Chakma people suffered a great lost of human life and properties. In return a good number of MNF insurgents lost their lives at the hands of Chakma people.

Then the time came when Mizoram was elevated from being one of the Districts of Assam the status of Union Territory. In the year the then Chief Executive Member, Mr. Ch.Chhunga representing Mizo Union Party Mr. Dengthuama from Congress Party and leaders from pawi-Lakher Regional Council such as Mr. Manghnuna, Sapliancheuva, Mr. Sangchhuma, Mr. Mylai Hlychho, Mr. Zakhuma, Mr. S.Hiato and one representative from Chakma, Mr. Atulchandra went to Delhi. Mr. Ch.Chhunga and others agreed not to for formation of Chakma District Council. while. Atulchandra had a forvent clandastive proach to the U.T. Special Secretary Mr. Pimputkara stating that the Chakma who belong to distinct ethnic group, having different dialect, culture religion from others badly needed a political statui.e. District Council to safeguard and maintain own development and welfare. This had very much convinced the Special Secretary for U.T. who later on conveyed the matter to the Government of Mizoram. Accordingly, the then Chief Commissioner, Mr. Dass and D.C A.C.Ray made all possible arrangements for the birth of a new District Council for Chakma people. The Mizo political leaders at that time always raised criticisms and blame on the then Chief Commissioner and D.C. for there was no consultation or agreement with them. I'll now, the Mizo politicians blames among themselves for the formation of Chakma District Council. But the truth, it seems that, the Mizo political leaders did not play important party, it was the bureaucrats who unanipulated the whole process for the birth of a new District.

Mizoram, earlier called Lushai Hills then, Mizo Hills District annexed to British-India in 1891, the North Lushai Hills under the Government of Assam while the South under the Government of Bengal was transfered to the administrative area of Assam in 1898. In 1930 the extreme south of Mizoram inhabited by Pawi and Lakher and Chakma inhabited areas were also included. In 1952 the Mizo Hills District had its set up according to the provisions of the Sixth Scheduled to the Constitution of India where its internal affairs, customs, manners, etc were to be looked after and managed by the District Councils with executive and legislative powers.

And on the 21st January, 1972 after 6 (six) years of political upheaval due to MNF movement for independence in 1966, the Mizo District was upgraded to the status of Union Territory. Meanwhile the leaders of Pawi, Lakher and Chakma fervently pressed the central leaders for formation of political status which would enable them to manage their internal affairs. Then bureaucrats namely Mr. S.J.Das, Chief Commissioner, Mr. A.C. Ray Deputy Commissioner, and Mr. G.N. Chattergee, Secretary and Director of Education promptly took

all possible steps. After making all the arrangement, Mr. Das went to Delhi and when he came back the news he brought was the formation of Mizoram into three Districts—Aizawl District, Lunglei District, Chhimtuipui District and the birth of three District Councils under Chhimtuipui District namely Pawi District, Lakher District and Chakma District. The birth of Chakma District Council is 29th April 1972.

Among the Chakma politicians, Mr. Atulchandra was one of the most popular and capable leader. The Chakma people must owe a great depth of gratitude to him as it was he who initiated and rendered untiring service for the good of Chakma people and it can be said that he is the architect of Chakma District Council. He, then headed the first Chakma District Council with the members shown as follows:—

- 1. Shri Atulchandra Chakma CEM 2.4.72 to 22.1.1973
- 2. Shri Mayour Dhaf Chakma Chairman 15.4.72 to 22.1.1973
- 3. Shri Ganadhar Chakma EM 5.4.72 to 22.1.1973
- 4. Shri Anandha Kumar Chakma EM 15.4.72 22.1.73
- 5. Shri Sattya Chakma M.D.C 15.4.72 to 22.1.1973
- 6. Shri V.Satliana M.D.C 15.4.72 to 22.1.1973

After this also, Shri Atulchandra Chakma had been Dy. Chairman of the District Council till 23.1.78 and as an Executive Member till 1988.

In the Mizoram election for M.L.A seat, the two seat of Chakma inhabited areas have been re-

tained by the Chakma leaders as shown below:-

- Year	Constituency	Elected
1972	Chawngte	Santya Priejo
	Tlabung	Hari Kisto
1978	Chawngte	Kristo Mohan
	Tlabung	Hari Kisto
1979	Chawngte	Kristo Mohan
	Tlabung	Hari Kisto
1984	Chawngte	transaction and the same of th
	Tlabung	
1987	Chawngte	
	Tlabung	
1989	Chawngte	Nirupam Chakma
	Tlabung	Hari Kisto

Now the Chakma are a part and parcel in the Mizoram and as they constitute a District Tribal Community, their identity is very conspicuous. In Mizoram politic, the part played by the Chakma leader is no less to be undermined. In the present LalThanhawla's Congress Ministry, Mr N.K.Chakma holds the post of Minister of State. The name of Hari Kisto Chakma is also worth-mentioning here for he won every M.L.A Election with Congress ticket from Tlabung Constituency since 1972.

### DIVISION OF TRIBE AND CLAN

The Chakma as a tribe has two main branches known as Tungtungia and Anukia. These two branches may be said as subtribes of Chakma. Under these two, there are a number of clans which they called Ghuthis and under these there are many Sub-clans called by them Gaia. Members of the sub-tribe, Tungtungia are said to be more original and less assimilated than that of members belonging to

Anukia with Bengali culture. They also maintain to speak more of their original dialect. Whereas the Anukia members adopted many Bengali language and also defined many life styles of the latter in culture, customs, religion and so on.

From the two sub-tribes as a whole the Chakma are divided into 5 main branches or clans known as Ghuthis according to the name of their progenitors. And this hereditary line is again sub-divided into various Gajas/sub-clan. The names of Ghuthis and Gajas/sub-clans are given below:—

- 1. Dhurjya: Dhurjya was the name of a chieftain who lived at Bak Khali in the district of Chittagong. The people of this clan are known as Baga gaja.
- 2. Kurjya: The progenitor of this hereditary line was known as Kurjya. The people of this clan are known as Tanya gaja.
- 3. Dhabana: The progenitor of this hereditary line was known as Dhanbana and the people of this clan are known as Mulina gaja.
- 4. Pira bhanga: (means a low broken wooden platform for sitting): As the Chakma story goes, once a chieftain sat on a wooden platform for which collapsed under lies weight and since that time the people of this clan are known as Pira bhanga.
- 5. Mandar: (means indignity): This Ghuthi has practically been forgotten by the present generation the meaning itself aroused debased feelings.

There are altogether 46 gajas in Chakma tribe which are shown below:—

- 1. Amu
- 2. Bamu
- 3. Babora

- 4. 'Barwa
- 5. Batalya
- 6. Boga

7. 10.	Borsage Dhamei	8. 11.	Bunga Darjee	9. 12.	Bangza Dawin
13.	Dhabana	14.	Dhurjay <b>a</b>	15.	Dhurjea
16.	Ichapocha	17.	Kala	18.	Kengrag
19.	Khambe	20.	Khionjoy (hengge)	21.	Kura
22.	Kurjya	23.	Kutua	24.	Larma
25.	Leba	26.	Loskra	27.	Molina
28.	Molina-sega	29.	Pha ksa	30.	Phedangsiri
31.	Phedugsa	32.	Phema	33.	Pir bhanga
34.	Poa	35.	Poma	36.	Rangyace- lumya.
37.	Rangi	38.	Sadonga	39.	Sege.
40.	Sekowa	41.	Shoalyia	42.	Tuma
43. 46.	T heya Warggu.	44.	Toinya	45.	Uksırri

## Physical appearances

Chakmas are of short to medium stature with well-developed muscles. They bear mongolian features with yellowish complexion and little or no hair on the face and chest. Their women are said to be lacking public hair. Their hair form is straight, no wavy or curly hair is found among them. Most of their hair are short. They are happy people at their homes and give a cheerful look. They are honest and sincere people but are always rejuctant to change their old habits and usually do not express their feelings affirmatively. They are usually very spendthrift and do not practice the art of saving. Their requirements of life are very limited. are very slow in making friendship with others and are introvert by nature. Their view of life is deeply rooted in their religious beliefs.

#### Ceremonies and Social Customs

They depend for their livelihood mainly on jhumming. Their main crops are usually rice, millet, tool, cotton, mustard seeds etc. They change their mode of living with the change of jhum cycle. The lean period of their economy comes just prior to their jhum harvest i.e. between July and September. They turn pauper in these hard days and become indebted to the moneyed men (mahajan, morey lender). As a result major portion of their jhum yeild goes out of their hand. The zestful period of their life during the year lasts for 1-2 months only i.e. immediately after the harvest. They are very hospitable and would entertain guests even by berrowing. Their ceremonies are usually of two types.

- (i) religious ceremonies and
- (11) ceremonies based on social customs.

They believe in ghosts and spirits.

They worship evil spirits and perform various pujas for being blessed with wealth, prosperity and happiness in their family. It is known as Burpara signifying various purposes. There are other Pujas (ceremonies) known as Ohys. Thanamana, Gangmana which are mainly performed with a view to shielding the family or village against any unforecent vils. Witchcraft is also very common in the society which is usually made by a spell known as Chalan. Usually if persons become disagreeable then casting of spell to one another by chalan or Angwould follow. Among the different forms of chalan the following are the most common:

- 1. Bhut chalan
- 2. Puri Chalan
- 3. Jadu Chalan

These chalans and Angs are used for both good and bad purposes. For example, if a married man takes fancy of another women, then the husband is to be treated with Eg-Garani Chalan, as a result of which the man would dislike his new lover and remain saithful to his wife alone.

The Chakma also observe some ceremonies in the form of festival such as Biju, Gonga phuzua, Lokhi Pujua which are believed to be copied by them pour the contemporaneous Hindu people, which are however connected with religion.

## Marriage `

There are mainly two system of marriages in the chakma society.

- 1. Religious system of marriage and
- 2. Social and customary system of marriage.

The religious system of marriage is usually followed among the advanced section of the society. It is performed by the Buddhist monks (Blikshu) as per the tenets of the religion.

The other form of marriage is very popular in the village to this day. The usual marriage system is as followed:—

On a young man's attaining a marriageable age (say 20—22 years) his parents look about for a suitable match. On finding a suitable young girl of their choice, a male relative of the family of the groom will be sent to the house of the young girl. If the discussions are favourable then they will fix a day for a meeting of the parents of both the parties. The bridegrooms parents should proceed to the would be brides house taking with them a bottle of wine. Eventually they will sleep in the would be bride's house.

After a couple of days, the bridegrooms parents will pay a second visit to the intended bride's house, taking with them a bottle of wine and rice cakes.

Again, after some days, they would pay the third visit and this time with lots of wine, cakes and other eatables. On this occasion will meticulously discuss the marriage topic. They will fix the date of marriage. On the day preceding the marriage, the bridegrooms party take with them presents, clothes and jewellery and march to the bride's house. Then the bride is adorned with new clothes and jewellery and throughout the night there would be a festive mood in the bride's house. The next day, after the morning meal, the bridegroom's party escort the bride to bridegroom's house and in the evening the actual ceremony takes place. The bride and bridegroom are made to sit together, and two of their relatives—a man and a will, with the consent of all present, bind the cople together with a white cloth. The bride has then to place cooked rice and prepared pan in the month of the bridegroom and he has to repeat the same act to her. As soon as the cloth is loosaned they are declared newly married.

In the marriage ceremony, a fowl is killed, its tongue is taken out and according to certain marks therein, the following matters are predicted:

- 1. Whether the matrimonial conjugal life would be happier or not.
- 2. How many children they will be gct and
- 3. Whether the first child would be a male of a female.

The parents would also look anxiously for dreams which would indicate omen and foretell the joys and sufferings in the married life of their children.

Polygamy: Polygamy i.e. the system of keeping more than one wife is also prevalent in the society. The marriage ceremony is known as Chumulong. The groom is to pay the price for the bride which usually includes paddy, domestic animals in addition to cash amount.

**Divorce**:- The system of divorce is also found in the society and there is no barrier for widow remarriage.

Elopement: Elopement of girls with their lovers is also practised. But, if the father of the girl becomes stubborn and declines to offer his daughter matrimony to her lover then no marriage can be performed (usually marriages are negotiated by parents and the women do not have right to choose their husbands). However, if in the case the lover, for three consecutive times, can flee with the girl then the girls father would have to acknowledge the marriage. In this kind of case, usually the bride price is claimed at a higher rate. In other words, elopement does not necessarily cancels the price of the bride. On the other hand, it only increases. Immediately after the marriage the newly married couple would receive blessing from their elders. This ceremony is known as Seep Dan. On the occassion of marriage their friends and relatives make presents to the newly married couple and this is known as Leculi Dan. The Chakma belongs to the Patrilineal. Patrilocal society. Descendants are raced through the male live and as such their issues belong to the clan of their father. In marriage the bride goes to stay in her husband's house.

Art, and music: Chakmas have not attained much profiency in the field of art and music except for

popular songs. Their old traditional musical instruments like singha, Dhuluk, Khengarang have been replaced by modern Harmonium, Dhole and Tabla. Some of their old remantic songs known as Ubagect are still popular among them. The last remnants of their glorious historical past have been praised in their songs known as Gengkhuli Geet, Radhamon Dhanpati Pala, Raja Sadeng Giri Pala and so on. Unless special eccassion demands these are not usually sung by them and before singing these songs the singer is to perform. Some prayers/Pujas in keeping with their old belief and tradition. There is no visible mark of their traditional dance style. Dancing is not encouraged in the society. Except by small children, but as a result of their closer contact with the people of the plains they have developed the basic rhythm of dance which has become very popular among them. They are much fond of Doli/Drama.

Games: The games of popular nature among the Chakmas are: Ghila Khara, Nadeng Khara, Potti Khara etc. which are still played with love and enthusiasm by the younger people.

Death: The Chakmas cremate dead bodies. If death occurs during economically hard days then they usually bury the dead body for the time being till harvest time. When they are financially better off then they disinter the dead body which was buried earlier, for cremation and then perform the last rites which is usually followed by a communal feast. The head of the dead person in the case of man is set in the east direction while placing inside the grave. In the case of women it is set in the reverse direction. During the prime season of the

year when the close relatives get together, they take out the dead body from the grave and cremate it by the river bank where the river usually flows into a curve.

The following morning some close relatives from the family of the deceased go to the cremation ground in search of foodprints, which was left behind (according to their belief) by the deceased person and that very shape indicates his re-birth. They are staunch believers in re-birth.

At daybreak the nearest members of the family (son, brother) of the deceased person get together at the crematorium and collect seven selected bones from the cremation spot. They put them in an earthen pot and immerse them all into the river after performing some rituals by uttering some mantras from the Agartara (a customary religious book in Chakma which is conducted by Ruli Baday village priest). All the sons of the deceased person shall have to shave off their heads at that particular place and then return home. Usually they observe seven days of mourning period. On the seventh day they perform last ritual known as Satdinya by offering all they could afford to the Vhikshus who conducted the ceremony. All the villagers participate in the last ritual which they concludes in a communal feast.

If the dead was a rich person, then his body is taken out ceremoniously on a chariot for some distance, before cremation which involves lot of money and material. This festival is known as Rath Tana.

Dresses And Ornaments: Like those of the other hill tribes of the north eastern area, the Chakmas

foo were self-reliant in preparing their clothing apparels. Weaving on loin loom was an established social duty of chakma women. Their dress on the whole was very simple—women wearing pinon, Khadi or wrapper and men wearing a white turban with coat and dhoti. The upper classes wear white socks and European shoes.

Pinons are similar to Lusei puans but not so colourful or rich in embroidery work. The texture two is much more coarse than that of puans. Usually the surface is block or deep blue but sometimes with black and deep blue stripes. About six inches above the lower edge runs a red border of about three inches broad through the entire length of the pinon. Besides, a broad multi-coloured border on red background is woven along the entire breadth of one edge. While putting on pinon it is so arranged that this multi-coloured design remains on the front.

Khadi is a sort of a breast cover about ore and a half feet broad and four to five feet in length. Usually the background of this is red in different shades. But on this background colourful designs of various motifs are woven. While putting it on, several rounds are run over the breast to provide a secure breast cover. In addition to this, a plain white sheet of cloth also woven on long loom is used as a wrapper.

The dress of the male folks resembles that of the Bengalees to a large extent and even the method of wearing is similar. A white dhoti with very thin border in dark colour is put on along with a wrapper to cover the upper portion of the body. They also put on a white turban but its use has now become very rare except in interior chakma villages. On the whole the chakma dresses for both male and femile are conspicuously different in their colourfutness from those of the other tribes in this area.

The ornaments of chakma women consist of silver earrings, necklaces, bracelets and ankiets. There are three varieties of necklaces, one of massive make worn close round the neck, the other a band if filigree work in silver reaching below the breasts, the third consisting of rupee-coins strung on black thread and numbering from fifteen to thirty.

Houses: The houses are built entirely of bamboo with a machan floor raised some six feet above the ground. The ground floor is fenced for keeping domestic animals. The house is divided into compartments, and the requirements of the married members of the family are first attended to. the event of several families living together, the rooms are apportioned in due order of seniority. For instance, in a family of which three members are married, the house will be divided by mat walls into four compartments. The outer one is reserved for the unmarried male members or for the use of visitors, and is called pinagudi, the next compartment will go to the eldest male representative of the family with his wife, the third room to the second eldest, and the fourth to the youngest married member. Each room averages fifteen feet in length, including the ochaleng or back verandah, which is from five feet to seven feet in breadth. When laying out the compartments the house is divided breadthways, taking the centre or ridge pole of the house as the line of division on which to mark out the family quarters, which are to the back, while the front portion is partitioned off as the bachelors quarters and cook-rooms. In the

front of the house is a verandah which is divided into two by a mat partition for the use of the males and females respectively. In the front of the verandah is a big open space or raised platform, used for various household purposes. Small compartments may be erected on this for the storage of grain, ecoton, or household offects, but as rule the grain is stored away from the house for safety in case of fire.

A rough step-ladder gives access to this outer space and forms the entrane to the house. This space will generally be enclosed with a bamboo mat wall three or four feet high to prevent the small children from falling over. Shocking accidents occur sometimes when this precaution has been neglected. The back verandah of the house is also u cd for storage purposes, while the front is used to sit and for the women to weave.

Language And Literature: The scripts which has been handed down to the chakmas from their fore-fathers bear distinctive similarity with the Arakanese script. The cursive style of the 13th century scripts of ancient Tamil has a great similarity with chakma scripts.

The earliest literature in chakma script as available with the chakmas is Agar Tara (a religious prayer in one book). These are pactised by the Lures in performing religious rites. These are written in the similar structural style as found in the epigraphic copper plates in canjevaram. Therefore, we find that there is a great similarity between the chakma script and the script that was found in the southern coast of India.

Chakmas have been living in the adjoining parts of Arakan and Bengal since very ancient time.

Many of their rituals are no more in vague like Thanmana etc as it requires participation of all the people in the village involving a lot of expenditure.

Chakmas bear distinct marks of old traditions of Buddhism. Every well-to-do family shall invariably construct a worshipping place (a small temple for Lord Buddha) in front of their houses. This religious place is always placed outside their dweeling places. They make generous offerings to whikshus, the Buddhist monks who perform all their religious ceremonies.

Although the chakma are said to be purely Buddhist in religion, there are some elements of Hindrism in their belief regarding the creation of universe, inlusion of the names of Sita, Rama, Hanuman in their mythology which still mentioned in the chanting at the performance of sacrifices and ceremonies.

# An English version of Chakma social and Customary Laws:

- 1. Malik neiya jharat kee jinishat daah-jya laakara deebar kah-dea. A forest/jhumming area bearing a distinct smark of prior adaptation by any individual, shall not be possessed or destroyed (the said forest area) by other person.
- 2. Jadeewa-ijjath-i tei kee-ki kam mana ceratin acts which are disdainful for the community and society as a whole are prohibited.
- 3. Sadanga bei bone louya lui mana marriage are prohibited with step-brothers and step-sisters, because the divine bond between them is much greater than any temporal relationship.

4. Rana marde ki Ranee milai biya gari na parana

After one's wife's death or one's husband's death one cannot re-marry till the ritual after 7 days in the name of the deceased (satdinya) is over.

- 5. Beena udshave na nachana, geet gana oreng karana restrictions on dancing, singing and rejoicing unceremoniously. The word 'Reng' cannot be adequately expressed in English. It generally means a voice (loud) of young man in the lonely valley made out of rejoicing, singing to allure his sweet-heart.
- 6. Aw-chee-jear Khawdaa: There are restrictions on expression or use of vulgar, ugly and indecent language and also on any obscebe act in any public place. The word Aw-chi-jee connotes wide meaning. It also indicates impurity or unholy. In the event of any bad omen or evil befalling a family or village, the cleansing is followed through some rituals either religious or social. The whole of this practice is called Aw-chee-Jce.
- 7. Ghar-rh bahn, Para-ba-hn/kono Jah-ne bhangee deele: Whenever an unholy spirit or a contagious disease attacks a family or village some ceremonics are performed in the whole of the affected area and such area is indicated by raising a flag, black or white in colour. The area remains closed for all sorts of visitors for some specified period. Any violation of this rule attracts punishment.
- 8. Bya-ja doober Kah-da: The meaning of Bya-jah-doober cannot be adequately expressed in English. It may be explained in this way. The highest authority in the society is the king and even he is not authorised to enter with shoe on into the portion of a dweeling house.

- 9. Bohn lenar bedles: The system of marriage is called chumulong. It is performed by oozah (village, priest). In this ceremony fowls and pigs are sacrificed and the bride and groom sit together in severence to these offerings.
- 10. Gaburh mardah milai pogal ahle: On breaking of the sexual taboos by unmarried men and women the punishments are awarded by village elders which generally makes the offenders to offer pigs as five.

  11. Kwhn dusath suwr deeya pare: On suspicion of indulgence in sex by those not yet married both man woman are liable to be punished by imposing a fine of a pig. It prohibits free mixing in the society.
- 12. Gausala Gung Puja: This ceremony is connected with child-birth. Without this ceremony the mother and the child are treated as inauspicious. As soon as a child is born the father brings a basketful of dry earth. He puts it close to the mother's bed and kindles a fire on it which is not allowed to be extinguished for few days. After this, earth is cast away; feast, amusements mark the occasion. Usually the mother goes to bathe in a nearby river on the next day of delivery, holding a rope of cloth in hand, one end of which is tied for fear of the evil. Punishments: Under the provisions of the Chakma customary laws, the following punishments are usually awarded to the offenders:
  - (a) Jarimana (cash five):
  - (b) Muchlika (Bond, Agreements)
  - (c) Marpeet (Physical punishment)
  - (d) Jendhera: In this the offender's hair on the head are cut into three parts and a fowl is hung on the neck and a bamboo broom is kept in his hand. He is then escorted by two

villagers to every house and on reaching at the door—step the offender snall pronounce his crime or mis deed for which he has been awarded the punishment. The offender shall also make sound with help of the bamboo broom to attract the attention of the people. After having paraded through the whole of the village the offender will appear before the parchayat where his head shall be shared off and then he will take a dip into water. After having done this the offender shall beg mercy of the panchayat. This system of punishment is called Jendhera.

- (e) Vandala: In this the offender is to offer food with reverence to all the olders in the village.
- (f) Ham-o-Ladi Ujance Lamonce garana: In this the victim girl/wontan after having taken a bath, with her wet bress on, shall stand putting her legs apart and then the offender shall pass through the leg 7 times—and every time shall utter her 'ma' (mother). Momeherra (Bungthuam) Lokicherra, the inhabitants of these villages are now exactly like Lushai people, Luseicherra and Kanhmun—20 households.

Names of villages inhabited by the Ranglong tribe in Tripura are —

- 1. Enchawi
- 2. Laikhua
- 3. Tuivalian

- 4, Tisa khua
- 5. Ruat
- 6. Bagbasa

- 7. Joitang
- 8. Joinagar
- 9. Sawrawspur

- 10. Jambir
- 11. Makangtila
- 12. Noagong

- 16 Danukcuci
- 13. Balukcherra 14. Khuri
- 15. Darmotilla

- 16. Pawlkhua
- 17. Chorai Bari.
- In Cachar of Assam state are 1) Pipla 2) Baliapunji
- 3) Baliatongia and 4) Nurka.

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