

FOLK LITERATURE OF THE SOUTHERN ANGAMI NAGAS: MORUNG AS PEDESTAL

(Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for award of Ph.D. degree in English)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research work has been a journey in itself, and in the process, I am extremely grateful to several people in completion of the work.

I express deep sense of gratitude to my supervisor Professor Dr. Rosemary Dzüvichü for her unstinted support and encouragement at every phase of the research. Her wise advice and clarity of thoughts helped me sharpen my ideas, reflections and writing. I am thankful to the faculty members, Department of English, Nagaland University for their continual guidance during my study.

My special thanks to my loving parents and family members for being with me through thick and thin, providing the needed care and affection. I am deeply indebted to Dzuvisozo Tetso, who was instrumental in the shaping and writing of the thesis.

The research will be incomplete without the field studies and interviewers who graciously gave their time and granted me the benefit of their experience and knowledge. I am moved by the zeal of the village folk in disseminating the knowledge of oral traditions.

God has been always faithful to me and I owe all the success to our Almighty God.

Place : Kohima

ZHOVINO AGATHA ZHASUMO

Date : 17th October 2022

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PREFACE

The cultural facets of any group of people are many and possess varied dimensions. The ideological, morals and values are a major component and are intrinsically linked with folk traditions. The present study explores to understand the folk narratives of the Angami Naga tribe and the changes taking today.

Nagas interaction with the outside world was limited but not isolated. The hostility, friendship and trade between the Nagas and Ahoms began in the early 1230. With the treaty of Yandabo in 1826, Assam was annexed by the British and subsequently the Angami Naga territory came into direct contact with Britishers. With the arrival of Christianity in 1872, formal education followed suit. The quest for political identity for Nagas started in 1918 with the formation of Naga Club. All these factors had gradual and enormous effects in the socio-cultural life of the Naga tribes.

The tribes of Naga today are exposed to the era of information and globalization. In this respect, the cultural traditions of the villages are undergoing through a process of transformation. There is consciousness to revive and maintain the cultural identity of the tribes. The research on folk narratives and the institution of morung is a means to explore the rich cultural heritage of the Southern Angami Nagas.

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

Folk literature is the lore of unlettered people transmitted by word of mouth. It consists of both prose and verse narratives, poems and songs, myths, dramas, rituals, proverbs, riddles and the like. All literature was considered folk literature till 4000 BC. But writing developed in the years between 4000 and 3000 BC, in both Egypt and the Mesopotamian civilization at Sumer. Thereafter from Asia, North Africa and the Mediterranean lands spread rapidly the written literature over much of the world. Nevertheless, there exist a large and important activity carried on by those actually unlettered and not much used to reading and writing. Even now, majority of men and women are still carrying the tradition of oral folk literature, since it is the only kind they know.

1.1. Objectives of the research

- 1.To contribute to the realms of oral tradition of the Southern Angami Nagas.
- 2.To analyze the power and functions of the traditional institutions and invigorate the time tested values of our ancestors.
- 3.To augment and revive the vibrant story telling tradition.

1.2.Outline of the thesis

Chapter-I. Introduction.

The first chapter will deal with a brief account of the Southern Angami Nagas. It will elaborately deal with their origin, migration and settlement serving as a brief preamble to the Southern Angami Nagas. Further, it will serve as the background to locate the villages to be undertaken in the study.

Chapter-II. Traditional Institutions: Morung as a medium in community governance.

The institution of Morung is one of the most dominant features of the social structure of the Angamis. The chapter will look at the different aspects and activities living in the morung as Chattopadhyaya has to say on Morung as quoted;

“It is here that the foundation of each generation are laid, moulded and built up. The growing youth is taught the meaning and significance of traditions, told of the valour and heroic deeds of the earlier generations and that it is in the glory of the past that the seeds of the future have to sprout” (Chattopadhyaya,k 83).

Chapter III: Constructing history through Folk Tales and Narrative Poems.

The chapter will deal with the folktales and narrative poems which are of ancient origin and have deep psychic roots in the life of the community. Stories and poems are enriched as they are transmitted from one person to another. It tends to examine them as a means in which the structure and cultural value of the society are told and experienced.

Chapter IV: Folk songs as invigorating element of a living culture.

The chapter aims to explore the oral tradition of the Southern Angami Nagas which is kept alive through folk songs wherein also lies important clues to the philosophy of life. Folk songs are both historical and romantic. Some songs narrate entire stories of famous ancestors and historical events .Seasonal songs are also there which describes various activities done in a particular season.

Chapter V: Changing syndrome in the traditional practices and values.

The chapter will examine the rapid changes in the social set up. Unfortunately, many of the customary practices and values have been forsaken. The chapter thus, intends to analyze the varied impact leading to the changes in the values and practices.

Chapter VI: Conclusion.

The study will conclude with the sixth chapter which will present the recommendations and findings. The contribution of the research in finding new understandings and important issues will be summarized in this chapter.

1.3.Research tools and Methodology

Four villages namely Phesama, Kigwema, Jakhama and Viswema have been selected for intensive study. The method used was participant observation supplemented by queries whenever necessary. Such informations were confirmed by clues through folk songs, folk poems and folk

tales. Emphasis was given to the kinds of the indigenous institutions, their functions and of course, their evolution in the modern context. Data collected from these four villages generally reflect the characteristics of the southern Angami society and culture. The primary sources of the study are mainly gathered from oral narratives from the selected respondents of Southern Angami area of Kohima district of Nagaland. The secondary source materials are from the relevant published or unpublished written material. The secondary sources are also collected from the books, articles and documentation by folklorists and scholars available in the form of anthologies and selected websites. Both the sources are amalgamating in the process of the writing.

The tools used for the study involves in depth interview with a list of select themes on which information had to be gathered. The in-depth interviews were conducted from among four villages in the southern Angami region. The researcher probed and crossed examined the interviews on them to establish facts. The information gathered from these people helped in a better understanding of the study. The venue for the interviews was arranged according to the convenience of the interviewee between 2019 to 2021. On an average, each interview lasted around 30 minutes to an hour. The only criterion was to ensure privacy so that the person could express his or her feelings freely and independently. A few interviews were conducted in two or three sessions. Every interview was recorded and translated paying attention to the grammatical correctness, either by the researcher or by qualified translators. Additionally, the researcher has been living in the village and involved in the activities. The researcher also visited the selected villages for a significant length of time at different intervals and interacted with the people and the village leaders. Hence, the researcher's observations also form part of the findings. Having completed the transcription, the responses were collated, noted, processed and analyzed. The researcher meticulously examined the information gathered through interviews, observation and articles collected from the villages.

A set of questionnaires were distributed to the four villages on topics of morung, folktales, folksongs and narrative poems on some of the southern areas of Angami tribe of Nagaland, based on which views of the people are extracted.

1.4. Limitations

The present study is based mainly on qualitative method. Inclusion of more villages in the entire area especially through interview schedule would have been a complement to the present study and would have made it more comprehensive.

1.5. Review of literature

For a better understanding on the Angami Nagas, there is a need to examine and analyze literature available. The study of the Angamis were undertaken initially by the British administrators, surveyors and missionaries based on their personal visit to the places and acquaintance with the people. Review is focused on understanding the Angamis, their oral traditions, customs, traditional institutions and the continuity and changing dimensions.

J.H.Hutton's *The Angami Nagas* published in 1921 and reprinted in 1962 stands as a monograph of the Angami tribe. He presents a detailed account about the Angami way of life, beliefs, customs and traditions etc, which are discussed at length. He makes an in- depth analysis of the Angami society which existed in the past and elaborated on the various important institutions which governed their way of life.

Sanyu (1996) in his book *A history of Nagas and Nagaland (Dynamics of oral tradition in village formations)* gives a picture of the formation of a village, policy, socio- economic background which have survived through oral traditions. He has remarked that the stock of oral traditions in the form of folktales, poems, legends and prayers have contributed greatly to the understanding of the Angami tribe. His main focus was on Kohima and Khonoma which he considers the two villages as important centers of migration and settlement. He also presents how Naga society has been affected by modernization.

Zetsuvi's(2014) *Traditional culture of the Angami Nagas* is a study of Angamis. It provides information on the social structure, religious practices, customary laws and practices of the Angami Nagas. The impact of Christianity and education were discussed from different perspectives.

Easterine Kire(2019) *In Walking the Roadless Road: Exploring the Tribes of Nagaland* gives a glimpse on the Angami society before the coming of Christianity. She describes how a

traditional village was structured and also talks about the religious and spiritual beliefs that went a long way in influencing the behaviours of the people in the past.

Charles Chasie in his book *The Road to Kohima: The Naga Experience in the Second World War* talks about the presence of diplomacy which existed to facilitate relations between the community. He gives a glimpse of the conduct of warfare in the past. Religious ceremonies associated with agriculture is discussed.

Zapuvise Lhousa in *Strange Country: My Experience in Naga Nationalism* states on the traditional institutions as well as the customary laws which served as the sole means of solving disputes before the coming of the British. Revenge was a strong theme among the Angamis in the past where failure to avenge the loss of a loved one was seen as shameful.

1.6 Folk lore

Folklore, in a very simple term, is the orally transmitted folk literature or oral tradition of the common people, which is transmitted from one generation to another through the process of socialization. It represents the traditional songs, tales, proverbs, legends and beliefs of the people. In this regard, Puina has rightly pointed out that the *field of folklore is extensive and provides a rich treasure of every folk's experience* (Puina 3).

Felix Wilfred is of the opinion that,

The word 'lore' in folklore refers basically to the expressive forms of the people- verbal (folk stories, folk songs, ballads, proverbs, riddles, aphorisms etc) and non verbal (folk arts, folk festivals, folk dance etc). As for the 'folk' aspect of folk-lore, by folk are not meant people in general without qualification in terms of our social reality (wilfred 234).

Thus the term 'folk' is referred to any people or community who share a common factor. And this common factor may be either in the form of religion or a profession. Felix Wilfred goes on to say that they live with their own expressive forms which embody their life patterns, self-perceptions and their interpretation of the world and society. The term was suggested in 1846 by William John Thomas (1830-85), founder of the folklore Journal Notes and Queries. Nowadays,

it often embraces material culture and non- material culture. The field of folklore now overlaps considerably with those of cultural anthropology and popular culture. While folklore includes religious or mythic elements, it also concerns itself with the sometimes mundane traditions of everyday life of the folk. Folklore ties the practical and the esoteric into a narrative package. It also studies medicine, supernatural, religious and political belief systems as an essential culture.

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics characterized 'folklore' as consisting of customs, rites and beliefs, belonging to individuals among the people, to groups of people, to inhabitants or districts or places, and belonging to them and often times in definite antagonism to the accepted customs, rites and beliefs of the state or the nation to which the people belong. Scholars like Malinowski, Radcliff Brown says that it is a vital element in a living culture; it is considered to be a dependable index to the background of the people, an index to the tradition, beliefs and inquiries of an unsophisticated mind. By and large, it reflects the stage of development of human mind and indeed provides a link to the cultural continuity and literary development.

According to David C. Laubach, "the best one is the simplest" and that is, the lore of the folk. He describes a "folk group" as a group "that needs to have at least one thing in common: religion, costumes, architecture, language, ethnic, background, geography, or occupation." Thus, folklore, in very simple definition, is the 'oral tradition' that is passed down from one generation to another and it includes the customs, stories, songs, art and culture of a particular group of people with more or less the same ethnic background, geography, religion, language, costumes etc. Laubach further states that, there are four basic tests that can be applied to determine whether something is or is not folklore. First, folklore is oral. It is handed down or passed on by word of mouth. Second, folklore is traditional within a certain group, a set form that is handed down without destroying the basic design from one generation to the next. Third, folklore must exist in different versions, things change in oral transmission. While the basic pattern and function remains constant. Fourth, folklore is anonymous; the origin of the lore is unknown.

Folklorist William Bascom states that folklore do have many cultural aspects, such as allowing for escape from societal consequences. In addition, folklore can also serve to validate a culture as well as transmit a culture's morals and values. Folklore is also the root of many cultural types of music. Country, blue and bluegrass all originate from American folklore.

Folklore can also be used to assert social pressures and served a means to relieve them. In addition, folklorists study medicine, supernatural, religious and political belief systems as essential culture.

Appavo opines that it must be well remembered that folklore serves as a primary vehicle for that communication and contribution of attitudes and values. Folklore and folk literature contribute to family and a community centered culture. It is said to be most effective in its original oral form to promote social solidarity and happiness. It becomes a part of the traditional support system for children and all individuals, a field which deserves exploration. In an anthropological usage, the term 'folklore' has come to mean myth, legend, tales, songs, dances, proverbs, riddles and a variety of form of artistic expression, whose medium is the spoken word. Generally, the term 'folk' denotes a group of people and 'lore' meaning a body of traditions, which is transmitted from one generation to another, from one individual to another. Folklore is a part of cultural heritage. It is treated as a mirror of culture, which reflects the Naga head hunters culture and brings solidarity, continuity and consistency among the Naga tribes.

Folklore, the spontaneous creation of unsophisticated popular imagination, is not just the traditional source of entertainment to the people. Folklore embodies the ancient observation and customs, beliefs, especially the value systems and the moral laws of a community or a tribe that makes them distinct from others. Folklore, in the form of storytelling and oral transmission of knowledge and information thus functioned as the storehouse of racial history and regulator of social behavior. Folklore as a system in the broadest sense includes legends, superstitions, songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, spells, nursery rhymes, traditional lore about the weather, plant and animals, rituals at birth, marriage and death, dances and the performing arts associated with the ceremonies or community festivals. It may remain the same but may develop new meanings and associations depending on the social circumstances in which communities live and on the variable conditions of ecology and environment in the long run. Oral tradition has come to be widely recognized in the context of tradition-oriented communities of the non-western world, for whom the search for identity in the face of waves of change has become an extremely vital issue. In the newly emerging nationalities in Africa in particular, oral tradition has proved to be not only of great academic significance but also of immense practical value in nation building process. The folklore tell us about the relations of people, something that is basic to human life

and to every society as it is the literature of the common people. It tells us how different communities and tribes are linked to each other, just as there is dialect continuance which link one area with another irrespective of territorial boundaries. The cultural patterns are reflected more strongly in the folklore of the communities. Socio- cultural context plays an important role in the development of oral literature because any narration of oral tradition is located in a social and cultural context. Any narrative is interwoven with the culture of the society and it reflects the social reality of the community. Folk narratives are basically social experiences and the reflections of these experiences are mostly perspective in nature. They reaffirm and restore moral values and common loyalties of the group. It reveals the conceptual machinery of values, beliefs and social arrangements including the social control mechanism of the society in which the tales are grounded.

The importance of the oral tradition in folklore has a historical validity. Since the mid-nineteenth century, folklore has been the collective name given to traditional verbal materials handed down primarily by word of mouth rather than in the written form. Folklore in the early stages always flourished in communities in which few could read or write. But it is a fact that as societies grow out of the pre- literate stages, their languages develop a written literature of their own and the folklore elements undergo a process of change due to various cultural factors. Folklore is a historical science : ‘Historical’ because it attempts to throw light on man’s past, a ‘science’ because it endeavours to attain this goal, not by speculation or deduction from some abstract principle agreed upon a priori, but by inductive method which in the last analysis, underlies all scientific research, whether historical or natural. Folklore limits itself to a study of the unrecorded traditions of the people as they appear in popular fiction, customs and belief, magic and ritual.

“Folklore” is a generic term for different varieties of traditional narrative. The telling of stories appears to be a cultural universal which is common to basic and complex societies alike. Even the forms are certainly similar from culture to culture. They are considered to be oral tales to be told for everybody. On the other hand, the term “Folklore” can be labeled as a figurative narrative which has no sacred or religious content. In H Jungian’s view, which is but one method of analysis, it may instead pertain to unconscious psychological patterns, instincts or archetypes of the mind. This may or may not have components of the fantastic such as magic, ethereal beings of the personification of inanimate objects. Legend, Myths, Folklore, and Folktale are all

different expressions or labels of the same genre, and these tales are multifaceted reminiscent of the flower garden of myriad tapestry. The beauty of these tales is that they invariably come to a clinching conclusion with rich moral lessons. These fables, legends, folklore and folktales ought to be passed on from the passing generation to the present and coming generation so that the rich legacies are preserved and treasured. It links people with the past and provides a glimpse into the future.

1.7. Folk tradition of the Nagas

North- East India with its hills and plains is the homeland of an almost bewildering variety of ethnic groups, both tribal and non- tribal. The region has been, and still remains, a veritable 'folklorist's paradise'. Although various factors of change represented by modernization and liberal education of the western model, accompanied by large scale literacy has emerged, oral tradition remains an abiding force for most of the indigenous communities. The traditional way of life incorporated all aspects of development of the community. One of the most important characteristics of oral tradition is that it is a community centered tradition. The community always outweighs the individual. The individual is dependent on the community for survival, and in the same way, the community is responsible for its individual members.

Nagaland, located in the north –eastern extreme of India, is the 16th state of the Indian Union carved out from the erstwhile district of Assam as a result of an agreement between the Indian Government and the Naga People's Convention and was established on 1st December 1963. The mountainous state borders Arunachal Pradesh in the North, Assam in the west (and also North), Manipur in the South and Myanmar in the East. This picturesque land is endowed with an enchanting landscape of green hills, valleys and rivers flowing down the mountains, across deep gorges and narrow vales. The state is mostly mountainous except those areas bordering Assam valley. The highest peak in Nagaland is Mount Saramati with a height of 3,840 metres. The range of the peak forms a natural barrier between Nagaland and Burma. It lies between the parallels of 98 degree and 96 degree East Longitude and 26.6 degree and 27.4 degree latitude North of the Equator. This land of exotic charm remained untouched for many turbulent centuries, during which the Nagas were engaged in fierce head-hunting expedition in hill top villages and densely forested hills. The hills take the form of serrated ridges and they are separated by deep valleys where streams and rivers make their way. The two important mountain

ranges are Patkai and Barrail. Saramati, the highest peak (3,840 metres) in Nagaland is part of the Patkai range, while Japfu (3,048 metres), the second highest peak is part of the Barrail range. Important rivers that rise in Nagaland are Doyang and Dikhu, which flow into the Brahmaputra and Tizu, which joins the Chidwin in Myanmar.

Nagaland is the land of the Nagas comprising group of tribes culturally distinct from other tribal groups living in North- Eastern India. The origin of the Naga tribes is encapsulated in folklore and legends. After examining various oral sources, Sanyu concludes that the Nagas belong to the Mongoloid racial stock and that their original home was in central China. After leaving their original habitat before the Christian era, that took different routes and gradually reached their present habitat. Their migration took place in several waves, and continued for some centuries till the different Naga tribes came to occupy the places of their present habitat.

Scholars have pointed out that a Naga village was a distinct political, economic and religious unit (Horam 60), so that the Nagas lived in permanently established village- states (Yonuo x). When the British came in 1832, they found each village isolated from and hostile to its closest neighbour. This was so mainly because of the practice of headhunting and the absence of any trade relations (Horam 61). In the village, the traditional chief played an important role, though his position differed from tribe to tribe.

Traditionally, Nagas are a people of oral tradition. Before the advent of the American missionaries in the Naga hills in the 19th century, the Nagas were illiterate. Writing was unknown to them and they did not have a script. They lived in villages almost in isolation from each other and the rest of the world. The world of the Naga revolved around his village, family, clan and khel. Their lives were based on the agricultural cycle. The people were self sufficient and there was little contact between the tribes. Prior to British rule, every Naga village was an independent republic. No tribe ever ruled over the other.

Temsula Ao in her seminal work *The Ao Naga Oral Tradition* asserts that that the oral tradition of her people is not a mere form of storytelling as opposed to a written, recorded version. In fact, Ao says that in many ways the source of the people's literature, social customs, religion and history. This is true of all the Naga tribes who share the commonality of oral tradition. Because of the absence of written records and history, the oral tradition assumes profound significance for non- literate communities. The lore of the people kept alive through

the myths, legends and tales remain the only link between the past and present. In it is found a treasure trove of cultural values, knowledge, information and all aspects of the way of the people that binds them as a distinct race.

Nagas have no script of their own and therefore there was no written literature of any form. Till later half of the 19th century, there was no literary activity. The Nagas have rich tradition of folk literature. It contains folksongs, folktales, proverbs, myths and jokes, a mixture of humor and myth. According to such oral literature, God has given a script to both people of the plain and the hills. The given script to the plain people was the one written on the stone that it was permanent. The plain people had learnt it and preserved throughout the ages. On the other hand, the script that was given to the people of the hill was written on animal skin. Since the hill people moved on from one place to another in search of better land for settlement, the father of the family kept the scroll in a bag. One day, while the family was in the field, their pet dog had taken it to somewhere and ate it up. The script was, thus lost forever and no one could learn it. According to another version, the father of the family kept the scroll in a bag and placed somewhere in the corner of the house. One day when he was out, his children felt hungry and they took out the scroll, supposed to be a dried animal skin, burnt it in the fire and ate it up. The script was, therefore, lost forever.

Naga folklore in general has much in common with that of other races of Mongolian affinities. Most of the stories of different tribes have similarity except in minute details. The Naga people, like other Indian communities have a rich store of folklore almost untapped and unexplored. Many of the tribes had an institution called “Morung” or dormitory. This had been a vital centre round in which the Naga folklore flourished in its height. Men, from the prime of human history, tried to find out means in making leisure enjoyable. They used to sing and dance spontaneously. Nobody had to teach all these in the beginning. Thus evolved the institution of folk-song, folk-dance and storytelling. Folklore of a particular area reflects the mind, the character, the background, the belief, the religion and taboos, the superstitions, the traditions, the culture and everything that makes them distinct from others.

Several stories are based on various animals and birds. These, besides offering morals of ethical value, reflect an amazing affinity between the human beings and the animals. The indigenous religion which permeated all aspects of life and governed the life of the community is expressed through the narratives that describe cultural practices such as the rituals of giving

feasts of merit, killing a tiger, and various other taboos related to individual and social life that revolved around an agricultural cycle. There are stories based on the ill- behaviour of the step-mother. This is probably, much common a theme in the Indian folk tales as a whole. By and large, however, the tales portray a large variety of men and women with local colour.

Amongst the animals, the tiger occupies an important place in the Naga folk tales. The Angami Nagas have, hitherto, a superstition to say tiger. They address the tiger as “ Udzurie u ” meaning elder brother. Referring to the tiger as their “elder brother” is also an illusion to the Naga folk belief which says that man, tiger and spirit once lived as brothers and shared the same mother, but the death of the mother resulted in chaos and disunity. Quoting the Naga scholar Wati Longchar, Tezenlo Thong elucidates on the myth’s significance to the Naga worldview:

In the myth, the human being represents humanity, the spirit signifies extraterrestrial beings; the tiger represents the animal and plant kingdom; and the mother symbolizes the Mother Earth (Thong 34).

1.8. Migration

The Naga tribes hold their own tradition of origin and migration. However, it is amply proved that the Nagas might have been the first settlers in this region. This speculation is believed to be true by the fact that there are no traces of human habitation in this region. Moreover, there is no Naga tradition that relates about the other people preceding the Naga settlement in the region. It is difficult to identify the first settler among the Nagas, but it is certain that the Nagas were the first people in this part of the country before any people arrived and occupied the present place. The origin of the Nagas is often blended with myths, legends, folklores and traditions, and some tradition are traced back to their origin of emergence from the bowel of the earth, stone and water source.

Based on oral tradition, it can be said that the Nagas were among those tribes who migrated from China through the Patkai section and settled on the way in the Naga Hills. Some observations made by scholars suggest that the Nagas came from the Mongolian stock who migrated from China before the Christian era. The migration of the Nagas did not take place in one wave. It must have continued for some centuries in various groups because the oral sources,

folklore and other legendary sources do support us in suggesting that all the Naga tribes did not break into different tribes only from Naga Hills itself. We have the oral sources which throw light on the subject of migration. Today, almost all the Naga tribes trace back their origin back to the village of Khezhakenoma in Nagaland. Khezhakenoma is a village in Chakhesang area near the present Manipur border. Although the legend of Khezhakenoma is generally accepted by most of the Naga tribes, viz, Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, Sema, Zeliang, Lotha, some of the other tribes have their own versions and legends. The Nagas have different stories about their origin. The Angamis, Sumis, Rengmas and the Lothas subscribe to the Khezhakenoma legend. It is said that there was a large stone slab having magical properties in the village of Khezhakenoma. Paddy spread on the stone slab to be dried was doubled in quantity by evening. The three sons of the couple who possess the stone used it on the basis of rotation. One day, there was a quarrel between the sons as to whose turn to have the slab. The couple, in fear of bloodshed among the boys, set the stone on fire. As a result, it cracked. It is believed that the spirit in the stone went to heaven and the stone lost its miraculous properties. The three sons thereafter left Khezhakenoma and went to different directions and became the forefathers of the Angami, Sumi and the Lotha tribes. According to another legend, to which the western Angamis subscribe, the first man evolved from a lake called 'Themiakelhu zie' near Khonoma. The Rengmas believe that until recently, they and Lothas formed one tribe. The Aos and Phoms trace their origin to the Lungterok (six stones) on the Chongliemdi hill.

Hutton gives an alternative version of the tale recounting the origin of the Nagas and the plainsmen. The husband of Ukepenopfü had a terrific appearance, so he hid himself in a vessel. As the two sons grew up they wanted to see him. Their mother said, "I will show you your father, but he who gets frightened cannot get his father's knowledge and wisdom." When the father was shown, the elder son who is said to be the ancestor of the Nagas, got very scared and ran away. But the latter who begot the Indians wished to see his father in the vessel. The father then asked his wife to take care of their elder son while he went to the plains with the younger boy. That is the reason why the Nagas are poorer in knowledge as compared to the men of the plains. (Hutton 260-261). An Ao Naga tale of a similar type goes like this: Two brothers appear on the earth, out of an aperture in a stone. They agree not to live together. The elder brother goes to the hills for land for cultivation. The younger brother comes down to the plains to raise

sugarcane and corn. The elder one is said to be the ancestor of the Aos and the younger brother as the ancestor of the Assamese.

The fact that the Nagas have many cultural affinities with those living in remote parts of South East Asian countries like the Dyaks and Koyan tribes of Borneo (Indonesia), the Batlak tribes of Sumatra (Malaysia) and the tribes of Formosa (Taiwan), and the tribes of Sawarak of Malaysia: and the cultural importance of cowrie shells, conch shells and log drums like the canoes of islanders, the custom of eating all sea creatures are sufficient proof in themselves that the Nagas once lived near the sea coast, which they, without doubt claimed to have ruled the coast for ages.

1.9. Angami Nagas

The Angamis are a major ethnic group native to the state of Nagaland in North-east, India. Their history has been handed down the generations through oral tradition. It is believed that they migrated from South-East Asia to the present settlement probably in search of land for terrace cultivation. The habitat of the Angami corresponds more or less to the central and southern parts of Kohima and part of the Dimapur district of Nagaland. Today the Angamis are broadly divided into four regions: The Northern Angami, the Western Angami, the Southern Angami and the Chakhro Angami. They are known for the Sekrenyi celebration every February. The mother tongue of Angamis is Tenyidie language, which has its variants in different villages and regions.

The name Angami, like most names of tribes in Northeast India, was given to them by their neighbouring tribes or people. Their original name is *Tengima*. The word *Angami* is a warp of the Manipuri word. Angamis were called *Tsungumi* by the Sema, *Tsungung* by the Lotha, and *Mour* by the Aos. In any case, the name Angami has been in use for a long time, and now the Angamis too use it to describe themselves. The traditional habitat of the Angamis corresponds more or less with the central and southern parts of the present Kohima district. The entire area is mountainous, with eminent peaks and elevated ridges, irregular spurs and deep valleys. *Summits of the lofty peaks are thickly wooded, clad with evergreen vegetation; they abound in varied*

flora and fauna. The lower hills have become deforested owing to the practice of both slash and burn and terrace system of cultivation (Gazetter 12).

Hutton (Hutton15) identifies four distinct groups among the Angamis. They are Khonoma group, Kohima group, Viswema group and the Chakroma group. The Angamis live mainly in the central and northern part of Kohima district which is the capital of Nagaland. Some of them have also settled in Dimapur district. Of all the tribes inhabiting Nagaland, the Angamis occupy the most extensive area. The Angami inhabited area is bordered by the tribes like Zeliangs, Rengmas, Chakhesangs and Maos. Angamis are predominantly agriculturists, depending on cultivation and livestock rearing. They can produce nearly twenty varieties of paddy crops every year. They are well known for environmental consciousness. Since they use their water courses for terraced wet-rice cultivation. In fact, they are one of the only two groups of Nagas who practice wet-rice cultivation on terraces made on the hill slopes. This allows them to cultivate the same plot year after year. They are less dependent on slash and burn cultivation. Classification of lunar months in a year is correlated with agricultural seasons as the occupational activities are predominantly agricultural based. Similarly most of the festivals are agricultural related. The Angamis divide a year into twelve lunar months and the leap year is adjusted by an intercalary month which is introduced once in four years. The Angami months and the Roman corresponding months are given below to know the approximate times.

Roman Month Angami Month

January	- Doshü
February	- Kezei
March	- Kera
April	- Ketshü
May	- Cacü
June	- Cadi
July	- Mvüsa
August	- Tsiarie
September	- Rüyo
October	-Thenyie
November	-Ziephie
December	-Rüde

Community feeling is fostered through the *theshou* or community house which served as the traditional system of education. Cultural information is transmitted not only in the personal space at home but communally in the *theshou*. This education reflects communal relationship and subscribes to the view that it takes the whole community to raise a child. Through it, the boys gain knowledge about different aspects of life. They listen to the stories and tales from the elders and learn the customs of their people through this traditional way of disseminating knowledge. The Angami society does not have any kind of social stratification. Property is distributed equally among the sons. An interesting aspect of the Angami society is that the youngest male in the family inherits the parental home, which also signifies that the latter is responsible for taking care of their parents until they breathe their last. The genealogy of the family is also counted on the youngest son. Angami men mainly wear white Mhoushü and black Lohe shawls and kechünei or kilt with lines of cowries around their loins, while the women wear chiecha/ menei wrap around skirts and shawls of unique design. Both men and women in the Angami society love to wear ornaments that they often display. The Angamis mainly followed animism, their traditional religion. They believed in a Deity who was all powerful and created everything. However, they also believed in evil spirits that caused all the problems to human beings, and to appease such spirits they made offerings. Since the later part of 19th century, the Angamis have embraced Christianity, and today majority of them are Christians adhering to various denominations, such as Baptist, Catholic, Revival, Pentecostal, Assembly of God, Seven Day Adventist etc. The Angami had an informal council of elders who were selected on the basis of their age and experience. Each khel had a representative who was chosen by the men of the khel. Women had no say in these matters. Disputes were dealt with by lengthy arguments of both the parties in front of the council and other villagers. The cases were decided according to the customary law.

Sekrenyi (also known as Phousanyi) is the main festival of the Angamis. It is a ten day festival held in December by the Southern Angamis and in February by the Western and Northern Angamis to mark the beginning of the lunar year and seek blessing so that the ensuing seasons bring good fortune. The festival is celebrated by performing a circle of ritual and ceremony, the first being 'Kizhie'. A few drops of rice water which are taken from the jug called "Zumho" are poured on leaves and placed at the posts of the house by the lady of the household. The first day begins with the men going to the village well to bath. At night, the young men

clean the well. Some youth from the village guard the well and no one is allowed to fetch water after cleaning. Women are restricted to touch the well water at this time. And so the women make sure that water is fetched for the household before then. Early the next morning, the men especially the youth of the village perform the washing ritual at the cleaned well. They young men wear two new shawls called the white Mhoushü and the black Lohe and sprinkle water on their chests, knees, and right arms. They even sprinkle water on their spears and guns. This ceremony is called Dzüseva which means touching the sleeping water. It symbolizes washing away all their ills and misfortunes. On their return from the well, a rooster is sacrificed by throttling it with bare hands. The sacrifice is considered as a good omen when the right leg falls over the left leg as the rooster falls down. The innards of the fowl are then hung outside the house and the village elders to inspect. And the sacrificial rooster is cooked at a separate new hearth using new utensils. The Thekra Hie is said to be the best part of the festival. It is the time when the young people of the village sit together and sing traditional songs throughout the day. Jugs of rice beer and plates of meat are placed before the members. The youth goes for hunting on the seventh day. On the eighth day, the festival is celebrated with the bridge pulling or gate pulling is and inter-village visits are exchanged. Until the close of the festival no one goes to the fields to work. The young unmarried girls with closely shaven heads sit down singing tunes of bygone ages, recreating a past where no one dared to touch the human soul.

The idea of the existence of spirits is widely prevalent among the Angami Nagas. Natural objects like a huge and strange looking stone is taken to be haunted place of the spirits and as such it becomes an important object of worship. The Angamis believe that stones can even cohabit and breed at certain times. Most villages have a 'spirited stone' called 'Kiputsie' where hunting ceremonies are conducted. The names of some spirits in the Angami belief system are given below:

Kesüdi	- The giant ferocious spirit
Ketsierho	- The spirit of stone
Rothse	- The killer
Rapu	- Ghost of Nightmare
Mechiemo	- Gate keeper of death
Chükhio	- God of beasts

Ruopfü	- Men's spirit
Telepfü	- Spirit of intellect
Miaweno	- Goddess of blessing
Dzürhu	- Goddess of water creatures

1.10. Southern Angami

Japfüphikimia or Southern Angamis as known today inhabit a contiguous geographical area situated in the foothills of Mount Japfü, the second highest peak of Nagaland with thirteen government recognized villages. The link among the villages have been unique in many ways with the generations descending as offsprings of a proud common ancestry. Their forefathers have been said to have migrated from Makhel leaving traces of evolvement and humane development following a trail spread around the vicinity of Mount Japfü. Southern Angamis, like any other tribal society, passed on all information by word of mouth from one generation to another. Therefore, historical accounts are metamorphosed into magnificent tales, and they are communicated down the generations. The practice of our ancestors to correlate any significant events in their lives with nature and using it as a symbol makes for the rich folklore.

Southern Angamis are known as *Zuonuo- Keyhnuo*. Sanyü (Sanyü 28) says that they are the descendants of two brothers named *Zuonuo* and *Keyhnuo*. In the process of migration and expansion, they formed ten villages. These villages are Kigwema, Viswema, Jakhama, Khuzama, Kidima, Kezoma, Phesama, Pfüchama, Mima and Mitelepe. Kezobasa, the eleventh village later emerged from Kezoma. The area inhabited by the *Zuonuo- Keyhnuo* or the Southern Angamis is a compact region, with clearly identifiable natural boundaries on all sides. Kohima village and Kohima town lie to the north. In the west, the Southern Angami area is bounded by the lofty Japfu range of mountains. Some of the eminent peaks in this range are Japfu (3,894 metres above sea level), Ezupu (3,056 metres), Khuno (2,887 metres) and Traharo or Terhazu (2,613 metres). To the South of the Southern Angami area lies the territory of the Mao tribe. Dzü river, called Doyang as it leaves the Angami area, and which rises near Mao marks the eastern boundary. From west to east, the area slopes from the watershed of the Japfu range towards the Khwiru river, to rise again to the Kidima range, and then again slopes rather steeply to the Dzü

river. At the Western edge, the area consists of the steep slopes of the Japfu range, but the slopes become gentler as they near the Dzü. There are several spurs of the Japfu range jutting out towards the east, with mountain torrents and streams rushing in between them to form the Khwiru, which collects all the waters draining from the Japfu range, and which, in its turn, joins the Dzü near Chakabama. As rainfall is heavy, these streams never become fully dry. Describing this area, Godwin- Austen (quoted in Elwin 578-588) wrote in 1872:

No part of the Barrail is more beautiful than that between Kigwema and Sopvomah, looking up the lateral glacial gorges with their frowning, steep sides , running up to the crest of the Barrail, which is for the greater part a wall of grey rock and precipice. Dense forest covers the slopes, but from their steepness many are bare, breaking the usual monotony of the dark- coloured mountain scenery. Where the steep rise in the slope commences, the spurs are at once more level, and are terraced for rice cultivation; not a square yard of available land has been left and the system of irrigation canals is well laid out. I have never, even in the better- cultivated parts of the Himalayas, seen terrace cultivation carried to such perfection, and it gives a peculiarly civilized appearance to the country (Elwin 576-578).

A typical Southern Angami village has a well defined residential site, usually located on the saddle or ridge of a mountain spur. Such a site was obviously chosen for defensive reasons as in the past inter village feuds could arise at the least provocation. Given the nature of the residential site, no visitor or stranger can approach the village undetected even when he or she is at some distance. The residential site is surrounded by some small tracts of forests, bamboo groves and small patches of kitchen gardens. Next to them are the terrace fields. On the higher slopes, where it is not possible to construct irrigation channels, are the jhum fields.

Agriculture forms the dominant economy of the people since time immemorial. It pictures a type of agricultural society having strong kinship ties with family as the basis of social organization. The economy of the people being agrarian, possession of surplus rice was the sign of richness. Rice was grown not only for consumption. It was also considered as the most important possession to gain recognition in the society. The status of a person in the community was determined mainly by the amount of rice he stored.

The Southern Angami village is a compact community and the limit of habitation is marked with stone walls and gates. The gates served not only as a line of demarcation but also

for the purpose of defense. The gateway is closed by a massive wooden door which is hewn out of a single tree trunk and during those days it was shut at night to prevent the sudden attack of enemies. The door is often decorated with carvings of human heads and animals which represent captured enemy heads and the skulls of animals sacrificed after a raid. The door is closed from inside in such a way that it can be well barricaded in case of an attack. The name of the village is suitably chosen from the peculiarities of the site, nature of the site, incidental place and the founder's name. Nomenclature of village is carefully given otherwise misfortune befalls upon the inhabitants of the village. The usual practice of naming the village is that it is given by the wise man, priestess or sorcerer in ritualistic perspectives. The naming of a village is given once for all and it carries the identity of its inhabitants. Each village has a well defined territory which consists of both the cultivable and uncultivable land in it. Inter village boundary is marked by moveable and immovable objects. The moveable objects are marked by stones, while the immovable objects are formed by a river, stream, ridges and hillock.

Dress and ornaments represents the aesthetic aspects of their culture. Most prominent item of the dress is the shawl. The shawl of a man who had performed the feast of merit is different from that of an ordinary villager. Likewise, the shawl of a warrior is different from which is commonly worn by the villagers. The pattern and ornaments speaks about certain achievements and also represents the identity of the individual. Success in warfare or feasting are displayed in the ornaments and dress patterns.

1.10.1: Traditions followed for setting up of a new village

The villages in the Southern Angami area, like the other tribal Naga society are invariably divided into a micro administrative unit called 'khel' or 'sector'. There are some villages, where the division of a village into khel is done according to the clan or pedigree. The khels are mostly divided according to the geographical setting, separate dialect speaking group, arrangement of separate clan, population and land pressure. One of the possible characteristic of the khel arrangement is due to uneven distribution of the landscape, since the ancestors chose to live on the summit of a hill, the village is divided into upper and lower khels. The division of a village into khels varies from village to village, according to the population, landscape, number of clans living in the village and number of dialects spoken in the village. A small village have

two or three khels, while big villages have four to five khels. Every separate khel is marked by the gate and Morung, and there is competitive spirit among the members of the khel. The division of a village is not maintained with a fence or ditch, but in order to prevent inter khel land dispute. The boundary between khels is usually marked with the help of a stream, boulder stones, hillock or geographical settings. Each village had a very strong youth dormitory or morung system. Each khel had a dormitory and these had reciprocal or obligatory relationships with each other and even with dormitories of neighbouring villages. The members of the dormitory controlled the political and juridical activities of the khel. The Nagas followed what is known as the segmentary system: a Naga's first obligation was to his morung or khel and then to the village. There have been instances in the past when khels of the same village were at war with each other.

Another striking feature of the village is its age-set system. Every khel has a number of age sets which are named after their patrons and its membership is for life. In this system, the term for age sets holds the same meaning as the English word 'peer'. It is not uncommon to find references to one's age set during conversations. Every age set has a leader and a committee which decides its actions. During the weeding and transplantation of paddy, members of the younger age sets work for a nominal payments in the fields. The age sets also contribute labour towards cleaning the khel ponds, clearing the paths to the fields and are active in social services pertaining to their khel. Each khel of a village has its youth club, council of elders and a women's group besides an officially appointed village committee comprising of a chairman, vice chairman and a group of members who are responsible for the development of the village using the funds given to them by the state government. In addition, the villages have continued with the system of Gaonbura. The British had introduced the system to induce some uniformity in the village political structure which would facilitate the governance of the villages. Under the British rule, they were responsible for the collection of house tax from the villagers and for supplying porters and rations at a nominal cost. The Southern Angami region comprising the thirteen villages have certain common features in terms of their social and cultural history.

In the case of Kigwema village, the manner in which it was instituted was described in the village council monograph through a committee constituted in 1959. The same is roughly translated and paraphrased in Tenyidie as follows:

-A select group representing each clan is deputed to conduct preliminary survey of potential areas.

-Based on their report and feedback about the location, land availability, water resources for arable agricultural purposes etc, a decision was taken.

-Once the new location identified is agreed upon, few key personnel were chosen to perform specific roles in ceremonies and rituals. They were Kemevo-u (chief Priest), Tsiekra-u and Liedepfü.

Kemevou (Chief Priest)

One of the oldest amongst the Thevomia moiety is chosen to be the Kemevou, who will pronounce and perform all rituals and ceremonies for the village. The chief Priest, besides his role as a titular head for all religious practices, does not have any administrative authority or judiciary power over the people, which are democratically decided by the 'peyus' in a loosely formed Council of elders comprising of representatives of each clan and Thino(Khel)

Tsiekrau

One of the oldest amongst the Thepau or Thepmia moiety is chosen to be the Tsiekrau, whose role is to conduct and perform rituals concerning initiations of agricultural practices including the sowing season. Subject to such initiation rites performed by the Tsiekrau, then and only then, can the people start sowing grain during the season.

Liedepfü

From amongst the Thevomia moiety, one of the oldest woman is chosen to be the Liedepfü, who is responsible to perform rites of initiation for harvest of crops and gathering. The rituals are observed by the Liedepfü who fasts for five days, and following that, the people can start harvesting crops and gather in their produce.

It is apparent that the process of establishment of a new village follows strict adherence to the principles and rituals performed which involves the complementary moieties of both Thevo and Thepamia, to ensure general wellbeing, progress, human productivity and equitable prosperity amongst the population. The ceremony invariably involves sacrifice of either an ox or a cockerel, for propitiation and invoking God's blessings for good omen, good health, wealth, long life and general well-being. The sacrifice is followed by three days genna during which no one is allowed to work in the field. Traditionally, it was believed without doubt that, curses in a variety of forms

will befall anyone who breaks or violates the genna. Conversely, blessings will come to all who obey and follow.

1.10.2 Indigenous Festivals

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for the villagers in the Southern Angami area. The people practice two main types of farming. The first is known as terrace cultivation and the second is called Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation. Throughout the year, different festivals are celebrated with much vigor, enthusiasm, fun and full of gaily, which are closely associated and revolve around the agricultural practice. Festivals form an integral part of the village which is celebrated basing on the lunar calendar. The festivals (tenyi) showcase the rich cultural heritage of the village with indigenous songs, dances, games, rituals and narration of the folklores by the village elders. Apart from the grand fest and merry making, the festivals are being celebrated to seek blessings from the creator, it is also a time for prayers where various complex rituals and rites are being performed. People pray for the prosperous and bountiful harvest, peace and harmony of the village and region. Some of the major festivals celebrated throughout the year are:

Tsakonyi- It is celebrated during the month of February. The festival is also known as the festival of husband and wife, which is celebrated for a period of two days. This festival is associated with a chain of rituals and rites. On the first of the festival a special ritual 'kide' (blessing of the house) is observed. It is done by the mother or the eldest female member of the family. Women folk are tabooed to take bath on this particular day. After the festival is over, various seeds are sown in the seed bed. Such as oshe (job's tear), sakocii (maize), oso(rice), otii(bears), pitushe (cucumber), lomiishe (pumpkin) etc . The festival is celebrated with great splendor, merry making, drinking, singing and dances.

Keriinyi- Keriinyi is celebrated for the preparation of the paddy transplantation during the month of April for a duration of three days. It is marked by singing songs, dances, feast and narration of folklores. Preparation of zutho (rice beer is undertaken weeks before the actual celebration of the festival.) While the paddy transplantation is labour intensive, as vast majority of the field works are being done manually rather than utilization of any machines or animals. It is also a period for the villagers to take proper rest and prepare themselves both physically and spiritually by

invoking God's blessing for the successful paddy transplantation. During the olden days, it is also said that after the celebration of *keriinyi*, if one does not carry 'onhu' (a thatch material to cover the body from rain and sun), they are regarded as lazy people.

Chiinyi- The word 'chii' means millet and 'nyi' means festival. *Chünyi* therefore, is the festival of millets. It is the post paddy transplantation festival celebrated in the month of July. During the olden days, the significance of the *chiinyi* was celebrated to commemorate the harvest of *ochii* (millet). It is also a season of merry making and entertainment after a long and stressful labour work in the field. It is usually celebrated only after everyone completes the paddy transplantation. On the fourth day of the festival, a significant ritual take place. It is called 'oviimeta'. 'ovii' literally means chicken and 'meta' means release. On this day a healthy and clean cock is being released behind the *khavii* (village gate). It symbolizes sacrifice and is regarded as an important ritual of the festival. On the same day of *ovii meta*, 'chanjo' (traditional gun fire competition) is observed, which is an important event of the village, participated by the adult male population. Various other activities and traditional games such as 'phiemetsa', are done which is similar to that of the modern fete day. Outsiders or people from other villages are not allowed to enter the village gate on this particular day.

Khezhienyi- *Khezhienyi*, the fourth festival of the year is being celebrated for a period of 3 days, during the month of september. It is a festival for the preparation of harvest by invoking God's blessing for success and bountiful harvest. Soon after the festival, 'Lii-de' (blessing of the crops) is done by the 'tsako' the custodian of the traditional rituals. 'Tothii' meaning invoking God's blessing for good harvest and to prevent the occurrence of any natural disaster from further damage of the crops. It is observed for five days. During this period the people are tabooed to undertake any manual work.

Teriinyi- *Teriinyi* festival is celebrated in the month of October for a good and successful harvest. It is a festival of thanksgiving for the rich harvest gathered in the granary. It is the fifth festival of the year. It is also regarded as the longest festival of the year, celebrated for seven days. It is a time for relaxation after the toil and intensive labour work in the field. One of the significant events observed during this festival is that the newly married couples received gifts in

the form of cooked meat and 'zotho'. The best 'zotho' is brewed and brought along with the best part of the meat as a sign of appreciation and acknowledgment to the newly married couples. During the concluding days of the festival, another ritual is observed which is known as 'va-ate' which means to decrease one's appetite. The forefathers were very hard working people, they had a self sufficient economy, maximum effort and time were spent in undertaking their agricultural activities. It is the priority of every men and women folk to work very hard rather than spending resources or money on food and eatable items.

Sekrenyi- It is the premiere festival celebrated in the month of December/January. 'Soke' literally means sanctification while 'nyi' which stands for festival. It is a period to celebrate in jubilation for the successful year after undertaking various activities and manual works throughout the year. It is also a festival for the people to prepare themselves in order to start a new prosperous new year. Various complex rituals and rites are being strictly done during this festival – 'Opho mesa' which symbolize cleaning and sanctification of oneself both physically and metaphysical. This particular ritual is done on the first day of 'soke' by the male population of the village. Early in the morning the men folk goes to the village well and bathe themselves which symbolize that all their troubles, bad luck and misfortunes have been purified by the water. A series of rituals and rites are performed to obtain skills and strengths during the war with their enemies, to gain victory in games. To ensure good health for the coming year. As part of (Opho mesa) 'thürito' (I will hunt wild animals), Terigito (Be a good warrior), Sonalü gito (Hunt or defeat my enemies) are being uttered by the male population of the village. They also make new hearth and cook their own food, all untouched by the women.

'Meliko' peer groups both men and women gather together and tune themselves to the melodious folk songs, dance, feast on the local brew and best meat. The men folk dressed in traditional gear perform traditional warrior dance and war cry. The women folk also wear the traditional attire , jewelleries, ornaments and join the men folk in celebrating the festival. Various traditional games such as phieda (dwarf bamboo competition), tedwemesü (high kick), kene (wrestling), thulova etc., are played by both men and women folk during the festival. The rich tradition and cultural heritage of the forefathers are deeply treasured, remembered and celebrated even today. However with the dawn of Christianity and modernization much of the rights and rituals are no longer observed by people. Nevertheless, the above mentioned festivals

are still observed and celebrated with much enthusiasm and nostalgia, in preserving the rich cultural heritage inherited by the forefathers.

1.11. Description of the studied villages

1.11.1. Phesama village

The village of Phesama lies to the south of Kohima, the capital of Nagaland and 8 Kms away from the capital. It is the first village in the Southern Angami region that one comes across when one journeys on the national highway 2 towards Imphal, Manipur. The name *Phesama* literally means ‘ new place’. According to oral tradition, the village was established by Merhivi and Sileo who had come from Kigwema village at around 1300 AD. After the village was established To-o, tacü and Seikha joined Merhivi and Sileo in the new village. Today, Phesama village comprise four khels namely Viyiema khel, Makhuma khel, Seikhama khel and Merama khel. As with any village or settlement that has its peculiarities, Phesama village and its land also have certain peculiarities that are unique, such as:

- I) Village gate, Dormitory and stone sitting place
- II) Blessed stone

Ngelo:

This is a magical /blessed stone which lies at the base of a natural pool beneath a water fall. ‘Ngelo’ means ‘that which does not move or cannot be moved’. During the driest season when the water level goes down the tip of the stone is seen. When touched, the stone is easily shakable, but no one can lift it out of the water. On both sides of the waterfall of ‘Ngelo’ , nature has provided eyes. In addition, animals and insects guard the stone. These guardians are :

- i) Snake.
- ii) Tiger (Khuki and Rokhu).
- iii) Rat.
- iv) Bees (pfhiyo).

During the rainy season, it is said that the sound/ noise of the water fall can be heard up to Chedema village. Also from the water vapours of the waterfall, rainbow is formed at which time none can go near the site. It is said that people in the East (Chakesang area) see ‘Ngelo’ as a flashing light. Therefore, they came and tried to take it away, but were unsuccessful.

III) Lakes

i) Nuzüza:

This is a natural lake. It is not big but it has occupied land that would yield 7(seven) cane barns of paddy. During internecine village wars, there lived a Phesama villager who had extraordinarily powerful eyesight. He would ascend to a high level ground and look out. With his powerful eyesight, he could see Kohima villagers as they went to and fro from their fields. A detailed discussion is narrated on the chapter based on folktales.

IV) Shükheocü

This is a knife sharpening stone (pecütsie) lying on the top of a hillock. The stone is good looking and is just like ordinary knife sharpening stones that are in usual use in our homes. Hunters go to see this stone in order to divine their chances of success during the year. If the stone is found to be smooth and clean, the hunters of the year would be successful, but if the stone is covered with moss and grass it would indicate unsuccessful hunting. This is why hunters look at Shükheocü to plan out their hunts.

V) Thenyü

This is the name of a hillock where there is a standing stone of the spirits. The stone has a natural clear hole close to its ears. If anyone were to block this hole with stones, sticks or leaves, violent storms of wind and rain would come and devastate Phesama. That is why no one is allowed to block the hole in this stone.

1.11.2. Viswema village.

Viswema village is considered to be the third biggest village in Asia. It is situated at 22 kms South of Kohima , the capital of the state of Nagaland. The village is divided into 4 khels, which, in the alphabetical order, are kirhazouma, Pavoma, Rachüma and Zherima. The village is bounded by Khwil in the East, Zeliang land in the west, Kehol in the North and Chokwil in the south. The meaning of the village name “Viswema” has two words, “viswe” means “very good” and “mi” stands for “people”. Putting these two words together it becomes “viswemi” literally meaning “Very Good People”. It is now officially known as “Viswema”.

Till the year 1927, Viswema village as a whole had only one religion, “Pfutsana” (ancestral religion). The people of Viswema believed in the existence of a Supreme Being called “Okemenüpu” (God or Giver of life). All misfortunes are attributed to bad spirit called “Terümi”. When misfortunes occurred they performed various rites and rituals in the belief that such rituals appeased the Terümi and that the bad spirit would leave the affected person and the misfortunes were overcome. The 2nd World War (1939-1945) had not spared Viswema village. It is told that a couple of years before the coming of the Japanese to Viswema, the British had set up their camp or outpost at Kipizwü and their rations were air dropped. But communication between the British and Viswemi could not have taken place without interpreters from the village. The ceaseless war continued in Kohima and occasionally the Allied Forces dropped bombs and fired machine guns at the Japanese in Viswema from the planes. So the people dug trenches in the nearby fields and gardens to save their lives and property and also left the village to hide in the jungles. Apart from these difficulties, the people were asked to collect rations for the Japanese army and fodder for their horses. And the villagers were forced to kill their domestic animals, especially pigs and chickens, and collect green vegetables from the jungles as food for the soldiers. The Japanese had a special liking for the wild vegetable called “wakraba” (Gakra) which was found abundantly in Viswema. In most cases, they paid for their food. The war affected Viswema village very badly and the economy of the people was seriously damaged.

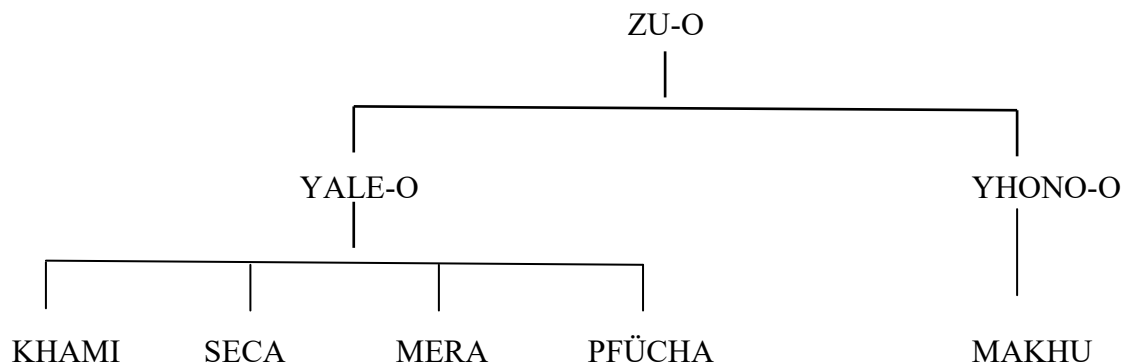


Fig.1.1. Village Gate, Viswema village

1.11.3 Kigwema village.

Kigwema, one of the oldest villages in the Angami area, therefore the village is referred to as *KIGWEMA* which means ‘ki’ stands for house, ‘Gwe’ means ‘occupy’. This is based on the narrative that the present Kigwemians occupied the houses vacated by the original settlers. It is bounded by Phesama and Pfuchama villages in the North, Jakhama village in the south, Mima village in the East and Dzükou valley in the west. Kigwema village in the present set up comprised of five thinos (khels) namely, Mera, Kipho-seca, Khami, Makhu and Seca. It is believed that, the Kigwema people originated from the patriarch Zu-o, whose descendants were Yaleo and Yhono-o. Tradition has it that the eldest descendants gave rise to Thevo moiety and from the youngest- Thepa moiety, the two lineal units required in the dynamics of a village establishment. Yaleo Thevo fathered four sons, Khami, Seca, Mera and Pfucha. The Makhu clan descended from Yhono-o Thepa. While Pfucha Thevo migrated to set up Pfuchama village, from the remaining four progenitors, the Seca Thevo clan split up into two subsets that eventually resulted in the five Thinos in the current set up of the village.

The genealogical line of the village is illustrated below:



The village is considered as the dispersal point of all the present day villages of the Angami tribe such as Phesama, Jotsoma, Khonoma, Mezoma, Zhadima, Mima, Pfüchama, Kiruphema, Thekrüzhünama, Socünoma, Rüzaphema, Chümoukedima, Mengujüma, Piphema, Pherima, Medziphema, Chawüma, Seithekiema, Tsiepama, Viphoma, Gariphema, Chiechama, Phekerkriema, Dihoma, Kijümetouma, Tuophema, Nerhema, Meriema, Tsiesema, Thizama, Chiedema, Rüsoma, their offshoots in the Chakhro Angami area of Dimapur district. Besides, some groups have moved to Sema, Chakhesang, Zeliang and Rengma regions.



Fig 1.2. Stone inscription at Kigwema village



Fig. 1.3. Village Gate, Kigwema

1.11.4 Jakhama village.

Jakhama village is a very old Angami village with many legendary stories attached to her. It is situated in the Southern part of Nagaland, along National Highway 2 and 16 km away from Kohima, the capital. There is no written record of the traditions and legendary stories of our ancestors. The traditions and stories are passed down orally from generation to generation down the years. Jakhama village is rested on a low lying hillock, dwarfed by the exotic and lofty mountains, “chen-hicie, Thübo / Chieyiezo and Terozu” of the Japfü range in the west. The remaining three directions of the village are surrounded by perennial streams- “Kehorü, Chichorü, Tebwükorü” that merges and forms “zarü” or the “Dzüü” river. Towards the North is Kigwema, Mima and Chakhabama villages, towards the south is Viswema village and toward the East is Kidima and Kezoma villages. The village is located at an altitude of about 1550 metres

with a geographical area of about 10312 acres. It is richly covered with sub tropical type of forest and vegetation.

Jakhama village has seen its part of head hunting and also in bringing about peace and harmony among warring villages. Owing to their reputation as skilled and daring warriors, along with quality of good statesmanship, people were inclined to honour and obey decrees passed by them. This caused change in the people that came to their influence, from the fierce head hunting warriors to peace loving cultivators. It is said that whenever some groups of people or villages were unable to settle disputes, they usually approached Jakhama villagers to pass judgement for them. And the elders and warriors of Jakhama village would give their judgement, urging both parties of the warring villages to restrain from killing one another. Literally speaking, the reign or rather, influence of Jakhama village warriors extended even to Chakhesang areas, like Lozaphuhu, Phomi etc. The stones erected to indicate their reign or territorial influence stand to this day.

CHAPTER- II

TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS: MORUNG AS A MEDIUM IN COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

2. Morung as a traditional institution

2.1 Units in Naga society

The Naga way of life is predominantly governed by community participation. The village is the nexus of every individual's life and every occasion, right from the birth to the death of an individual, is regulated by the presence and participation of the larger community. Traditional Naga villages are invariably sub-divided into a micro administrative unit called *khel* or sector. There are some villages, where the division of a village into *khel* is done according to the clan or pedigree. In Naga villages, the arrangement of *khels* are mostly divided according to the geographical setting, separate dialect speaking group, arrangement of separate clan, population and land pressure. One of the possible characteristics of the *khel* arrangement is due to uneven distribution of the landscape, since the ancestors of the Nagas chose to live on the summit of a hill, the village is divided into upper and lower *khels*.

The village serves as an important unit which links every individual member and family to the larger social group. The participatory village management is inclusive of the individual's involvement in the overall functioning of the village, such as, preparation of fences for village defense, making the log-drum, and preparations for important festivals, as well as, creating a support for the domestic life of every member of the community. The private spheres of life are dominated by various rituals in which the community participation plays a very important role. Every man constructs his own house once his marriage is finalized and shifts there with his wife after the wedding rituals are completed. Members participated in every aspect of life, right from waging wars against enemy villages, head hunting activities, celebrations of festivals to performance of *genna* and other rituals. Even though every family was self sufficient in their own way, but every activity of an individual had the involvement of the community. Members of clans were bound together by a common identity which made the distinction between the public and private spheres disappear. For the Nagas, the individual, the family and

the community were intricately connected. Various practices of the past, such as, compulsory dormitory life among most of the Naga tribes helped in establishing this bonding as well as educating the youth about the customs and traditions to be followed lifelong.

Though there are many different Naga tribes each having its own distinct language and cultural practices, one common feature among all the tribes is the practice of disseminating knowledge through community houses. These were mainly for the male members but also served as common meeting places. The elders were responsible for their cultural initiation. The basic concept of this system was that the elder members of the community taught and guided the younger ones by sharing their knowledge and wisdom gained through experience. MacIver and Page used the term 'institution' as an established form or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity. According to them, whenever associations are created in a society certain rules and procedures follow the dispatch of common business and for the regulation of the members in their relationship with each other. As reflected in the above definition, these scholars consider institution as formally agreed upon bodies articulated and enforced through numerous traditional values, which have been universally accepted by the groups. Institutions according to these writers, are functional bodies which regulate the socio- political communication of the group.

The villagers were basically animists. For the people, the universe was filled with innumerable spirits whose actions influence the life and outcome of the daily activities. These spirits are everywhere and capable of bringing untold misery and ill luck to those who unwittingly offend them. They can ruin crops, bring disease, death and unexpected misfortunes. The people, therefore tried their best to placate the angry spirits, ward off the evil ones and please the spirits that could be done by rituals, offerings, prayers and sacrifices. No steps would be taken without consulting the spirits. Various customs, observances, religious ceremonies, rituals, beliefs and practices became a part of the life of the villagers. Historically, Angami religion was known as 'tsana' meaning way of ancestors that was characterized by belief in spirits. The Chief known as Kepenuopfü was considered the creator and supreme being of all living creatures. The literal meaning of 'kepenuopfü' is thus simply 'birth spirit'. The Angamis also had deities as 'terhoma' which means spirits, but when the missionaries came and translated, the word 'terhoma' was termed as 'satan'. This made the idea of all the terhoma to be considered as evil in the minds of the people, even when some of them possess benevolent qualities.

2.2. Morung as an institution

The Morung or the Bachelor Dormitory system was considered an essential part of Naga Life. A naga village was never complete without a Morung. Soon after the establishment of a village, a morung was set up. One of the earliest definition of the word ‘morung’ is given by Edward Winter Clark, the first American Baptist missionary to the Naga Hills in the Ao-Naga Dictionary compiled in 1911. According to him, the word ‘morung’ is derived from the Assamese word which means ‘a big tree drum’. In the olden days, it was the custom for the Nagas to keep a drum made of a big tree near the bachelors dormitory. As the big tree drum was found in Naga villages near the boys dormitory, the Assamese people called the dormitory itself morung. In the Naga context, morung popularly refers to the bachelors dormitory even though some tribes have dormitory separately for girls. It was the central piece in the village. The morung is typically a huge building which dominates a Naga Village, resplendent with carvings representing hornbills, tigers, mithuns and human heads and sometimes with projecting barge boards resembling wings or horns. It is a place where skulls of human and animal were kept as relics. It is regarded as the most magnificent house in a village. In Nagaland, apart from the general usage of the term, each Naga tribe has its own name for it such as the *Ban* among the Konyak tribe, *Kichuki* in Angami, *Argu* in Ao, *Chumpo* in Lotha, *Apuki* in Sumi, *Renshe* in Rengma, *Chittiche* in Chakhesang, *Haku* in Chang, *Pang* in Phom, *Awikhuh* in Pochury, *Khiangyam* in Yimchungru, *Pon* in Khiamnuingan, *Herangki* in Zeliang and *Sigtang* in Sangtam.

In the Angami villages, the khels are maintained accordingly by the clans. Each khel is identified by a separate Morung. The members of other khels are allowed to visit the Morung of another khel, which indicated the gesture of inter –kel relationship. Though the village is divided into different khels, yet there was a real bond between the members of the khels, and at times when the village is in real threat, they invariably became as one to identify their enemies and collectively fought against it. The members of the khels are further structured into ‘Peli’/ Peer group/Age group. Peli is a blend of boys and girls. They help one another in every possible ways. The entire village fully participated in the celebration of religious festivals, marriages and other cultural events. Each khel has their own respective Morung. Like the other Naga tribal villages, the Morung is a place where the boys gather together to sleep. It performed varied

activities. The dormitories served as the appropriate platform to pass on the tradition, culture and beliefs of the younger generation. The morung cannot be regarded as a simple hostel style dormitory fashioned for unmarried boys to live in. It is indeed the very foundation and pillar of Naga custom and tradition and helped in keeping the society a close knit one. Thus Chattopadhyaya has this to say on Morung:

It is here that the foundation of each generation are laid, moulded and built up. The growing youth is taught the meaning and significance of traditions, told of the valour and heroic deeds of the earlier generations and that it is in the glory of the past that the seeds of the future have to sprout (Chattopadhyaya, k 83).

The morung forms the most important social institution in the ancient Angami society. It is a place where the unmarried young people are trained up to live and behave within the norms of the society. It was not only a place to rest after the day's work but also an institution to initiate the youth into various aspects of the society. The senior members carried out the functioning of the morung with the advice of the elders. Education was brought through traditional dormitories called Morungs or age-group houses. The way of the tribe were taught under the tutelage of elders or parent. The morungs served as educational centers equipping the young with the values and ways of their culture. The individual's close association with the larger community is visible in every walk of his life. The important occasions are marked by the traditions and cultural norms that he need to strictly adhere to. Dormitory life in the traditional village played a very important role in the formation of a person's identity. It was customary for all young boys and unmarried men after a particular age to sleep in their respective dormitory. Here at the morung, the youth receive valuable lessons in leadership. Life in the dormitory shaped the personality of the individual and inducted him to the community culture and belief system. Every member has its own responsibilities assigned and the members are supposed to perform those. It carries a life-long significance.

Morung as an institution can be seen in two important aspects based on their functions. The outer part of the building serves as *thelhou* or the meeting place for men which also houses the fireplace. The inner section is *kichuzhu* or the sleeping place where all the boys and young men sleep at night. The life of an individual is shaped by the traditions and customs of his larger social group that he is inducted right from his childhood days. The dormitory life teaches the

importance of leading a community life. The traditional way of life incorporated all aspects of development of the community. One of the most important characteristics is that it is a community centered tradition. The community takes precedence over the individual who is dependent on the community for survival, and in the same way, the community is responsible for its individual members. Therefore in the preliterate life, education was a community affair.

Dormitory life is seen as the very foundation of community bonding among the people. The essence of brotherhood and responsibility towards the entire clan are nurtured in young minds right from the very beginning of their life in the dormitory. Parents lay utmost emphasis on the formation of the character of their children based on traditional culture and principles and thus, prioritize on their real-life education in the dormitories. Even a child who was deprived of parental guidance due to deaths or other circumstances could still learn about the ways of the community through this sharing. It must be considered that the morung was the centre of social, religious and cultural life. No social life in the village could be arranged or managed without the help of the morung members. All announcements whether of meeting, death or even of impending danger and war is made at the morung. In some tribes, this is done by sounding the gong. Skulls were hung in the morung and pillars were carved with striking representatives of tigers, human figures, animal figures. Life in the dormitories was crucial for the Nagas as the education that they received there was important for their overall development. In the Morungs, the boys got all kinds of training in *..the art of fighting, discipline, obedience, courage, patriotism, wood-cutting and carving, carpentry, basket making, dao, spears, and other utensil. They also learnt traditional songs, love songs, customs and all kinds of social activities* (Jamir 29). Those who do not get married continue with further training and sleep in the dormitory compulsorily.

The Morung serves as a guard house and a learning center. It is usually constructed at the Village entrance or a spot from where the village can be guarded most effectively. It enable the members to watch and protect their village from sudden raids and attack of the enemies. The shape and the structure of the morung varies from tribe to tribe and from village to village. Its size also varies from khel to khel depending on the size of the population. Fantastic carvings embellished the open porch of the morung. The inside of the house contains the cubicle and the fire place. Hunting is an activity that the villagers like to do. Men of the village go for hunting in

the jungle. When they hunt animals, people come together and have feast. The flesh in the head of the animal is removed and the skull is boiled and hung outside the Morung while the other parts are cooked. During the days of head hunting, the head of the enemy is hung above the bed with celebration. Outside the morung, there is a large wooden platform on which the young men sit and relax. An elliptical form of a wide open entrance place gives a fancy look to the Morung.

Functions of the members were divided among the morung members according to their age. The junior group was generally entrusted with the task of collecting fuels from the jungle, for use in the morung at night and rainy days. The intermediate group had the important function of helping the people of the village in distress. They were expected to assist the senior group in administrative works. The senior group has the over all control of the members of the morung. If anybody fails to fulfill the work allotted to him, he was punished by generally allotting him double the work he had failed to do. Obedience and discipline are strictly enforced in the morung.

Prior to the construction of the Morung, it happened that the boys congregate in one of the houses of the boys house which is spacious enough to sleep together. They chose a house which is located in the middle of the khel and is high, near to the fort so that information can be passed easily and expeditiously. For instance, the Merama boys in Phesama village used to gather in the house of an elder which was in the heart of the khel. Gradually, the boys felt the need of a bigger house. Thus, the community came together for the construction of Morung.

Morung is accessible the whole day. Evenings at the dormitory were exciting events when they exchanged stories. The boys liked to come and spent their time together at the Morung. It became a recreational place for them after a tiresome day. The boys had so many stories to swap so they never slept early on dormitory nights. The members of 'Pelikro' gather in the evening at the Morung. Sometimes they bring rice beer and meat and have carousal. At night, the boys are advised and mandated about the work to be done the following day. When they woke, they fold their sleeping mats and some of them left their mats on the bed if they intended to come back and sleep that night. The others leave with their mats folded up under their arms. In some khel like Khamima of kigwema village there are two morungs. Both of these morungs were fully occupied by the boys.

The institution of morung is one of the most dominant features of the social structure of the Nagas. Besides the family, it was the most valued educational set up of the Nagas. On attaining the age of puberty, young boys were admitted to the dormitory. It was a place that guided the people and communities to uphold their identities. Noted Naga scholar Shisak pointed out that no human society can exist and grow without education of some kind. And Nagas were no different. Since they did not have a tribal or inter tribal organization to deal with the needs of the tribes as a whole, each village became entirely responsible for its own economic, social, spiritual and political needs. To fulfill such needs, it required that the young be trained and taught within the village community. One such center where training was given in Naga society was the morung. Morung constitutes significant social and cultural institution which also serves as the basic educational foundation. Much of the Naga culture, its customs and traditions has been transmitted from generation to generation through the medium of folk music and dance, folk tales and oral historical traditions, carvings of figures on stones and woods and designs on clothes. Much of this teaching- learning process took place at the dormitories.

No women were allowed to come or enter the male dormitories. No self respecting man ever revealed the talk of the morung to their wives and mothers. Morung was an out of bounds for women. According to beliefs and customs, if a woman enters the morung, it renders the entire village unlucky. The bad luck may come in different ways. If it is the season of chase and hunting, the huntsmen will hunt in vain and not be able to obtain any gain. The huntsmen because of defiling of the morung by a woman would return disappointed. If the village happened to be at war with another village or comes under sudden attack by another village, it was sure to be defeated or at least suffer casualties. Such was the belief on the morung precincts, a forbidden place for the females.



Fig.2.1. Morung at Seikhama Khel, Phesama

2.3. Construction of Kichüzhii

The morung building was built by the villagers but its maintenance was mainly the responsibility of its members. Construction of a new morung involves much feasting and ceremonies. The entire khel or the village would be involved depending upon whether the morung was built for use by the khel or the whole village. Sometimes, they even seek the help of the neighbouring villages depending on the relationship that existed among the communities. To exemplify, the Merama khel of Phesama village had an ancestral cordial relationship with the Khamima khel of Kigwema village. Hence, they can seek the help of the other in times of need. The cost of the feast mainly in the form of rice and meat was borne by the khel or the entire villagers as the case maybe.

The word ‘Kichüzhii’ contains two words ‘kichü’ and ‘zhü’. The word ‘kichü’ stands for sleeping together and the word “zhü” means bed. To make kichüzhü, it starts with imploring of blessing by the chief elder / chief priest. The community circumspectly selects a tree to be used for making the bed. The men go to the jungle for identification of the tree. When a tree is found suitable for the purpose, the tree is marked as a sign of ownership. If a tree is big and suitable for the bed but is dwelt by any animal, bird or insect, then the tree is repudiated.

Dreams play an important factor in decision making and interpretation of future among the people. Thus, the villagers listen to their dreams to find out whether the selected tree will be suitable for making bed. If dream turns favourable, the villagers go onward to proceed for the work. A feast is organized on the day of pulling the wood. The villagers put on their traditional attire and proceed to the jungle for bringing the tree. If it is a big tree, it involves the entire village. The eldest who is called as ‘phichii-u’ would lead the group with dao and spear on his shoulder. On reaching, he pronounced the blessing. He even sprinkled rice beer on the tree and say ‘reach safely’. They were advised not to turn back. In place villages like kigwema, the person leading the group is not allowed to sit till they reach the village. On reaching, he will lay down his dao and spear and thank God for the safe return to the village.

The dormitory was a long bed hewn out of a single log on which 10-14 boys could sleep. The members worked together for making the bed. At the completion of the bed, the village priest called as ‘Phichü-u’ pronounced blessings upon the bed in order that it can be beneficial and be valued as a source of treasure for the generation. A ceremony is performed on the very first night. Two young boys were selected to sleep on the bed. These boys were called as “Phousa Khriesa”. ‘Phousa’ stands for clean soul and ‘khriesa’ stands for young man. The two boys who were to have clean soul were made to sleep in the bed on the very first night.



Fig.2.2. Sleeping abode inside the Morung

2.4. Relevance of Morung in community governance

The relevance of the morung can be understood in the following areas:

2.4.1. Values

Young people learned all about social etiquette, duties and responsibilities expected of them as responsible members of the community. In Morung, values like dignity of honesty, sincerity, discipline, respect for others, morality etc were imparted. The boys were taught how to behave and live in the society. They learn about the do's and don'ts of the society and to render service to their community. It has thus been rightly stated that *..Morung institution(bachelor's dormitory for boys and girls) of the Naga occupy a pivotal position in their socio-cultural and economic life as it preserves the deep seated moral social value of the Naga society* (Saha and Mishra 216). It served as a training ground for all lessons that a youth must learn before starting to live independently. It gave them a distinct identity and provided the necessary discipline, sense of duty, unity and pride in their respective members. A person who becomes the member of Morung refines his culture, rectifies his demeanor, changes his attitude, polishes his code of conduct, develops his conscience, nurtures his thoughts and actions; realizes his duties and responsibilities and later becomes a successful man in the society. Through interaction, the

individual learns the skills, beliefs and standards of judgments that are necessary for his effective participation in social groups and enable him to perform social roles and develop the community feeling. The boys were obliged to obey the rules that enabled them to safe- guard their lives, property, family and clan. This resulted in building a strong, organized, disciplined and efficient administration under the jurisdiction of their village.

The advice of an elder is always given due importance. While discussing something serious in the morung, then an elderly virtue of his age, has to be given the first opportunity to express his opinion and it is quite an offense for a young member to overtake his elders, no matter how clever and intelligent he may be. The well mannered of the morung member is well profoundly established and can be seen in many occasions such as when the elders or other member of the morung visit the morung, the member sacrifices their seat for the visitor.

Morung is a house of instruction for the boys. Traditional customs and practices were taught and the youngsters were prepared for life to play their roles in the society. No individual acts on his own concerning his life without the approval of the larger group that he belongs to. His actions not only affect him but are linked to that of the entire clan and village. In such a scenario, the individual must adhere to the rules and regulations of the larger social group that he belongs to. It is this association that establishes the unique identity of the individual. They were instructed not to be arrogant rather respect oneself sufficiently so as to fulfill the responsibilities of manhood. They were taught how to work in the field and to work with wood and bamboos. Proper planning for works to be carried out was deliberated in the Morung. The boys who attained an age where he can work joins the Morung and gets himself involved in the various activities and works.

Morung served as a centre of education. In the past, when there was no formal school, the morung served as a traditional school where traditional values were handed down from one generation to the next. They were both taught theoretically as well as trained practically on the traditional aspects of the Naga society. They get acquainted with the culture, folklore songs and dances. The morung fosters every kind of art. All the legends, songs and the traditional practices are taught here. A popular phrase of the morung is ‘a son of thehou never goes spoilt’. Inculcation of moral values necessary for a stable society was done at the Morung. They were given the do’s and don’t of the society. In order to please God and to let the people live together

in harmony, the many 'kenyii' or the restrictions were orally taught to the villagers. Therefore, the folk have to take heed of the so called 'kenyii' which ensures blessings from kepenuopfii.

Consequences of violating 'kenyii'

- Handicapped.
- loss of eyesight.
- loss of hearing.
- tragic death.
- shorten life span.
- Houses burned by fire.
- Fields will not yield fruits.
- Accidents.
- Diseases.
- Poverty.

Blessings on adhering to the 'kenyii'

- Long life.
- Fields yield fruits.
- Generation.
- Richness.
- Good health.

Some of the noted 'kenyii'

- Thou shall not go against kepenuopfii.
- Thou shall not disobey parents and elders.
- Thou shall not laugh at the handicapped and poor people.
- Thou shall not take away properties of the mentally retarded people.
- Thou shall not get curse from parents and elders.
- Thou shall not laugh at parents by calling their names.
- Thou shall not laugh at barren mothers.
- Thou shall not mislead strangers .
- Thou shall not eat directly from cooking pot. It has to be served on plates.
- Thou shall not throw cup or plate at others.
- Thou shall not burn leftover food/ eatables.

- Thou shall not take bribes.
- Women should not keep long hair before marriage.
- Women should tie their hair while carrying baskets.
- women are not allowed to cut the hair of men.
- Thou shall not cross legs while having food.
- Thou shall not kneel down while working in field.
- Thou shall not sit and work with spade.
- Thou shall not build house with trees which is not known.
- Thou shall not build house over streams.
- Thou shall not build house with trees where animals, birds, insects have build their home.
- Do not cook in the middle of the river.
- On the day of harvest, the fire in the kitchen must be kept burning.
- Thou shall not cook bird and fish together.

More regulations

- *Anyone convicted of theft is fined seven times the value of the things stolen.
- *Accidental killing is punished by seven years banishment.
- *Intentional killing is liable to receive tit for tat revenge.
- *Adultery is punishable with a befitting action.
- *Theft and false allegations are treated as equal offence.
- *If a stray domestic animal from a neighbouring village is found, information should be duly sent to the village authority, and the animal kept at least one “zhangudo” (five –seven days) before killing it.
- * Every village, big or small, is governed by its own customary laws, and as such a village cannot impose its own laws on the other village.
- *Anyone requiring to dispose off his ancestral land is bound to inform his clan or khel first before selling it to others.
- *If a person, whatever may be the reason, wants to leave his village and settle in another village, the one who adopts him is obliged to give him a share of his property to the adopted person. He can solely own such property as long as he lives in the village, and only on leaving it he is to return it to the owner. He is also entitled to use the community land or properties of the clan, khel or village.

The younger men listened closely without speaking much. For instance, the boys were strictly taught not to steal. And harsh punishment was imposed on indisciplined boys and those who go against the law framed at the Morung. Likewise, boys found to be drinking wine excessively creating chaos were given befitting punishment. In Khamima khel of kigwema village, the people involved in quarrel are taken outside the thehou. Even today, if anyone tries to bring disorder in the society, the person is tied and kept in the morung. Thus, we find morung as an institution to control the behaviour of the individual. It becomes a centre in maintaining law and order.

2.4.2. Military Training

Morung was the centre for military training for the young boys. The villagers have been inveterate lovers of freedom. Inter clan and inter village rivalry was common in the past. Head hunting was practiced by the villagers. The Naga character of independence and alertness had been mostly built up through the institution of the morungs or bachelors dormitories. They learned how to use a spear, a dao and a shield in battle. The art of warfare and the spirit of patriotism were taught in the morungs. The youth were taught to keep vigil throughout the night guarding the village against enemies. Education in the morung is expected to have hardened the young Naga man so as not to weaken in front of wild animals or any other life threatening danger. This training enables him to master the art of using weapons for self-defense and killing his opponents. Since warfare was a part of life, the morung also served as a training ground for young men to learn about strategies of war. The techniques of warfare are taught to the members. Corporate works are chalked out and great decisions of war and peace are taken at the morung. During head hunting days, raids from neighbouring villages were frequent. The man's involvement in participating in raiding enemy villages and head hunting is most prominent. The importance attached to this activity stems from the belief of the Nagas in the necessity of killing enemies, chopping their heads off and bringing the heads as trophies back to the village. The violent and blood thirsty nature of the stems from his desire to be accepted as a worthy member of the community for fear that his inability to take heads will be seen as sign of his lack of masculinity and physical strength. In the days of headhunting, the beheaded heads were brought to the morung and were placed as a souvenir. Young men were imparted knowledge on past glories and warfare. Those who go for a war are expected to sleep at the morung. The warriors

were not allowed to sleep at home with their wife and children. It is ultimately the gender role specific to his sex that he has to perform and in that the Naga community will not show any consideration to men who are incapable. M. Horam connects the Naga culture of head hunting to that of a sense of accomplishment and glory.

Not to go on raids was considered a sign of cowardice and proof of absence of virility in men. There was no question of satiety where head hunting was concerned, and once crowned with success and glory it was shameful for a village not to add to the numbers of heads its warriors had already taken (Horam 91). The warriors are no less than the soldiers of a country who risk their lives to save their countrymen from foreign invasion. Every Naga man was expected to be a part of raids on enemy villages and get back trophies of enemy heads for the village. Every individual acted as a cog of the larger wheel of the community's purpose, tradition and identity. For every Naga, the village that he belongs to is of primary importance and it is association with the village that gives him his identity. Thus, the*attachment of a Naga for his village is so strong that no price is too costly for him to defend the hearth and graveyard of his ancestors* (Shimray125). As such, an institution like morung was very vital and essential for the security of the village. It also acted as a sanctuary for a culprit who takes refuge in it, as long as he remained under its roof.

Morung is seen as a place of guard for the village. The safety and prestige of the village were dependent on the vigilance and well preparedness of the morung. It served as an institution to impart various arts and warfare skills that enable them to protect the village from enemies and any external interference. The morung is used as an armoury to store the shields, spears and daos etc so as to quickly counter an offensive or to avert any surprise and sudden attack/imminent threat. The boys guard the village and the people with spear, dao and shield. In olden days, there existed a group of people known as 'Pesema' who enters the village and kidnapped the dwellers. They were seen as kidnappers. The very news of Pesema in the jurisdiction alerted the whole village. At this, the boys stay awake to ensure safety to the villagers. They remain vigilant at night. During the conflict days, the boys take turn to keep the village safe. In olden days, it was said that animals from the jungle entered the village and took away the chicken and other pet animals. Men were taught to be ever ready to showcase their courage. Thus, the boys were accountable to protect the houses and its people. Protection of their

territory was the primary objective of every man and towards this goal, the entire village contributed towards this goal. Also, sometimes wars were waged as acts of retaliation against the killing of clan or village members. Such killings were avenged. During wars, the boys slept together to defend the village with indomitable spirit. The youth stood to watch against the intruders. Reminiscing about hunts and battles in the past, it becomes a place where any youth with a man's heart inside him lingers to listen or add his stories as well. In some Morungs, like the morung at Seikhama khel in Phesama village, the bed is put high from the ground. A ladder is kept to climb to the bed. Its main construction of higher beds is to be in a better position to kill the enemies, in case they attack the Morung. Spears are kept and were used by the boys to attack the foes.

In the dormitory, young men are narrated tales of courage and valour of village elders who have risked their lives to protect the honour of the village. Various oral narratives told by elders and dormitory parents prepare the boys to harden their minds and look for similar instances to prove their mettle to their entire community. They gradually develop the skills which would stand them in good stead for future leadership. Every man was trained in the art of weaponry and nothing was more important to him than being part of the many wars that his village would wage against the enemy. Every individual had a social obligation to the village. As a person grows older and hearts get stronger, the responsibility on guarding the village and earn a great name for the village arises. The skills of fighting wars became a part and parcel of every boy's training schedule. Even when he grows up there is nothing more important to him than participating in village raids. The urge to be a part of these raids could be seen even in aged men of the village as this was the only means of performance connected to showcasing one's manliness and gallantry.

They were ready to sacrifice their lives for the defense of the village. For instance, in the days when war and raids from neighbouring villages were frequent, an institution like Morung was very vital and essential as it stands as the security of the village. Several years spent together with other members also brought in the true sense of brotherhood which was very essential to the village community bound life. It is in the morung that the boys get all the useful lessons valuable for community living. Every able-bodied Naga man was taught right from his

childhood days that it was his most sacred duty to protect his village. The protection of the clan members was one's foremost duty. An elder in Kire's book *Sky is My Father* says

a man is not a man if you let another man kill your kin and torch your houses and you do nothing about it. We have a name for such men –“Thenumia” , women! he spat out the word. That is what drives a man to battle, the need to prove himself worthy of defending his village and his women folk, and to earn ornaments of war (Kire 8).

Head hunting was planned and discussed in the morung. The practice of hunting heads was an important way of life that incapability to participate in the act was regarded as an act of cowardice. It gained status among the members. Head hunting, which was in the beginning merely an act of retaliation or survival gradually was related to gender roles, such as that of masculinity. Successful head hunters enjoyed prominent positions in the society while non performers were looked down upon and had to face ridicule. In such a situation, it was ideal for the practice of head hunting to thrive and become more popular among the youngsters. Their sense of masculinity was associated with his success in participating in wars and hunting heads. Men who shirk away from such practices were regarded as cowards and would face various forms of insults. Horam too connects the Naga man's lack of success in head hunting and wars to that of his cowardice and says,

Not to go on raids was considered a sign of cowardice and proof of absence of virility in men (Horam 91).

2.4.3. Art of Love

Morung had their romantic side too. Here, the young men learned the art of love from the experienced senior people. Again, young boys courting the girls express their love through singing. Many songs are composed with themes based on love which perhaps the romantic nature of the boys. The songs were often inspired or motivated by the relationship at the dormitory. Conversations about love and sex would produce laughter in the morungs. Marriage of a member involves the larger community. During the period of betrothal, when the boy needs to construct his own house where the bride will come to live, he is supported by his friends, relatives and other members of the village. The involvement and the support of the members during the occasion include conducting the marriage ceremony as well as helping the couple set up their homes. The morung members helped set up a house for him. When any member of the

morung marries, the members help to arrange the wedding feast and the young bride groom would reciprocate by inviting the whole morung to his father's house. On the day of wedding, the morung mates would accompany the groom to the bride's house. And then, the mates later escort the bride to the groom's house. It is the morung members which constituted the bulk of the groom's party.

2.4.4. Sports

The Morung gymnasium brings out the skilful sportsmen, wrestlers and warriors. The assiduously practiced wrestling, stone throwing and colour the village fairs to participate in inter-village competitions. During the festivals when people stop working to celebrate a special event , a wide range of sporting activities like high jump, long jump, shot put, wrestling etc are held in the yard at the front of the morung. Winners are feted and recognized as potential warriors and leaders. Morung produced many sportsmen and tough wrestlers. Morung is seen as a centre for sports and games. During sekrenyi, they played by keeping a stick and they throw stones to hit the stick. The person who hit the most was declared winner and was awarded with rice beer. Competitions are there among the boys of different khels. During sports in the village, the boys gather in their respective Morung and trained themselves to give their best for their village. Instructions by the elders and experts were given to the boys. The elders pronounce their blessings on the boys. After the day's activities, the boys retires to the Morung and makes plan for the next day. The best players were selected to represent the village to compete with the neighbouring villages. It is a place where the youth were nurtured for physical fitness and to develop clear conscience.

2.4.5. Skill based activities

Skills like handicrafts, woodcarving, baskets of various designs, wooden utensils, rice brewing etc was taught in the morung. It is compulsory for all the boys to acquire the skill of making basket of all kinds such as carrying traps, winnowing tray, barn baskets etc. There are some professional basket makers and each and every member was taught to develop the practical

skills to make them with their own hands. Younger boys learnt to weave baskets. As they grew older, they became adept at weaving the carrying baskets which the women used to carry water and wood. Baskets were finely woven to carry grain. But these were among the most intricate to make. Basket weaving began from simple weaving to meet the needs of the kitchen. The village elders taught techniques of agriculture, basketry, making weapon, hunting, and all kinds of skills required for their daily practical life. On rainy days, the old and young men alike, moved to the morung with their basket making and wood carving implements, tools and spend their day at their respective works. The young men learned the new arts from the old. Till today, the young men gather at thehou to learn the skills from the elders.

2.4.6. House of reconciliation

Morung was a necessity not only for war and education, but also for bringing understanding and reconciliation of different shades of opinion. Disputes regarding territorial encroachment were a common scenario. Sometimes disputes would also centre round disagreement on agricultural lands. Coming to the same Morung every night, the young people could understand one another better. It rendered an opportunity to the young men to talk face to face and talk out their differences and reconcile matters. Any problem related to the village is settled in the morung and the general will of the seniors are accepted for the welfare of all. It is said that a tradition was followed in the Morung pertaining to the treatment of guests from other villages or places. The morung was used as the village inn to accommodate friendly travelers from other villages. They were treated well in the Morung. Sometimes, outsiders sought the Morung for protection from enemies. At this, they were guaranteed safety by the boys in the Morung. The guests or outsiders were to sleep in the middle. And the boys slept in the sides. The boys were enlightened on the friendly ties with other villages. And they exchanged feast as a sign of their relationship. For instance, the Makhuma khel of kigwema village and Merama khel and Makhuma khel of Phesama village exchanged feast. They wore their traditional attires and celebrated together.

2.4.7. Traditional knowledge

Kichüki is an institution which sustains and transmits the traditions, customs, and beliefs from generation to generation. Even though Morung was made to accommodate the young bachelors to sleep at night, sleeping is not the only thing that happened in these glorious dormitories. Perhaps, it evolved to meet the needs and requirements of the society. It is here that the youth became acquainted with their rich culture. Almost every night and especially on festive days, the morung members listened to the talks given by the village elders and old men on variety of subjects such as wars, stories of brave warriors and description of some kind of natural calamity that had overtaken the village in the past. The dormitory was a very appropriate place for continuing the tradition of story-telling and those sessions kept alive the various myths, beliefs and legends of the tribe and thus, the oral narratives were transmitted from generation to generation. In a closely knit society, each individual had their own share of responsibility and obligation. And each family had land and forest demarcated by boundary stones which were forbidden to be moved lest misfortunes come to those who encroached. These customs and traditions are still maintained with high reverence even today in the village in the form of taboos. The laws of the land are never written down, but the members of the village testify to the truth. The people have always relied on memories. And thus, an old man is revered as he stores more information and knows more about life.

Here, the old men drinking rice- beer keeps the traditions of the village alive with their discourses. The elders also told the young boys of various medical plants sitting near the fire place. It is an institution for the young boys to learn about their traditions, legends and heroic deeds of their fore – fathers. Livestock and their produce from the field was their pride. If a cow accidentally dies, then it is shared among the neighbours. In return, the neighbours contribute and share rice. This act is known as ‘Halo’ among the viswema people. And it enhances their bond of friendship and built their trust on one another.

2.4.8 Centre for important festivals and rituals

Involvement in the larger community was not only limited to his participation in wars and hunting activities. The villagers celebrate their festivals and perform rituals together. Even

individual and family specific celebrations, such as, marriage or title taking ceremony was never limited only to the concerned people or family. The entire community is involved in the preparations and celebrations of these events. Morung became a place for performing magico-religious activities designed to bring about success and augment productivity for the overall well being of the community. Most of the Naga festivals revolve round the agricultural operation. The festivals vary from tribe to tribe and time to time. There are some Nagas, who celebrate the festivals before ensuing of agricultural operations, to appease the deity to control the natural calamities and maximize the crops, while the other Nagas observe the festival after the harvest to give their gratitude to the deity for bumper harvest. During the festival, a village is given a face-lift by the village community. Morung is usually repaired on the eve of the festival. The chief of the village announces the festival well ahead of time, and the village men will begin to prepare themselves for all the necessary arrangements for the celebration of the festival. In fact, all their laws and practices are intrinsically hinged on it. Though their religious practices were not uniform, most tribes believed in a higher being or spirit, named or unnamed, in whom was the beginning and was all powerful. But there were also smaller spirits who constantly interfered with human beings and therefore the need to appease them through rituals and observing taboos was a common practice.

The rituals were transmitted to the boys, some of which were performed annually while some were performed on a monthly practice. 'Teitho' ritual was performed every year. In the earliest days, it was done every month. It was done for the protection of fields from wind, rain and hailstorm. It lasted for five days. Hunting activities was not allowed during these days of rituals. If it has been performed well, then it was a hope for a plentiful harvest. It was followed with another ritual called as 'Tefii kerha' or 'ohi keyho' in Viswema. After transplantation in fields is done, a dog is killed and is offered at the village gate. As they make their way to their fields, it was feared that evils spirits and misfortunes may befall them. With the belief that dog can overcome the evil spirit which is called as 'terhuomia' and that the smell of the dog was disliked by the evil spirits, the villagers performed this ritual.

The word 'genna' is used and understood by most people to be of Angami origin 'kenyii' which means forbidden. It can have two meanings. Firstly, it loosely refers to a sort of holiday on which no work may be done by the entire village. The second and more stringent meaning of the

term indicates anything that is taboo, forbidden or prohibited. Gennas of this kind puts restriction on the concerned individuals, groups or whole village. It may last from a day to several days. It is also connected with festivals of all kinds. While others are occasional, most gennas are annual and connected with agriculture being the main occupation of the people. In the days when war was frequent, a number of gennas for making war and peace were observed by an entire village. Communal gennas are those related to the village as a whole; linked with agriculture, good health, prosperity, hunting, prevention of unnatural events and calamities, rain making and stopping, war and peace. Individual gennas are related to isolated rituals concerning matters like health, death and adoption. Gennas can also be looked upon as a holiday in ordinary understanding, since it is a day or days free from hard labour due to many reasons which may be unnatural and foreseen occurrences that brought destructions to the village.

There are some activities and gennas associated with agriculture in the southern Angami areas. Rituals and customs associated with festivals are related to agricultural activity following a seasonal cycle. These along with customs associated with religious practices form an important segment of folk life, and they partly function to provide psychic reassurance against external dangers of natural calamities. Here, the gennas are also festivals because the word 'nyi' means feast. However, this does not imply the literal sense of festivity, but the whole activity implies a day or the days of ritual observations before the next working days begin.

Tsakonyi: this is observed in the month of February and marks the beginning of sowing of seeds.

Kegunyi: this is observed in April before the transplantation of the seedlings. It is also the time for preparation of water channels for terrace cultivation.

Chunyi : this is observed in July. It is associated with the harvest of millet, the first crop to be harvested among all the crops. No other crops could be eaten until the harvest of millet. The first reaper observes five days of gennas before the harvest.

Kezienyi: this is observed in the month of September just before the harvest of paddy.

Tegunyi: this is celebrated in November after the paddy harvest. This is the time to share the new produce of the field. It is also believed that the spirits of the dead visits the village; hence, this month is kept aside to clean their graveyards.

Sekrenyi: It is observed in December. It is the most important feast and calls for big celebration that last for about seven days. But the season being in festive mood, it last much longer especially for the young. It is popularly known as the feast of purification or in local dialect

‘phosanyi’. It marks the end of the old year and a new beginning by invoking Ukepenuopfii’s blessings for another successful and prosperous year.

Besides these gennas, there are a complex whole of forbidden days and feasts days related to the interaction with strangers, hospitality to guests, unexpected and unforeseen events of destructive elements, admission and adoption of outsiders and a lot more.

The village is an economic unit and all the rituals observed for the cultivation of rice , necessitates the community participation in the form of village gennas. Rain compelling ceremonies are naturally part of the cultivating rituals. The appearance of epidemic sickness invites a genna, the observance of which is prophylactic rather than healing. The occurrence of mysterious ‘extra natural’ cases of death also necessitates a village genna for the purpose of separating the living and the dead. If a village house is burnt, there is a genna against all ordinary works for a short period. In some cases, gennas are caused by the deliberate intentional acts of individuals, as when a man erects a stone monument. There are village gennas connected with the first fruits and the first death of any domestic animal in the year. Some village gennas therefore are periodic occurrences while others are held only after the occurrence of some abnormal event. For instance, the Meze clan of Jakhama village does not work for three days in relation to a stone called the Kehozza from where the humans are believed to have emerged. The latter are as much part and parcel of the village customary laws. During the village genna, the village gates are shut. Strangers are not allowed to come in nor members to go out. All hunting, weaving, outdoor field works, games of all kinds are strictly forbidden.

It is also a centre for important rituals. During festivals, the boys come together to celebrate. Sometimes the Morung becomes packed. The boys thus have to sleep in the bamboo carpet outside the morung. The boys bring various items like rice beer, meat, local beans and have celebration. In days of head taking, a captured head would be brought to the Morung where necessary rituals would then be performed. All sacrifices and genna relating to clans or to the village were performed in the village by the head priest on behalf of the community. Before the advent of Christianity, all Naga tribes followed their own traditional beliefs. Though the rituals and practices differed from tribe to tribe, a common belief was the deep reverence for nature, and belief in the existence of a superior being or spirit. In the Naga traditional worldview, there was no dichotomy between the natural and spiritual world. They accepted the coexistence of man and

spirit. All the festivals are based on their religious beliefs and manifested in their cultural practices which the youngsters were taught about.

2.4.9. Leadership skills

In Morungs the young ones were prepared for all the tasks and responsibilities of life. It served as a socializing agent and a place of learning to shoulder responsibilities and played a pivotal role in shaping the future of the young generation. Habits and manners were shaped, characters built up and discipline imparted. Boys were taught about their duties, how to live and behave in the society. They were taught to be swift in discharging their duties. As a member of the village, he is expected to possess certain qualities and the failure to demonstrate those results in him being ridiculed. The life in the dormitory teaches every young man to be fearless. His entry to the territory of the adult world is initiated by the demand of the community to showcase his zeal in participating in community hunting activities and raids on enemy villages. Developmental works for the village was discussed at the morung. Village relationships were told at the morung helping them to maintain ties with other villages. Even revengeful thoughts are aroused while talking about the past stories.

The younger members usually remains silent and ruminates wise advice of the elders and leaders. It is seen as a place where boys were disciplined and shaped into responsible adult members of the society. It plays a vital role in preparing younger generations for posts in the village council. Commenting on the importance of the dormitory in the life of the Naga men, Major Anand says *The morung plays a vital role in preparing the younger generation for posts in the council. The morung is the club, the public school, the military training centre, the hostel for boys and a meeting place of the village elders. It is as well the centre for the social, religious and political activities. In short, it is the fulcrum of the village democracies* (Anand 91-92).

2.4.10. Folk songs and Dances

Pleasure activities like singing, dancing and competition are done in the Morung. During dances and celebrations, it is the duty of the elders to see that the boys are dressed properly. The elders even have the right to punish anyone who does not obey. Through such activities, the boys developed their unique traditional folk songs and dances. As a centre of recreation and entertainment, the boys sit around the fires singing songs, sharing jokes etc and they organize various social and cultural gatherings for the village. The rich culture and customs which were transmitted from generation to generation through folk songs and dances were conveyed to the young in the morungs. The morung members worked in their own fields except on feast days during the day. The morung comes back to life after the evening meal when members begin to fiddle in for the evening singing, merry making and finally for sleeping. Young men practice and learn to sing the different songs. Different songs are sung to suit the different times and occasions. In olden days, all the songs were simply memorized and passed on by rote. Around the morung hearth, the young boys recite incantations, sing songs and recite poems. Hardly any dance is performed without the accompaniment of music or shouts of some kind. Dances are usually performed in festivals and on religious occasions. War dances were taught along with war tactics.

The morung also served as a recreation club to foster art and discipline. The curriculum of the morung is not all work. At Morung, the boys had discussion on courting ladies. Then they proceed to the girls place for courting. They sing courting songs heartily. The boys practiced songs for different occasions and place. The songs sung at the fort are different from the courting songs. Thus, the people come to know where the boys have been through their songs. Songs known as 'Geizo' were taught and learnt by the boys. The wordings, meanings and the significance of the song were discussed. There were also many songs mourning dead warriors too. The voices or parts of the songs were taught to the boys.

- a. Ca ke- Alto
- b. Ri do- Soprano
- c. Puo ri- Tenor
- d. Puo phi- Bass

In times of sadness and worries, the boys sing songs to brighten the mood of the people. For instance, when sickness befell a family, the boys sing songs to lift up the spirit and to show that they are with them in their difficulties. When a person dies, the boys give company to the bereaved family. They make fire and sit the whole night without sleeping.

2.4.11. Story telling

In the absence of any written document, oral historical traditions remain the sole link between the past and the present. One acquired the skill by the most assiduous cultivation of the memory. Most dormitories have recreational activities with feasting, drinking and dancing. Instead of completely dwelling on entertainment, jokes, playing games, singing and dances which are of course important aspects of life, story telling was also given place and time. It was a part of entertainment and breaking ice. It presents cultural values to the listeners and challenges them for meaningful application of stories in practical. This serves the purpose effectively because the participants are mostly young people. Conscientizing them in their own culture is important because they are influential and if they can inculcate positive attitude toward their own culture, they make tremendous contribution towards the conservation of their culture. Folk stories contain less romantic episodes; they tell more about animism, the only religion of the Nagas prior to their contact with western missionaries.

It appears that in the early days, story telling at the dormitory was more organized. The elder or the priest would come prepared and the stories of the past were recited. Old men sat in the morung and narrate stories to the boys of the past legends and heroic deeds of their fore fathers. The village elders conducted frequent story telling sessions for the youngsters during which various legends and myths were kept alive. Story telling was an organic part of the joy of everyday conversation, and it supplies man's everlasting need for a good laugh and to escape, however briefly, from the routine and monotony of life.. Easterine Kire's book, *Sky is my Father: A Naga Village Remembered*, is replete with instances of community bonding formed in the dormitories. The oral tradition passed on from generation to generation in these dormitories is most significant for the Naga-

Talk at the thehou, the community house, often centered round what was called man's talk. No woman was allowed to come to the thehou or enter the male dormitories. Reminiscing about hunts and battles in the past made the thehou a place where any youth with a man's heart inside him would linger and listen to add his stories as well.

But if the elders were there, the younger men listened closely without speaking much. They came to learn the stories of the village. It was good to be called a thehou, a child of the thehou- it meant that such a person was well-versed in the stories and customs of the village (Kire 7).

When reciting jokes and humorous anecdotes the storyteller laughs at others and occasionally at himself. Their main function is to entertain and to act as a constant source of pleasure and amusement. But to entertain is not their sole function. It is used by members of the community to maintain social control and to uphold moral standards. Repeating a joke, an anecdote, a trivial remark or a rumour is one way of criticizing others without anyone accused of being responsible for such criticism.

Storytelling sessions were an important part of the village culture and it was shared in the community houses. The elders narrate the stories to the younger ones. The boys sit in the morung and listen to the stories and advices of Peyumia (village elders). They come together to learn the stories of the village and become well versed in the stories and customs of the village. Through stories, the elders taught about their own personal experiences as well as folktales, legends, myths and beliefs of the community. The members who have gone for discrete trip to other places give an account of their experiences and the lands visited. The members further talked about their guests from other villages and places. Secrets meant for the men are deliberated and it cannot be revealed even to the family. They were furnished with knowledge about their ancestors and boundaries were imparted to the boys. Land holdings and ownership of land were told in order to avoid land disputes or controversy among the villagers. This naturally led to the dissemination of historical and traditional knowledge.

The creative and instructive nature of oral tradition in the villages is passed from one generation to another through the method of storytelling. By narrating folktales which are told in childhood in the form of entertainment but the general motif is to teach about a culture. The stories have moral lessons in them from which the youngsters understand the concepts of good and evil. Stories are frequently told as evening family entertainment to pass the local or the

family knowledge. However, stories are told more formally in Kichūki to validate a person's or family's authority, responsibilities or prestige. Such stories often teach important lessons about a given society, their culture, land and in ways in which members are expected to interact with each other and to live in harmony with the environment. The passing on of the stories from generation to generation keeps the social order intact.

There have been yet another means of entertainment and past time that have a real community building role among the villages. At leisure time at night, they come together after the day's work and share practical jokes and riddles. They enter into a lively competition with these mind teasers. It shows a glimpse into the nature of the tribal mind. The villagers are basically people of deep emotions. They relish delicate feelings. Through proverbs, the folk reflect their sophisticated manners and social attitudes. They can also be said as excellent examples of tribal wisdom which is based on their concrete experience rather than cerebral activity.

2.4.12. Social services

Disciplined by the iron rules of the morung and elated by the teaching of the elders, the young people turned out as perfect citizens. The youth willingly render their service to the community and sacrifice for the welfare of the society. The lessons in the dormitory inculcated in them the sense of sacrifices and selflessness in their minds and to render voluntary services to the needs and welfare of the community. When any guest comes to their village, they have to look after them. If a villager is in need of any help, he requests the boys for assistance who goes and accomplishes the work. They unite the youth together, provide an opportunity for close companionship and educate them in community living. They were always willing to volunteer their services and sacrifice their personal interests for the welfare of the people of the village when called for. The boys helped in construction of houses. An individual who planned to build a house listened to his dreams. If a person is opting for a new site for building his house, he does the ceremony with spear and a cock. In olden days, the villagers usually built their houses with bamboo and straw. When a villager is to build a house, the boys were advised to succor in the work. Hence, the boys get up early in the morning and carry wood, bamboo, straw and logs for new houses. They also go to the jungle to collect ropes from small cane to support the pillars of the house. Sometimes, work is divided among the boys such as cutting, cleaning and tying. At

times, the owner keeps the bamboos at half way so that the boys on their return from fields deliver it to the village. Earlier, it was like a daily activity for the men since there was no daily wage earning or hiring workers system. It was a voluntary work. The richer families provided food for the workers. As for the sick and the poor families, the boys carry their own tiffin and help the owner. After completion of the house, the owner feast the Morung boys. It is traditionally called as 'zu zu pie'. Those involved in the house construction were called as 'kithoma' The boys come to collect rice beer and meat from the host mewing like rats. 'Zu' means rat. 'pie' means carry. The owner of the house shout saying 'they are taking away the rats' It is done with the belief that the rats are driven whose stay might ruin the house. The people inside the house splash water on the boys. However, the boys rush inside to get the meat and rice beer. At the splashing of water, the boys get wet while they try to escape with the rice beer and the meat. It signifies taking away the rats and not to come back again. The boys then gather, sing 'we-ho' and celebrate together.

The educative role performed by the youth dormitory in forming the personality is very significant. The dormitory life trains the individual being in traditional values, ideas and ethics of the community and transmits the culture to the younger generation. The training scope is vast as it initiates the growing generation into their cultural heritage. It served as a learning institution in the long and continuing process that nurtures young men to become self reliant, disciplined, well mannered, responsible and a good citizen. It ultimately promoted the maintenance of social cohesion and group solidarity. It taught the young men a sense of fraternity and corporate life in the village which is essential for sustaining the community life. The variance of morungs in the studied villages is highlighted below:

Name of the village	Number of Khels	Number of Morungs
Viswema	Four (4)	Four (4)
Jakhama	Eight(8)	Eight(8)
Kigwema	Five (5)	Five(5)
Phesama	Four (4)	Four (4)

It would not be wholly correct to say that the morung has become extinct. It must be rather understood that circumstances has transformed the life of the people and consequently the

morung has been affected. The morung still exists with its imitation built, or revived briefly around festive season. This temporary revival of the ancient morung system is common to all the Naga tribes among which the morung once existed. Though it might have lost its original significance, to say that the morung has completely disappeared would not be true.

CHAPTER- III

ORAL TRADITION: CONSTRUCTING HISTORY THROUGH FOLKTALES AND NARRATIVE POEMS

3. Construction of history through Folk tales and narrative poems.

3.1. Story telling tradition

Story telling is a universal human activity. Every society at every period of time has stories: some as oral history, some as part of religious rituals, some for instruction, some as talking about lineage and some for pure entertainment. It is considered an ancient art of conveying events through words, images and sounds often by improvisation or embellishments. Folk tales, with few exceptions, fall into the last two categories. These are stories that are fictitious and products of fantasy as well as make-believe stories that create new worlds. Thus, it provides an outlet for the frustrations and fears and served as platform for hopes and dreams. They are also stories that instruct and impart knowledge in the form of fables and aphorisms.

Story telling constitutes an important means of preserving cultural traditions and they are also instructive and educational for young minds, which serve as a source of inspiration in fashioning a moral code, giving the whole community a sense of belongingness. Stories or narratives have been shared in every culture and in every land as a means of entertainment, education, preservation of culture and to instill moral values. The rich cultural heritage of the Nagas are preserved in these stories and folktales. They preserve the social fabric of the society. These valuable treasures found through the folktales reside in the story tellers of the villages who narrate the stories orally and are considered as accomplished persons, as storehouse of valuable knowledge. Sometimes, a single narrator or a group of narrators go on telling the tales of their soil, accompanied by singing, dancing and playing of musical instruments. These tales were of nature, on the creation of man, of animals, relationship between villages, tribes, supernatural tales, heroine-oriented tales, tales of bravery, headhunting tales etc.

By its nature, storytelling is an oral art and does not normally leave a paper trail. However, there are a few ancient documents that have survived. It records or mentions folktales and there are some still in circulation about hundreds and even thousands of years later.

Therefore, a folklorist must use this very sparse written record like that of a paleontologist who uses the fossil record of prehistoric animals. Both specialists know that the preserved physical evidence represents only a tiny fraction of what had formerly existed. Folklorists classify oral tales into German words “Marchen” and “Sagen”. “Marchen” may be translated as ‘fairy tale (s)’ which takes place in a kind of separate ‘once upon a time’ world of nowhere-in-particular. They are clearly not intended to be taken as true. These stories are filled with clearly defined incidents and describing people having flat characters with little or no interior life. When the supernatural appears in the stories, it is presented matter-of-factly and without surprise. Indeed, there is very little affect. Generally, bloodcurling events may take place, but with a little call for emotional response from the listener. “Sagen” can be translated as ‘legends’ that are supposed to have actually happened at a particular time and place. They draw much of their power from facts. And when the supernatural intrudes, it does so in an emotionally fraught manner (<http://en.wikipedia.org>).

Over the years, scholars have known that variants of most of the stories circulating orally in a given region are found in other places as well. One explanation is that the sameness of the human psyche everywhere led to the independent invention of stories with similar plots in two or more regions. This view is justifiable when such stories deal in a straightforward manner with commonly experienced human problems. For instance, rivalry or antagonism between siblings and social classes. However, when the plots are complex and are constructed from unusual motifs, then the reason dictates that these stories were not created independently but rather traveled from one place to another with or less intact. The often striking similarities between folktales that are found around the world should not draw conclusions that all cultures tell the same types of stories. All societies tell stories for various purposes such as entertainment, education and religious purposes. However, the stories are often quite different from group to group. Folktales have been handed down traditionally by word of mouth or in the written form by group of people whether literate or illiterate. These tales which exist in the memory of people cannot easily be easily categorized. Students of the folktale are basically concerned with the origin and dissemination of tales and presents folktale as an art. As an art form it concerns the conditions of folktale telling, the reception of the audience, the way they are handed down, and the stylistic effects of this oral art. (Shipley 4-125)

3.2. Folktales and Narrative Poems

Folktales can be interpreted at different levels: psychoanalytically, anthropologically or literally. Psychoanalytically, folktale is considered a cultural or universal dream fantasy which expresses suppressed emotions of individuals and society. Anthropologically folktales reflect a society's view of itself as these express their fantasies, mirroring their culture and history. Literary interpretation of folktales brings to focus ethno poetics and folktale criticism. (Ben-Amos 263-266)

People need folktales to regulate their lives. The old folktale, "The Mother of a Bandit" has been told and retold for over a thousand years. It is said that before a bandit was put to death, he was asked to suck the breast of his mother, then he bit off his mother's nipple. In a variant, he bit off his mother's ear. This tale tells people that parents have to educate their children strictly. The "Grandmother Wolf" tells people how to deal with bad people in disguise. The "Cinderella" tells people that work can make people beautiful and good will be rewarded with good. The "Four Blind Men Feel an Elephant" tells people that it is ridiculous to look at things from a one-sided view, at the same time, it also tells people that we should look at things from stereoscopic view-point.

The educational function of tales is eternal. Being the best teaching materials, folktales will exist in people's lives forever. Some details of a folktale might have changed, but the main structure of the tale seems to remain the same. Folktales are the reflection of life. If we look at folktales from the aspect of stereoscopic thinking, we will find that folktales also have functions of education and amusement. Folktales are also valuable in artistic appreciation and references. Writers and artists often get enlightenment from folktales. They are the source materials for writers and artists for their creations. These social functions of folktales will last forever. The folktale is a kind of living art and affects social life greatly.

The folktale, combined with new trends, is performing fully its practical functions. This is also the essence of the folktale. Folk literature is stereoscopic literature. Stereoscopic way means that the folktale has variants. Each variant represents one side of a tale, and all variants of a tale construct the tale as a whole. Stereoscopic way also means that during the performance of tale telling, the tellers facial expression, body movement, music and so on, are very important.

Tale telling cannot be separated from certain situations and communications, which also changes along with the changes of the stereoscopic environment. Folktales have exuberant vitality.

The folktale is still part of the new system and has many practical functions in this new environment. For example, jokes and humour have amusing and satiric functions, fairy tales and fables have educational function, historical tales and tales have perceptual value.

Folktales also reflect man's reaction to the great passions and mysteries of life and death, his fears and hopes and deepest aspirations. In brief, they reflect man's constant longing for security and peace. He wishes to invite fortune and experience life's joy and blessing since time immemorial. Folktales have a social function as guide to ethical behaviour, imparting moral values. The symbols and allegories presented in the tales are to be analysed to find their deeper meanings to the tribal culture. The tales express man's instinctive fear of the unknown, what the Greeks called 'deisidaimonia' meaning fear of the Gods. Man is anxious and uncertain as ever about his future, and constantly endeavours to explain his own existence and place in the universe. He wanted to avoid evil and is afraid of tempting fate and disobeying the old taboos. Fear of death, disease and suffering, curse and retribution, poverty and insecurity are some of the fears which are inherent in man.

The type of stories usually referred to as folk and fairy tales are passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation. Those stories rely on their ability to satisfy the listeners for their survival. Stories that fail to entertain such as bad jokes are soon forgotten and lost. The psychology of entertainment is said to be complicated as different listeners can be attracted to a particular story for varied reasons. Folk tales with a strong message satisfy a number of personal and social needs. Perhaps most importantly, these tales provide a mechanism for fantasy wish fulfillment. The problems of the tale heroes and heroines are exists in real life such as poverty, sibling rivalry, unjust persecution, finding an appropriate mate, and many more.

It also deals with the great issues of life: the creation of the world, the nature of good and evil, and the relationships between deities and mortals. Folktales also address the nature of things, but usually in a less profound and less authoritative manner. These tales offer explanations to life's questions, both trivial and fundamental. Another function of folktales is to preserve and promote cultural and personal values, but they must do so entertainingly, or they will not endure. All cultures tell stories that are didactic and some ancient tales have strong moralizing components too. In traditional tales, morals typically centered around the

preservation of existing values and stability in the society. Ancient tales are to be praised. Many of the values in the tales held families and communities to live together in a hostile world. It enabled them not only to survive but sometimes to thrive and prosper. These tales seem timeless in their merit as it deals with diligence, honesty, generosity, dependability, perseverance, courage, and providing a unique balance of self reliance and selflessness.

Some values which are equally well represented in traditional stories seems embarrassing to sensitive modern readers. Sexism, racism, anti-semitism, persecution of people deemed to be witches, and an almost obsessive drive toward penalty are among the ideals unapologetically advanced by traditional tales that modern readers find as derogatory. Furthermore, social structures that promote inequality, such as monarchies and rigid class systems, are often described but seldom challenged in the tales.

Folk tales are veritable catalogs of ancient beliefs and practices. The numbers of such beliefs inherited from the distant past and used by storytellers is very large. The many types of supernatural beings represented in the tales are likely derived from ancient polytheistic religions where individual deities were neither inherently good nor evil, and often capricious in their dealings with humans. It reflect ancient beliefs in other realms (for example, a fairyland or spirit world) parallel to our own, with some individuals having the ability to cross back and forth between them.

The tales also reflect their distant ancestry through ancient practices not involving magic. Another repugnant but well documented ancient practice reflected in the tales is the right of parents to abandon unwanted children, leaving them to die of exposure. The rigid rules followed in patriarchy are apparent in many tales. It includes the right of a man to execute his wife for suspected adultery. The absolute authority of kings over their subjects is hardly questioned in the traditional fairy tales. Arranged marriages which includes marriage by purchase, are depicted repeatedly and for the most part without any criticism. Marriage by capture also happened frequently.

Although scholars from the brothers Grimm onward have recognized that Indo-European folktales fall into fairly well definable groups, it took nearly a century before these observations were developed into a formal classification system. In 1910 the Finnish scholar Antti Aarne published his *Verzeichnis der Marchentypen* (Index of Folktale Types). In the year 1928, Stith Thompson, an American folklorist issued an expanded version of this pioneering

work which is now in English instead of German and is titled *The Types of the Folktale*. The second revision which further enlarged appeared in 1961. This final product has proved itself as an indispensable tool for folktale researchers.

Folktales are not easy to define and to categorize with the very nature of being fluid. Even the word *folktale* resists easy definition. The following table taken from the contents of Aarne's and Thompson's *The types of the Folktale* gives an overview of their system. It also illustrates the lack of accurateness in the term *folktale*. In common usage and even among the professional folklorists, all the types of tales represented in their book are folktales. However, one of the main subcategories under *folktales* is *ordinary folktales*. Although in everyday English usage folktales and fairy tales often are treated as two different types of stories, folklore specialists generally prefer the term *magic tales* over *fairy tales*. By either name, these tales form a subcategory of *folktales* and not a separate genre.

Aarne-Thompson Folktale Types

Animal tales

Ordinary folktales

Tales of magic

Religious tales

Novellas (romantic tales)

Tales of the stupid ogre

Jokes and anecdotes

Formula tales

Unclassified tales

Narrative poetry is a form of poetry that narrates a story. It often makes use of the voices of a narrator and characters as well. Narrative poetry does not usually follow a rhythmic pattern. The poems that make up this genre may be short or long and the story it tells may be complex in nature. It is usually seen as dramatic with diverse characters. Folk narrative poems are formed and transmitted from the perspective of time and space. They form an essential part of the social and cultural life of the tribals. Generation after generation, people narrate these narrative poems, relishes and enrich them. These poems can have both a moral and psychological scope. They have a distinctive entertainment value, depending upon the nature of the teller and the style of telling.

3.3. Folk tales and Narrative Poems amongst the Nagas

Storytelling and folktales have been an indispensable part of Naga society. Each Naga tribe has its tales that are explanatory or told just for enjoyment. However, it was only in the recent past that these oral narratives have been rendered into written form. Folktales also presents the inner working of people in the traditional societies. They also have the function of entertaining and instructing people. The tales are of different categories such as adventure stories, journeys into the other world, narratives of marriage, sexual adventure and so on. Folktales that deal with human beings and their adventures are very numerous among the Nagas. Some of the tales are laid in highly imaginative time, place and land, filled with supernatural creatures. There are stories of spirits and fairies; some are harmful while others are helpful. There are witches, devils, water spirits, and supernatural guardians of the mountains. Belief in spirits is also very common among the tribal people. It is to be kept in mind that the folktale flourished among the Nagas in the past when the 'Morung' system was in vogue in the villages where young people spent the night together recounting tales. The stories narrated had an influence on the young as well. Through these tales one is able to know the culture and tradition, beliefs and sensibilities, superstitions and taboos, mind and art of the various tribes.

Nagaland is so diverse and each tribe has its own history, language, culture and folktales. The Naga way of life was closely associated with beliefs in the supernatural and spirit world. The 'tiger-soul' was one such belief of the Nagas which had its roots in the oral tradition and the firm faith of the tribes in the supernatural. The folktales of the Naga tribes highlight the various beliefs in the close association of the human world to that of the natural and the supernatural. The lives of the Nagas were immersed in the conduct of various rituals to appease their Gods so that they could protect them from the malevolent spirits. Every phase of life, right from birth to death, was connected to these rituals. Many of these religious and secular ceremonies were observed by the entire clan together, thereby, highlighting the domination of public life over the private.

Folktales reflect cultural ethos of the Nagas. Often some of these are common to several tribes with variations. Some of them may be peculiar to a particular tribe or even a village. It is to be noted that the oral fictional narrative gives the storyteller freedom, provided the storyteller recounts these in keeping to the limits of the taboos. These narratives are passed on from one

storyteller to another for generations and they go beyond language boundaries. At times, the narrator slightly modifies his narrative to his audience. This in turn is passed on with modification by other narrators. However, the basic concepts in the story are passed on from generation to generation. To a great extent, folktales have provided and shaped the Naga society through different patterns like history, rituals, the creation, universe, mysteries of the Supreme Being, animal kingdom and worldviews. The Nagas comprise of many tribes and each tribe abounds with their distinctive and tribe specific myths of origin and legends of migration besides a host of other tale types. The Nagas make a clear distinction between oral traditions of historical importance such as origin and migration and other tale types by way of the importance they lay emphasis upon each category. Also in villages, the traditions and memories pertaining to that particular village is preserved and narrated with clarity

In the bygone days, Nagas believed in honesty, truthfulness, loyalty, cooperation, and respect to elders. These virtues were given importance while rearing a child. Anybody who had accumulated wealth through illegal methods was looked upon with contempt. They strongly believed in the supernatural powers and highly revered hills, forests and rivers. Each village, being an independent entity, had its own norms and customary laws which were self sufficient to control the behaviour of the people, and thus there was democracy in the true sense. It is also to be noted that the lives of the people are immersed in the observance of genna days and various rituals. The word genna signifies a period of purification during which the Nagas strictly observe certain rituals in order to appease the Gods. Also the Naga belief in the spirit world dominates his mind and therefore, utmost care is taken to ward off the evil spirit with the help of these rituals. The superstitious village folks give lots of importance to unnatural events. In the observance of rituals during birth, marriage and death, an individual requires the support of community members. Some of the genna days are observed by individuals or his family and yet there are many occasions during which the entire village is a part of the taboos and restrictions. The fear of the supernatural is deeply seated in the mind of the Naga. Any wrong move on the part of an individual would offend the deities and cause havoc not only to him but to the entire village.

Each of the Naga tribes, be it the Aos, the Angamis, Semas, or Lothas have their own distinctive culture and folk tales of their own. Their past history can be understood better through a study of their oral traditions. The folktales bring alive their customs and traditions. Folktales

are the major source of the transmission of culture among the Nagas. They bear allegorical meanings. To get information from folktales, elders of the village are the perfect source. In every Naga village, singing of folk songs and narration of folklore are very common. These stories not only highlight the cultural aspect but they are also instructive and bear a moral meaning. They teach the young minds about their past and also teach them what is right or wrong. The folktales are of different types- some are based on animals and birds, some show the relationship of man with animals, while some are tales of ill-treatment by step mothers. The folktales fall under the category of tragedy, romance and humour as well.

In a great deal, we can consider that many folk narratives, for instance, in their own subtle and artistic way stress Christian virtues like obedience, modesty, humility, charity, diligence, fidelity, unselfishness etc by punishing disobedience, greed, arrogance, envy, vanity, laziness, curiosity, selfishness and so on. Many folktales let the poor and simpleminded achieve the good fortune of the hero at the expense of the rich and clever, thus stressing the blessed nature of poverty and simple mind. By rewarding with greatness and beauty the one who chooses what in appearance looks most humble or ugly, the value of modesty is likewise rewarded and respected. They proved an excellent medium to demonstrate the vanity of earthly affairs, related to a philosophy of earthly existence as an illusion.

Anyone who frequents a milieu where tales are told know that telling tales might be something else more than pure entertainment. Used as illustrations of daily life situations the folktales constitute a gospel of the people, which with its parables and examples confirm or reject the norms and values that everyone already adheres to or condemns. In this social context the folktales are like an unwritten code whose authority is indisputable. The same story can be used in one situation as an argument, and in another situation as an argument for exactly the opposite. It is characteristic of the usage of the storyteller, that he or she, in any situation, knows how to pull the right strings, so that things which people are not normally conscious of come to the surface and become visible. In one sense their tales could remind us of those modern kitchen implements where one can exchange the pieces according to the task to be carried out.

The local community adopts the tales and makes them its own property by having them reflect its beliefs, dreams and its needs, but also its prejudices and its condemnation of the others. Furthermore, the world of the tales allows the teller to project the material reality of the audience into the land of fantasy, where the postulates of the tales can be put to the test without anyone

experiencing blame or insult. As a matter of fact, the legitimization of prevalent norms of behaviour, beliefs and rituals are the important aspects of folklore that were pointed out first by anthropologists. In his *Four Functions of Folklore* the anthropologist William Bascom calls attention to the fact that in some societies the storyteller is expected to modify a familiar tale by introducing elements or giving a novel twist to the plot, and this, he says is in itself of basic importance to the study of dynamics and the aesthetics of folklore

Temsula Ao (1999) clearly illustrates how oral tradition plays a pivotal role in the structuring of the society, and constitutes the worldview, sense of identity as well as the idiom of the Ao's continuance within that world. The observation of Prof. Ao reminds us of similar observation such as "folklore is a mirror of the culture" (Alan Dundes, 1966). When we consider the conception in the context of the perception of oral tradition among the Nagas, it will not be incorrect to say that oral tradition is not only a key to the past, but it also reflect the present and thus also a key to understand better the present as well. It serves as the receptacle of the collective memory of mirrors their values, attitudes, social mores, customs, lifestyles and the people's experiences. It serves as the receptacle of the collective memory of the people's experiences. It mirrors their values, attitudes, social more, customs and lifestyles reflecting the culture of the owners of the folklore and traditions. It also provides a historical frame with which the people can connect, identify with and around which the people's sense of people-hood, belongingness and the historicity of their experiences are constructed and built.

Naga Legend of writing

There is a Naga legend on the art of writing on skin and how it was lost. An Ao tradition holds that in the beginning man and beast lived together. During this age, there was a written script written on the hide of an animal, hung on a wall. One day, as the people were away in their fields, a dog dragged it down and ate it up. From that time onwards, people had to commit all knowledge to memory and began transmitting the same by word of mouth to succeeding generations. The oral tradition thus begun became the repository of all knowledge about the origin of the tribe, the clan divisions and organization of the important institutions governing community life based on these divisions, as well as the belief system forms of worship (Ao 8).

Tenyidie folk poetry can be broadly divided into two categories, invocation poetry and lyrical poetry, according to D Kuolie (2007). He explains the distinction to say that the “invocation poetry” is closely associated with religion and therefore it can only be pronounced *in a serious manner with solemnity of tone by village priests only at the all sacred rituals and ceremony of solemnization/ anointing of the person selected for priesthood*(2007;129-130). On the other hand, the “lyrical poetry” is *associated with culture and folk song, the themes of which includes local history, legends, love ballads etc, and, therefore, is more popular with the common folks* (ibid:130).

This legend being the basis of the story telling traditions, folktales, legends and myths have flourished among the Nagas from times immemorial.

3.4. Rituals

Ritual is seen as basic to the understanding of man. Sometimes man is described as a basically rational, economic, political or playful species. Man may however be viewed as a ritual being exhibiting a striking parallel between his ritual and verbal behaviour. It is possible to view ritual as a way of defining or describing man since ritual is a specific and observable kind of behaviour and is based upon established or traditional rules, laid down by all known societies. According to the French sociologist, Durkheim, ritual is a determined mode of action. The reference or object of ritual is the belief system of a society and is constituted by a classification of everything into the realms of the sacred and the profane. It is also taken as a universal feature of religion. Belief system, myths, and the like, are perceived as expressions of the nature of the sacred realm in which ritual becomes the determined conduct of the individual in a society. It expresses a relation to the sacred and the profane. The sacred is that aspect of beliefs, myths, and sacred objects that is set apart and forbidden in a community. The function of ritual in the community is to provide proper rules for action in the realm of the sacred as well as to act as a bridge for passing into the realm of the profane.

Ritual is often described as a symbolic expression of actual social relations, status, or the role of an individual in a society. Ritual is further described as referring to a transcendent, numinous (spiritual) reality and the ultimate values of a community. Ritual as symbolic behaviour presupposes that the action is non- rational whatsoever its referent. It means, the means end relation of ritual to its referent is not intrinsic or necessary. The basic problem in all

of this is that ritual is described from an observer's point of view. Whether the ritual man is basically a non-rational or rational, as far as his behaviour and his belief system are concerned, it is solely dependent upon whether he understands both behaviour and belief to be a symbol of social, psychological, or religious realities. The notion of the sacred as a transcendent reality may become closest to the participant's own experience. Rituals are dependent upon a belief system for their complete meaning. Many rituals are patterned after myths. Such rituals can be called as imitative rituals, which means the ritual repeats the myth or an aspect of the myth.

Rituals abound the life of the Nagas, important among those are the ones performed by title takers, cleansing the village from epidemics, first seed sowing ceremony, village reconstruction etc in which the entire village participate together. Their life is immersed in various rituals to be followed at every phase of life. The fear of malevolent spirits made the Naga scared and thus, his everyday life was occupied in placating these spirits through rituals and offerings. They fear that it was not easy to contest with these malevolent spirits who could cause harm to them anytime and therefore in trying to escape the wrath of these spirits. They performed various ceremonies and sacrifices in the utmost religious manner to ward off the evil. The genna observed very strictly on different occasions formed a part and parcel of the Naga life. Some of the genna days are observed by individuals or his family and yet there are many occasions during which the entire village is a part of the taboos and restrictions.

We can classify rituals into positive or negative rituals. While most positive rituals are linked with concentrating or renewing an object or an individual, negative rituals are always in relation to positive rituals behaviour. Avoidance is a term that better describes the negative ritual; the Polysenian word 'tabu' (English taboo) is a popular descriptive term for this kind of ritual. This term is applied to those rituals that link something to be avoided or forbidden. Hence, negative rituals focus on rules of prohibition, which encompass infinite variety of rites and behaviour. The common characteristic of all can be seen in breaking of the ritual rule which brings in a dramatic change, usually some misfortune in ritual man. However, variation in this type should be noted from within a culture or cross- culturally. What is prohibited for a subject; for example, may not be prohibited for a king, chief, or a shaman. Contact with the forbidden or transgression of the ritual rules is often atoned by rituals of purification.

The sacrificial rituals are complex and diverse throughout the world. The significance of this type is well documented in the history of religions, and it has been seen as the earliest or

elementary form of religion itself. Its distinctive features are found in partly or total destruction of the victim. The victim need not essentially be human or animal. It can be vegetables, cakes, milk, eggs and the like are also 'victims' in this type of ritual. The total or partial destruction may take place through burning, dismembering or cutting into pieces, eating or burying. The sacrificial rituals fall into two classes. The first type in which the participant or participants receive the benefits of the sacrificial act and the other in which an object is the direct recipient of the action. This highlights the fact that sacrificial ritual does not only affect the individual but also objects such as houses, a particular place, a thing, an action, a family or community, or spirits or gods that become the intended recipients of the sacrifice.

Rituals of passage have often been described as rituals that can be found practically in all religious traditions, identified by the basic characteristic of the life-crisis and transition from one mode of life to another. These rituals mark a crisis in the life of an individual or community. Generally, they often define the life of an individual. It includes rituals of birth, puberty and entry into the full social life of a community), marriage, conception, and death. Most of these rituals mark a separation from an old situation or way of life and marks a transition rite celebrating the new situation, and a ritual of incorporation. Rituals of initiation into a secret society or a religious vocation such as priesthood, ascetic life, medicine man are also included among rites of passage as characteristic rituals of transition. One of the dominant motifs of these rituals is to emphasize on separation as either a death or a return to infancy, or the womb. Another important occasion where the village community comes together to perform rituals is the death of a member. Death of a member is considered a serious event and it involves various rituals to be observed, many of which require the support of the community. Other than natural deaths, the members also gather together in the observance of several genna during certain emergency situations, such as, death of a clan member by accident or when fire breaks out and burns the village and so on.

Most rituals are associated with a particular time of the day, month, year, stage in life, or commencement of a new event or vocation. This temporal characteristic of ritual is often called 'sacred space'. Time and space forms essential features of ritual action, and both mark a specific orientation or setting for ritual. When particular ritual objects, dances, gestures, music and dress are included in the study of ritual, the total structure and meaning of ritual behaviour far exceed any one description or explanation of ritual man.

3.5. Traditional stone pulling ritual

The villagers practiced the custom of planting stone monuments along roadsides leading to their village. These stones measuring from about two to twelve feet high are still found standing in rows along the village outskirts. They commemorate feasts given by husband and wife couples to the entire village. A preparatory feast 'Temza' followed by three merit feasts 'zhotho' had to be given by the couple, after which, two pre selected stones, one for the husband and the other for the wife, were dragged to the village by all the people in full traditional regalia and planted upright at a vantage spot. As per tradition, a set of nine such feasts could be extended in succession as and when convenient. The cycle would then be repeated all over again if couple desired to do so. These stone cenotaphs are thus symbols perpetuating the memory of persons through the feasts given by them. In the olden days, this was considered the ultimate benchmark of achievement and all who succeeded gained recognition and prestige in society. They were also honored with special privileges.

In a time when the method of agriculture and livestock rearing was primitive, amassing sufficient wealth to carry out such a ritual involved years of intense physical labour, yet all quietly toiled hard with this objective in mind. Though today this ancient custom is no longer practiced, one can still admire the multiple significance of its purpose. It nurtured the culture of giving and sharing and also motivated the people to put in additional effort beyond what was required to sustain their simple day to day lives. The laid down standards induced the people to walk the extra mile in order to further the overall prosperity of the village.

The rite

A husband and wife couple who were ready to throw this feast (zhotho) would firstly give a preparatory feast called 'Tem-za'. After this, they would await a good dream to make the declaration about their intent of performing the 'zhotho'. Accordingly, on the day after getting a dream which they believed was propitious, they would invite a husband and wife couple who are also very close family friends, and the first announcement would be made to them. The 'zhotho' involved much expenditure as it required giving a lavish feast of meat, rice and wine to the whole village. There are altogether nine sequential series of such feasts after which the sequence is repeated all over again. Each of these feasts was named differently. The first is called 'keda', the second 'Hi' and so on. It may be noted that stones were pulled and planted only from the third

feast onward and this continued till the ninth. Those who performed the first feast earned the right to have pillows for their head during their burial and a three tier stone grave. The custom also entailed the feast givers to present meat to those who had already extended such feasts in the past. The following is the specified list of fresh beef to be presented to the earlier feast by the intending hosts.

1. To those who had extended three merit feasts- 'seli' (any portion of meat)
2. Four merit feasts- 'Pocii' (full one side chest of a cattle)
3. Five merit feasts- 'Pobo' (full front leg) without 'Pongu' (hoof). The hoof is given to the person who delivers the gift.
4. Six merit feasts- 'Pobo' with 'Pongu'
5. Seven merit feasts- 'Podo' (full hind) with 'Bokhi' (choicest parts of a cattle's innards)
6. Eight merit feasts- 'Poma' (entire rump), 'Podo' and 'Bokhi'
7. Nine merit feasts- 'Podo', 'Poma' and 'Bokhi' and 'Oza bwe' (scoop blood)

After giving the third feast, the couple qualified for 'Otsiisii' meaning 'stone pulling' by the whole village and erection of two pulled stones 'Tsiiswe', one each for the husband and the wife. They also earned the right to put on 'Zhotho Khwe' a special kind of shawl. Giving the fourth feast entitled them to adorn the front gable of their house with 'Kika', a 'V' shaped wooden board stylized in the shape of two hornbill heads.

On completion of the last stage if the couple desired to continue extending more feasts they had to repeat the same series all over again. This time round they were however required to first perform a ritual depicting rebirth which involved lying down on a bamboo rice winnowing fan (Lheru) which also serves as a cradle for a new born. Considering the economic situation of the villagers of that time, a couple venturing to host the entire village for the second round was rather extraordinary. Hosting the third second round feast entitled the couple to make 'Soki Ki', a house made entirely of wooden timber. This was very special and exclusive because in those days the villagers lived in houses made of bamboo wall and straw roof only. Also, the two stones pulled in their tribute required to be planted within the village. Such stones were named 'Tecotsiishii'. This was more or less the ultimate mark of merit.

The community participation in honoring the feast giving couple by pulling two stones and planting them at a vantage point of the village was performed only after the third feast was extended. After hosting the third feast the couple would search for two appropriate stones of

dissimilar sizes- a large one for the stones were identified, they would go back home and await the meaning of the husband's dream of that night. If it was interpreted as good, plans would be made for the pulling ceremony, but if the dream happened to be bad the stones would be discarded and new stones would be sought.

Once things were conducive, certain rituals had to be performed before the stones were pulled. A lady (zodipii) would be specially selected to brew rice beer (zotho). After it was ready the zodipii will first serve the beere to the feast givers- the husband first and then the wife. She would next serve the 'Dava o' (the ritual performer) and then to all the others.

Two experienced persons called 'Tsiromi' would first go and tie the stones to wooden sledges (lokro) with thick and strong jungle vines 'sakro zho' (*Acacia pinnata*). Once the tying was done the end of the rope would be peeled a little followed by loud ululation 'Mekrlui'.

Thus, although people were governed by gerontocracy (rule by elders), age alone was not the deciding factor for leadership as it was really a meritocracy. Because an aspiring 'peyu'- leader, had to prove his mettle by distinguishing himself at least in some leadership qualities such as determination and courage, humility and integrity, compassion.



Fig.3.1. Stones erected in tribute to the feast givers at Viswema village

3.6. Folktales and Narrative Poems amongst Southern Angami

Southern Angami people have a rich treasury of folk literature, of which folktales and narrative poems form an integral and important component. The culture of the villagers and their experiences play a dominant role. Folk narratives continue to have a meaningful role to play in people's lives today because they perform an important didactic function. They reflect man's duality. Man is a combination, on the one hand, of cultural conditioning and, on the other hand, natural instincts. Many folk narratives are sermons in miniature. They have a similar function to cautionary legends and they correspond to the modern paradigm of social control. If the moral code is broken, punishment follows. Jokes and anecdotes, as well as legends, often have a didactic function. These tales in miniature- the product not necessarily of well known, acknowledged storytellers, but of the ordinary creative human mind with a gift of speech- fully deserve to be studied in detail. They also help the listeners to choose the correct way for positive living. The tales are indigenous stories that are developed with the social context and laden with philosophy though they sound simple and linear.

Story telling has been part and parcel of life for generations. It is through narrative performance that the southern Angamis have been educated, entertained and informed. Stories were told in many informal settings and by a cross section of society. Indeed, some of the traditional tales are declining, but others are changing along with the changing of the society and these can serve for the new life of folktales. Some of the old traditional tales still have artistic charm and such tales, perhaps, will never cease to exist and will be handed down for ever. And many new tales appear continuously in modern times.

3.6.1. On Friendship and Rivalry

Khrahazwii hise yozo

Krahazwiimi lo kevi medo

Keshiiciene yo kerheyacu

Lu kewhizwii hisemi siine

Khotoluno dodu-a teshe

Keyokevi tekhri kevi ze

Okeno se oso mi meso

Okhrukesa chekhel nhano

Pciilemo mhasii thukese

Re-etso re – emi ova mesiirii

Keyo kevi dase krozol

Ono viho oyozerhe

Owhelo ne keyo mhiikwii se

Okevitho osomi meso

Mitoyozo kitalilo va (electricity)

Whelilo le kelilo vakrwii

Osomize zal kita lo

Mekikerwii odo fiikeka

Mekikehi orwiiswii meny

(The english translation)

The year Krahazwimi applies its wisdom

Made merry together

The Hisemi khel of Kewhizwii

Is getting ready

With cheerful vibrant youth in

Joy to host our guests

On the day of the new month

Preparing for it without going to field

The traditional attires make us more grand

The witty Dase and Krozol

On the same track was dear Viho

With the witty spirit of the gathered group

Host our guest with hospitality

The light lights everywhere

It brightens every corner and places

The guest on the courtyard of Zal

Yodelling and leaping

Yodelling and seek the blessing

They are Saho and Lopoho

Admiration followed by Tepul

Long live the composers

The above narrates the friendship maintained by the people of Khrhazwi of Viswema village and Hisemi of Kohima village. It highlights the preparation by the Khrhazwimi to host their guests. It is through a narrative poem such as these that their thoughts and expressions are exhibited.

Nuzüza

During internecine village wars, there lived a Phesama villager who had extraordinarily powerful eyesight. He would ascend to a high level ground and look out. With his powerful eyesight, he could see Kohima villagers as they went to and from their fields.

Thus they could not hide from his sight, which made it difficult to attack Phesama.

So Kewhimia (people of kohima village) decided to plant landslide seed and destroy the high level that was the lookout post. They hired a certain person called Thalienuo to do the deed. The landslide seed was initially very light, but as it was carried over a distance it became heavier and heavier. And so Thalienuo had to stop on the way. Till today the place where he stopped continues to experience landslides. As he continued his journey towards the village, he was afraid to go into the village and left his load at the village gates. This led to landslide at the site. The landslide disfigured the place and formed into two lakes, namely, 'Tsesheza' and 'Nuzüza'. When people enquired as to which side was the lake's source (bigger side of the lake), the people who saw the lakes said it was towards Phesama. On hearing this, the villagers felt sad and said 'instead of casting a curse on others, a boon has been granted'.

Nuzüza means getting one's daily needs and able to live on the produce that one gets. Even to this day, the people of the village proclaim that the lake once dried will result to unproductive crops and livelihood. The lake has water source of its own supplying water to the nearby fields.



Fig.3.2. Nuzüza lake at Phesama village

3.6.2. On Naming

The people take the beliefs very seriously and their entire life is spent in appeasing the deities and various supernatural forces as per the village custom through offerings in the form of cattle, pigs, fowls, eggs, rice beer and performing genna during different occasions. The birth of a Naga child is associated with ceremonies and rituals. During the naming ceremony of a child, the traditions and norms are followed. A child cannot be named just like that without adhering to the cultural practices of the clan. According to the custom, names are supposed to be chosen in a careful way for the repository of clan names belonging to legendary figures, brave warriors and important persons. The history and tradition of the clan are associated with those names. It can be seen in the case of Zashiimo clan of Phesama village.

Zashümo

The Zashümo clan had its root from Lt. Merhivi, a founding member of Phesama village. The father of Merhivi was Mr.Sano. Mirhivi migrated from Kigwema village. The name of Merhivi was given by a person from Khonoma village of Semoma khel. The parents of zashümo desired to let their son have a name unfamiliar with any others. For the same, braving all the troubles, they took him to Khonoma village as they learnt of a man in that village who has the gift of naming new born. Accordingly, the man named the child as ‘Zashümo’ at the desire of his parents which means ‘Zashü’ same name and ‘mo’ none. Thus, with this forefather, the Zashümo clan came into existence.

3.6.3. On Origin

Much alike other indigenous people, the Angamis too revere Mother Earth and with Ukepenuopfü, the birth spirit and creator of all. The people are instructed on the essential bonding with nature. Origin myths and folktales passed down through oral tradition give us an idea about the traditional worldview. Though some of these may seem like superstitious beliefs to an outsider, myths and beliefs serve an important role in educating about the way our forefathers perceived themselves and the world around them. They are the oral source of history.

Viswema village is considered to be the third biggest village in Asia. The meaning of the village name “Viswema” has two words, “viswe” means “very good” and “mi” stands for “people”. Putting these two words together it becomes “viswemi” literally meaning “Very Good People”. It is now officially known as “Viswema”. In ancient days, people of other villages, who had new birth in the family or were newly wedded or who were to host social feast or feast of merit called “Zhothu” or “Temza” would prefer to invite a person from Viswema to be their first guest to taste their food before any other person visits them, with the belief that blessings and prosperity would come to their family. History is the systematic record of the past, not merely of kingdoms and empires. But the early history of Viswema remains inconclusive as there are no written records. However, that the people of Viswema belong to mongloid race is certainly proved from stories verbally handed down and by comparing the people of Viswema with the other Nagas.

It is believed that in a place called 'U-amia' village there lived a person with six sons but he did not have sufficient property to share among his sons. So he asked his second son to go out and find a place for himself to live. He gave his son a cow, a dog, a cock and a seat fitted on the back of the cow with the advice that his son should go on till the cow mooed, the cock crowed, the dog barked and the seat from the back of the cow fell down to the ground.

So his second son began his journey but even after a month's journey nothing happened and he began to doubt his father's advice. He even went to the extent of thinking that his father wanted to kill him because he was poor. However, knowing the love and care his father showered upon him, he continued the journey. He ultimately reached a place called Mekhromi/Nkhromi, Makhel near the present Tadubi village in Mao area of Manipur state. And then just as his father said, the cow mooed, the dog barked, the cock crowed and the seat fell from the cow's back. So the man sat down to take rest for a while and as he began to set up a place to spend the night, beautiful girl came and helped him build the place, and both of them not only spent the night together but lived together in that place.

Their family eventually grew and became a very big village. Later, one of the villagers called Vadol took his family to a place called Tenyiphe (near Tsüvül river) and settled there. From there some of the children of Vadol migrated to Mehiemi (Maram, Manipur) but there was an epidemic and many people died. So, one man called Viswe took his family to Kezol, crossing the place no known as Vishe Kharu and reached Kipizwü (the site above the present day village of Viswema) and settled there. The Viswema people are descendants of this family. That Viswema people had settled at Kipizwü is proved by the fact that the anvil which they used is still found at Kipizwü. Also broken pieces of potteries were found till recent times from this site.

When the people of Viswema were still in Kipizwü, a group of people known as "Thoramami" (Kharenümi) from Phezu (Phezwü) came and attacked them along with a white elephant. But they were defeated and they moved towards Kuda(Dimapur). Another group of invaders is said to have come from the Northwest called "Ketodi" (the black rulers) but their commander was killed and the attackers fled. There were several encounters with the Manipuri forces. One such encounter took place in 1879 during Anglo- Naga war when the British sought help from Manipur Raja Kirti Singh as Viswemi lay in the route to be traversed by the Manipuris. Later the Viswema people shifted their village to the present site. Shifting could be

because of the frequent wars or other reasons like difficulty in cultivations on the hill slopes, growth of the population and want of more land for cultivation and settlement etc.

3.6.4. On Head Hunting

Folktales have the capacity for acculturation, assimilation, adjustment and conversation, and at the same time to support the institutions and behavioural patterns of a culture. Besides suggesting rules for conduct, it also brings to light the need for holding up to scorn those who deviate from socially accepted norms and eulogizing those who follow them. It exemplifies the standard-bearers of values and goals of the community.

Internecine village feuds, personal animosity and vengeance had been the motivating force in the initial stage, which became an effective incentive to earn prestige, valour and insignia for a victory of a successful head hunter; subsequently, it developed into a degenerated, morbid ethos of personal bravery. The feathers in a head gear worn by the Angami male indicating the number of heads won by him shows the irrational, abominable depth to which the inhuman practice plunged. Head hunting had far reaching implications for the Naga men and cannot be seen only as a survival mechanism against the enemy. J.H.Hutton points out one such implication of the importance of head hunting in the Angami Naga society

It is agreed by all Angamis , as well as by other Nagas, that head hunting was essential to marriage in so far that a buck who had taken no head, and could not wear the warrior's dress at festivals, not only found it exceedingly difficult to get any girl with pretensions to good looks or to self respect to marry him, but was held up to ridicule by all girls of his clan (Hutton 165).

There are folktales which fully depict such incestuous episodes. Ruth Benedict (1887-1948) has pointed out that the tribal mythologies narrated violations of taboos, such as the hero trickster in the 'Journal of American Folklore' sleeping with his mother-in-law which would never be tolerated in real life. In the 'Rationale of the Dirty Jokes' (1968), Hungarian scholar G.Lengman draws attention to the most current folktale type of modern society and talks on the clear motivation of dirty jokes which violate sexual taboos. The general tendencies of the individuals having incestuous phantasies are implied in the Oedipus Complex too. The incestuous instinct always causes fear and evokes unconscious guilt later, but the intruders and irritants in its designs are looked at with frown.

The story of Mehoviu

Morusa is a dweller of Kidima, a southern Angami village. He is a robust health wise or has a proportionate physique and is affluent. After all, he is a good warrior. Morusa thinks of taking a dive into wedlock. But there is no girl in his village who could be a match for him. The female relatives of Morusa began to gather news about the eligible damsels in the neighbouring villages, and on search, they learn that there is a pretty girl called Mehoviu in the adjoining village. Mehoviu does not know Morusa. But she has heard of him. Actually, Mehoviu has been dreaming and weaving fantasies of merry making that she eats and drinks at Morusa's house. Representatives are then sent to Mehoviu and her consent is obtained. The date on which Mehoviu would arrive to Morusa's house is fixed and the word was sent around accordingly.

On the appointed day, Morusa rises early in the morning and chuckling tells himself "Tonight, my wife will come. I must, therefore, go for head hunting and come with a head. In the evening, when my bride comes, we would be all feasting Rupie" (the ceremonial meat served in the feast to celebrate a head hunting success). He togs up and goes for head hunting. But he finds no warriors. When he is passing by a village, he comes across a plump belle. Morusa does not want to slay a girl. Nevertheless, he kills her and chops her head off for want of warriors (men). He brings the head home, and in the twilight, they are relishing feasts around the head and waiting for the bride's arrival. They wait and wait, but Mehoviu does not appear. Wondering as to what has happened, folks conjecture that Morusa has been jilted. Then reaches the news that when Mehoviu was about to leave, a head hunter slew her. It dawns on Morusa that he has killed his own wife-to-be and has carried the head home. Morusa is distressed.

The tale of Mehoviu is a well crafted short story, with its tense thematic progression. Its focal action is on inadvertent killing of his own prospective bride by a capricious youth. The exposition of the story in the beginning delineating the male protagonist's physical nature along with his personal traits of bellicose character and abundant riches, and in a few pen strokes, takes off to establishing romantic mood of his mental life to plunge into nuptial bond thereafter triggers the action of the story. Here, the non availability of a suitable match is counter-poised by the non availability of a warrior outside the village. Since no cultural proscription of female head hunting is available, the plot renders Morusa to cut short the dreams not only of his fiancée, but his own, killing Mehoviu, the female protagonist and none else. The contrivance provides fatality

for both, Mehoviu and Morusa (as the supposed perfect match is wiped out at his own hands). Therefore, the tale can be considered as a powerful tragedy.

The action in the tale is charged with emotional crescendo, suspense and vivid scenarios shifting rapidly. It has its own anti-thesis since the decision on the bride's arrival itself is the source of its reversal and final termination. It is potent enough to throw ripples of excitement in Morusa arousing him to display his chivalry by head hunting which is in consonance with his bellicose nature. His awakening arousing with chuckle in the morning, in fact, is apparently a physical one and the display of his gallantry which ultimately proves to be a dastardly act, performance of a ceremonial feast appropriate to the festive mood of the occasion and thereafter, night copulation is the natural course of the romantic day, though among tribals it is not customary for the bridegroom to go head hunting before the wedding.

The protagonist's desire, his toting up, setting out and searching for warriors to fight with all these sequences have picturesque qualities of cinematic shots, and serve neatly prepared foreground for the catastrophic peak moment whereupon he commits uxoricide unwittingly through want of identity and want of a warrior man. Of course, there is no taboo prescribed so far in the cultural milieu proscribing female head-hunt. Therefore, the protagonist's balking and jibbing is nothing but suggestive of his dormant humanitarian traits which, however, no longer desist him from his final horrid act, in the face of its cultural sanction. Here, man is stretched to the conformity of the corporate body of society wherein lopping off the head of any human victim irrespective of the sex, age and status earns the slayer no less prestige than the killing of armed warrior.

The climatic moment has high pitch dramatic irony and the falling action reversal shows lull, stasis and prelude to the revelation- unraveling the knot, the denouement- of the ghastly act of butchering his own wife to be Morusa who is, according to the surmise of the jubilant people celebrating, feasting around her head itself, jilted by the bride due to her non-arrival while in fact, she was jilted by him most savagely under the cover of a practice culturally motivated and socially supported.

The crux of the tale is the realization of the protagonist- that the woman head-hunted by him and the bride who is eagerly awaited on her non arrival at the appointed hour by the rejoicing people is the same one that correlates the incident with the arrival of the news about her being slain.

It was not only survival and protection of the village that drove the Nagas to wars and hunt heads. The practice of head-hunting had many other social and cultural implications. Thus, ...a young man, eager to prove his mettle, would long to take a head, bring it home in triumph, to be feted as a warrior, gain the privilege of wearing the coveted warrior's ornaments and, having at last proved his worth and manhood, acquire a bride (Horam 88).

The social sanction of marriage was also gradually linked to head-hunting. A young man would not be able to find a bride for himself unless he proved his mettle by participating in head-hunting raids. This social approval was indeed necessary for the young Naga man as the larger community viewed him in conjunction to that one particular act which would prove his virility. Such prospects of social recognition changed the very notion and meaning of head-hunting among the Nagas and gave it almost a sport like quality, positive in nature.

Head hunting practice was the cultural norm of the Naga societies. Bringing enemy head from the battlefield or after attacking an enemy village is considered as a trophy, a sign of victory over the enemy. Internecine village- feuds, personal animosity and vengeance had been the motivating force in the initial stage, which became an effective incentive to earn prestige, valour and insignia for a victory of a successful head-hunter. Subsequently, it developed into a degenerated, morbid ethos of personal bravery. The feathers in a head-gear worn by an Angami male indicating the number of heads won by him shows the irrational, abominable depth to which the inhuman practice plunged. The present tale makes a mockery of this through its paradoxical situation unfolding the apparent bravery culminating into cowardice and successful hunt-victory into defeat, because the hunted creature is his own wife, and defeat, because it has turned into an inexorable personal tragedy. The tale abounds with travesty and ironic juxtapositions, viz. human/ inhuman/ life/ death, bravery/cowardice, successful/defeat, rejoice/affliction, material/spiritual, and the apparent/real, etc.

The head hunting gave special importance to men, treating them as protectors of the village and made them to think of themselves as superior to women. During the days of head hunting, the men folk had to be well fed and taken care. They were given the best portion of meat during meals. In the physical world surrounding the protagonist with its material(affluence), physique (flesh-sex implied) and violence (head-hunt), the affliction caused to him due to his personal tragedy of his own making is powerful enough to throw ripples in his consciousness which is suggestive of his real awakening. Here, the practice which is safely operative in a cultural

cognitive anthropological cosmos is proved to be out of place in a personal cosmos. Inevitably, the perturbation in an individual's consciousness caused by a pervert social- practice is, in fact, a stir, also a perturbation in the consciousness of other members of the group. The malady emanating from the thought system of the society leading to deadly end, could be penetrated by the befitting severe shock treatment received by the protagonist who is plunged into human pathos.

This tale is a classic example of a critique culture. Had the protagonist met a warrior when he set out for a hunting spree, and in the ensuing fight if his head lopped off, there would have been no tale to tell since the critical point aimed at would have been lost in the wilderness, and the tale would fall flat, the maiden would be in woes and morose for some time and the whole episode would vanish into oblivion. In George Kukacsian's sense of critical realism, the present tale, a literary artifact, has achieved what it could – the best by allusion and in an implicit way.

3.6.5. On Love and Marriage

Often in stories concerning marriage, a woman is the helpless victim as she is sold off at a bridal price; yet in certain stories the woman has the freedom before marriage to decide on her partner. These tales show how societal traditions are passed on from generation to generation by oral tradition.

The Tenyidie folktale 'The legend of Sopfunuo' is the story of pretty Sopfunuo married off to a Mao boy who eventually drove her out of his home along with her little child due to jealousy and suspicion. While wandering in the forest they were killed by evil spirits and were turned to stones. Being told in a dream, her father arranged to drag the big stone which was Sopfunuo. But due to thunderstorm the stone pulling was halted. Meanwhile a villager had a dream message from Sopfunuo, 'How dare you take me leaving my baby?.' This is how the two stones of Sopfunuo and her baby were dragged to Rüsoma village where it is believed to be growing ever after.

Lhedilie

Once, there lived a handsome young man in the village of kigwema named Lhedilie. He was a tall, young man and a mighty warrior. The elders of Kigwema said that he was an excellent youth with a good character. He did well in sports and was the most eligible bachelor.

Lhedilie's parents were worried about getting an ideal wife for him. So one day they talked to him about his marriage. Through an envoy, they asked for the hand in marriage of a lady called Kheri-ü. She was a beautiful and an intelligent maiden in their own village. She hailed from a rich and brave family, the daughter of the village chief. She was not only beautiful but was also wise and prudent.

Lhedilie's parents were very happy, but at the same time they were worried if the girl's parents reject their proposal. Vikedorei, the envoy went to the girl's house. Her parents approved. Both families agreed with each other. Before their marriage, the traditional ceremony known as 'Thova' was performed. It was done with a hen, checking their luck for a successful marriage. They were found to be match for future. After some weeks, Kheri-ü and Lhedilie were married. Though they did not know each other, they were obedient to their parents. They had a long and happy life with three daughters and a son.

The tale presents the ceremonies and rituals connected with marriage that existed in the traditional society. The final consent comes to picture with the performance of the ceremony called as 'Thova' where they were found to be suitable for one another.

Easterine Kire says, *Poetry is the base of our literary culture. In Tenyidie, a poem is not just a poem. Every poem tells a story* (Gopinath Mahanty Lecture, 2016). Here is a few couplets from Angami poem which the lovers sing while strolling at the edge of jungle or collecting wild vegetables

To part with you
Is heart breaking ,
How can I go,
Where I can not see you.

As full grown paddy stalk in field,
Dancing in the breeze of summer,
So as you are, my darling,

To the sweet heart under heaven,
 Who can be double minded.
 Ruditsou, scatter seeds from your beautiful hand,
 To grow as beautiful as you are.
 To all places I go for courting,
 I met not one fairer than you,
 You have captured my heart.

Loudly, I would have called you darling,
 But if some of your lovers hear me,
 They will question you again,
 That's why I am cautious.

If I come to court you one night,
 If your neighbours ask you the next morning,
 Who visited you last night?
 Be reserved, betray not, confuse them.

In her dancing playfulness, the girl is described as an essential part of nature, her unwitting wantonness of beauty and her inherent dynamism of the wild captivates the lover's heart. Rather than becoming possessive, the lover is cautious and warns her against exposing him so as to guard her free sports with her other loves.

In a tribal society, the promiscuity involved not much obligations on either side, but if two young people had been lovers for some time and had become fond of each other, they began to consider marriage. Usually, it was the boy who took the initiative and asked the girl whether she was willing to become his wife. If a girl did not relish the prospect of marrying her lover or feared opposition from her parents, she would refuse his proposal and shelter behind the authority of her parents. Although parents sometimes arranged marriage, an attempt to forbid their unmarried daughter a friendship with a particular boy would have aroused general disapproval. One will realize the philosophy behind the given poem:

Avu neihu

Avu neihu kerī nyū cū
 U kinumia mo zo u die rhe
 Molie idi so kesi pfū rha a tsū
 Derie no khapie se
 Me ketha shū a ro shevū
 Uramia nyūkhro nyū nyi
 Hie pie wepfū kenvenuto kivo
 Kezhanhie we she-u no ler
 Kehie shūphrei hiezhū pie kelhou
 Nie nuo zaū sochū di shevū
 A thuo a nou vi kemo üsie
 Zevokhrienuo thole üzo
 Cūza melo kevi-u depe
 He pie-e nuo vo khashū nu
 Nie kethau ketsoū liro
 A veü hie
 Kene nuo lhikhrū
 Kevie waluo
 Ani kerüü

Avü neihu

Our desire to marry
 Family without knowing our desires
 No, they said and searched me another lady
 But to give you
 You to be someone's make me jealous, my lady
 Villagers celebrate nyūkho festival
 Carrying my child visited parents
 That day entered the man
 Removed the carrying shawl and holds the child
 What have you name the child lady

I on my own
 Named her zevokhrienuo with my grief
 Giving the best row from the necklace
 Put it on the neck of the child
 If husband enquires
 Tell not mine
 Bought by parents
 Hide it
 My love

The above poem is about a young man and a lady who were in deep love with desire to get married and live together. Parents of the man disapproved their love and made him marry a lady from another village and parted them. The man in the song expresses his jealousy to let the lady whom he truly loved be someone else's wife. The woman also got married. Both of them settled and started their own family. Years went and the lady took her child to visit her parents during the village festival. On that day, the man enters. And without hesitation, he holds the child in his arm and asks her name to which the mother replied 'Zievokhrienuo' (hesitating to take away) as she named her with all grief and remorse she faced for their love. Hearing this, he unleashed the best row from his necklace and puts it on the child. If the husband enquires, the man tells her not to tell his name but to say that it was given by her parents. The song ends calling her as a lover yet diverted.

3.6.6. On Spirits

Tribal folk tales are deeply connected with the myths and beliefs of the tribal communities. In other societies folklore is considered by a wider cultural background. Folktales are of ancient origin and have deep psychic roots in the life of the community and as the society comes out of a tribal stage and reaches out to the more organized and settled agricultural ways of life, the folk tales too come out of the strangled hold of pure ritual or magic. Stories of Spirits taking possession of humans are common among the Nagas. These stories are essential to make people believe in the supremacy of man for his survival. Psychoanalytically, it is to be understood as the helplessness of man who is the victim of evil spirits, as the people have to

appease them for survival. Such stories can remove fear out of the community as evil spirits are given a place of their choice away from human habitation.

The Angamis belief in the spirit world also centers round various other myths and practices that are a part of their daily lives. The older people repeatedly warned the children not to wander in the forest while playing. Visakhonu Hibo talks about an evil spirit called “Ratumi” which was greatly feared by the Nagas because it fed on the entrails of human beings and was believed to roam around certain villages (Hibo 116,117).

Like all Naga society in particular and primitive society in general, the past Angami society was inter-mingled by beliefs in the spirit world that co-existed with the humans. Indigenous religion is a system of beliefs and practices dealing with spirits endowed with divine powers. There were certain evil spirits that cannot be appeased and remained a strong threat to the people. The evil spirits tormented people in order to instill fear in the hearts of the people so that they will offer sacrifices. The belief in evil spirit naturally gave rise to the belief in the existence of the human soul. It was believed that the illness of a person was due to the capture of the soul by the evil spirit keeping for intrusion into the spirit’s abode. The soul could be released from the bondage of the evil spirit only by proper propitiation after which the illness would subside. The people believed in animal sacrifices to propitiate evil spirits.

They also believed in the existence of good spirits, who do not harm the people. However, the people did not give much of their time to the good spirits because of the constant anxiety and fear created by the evil spirits. The spirits are said to communicate with individuals in dreams, but their will is also discerned through omens. Indeed, interpretations of dreams and divination have important roles in the life of the Nagas. This is also true in the case of the Angamis. (D Souza 53)

Oramine Tekranyi-o nyi

Oramine ne tekra nyi nyi

Avu zo vo Lbrwolo wada

Tsiine da pfii thokhwe nyii bade

So-o tso kemo ki ne

Terii mo no ketsa ro khono te

No ne du da a bo a lebu

Orami ne tsiikhwe ba phuo
 Soka se sii todi ha kedii
 Totha ta mo cii se cie ne la vo
 Owa phi thii the la ka
 Tsii ne ngol shevere kemha

Tekranyi-o

Our village celebrate tekranyi-o
 Go to the rivers to collect leaves
 Collect and make seat for the cowboys
 Before reaching
 Not the evil spirit but the wild animal
 You left, I alone
 Villagers at the meeting place
 With sticks hang the traditional attire of the lady
 not this year, but after three years
 Leaves started growing
 I feel I could see you again

In the above poem, we find that the beloved's life is taken by the wild animal and not the evil spirit. On hearing the news, the villagers hung the attires of the lady as they believe that she will need it in the next world. The partner continues to mourn the passing of the beloved and cherish the memories. The belief in evil spirits and human spirit naturally gave rise to the existence of life after dead. The people believed in a world where human spirit goes after death. This is why the Angamis had the practice of keeping a lantern lighted on the grave of loved ones for a few days after a person dies because they believed that spirits of the loved ones should not be afraid of the darkness when they wake up in the next world. The indigenous religion of the Angamis believed in life after death. They believed that the souls of the dead people go to the next world where they begin a new life. Hence, it was the traditional practice of the Angamis to bury some of the belongings of the dead person along with his coffin. The belief was that the dead person will need it to set up a new life in the next world. However, this is neither justified nor proved to be true. The people also believed that the spirit of the loved ones return and show

themselves to their family not to frighten their family but to say farewell in a manner that the family would recognize and be comforted. At times, the living and the dead are brought together in dreams, which are in many ways of great importance to ritual practice. There are also beliefs that some spirits of the dead are not at rest and they try to return to the world of the living. They haunt the places they frequented when they were alive, especially those who died young. Desperately, they want to live out their lives to the full and when their lives are cut short, they try to find ways to return. So, there are reports of sighting them at former hunts circulate in the village terrifying the people living in that area.

3.6.7. On Existence of Devil

The Tiger, the Devil and the Man

Once upon a time there lived a tiger, a devil and a man who were said to be born by one mother. They lived together as a family in one house as brothers, but after the death of their mother, they were separated from each other and started living in different places.

The tiger is said to be the oldest, then the devil, then the man who was the youngest of the three. Though they were brothers of one mother, each had different traits and natures. Their difference was shown when each of them had to care for their mother on different days when she was in her death bed. Their mother had gotten sick, and each one of them had to stay with her on alternate days. She understood their different natures and blessed them accordingly.

The first day was assigned to the tiger, being the eldest of the three. When the tiger stayed with his sick mother instead of giving her care, he wanted to eat her when she died. His mother was very much worried and disturbed at her son's rude and ungrateful attitude. She cursed the tiger to live in the forest in the fear of man, away from human habitation for the rest of his life and made him eat raw food throughout his lifetime.

The second day was the devil's turn. Instead of giving her proper care, the devil caused her to get a fever for the whole day and she was not given food to eat. She cursed her second son, the devil, not to come into the sight of man and to hide from his face. The devil was made to live in the secluded places on the earth. That is why men cannot see the devil or encounter him face to face today. Finally, on the third day, it was the turn of the man to stay with his mother. When the man was with her, he cooked her warm food to eat. He gave her proper care and treated her

kindly. He bathed her with warm water and massaged her. As a result, she felt much better. She was grateful to him, blessed him, and opened space for him wherever he wanted to live. She gave him wisdom and a better thinking power. She blessed him and made him superior to all animals and birds on earth.

The cosmological world of the Nagas is properly represented here through the story of the tiger, devil and the man as brothers. Pride of place is always given to human beings, because they have intelligence and wisdom. The constant interference of the devils with the human lives can be explained with the same myth that the devil was annoyed with the man for getting better blessings than him, though he was the older one. This is why the elders warn not to trespass the abode of the devils, the desolate places. These stories are still a lived reality in the Naga society. Though turning to Christianity has, to a large extent, invalidated the old practices and sacred rituals, it is not all lost. In fact, Nagas still have a strong sense of respect for the oral or the spoken world.

3.6.8. Of Legends

Folktales in a significant way are connected with the language and the wider cultural background notwithstanding the fact that it is primarily a feature of the oral tradition. This umbilical link with orality is established even in the written folk literature of a much later period. Folktales incorporated are not just enjoyable but talk a lot about the beliefs of the people- how and why they believe and what they believe.

Jakhama village is a very old Angami village with many legendary stories attached to her. It is situated in the Southern part of Nagaland, along National Highway 2 and 16 km away from Kohima, the capital. There is no written record of the traditions and legendary stories of our ancestors. The traditions and stories are passed down orally from generation to generation down the years. Jakhama village is rested on a low lying hillock, dwarfed by the exotic and lofty mountains, “chen-hicie, Thübo / Chieyiezo and Terozu” of the Japfü range in the west. The remaining three directions of the village are surrounded by perennial streams- “Kehorü, Chichorü, Tebwükorü” that merges and forms “zarü” or the “Dzüü” river. Towards the North is Kigwema, Mima and Chakhabama villages, towards the south is Viswema village and toward the East is Kidima and Kezoma villages. The village is located at an altitude of about 1550 metres

with a geographical area of about 10312 acres. It is richly covered with sub tropical type of forest and vegetation.

The ancestors are believed to have migrated along the river valleys and emerged to settle from a place locally called “Kehoza” or “Kelhouzie” (Life giving lake). They first rested at Sajaoba/ Chahoumai, then settled in Makhel / Mikhomai. From here, they separated out to settle at different places at different times. The ancestors of Jakhama village walked towards the southwest direction. Many others from the group scattered to other places too. Some of the groups went towards the north and settled at Khezhakeno and so forth.

Very often, the settlers at Viswema village were troubled by invading warriors coming from the northern side, who were called “Mezhamia”. Viken, a brave and skilled warrior, was sent to guard against and stop these enemy invaders. Thus the name Jakhama or “zhokhami” is derived from the term “Mezhakha” (to check the Mezhas). The rock used by Viken as his hideout is called “Viken Zi”. Many stories are told about the skill and daring warriors from Jakhama village. To mention a few- Yiethün, Vimetwe, Sotwe, Hopin, Zakahe, Kazhümo, Viswen, Neilezhü (Buto), Nothüre, and so on.



Fig.3.3. Description of Viken Zi, Jakhama Village



Fig.3.4. Bed of Viken, Jakhama Village

The story of Nriu

Nriu, an orphan who became a legend, reflects an interesting episode of a circular migration originated from Kigwema village. The grand parent of Nriu, Horü migrated from Kigwema, became a Zeliang and lived at Tsiepfuma village. Through a twist of fate, Nriu went back to his ancestral home- Kigwema, to be adopted by one of his own uncles, Pfükha Thepa. The legendary Nriu migrated out from Kigwema, his adopted village and went to Secü and apparently married a second wife, procreated and died there. Interestingly, Secü happened to be a village set up originally by people of Kigwema through Mera lineage. The descendants of Nriu were again lifted out by Khate (or his clansmen) and brought to Khonoma in the last leg of migration. Khate, was originally born in Kigwema and migrated to become one of the founding fathers of Khonoma village, who presumably knew about the life and background of Nriu and his descendants living in Secü.

Khate (or some of his descendants) went down to Secü and brought up the progenies of Nriu who were their own kinsmen. The story of Nriu appears to follow a circular migration beginning with Kigwema and ending at Khonoma through his progenies. His descendants grew and

multiplied and gave rise to many heroes and leaders of stature in the Naga community. It is interesting to note that, during the peak of Naga National uprising in the mid 1950s, Zapu Phizo, as the NNC President in hiding, took refuge in many different places amongst which Kigwema featured prominently. Sometimes at the foothills of Japfü peak, commonly known as ‘Phizo’s camp’ which incidentally was the place where his ancestor Nriu was taking shelter in the hollow of a tree trunk when he was found by Seca and Pfükha, and brought to Kigwema and adopted by Pfükha Makhu.

3.6.9. Animal Tales

Why dogs can’t speak today

There is a tale that long ago even dogs could speak like human beings. But many a time dogs could fall prey to other predators. Therefore, one day the dog decided to take protection from the biggest and strongest of all animals. On seeing the huge elephant and a tiger, the dog made friends with them in return for their protection. But whenever they roamed around, the dog always barked in and out the forest. The elephant and the tiger therefore, warned the dog not to bark because humans could hear them and hunt them down.

On hearing this, the dog thought to itself and said “I thought it was both of you who were the strongest of all things.” But to his utter surprise, humans were found to be more superior. So the dog went in search of humans and began living with them.

The dog also felt very happy and comfortable in the company of humans because when the dog barks, the humans do not prevent the dog from barking. Instead they encouraged the dog to bark more, and thus the dog and human beings came to be closer to each other.

Human beings cannot see devils because they are only spirits, but the dog can see a devil. Consequently, whenever the dog detects the coming of a devil, the dog warns the human to be ready either to fight by means of spiritual spells or to step aside. The devil is not happy with the dog. One day, when the dog lay asleep, a devil came and pulled out the dog’s tongue. This disabled it from communicating with humans. If this had not happened today, humans and dogs would be able to speak more directly with each other.

3.6.10. On Tricksters

Trickster stories are popular among many societies around the world. They are often portrayed as mischievous beings in the folklore among the primitive communities. These stories are told all over as a powerful medium to disseminate culture. At the same time, they exposed the nature of intelligence. Tricksters are often projected as playing a dual role- the creator and destroyer, benefactor and buffoon, deceiver and deceived, clever and stupid. Trickster tales are those in which a character is the protagonist and clever yet causes problems for the other characters and usually go unpunished. A popular trickster story common to the Angami tribe is Mache/Matsi: Matsi was known for his tricks. Leaving the kids with their tiffin, the parents go to field. On return, they find that in their absence Matsi had eaten the tiffin kept for the children at home because he was a lazy fellow. The elders were surprised how Matsi could consume that large amount of food in a day. Eventually, they found out Matsi could pass stool after meal which is not possible for the rest. Trying to understand this, the parents offered gifts seeking the help of Matsi as to how he could pass stool and they couldn't; he used a burning rock to open a hole for passing stool, after which he threw them into a barn saying that whoever cried and moved more would have a larger hole, warning the parents not to open the barn till he crossed a mountain (so that he escapes with the gifts). Sadly on heeding to his advise, they found out that he had tricked them for they found the children dead. As days went by, when his supplies ran out, he went back to his old scheme of stealing the tiffin of the children in the village. On hearing this, the villagers planned to kill him. One day, the villagers chased him to a place where he couldn't run anymore. However, he dip himself into a muddy field and pretended to be a farmer. He once again tricked them disguising himself to be a farmer and directed them to another direction saying Matsi had gone that way. The next time, the villagers again sought to finish him by burning the jungle where Matsi lived, however he escaped by hiding himself inside the body of a dead deer. Finally, the villagers caught him and killed him by tying him and let him down the slope of a mountain.

It is seen not just a story for amusement and entertainment but it also have some connotations. It portrays that the villagers were agriculturists. Mache was irresponsible with less affectionate and no sense of allegiance to the villagers. The villagers were very annoyed with Mache for his tricks and mischiefs. And such characters were unacceptable and looked down by

the society. Till now when someone remarks as “You are like Matsi” it is mostly seen as a derogatory remark, though of course, in some cases it extols the intelligence or wit of a person.

3.6.11. Of Festival

During festivals which is spent in fun and merry making, young men and women are allowed to freely mingle and get to know each other. It is also an appropriate time for the young to woo their loved ones and choose their life partners. Gifts are exchanged between lovers and betrothed. Men and women relax during the festival drinking wine and rice beer and eating various delicacies. They are also seen dancing around the streets of the village and indulging in various games, such as, tug of war. The festivals are celebrated with the purpose of invoking his blessings for the protection of fields and crops from natural disasters and other means.

Traditionally, the women also have their role as story tellers or poet singers. Infact, in certain festivities, women’s role is distinctly marked to complete the celebration. Te-l khu khu is a festival that falls on the 13th of chiinyi (July). It is dedicated to and celebrated by innocent head shaven damsels during the olden days. It is a festival of giving and sharing of food with each other. This is the festival dedicated to girls.

Origin of te-l khu khu

One day a lady saw an othsii bo (millet plant) fully ripened, in the idle of a zabe (big pond) Seeing the plant, she sent a teli (squirrel) to pluck an ear for her, but the squirrel did not return. Then the lady sent an Oka (Parrot), but the bird instead, started eating the millet and did not return. Lastly, the woman told a te-l (toad), and the toad brought her an ear of millet. The woman gratefully received the ear and told the toad that she will give a serving of millet to him every year. Thus. Te-l(toad) khukhu(serving) came into being.

Preparation

With the coming of chiinyi, the young village damsels are abuzz with preparations for the te-l khukhu festival. They collect wild flowers, in advance to decorate the particular Chokrwu (eaves at the entrance of a house) they decide on. The most common flowers are Khwiiso pii (Ginger lily, *headychium aurantiacum* wall) Phakii pii (rock butterfly lily, *hedychium ellepticum* buch) Terii su and Tsakoshe pitha nii(tender maize). A single wooden ladder with a fork tail at

the base for support is used to climb up the chokhrwu. The flowers are put on the eaves and roof opening and roof including the kika (a V shaped wooden board), while the Pithanii's will be lined on the inner walls of the Phyokhru. Seeing the decorated Phyokhru are itself a feast to the eyes.

Days ahead, preparations for the tel khukhu get underway. Men cut phsii (oak) trees and collect olo and women folk start grinding othsii and catch Kona (edible snail) for the big day. In those days the rituals were rigid and the girls were not allowed to do any household chores apart from dziilo piva (bathing) on the tel khukhu day. The foods to be distributed to the damsels on the tel khukhu morning are cooked the previous night. The cooked food are served in nakhu (type of peepal) leaf rolled into cone shape and pinned with small bamboo pieces. The servings include a handful of cooked millet and rice, two pieces of pork, two pieces of snail and two thin strips of banana leaves spread over the food.

Sometimes delicacies like ovii, olo, ovudzii(egg) etc are also served depending on their availability. These servings are spread out in oru(bamboo craft for rice winnowing) and covered with banana leaves for the night. The foods that are cooked for the rituals are not allowed to be tasted by anyone before the first damsel perform the rituals in a household. The household waiting for the tel khukhu ritual to be performed cannot cook anything over the mipho(fireplace) till the rituals are completed.

The first damsel invited to perform the rituals on arrival, receives a serving, drops a morsel of rice twice near the Miso (supporting stones of fire place), does the same with pork and tastes the food. Then she leaves the household heading for the other houses where she is invited to collect her khukhu. She carries the servings collected in her shawl till she can carry no more. Once the rituals are done, the damsels gather at the decorated Chokrwu, sing songs, eat and make merry the whole day long. During the day, they also visit nearby Chokrwu's and also visit prominent areas in leisure.

In olden times, meat was not always available. Hence along with rice and millet the khukhu is also given with khova (Allium chinense), Lomshe(pumpkin) and Thupchie(seasoned fats). Girls with a good number of brother siblings are not allowed to perform the ritual for fear of the brothers tasting the food of the sister. So they are given the Khubjyo khukhu so that the brothers can also partake in the food. The damsels partaking the tel khukhu are not allowed to taste the Khubyo khukhu preparations. On this day, the boys are not allowed to climb the

Chokrwu, nor go near it. This is done so because it is believed that on this day if the girls throw Kona kii (snail cover) on them or even if it falls on them accidentally, it will make them weak and will never win over their contemporaries in future. Also, it is believed that on this day if the girls throw Kona kii on any boy, it will make him a permanent failure in hunting.

Discrimination of women, after the girl child reached puberty was present in the past with the on-set of their monthly cycle menstruation, but the girl child before reaching puberty was allowed to take part in their brothers or fathers' Sekrenyi feasts where new rice, a perfect rooster and specially brewed rice beer were drank and eaten without participating in it. Therefore, discrimination of the girl child was lesser as compared to the women folks in the case of Viswema villagers of the Angami tribe. At Sekrenyi festival, the mother with the elder daughter would cook in the normal kitchen hearth with normal utensils, cups and plates even if they had some special meat in view of the occasion. However, the younger daughters would join the father of the house and other male siblings at the purification festival with new or Sekrenyi specific utensils, cups or plates with the prized rooster and other delicacies in a new cooking hearth, usually set up in the granary room that lies adjacent to the kitchen. This was practiced particularly among the Angamis whose main doors were located at the center of the houses with three rooms. The outer room was doorless. The granary room with the main door was located right in the middle of the house and often times held the biggest room of an Angami hut, followed by the kitchen with space emphasized for socialization as it caters to the role of the present understanding of drawing rooms in contemporary house structures. Sleeping quarters held less importance when compared with the space set aside for granary stored in mega bamboo storages called 'okhi' in viswema dialect, one among the Angami language group.



Fig.3.5. House decorated on Tel Khu Khu, Viswema village

3.6.12. On Setting a new Village

According to oral traditions and narratives of Kigwema village, the ancestors while migrating from Makhel collected fire (a burning charcoal) from the house of a rich man at Pfüsüma village. In the process of setting up a new village, tradition dictated that, the first fire has to be made, collected from a pre- burning hearth, and brought preferably from a wealthy man's house to ensure prosperity of the new village. The people of Pfüsüma and the people who would become citizens of Kigwema entered into a traditional oath, whereby their fraternal relationship was permanently cemented, and paraphrased as below:

- That, between Pfüsüma and Kigwema, there will be no inter-village feud or war.
- There shall be no intentional murder between its citizens.
- There shall be no imposition of penalty against acts of accidental crime committed against each other.
- Both the parties pledged themselves that whosoever breaks or violates the oath shall become lame, blind and die a paralytic death.

The small band of ancestors who were descendants of Zuo and Keyho phatry, comprising both Thevo and Thepa moieties came and settled initially on the spurs of Vipikhowo on Japfü ridge which was called as 'Seiterhaphe' meaning the 'woodland outskirts village'. Circumstantial

evidence suggests that, part of the migrating clans settled in the lower ridge in the present day location of Kigwema. It may not be an over statement to say that Kigwema area was the spawning ground from which many Angami people and few other tribes or at least some of their subsets have made it their temporary home before dispersal, which fits the narrative of Kigwema as the 'old house' or the 'old home' for many.

CHAPTER- IV

FOLK SONGS AS INVIGORATING ELEMENT OF A LIVING CULTURE

4. Folk songs as Invigorating element of a living culture

4.1. Folk songs

Singing is universal in human society. It is exemplification of finer aspects of human life. Often, poems and songs give us a clearer insight into a person's soul rather than the most lengthy discussions. And, in the poetry of those unlettered and sophisticated lie certain important clues to their philosophy of life. Generally speaking, Folklorists use the term 'folksongs' to designate songs that are traditional. A song becomes traditional when it is transmitted in versions among individuals or groups of people with shared interest. Because the songs are largely orally transmitted, they undergo certain changes either in their form, content or context. Even though the folksongs are used simply for the contentment of singing or listening, they also act as the means for the utterance of ideas or emotions held in common by a group. A community, whether agricultural or otherwise, expresses itself passionately and imaginatively through its folksongs. These songs are live human documents that reflect the actual historical processes and phenomena of different ages. Though the relationship between the members of a community or a group, in some cases, must have been based purely on their basic necessities, the super-structures of religion, philosophy and literature also penetrated deep into the reality of their social situation as is seen in much of the world everywhere. Therefore, the cultural traits of their rich folk heritage can be discerned mostly in their folksongs and rhymes. Tagore also thinks that *we may discover in these folk rhymes many a trace of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain- coming down the ages. Entwined in their broken rhymes one may still trace many a tale of hurt and sufferings. They are fragments of emotions and sentiments from bygone days* (Tagore 2).

As a matter of fact, in many places these songs are of great importance and sung at the functionally important junctures of various rituals ranging from harvest, festivals, marriages, births and deaths; while in certain regions, the songs are used to infatuate and enrapture the hearts of lovers or to serve the purpose of initiating religious ceremonies and secular rites, or to depict past exploits of the heroes. Through them, the group also lightens the burden of communal labour. In some preliterate groups, the songs are used as recital of incantations to invoke blessings from the supernatural powers, or for magical effects to cure illness, or to thwart

enemies. Folk songs can be said to have distinct features. Mahapatra opines, *These are created by individuals or groups, but generally without the identity of the authors, and are products of a society or region. The peculiar feature of the songs is that, the song lack the style, personality and idiosyncrasy of the authors, which are attributes of the literature of sophisticated society. The folk- songs are, therefore, the expression of the simple mind having primitive impulses and these are the creation of a society with different life- activities* (Mahapatra, 156).

Folk songs imply the use of music, and the musical tradition varies greatly from one area to another. Few aspects of human culture can claim to be so old and so universal as music. Being present in all the human societies from the very ancient times, music has unfolded in diverse forms. But it has a special role to play in the primitive society since non -ritualistic or magico-religious music became quite developed at one stage of their civilization in certain continents. When the language was not much developed in the earlier stages of our society, man relied upon vocal tunes to communicate with supernatural powers to supplicate for his prosperity and protection from evils. With gradual emergence of the trend of singing ‘worded songs’ , this powerful medium became more effective to exploit its non ritualistic aspect to express different human feelings, apart from its tantric use to obtain some tangible results. In some places words of songs are of little importance and seem to be used primarily as support for the music. Frequently there are senseless monosyllables and much repetition to accompany the voice or the musical instrument. In most parts of the world, drums and rattles, beating time by hands or feet or the stroking of a harp give a strong rhythmic effect to folk singing. In others, flute like wind instruments or single stringed bamboo fiddles of one kind or another are used to affect the nature of the folksong texts. It needs special mention here that the collateral use of music and folk songs is greatly valued among certain preliterate groups for curative propitiation and exorcistic séance-purposes. In most of such songs, one spirit or the other is invoked. The utterances are generally made with conviction, urgency and sincerity. Actual ownership of such songs is invariably maintained and their use carefully guarded. They may come to the owner in a dream or as a result of fasting or other austerities.

Even when folk songs and music are not used for those practical purposes but only for the pleasure of singing or listening, the greater part of the world uses them for expressions of commonly shared ideas or feelings which are often trivial but sometimes they may be profoundly moving. It so happens that the songs, though inherited from the past, would be having a different

orientation in their spirit in the sense that the ideas, composition and notation for them were conceived in consonance with the prevailing cultural contact situation in most of the places. With the advent of speedy means of communication, the interaction between different peoples of remotest areas became more vibrant especially at the levels of socio-economic and socio-political life. The continuity of these contacts became more dynamic so much so that the felt need of the social life of these people was the orientation in the mode of expression of various cultural elements that they had. The result is palpable in the structures, tunes and themes of their folksongs including those sometimes spontaneously composed. Similarly, preliterate societies used music as an unambiguous signal for expressing human thoughts more than as a finer symbol, apart from using it to please his companions, and for his personal pleasure and relief as an entertainer. It is, therefore, expected that culture will be reflected more in the music of a man who is in more primitive condition. Here, the music is born out of free vein of human sensibilities unlike its modern trend based on conscious systematisation and codification with a view to reaching an impersonal transcendental world of aesthetics.

In a varying degree, akin to such combination of song and story are the dance songs among preliterate cultures chanted by the full complement of a race or a social institution from the youngest boy to the oldest warrior who can still swing a decorative lethal weapon and bend his knees in the rhythm of the festive round dance. Pride in one's own race or social institution is expressed in numerous songs praising the might and prowess of its mythical or historical figures. Here, tales are not described but only alluded to, so as to arouse emotional associations rather than amusing an audience indicating the mythical background and are consequently understandable only to the initiated.

In major parts of the Western and Asian civilizations, narrative song has played an important role for a long time and has been sung by the most skillful singers. Songs of warfare, adventure, domestic life have formed local cycles. Each of the cycles has its own characteristics and distinctive metrical forms of events and expressions. Repetition and vocal interpolations are the traits typical to folk songs. Sometimes, the songs, though sung in good spirit, are monotonous and dull, rather like dirges, and sometimes, enchanting and vigorous, accompanied by dance in romp and playing musical instruments with great hilarity, at the same time keeping rhythmic beat with a little bark on a high shrill note.

Folk songs and dances also kept alive the spirit of community bonding. Folk songs are charged with vivid intensity. They expressed their emotions concretely and unobtrusively. They are established among the people through the originality of the simple folk. It reflects their hopes and aspirations. Various forms of oral tradition kept the spirit of the tribe alive and facilitated the bonding of the members. The songs of the folk covers a wide area of human life. It is a rich source of socio- cultural history of the people. It illuminates the daily and cultural lives and shed light on their philosophical inclinations. It allows the preservation of memories and traditions of their culture and to pass them on to future generations.

Successful raids on enemy territories and returning with heads entail much celebration and the village participate in the songs and dances marking the occasion. Man take part in the songs and dance to showcase his involvement in the growth and prosperity of his tribe. Man craved to adorn himself with the embellishments which showcased his masculinity and mettle. Social recognition and words of praise from members had been the ultimate recognition in the past. The material decorations gradually took the place of such words and songs. Songs had a significant role in the traditional way of life. They were not sung merely for entertainment, but served as a form of communication. Songs related stories and tales expressed various emotions of the people and also recorded events and incidents. There are many types of songs sung for different purposes and occasions such as songs of courting, work songs sung while working in the fields, cowherds' songs, songs of celebration during festivals, songs of lamentations and chants during deaths and funerals etc. Each of these songs is composed with lyrical beauty, and each tells a story.

Thus the accompaniment of folksongs or such music can be rightly categorized as folk level melody being a folk level thinking which is quite distinct from classical or 'absolute music' that can be classified as 'art level melody' being at an art level thinking. Having wider scope, the former achieves deeper penetration in the world of thoughts, whereas the latter being more 'codified' and abstract is accessible to a limited circle of its specialization. There are also the dance songs among preliterate cultures chanted by the full complement of a race or a social institution from the youngest boy to the oldest warrior who can still swing a decorative lethal weapon and bend his knees in the rhythm of the festive round dance. Pride in one's own race or social institution is expressed in numerous songs praising the might and prowess of its mythical or historical figures.

All the festivals and social functions are celebrated by feasting, dancing, and singing by different communities. So also, special occasions such as marriage and birth of a child consist of similar festivities in many cases. Nagas dressed up in ceremonial clothes and ornaments used to celebrate victory in war and Feast of Merit by brisk feasting, dancing and singing. Spring festival (birth of spring) is valued among the Konyak Nagas. On the day of the festival, men whirl their spears and dao rush through the village with wild cries acting as though they are going in the war. With tossing feathers and the bright dyed hair of goat, they wave from weapons and head dress looking like fantastic birds in the mating season. The open place in the village is thronged with singing by men. Dao flash high in the air and voices are raised. The song swells forth and at times breaks into temperamental outbursts and into harsh, uncanny yells at the climax. Repetition and vocal interpolations are the traits typical to folk songs. Songs sometimes sung in good spirit seems monotonous and dull, rather like dirges accompanied by dance in romp with musical instruments. At the same time, they keep rhythmic beat with a little bark on a high shrill note.

Folk songs are realized through performances in specific context, with more emphasis on face to face communication and social interaction between the performer and the audience. Folk songs and dances are something more than recreation. It is a very serious business; to bring prosperity or avert disease, to bestow blessing, celebrate victory or lament the loss of battle. At work, they simultaneously sing work songs which gave the worker singers not only physical stimulation and spiritual comfort but also produce the efficiency of their labour throughout the year. Some instances of the invocation poetry have been seen while exploring the novel *A Naga Village Remembered* by Easterine Kire where the priest blessed the couple and performed the ritual after the seed sowing. However, it is worth considering an invocation prayer pronounced as a blessing to a person who is throwing the Feast of Merit:

(The priest draws the attention of the feast-provider to receive the blessing of God that he is pronouncing)

Wo...Receive this (blessing)

For the reason of refusing any misfortunes,

You have prepared stock of rice-beer and spread delicious food and drinks

Over the best plantation leaves that have been collected from the forest.

Wo.... Your domestic animals that have been killed

That lies on the surface of this great earth,

Wo... Let your meat be dressed in abundance
 Shall be served in the manner of building of anthill;
 Shall be cut like chopping of tree-trunk;
 Shall be cut like breaking of quartz;
 Wo... Shall remain impossible to be chopped to end.
 Wo... Your distribution of foodstuff shall remain sufficient and also be in surplus
 And extend to your neighbours; yet shall remain full on you hook.
 Wo... your rice-beer shall remain full like spring-water that flows,
 Like water in river basin and in lake,
 It shall remain impossible to be emptied.
 Wo... Beyond celebration your rice-beer shall be served to the needy people
 And shall be let to lend to others.
 Wo... Let your guests enjoy to the zeal and yelling;
 Let them be at din like incessant sparkling of burning of Zombou;
 Like non-stop clicking of sevü and shower of hailstorm.
 Wo... Let your domestic animal be grown to you,
 Overflowing your home and fill your surroundings.
 Wo... Let your seeds that is sown in sown in soil bed be germinated ,
 Overflowing its bed and shall cover the surroundings,
 Creeoing over tree trunks and rocks.
 Wo... The place that your house stands
 Shall not be a dwelling place of poverty;
 Neither shall be a habitat of ill health nor death;
 But shall be dwelling place of growth of life;
 Be a place of festive celebrity;
 Be a dwelling place of abundant wealth.
 To let you live surpassing others
 And let you be exemplary in your bearing leading to the merit of new life (Kuolie 133-134).

4.2. Folk songs amongst the Southern Angami Nagas

The underlying force of tribal living is a sense of celebration. It is an exultation of life that finds spontaneous expression in songs and dances. The cheereful and celebrative character of tribal personality is best presented in their strong musical tradition. Songs and dances are effective ways in which the villagers express themselves creatively, sharing their experience of life, emotions, history and above all, their irrepressible hope and joy in living. Their song can be seen as deeply poetic expression. The themes of the songs are all encompassing. It may be about life event: birth, marriage, death, agricultural cycle etc. It also included daily life experiences such as pain and suffering, joys and sorrows, success and failures, frustrations and aspirations. Some songs abuse or satirize individuals or group of people. Through the songs, the folk relieve their emotions. Various techniques are employed to perform their songs. It comprises oral composition using words and phrases, oral performance, face to face performer, audience interaction and participation. Other devices are the accompaniment of the singing with instrumental music, ululating, dancing, dramatization and work. Their songs and dances are rendered by group of performers moving in beautiful and undulating waves.

All the festivals and social functions are celebrated by feasting, dancing, and singing by different communities. So also, special occasions such as marriage and birth of a child consist of similar festivities. Nagas dressed up in ceremonial clothes and ornaments used to celebrate victory in war (headhunting) and Feast of Merit by brisk feasting, dancing and singing. Colourful life and culture are an integral part of the Southern Angami people who are unique in their customs and traditions. These customs and traditions are translated into festivals where ancient songs and dances form the soul of it, and through which oral history has been passed down to younger generations. Song and dance not only provide a creative outlet to the community, they have an intimate relationship with the ways of life and tradition. There is also a deeper social meaning attributed to these songs and dances. The youth also receive their training in singing while they stay in the morung houses: they often go out on visits to each other during the day time returning in the evening to one's own morung house or together take part in the village festivals.

4.2.1. Feast of Merit

The Nagas are a fun loving people. They have festivals to commemorate different occasions which have a close association with their agricultural life. Dignity, pride and fame also constitute their outlook. For instance, the Feast of Merit and head hunting were important events that marked the upliftment of one's social status. Feast of merit is an occasion of festivity. The highest honour a Naga man can achieve in a lifetime. No mere individual will be allowed to host the Feast. He has to be a brave warrior and should be bestowed with or have acquired enough wealth. Usually the Feast of Merit entailing honour and fame to the giver is thrown by the married man. Irrespective of any person's social status in the community, the feast of merit was an invitation to all in the community. Also, the status and recognition was not reserved for any particular person, clan or family. Anybody who has the capacity to perform the feast may do so in order to get social recognition.

The preparation of the feast is marked by strict genna pronounced upon the host. On the day of the feast, he has to slaughter 3-4 bisons (depends on the number of households in the village) and its meat distributed in large but equal quantities. Wine prepared in large wooden vessels is provided in a lavish manner for all to enjoy. And as a mark of public recognition, the man and his wife would be given a special shawl by the village in public display and a megalith would be erected in his name, so that the next generation continues to honour him. Besides, a special blessing is pronounced by the priest. In traditional Naga life, its prominent feature is the giving of a grand sumptuous feast which reflects magnificence, elegance and lavish life of the Nagas. Rice and rice beer was served to the community. Cattle, pigs and mithuns were slaughtered to feed the villagers. Singing and dancing blended with eating and revelry marked the occasion. After performing on grandiose scale in such feasts, a domestic animal is sacrificed. The feast endows the donor with great honour and by virtue of this becoming a leading celebrity, he can wear special attires and ornaments. The feast giver gets the privilege to have songs composed in his honour. Meaningful songs signifying his wealth and generosity were composed and those songs were preserved as reminder of his richness and status for generations to come. In fact, the younger generations takes immense pride in reminiscence of the achievements of their forefathers.

The house of the giver of the feast of merit can be still seen in most of the villages. It was constructed distinct from other houses with special symbols designated to the

man who sacrificed his wealth for organizing feasts. He can adorn and beautify his house in special styles obtaining a high dignity and status in social life. The house can be indicated by beautiful carvings on the frontal house. A grand horn like projection of the house marked the special status of the feast giver and his family. The feast of merit may be taken as a means of social mobility towards a dignified status.



Fig.4.1. House of a performer of Feast of Merit

Neihu- Performer of ‘Feast of Merit’

The eldest son of Yhokha from Kigwema village, Neihu was a celebrated rich man, who performed a number of feast of merit. Neihu and his descendants settled in their original ancestral home when Kigwema village was first established, which now falls under Makhu khel. Neihu belongs to Thevo moiety of Seca lineage and their clan subset is located where the ‘kemevo tsie’ was erected which stands till today. A segment of Neihu clansmen, had shifted and settled in the upper Kipho-Seca Khel and merged with their cousins of Kipho- Nthe- Seca lineage. It was during the second feast of merit conducted by Neihu , a son was born to him. While performing feast of merit, tradition required that, the person has to undergo a period of

fasting and the son born at such a time to Neihu was named 'Chose' translated as 'Cho' means 'awake/fasting' , and 'se' means 'meet/arrive' (arrival in times of awake/fasting). In commemoration of his son's birth, Neihu erected a huge wooden post, hewn out of a single tree trunk, called 'chose-codi' a relic, which stands till today. However, Chose migrated to Phesama and settled under Makhuma khel, where his descendants are known as 'Chuse'. This song is dedicated to Chuse and is said to be composed either by his wife or his friends.

Chuse no geizo

Chuse sa tsu lu rünyi gei ne
 Hizo-o chürei lola re ha
 Kete ratha mha medo mehi
 Rilo monyü rei kesa cuse
 Khrü viciemu cuse sūmane
 Vüie lopfü tsie khwe bazhie lo
 Balie hu mu hiro yi chuse
 Khronyi liemu mapie ma tse ze
 Uketara tehu chüo chü
 Balie hu mu ripa suo di nu
 Tei cie hurei teichie lo-o sü
 Tema teikhro kelhouko mete
 Marei suo mo terhuopfü rüsuo
 Tetschü virei nhanyü kepa mha

Chuse dead and enters the land
 Impossible to console
 Standing outside the house, deep thoughts
 Not consoled, Flash memories of Chuse
 When moon shines Chuse's friends
 Dressed up, gathers together at the sitting place
 Sit together, with regretful hearts
 Festival and each holding their own

Outside house, they come together
 As they sit, remorse to look
 Year and the most painful year
 People under the Sky
 All good as they worship
 Grew together, faded away like the leaves.

4.2.2. Love songs

Like folk songs of any tribal people, among the Southern Angami too, love songs played an important role. The singing of the young boys and girls expresses the ardour and joy of life. Love is an inexhaustible theme in folk songs. Of course, many songs are fully understandable only to a limited circle and even the singers sometimes cannot explain the exact meaning of the individual words, for the archaic language used in songs is very different from the language in everyday use. Therefore, recording and translation of their innumerable songs meet with peculiar difficulties *just as the spoken language varies from village to village so greatly that within a radius of ten miles one may find three distinct dialects, so too differ the poetical idioms not only of villages, but even of individual morung* observes Christopher Von Furer Haimendorf. Yet these are no longer dead idioms preserved only in traditional formulas, for today the young men and women still produce new songs in the same stereotyped phrases, though they are not able to give a word-for-word translation.

Songs are the principal and recognized medium through which the individual as well as the group express their most intense emotions. Nagas of most other tribes sing at work on the fields or when carrying loads, and in the Angami area at planting time the work songs of boys and girls resound from all the rice terraces and fill the valleys from morning to evening. At night, the boys visit the girls and spend hours singing. And when at dusk, the young people return from work from the fields, they assemble on the raised platforms and sing alternate songs, each vying with the other in appropriate responses, and their verses, sometimes sentimental, sometimes taunting, always exploring perennial theme of love.

Many songs are straightforward descriptions of the romantic love. The songs are also couched in archaic poetical language, and albeit on traditional lines, they are mostly spontaneous compositions. However, the addition of meaningless words of *ho hi hiyo le he-e* mingled in the

texture makes the chanting more melodious and pleasing but impossible to understand the meaning of those songs without the full details of the circumstances to which they relate. But they are discarded in such lyrics so as to achieve resonance and to make them enchanting with very great appeal.

Sohimozho Sonodihole

Tenuma ne pou kho chupfũ po nimasaho

Mewi sei dupfũ kenyu lane

Seipra keda nenei ma kho shie

Seico biredo hikho shie

Chu pfukho lu rüchie yone

Phinyuo chachu dzü de hikhiphi

Hiwe soro sone nei neidi

(English translation)

Girl chase her lover carrying her basket

Goes to carry mewi firewood

Select the best firewood for her lover

Filling basket with the branches

Carry it across the stream

Look in the muddy water to see the shadow, Oh Myself

If bad to look, who will like me

The song is about a lady presenting her best for her lover. It expresses her strong attachment to her beloved. She selects the finest firewood for the home to warm her beloved. She does not want to lose her lover and tries every way to win him.

Another love songs goes as:

Khwemedzü

Khwemedzü vi zorie

Rüpfũ epi

Derie uni mia

Rüpfũ epi taya mo

Epi moni mezho badi

Uni-u se shü le mo sa

A mote tha

Khwemedzü

Banana leaf looks good

It breaks away

But our beloved

Do not break away

Instead of breaking it remains green

If not pair with the beloved

It is not me

When youth blossoms, the young boys and girls feel a wonderful indescribable sensation which they cannot narrate to others easily. And they paint this feeling through the songs of their heart. The feelings gradually ripen into love. The song compares banana leaf and the love of a lover. Unlike the banana leaf which tears away, the love of a lover stays strong. It does not break rather stands strong. Love stands fresh as the green colour. It ends with a strong positive note that if the lover fails to pair with the beloved, than it says 'it is not me'. The lover expresses the strong desire to win the beloved and we see the feelings being poured out spontaneously while being involved in their ordinary daily activities.

Here is a song by the lovers as they meet at midnight:

Kigha vü khu

Phetso li a he we

Kele ze ne

U neima ze vo

Khwe bi rho keli

(English translation)

Cock crows

In the center of the village, dog barks

When this happens

Takes the beloved

Shawls are exchanged

The images and the language presented in the song are rustic. It presents a rural milieu. These are all the usual accoutrements of village life- cock crows, dog barking. The song is on lovers who meet at day break when the cock crows. The lover takes the beloved and they exchanged shawl which is seen as a gift they present to each other.

4.2.3. Marriage

Nothing exhibits the spontaneity, creativity and fine religious fervor of women folk better than the large variety of songs that form part of the marriage ceremony. Spontaneity and creativity are also seen in the homespun images they used to express tender feelings of love and separation aroused in the young bride or her dear parents on the occasion. A young girl's love yearning for both love and security is expressed in a song. It reflects the hopes and aspirations that rise from ways and conditions and as such these can be considered as one of the most intimate possessions. It portrays the conditions of a lady. It sometimes reveals the bare truth which comes as a shock.

Tenomine

Sohi Mozho Sono Diyole
 Tenomine Po nhatsii-o ne
 Pokho khipfii po mhatho keka
 Tsiine sevo pokemhu ketso
 Ponoe-o ki aliliilhoshe
 Kekimiki aliliiltoshe
 Sohi Mozho Sono Diyole

(English translation)

Girl child at her early age
 Carry her basket for her many works
 Till her marriage
 Did not get her lover in marriage
 But to a stranger in marriage

The above song sings of feminine marriage and other domestic functions. She expresses her pain through the song pouring out her heart spontaneously. The song expresses the plight of a girl where she is bound by the decisions of her parents and elders. Every stage of the marriage ceremony, almost every ritual has song appropriate to it; these include the many impromptu compositions relating to the auspicious occasion marked by a sense of piety and sanctity of tradition and custom. The girl's grief at parting is also rendered in these songs with a touching poignancy. Repetition stands as one of the characteristics of folk song. Sometimes, a particular tune is repeated several times, each time with different words. In the above song the line 'Sohi Mozho Sono Diyole' has been repeated. It is seen as a primary organizing principle since it performs many functions. It brings a sense of familiarity within a certain piece and enables the audience to follow and sympathize and empathize. Further, it assists memory and enables the listeners to identify and be involved with the art.

There is a close emotional association which causes the listener to consider the folk song and accept it without questioning its formal structure. Another song of unfulfilled love goes as:

Kahi Hipe

Sheno Riza o we sheno Riza

Hiyo le hi yo le a zho

Kahi hipe nikhwe hu yo ne

Keyo kenyü takwe tha lho lü

Nini lü no tselü chai she

Cha zo le e zeta mo lo tha

Ni ketonha hi mesi hi lo

Hi tha to nizha re-a me

Hi zha re-e hi ni no lü mhyü ze

Ze mecha tsu lu kerü mecie

Teizu kezi rüyo me mo di

Rüyo zhü rei, nei ni ma sheli

To lo-I mu la mecü shie-u

(English translation)

Cup made of horn

Cup in hands, people gather around to hear him
 Laughing at your jokes, but
 Your lover is being proposed this morning by another man
 Hope she is not taken yet though being proposed
 Tell me the day you are marrying
 I will be going today, are you troubled
 I may be troubled since my love is marrying
 Took her beyond the river
 Don't you feel overwhelmed by sadness?
 I am sad but responsibility of the lover
 My man is irresponsible

4.2.4. On Social life

The folk songs, covering the journey of folk life beginning from the cradle and ending with the funeral, connote the spontaneous outburst of feelings, love, imagination, sentiments of the ancestors, morals and disciplines. Though sometimes predominantly religious, they mostly bear traces of other aspects discussed at length. Work songs such as weaving, wood cutting, basket making etc are not scanty. Even some of them are connected with the festivals and are philosophical in content. In course of time, in some places the work song has been changed into a kind of romantic song too in the form of snip-snap between the males and females or between two persons. This corresponds to the rural folk song performed by the villagers without the aid of any accompaniments like musical instruments. The text of the traditional folk songs give poignant reminders of the universal and timeless characteristics of mankind in their living, loving, toiling and suffering. The personal quality found in the folk song makes the persons or events very real to the listeners who then closely identify with those specific feelings. Perhaps this personal identification has made folk songs of any tribal land vitally important. They have strong sentiments of attachments to their village. The villagers of the Southern Angami villages are no exception. There are also songs concerning the works, domestic chores, Feast of Merit and communal gatherings.

Merama Geizo

Mera khriesa tsu pa ketsa cha

Zophi lemu tsepfe bazhe gi

Bahu lemu thino dze kepu

Khriesa rüü dzumho vakedo

Rungu thedze chü ke ho rüchie

Zokho le mu puno badze gi

Balemu loshü die kepu

Methu kepu rata tenyü mo

Sonie zoshü chievü nanezo

(English translation)

Youth of Mera together set to jungle

Reach stone fort

Rest and to talk of their khel

Boys and girls then get in the water

Hunt with spears as they continue

Reach Puno fort

Sit and pour out sentiments

With bloom rhododendron which looks unfading

Know who composed, the two ladies

The song is a dedication to the Merama youth of Phesama village. This song is sung together to fortify the sense of oneness. It talks about the youth setting out together towards the jungle. As they sit to rest, they talk about their history. At Puno fort, they sit and pour out their sentiments. Till today, Puno fort is maintained by the people of Merama. It signifies the bond the Merama youths enjoy and cherish while singing this particular song.

4.2.5. On Dream culture

Angami dreams(mho) are experienced(and remembered) differently depending on levels of practice, interest, alertness (rhorhü) and ‘giftedness’ (mhaphruo) of the dreamer, though generally it is believed that dreams are revelatory for everyone. Dreamers can draw truths about the world from a spirit mediated realm of knowledge. At a first level, dreams disclose signs that

may be interpreted in the course of recollecting and publicly narrating. It is imperative for the dreamer to remember their symbolic arrangement and to consult a memorized lexicon of meanings that emanate through personal experience and shared experiences of others. In the event of an enigmatic or even disturbing dream, the dreamer will typically consult an elder who is considered wise and skilled in interpreting dreams. On the other hand, dreams can be doorways into an extensive terrain that the dream self temporarily conjugate with a host of other entities like the ancestor spirits (uchie ruopfū) and powerful deities (terhuomia), all of whom are conscious and may or may not choose to make an appearance or share knowledge with the dreamer. Hidden from most, this terrain can be seen by gifted dreamers with an unusual ability to ‘wake up’ while asleep, and can navigate its contours and connect with its entities. Traditional shamanic healer-diviners (Themumia) operates at the margins of the community communicate with tutelary spirits and thus may access this spirit realm and its knowledge. Children and individuals travelling or hunting alone are believed to be receptive to a form of spirit entrapment or ‘forest song’ in which, like the Greek sirens, spirits draw unsuspecting persons into the forest through allure melodies to a point where they cross over into the spirit realm- a central theme in Angami folklore. As spirit entities have foreknowledge of human reality, and dreamers can tap fragments of that foreknowledge, one can foresee and attempt to affect the coming into being of the present.

Most dream narratives points the symbolic nature of their experience, and these need interpretation. The other category, namely ‘mhaphruo’ dreaming, involves greater self-consciousness while in the dream. In other words, the dreamer is conscious of their own agency and their ability to obtain knowledge through interaction with other entities. These categories are compatible with Hutton’s own observations a century ago.

Tsaro zodu du

Oko zo vo tsaro zodu du

U mho kevi ketso

Sephi dosii mhovi mi ketso

Sephi dosii Puzen Ngoyen

Sevo nuovii elu thwe thu

Sevo u kharu kikha thu

(English translation)

Tsaro zodu du

we go to jungle to cut wood

Listen to dreams

cut, listen to dreams

Cut, Puzen Ngoyen

Bring and the ladies admire

Make the doors for the gate

Construction of village gates, morungs are considered sacred. Therefore, it requires a ceremonious and a reverent ways in the process. The above geizo/song is about listening to dreams while identifying the tree for the construction. They also listen to their dreams to cut the tree and bring to the village. Further, the womenfolk admire the tenacity and skills of the men.

4.2.6. Village rivalry

Folk songs can be seen as story telling songs. It might be about aspect of love, work, religion, recreation, rivalry or any of the various types of topics. It tells the story chronologically, and in terms of beginning, climax and ending.

Sodzū hu no geizo

Sodzūhu no uthu huo kerhe

Kha mezha sū tsie kedi yo ba

Hiewi medo niewi sa mezhu

Vota monyū terhopudi-ü

Boli tha mu rülhoulie huolie

Luha sode puo ketso rüso

Tso-o Tso-o mani kemo-u sū

A nuo neisü a nei a medo

(English translation)

Takes the cows for grazing in the same place

Left to graze, sits on a sizeable stone

Cows here follows the other group

Has it followed Terhopudi-ü

Inside the cage and jump over for the cow
 Who is that person asked repeatedly
 Tso Tso is the name, the one not loved by others
 My child's beloved is my liking

The folk song on love of Tso Tso and Terhopudi-ü is filled with rich and colourful imagery. The meeting place of the lovers is a theme in the songs of love. The villages have certain usual meeting places. They are the paddy fields, woodlands, riverbank etc. In tribal society, the scope is wider. For instance, the Angamis enjoy a great freedom in this matter.

Tso-o was a handsome and a smart man from Secuma village. He was admired by all. Terhopudi- ü was a beautiful lady from Meriema village. They were the pride of their villages. One day, Tso Tso and Terhopudi- ü met while they were out grazing their cattles. Tso was mesmerized by her beauty. On their first meeting, they fell deeply in love with each other. As the sun rose, Tso-o went early in the morning in the hope to meet her. They meet again. They sit and talk and exchanged their names. He professes his love for her. Their love for each other was so great they couldn't stay apart. They continue to meet, share their food resting under the rock while the cattle grazed. Finally, they decided to take the consent of their parents for marriage. As they depart, Tso-o promised to meet her again. Later that day, the two returned to their villages to ask permission from their parents. The enmity between the two villages make the parents to reject their request. Tso-o agreed to obey his parents. Terhopudi- ü parents rejected too. As the two villages were sworn enemy, both their parents refused the idea of marriage and forbid from meeting again. Both Tso-o and Terhopudi- ü could not help meeting each other under the big rock where they had first met.

The next day, as decided, Terhopudi- ü came to their meeting spot. Unable to find TSo-o, she waited and waited. On the other hand, Tso-o was detained by his admirers and friends. Terhopudi- ü waited. As Tso-o didn't turn up, she felt so betrayed that she started crying. And as she cried, her tear drops fell into a large leaf. That evening Tso-o came looking for her but she left. And on seeing her tears on the leaf he followed her and called her out. But Terhopudi- ü did not respond. He called her up repeatedly and finally she turned up in anger. As she did, she happened to see Tso-o drinking her tears that she collected on the leaf but she still felt betrayed and left. One of Tso-o cow followed her to her home. The next day Tso-o came to collect his cattle. Terhopudi- ü was pounding rice with her mother. She refused to talk with him though she

directed him to the shed where she had locked his cows the previous night. Tso-o jumped into the shed and got back his prized bull. On seeing his agility and good looks, Terhopudi- ü's mother was impressed. She enquired as to who his identity was. Tso-o and Terhopudi- ü never met again after the incident. Years passed by. They both got married and had children. As fate would have it, their fields were closeby each other. One day, Tso-o sends his son to collect coal to make fire from neighbour. Ts-o's son goes to Terhopudi- ü's hut asking for hot coals to start a fire. On seeing the boy, she enquires as to whose son he was. He reveals his father's name. Terhopudi- ü then gave a necklace to the boy and said 'Son, You are handsome as your father. But don't ever break whatever you say'. The boy returned to his father. On seeing the necklace, the father enquired. The son replied that the woman who gave the coal presented him and told him what she told – not to break words like his father. When Tso heard of from his son, he was saddened and he regretted that he had not kept his word.

The above song sings on the romantic love specifically the intense passion that sprung up at the first sight between Tso and Terhopudi- ü but the enmity between their villages created a profound conflict for Tso and Terhopudi- ü.

4.2.7. On War

A war song is a musical composition that is related to war and exposes the attitude and mind of the tribal people towards war. The folk songs serve many purposes. They strengthen morale and help to diminish the fear. Almost all the Naga tribes have legends about their coming to stay in their present habitat; there are tales of bravery and supreme courage associated with such events: these define not only the origin of the tribes but also of the clans- even of the villages. That is the reason why some songs which have become archaic are still being sung. These songs are sung today as an honour of the brave deeds of warriors and traditional heroes. The songs recall with pride the deeds of valour of their ancestors. Women played an important role not only in managing the families but also had larger responsibility of the village in the absence of the men, but also providing encouragement to the men folk. Horam notes

In the days when head hunting engaged all the attention of the Naga menfolk, the womenfolk shouldered even greater responsibilities. While the men indulged in sports of all kind, the women had to worry about growing, storing and preparing food for the family (Horam 48).

In order to encourage the men of the clan to act their part in taking more heads and thereby, get rid of the enemies, the women used to weave a special shawl. Various songs and narratives prevalent among the Nagas showcase how the successful wars were considered as an act of pride. There also exist many songs to ridicule the men who could not display their courage. Women openly sang those songs to make fun of the men who were considered feminine and therefore, not fit for the gender specific role supposed to be performed by them. The villagers also celebrate to receive the successful party who came back after winning a war. The entire village came together to celebrate whenever such an occasion arose. It is also noted that such celebrations would be moments of elation for the whole village.

U Nagamia terhü chü

U Nagamia terhü chü mese

Kijü tsoyo tuoso lazi ho

Mashie ciepie tolü shü mese

Harasuo sa a tovo teho

Harovi sa li la votuo

Elila vo ara zu ho teho

Tuo kepa nhie luosü rezhie ho

Lakevo nha azhie pu phamo

(English translation)

Nagas fought war

Naga people fought war

Into the thick jungle

Shoot guns at one another

If bad luck, may not return

If luck favours, may return

Turn back to my native place

Stepping moments with a heavy heart

On return, endless stories follows

Another song on war goes as:

U Nagamia luo kezha ho no

U Nagamia luo kezha ho no

U phou khrie mo ngumvüme mese

Lu makri cho terhü rezhü shie

Dojüpfüno tuoshütuo zhümo

A theho se thutehi eka

Ketatane huoliere teho

A rosuo no dou kezhü nhane

A nona tho di-o bi teshü

Lore tha rei thulere teho

A nona bu teluo suo heluo

(English translation)

Nagas looking on for freedom

Sacrifice oneself to fight the enemies

Towards Manipur, intense war

Ready to march on

I am destined to fight wars

Leaving everything to fight

If ill luck, I perish

My two beloved, where are they

Heavy is the heart as it gets harder

Tell my beloved not to grieve

The above songs present the naga warriors who fought with great courage against their enemies. It is in a simple and expressive form. It becomes a description of the life during the times of war. It has a pungent comment. The songs express the situation they are in. We see through them an expression of the powerless, subversive fears and frustrations inside their heart. The soldiers went to fight without knowing where they were going. They are unable to express their discontent and anger at their fate. It only permits them to endure and mock on what they cannot change. It was a tough decision to go to war leaving behind their loved ones. In the poem,

we see the lover going to the war leaving his beloved. It describes the entire saga of their separation.

4.2.8. On Agricultural life

Songs are the principal and recognized medium through which the individual as well as the group express their most intense emotions. Nagas of most tribes sing at work on the fields or when carrying loads, and in the Angami area at the time of plantation the work songs of boys and girls resounded from all the rice terraces and fill the valleys from morning to evening. After returning from work from the fields, the young boys and girls assemble on the raised platforms and sing songs. Boys and girls, leaning affectionately against each other, sing alternate songs, each vying with the other in appropriate responses, and their verses, sometimes sentimental, sometimes taunting, always exploiting perennial themes of love.



Fig.4.2. Terrace cultivation at Phesama

The songs or chanting are expressions of the close contact between the world of nature and the world of tribal existence. The culture of the Southern Angami people is based on agriculture. They observe a good number of rites and rituals integral to paddy cultivation. As agriculture is the mainstay and paddy is the principal crop of the villagers, they observe different rites and rituals associated with rice cultivation. Each stage of rice production is done on an auspicious day which is followed by some specific rituals.

Levizaü

Levizaü ü no ca
 Levizaü rochü nu kezhu
 Mani maze dzü kekuo le ti
 Kuoloe lhodi dzie nuo cha niehuo
 Rüwi zhürei shülie mo di nu
 Mekho ro puo shi-u le nu zhü
 Kekri guo hie shiu shürha guo
 Guo puo tsü di puo bu zhü rüli lechu
 Ketsie hurei zho kekri chüsie
 She u tsie lü uchüta rakho
 Ba-o zhiesü kerhelie di nu
 Khriesalie di nu nhicunuo rüli
 Keputuoü lido ba chülie
 Noü pukhrie aü pu the se
 Thezie morei süpuo mo to me
 Phenu parei mazho ma phipa pfüdi
 Metsüdzü zho nuonima yo gei
 Rüü nook vaphi ketsa cha
 Tsa nu lie mu neizho the kerei
 Zokholie mu khrorhi reser
 Balie houmu rodzü lie lie ha

Levizaü

Lay a wide field
 Cross rivers to reach
 Difficult to cross, lift hands and keep going
 Laborious yet continue
 Plentiful vegetations in field
 Let it sprout well
 Grow and ensure a peaceful mind
 Stones pile up
 Joyfully reached the field
 Gather stones and sit
 Attain youth and thinks of childhood
 Sit to discuss
 You reluctant to speak, I start
 Thankful, agreed on
 In village, wear Phipa
 Dew drops fall
 Accompany ladies to the jungle
 Enters forest, put leaf in the ear
 Collect vegetation
 Rest and return home

The song gives us a small glimpse into the rich repository of folk songs which can be seen as an expression of the tribal vision of life. It delivers the story of the past people and about their happiness and sadness. Their close connection as well as the interdependence between human beings and nature is evident. The early folk depended wholly on agriculture for their livelihood. Every individual or family owned land for agriculture. Agriculture was the main occupation. The economy of the villagers was mainly consumption based. They did not bother about saving or investing for the future. If their produce is abundant for consumption for the year, they are contented. Other necessary essentials for their everyday life are acquired through exchange and helping one another. In the song, we see their happiness in rendering help to one another and reaping a rich harvest. It was laborious yet they have to continue as agriculture was

the main source of their livelihood. They pray for the seeds to sprout well. As they reach the field, they also recall their childhood with joy. As they collect the vegetation, they share their stories. The joy they find in the company of each other make their work less tiring. The folk songs served as a means to encourage and motivate the men folk and the women folk to work harder and better and complete their task in the best way as they work in unity. Through the song, it awakes the team spirit of the weary workers and enlightens them.

There are folk songs in relation of agriculture and it is seen as one of the traditional assets for the people. These songs recount the various aspects of nature in general and agriculture in particular. There are seasonal songs which describe various activities done in a particular agricultural season. It shows the close affiliation of the tribal people with the natural phenomenon. During agricultural season, the folk remain busy with various agricultural activities. At the time of transplantation, they sing this song:

Tekhu Keshe

Tekhu keshe

U bithu meza moro

Ana pe u mho hi mo she

Hi niu no ze dzüko keko leti

Kole lho ni u bi cha

U dze cha ni ho

Rüwi zhü ri shü le mo di nu

Transplantation

Transplanting paddy

If elbow do not speed

Share on sesame will be less

With beloved, crossed waters for plantation

Difficult to cross, raise hands

Lift hands to follow you

Twisting yet could not catch

The song is on the season of transplantation. It exhibits the efforts and struggles of the folks in their work. Elbow has to move swiftly or else they are denied of their share in sesame which added vigour. The villagers have to cross rivers to reach the fields even though it is vicious. It is the season of rainfall and they struggle to cross the waters. They hold and raise hands to follow the group. The song ends with a sad note that the person tried every way to the point of twisting hands in direction to catch the beloved yet failed.

4.2.9. On Clan

Stories and songs celebrate the beginning of a people like where they came from, why they do things the way they do, how the sky, the earth and everything in them came into being. They speak of animals, birds and spirits to show of the close affinity that existed between them and that each one should respect the other. They sing of legends who brought pride and honour to their land. They talk of myths and take them to heart.

Merhivi nuomia geizo

Merhivi nuomia khrüluo-o thsu
 Kevi u tuo yi He-ü He uthuzuo kerhe
 N dzu pekra n bou thus tsu thus li lu
 Ntsia pielie teikijü rüsuo
 Rüsuo thadi kha pru keshü ha
 Puo mezü ruprei puopfü kerüchü
 Shübe repfü nki khrü khro kele
 Cüyi cüdi viha keyie lu

(English translation)

Merhivi descendents crowded the full moon
 Graces on them , share same bowl of rice beer
 Your descendents fill heaven and earth
 With thy seeds, worshipped the earth and heavens
 In reverence, sowed the seeds
 With the petals, sprouting to bushy sheaves
 Yielding fruits of grains flowing under the roof
 Bountifully filled to the satisfaction of all

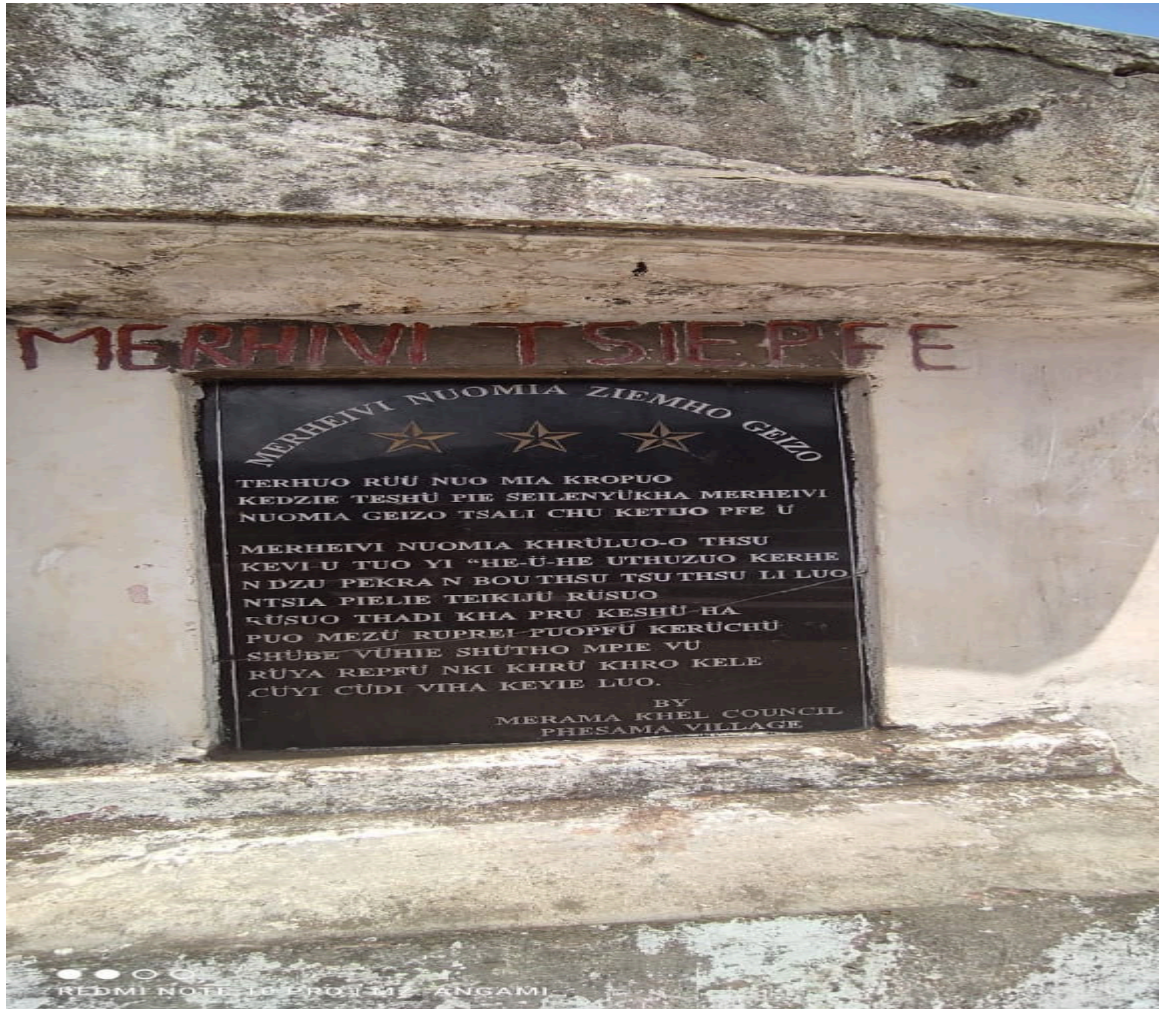


Fig.4.3. Merhivi Tsiepfhe, Phesama

The song is based on a dream. One midnight, a man in his dream saw angels in the form of beautiful ladies holding hands together and singing songs on the children of Merhivi. This song is seen as a blessing to the descendants of Merhivi. The Merama of Phesama village are believed to be the descendants of Merhivi. The folk still cherish the song and continue to sing during special occasions and festivals. It further helped them feel the spirit of community and to rise and persevere through hardships and stay united and one.

Folksongs, covering the journey of folk life beginning from the cradle and ending with the funeral, connote the spontaneous outburst of feelings, love, imaginations, sentiments of the ancestors, morals and disciplines. They stand as the principal and recognized medium through which the individual as well as the group express their most intense emotions. Thus, it is observed that folk songs represented a vital and multi functional means of verbal communication that supported diverse activities in a living culture. The songs of the folk are stable and viscous and help in reconstructing the contacts of communities with one another and in understanding the diffusion of cultural traits.

CHAPTER-V

CHANGING SYNDROME IN THE TRADITIONAL VALUES AND PRACTICES

Unless individuals communicate the folklore they know, others are unaware of it and are unable to learn it; and while that folklore persists in memory, it does so only as long as those who can recollect it remain alive. Because people are the creators and perpetuators of folklore, it is they who are the determiners of its history. Tales and songs, for instance, become folktales and folksongs because individuals find them meaningful, relevant, or appealing enough to want to tell and sing them over and over again. But tales and songs, like such material objects as clothing, go in and out of fashion; and when people judge a once-told story or frequently sung song to have little or no meaning, relevance, or appeal, then they are not motivated to perpetuate it by sharing it with, or teaching it to others.

Metaphorically and by analogy with living things, folklore is often characterized as something that is born, lives and dies. But sometimes when it seems destined to die out, individuals come to conceive it to be meaningful, relevant, or appealing once again; and they communicate and share it anew, occasionally only once, but often on multiple occasions and through time. Folklore on the verge of dying out is thus revived in metaphorical terms; and its traditionality may be re-established if people again come to communicate it with notable frequency as they interact over time. As Raymond Firth writes about oral narratives, if *“traditional tales no longer describe the kind of society which is generally desired by the people, and the continuity itself either has ceased to have meaning or is actively opposed... the reaction of a people is to let the traditional tales go altogether, not bothering to impart them or to listen to them anymore* (Firth170). However Firth adds that people may come to find in time that they want these tales again as a validating resource for their own general continued existence as a society. They may then revive the stories in order to maintain their social identity in a wider social universe. Firth continues: *The tales can be maintained as true ,they can be maintained as true, they can be held to have a symbolic character, with their true meaning ascertainable only to those who are patient to inquire and sympathetic to the interpretation, or they can be regarded as simple recreation* (Firth170). Alternatively, states Firth, the tales can be maintained as overtly or symbolically true by the community concerned, and issued to the world outside as recreational or aesthetic products. In any case, he concludes that as a property that is indubitably

belonging to the group concerned, the traditions can serve as an identity badge and as a social rallying point. What Firth talks about can be seen in the institution of Morung and the folk narratives among the studied villages. Values and sense of identities are derived from gatherings and participation at the morungs. Learning folk songs and presenting in cultural or village programs have become an integral component in the lives of the villagers and the people are conscious of their culture both material and non-material; material in the form of ethnic clothings and non-material culture in the form of art, songs, tales etc. By nature and definition, folklore exists only because it grows out of and manifests itself repeatedly in and through the behaviors of individual human beings. For there is no story without the telling, no song without the singing, no tune without the music making, no game without the playing, no proverb without the speaking, no dance without the dancing and so on.

The concepts of folklore and tradition have always implied an idea of change and continuity. Although speaking historically, the questions of continuity of folklore as well as the idea of a static rural culture have been questioned. The modernization of the society led many scholars to believe that folklore was dying or would die out very soon. And in fact some genres did disappear from oral tradition due to the impact of modernization, but they continued to live on in other forms of modern media. For example, the television superheroes in many countries have taken some of the roles that traditional folk heroes have always had. Interestingly this kind of change and continuity of tradition is more visible in modern mass culture and the heroes of this culture which have the same characteristics as the traditional animal tale heroes. Similarly in many countries the magic folktale is no longer transmitted orally, but through books, videos and television and now in internet and email etc. Parents more often than not use all these modern media and read or retell them to their children. The professional storytellers too adapt them from printed or oral sources. These story tellers are not bound by regional or national folk traditions but feel free to use stories from any culture.

Naga culture and ways of life have been much altered as a consequence of colonial encounter. The colonial intervention along with Christianity as historical forces shaped Naga society beyond recognition. As both colonialism and Christianity are part of the Eurocentric discourse, there is a need to renegotiate the space outside the Eurocentric binary of “civilized and primitive”. The only recourse for an alternative representation of Naga cultural practice and identity construction is the oral tradition including the folklore, for the Nagas have been trapped

in the monolingualism of colonial ethnography as the subjugated 'other'. Described as 'primitive', the Naga is denied of a fair understanding of his cultural practices and worldview. In the process of knowing the Naga, a deliberate distortion of Naga culture has taken place. Colonial ethnography providing 'knowledge' is the field force behind colonial power as well as instrument for cultural loss of the colonized. Representation of the past and the ways of the people are expressions of power by those who write about them. The colonists Eurocentric notions set themselves as 'civilized' considering other culture as 'primitive' in that one may argue that ethnographic concept of truth is constructed and not discovered. The concept of civilized is used as a synonym for superiority of certain groups.

The Nagas lived in isolation for centuries, and were brought into contact with the outside world only in the second half of the 19th century with the arrival of British administrators and American missionaries. Before the coming of the Britishers, people of the region remained almost segregated. During that period of seclusion, the social and cultural life of the Angamis had not known much variation. There was a little scope for mixing together with other people of the country. The other people were also not interested in their problems and aspirations. As such, in the early days, people in the hill areas were left alone to lead a life according to their own ways of life, following their own customary laws in all matters of their socio-political activities. The hill people living in the mountainous region, very often cut off from each other, have their own ways of life, which certainly add to the beauty and variety of Indian culture.

The Nagas were visited by the colonial power during the middle of the nineteenth century when imperialism or colonial expansion was reaching its height. When the western world was busy in its empire building and exploring the places furthest from them in the planet to subdue and claim possession, the Naga people were complacent of their own small world, unaware of the impending disaster that was about to shake their land. Surprised by the strange looking people whom they had never encountered before, the Nagas were bewildered at their entrance. The forceful entry of the British and their subsequent administration of the Naga hills had a huge impact on the cultural identity of the Nagas. The advent of the British in 1832 was to change the world of the Nagas forever. The actual occupation of Naga territory began when British troops under captains Jenkins and Pemberton tried to trace a land route from Imphal to the plains of Assam through Angami-Naga territory. This was a sudden intrusion on the Nagas and resulted in a rude awakening. The Angamis spearheaded by the village of Khonoma put up several strong

fronts to resist domination since the first British expedition in 1832, until they finally gave into the superior weaponry of the British in 1880.

The Naga tribesmen fiercely and bitterly combated the authority of the British until the fall of Khonoma village in 1880. The Nagas fought with all their might to preserve their socio-economic, political and cultural system in opposition to the technologically superior British Empire. After about 50 years of fighting, the British consolidated their power and ruled over part of Naga areas until 1947, but the northern and eastern parts of Naga areas were never conquered by them.

H. Srikanth notes, *colonialism destroyed the traditional economic base of the native communities and replaced the age-old political and social structures by new institutions and practices compatible with the interests of the new rulers* (Srikanth 79). The Naga inhabited areas were arbitrarily divided by the British. These acts were done purely for their convenience in administration with total disregard for the people living in the region or the effects it would have on them. The British officers felt it *necessary to civilize and humanize the hill communities through the spread of modern education and Christianity* (Srikanth 96) since they could not be tamed by treaties, punitive expeditions and material concessions. Education and Christianity were thus used to *make the native tribes accept the changes brought by colonial rule* (Srikanth 96). They followed a policy of least interference in the internal affairs of the Nagas giving due regard to the continuance of village administration, land system, customary laws, social customs and communal institutions of the tribes. In their own interest, they declared Naga territory as a “backward area” and aimed at administering it *in a simpler and more personal manner than those of the more civilized and longer settled tribes* (Elwin 34-35). Little importance was given to improvement of communication and natural resources. The task of educating the tribesmen was left to the American missionaries whose main aim was to spread Christianity. British colonialism thus, imposed the Eurocentric concept of progress and modernism on the natives and caused a rupture between the past and the present.

The silencing of the natives had serious repercussions. The idyllic life of the Nagas was totally disturbed during the war period. Easterine Kire states that during the British rule, *the villages that were found rebellious were burned and their populations scattered into other villages for specific periods of time. Burning of houses and scattering of village populations destroyed the setting of oral narratives effectively* (Gopinath Mahanty Lecture). For about half a

century therefore, oral literature was silenced. According to Kire, the history of Naga literature is punctuated by the silencing of oral narratives at critical periods in their history and this was the first silencing of our narratives. On the one hand, war caused the silencing of oral narratives. On the other hand, during relative peace under colonial rule, a foreign culture made intrusions into the lives of the Nagas and caused cultural erosion. It was during this time, the American missionaries also arrived in Naga territory. As noted by Charles Chasie the first literary figure to make his presence felt in the region was E.W Clarke, an American missionary of Dutch origin who arrived in Sibsagar, Assam in 1869. He used to make forays into the Ao Naga hills and slowly started making converts. He first translated and printed a hymn book and 'The Lord's Prayer' for the sake of his converts (www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net). He established a base at Molungyimsen village in 1872 and set up the first printing press there in 1884. Hence, print culture and the written word were introduced to the Nagas through the missionaries. The Roman script was used to transcribe the local languages, and soon grammar books were also printed in addition to Christian literature.

Although it was the British administration which set foot in the Angami region in the first place, yet it was the American missionaries who introduced Christianity and modern education among the Angamis. At the initial period of the British administration, they adopted a policy of giving minimum interference in the affairs of the local people and thus they did not do much either about educational or social development. In fact, when the British had extended its control over the Naga hills in the beginning of the nineteenth century, some of the missionary approached the British authority to allow them to carry out missionaries work among the people. However, this request was not in favour as they thought this might hinder the government policy. But when the British realized that it was not easy to deal with the Angamis and no profitable taxes could be derived from them, they permitted the missionaries to work among the Angamis at their own risk and expense.

Christianity came to Nagaland in 1872 and the Kohima field had its first convert, Mr.Lhousietsü of Kohima village on 21st March 1885. With the coming of the British the practice of head hunting had immensely declined among the Naga community. The British identified 14 tribes of the Nagas and thereby set up a traditional boundary among different tribes. There is no supremacy vested to any tribe by the Government to fight or launch war against other tribes in order to occupy the other territory nor there is any law for any Naga tribe to occupy the

land of the other tribes. With the advent of the influential Americans on Naga soil, it gave birth to Christianity in Nagaland which was accepted by the people with ambiguity in the beginning. Later on seeing the prospect of its fundamental preaching of the gospel and its practices, the people accepted it as a religion and acknowledged it as the untainted religion.

The district of the Naga Hills falls to the share of the American Baptists. So by the middle of the nineteenth century, the American Baptist missionaries had begun to make effort to reach out to the Nagas. The first missionary couple to the Nagas, Dr. E.W. Clark and Mrs. Mary Mead Clark, succeeded in establishing the first church at Molung Kimong in the Ao Naga country on 22nd December, 1872. Soon, other missionaries also began their works in other parts of Naga areas. Rev C.D. King and Mrs. King were the next missionary couple appointed to work in the Naga Hills in the 1878 and they chose to work among the Angamis, but their mission would come to fruition only in 1883 when they established the Kohima Baptist Church. The third front to be opened for missionary work in the Naga area came in 1896 when Rev. William Pettigrew was allowed to start his work among the Tangkhuls by stationing in Ukhrul. The reception of the good news by the people was of mixed feelings. In many villages, the first converts were chastised and ostracized from their villages, thereby resulting in the establishment of new villages solely for the Christians. In some places, however, there seems to be a curiosity of the new religion and they even responded well to it. Whatever the case, the missionary zeal of the missionaries and the new converts grew stronger. Under the patronage of the missionaries equipped with the knowledge of the word of God, the new converts became bolder in preaching the new religion. Though there were resistances and hostilities from here and there, they did not give up the desire to reach out to those non-Christians.

Gradually, people began to turn to Christianity. With the establishment of mission schools and hospitals, the missionaries were able to draw not only the Christian converts but also the not yet converted ones to the new ways of seeing the world. And by the dawn of the new century, change was much visible in the land of the Nagas. This can be clearly deciphered in the voice of Mrs. M.M. Clark, as she said in her narrative and travelogue *A Corner in India*

Now, with the gospel well entrenched among the Aos, with several Christian communities among the Lhotas, the promise of an early break among the powerful and numerous Semas, and farther on the work already going forward among the Angamis and Tangkhuls, the eye of faith can easily foresee the joyful greetings of the frontier heralds of the cross... (Clark 163).

With the spread of Christianity, the missionaries started educating the natives by setting up schools. Modern or western education and Christianity went hand in hand under colonial rule. With the advent of the Britishers in the Naga hills, their forced entry and resultant subduing of the various tribes, the spread of Christianity and more importantly, the migration of the youth in today's time to urban localities in search of a better future, the Naga community no longer identified itself as a homogenous village entity the way it could be recognized in the past. The western educational philosophies imparted by the Christian missionaries and the subsequent embracement of the new religion had become the most powerful dimension to define the conditions of life in the contemporary literature of Nagaland too. Wherever the missionaries were assigned, they established educational schools and provided health care facilities. Besides *the Christian missionaries took the lead in ushering in a print culture by establishing printing presses and bringing out textbooks, book on grammar, and Christian literature and journals in the local languages* (Misra xiv).

The advent of Christianity and education brought about many changes in the social behaviour and cultural life of the Nagas as well. The normalcy associated to the act of head hunting for the Nagas was questioned within the framework of the modern man's aesthetic sense and morality. Though head hunting among the Nagas is a practice of bygone days and has hardly any importance in today's context, it is imperative to review the act to understand the indigenous beliefs of the tribes prior to the advent of Christianity, modern education and western influence. During the British colonization of the Naga hills, the practice of head hunting was seen as a barbaric act and was thus, abolished by the imperial masters. Education also opened the eyes and minds of the people, and was made to realize that some of the myths and beliefs were unfounded. At the same time, with education there was revival of the traditions because preservation of tales, ethnic wears, search of lineages and research on these subjects were on the rise among scholars and cultural groups. There is a pursuit for re-generation of ancestral morals and values. There is a blend of tradition and modernity, be it in the form of art, music, attires and in the laws and administration of justice.

It is quite interesting that wherever primitive agriculture has given a way to the new modes of cultivation in the tribal societies, new and more creative rituals and festivities have emerged, which can be termed a new attitude to religion; the oral tradition too has found a way to cut across the old and obsolete myths and develop new possibilities. One of the most profound

changes was seen in the conversion to Christianity. Besides proselytism, the missionaries also gave importance to education which in turn played crucial roles in bringing a marked transformation. Even today, a marked difference can be seen in progress and development among people where Christianity was first introduced. Before the missionaries brought Christianity to the Angamis, the people believed in and practiced indigenous religion. As such, they were superstitious and lived in constant fear of unknown deities and spirits. The village priest thus would perform different sacrifices to appease the spirits so as not to harm the village. The Angamis also believed that the spirits of the loved ones who died tried to return. The belief in the spirits of the dead had a strong hold in the life of the Angami society of the past. They feared spirits, like the unknown ones but welcomed some others especially the loved ones who came to tell them that they were happy in the next world. It was only after the spread of Christianity that people began to slowly let go off such beliefs. Thus, we see that Christianity had a strong impact on the Angami society. Due to the intervention of Christian missionaries, there has been a change in various socio-cultural traditions of the Southern Angami people. The people of the Southern Angami are superstitious and independent of their religious predisposition. In the eyes of early evangelization, their culture was seen as under darkness or unchristianized, devoid of the knowledge of truth. The Christian worldview is, in Christ there is life, light and truth.

With the coming of Christianity into the area, the socio cultural aspect changed. Prior to the coming of Christianity, one of the most terrible things in Southern Angami region was continual warfare and inter village disputes. Drinking of rice beer was common among the Nagas. It was an important food items used by the people. However, the men in particular created problems in the family after excessive drinking. Thus the Christian missionaries taught that abstinence from drinking of rice beer is an outward sign of a Christian life and they persistently taught that a drinker of rice beer would be condemned to hell. The natives converted to Christianity were expected to put an end to their old ways of life, ritual practices, sacrifices and celebrations of various kinds. These were gradually uprooted from the societies by embracing the new religion, Christianity. The practices such as Feast of Merit, sacrifices to propitiate the spirits and the use of rice beer and the most effective traditional institutions like Kichüki took a different shape. These were replaced by new practices acceptable to Christian norms of life. In the process, they apparently developed a negative attitude towards their own

culture. This notion however, is not the same anymore; there is a revival of these practices in new forms. For instance, hosting of Christian festivals such as Jubilees, Christmas by individuals/families are a common feature today. This has become an equivalent of the rich calling a feast of merit in olden days.

Preceding the entry of Christianity, there were several restrictions which were undoubtedly based on superstitions. Nevertheless, most of these superstitious beliefs are done away through the teachings of the missionaries. For instance, certain kinds of food were prohibited to be consumed by men, women or children. But such taboos are no longer practiced by the Christians following the importance of maintaining a healthy and a balanced diet. Fowls and eggs which were widely used for sacrificial purposes are no longer necessary and people take them on a large scale as a normal food item. In the past days, there was a constant fear of evils spirits. The people believed in the existence of evil spirits in the world. Sickness or natural calamity and the like were attributed to the malevolent spirits. Traditionally, the Angami people led an unhygienic life. There were no separate sheds for cattle, pigs and fowls and they shared the same house with the owner. Boiled water was seldom used for drinking purposes as most of the families used rice beer. All these unhealthy practices become a breeding ground for germs and thus diseases such as small pox and cholera was common among the people. However, they distanced themselves from the preventive measures as they believed that the diseases were the work of the evil spirits which could be cured by offering sacrifices to the spirits. Christianity stands against this belief with the preaching of the supremacy of Christ over all the other spirits concerning the people to stay away from sacrifices to appease the spirits.

When people started to embrace Christianity and education, there was a gradual disintegration of the traditional values. The newly converted Christians felt that they had to get rid of some of the old practices and cherished social customs. They found that they could no longer participate in some of the festivals of the village which were closely associated with animistic belief. For instance, the early Christians stopped taking part in the gate pulling ceremony of the village which was then compulsory for male member. They refused it on the grounds that there are certain traditional rituals which they could not be involved in as Christians. The non- Christians took it as a sign of cowardice as their refusal meant their failure to participate in the defense of the village. Again, the Christians did not like to adhere to the strict observance of genna. In the light of their new found faith, they were all superstitious

beliefs. Where as the non- Christians believed that non adherence to the genna will raise the anger of the evil spirits, which would endanger the entire community. Such defying acts were considered as a crime committed against the whole village. The converted Christians became reluctant to involve themselves in communal fight which was a sign of weakness and lack of courage in the eyes of the non-Christians. Consequently, it shook the very foundation of the closely knitted fabric of the society.

With the cessation of continual hostilities and warfare between villages, the morung ceased to be seen as a necessary guard room or to serve as armoury. The missionaries implemented Christian principles on the people. Anyone seeking baptism was required to follow the Christian doctrines and abstain from participating in what they saw as 'heathen ritual'. Moreover, the missionary dissuaded the converts to stay away from dormitory. The disobedience towards the dormitory principles meant something superior to the converted Christians. The charm and the usefulness deteriorated gradually as it was seen as an institution that did not align with the teachings and principles of Christianity. Thus, the morung which was once the core of the community gradually vanished and now only the traces can be marked as it still remain part of the history. Some important and noted rituals are still practiced and celebrated with some modifications.

Evil confronts us in our everyday life, and we know it as the dormant dragon in our hearts. Evil is explained in terms of our culturally engraved response patterns and world views. Christianity's teaching has laid down standards of good and evil. Evil is understood in terms of Christianity's frame of reference. The picture of the Devil is close at hand as a manifestation of evil. Indeed , in the minds of people the Devil is tenacious of life, and so even in our secular society. Yet, he appears in different shapes. He may reside as a concrete entity, and he may reside inside us, as an abstract source of power and potency. Whether he is perceived as concrete or abstract, he emerges as a core element in our anxieties, in what we are afraid of, in what we cannot control. And it is not surprising that he contributes so much to the formation of rumour stories and storytelling in general. And it is not surprising that he contributes so much to the formation of rumour stories and storytelling in general.

Today, we have only a few remnants still adhering to the old religion.No doubt, the missionaries have brought about enormous positive changes in the fields of education, medicine and other social works. It was the positive works of the Christian missionaries that brought many

to their fold. Among most tribal population of the Northeast, Christian missions were and are appreciated for the positive social changes. For most Nagas, Christianity is considered a major harbinger, if not the only one, of modernity and progress. Asoso Yonuo accredited the works of the Christian missionaries as

An inward machinery which brought modernization, western ways of life, education, the renaissance of Nagaism and unity among Nagas (Yonuo 120).

V.K. Nuh put it this way:

Nagas should be grateful to God for adopting Christianity as their new way of life and religion because whatever small achievements that they have so far made are all because of this faith. Note the contributions of Christianity to the Naga people (Nuh 198).

In most of the discourses, we find a non hesitant recognition of Christianity playing a positive role in the society and in creating a sense of identity.

However, when we give a closer observation, we also find the people experiencing a sense of loss of tradition and culture. Though the main objective of the missionaries was to proclaim the Gospel, Abraham Lotha finds out that *in practice, conversion to Christianity also meant conversion to modernity and Western morality, particularly American Protestant Puritanism* (Lotha 79).

But the root cause of such turnabout was already an agenda of the missionaries, as Richard M. Eaton notes

Most foreign missionaries in the Naga Hills were prohibitionists American Baptist who understood religion in strongly moral terms and consequently saw a conversion as a conscious moral turnabout, of which markers like western dress or abstinence from alcohol were outward signs (Richard 255).

Therefore, the missionaries obviously would have adopted certain codes of conduct which the converts had to follow as is clearly seen in the words of M.M Clark

The Nagas, once civilized and Christianized, will make a manly, worthy people (Clark 45).

This could also be read with what John Butler in Elwin after an expedition to Assam Project reported

The south-eastern hills of Assam are the abode of the many tribes of Nagas. They are very uncivilized race, with dark complexions athletic sinewy frames, hideously wild and ugly visages:

their faces and bodies being tattooed in a most frightful manner by pricking the juice of the belanut into the skin in a variety of fantastic figures (Elwin 515).

Like the political colonizers, the missionaries saw the Nagas as barbaric and uncivilized. The new converts were, thus, taught the new way of living and to see the world as the missionaries saw it. The missionaries, as part of their civilizing agenda started a religious and social reform wherein,

Every form of demon worship, open or suspected, was attacked – Sunday-breaking, rice-beer drinking, licentiousness, and all social vices... Instead of congregating promiscuously at different houses to sleep at night, singing objectionable songs, telling doubtful stories, and engaging in lewd conversation, these young reformers separated themselves and built a dormitory for their own accommodation in which purity and holiness should reign. Here at morning and evening time the voice of prayer and songs of praise are heard (Clark 138).

It is clear from the words of Mrs. Clark that the native culture is pictured in a negative light. Sadly, folksongs were classed as ‘objectionable songs’, folktales as ‘doubtful stories’, the age old morung system as mere ‘congregating promiscuously’, the religion as ‘demon worship’ etc. Therefore, the missionaries, no doubt, adopted strict puritanical measures to civilize the Nagas. Furthermore, the new converts were told *that total abstinence from all intoxicants is required* (Clark 1907:140). These teachings were effective that even today most people continue to refer to the few non-Christians as ‘rice beer drinkers’. Rice beer which was a staple Naga drink and considered good for health if drunk in appropriate amounts was equated with ‘alcohol’ and ‘intoxicant’ which was seen as harmful by the missionaries. Such was seen as the beginning of the modernization process which, as the missionaries would have required, was to supplant the native culture with the western one. They failed to see that the natives did have a culture of their own, a religion of their own, and a philosophy of life that guided them.

For the people, the aftermath of the encounter with the white race, represented especially by the American missionaries, created a disconnect or a rupture from the past. With the western tuned church hymns over shadowing the old oral folk songs, the story of Christianity replacing the myths and legends of yore, the western lifestyle substituting the cultural attires, the history of the Nagas has never been the same again after its convergence with the influential western world. Some of the British colonial anthropologists have also held the missionaries responsible to the degradation of the Naga culture. Referring to the Christian mission, Mills said,

One of the mistakes made by the Mission, the gravest in my opinion, and the one most fraught with danger for the future, is their policy of strenuously imposing an alien Western culture on their convert (Mills 420). Being a trained person in the field of society and culture, Mills evidently understood the possible consequences and was of the opinion that the Nagas folktales be translated and compiled by then, should be used in schools but his idea was rejected by the 'mission schools' (ibid:307).

Temsula Ao recounts the unfortunate loss of culture as

Many of the chants and songs associated with the ceremonies are now lost because more often than not, such interest were discouraged by the people themselves as were seen as harking back to the dark and heathen past (Ao 196).

On a similar note Christopher von Furer-Haimendorf remarked *seeing his own customs condemned by the missionaries, he learned to despise his own tribal and cultural inheritance* (Haimendorf 55).

He even recount and incident when he met a 'Pastor', *'I asked the 'Pastor' why the bachelors' hall was no longer used. 'How could a Christian boy sleep in this house of the heathen?' was the reply. To use them would be against our rules* (ibid 51).

What was taught in the mission schools was clearly manifested in such statements.

Temsula Ao further enumerates the impact of turning to Christianity in the following way;

The most decisive blow to the fabric of the tradition was struck when the new religion i.e. Christianity, began to win converts quite rapidly. Acceptance of the new religion demanded total abandonment of the 'old' ways. A way of life, which had sustained and nurtured generations, suddenly became a 'taboo'. Thus, indigenous form of belief and worship, observance of the various festivals and rituals and chanting of traditional songs which contained not only religious elements but also much of the literature and history of the people became taboo. Food and dress code too had to undergo changes according to the 'new' ways (Ao 175).

The old ways showed a close interlink of culture with religion and also with the socio-political life of the people. The missionaries, however, could not comprehend this interlink. What they saw was some barbaric and uncivilized culture. The teachings of the new tradition necessitate the people to discard their cultural heritage along with their religious beliefs. Therefore, when they gave upon their belief system they also abandoned the culture and history as attachments. Many Nagas thus have given different views on Naga identity and Christianity. According to Hokishe

Sema, Christianity has affected the cultural identity of the Nagas. He further specifies the control that Christian missionaries imposed were such as not to participate in any rites and rituals connected with the traditional religion. And thus, created divisions within the community. When the whole village had to observe community rites, non-Christian expected that everyone should participate whereas the missionaries prohibited the Christians from partaking in such religious rites. With much regret, he points out some major setbacks of the Christian missionaries.

The arrival of education ushered tremendous transformation in the social life of the community. Penetration of the new ideas in the heart of the village has affected the simple minded villagers. Today, most of the people in Angami area pursue education with determination. Education is regarded as a means of gaining social and economic status. It has thus become the desire of every parent to see their children becoming educated. This is more felt as the fact that by obtaining higher education, people started joining public services assuring better economic and social status. Now, the old and the young alike appreciate the vocation which guaranteed economic stability. Parents do not want to miss the opportunity and are anxious to send their children to the best schools.

Education has inserted urban values to the simple folks in the villages. To pursue education in colleges and universities, the students from the villages migrate to towns and cities. At the completion of their course, they start to work in cities. At their return, the villagers at times look at the individual as a model and even to the extent of a celebrity. And the returnee finds the village lifestyle as a monotonous routine as there is fewer chance to become a person of wealth and influence. Education leads to social mobility, often resulting in geographical mobility and thereby shaking the age-old family ties which is based on a closely knitted family. Inter-marriages between the various tribes were rare in the past. Today, with the changes in the society, inter-marriage has become a common occurrence. Marriage with non-Nagas has crept into the society which was beyond imagination in the past. All these changes have come in the society because the educated section favours freedom in the selection of one's life partner, family planning and other similar areas of life.

Majority of the Naga people have adopted Christianity today. Along with it, rapid spread of western education and the impact of globalisation have made deep inroads into traditional Naga beliefs and customs. However, the Nagas stand as a tradition loving people, and a more or less distinctive Naga way of life is still being maintained. Though the Nagas are traditionally an

oral society, modernization along the western line commenced after the coming of the British and American missionaries. Since then, there has been a change in almost all aspects of Naga way of life. Modernisation, new technology and innovations gave rise to new folklore and new traditions. Mass media, for example was first seen as destroying the purity of folklore and oral tradition, but it soon turned out that mass media in fact was becoming a new carrier of folklore and the retelling of films and operas and other genres was changing the temporal boundaries of folklore rather than destroying its content or purity. The mass entertainment industry did not become a one way communication, as we gradually discovered the interaction between the listeners and the consumers broadened the horizons of folklore and oral tradition in the modern times.

It is also seen that our village community is not a static, timeless and changeless one. It also changes along with the changing pattern of modern civilization, the social structure, socio-political organization and ethos of the communities. The Southern Angami Nagas follows the patriarchal system where male is the head or the dominion of the family. Since ancient times, the male were the ones to make decisions and led the family and the village in front. Even today, the male dominated society among the Nagas has been an important feature of the society. But with the better age in time, women have started to participate in various activities and be part of higher post like Village Development Board. Traditionally, a girl kept shaving her head till marriage. But now, Christian parents allow their daughters to grow their hair. In the initial years of the coming of education, girls were never encouraged to obtain education. However now, there has been an increase in education of a girl child. As a result, there arises a gap between the illiterate village girls and the educated girls. The former category still go to field, fetch water, weave cloths and have a community life whereas the educated girls have higher and loftier aims. They get themselves prepared for various intellectual activities and some of them even attain great achievements.

The modernization of the contemporary society led many scholars to believe that folklore and myths are dying traditions or would die out very soon and would be replaced completely by print and electronic version of literature. The fact is many genres did disappear from oral tradition of various societies but it is seen that folklores continue to live on in other forms even in the modern societies of the world. This lends credence to the assumptions that the elemental essence of folklore and oral traditions are its acquiescent qualities to the changing social and

cultural landscape. It is because of such qualities and also because oral transmission is the elemental basis of folklore, it is always faced with the risk of alteration and modification as the lore travels over time and space. At the present time, modernization has become a world wide phenomenon. All communities of the world have become absorbed in this world wide process of modernization and the present day culture change situation all over the world has become the process of which all cultures of the world are fast moving towards uniformity. In the age of globalization and modernization, often folklore is seen out of traditional context. In such situation some changes are observed. The impact of commercialization and mass media is visible in folklore. However, the people of the Southern Angami still uses folklore in order to exert their identity. Thus, there is continuity and change.

With the advent of modern system of government, morung gradually lost its significance. Accordingly, the village headmen are provided with court warrants and authorized to enforce government regulations. In matters regarding settlement of disputes, there was no written record or laws. It was settled according to the oral tradition. Now, with the coming of modern education, conflict matters are put into writing and disputes are settled according to the legal procedures.

The world of materialism and secular education can be said to be destroying the sense of dignity of manual labour. In the past, the young ones were taught from their childhood to be responsible and self supporting. C.D.King, the first missionary among the Angami found this quality in the students when he established his school in 1881. Writing about them, he said

They are independent, self reliant boys who support themselves and ask no favour from anybody. In age they cannot be more than from ten to fourteen. They find employment in the station usually as assistance to their regular officers and other (King 15). Morung taught the dignity of labour but is disappearing from the society. Many young educated youth consider manual work as beneath their dignity and feel ashamed to identify themselves with their parents who are from village. This kind of attitude has brought misunderstanding in the family. Subsequently, there has been a generation gap between the parents and their children. The rich culture were also reflected in arts and crafts. However, the glamour of westernization has influenced the modern generation to a large extent that they gradually started to neglect and look down on their art and crafts as old and primitive. For instance, pottery as a craft is no longer in

practice. The art of weaving which was once considered as a must for every girl to master in the past is known by a very few girls at this juncture.

Today, it is a common complaint that the young people no longer respect their traditional customs. To them, in the days of yore, village elders were trusted, honoured and respected. This made the elders happy and contented. Until recently, the people would never pass one another without a courteous word of 'how are you' 'where to' 'where from' and addressing the elders in a proper manner as 'aunt', 'uncle', 'father', 'mother' and the like. But today, matters have become contrary. Many young people would pass an elderly person even without a friendly greeting which according to the tradition is regarded as impolite. The same is true in welcoming guests to one's home or village or answering to an enquirer. Speaking of the Angamis in the early 1890's, R.G.Woodthorps said that the Angamis were 'cheerful, frank, hospitable' towards their guests. Sadly, these values are fast ebbing, which is largely affected by the modern life style.

However, the institution of morung has not lost its significance altogether. For some of the studied villages, the morung continues to be the place where disputes are settled, meetings are held, and important cultural activities continue to be held. The structure of the morung has changed but the idea and techniques remain the same. Though the practice of sleeping in the morung is no more, gatherings and learning are very much active and alive in the village morung.

The massive waves of modernization have brought changes and have been striking at the roots of traditional group identity. In this age of modernization, one can understand the impact of modernity on everyone but still one should not forget the past. It is seen that the people are losing their tradition due to the influence of globalisation yet the native culture and tradition should not be forgotten. Some cultural trademark of the villagers in olden days were traditional music, songs and dances but these were discouraged since they appeared devilish and animistic to the eyes of an outsider. With formal education, the old age dances and songs were ignored changing the social face of the society. It ultimately brought a class division in the society. New changes which grew among the people expand the mental horizons and they began to suffer an identity crisis. This phase of socio-cultural change brought about a change in the mindset and behavior of the villagers. Nevertheless, there is a strong urge today in search of their identity through revival of their traditional music, tunes, dances, attires and legends. There is an increase

in the celebrations of age old brotherhood amongst clans of different villages/tribes; tracing of ancestral lineages, migration routes and patterns have gained ground. The church have embraced traditional musical instruments such as the tati, trumpet for its major events. There is a shift in total rejection of old practices but there is a visible enculturation taking place in the villages. In fact preservation and promotion of their folk traditions are taking place both orally and by means of written records.

Gradual migration of the Naga people to urban pastures in search of better living conditions, education and employment led to the disruption of the village life. No society can remain untouched by the dynamics of social changes and oral tradition is vulnerable to such developments. Nevertheless, oral forms which primarily existed in preliterate societies do not end with literacy, but continue to flourish and strengthen different aspects of a people's culture. At the same time, the written form now plays a very important role in transmitting information more rapidly to greater numbers and distances. The emerging contemporary Naga literature reflects an amalgamation of the written and the oral. As stated by Misra, *adaptations and transcreations of oral literature constitute a significant part of print literature in modern times* (Misra xxii).

Urbanization and social changes in the cities and in rural areas created new housing politics resulting in smaller houses and apartments. The villages are in the process of gentrification. The houses are well equipped with modern fittings which expose their desire to join the world of modernity which comes at the benefit of higher education. The growing privatisation weakened the solidarity and amenity of the neighbourhood. The informal gatherings in the evenings came to an end. The public style of narration was replaced by a style grounded in family or private tradition and storytelling began to be fitted within the cracks of an otherwise busy life. Urbanization and industrialization made old traditions connected with rural life of the agriculture-based communities, who more often than not, were the actual carriers of the tradition, of less interest to the ever changing frame of the new society in which the folk as well as their lore were always on the move. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of southern Angami area. But with the passage of time, people started pursuing jobs in government sector, private sector and business. Ambitious mind crept into the society and this in turn has led into a better economy for the people. In this scenario, however, the link between the past and the present was not entirely broken, and in fact this phenomenon on the other hand created new

possibilities of social interaction and creation of new folklore and oral tradition based on the old traditions.

Technological innovations have radically changed our daily lives and our working conditions during the last century and a half. Now, the aspects of tribal life in the villages have been changing, initiating a process of social and cultural disintegration. The traditional form of tribal life has been disrupted and the spectrum of multi dimensional social changes have brought its total transformation. The folk culture is now gradually overtaken by the present technological age. Of course, its dying process is slow. Because, any item of folk literature is completely lost only when it ceases to exist in the memory of man.

It is noteworthy that westernization and its impact is greatly felt by the society. The many facets are visible in their way of life such as diet, manners, dress and lifestyles. The educated develops a tendency to wear the latest fashion, listen to the newest music and perform the contemporary dances. The use of drugs and harmful substances is now rampant among the younger generation. The networking of internet, television, screening of provocative movies are in access with no prohibitions.

The Nagas had no reason to doubt the traditional value of their oral tradition that was being passed down from generation to generation before the advent of Christianity. However, the transformation from oral tradition to the written script tradition shifted the gear of reality to an unfathomable contradiction and vagueness. With oral tradition becoming a thing of the past, there was no initiative taken to record the valuable contents of our oral history. The first generation elders who prided in their story-telling prowess and ability to recount the momentous events of our ancestral history were unintentionally ignored.

Much of the oral tradition, which was the foundation of the lives of the indigenous tribes has been lost due to the absence of a written script. The records of the British administrators and ethnographers have served the purpose of documenting the life of some of the tribes. The works of contemporary writers is helpful in keeping alive the age-old traditions and customs of the people. Along with education and modernization, greed, envy and competitions crept into the Naga society and have had negative impacts, the result of which we witness today. Changes were brought about by the advent of the British, Christianity and modern education in the life of Nagas.

Even in today's time, much of the folklore and folk literature remain in the oral tradition, imposing a threat of being lost with time. This great body of oral tradition was the very foundation on which a Naga individual's life was based and also provided the life source for the functioning of the village community. Though a great many elements of folklore has its roots in the hoary past of the folk, it is not confined to the past events or past beliefs alone but contemporary cultures are also constantly engaged in the creation and transmission of folklore. As such, the notion that folklore relates to the past is only partially true. The process of engaging in creation and transmission of folklore presupposes two things- one is the recognition of the existence of a folk group and the other is the need for continuity. Richard Bauman observed that the basic premise which appears to underlie such formulations is that folklore is the functioning of shared identity (Bauman 21-22). Bauman's formulation of folklore as the functioning of shared identity is made more explicit in the definition of the field of folklore as proposed by Alan Dundes. According to him, the term 'folk' refers to any group of people who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor- it may be a common occupation, language or religion- but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason have some traditions which they call as their own. Generally, most groups consist of many individuals. A member of the group may not know all other members, but he will probably know the common core of traditions belonging to the group's traditions which help the groups to have a sense of identity. From such definition, it therefore follows that the distinctive traditions, speech, stories, myths of folk groups sets one group apart from the other. This means that although folklore might be a key to the past, it likewise reflects the present and thus is also a key to the future. Such succinct observations are very relevant particularly with reference to traditional societies like the Naga society.

CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION

Oral tradition, the source of folk literature is now hailed as the chronicle of human history by providing evidence to the origin of people and their subsequent migrations to their final destinations. Jan Vansina, in his book, *Oral Tradition as History* (1985) says that the rules of historical evidence as applied to oral traditions forms a body and a logical train of thought (from the Preface xiii). Oral literature helps the people to peep into the beliefs and the cultural nuances of the people and captures the entire epistemology, their history which is handed down from generation to generation, and also the social implications. There is no doubt that the prospect of reconstructing their ancient history enshrined in their origin myths and folklores is an area of great importance which demands serious considerations. This is however not as simple as stated given the fact that it would require a multi disciplinary approach. The idea of identity is to a good extent said to derive from oral tradition as it tells about the origin of the people and their culture.

Oral tradition is not just the songs and stories that memorialize the history of the people. It forms the philosophy and the life world of the people. The cultural expressions of people's everyday life is the main field in the study of folklore. Folk narratives, ideas, customs and rituals are integrated into people's daily lives. Folklore, however, is not only used, but also created in everyday life. It gives us a pattern for expressing ourselves into which we can place various experiences and impressions. Through a kind of localization and vernacularization, the mass mediated products can also become items of folk expressions. A highly diverse in cultural and traditional aspect, the Nagas for decades have sustained their customs, culture and identity through oral narration. Folktales, narrative poems and folksongs contributed largely in the formation of the folk literature of the Nagas. Large number of folktales and folksongs are not of recent origin. They have existed since the time of our forefathers and has been transmitted orally in the absence of written forms, as Chandrika Singh in *The Naga Society writes in the case of Naga Society and its cultural as well as social norms and values, it never happened that the Naga people lost their identity* (Singh 1).

Nagas are a community that holds dear the tradition of story- telling and narrating songs and poems, and so there is a conscious effort to recreate a resplendent past through a retracing of the traditional folklores and folksongs. And such a reverting to the past is important as an identity signifier for the Nagas. The literary history and culture of the Nagas would necessitate an understanding of their oral tradition which is the source of knowledge of the history of origin, philosophy, religion, culture and social life of the people. Nagas were a preliterate society and every aspect of their lifestyle was retained in the oral tradition. Even after more than a century of being educated, much of the folklore and folk literature still remain in the oral tradition. Indeed, the very history of the Naga people, their religion and entire social life is shaped by their oral traditions.

Today, the bulk of the recorded of the folklore of the tribes comprises the account left by the foreigners, missionaries and British administrators written in English language. The indigenous writings are written in various tribal languages and only few books were published in English. These books are a valuable source to the tribal. It is thus not easy to speak of a common folkloristic tradition or folk literature of the Nagas as a whole. This is because there have not been much collective materials recorded about the lore of all the tribes. In recent times, attempts are being made to record and provide education through it. Talking about the 21st century in our state Nagaland, there is a particular subject that deals in educating the young minds on the rich cultural heritage of the land.

The first chapter introduces folk literature that is based on the tradition , culture , belief and practices of a group of people usually not having any written records. In fact, it depicts the total way of life. One of the characteristic features of Naga oral tradition is that every Naga village has its own repository of folklores such as folktales, legends and mythologies and history of migration. Nagaland, a land of diversity, a mixture of tribes, each having their own distinct traditions and culture forms the folk literature of the Nagas. The folk possesses outstanding cultural and traditional features of the popular headhunting, feast of merit, folktales, beliefs, folksongs, practices, dances which contribute immensely to the folk literature of the Nagas.

In the ancient pre-literate world of the Southern Angami people, oral tradition played the dominant role as the chronicles of history, source of knowledge and wisdom which guided and influenced the people. Their culture flourished without any written script of their own. Yet they had an effective medium to communicate and record history and have been preserved for many

centuries through the oral tradition based on deep-rooted and time-tested foundations. Any oral narrative of traditional history, origin and migration of the people, formation of the village, events of war, peace, festivals and so on are transmitted by word of mouth through songs, poetry, prayers, ballads, sayings, stories and tales or as public oration when the situation demands. Though the stories of all the villages are just as important as the others and fully recognizing that in being selective, the study faces the potential of losing some important knowledge, research of this nature eventually had to make the decision of selecting the specific folk groups for gathering the necessary information and so the four villages were visited for the research.

The villages in the Southern Angami area have largely retained their mode of cultivation and interest. The basic interest is his family, clan, khel and the village. We find that they are passionately attached to their land, village, community and tribal affairs. Great agriculturists they were and the people depended on farming and hunting. They continue their traditional way of cultivation. They plough fields, build houses, cut down forest and trees for slash and burn cultivation. They still practice hunting, fishing and hold village councils. Each village is composed of clans and Khels. General gatherings, community singing, dancing, rituals, festivals and the like are termed as similarities among the village. Despite the fact that the bulk of the population has accepted Christianity as their religion, the link of the people with the traditional beliefs and customs has not been snapped and, as such, traditional myth like stories about the origin of human groups, animals and other objects are still in circulation.

Oral tradition plays a pivotal role in maintaining cordial relations among the people. With its time tested values of transparency, honesty and truth, oral tradition serves as a means to resolve the vexing problems with a belief in its efficacy of delivering justice. In the socio-cultural and political life of the Southern Angami Nagas, oral narration was, and still is, a powerful weapon to prove or disprove, substantiate and support and dispute or claims and for resolving disputes and conflict. Disruptions was restored through negotiations and dialogue. It is instrumental in peace negotiation or to conduct truth in times of confrontation and conflict.

The second chapter gives a brief account on morung which is a male dormitory is evident in almost all tribes of the Nagas. It was built in a spot where it is in advantageous position to defend the village. It was like an education center for the males. The early life of the Southern Angami people can be said to have a community life rather than that of individualism. Like many tribal societies, the Southern Angami have a patriarchal social structure which is

characterized by the notion of male supremacy. While the public sphere remained a male domain, women were responsible for looking after the domestic affairs. Historically speaking, the public image of the society has been a male dominated one which is reflected in the role of Kichüki in community governance. They gather in the Morung known as kichüki and stories were exchanged as a form of learning. This help them to know their identity. The people followed strict customary laws and practices for peaceful living which if violated had to face consequences. These were imparted in the dormitory. The penalties and punishment was imposed based on the crime committed. If the crime is severe, the culprit is even ousted from the village which if followed till date.

The practice of head hunting, symbol of valour, tectum and sacrifices could be noticed from the motifs elaborately carved on the poles and cross beams of the morung. The structure of the morung demonstrated the architectural style of the Nagas. The folk were creative in art and crafts. The people used hand made pots for cooking, bamboo baskets to carry things which were taught in Kichüki. Even today, the crafts are seen on the entrance gate of the village. The age old traditions are still used and are valued. Skill based activities like handicraft, woodcarving, spinning, cooking, rice brewing was taught in the morung. The dormitory life has imparted the virtue of dignity of labour. In the olden days, those who refuse to work in idleness were denied of food. They strive to remain productive. However, the dignity of labour seems to be eluding in the present era. As a result, there is an increase of educated unemployment in the state. Our modern system can adopt and institutionalize these skills and activities to reduce the problem of unemployment in the state.

The selection of tree in the construction of the morung exhibit the respect for the ecology. The tree to be used in building the morung was chosen meticulously by listening to their dreams and due consideration to the dwellers in the trees. The tree is repudiated if it is found to be dwelt by any living creature. The process unmask a preemptive for the protection of the environment and a exemplar for the posterity to keep elevated. It resembles the modern day educational institutions as it imparts discipline, knowledge, traditions, customs and religious practices. The elders in the village delivered to the boys the benefits of the various medicinal plants found in their area. These were used to treat certain ailments and diseases in the absence of modern medicines. Till today, these locally available plants are used by the villagers. These traditional

knowledge on the various medicinal plants found in our land can be documented by the younger generation.

With the coming of the British and the spread of Christianity, the morung system started losing its notability. The early Christian missionaries probably confused the cultural values with religion. Thus, they considered the institution of morung which is a cultural centre as a heathen institution and the life in dormitory as actions against the doctrine of Christianity. Haimendorf deeply lamented the decay of morung and said that gone are the days, perhaps never to return. Education followed with the coming of Christianity. Modern schools, colleges and various modern institutions have been introduced. Boys and girls were sent to schools and colleges that affected or undermined the functioning of the dormitory as they started to adopt modern outlook and western approach.

Thus, the bigger portion of the existence of the morung culture remains on the side when Britishers and Christianity were not introduced. This, however, does not mean that all the good qualities offered to the young men were abandoned. It only denotes that in order to give more importance to the church which is a calling as a Christian, the institutional hierarchy were re-prioritized. Moreover, because the morung was a centre for training of men to be brave and to be skilled to kill an enemy, it had to be compromised as people started to accept Christianity.

We find that the people still cherish our history with the glorious institution of the Morung. Therefore constructing replica of early morung is a welcoming idea for most occasions in the state. For instance, each tribe has its own morung constructed in the heritage village, Kisama where all the tribes comes to celebrate the festival of festivals in the beginning of December every year known as the Hornbill festival. Indeed, there were several things that morung as an institution taught our ancestors. The one practice that makes the system bitter is seen in the trainings for killing when head hunting was practiced. However, the desirability overweight the drawbacks. And almost everybody who has gone through our history acknowledged and admired the goodness of our ancestors. Many applauded on the governing system that existed though the folks had never been in contact with the outside world. The kind of virtues that our ancestors uphold was genuine. With the emergence and the preference for modern education by the people, it will be close impossible to go back to the morung system as before. The physical infrastructure may not be necessarily needed to learn the values taught by

the ancestors. However, these positive virtues can be blended in our modern day educational institutions , churches and our homes.

The third chapter explores folktales and narrative poems which are passed on from the elders to the younger generation which were an important way of preserving cultural traditions and teaching the young to understand their roots; there is even folktale narrating about their migration and history. The chapter analyzes the philosophical, cultural, sociological perspectives of folktales and narrative poems. Folktales is seen as offering solutions to dilemmas and gave the community a sense of history and belonging. The tales disclose the importance of naming in Angami culture. It might be naming a new born, a clan or a village. Each name has a message to convey. It can rather be seen as prophetic. The naming of the clan ‘Zashümo’ adds to this culture where the parents bear the trouble and take their son to another village to be named by a man known for his gift of naming. Being tribal, they have a good number of stories to be told to the children. The tales allow the folk to imagine the way in which they will apply what is revealed about life and human nature. Though the tales seem at first as completely distant from the reality, is often experiential in nature. The tales ultimately substantiate the ways of life and the moral codes of the community. They incorporate the past to the present and act as a source of useful knowledge. Pledges and promises made between villages often ensuing peaceful negotiations were highly respected and honoured as we see in the poem ‘Khrhazwi’ where friendship is maintained by the Khrhazwi of Viswema village and Hisemi of Kohima village and a feast is hosted by the Khrhazwi in honour of their friendship. On the other side, inter village feud was seen. Any violation was considered not only as an insult and offence but cowardly invoking wrath for vengeance and invariably resulting in more conflict. And this notion is reflected in the tale of Tso Tso and Terhopudiü whose desire to be united in marriage was shattered due to the rivalry that existed between the villages. Through the war tales, it delineates leadership as attained by a person through his courage and prowess by counting the heads taken.

While speaking of remembered heroes, we generally find that the images of warriors as well as the great hunters who come to the mind of the people as legendary figure. Any man who brings the head of an enemy was considered as a hero. This mindset is delivered in the story of Morusa and Mehoviu where the hero goes to another village to take heads to display his courage and gain recognition from the community. However, it ended in Morusa killing his wife to be as

he was not aware that the lady he killed was the one proposed to be his partner in marriage. This is why people including the colonist writers considered the Naga head hunters as ‘uncivilized’ or extremely ‘barbarous’ creating an image of horror. In olden days, however, headhunting was not completely seen as a senseless killing of the enemy but a tradition connected with the tribal principles of heroism, justice, honour, pride and recognition as the head of the victim was considered as a trophy of honour and bravery. Through folktales, we find that marriage was an important occasion and it follows certain process since the early days. A man in order to marry has to impress the family and relatives of the desired woman. He also proves his bravery as a warrior and as the most suitable man for the woman by bringing an enemy’s head as we find in the tale of Morusa taking the head of Mehoviu. This system has now vanished though the process of marriage continues.

Folk tales were seen to have moral values to be conveyed and to be acquired by the community. We see tales as full of wisdom and knowledge for life. It reflects the ethnicity and the social realities of the folk. Through the tales, the older ones share their experiences. People still refer back to the folktales or phrases from folktales which are popularly used depending on the situation. The remark ‘You are like Matsi’ which is used by people today can be traced back to the tale of Matsi who is a trickster. In most cases, people take it in a derogatory remark though in some case it acclaimed the wit of a person.

Folktales and Narrative poems brings out the collective value of social networks. They can be said to have originated from the base of culture and society. It continues to enchant people. They tell us our history, describe where we live, what our values are and ultimately self-realization. It carries a strong message. The tales are expressed in the form of different characters. And the characters resemble human characteristics and we need to learn the untold morals. The message perceived includes the victory of the right and final judgement in favour of the righteous. The philosophical implications give us an insight to comprehend the happenings and to gain knowledge. It presents an insight about the structure of the society and the situations prevalent so as to discern and support the areas that we need to carry on or to amend in course of time.

Chapter four presents folksongs which acted as a medium of transmitting the old ways and the roots of the people in an interesting and attractive manner. The apparent and reiterative function of the songs include serving as a means through which individual or groups can express

otherwise their suppressed feelings and views. It also mirrors their culture, beliefs and values. They served as a source of entertainment to the performers and the listeners. The chapter explores the various types of folksongs of the Southern Angami area. The occasions and the reasons for performing the songs were discussed. A lot of instances related to historical, geographical and anthropological aspects are found in the songs. Most of the ideas of the songs bear a special significance related to the perception of truth.

Through the songs of the folk, we find women to have contributed to the cult of heroism which is attributed to the male. It is rare to find accounts of a warrior like heroines in the folklore of the Nagas because in the society, women are restricted from taking up weapons of warfare. However, we see women as dominant characters wielding powers which was traditionally thought as a trait of the men folk. Women provided support by performing various practices such as singing for men, serving them while working, voice up their thoughts and opinions. They acted as home warmers and they knew the art of weaving, handloom and other things. The Southern Angami Nagas also possess rich history of freedom fighters and wars depicted in their folksongs. The aspects that we hear from elders have variations. However, they managed to sustain through oral traditions. And the contemporary society recreates the past history and the happenings based on the memories of the older generation.

Folksongs accompanied the people in the activities of their daily life. We hear folksongs in various occasions and festivals. It depicts their belief as they sing and praise the prosperity of the land, blessings, thanksgiving as we find in the song 'Levizaü' where the folk sings of the wide field with its plentiful vegetation and rich harvest. The people believed in unity of work as such in earlier days a group of people work together taking turns working in one another's fields and we find the villagers practicing it till today. As they work hard against all odds, they believed that their song would make their work easy and make them energetic. It also motivates them to pursue their work without being indolent.

The songs of the folk express their joy, victory, sorrow and celebration on agriculture, seasons, land etc. Some songs convey a message or highlight past beliefs and traditions. It also brings out the beautiful landscapes. The song 'Mera Khriesa' sings of the blessings bestowed on the descendants of Mera and the beautiful landscape as they sit and rest at Puno fort. And till today, this particular song is sung popularly on occasions and festivals by the people of that clan.

Folksongs can preserve the treasures intact and further enrich them by inventing new forms side by side with the great developments in any classical music. Meaningful songs signifying wealth and generosity were composed. Through the feast of merit performed by the people, we find that the idea of accumulation of wealth and monopoly over one's own fellow men was not in the mind of the rich people. It was based on distribution and sharing by feeding the whole community. Among the people, the conversion of surplus into prestige lies in giving the feast. It prevented individual from hoarding wealth, thereby, the chances to become all powerful to rule over the other villagers was checked. It was a leveling mechanism in society which assured that accumulated resources are for social ends and thereby prevent the accumulation of capital and growth of economic inequality. Status among fellow villagers increases only when they share their wealth. This act projects the non accumulative nature of wealth. We find that the nature of surplus distribution was such that it allows egalitarianism to prevail over a class based society.

The fifth chapter deals with the changing syndromes in the traditional values and practices. It is undeniable that Christianity and education has brought in a rapid progress of social change in the Angami society. However, the changes in the society is a complex phenomenon and are caused and shaped by diverse factors. Although, the truth remains that Christianity and education are only a part of the many factors in the process of the entire social change, yet it is felt that their impact is more noticeable than any other factors in changing the lifestyle of the people. The impact of globalization and Christianity was huge on the Naga culture but not damaging enough to wipe away everything. Their outlook might have changed and their lifestyle might have altered. And a new religion was adopted by the Nagas but they understand that the innate bonding with their culture and tradition is necessary to give meaning to their sense of identification which has a rich heritage from the past. There was a time when the oral tradition was shoved into the dark as part of the heathen past, but a new understanding has dawned to prove that all of it was neither pagan back then nor obsolete at the present. Folklores were told to young ones by mouth and are important because they were the earliest form of educating one another as there was no mass media, radio or television. So, people tell these tales for educating and promoting the culture and to exchange ideas and views. This led to broadening of imaginations. Today, we have books, movies, documentaries and other sorts of things and materials to impart such knowledge. For instance, cultural societies such as 'Rüsiekezhü kro-u' of Phesama village are imparting folk lessons amongst its members and the younger generation.

Lessons on how to play folk musical instruments such as Tati are imparted. During major cultural events and exchange programmes, the group takes the lead role. Therefore, the consciousness amongst the people in preserving their culture is taking place in the villages. It is researcher view that more of such group can further enhance their structure. For example, collection of visuals as well as audio, folk musical instruments and writings can become a research laboratory for further research.

The changes that have taken place among the Southern Angami region highlight the probability of deserting one's own cultural values by adopting fast into the imported western culture without proper analysis, study and reflection. Such has threatened family norms, social ethics and culture of the people. In the name of modernization, it has produced an uncertainty of future for many. Christianity as a force, had positive as well as negative aspects. For instance, its positive aspects were control of head hunting, village wars and control of administration system. On the other side, its negative aspect was the disturbance of the traditional tribal social aspects in the villages which was based on the rituals. The religious practices, rituals and customs the forefathers had are mostly gone. Converts were restricted to participate in common festivals like the "Feast of Merit". Since Christianity remained to be a force in total opposition to what the old religion and practices stood for, many elements of the cultural institutions of the villages gradually faded away. While the Christian missionaries made great impact, they were also responsible for the fading of many aspects of their culture and tradition. The people have been positioned in a world of cultural dilemma as they have discarded many of their own cultural practices and beliefs in following Christianity. The people find themselves unable to go in tune neither with the reality of Christian ethics nor with their old traditional value system. The disappearance of the young men's house or kichüki is due to the fact that from the beginning, the missionaries frowned on this as dens of vice and they took it as a place where singing, dancing, drinking and sex were the only pre occupations. The folk songs, folklore, folk dance, festivals and many other social activities were considered to be part of the animistic society and purposely undermined.

However, nowadays, the importance and awareness of festivals seems to be increasing as the people are realizing the uniqueness and importance of their culture. This is evident from the fact that they are asked to wear the traditional dress and perform traditional dance and song in almost every important occasions and functions. The very aspect of the traditional attires and

costumes that were discouraged by the Christian missionaries in the early phase of evangelization are now held centre in public celebration. This is one conscious effort of the younger generation to revive their culture and traditions. Even to this day, women in most cultures of the world are denied to exercise their rights despite the long history of struggle for their emancipation. Among the Nagas, though there are marked improvements in the position of women in the society with the arrival of Christianity and education, yet they are still to realize the true empowerment since they are still kept out of positions that hold power.

The closely knit society where individuals living with simplicity were moulded to associate with social responsibilities moved on to the more complex but advanced present where the existential moments seem more perplexing. Though the advent of Christianity and globalization has altered the lifestyle to an overwhelming state, the people have not given up their reliance on the culture and tradition that has made them a distinct people. In fact, there is a blending of their age-old culture with the imbibed modernity which creates a new definition of their identity as a Naga today. Nagas have come a long way from the self contented living to the exposure of a more modern but a more violent world. The precipitation of this transition was somewhat bewildering in many senses. In a matter of a century of colonial encounter, the cosmology of the Nagas was metamorphosed so drastically that the present generation is still grappling to come in terms with the changes. If we look into the phases of history, the challenges have been overwhelming. They were somehow able to come through it though the past has been tough on them. However, the present quandary is turning out to be tougher than the past as it was marred by memories of the unkind past coupled by growth of undesired situation at home ground, like this lament song-poem by Easterine Kire (2001)

We were proud and we were true
 a race of men like you
 we, too, were once, free
 children of those spaces
 of sky and mountain range and rock-bound river
 bequeathed us by the great spirit of these hills.

The white man came
 and then the brown man came

and sixty years it has been now
that they have been telling us
we are not our own.

How many men, how many women
How many children they have killed
For crying out freedom I cannot recall
For these are not the things
Out of which one can make
Songs or poems or dreams.

Betrayed we have learnt to betray
My brothers are riding out
to seek my brothers' lives
and I stand here alone
waiting, in the shadows
afraid, of life, not death.

Bury my heart too
At Wounded Knee.
(Wounded Knee)

Time has come to think of folklore bearers or the traditional knowledge holders. If adequate steps are not taken, there is loss of folklore heritage. Traditional folksongs and dances have been an indispensable part of the villagers. But it has changed. Now, Christian hymns have replaced the traditional songs. In the early phase of evangelization, folks were restricted from wearing even their traditional dresses and ornaments thinking it was unchristian. The beautiful ornaments of artistic value like ivory, cowries, hornbill feathers were rejected as they took it as a means of worshipping the spirits. The beautiful art and culture almost vanished. These changes have brought a cultural disaster and void for future generations. But this attitude has undergone a lot of change lately and today there is tolerance and broadminded acceptance among people. Several churches have now started to encourage indigenous songs, music, symbols and dialect in

the worship. She integrates them into the liturgical life in as far as they fit well into the system. Cultural symbols like spear, rice plate and cups are symbolically portrayed and used in places of worship and holy celebrations. The church has encouraged them and expressed the view that it is important and is meaningful to impart these into practice as it would help the person to participate in the worship wholly. Thus, various competitions on folklore, song and dance are often conducted to keep in touch with the tradition. Parents are advised to teach their children the age old valuable tradition.

Folk literature is not a static phenomenon as it transforms through the social environments by the people of every era and the institution it assimilates. It transfers the historical experience and the common heritage of values and symbols, as there is a vibrant process which engages its creators and relates to specific historic realities and regulates social relations. The study of folklore in contemporary society ought to include the relations of folklore and mass media on different levels and in various ways. Industrialization and the development of technological media do not necessarily imply the end of a given folk culture. We should rather look for the adaptations and changes folk culture goes through in industrialized societies. The study of contemporary folklore encompasses a vast array of old and modern expressive behaviours, texts and contexts, and in the modern world cultural products are communicated both by oral and technological media.

Folk literature is transmitted and maintained through word of mouth. Through this process of transmitting orally, some aspects undergo transformations depending on the speaker, interpreter and the listeners. Translating and documenting becomes a pivotal challenge in folklore. The effort to communicate accurately into the written form from what was once only in the oral form is not an easy task. Often translation fails to retain the poetic style of the oral narrator, thus losing the rich flavor and content in the original form. The unwritten literary world of the Southern Angami is rich with its culture and traditions. Still there are many genres of folklore in the southern Angami area which are yet to explore. Oral tradition which accounts of manners, customs, observances, superstitions, folktales, folksongs, folkpoems etc of the olden times should be recorded so that later people can turn for the information to these dying remnants of the unrecorded past. There is a wide scope of exploration both culturally and socially and it has potential to go far beyond to tell the people about vibrancy of the community in the Southern Angami area

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