

# **EARLY MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE NAGAS KHEZHAKENO AND BEYOND**

**Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfillment for the award  
of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History**

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the research data presented in this accompanying dissertation titled “**Early Migration and Settlement of the Nagas: Khezhakeno and Beyond**” has been carried out by Ms. Tsutshowe-ü Sekhamo bearing Regd. No. Ph.D./HAR/00016, under my guidance and supervision. The present work is original in its content and has not been submitted in part or whole for any other degree or diploma in any other University/Institute.

It is further certified that the candidate has fulfilled all the conditions necessary for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy award under Nagaland University.

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**DECLARATION**

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

This is being submitted to Nagaland University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

### 1.12. Background of the study

Migration, settlement, and abandonment have been essential for human evolution and development. It is a social process influenced by economic, environmental, and political change. Since pre-historic times, migration, settlement, and abandonment have remained a continuous process that has helped, shape or change the course of history. The migrant's<sup>1</sup> quality of life is improved, and the movement brings fusion in cultures. Etymology dictionary states that migration comes from the Latin word '*Migrare*,' which means '*to move from one place to another*.' Lee (1966) defines migration as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence, and no restriction is placed on distance (whether voluntary or involuntary migration). United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC) has termed migration as human movement from one place to another, categorized into destination, duration, reasons, and choice.

The occurrence of migration can be internal or international<sup>2</sup>, nomadic or semi-nomadic<sup>3</sup>. Internal migration can further take place through interregional and intraregional movements. Interregional migration is a movement from one region of a country to another, and the activity within the same region can be called intraregional migration. Migration can further be divided into long-distance migration and short-distance migration. Long-distance migration occurs based on learned, socially transmitted, or genetically inherited information about resources available in the past. On the other hand, short-distance migration has occurred based on current conditions, like existing resources and available cues (Brown et al., 2021). Ravenstein (1889), one of the pioneers to generalize the migration pattern through his 'migration law,' elucidates that most of the migrations are usually short distances. Khezhakeno migration was more of intraregional

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<sup>1</sup>Migrant is an individual who moves out temporarily or permanently from his native place into another region or country.

<sup>2</sup>Internal migration happens when a migrant moves to a different destination within a state or a country. On the other hand, international migration involves the movement of a migrant to another country or continent.

<sup>3</sup>Nomadic migrants move from one place to another without inhabiting a particular area. Semi-nomadic migrants are those who usually practice temporary settlement and seasonal migration.

migration since different groups only migrated within the area and did not migrate to other regions. Also, the Khezhakeno migration that took place during this period can be categorized as short-distance migration since its occurrence was mostly intraregional.

Two major factors which have influenced migration can be individual decision and group decision (individual and group migration). However both decisions also depend on the circumstances under which the migration is undertaken. In individual migration, a single person decides to migrate alone, while in group migration more than one person will move from one geographical location to another. In the case of Khezhakeno migration, an example of individual migration can be that of a person migrating and settling in a new area where he is later joined by others. In contrast, migration can also happen in groups where two or three persons, known to each other, and their families, migrate and form a new village or join an existing group. Examples can be cited from Tesophenyu village (Tseminyu district), where it is believed that an individual settled first and was later joined by different groups. Also, oral narratives of the Nagas talk about group migration where a group of people/families/clans abandoned a site and migrated to form a new settlement. It is also said that sometimes the total population migrating was up to the extent of 5000 or more<sup>4</sup>.

Migration can happen because of various reasons and issues. Fawcett (1985) in his article, *Migration Psychology: New Behavioral Models*, stresses on population redistribution as one of the main criteria for migration. He emphasizes on migration psychology which gives importance to individual migration behavior such as underlying attitudes, values, perceptions and intentions. Hence, one main focal point towards migration rests on an individual's mindset. Following Fawcett's work, Dingle and Drake (2007) further adds on the reasons of migration, giving a wider perspective which includes not just population redistribution, as termed in ecological application but they also put behavioral application as one of the reasons for migration. Therefore, it can be said that it was not just population redistribution that triggered migration, there were other reasons which had led to different group migrations.

Ravenstein's (1889) 'Law of Migration' points out that there should always be a reason to migrate and that people migrate due to push and pull factors. A push factor induced people to

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<sup>4</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Zapra Chakhesang of Yoruba Village on 13-03-2023.

move out of their present location and pull factor induced people to move into a new location. This push and pull factor according to Piche (2013) is the product of positive factors of destination and negative factors of origin. Researchers have also tried to understand human mobility in the context of climate change. Waldinger (2015) in her article, *The Effects of Climate Change on Internal and International Migration: Implications for Developing Countries*, stresses that adverse climatic change can lead to rise in migration. Emphasizing on climatic effects as cause for migration, Waldinger tried to portray the plight of the poorest and the most vulnerable, which are unable to migrate because they lack necessary resources. Environment change and degradation through deforestation and landslides due to other agricultural practices are often linked to disaster which leads to migration. The negative effects of climate change through land degradation can directly influence the economic condition of any area where the inhabitant's main occupation is farming. Dartnell (2020) explains the process through which climatic change made the early humans to migrate and evolve to get adapted to the changes. Natural disasters like earthquake, landslide, flood etc. also have a significant impact on human lives and migration. Environmental change as a cause for migration has remained an important factor and humans have almost in every situation used migration as an alternative to cope up with climatic change. In areas where there are conflicts, conflict displaced migrations occur, where an individual or a group is forced to move away from conflicted areas (CARFMS-ORTT, 2014). Many communities or ethnic groups also had to migrate unwillingly due to war, discrimination and persecution etc.

Oral narratives of Kohima (Kohima district), Meriema (Kohima district) and Pfutseromi (Phek district) villages reveal that the migrants explored and identified the site ahead before migration. For such groups, migration was a choice for better living condition. In the case of Tiyi Longchun (Wokha district) and Fuiqa (Zunheboto district) migration<sup>5</sup>, inhabitants migrated to different settlement areas after water started drying up. Migration of *Eighty Shield Bearers*, an oral narrative of the Sumis on the formation of Ghokimi village (Zunheboto district) is relatable with migration due to over population and further leading to economic decline. The oral narratives of *Seven Settlement Sites* of Khezhakeno narrate about the settlement, dispersal and formation of the seven villages within Khezhakeno village (Phek district). Inhabitants of these

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<sup>5</sup> These were the two major population explosion sites who relate their migration from Khezhakeno.

villages were forced to move out due to natural calamities like landslide, epidemic, animal caused disasters and external and internal conflicts. Again, one of the founding members of Mishilimi village<sup>6</sup> (Zunheboto district), by the name Visho before forming a new settlement site, had to leave his previous village because of an internal conflict. Taking these examples, in support of Ravenstein's law, it can be concluded that every Naga migration happened due to a reason. Understanding the various reasons for migration becomes important in reconstructing the Khezhakeno migration. Some of the reasons for migration and settlement at Khezhakeno can be search for better living condition, following a leader, drying up of water sources, population explosion, decline of economic resources, natural calamities, internal conflicts and enemy attacks.

In view of the above, Naga migration can therefore either be voluntary (free) or involuntary (forced). Voluntary migration happens when a migrant chooses to move and involuntary migration happens when migrants are forced to move out. According to Heberle (1955), in voluntary migration, an individual decides to migrate separating oneself from the existing group and joins another group or forms another group. However, such can also happen in group migration. Again, in voluntary migration even though a person migrates from one place to another place, his social standing remains the same but this may not be applicable in the case of forced migration.

Migration can also lead to the evolution of ethnic demographic and cultural values. In the course of migration, various groups carry along with them not only their material belongings but their social systems, values, beliefs, sayings, taboos etc which constructs the social structure. Though not mentioned in the narration, the migrants might have carried along with them the basic necessities mainly seeds, crops and plants. All these are important while trying to understand human movements. Migration therefore can reflect the changing world, bringing fusion to the customs and traditions of both the migrants and the receiving societies.

### **1.13. Settlement and Abandonment**

Understanding human settlement and causes for abandonment is an integral part of studying the migration process. Settlement refers to place where people live and settlement patterns shows the way in which they have settled. Natural environment, level of technology of

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<sup>6</sup> Related to migration from Khezhakeno

the people and interaction of social and cultural institutions usually influenced settlement pattern (Willey, 1956). A settlement area can be inhabited by a single household or can be a big civilization. Abandonment on the other hand, is the process whereby an area or an entire settlement is discarded or left, transforming into ‘archaeological context’ (Shiffer, 1987). It involves movements that may possibly be part of an ongoing strategy of shifting residence, a reorganization of local social and economic patterns, or a migration (Lekson and Cameron, 1995). Furthermore, a site is a place or location of an occurrence or events. People usually lean towards abandonment of sites and movements as a remedy to address various economic and social crises.

According to Nelson and Schachner (2002), abandonment in prehistoric North American Southwest occurred mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the arid to semi arid climate offered a challenge to hunting, gathering and particularly farming. Secondly, social practices evolved in context of lacking institutionalized hierarchy. Environmental changes have also significantly affected settlement and abandonment process. In the Dolores area, Southwest Colorado (North America) during the mid 9th century, when population increased, it affected the environment which later led to the abandonment of the site. Conflict within and between settlements like intra-village conflict may also have contributed to abandonment of sites and regions. In Nihewan Basin in North China which is believed to be the cradle of eastern civilization, more than 100 Paleolithic sites were excavated (Yun, et.al. 2020). According to researchers, the basin was abandoned and the settlers migrated to other location. The emergence of dense conifer forest and the disappearance of open steppe might have been the reason for abandonment of Nihewan Basin. Similar explanation can be done in the case of Khezhakeno migration wherein, before settling in the present area, there were lots of migrations. It maybe because the social structure had not evolved yet and there was no institutionalized hierarchy unlike what we look at the Chakhesang or the Angamis today<sup>7</sup>. It was only during the migration that it got evolved and maybe for this reason, there were more movements. Also in the process of Khezhakeno migration, there were some sites that were abandoned. According to the oral narratives, some previously abandoned sites such as Mütsale (Phek district), Kütsape (Phek district) and Kandinu (Tseminyu district) have already been reoccupied while some remain abandoned. Examples of

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<sup>7</sup> Some villages from these two major tribes associate with Khezhakeno migration.

such abandoned sites are the villages/sites of Ahonshü(Tseminyu district), Sukemüvo(Phek district), Pfüwe (Phek district), Longlaba (Wokha district) and Tiya Longchüm (Wokha district). Movement was frequent and the common ways to address social, political and economic pressures were through migration.

Based on how long a group decides, settlement can be categorized into two groups, i.e. temporary settlement and permanent settlement. If a settlement area is inhabited for a short period of time, it is temporary settlement. In a permanent settlement, the settlers settle permanently and they build their home and other structures and practice cultivation through distribution of land. Their intention is to live there permanently. However, a permanent settlement can be abandoned in certain cases. The suitability of the site is important for permanent settlement. At the same time, in temporary settlement, the time period can be for short as well as longer period of time. In some cases, people can initially settle temporarily and once they find the place to be suitable for habitation, they decide to settle down permanently. Sometimes groups settle in an area which they might later abandon (temporary settlement). This process can be due to two reasons. Firstly, a group settles down with an intention to permanently reside, but later abandon it (for various reasons) and migrates to a different location. Secondly, migrants have already perceived an area and on their migration to that destination, they temporarily settle in between for rest. Oral narratives state that a group from Khezhakeno before permanently settling at Longsa village (Wokha district), stopped in many places with the intention of settling down but later abandoned the site. Similar incidents can be said to have occurred with the other Lotha villages and Rengma groups. As for the Kohima and Meriema group, while migrating from Khezhakeno they had already decided for permanent settlement and on their migration to that destination, they temporarily settled in between for purpose of rest only. Such examples are common in Khezhakeno migration which will be discussed in chapter three.

Understanding ancient settlement and abandonment of sites can play a significant role in understanding migration route. During the process of migration from Khezhakeno and settlement in new sites, certain criteria were kept in mind such as, good water source, fertile lands with strategic defense location, omens and beliefs etc before settling permanently. Until any signs were shown or fulfilled, they would roam around and temporarily settle with the intention of



abandoning it later. For Khezhakeno group, while selecting a new settlement site, different groups had different criteria that defined a suitable settlement site. For some, they select a site and confirming it through signs and omens, they would survey the area and make sure that it is suitable for habitation, only then rituals were performed. Tesopenyu village under Tseminyu district made fire as part of the ritual and, Phensenyu village of Tseminyu and Mishilimi village under Zhunoboto district relied on the interpretation of dreams. Another group fully relied on supernatural intervention and believed that this supernatural being would guide them to a suitable site. In such cases, while migrating, individuals/groups carried along with them animals and specific items which have ritualistic significance and these items acted as a tool to help them find a new settlement. Dogs and fowls were the most common animals the migrants took along with them. The other items, on the other hand, could be specific leaves, tools and supernatural stones. Using these animals and items as mediators, spirits would guide them and show them the location best suited for settlement. Lazami village and Ighanumi village under Zhunoboto district followed similar ritual before the settlement. The third group's approach on selection for settlement sites is more logical in the modern sense. The Semas before the establishment of a new settlement site took the blessing of their elders. An offshoot of Sumi village (Phek district), at the time of village formation, Zhesa, the founder of Jesami village (Manipur), took fire from Sumi village and migrated to form a new village. Wokha village made sure that a certain number of clans were present. Similarly Meriema gave importance to Thevo (Older brother) and Thepa (Younger brother) tradition while settling in a new site.

#### **1.14. Oral Tradition as a Source**

For non-literate societies, in order to understand their settlement, migration and abandonment process, oral traditions play a very important role. In olden times, when literature was nonexistent, all historically significant events were preserved orally in the form of legends, myths, songs or cultural items. Using oral tradition as a source for understanding ancient settlement and abandonment is also a universal. Huge amount of work linking oral testimony to archaeological record has taken place mainly in Africa, America and Australia. African society, comprising of many tribes and clans were mostly not literate perhaps until 1000 years ago. Hence the study of African history started through oral tradition and later followed by archaeology excavation (Murila, 1979). Day (1972) studied on North American oral traditions

and showed the importance of oral sources in studying the history and cultures of these communities. He stated that, *validity of the oral tradition is enhanced by its goodness of fit with the historical data*, and called this phenomenon, *oral tradition as complement*. Berndt (1941), in his article, *Tribal Migrations and Myths Centering on Ooldea, South Australia*, used oral narratives to study the migration, settlement and abandonment of this group. Berndt also used oral tradition when he explained on the tribal movements from the Great Victorian Desert, Western South Australia. Looking at the African tribal, Native Americans and Australian tribal, researchers have stressed on the importance of oral narratives as a source of studying their history and cultures. They have also tried to reconstruct settlement, migration and abandonment through the oral narratives. Taking their examples on how oral narrations are used to study the history, origins and cultures of different groups, applying oral tradition as a source for data collection was adopted in this research.

To understand the Khezhakeno migration, settlement and abandonment of sites, understanding the oral tradition of those groups that have affiliation with Khezhakeno migration becomes necessary. For this group, oral tradition is a practice where lore, culture or myths are shared orally and this information is handed down from one generation to the next generation. Some of these oral narratives comprises of supernatural events or characters. While narrating oral histories, the narrations were conveyed both by individuals and groups. The Angami, Chakhesang and Lotha tribes' oral narratives were conveyed mostly by the elders individually or by the one who knew the history of their village. Group narrations were more popular among the Sema and Pochury tribes in which the village elders gathered in groups to discuss/verify before providing the narration. The Rengma tribe oral narrations were conveyed both by individuals and in groups. Depending on the area, the differences and similarities of knowledge, both individual and group could narrate the important historical events of their migration, settlement and abandonment of sites.

Aier (2018) mentions that the telling of Naga migration is a very serious cultural activity. History tellers also try to provide authentic information and believe that if any alteration is done to oral history for self glory or glory of the community glory, serious consequences would fall upon them and their future generation. Yet, despite this, oral narrations tend to be politicized, which makes it difficult to validate the authenticity of the story. Even to the present day,

transmission of Naga oral narration is mainly relied upon memories. It is being observed that in the present times, oral narrations are documented but most of them are written in local dialect and hence its scope remains limited to a particular region. At the same time some refuse to narrate their history simply to avoid any conflicts. Even though oral tradition has its own limitations, oral testimony remains an important source to study and understand the history of the Nagas. Further, not much documentation work has been done on Khezhakeno group migration settlement and abandonment, and those that were documented were mostly in references to oral narratives. This tradition is also useful in preserving the identity of a community, especially the weaker sections. For this, oral tradition has been used to study the non-literate societies of those groups that migrated from Khezhakeno, in an attempt to explore the possibility of using traditions as an alternative tool for historical research.

#### 1.15. **Other Naga Ancestral Sites**

Khezhakeno is considered as an ancestral site for many Nagas such as the Angamis, Chakhesangs, Lothas, Pochuris, Rengmas and Semas. But there are also other ancestral sites in the region which are equally important as Khezhakeno. Popular narratives on Naga origin and migration have highlighted other specific sites as areas for population explosion. Archaeological excavations along with dating result were carried out at Chungliymti (Mokokchung district), Khezhakeno (Phek district), Khusomi (Phek district), Lüradvü (Phek district) and Phor (Phek district) and some of these sites are said to have existed before Khezhakeno (Cal. AD 1320 to 1350). Chungliymti (Mokokchung district) is an ancestral place presently located in Tuensang district and lies between 26°15'5"N Latitude and 94°37'E Longitude. Radiocarbon dating done on Chungliymti site was dated to Cal AD 1018 +/- 98 (Jamir, et.al. 2014). The site is located high on a hill. Oral narratives state that the ancestors of the Aos emerged from six stones known as *Longtrok/Ungtrok* (*Long* means Stone' and *Trok* means 'Six'), located in Chungliymti. It was in this site that the refinement of Ao culture and tradition took place (Venuh, 2014). Few sections belonging to the tribes of Chang, Phom and Sangtam also claim to have originated from these stones. Khusomi (Phek district) is another ancestral site presently located in Phek district and lies between 25°43'7"N Latitude and 94°17'9"E Longitude. Radiocarbon dating done on the site dated the village to Cal AD 1320 to 1350 (Jamir, et.al. 2014). The site is located at the

present day Khusomi village. Oral narrative<sup>8</sup> states that a man by the name Chache migrated from Myanmar and entered the Naga Hills. He established Khusomi village and after him other groups also joined the village leading to its growth. Some of the Angami and Chakhesang tribes point their origination towards Khusomi as well.

Archaeological excavation was also conducted on another ancestral site of Lüradvü (Phek district) dating the site to Cal AD 690 to 1000 (Jamir, et.al. 2014). The village is abandoned and located between Laruri and Sütsü village in Phek district. It lies between 25°41'15"N Latitude and 94°50'56"E Longitude. Oral narrative claims that Laruri people sprang out from a hole located in a place called Khungzatvü in Laruri village. Another hypothesis<sup>9</sup> is the claims of Samphori that Laruri came from a place called Arote (*Aro* means 'Laluri' and *Te* means 'Village') which is located near Zenki River in Samphori. It is also stated that in a Burma Naga area called Tsesute, there was once four brothers- Lenuri (Khwiri) was the eldest, Laruri the second eldest, Longphuri (present Mimi people, Longpfür) the third eldest and Jedger the youngest among the brothers. These four brothers had the same parents and came from same village. The inhabitants of Laruri have spread across Meluri sub-division, Phek district and part of Burma.

Phor (Phek district) is one of the oldest ancestral sites in Nagaland. Radiocarbon dating done on the site dated the earliest evidence of human settlement in this site to 50 BC (Jamir, et.al. 2014). It is presently located under Meluri sub-division in Phek district. The village lies between 25°43'40"N Latitude and 94°46'45"E Longitude. It is said that Phorü is derived from the word *Jeiphopho* which means 'Everything in abundance/plentiful/populous' and *Rü* is derived from *Yazhürüi* which means 'People' (New Phor Village, 2020). Common oral narratives state that large number of population sprang out from an underground hole but as the population began to grow, the inhabitants of Phor who had already settled decided to seal off the hole. Inhabitants of Phor spread in an around Meluri sub-division and some migrated towards Myanmar. Excavations on all these sites were done on various remains of the areas like location, size, activities and material culture of a settlement and the interaction of their environmental, economic and technological determinants. Therefore, while studying migration from

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<sup>8</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Zapra Chakhesang of Yoruba Village on 13-03-2023.

<sup>9</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. S. Akho Leyri of Laruri Village on 09-07-2022.

Khezhakeno, it cannot be totally denied that some migrants from these sites (groups) assimilated with the Khezhakeno group. It is also highly possible that they were socially and culturally influenced by the latter group and vice versa.

### **1.16. Naga Migration into the Naga Hills**

Naga tribes are found inhabiting North East India and Western Myanmar. The Naga inhabiting North East India is found in the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland. However, this research focuses on those Nagas inhabiting the present Nagaland state who associate themselves with the Khezhakeno migration.

Common oral narration states that before the arrival of the Naga ancestors, Naga Hills region was said to be covered with dense forest. Almost all the interviews conducted with the inhabitants from the ancestral villages point to the claims that they were the first settlers in their region. Supporting this view, Alemchiba (1970) mentioned that no evidences were found to show that others inhabited the Naga Hills before the arrival of the Nagas. However archaeological works in Nagaland and excavation (Pokharia, et al., 2013 & Jamir, 2014) of prehistoric Mimi cave area in Kiphire district shows that human habitation goes back to 4450-4350 BC which doesn't associate with any oral narratives. The earliest reference of Naga was found in *Geographia*<sup>10</sup>, where Nagas were referred to as Nagalogoi, which means, 'the realm of the naked'. The Ahom Buranjis record that the Nagas were already settled in the Naga Hills when the Ahom came to Assam in the 13th Century A.D. (Sanyu, 1996). Even though Nagas were believed to be the first settlers in the Nagas Hills, most of the oral narratives state that they undertook a long distance migration before reaching the present settlement. Though different Naga groups agree on the long distance Naga migration, there are variations with regard to the route undertaken. However, one of the most common accepted oral narratives of the Nagas is that their ancestors migrated from Yunnan Province, China and Mongolia.

Likewise there are different hypotheses on the migration of the Nagas to the Naga Hills. A popular oral narrative suggests that Nagas might have been working as laborers or slaves at the time of constructing the Great Wall of China. Some laborers or slaves due to the bad treatment decided to run away and the Nagas are believed to be part of that absconding party. They crossed

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<sup>10</sup>*Geographia* was written by Claudius Ptolemy, a Greek scholar around 2nd Century A.D.

the Yellow River and migrated towards the pacific region and finally reached the Naga Hills. While inhabiting the coastal areas, the Nagas are said to have experienced occurrences of huge flood. So they decided to move to the hilly areas and settled there. It is also assumed that, at one point of time as Chinese population began to grow, the inhabitants started to migrate in search of favorable condition. Another common narration is the growing population of the Chinese Han people who started pushing southward forcing other groups to evacuate. Likewise, these immigrants took different routes like the Patkai, Arakan Yoma, Banda Arch towards Sumatra and Java, and some took the route towards Pacific section which extends from Formosa through the Philipines, Borneo and the Japan (Sanyu, 1996). Sanyu believes that the Nagas might have come from China via the Patkai range. Having believed to have stayed together once, similar cultural practices can be traced among these different regions. For example, the close affinities of the Naga attires and food habits with some mountain tribes of Vietnam make us assume that they might have settled together somewhere at one point of time. Nevertheless, Sanyu finds it hard to believe that the Nagas had taken the pacific route and reached the Naga Hills. He finds it more convincing that the Nagas first reached the Naga Hills but some continued their migration towards Borneo, Java, Sumatra and the Phillipines. On the other hand, Alemchiba (1970) draws a perspective that, the practice of head-hunting and the cultural similarities of the Naga with the Dyaks of Borneo and Bontoc Igorot of Philippine make one assume that they belonged to the same ethnic group and might have migrated together, practicing one culture but could have been later diffused to different directions.

Lotha (2010) mentions that based on oral and physical sources, Nagas are believed to have stayed in China and Burma before reaching the present settlement area. Finding similar practices in the field of art, culture and tone of language, Lotha also tries to connect the Nagas with Indonesians and Malaysians. On the other hand, Manasala (1994) and Nuh (2002) both support Sumet Jumsai's work, *Naga: Cultural Origins in Siam and the West Pacific*, (1988, Oxford University Press) which suggests that, the great sea faring people of South East Asia are most likely migrated Nagas rather than from Egypt as presumed. The primary contention is that the carrier of this culture were Austric, and the origin of that culture could be anywhere from Sumeria and India to South-East Asia and Oceania. Sumet tried to tie the group of people who had mastery over the sea to the Nagas. He believed that the Nagas had mastery over megalithic and hydraulic civilization, and so the megaliths found in Europe, America, South-East Asia and

Middle East were most likely erected by them. Erection of megaliths, the cult of head and head-hunting are also popular among this culture. The Nagas were believed to be part of this same higher civilization of culture that in the past were settled in upper reaches of Hwang-Ho River in China and migrated down to South-East Asia through the mountains and settled in the present hills of North-East India. Wettstein (2015) also supports this view and mentions that it is possible that the Nagas as primary culture dispersing through the whole world might have been the ancestors of the present Nagas. Also their fondness for cowries and conch shells to beautify their ornaments and attires suggest that the Nagas might have inhabited in some sea coast at one point of time from where they became affiliated to the usage of these items (Shimray, 1985). The usage of log drum or slit drum by the Nagas is also popular among the tribes inhabiting the Pacific Islands. The beads used by the people of Sumatra, Borneo; the Borneo and Igorot using the human and animal skulls displayed in or outside their houses; similar colour and design patterns of the cloths suggest that the ancestors of these groups might have migrated together or stayed together at one place, practicing same culture before dispersing to different directions. It may also be possible that they might have belonged to a much larger Polynesian group in the distant past. Focusing on the route of migration, Pou (2006) is of the opinion that, since ancient migrations had taken place along the river and corridors, it is possible that the Nagas followed the river course from China to Myanmar and later reached the Naga Hills. He assumes that Nagas might have followed the Salween River which originated from China, crossing Yunnan province and moved towards the southern sea in Moulmein (Southern Myanmar). Further following Irrawaddy River and Chindwin River, the Nagas entered Manipur via Imphal River.

According to Robinson (1975), Nagas may have emigrated from North West China during the conflicts for supremacy between the different members of Chinese and Tartar dynasties in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, as continuous wave of Naga migration into the Naga Hills was said to have occurred, this may be possible for the later groups because Naga already had contacts with the Kachari before the arrival of the Ahoms. Naga-Kachari relationship of intermittent warfare and friendship continued up to 13<sup>th</sup> century, till the advent of the Ahoms in Assam (Sanyu, 1996) & (Phukan, 1999).

An oral<sup>11</sup> narration states that besides other migrations, seven major migration waves might have occurred under the Naga migration. In the first wave of migration, the Nagas along with Kachin and Chin (Kachin and Chin belonged to the Shan group) migrated from Yunnan province, China and reached Kachin, Myanmar. At that time, Burmese population began growing rapidly but Nagas' (due to head hunting practices) population growth was very slow. Becoming the minority, the Nagas were harassed by the Burmese. Following this, a man named Chache migrated to the Naga Hills around 10 A.D. and established Khusomi village. This second migration wave is believed to have occurred after the seven generations had passed i.e. from Chache till Muro. Muro had three sons named Vadeo, Chevio and Rhao. They were all good warriors and well respected by everyone. During this period in Myanmar, the Shan kingdom of Pong in Myanmar invaded the Nagas forcing a huge Naga group to flee and come to Khusomi village for shelter. The total number of Nagas that came up was estimated to be five to six thousands or more<sup>12</sup>. The third wave of migration started when an epidemic occurred and killed nearly 2/3 of the total Khezha population. For this reason Khezhas along with the Semas migrated to Khusomi village. The fourth wave of migration occurred during Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb's reign when the Muhammadian invaded Ahom. The Ahom kingdom was invaded two to three times almost every year and the Mughal armies have killed many people, even civilians were not spared. In order to escape the chaos, some came up to the Naga Hills and formed a village called Zadima or Bora Gohain at Raj Bhavan. The fifth wave of migration is related to the Ahom state internal conflict for supremacy. The Ahom nobles were divided into two groups. One group to gain supremacy went and took assistance from the Burmese under the kingdom of Ava. Following this, a Burmese general named Mengibardula invaded Ahom with 30,000 armies with guns and swords. It is said that Burmese armies were very cruel and killed not only the enemy soldiers but also women, children and old people. Many civilians were killed in the invasion especially those inhabiting the lower Dhansiri river. In order to escape the turbulence, many Ahomias and Assamese migrated to the Naga Hills. They came up and

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<sup>11</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Zapra Chakhesang of Yoruba Village on 13-03-2023.

<sup>12</sup> Since Khusomi village was not big enough to accommodate a huge number of migrants, under the leadership of Muro's sons, two great internal migrations within the Naga Hills took place. Rhao being the youngest son stayed in the village with his father Muro. The first group under Chevio was believed to have migrated towards Lotha side however, nothing is known about them after this. Vadeo took the second group and went to Makhel. Some clans that followed Vadeo were Chepvo/Chepfo/ Chepfü, Meo, Po/Pou (Poumai), Pao, Sgao (Keren), Chuzu, Meiti, Lahupa and Mekri. Woch of Kithaga mentioned that, when he visited Imphal along with some dignitaries around, April 2021. They met Manipur Chief Minister N.B. Singh, and he stated that the Meiteis and the Nagas were brothers who migrated together till Makhel. From Makhel, a bigger group further went to Khezhakeno and others also dispersed in different directions.



occupied an area towards the southern part of present Kohima district and formed a village called Tholoba/ Thelioba<sup>13</sup>. For the Ahoms the word, *Tholo* means ‘their god or their king’. In the sixth wave of migration, Nagas are believed to have come from Kyin state in Myanmar who came in big group and settled at Khezhakeno village. Later after surveying the lands for settlements, they went towards the north to the Lotha area. This group called themselves as Kyong. The last and the seventh wave of migration occurred around 1971- 1972, when the immigrants of Bangladesh were loosely allowed to enter Northeast Indian states and many came to Nagaland particularly in the area of foothills of Dimapur. However, we cannot take this into totality and can be just taken as one of the many hypotheses on the ongoing debates and arguments on Naga origin and migration.

The above discussion has highlighted some hypotheses regarding Naga origin and migration. Though the outcome of the present research cannot give any concrete suggestion to the discussion, Naga migration in general can be linked with the greater Oceania, the Polynesian, East Asia and South East Asian groups. Also through all these, it brings to the possibility that Naga in the past moved around these regions before moving to the hilly regions of the Naga Hills and settling permanently.

### **1.17. Review Literature**

Researchers have conducted migration studies through oral sources, literary sources and archaeological sources (Emory, 1959), (Cameron, 2013) and (Dommelen, 2012). Scientific DNA analytical techniques were also applied to determine site migration, settlement, and abandonment (Shinoda & Adachi, 2017). Review of the literature shows that in tribal societies, history is preserved through oral tradition (Murila, 1979), (Tonkin, 1986), (Cohen, 1989), (Olupona, 1993), (Day, 1972) and (Aier, 2018), etc. Colonial writers like Mills, 1980 and 1982, and Hutton, 2003 and 2007 have also highlighted Naga migration from Khezhakeno in their writings. The post-colonial period also saw the emergence of Naga writers producing many books related to Naga migration. Works of Alemchiba (1970), Shimray (1985), Sema (1986), Sanyu (1996), Nuh (2002), and Lotha (2010) provide a great deal of information on Naga migration into the Naga Hills. According to these writers, Nagas came from China and Mongolia and, during their

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<sup>13</sup>Location of present Little Flower Higher Secondary School, Kohima

migration, settled with the groups of Dyaks of Borneo, Java, Sumatra, and the Bontoc Igorot of the Philippines, Vietnam, and Myanmar. The Nagas were even linked to a much larger Polynesian group. Due to many ties with international groups, Sanyu, 1996 says that *No Naga is of pure blood*. At the same time, North-East writers like Robinson (1975), Dutta & Sebastian (1999), while studying the history of Tangsas of Arunachal Pradesh, mention that they migrated together with the Nagas to the present settlement sites during the reign of the Tatar dynasty in China. The literature review shows that earlier works produced during the post-colonial period emphasized Naga migration from China to *Makhel* more. Later, archaeological works were conducted on the ancestral sites of Chungliyimti, Khezhakeno, Khusomi, Lüradvü, Mimi, and Phor. The works were published in two volumes (Jamir et al., 2014), and for the first time, radiocarbon dating was conducted on these ancestral sites. Aier's (2018) work highlights Naga oral tradition and provides a logical approach to studying Naga migration through oral narrations. In addition, some valuable works on village formation, migration, cultural practices, and traditional beliefs written in the tribal dialects were also referred to.

Mills (1980), in his book, *The Lotha Naga*, mentions that the Lothas in the past called themselves *Kyon*, meaning simply 'Man.' Mills mentions that the Lothas and the plainsmen in the past came from a place called Lengka, somewhere north or northwest of the Naga Hills. It is assumed that this migratory group split into two parties, one of which became the plainsmen of the Brahmaputra valley and the other the Nagas of the Hills. Mills' work also mentions the magical stone found at Khezhakeno and the dispersal of the Lotha tribe from there. He also mentions another common ancestral site for Lothas, Southern Sangtam, Semas, and Rengmas, believed to be located somewhere near the Mao area. From Mao, this group reached Kohima to Lozema and later reached Themoketsa Hills (Honohoyanto). At the last stop, the Lothas divided themselves into two, wherein one group moved through Phiro and Shaki and towards lower Doyang, and the other group reached Wokha Hill and formed a big village called Lungcham. From here on, the Lothas dispersed in different directions and formed many villages. The book also mentions the head tree (Mingetung) and its significance in village formation. It explains the social, economic, religious, and customary practices of the Lothas. Even though this book is helpful for a researcher, the work on migration needs to be more detailed.

Mills (1982), an ethnographer during the colonial period, provides information on the history and culture of the Rengma Nagas in his book, *The Rengma Naga*. According to Mills, the Lothas and the Rengmas agreed that they were one tribe in the past. Unfortunately, the tribe division, reuniting, and re-division in the course made studying their migration history difficult. They also point their dispersal towards Khezhakenoma, which in the Rengma language is called *Khinzonyu*. The book also mentions a magical stone that can miraculously increase the grains when kept on it. Mills states that while staying in Khezhakeno, the two sons of the Koza clan quarreled over who had the right to use the stone. Their mother, however, gave her younger son the right over the stone. After this incident, the elder son and some discontented families moved out of the village, which in Naga history will be marked as one of the great migrations of tribes. This migration includes tribes like Angami, Sema, Lotha, and Rengma. The book also mentions some old settlements where the Rengmas stayed temporarily during their migration. It also provides information on the migration of the Eastern Rengmas and the formation of Sahunyu (Sohomi), Meluri, and Lephori villages in the Phek districts. The book also provides information on the cultures and traditional practices of the Rengmas. Though this book is informative and valuable in studying the Rengma history, it is based on colonial perspectives. The information provided on migration is based more on oral tradition but not in detail.

Ganguli (1984), in her book, *A Pilgrimage to the Nagas*, mentioned the arrival of the first Ahom king Sukapha into the present Assam. When the Ahoms entered the Patkai range, they were confronted by the Nagas, who tried to chase away the invaders. In this conflict, the Ahoms displayed brutality by killing the Naga in different manners. Later several Naga villages (Not sure which Naga groups) living near the plains submitted to the Ahom rule. She describes the cultural practices of the different Naga tribes by emphasizing the festivals, religious practices, political structures, village log drums, the feast of merit, headhunting practices, and art and architecture.

Cohen David William (1989), in his article, *The Undefining of Oral Tradition*, states that oral tradition is derived from the everyday activities, gestures, and speech of an individual or a community. The journal states that oral traditions are those recollections of the past that are commonly or universally known in a given culture. It also discusses the African oral sources and

how they preserve their knowledge by deeply rooting it in their social process. This source is helpful for the researcher to understand the basic structure of African oral sources.

Manasala (1994), in his book, *The Naga Race*, stated that the evidence of Naga civilization is always connected with the sea coast, even to the African coast. It can be found on the coast of Europe along Britain, England, and Denmark, along the coast of Siberia, among Eskimo people, and on the coast of America. He stated that the Naga are both aquatic and hydraulic civilization. Their religion was associated with raising megaliths, the practice of sorcery, and the belief in spirits inhabiting all things- animate and inanimate. Manasala further mentions that the Naga culture and that of the Austric (Austric are the members of the Malay branch of the Mongolian race comprising the Australian, Polynesian, Melanesian, and Negrito) are unmistakable and often identical. Therefore, the Naga culture must be seen as a broad cultural group like the European cultural tradition.

Visier Sanyu (1996), in his book, *History of Nagas and Nagaland: Dynamics of Oral Tradition in Village Formation*, discusses the origin, migration, and settlement of the Nagas. He tries to bring to light the migratory route and the early settlement places of the Nagas. This book also emphasizes the oral sources and compilation of oral stories, poems, songs, legends, and folklore. Sanyu states that Nagas came from China via the Patkai range. He finds some close cultural affinities of the Naga attires and food habits with some mountain tribes of Vietnam. However, he disagrees that Nagas took the Pacific route and reached the Naga Hills. Instead, Sanyu thinks that the ancestors of Nagas first reached the Naga Hills, and it was from Naga Hills that some continued their migration toward Borneo, Java, Sumatra, and the Philippines. Sanyu also gives a detailed description of the origin, migration, and settlement undertaken by the present Angami tribe of Kohima and Khonoma villages. The origination of the village and a detailed description of the clan system of the villages of Kohima and Khonoma are discussed in this book.

Pou (2006), in his, *The Route of Nagas Migration*, believes that, since ancient migrations had taken place along the river and corridors, it is possible that the Nagas followed the river course from China to Myanmar and later reached the Naga Hills. He assumes that Nagas might have followed the Salween River, which originated from China, crossing Yunnan province, and moved towards the southern sea in Moulmein (Southern Myanmar). Further following the

Irrawaddy River and Chindwin River, the Nagas entered Manipur via the Imphal River. As Manipur was swampy in those days, they moved to the hills. From the Imphal River, they moved towards Karong (Senapati district). From Karong, they took the route along the Barak River and eventually reached *Makhel*. Pou believes it is less likely for the Naga ancestors to undertake the course of the Mekong River and migrate toward Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. He presumes that the Nagas resemble more the tribes of Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia rather than Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. This article tries to analyze the migratory route of the Nagas from mainland China to Makhael. He states that the Nagas followed the Salween River to migrate to the present settlement. After reaching Makhael, this article hardly mentions the migration and settlement of the Nagas to their present inhabited area.

Venuh (2014), in his book *People, Heritage and Oral History of the Nagas*, provides information on village formations and socio-political, religious, and cultural practices of the Naga tribes found in Nagaland state. Based on oral narratives, extensive research work was done on the tribes of Ao, Chakhesang, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Yimchunger, and Zeliang. He finds that each village has several clans known as *khels*. The clans are patrilineal and exogamous. The book provides information on the tribes that migrated from Khezhakeno. Certain groups belonging to the tribes of Chakhesang, Lotha, Pochury, Sangtam, and Sumi have affiliated with the Khezhakeno migration. This book also explains other ancestral sites of Chungliyinti (Mokokchung district), Leshemi (Phek district), Lekhromi (Phek district), and Kami (Phek district). It is mentioned that for Zeliang tribes, no good source of their migration is found except that the Zeliang group came out from a cave known as Taobhei. Taking oral narratives from the other tribes as a source, Venuh tries to conclude that the Zeliangs might have settled at *Makhel* along with the Mao, Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma and Pochury tribes.

Jamir, Tetso, Venuh, Mushrif-Tripathy, and Pokharia's (2014) in, *Archaeology of Naga Ancestral Sites: Recent Archaeological Investigations in Phek and Kiphire Districts of Nagaland* is the first excavation work done extensively on the ancestral sites of Phor, New Phor, Lüradvü, Khezhakeno, Movolomi and Khusomi located in Phek district and a cave excavation located in Mimi under Kiphiri district. The history of Naga settlement and settlement patterns of the following sites were broadly excavated and discussed. Excavations at Khezhakeno, Movolomi (located under the present Khezhakeno village), and Khusomi reveal that these sites

were contemporary with Khezhakeno dating to Cal. AD 1320 to 1350 and Movolomi dated Cal. AD 1420 to 1640. Khusomi, another important ancestral site contemporary to Khezhakeno, was dated to Cal AD 1320 to 1350. Radiocarbon dates Lüradvü to Cal AD 690 to 1000, i.e. 7th -11th century AD. Archaeological excavation on New Phor reveals that this ancestral site existed much earlier than the other sites mentioned, returning as early as 50 BC. The prehistoric cave in the Kiphiri district of Nagaland, close to the Myanmar border, was also explored. The excavation of the cave shows evidence of hunter-gatherer communities and identifies early domestication in the area. Scientific analysis and comparative study on the ceramics, agricultural and other tools, evidence from a subsistence economy in the form of rice, millets, etc., and human skeletal remains were also conducted.

Waldinger (2015), in her article, *The Effects of Climate Change on Internal and International Migration: Implications for Developing Countries*, stated that migration happens due to social, economic, and political reasons. It can also take place because of environmental change. People are forced to migrate due to sudden environmental shocks and natural disasters. This led the migrants to abandon the old settlement site and move into a more favorable area which could help them increase their chance of survival. Waldinger points out the negative effect of climatic change due to extreme temperatures, floods, storms, and drought. In the past, climate change has even brought about the collapse of empires and civilizations. The decline of the Harappan civilization was probably due to drought, and the population expansion to the Sahel region was because of land fertility. Both were influenced by climate change resulting in migration, settlement, and abandonment of sites.

Thong (2016), in his book *Migration Wave of the Rengmas*, states that in the Rengma migration, eleven migration waves took place that shaped the present Rengmas topography. Thong has mentioned that the Rengmas were part of a group who had lived in the 'Land of Aseronyu' at Tsengpha/Tsengbin, which is believed to be the foothill of heaven. The gods and humans used to interact in this place. The book provides information on Rengma migration to Khezhakeno and its dispersal. The numerous waves of migration however were emphasized on Rengma migration from Mount Terogvüthun to their present settlement sites. Thong's work provides general information on Rengma settlement sites. The migration route from Khezhakeno

to the present settlement sites in the Tseminyu district was undertaken via Kigwema, Kohima, Nerhema, Tsiethuma (Penshvünyu) to Mount Terogvüthun.

Wijitapure (2017), in his *International Migration and Migration Theories, Social Affairs*, states how migration theories are helpful as they provide theoretical guidance to understand the movement of people from a broader perspective. The article reveals that humans migrate because of push and pull factors. The push factor makes people move out of their current locations, and the pull factor induces people to move to new locations. In this theory, the economy, culture, and environment play a significant role in persuading people to migrate. Ravenstein's theory states that international migration is a permanent movement that usually takes place from one country to another, and international migration is a permanent movement within the same country. The theory, on the other hand, divides internal migration into interregional migration and intraregional migration. Interregional migration is a movement from one region of a country to another, and intraregional is a movement within one region.

Anungla Aier (2018), in her book, *Studies on Naga Oral Tradition*, provides a detailed explanation of the importance and challenges of oral study through local and international perspectives. According to her, the oral narration of the Nagas is complex as it is interspersed with customary practices and other literary expressions. It is also challenging to study Naga oral tradition as they abound in folklore and folksongs. So in order to unveil the hidden meaning of the lore, a multidisciplinary approach is required. A detailed explanation of knowledge keepers or Aseinge found in Nagaland is also provided in this book. The book is also helpful for researchers as it provides overall expressions on the origin of Naga tribes using myth and legends and some ancestral sites. It attempts to provide a logical understanding of Naga migration through oral sources. It also mentions the findings from archaeological excavations in different parts of Nagaland. Aier believes the legends of origination and migration provide some of the most ancient experiences. If we can understand the metaphorical symbols of the myths, it may help us read the inner workings of ancient society. The finding of this research is more focused on ancient settlements, and thus, tribe migration to the present settlement site can be undertaken as the research topic. Aier concludes her work by stating that many questions on ancient cultures still need to be answered, and through multidisciplinary, more rigorous study in this area needs to be undertaken.

Rengma (2018), in the book '*History of Rengma- Ntheni and Pochury*,' provides information on the Rengmas belonging to the Northern Rengma area. This group speaks the Ntheni language. He states that the Ntheni group acknowledges Vatu as their first ancestor. It was through him that the group later spread and formed different villages. The book explains the migration of the Ntheni group. Rengma states that Ntheni group migrated to the present settlement area taking the route via *Makhel*- *Khezhakeno*- *Kegwenyu*- present B.O.C. Kohima town, *Phool Bari* (Kohima Town)- *Chedema*-*Merhema*- *Chiechema*- *Khwenphen*- *Thansü*-*Ngachuki*- *Waghajan*- *Aghonshu*- *Nsunyu/Kethagha*- *Kandinu*. Rengma also describes the Pochury tribe as the Eastern Rengma tribe and states that they migrated to their present habitation site from *Kandinu*. When the womenfolk were drying paddy in the village, a white stag came near them. The men of lower *khel* started chasing the stag. This group did not return to the village. After settling temporarily in *Metsale* and *Ketsapo*, they separated and formed their separate *Sohomi*, *Meluri*, and *Lepthori* villages.

### **1.18. Significance of the Study**

Some Naga ancestors from *Angami*, *Chakhesang*, *Lotha*, *Pochury*, *Rengma*, and *Sema* tribes stayed in *Khezhakeno* before migrating to their present settlements. The present work is one of the first to undertake extensive research on those tribes migrating from *Khezhakeno*. This research has emphasized such groups' migration, settlement, and abandonment and the circumstances under which they moved to their present habitual area. The research also portray that there was a major impact of migration similar to *Khezhakeno* migration which can be understood through ancestral sites like *Fuyuqa*, *Terughunthung/Honoho Yanton*, *Khwenphen*, and *Tiyi Longchüm*. This work also reflects that when different groups migrated from *Khezhakeno*, they did not migrate as a tribe. Individuals, brothers, groups of people or clans undertook most of migrations. Thus, formation of a tribe (today) during migration and settlement from *Khezhakeno* becomes vital to the study. Also, a study on migration from *Khezhakeno* brought about similar/dissimilar cultural practices.

This study provides a broader outlook and a new approach to the study of Naga migration. Analyzing the different cultural practices further helped to understand the ancient migratory routes and the assimilation patterns. The various reasons for migration by a group and



criteria for selecting sites for settlement were analyzed through this research as well. This research tried to understand Khezhakeno group migration by incorporating objects carried during migration, ways of life, sayings, beliefs, taboos, and their assimilation and retention.. Individuals also stressed ethnic identity to provide the basis for self-identity. They are drawn toward an ethnic identity that gives them a sense of place, belonging, and oneness. Correspondingly, studies on early migration, settlement, and abandonment of places become an essential subject that helps reflect one's (group) identity.

Though much study has been done on ancient Naga history, attempts made on the migration and settlements of the Nagas are limited. Not much work has been carried out from a holistic historical approach on the early migration and settlement of the Nagas after the Khezhakeno settlement. Migration and settlement to new places occurred, villages and tribes were formed, all these occurred after settlement from Khezhakeno. Understanding the early migration and settlement will shed light toward many unanswered issues on early Naga history.

### **1.19. Objective of the study**

1. Incorporate theories on migration, settlement and abandonment related to the study. It will further identify the different routes taken by such groups and reconstruct the early Naga migration from Khezhakeno.
2. To document the oral tradition from those tribes who talk about their affinity and migration from Khezhakeno.
3. Conduct ethnographic study on those villages which are affiliated to Khezhakeno. It will also document and study those Naga villages which do not associate with Khezhakeno migration but have affinity in traditional practices.
4. Understand the formation of different groups that lead to the formation of (present) tribes.
5. Employ GIS and satellite imageries to map out and model the distribution of the ancestral sites and contact sites.

### 1.20. Hypothesis

1. Different Naga tribes migrated and settled at their present settlement at different time taking different routes. Some groups migrated and settled earlier than others. In the process of migration, different groups merged or deviated to different paths.
2. Khezhakeno is an important place of origin and dispersal for some Nagas.
3. Angami, Chakhesang, Lotha, Pochury, Rengma and Sema tribes have a common ancestry and settled together in Khezhakeno before dispersing to their present settlement.

### 1.21. Methodology

The present study is a case study employing qualitative methods. This research work reviewed both primary and secondary sources. Oral sources were collected from selected villages to understand the migration process and cultural practices of different tribes. Secondary sources in the form of books, journals, articles, government reports, newspaper, magazines, clan and village pamphlets and souvenirs were referred. An interdisciplinary approach was applied and literary texts, linguistic and archaeological sources are also referred.

Questionnaire method and interviews with village elders and public leaders who have knowledge on the subject were applied. Both personal and group interviews were conducted. Telephonic interviews were also conducted. Descriptive research for surveys and fact finding enquiries of different kinds and analytical research to use facts or information already available and analyze these to make a critical evaluation of the material were emphasized. The research also makes use of tools and apps for recording, videography, geo-tagging, photography and makes use of Google maps.

### 1.22. Structure of the Thesis

The whole thesis is categorized into five chapters. They are:

**Chapter I: Introduction and Research Framework:** The first chapter comprises of theories on migration and its evaluation. It portrays the different reasons that led to migration. The chapter also discusses the settlement and abandonment process sites. It emphasizes on the

importance of oral tradition as almost all the Naga tribes have legends and traditions to explain their origin and migration, in the form of oral testimonies. The chapter also includes the different hypothesis, literature review, aims and objectives of the research, hypothesis, methodology/Sources and thesis chapter plan is highlighted in this chapter.

**Chapter 2: Study Area and Introduction of Important Sites:** This chapter introduces the tribes and districts that are part of the research work. The tribes under the study are Angami, Chakhesang, Lotha, Pochury, Rengma and Sema from five districts i.e. Kohima, Phek, Tseminyu, Wokha and Zunheboto. It also introduces some important settlement sites like Honohoyonton, Lazaphuyeqa and Tiyi-Longchum that were once inhabited by some of the tribes mentioned above. The chapter also provides the description and location of the various tribes, villages and important sites related to the research.

**Chapter 3: Route of Migration: Naga tribes from Khezhakeno to their Present Habitation Site:** This chapter highlights the narratives of those tribes or clans which support their claim of affiliation with Khezhakeno. The reasons for dispersal and criteria for the selection of new inhabited sites are incorporated in this chapter. It also provides the route of migration undertaken from Khezhakeno to their present settlement site. District wise maps are also presented to help review the pattern of migration. Reasons for settlement and abandonment of sites are emphasized here as well. This chapter, through comparative studies among different tribes, tries to find some important historical sites that associate with the Khezhakeno migration.

**Chapter 4: Cultural Affinities:** This chapter will include comparative study on similar oral narratives, omens, objects used and other features. This chapter also expresses the cultural affinities and differences between those villages related to Khezhakeno migration. It also tries to study those Naga villages which have affinity in traditional practices with the Khezhakeno group. Such traditional practices can be religion, rituals, burial system, belief on charm stone, clan system, attires, dormitory system, linguistic, log drum, marriage, status of women, social setup and system of governance.

**Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion:** The chapter synthesis the whole research work. Important points are highlighted which are further discussed and conclusion of the research is made in this last chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### STUDY AREA AND INTRODUCTION OF IMPRTANT SITES

#### 2.1. Nagaland: An Overview

Nagaland is inhabited by various tribes known as the Nagas. It became the 16<sup>th</sup> state under Indian Union on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1963. The state is located at an altitude varying between 194 meters and 3048 meters and comprises mostly of hilly regions. It lies between 25.6<sup>0</sup>N and 27.4<sup>0</sup>N Latitude, North of Equator and between the longitudinal lines 93.20<sup>0</sup>E and 95.15<sup>0</sup>E (Statistical Hand Book of Nagaland, 2000). The state has an area of 16,579 sq. km. (6,401 sq. mi.) with a total population of 1,978,502 as per 2011 Census of India. Nagaland state borders with Assam in the North and West, Manipur in the South and Burma and Arunachal Pradesh in the East. At present, the state consists of sixteen administrative districts viz., Chümoukedima, Dimapur, Kiphire, Kohima, Longleng, Mokokchung, Mon, Niuland, Noklak, Peren, Phek, Shamator, Tseminyu, Tuensang, Wokha and Zunheboto. Nagaland is inhabited by seventeen major tribes viz Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Dimasa Kachari, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Tikhir, Yimkhiung and Zeliang. Apart from these major tribes there are also many sub-tribes among the Nagas (Nagaland State Portal, 2022).

According to Nekha (2015), Nagaland is inhabited by 68 tribes, speaking more than 100 languages and dialects. Tribes like Ao, Chakhesang, Konyak, Phom and Rengma speaks more than one language. Each tribe has their own distinct customs, language and attire. As Nagas prefer to build their houses on hill top and higher elevations, most of the villages are located at 1 to 2000 meters high (Statistical Hand Book of Nagaland, 2000). Based on their physical structure and outer appearance, Nagas are said to be from the Mongoloid race. Physical similarities of the Nagas were also associated with the tribes of South Asian countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Polonesia and New Guinea (Thong, 2012). Linguistically, Nagas belong to the Tibeto-Burmans who migrated from North Western China (Sanyu, 1996)

Commonly called as animism especially by the British and Americans, Naga religion was very superstitious and filled with many rituals for every aspect. Every village had either a priest or an elder who performed the rituals. The Nagas believe that there is a Supreme Being who was the creator of all. However, there can be other gods residing both in the sky and on earth. Nagas believed and still believes that there are good and bad spirits on this earth. These spirits reside on the caves, trees, forest, rocks, streams etc. Spirits were mostly feared and in order not to let any bad luck fall upon them, Nagas performed rituals and sacrifices to appease the gods and spirits. Economically, the main occupation of the Nagas during the pre-colonial was agriculture, practicing wet terrace cultivation and jhum or shifting agricultural system. Traditionally, Naga village had two types of government based on the principles of elected leaders and chieftainship. The elected leader's form of government was found among the Aos, Rengmas, Lothas, Chakhesangs, Changs, Zeliangs, Pochuris and Sangtams while the idea of chieftainship was more popular among the Semas and Konyaks. In the case of the Angamis, every male member of the village had a voice in the public meeting. In those villages which follow monarchical forms of government, their chiefs were more powerful as compared the villages that practicing a system that is very similar to the present republican form of government.

## 2.2. Khezhakeno

Looking at the significance of Khezhakeno from the perspective of Naga migration and settlement, the village becomes an important study area for this research. Today Khezhakeno is a Chakhesang village located in Phek district, Nagaland State. It lies in the region 25.30'N and 94.12'E at an elevation of 1660 meters (5,450 ft) above sea level. It is surrounded by Leshemi village (Phek District) in the East, Kikruma village (Phek District) in the North and Manipur in the West and South. The village is divided into three *khels* known as *Chisomikhel* (Upper), *Zhipfemikhel* (Middle) and *Kumunokhel* (Lower). *Chisomikhel* is further subdivided into *Abvumi* and *Tepfino* and *Zhipfemikhel* is sub divided into *Thasoumi* and *Tshemiladumi*. In Khezha<sup>14</sup> language, *Chiso* is the name of an oak tree and *Mi* means 'People'. The Upper *khel* of Khezhakeno village was named as *Chisomi* because in the recent past, the place was covered with *Chiso* (Oak) *chi* (tree). *Zhipfemikhel* derived its name from three Khezha words where, *Zhi* means 'Lake' and *Pfe* means 'Guard' and '*Mi*' means 'People'. In the past, an ancient lake once

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<sup>14</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mrs. Terilhou of Khezhakeno village on 25/01/23.

existed and the present *Zhi Nhaka*<sup>15</sup> (see Plate 1) (In Khezha language, *Zhi* means ‘Lake’ and *Nhaka* means ‘Nose’) located in the Middle *khel* is believed to be the nose of that ancient lake. Those inhabitants whose houses were located in and around the *Zhi Nhaka* were called as *Zhipfemi* and the Middle *khel* came to be called as *Zhipfemikhel*. *Kumunokhel* derived its name from the Khezha word *Kemhunu* wherein *Kemhu* means ‘Fog’ and *Nu* means ‘Child’. Thus the literal meaning of *Kemhunu* means, ‘Child of the fog’. The sub-*khels* of *Abvumi*, *Tepfino*, *Thasoumi* and *Tshemiladumi* derived their names from the different clan names. At present the village comprises of 33 clans. The village had seven *Puchike* (gates or entrances) which were made out of massive planks of wood with different motifs and symbolic representation. These *Puchikes* acted as the main entry, exit and defense point for the three *khels* located at different areas within the village known as *Punho Puchike*(*Chisami*), *Tsapfu Puchike*(*Chisami*), *Zhipa Puchike*(*Zhipfemi*), *Pfütshapa Puchike*(*Zhipfemi*), *Kobouri Puchike* (*Kumuno*), *Izako Puchike*(*Kumuno*) and *Lakou Puchike*(*Kumuno*). They protected the village from attacks of both humans and animals also acting as forts.

Khezhakeno village is also called as *Kozabomi* or *Khezhakeno*. The villagers call themselves as *Kozabomi*, which is derived from two Khezha words *Koza* and *Bomi*<sup>16</sup>. Thus *Kozabomi* means, ‘the Native People of Koza’. The word, ‘*Khezhakeno*’ is derived from *Kozano Khro* (*Koza* is the ‘Village Founder Name,’ *No* means ‘Children or Descendants’ and *Khro* means ‘Tax’), which was an annual tax collected from those villages protected by Khezhakeno. Thus, *Kozano Khro* or *Khezhano Khru* is a tribute/tax collected from the descendants of Koza (Khezhakeno Baptist Church, 2021). According to Lucy and Zehol (2009), Khezhakeno used to collect *Khezhano Khru* from some groups that had left the village and the same tax was paid by some neighboring villages that received protection from Khezhakeno against their enemies. According to an oral narrative<sup>17</sup> Khezhakeno acted as protector for those villages located on the opposite side of Mao<sup>18</sup> villages (Senapati district, Manipur state) and in return, these villages used to give the *Khezhano Khru*<sup>19</sup> to the descendants of Khezha. However, other Khezha

<sup>15</sup> Zhi Nhaka is a perennial spring water pond whose water level is believed to remain constant in summer as well as winter.

<sup>16</sup> *Koza* was the leader and founder of Khezhakeno village and *Bomi* meaning ‘Native people’

<sup>17</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Thochu Koza of Khezhakeno village on 15-01-2020.

<sup>18</sup> Podunamei village used to wage wars with Khezhakeno and the neighboring villages.

<sup>19</sup> British learned that the natives of Khezhakeno used to collect tax called *Khezhano Khru*. The name later became popular and British often used *Khezhano Khru* in place of house tax.

speaking villages have a different opinion with regard to *Khezhanu Khro*. An oral narrative<sup>20</sup> from Lekhromi village, Phek district (Khezha speakers) refers to this tax as *Khuzha Khru* which was collected by the Khezha or Khuzhami<sup>21</sup> group. Initially the tax was called *Khuzha Khru* but it was changed into *Khezhanuo*<sup>22</sup> with the arrival of the British. The narrative also states that the Khezha speaking group used to go as far as present Chumukedima area<sup>23</sup> and Burma to collect this tax. Khezhakeno is also known by different names to various Naga tribes. Angamis calls as *Kezami*<sup>24</sup> (*Keza* is referred to 'Koza' and *Mi* means 'People'), Rengmas *Khinzonyu* (*Khinzo* is another name for 'Koza') and the Lothas<sup>25</sup> calls Khezhakeno as *Phitson Yan/Phitssenyang* (*Phia* means 'Drying Grains in the Sun', *Tso(pa)* meaning 'Getting double' and (*Long*)*yan* means 'Village'), The Khezhas<sup>26</sup> of Chakhesang refer to Khezhakeno people as *Etsemi* (name of a clan in Khezhakeno village), while the Sümi village (Phek district) call Khezhakeno a *Khuzumukhami*. From the narrations, it is evident that the inhabitants of Khezhakeno were initially called *Kozabomi* and the present village name i.e. Khezhakeno may have originated later.

Seeing the importance of Khezhakeno in connection to the study of the Naga ancestral sites, archaeological excavation was also carried out (Jamir, 2014) along with documentation of oral narratives (Aier, 2018). Archaeological excavation at Khezhakeno was carried out under Jamir (2014), where three trenches were laid in the lower *khel* of the village; another trench on North of the dolmen *Tso Tawo* or 'Spirit Stone' and standing menhir and two other trenches were laid to the Northeast of the dolmen. In the course of the excavation, four human burials were uncovered and documented from Trench- 2 and Trench-3. Other cultural materials from the excavation include iron spearheads, points and terracotta smoking pipes. The pottery at the site of Khezhakeno is handmade with a few plain and incised ones but mostly cord impressed. Most of the surface treatment of the sherds is coarse though a few are fine and smooth. Fine clay

<sup>20</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Kedolhinyi Mero of Lekhromi village on 11-01-2020.

<sup>21</sup> When Khuzhami group went to ask *Khuzha Khru* in Japfu area, the inhabitants there refused to give tax and reported the matter to the Manipuri government. After this Manipuri troops led by a general named Machiphutero entered Khuzha/Khezha Tephe (Khezha area). The troop camped at the present Kami village, Phek district. On seeing the Manipuri troops Lekhromi villagers started to flee. They took along with them *Zhi Khu* (Iron Plate) but as they crossed the present Pfutsero town area, sudden strong wind and heavy rainfall occurred which somehow was said to have scared the Manipuri troops. Taking the opportunity, a man from Kami village killed general Machiphutero using a spear. After this Khezhaks were left undisturbed and they resumed the collection of *Khuzha Khru*.

<sup>22</sup> *Khezhanuo Khru* is also used in the Naga Tenyidie Bible to describe the word 'tax'.

<sup>23</sup> One of the newly created districts which is towards the western part of Nagaland state.

<sup>24</sup> Hutton (1921) in his ethnographic writing has also used the same word, Khezhami.

<sup>25</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Etsümo Murry of Wokha village on 18-04-2019.

<sup>26</sup> Khezha Chakhesang discussed in Chapter II.

perhaps collected from nearby stream or ponds was used for pot making and tempered with small stone granules and particles. The potsherds are mostly washed, both on the exterior and interior. The colour of the potsherds includes various potsherds of brown, dark brown, yellowish brown and greyish brown as the dominant colours. From the sherds fragments, the pots appear to be of two types, which can be identified as storage jars and cooking pots. A variety of designs is also evident on the pottery such as oblique/edged pattern on rim; pinched projections (appliques) with deep notches on rim-neck sherds and vertical cord impression. Most sherds appear to be plain (particularly on the rim area) but it is possible that such plain sherds occurring as rim fragments might have formed parts of vessels impressed with cord marks when originally manufactured. The botanical remains from the site consist of millet (*Setaria* sp.), *Echinochloa* sp and *Macrotyloma uniflorum*. Radio carbon dating of the site dates it to AD 1410–1440 (Pokharia et al. 2013, Jamir 2014b)

### 2.3. Study Area

The ancestors of some Naga groups belonging to the tribes of Angami, Chakhesang, Lotha, Pochury, Rengma and Sema, are said to have stayed and migrated from Khezhakeno in the past. This research focuses on such tribes/groups that have affinities with Khezhakeno migration. Basing on their oral narratives selection of the study areas for the research was done. The research also focuses on some present Naga villages that don't associate directly with Khezhakeno but has some interrelationship, such as the villages of Kigwema, Thizama and Viswema (Angami tribe), Akhwego and Laruri (Pochury tribe) and Kami, Khusomi and Lekhromi (Chakhesang tribe). Also Khusomi, Kigwema and Viswema are some major sites where population explosion for the Angami and Chakhesang tribes happened. Thirdly, there are some Naga villages though having no affinity with Khezhakeno migration shows similar cultural traits with the Khezhakeno groups, making their incorporation vital to the study. However, the study area emphasized villages associating themselves with the Khezhakeo migration. Basing on all these the Naga tribes in focus for this research are the Angami, Chakhesang, Lotha, Pochury, Rengma and Sema, covering five districts i.e. Kohima, Phek, Tseminyu, Wokha and Zunheboto under Nagaland state.



Sl. No.	Districts	Tribes	Villages associating with Khezhakeno migration	Villages that don't associate to Khezhakeno migration but have cultural affinities
1.	Kohima	Angami	Khonoma Kohima Meriema	Kigwema Thizama Viswema
2.	Phek	Chakhesang	Khezhakeno Pfutseromi Sohomi Sumi Yoruba	Kami Khusomi Lekhromi
		Pochury	Khumesü Matikhrü Meluri Lepthori	Akhwego Laruri
3.	Tseminyu	Rengma	Nsunyu Phenshunyu Terogunyu Tesophenyu Tseminyu	
4.	Wokha	Lotha	Humtso Longsa Wokha Yikhum	
5.	Zunheboto	Sema	Ghokimi Ighanumi Lazami Mishilimi	

**Table 1: Villages under the Study Area**

### 2.3.1. Kohima District

Kohima is located towards the South western part of Nagaland state and is located at 25°40'N 94°07'E 25.67°N 94.12°E. At present, Kohima district shares its borders with Tseminyu district in the North, Manipur state in the south, Phek district in the East and Chümoukedima district in the West. The state capital was inhabited by the Angami Nagas. However, today it is inhabited by various tribes and races speaking various languages. Kohima was made the first headquarter by the British in the year 1878 and when Nagaland received statehood under Indian subcontinent in 1963, it was made the capital of Nagaland. *Teniyidie* is the most common language spoken and used for writing, by the inhabitants of Kohima<sup>27</sup>. Initially, Kohima was known as *Kewhira*, the name derived from an Angami word *Kewhi*<sup>28</sup> (Wild Flower). Later during the colonial period, *Kewhira* was changed to Kohima<sup>29</sup>. Kohima is broadly divided into four regions for administrative purpose- Northern Angami, Southern Angami, Western Angami and Chakr<sup>30</sup> Angami. Earlier, Eastern Angami existed. Today they are officially recognized as a separate tribe as the Chakhesang tribe. Also the present Tseminyu district was part of Kohima district but in the year 2021, it was also recognized as a separated into different district. The total number of villages under Kohima district today is 57 scattered around different areas within the district (Kohima.gov.in, 2023). Out of these villages, the Khonoma, Kohima and Meriema villages talk about their affinity with Khezhakeno migration.

**Khonoma Village:** Khonoma village is part of the Western Angami villages, located 20 kms away from the state capital Kohima. It is surrounded by Mezoma village (Kohima district) in the North, Manipur in the South, Jotsoma and Kohima villages (Kohima district) in the East and Peren district in the West. The village lies between 25°39'16.049" N latitude and 94°01'19.3334" E longitude. The altitude of the village is 1511 meters. Sanyu (1996), states that the population of Khonoma village was about 6000 in the year 1985. The village name is derived from a plant locally known as *Khwiino* or *Pfūno* (*Glouthera Fragrantissima*) (see Plate 2). This plant is found abundantly in the present Khonoma area and so the place came to be called as

<sup>27</sup> Since Angamis are the major inhabitants of Kohima and tenideyie being the accepted spoken language of the Angamis, it becomes the popularly used language.

<sup>28</sup> Before the village formation, the place where the Kohima village stands, a wild flower locally called '*Kewhi*', was found in abundance and so the place was named after that flower.

<sup>29</sup> The changing of name from *Kewhira* to Kohima is unsure but many people believes that it was due to miscommunication

<sup>30</sup> In Angami language, the word *Cha* means 'Road', *Kro* means 'Lower' and so, 'Chakro' means 'People living in the foothills'

*Khwünoria* (*Khwüno* is the ‘Name of the Flower’ and *Ria* means ‘Place’, thus *Khwünoria* means the place of *Khwüno*) or *Khwünomia* (*Khwüno* is the ‘Name of the Flower’ and *Mia* means ‘People/Man’) which means the people of *Khwüno* means the people or man of *Khwünoria*). The Rengmas call the village as *Khünyu*<sup>31</sup>. The village is known for fighting against the British during the colonial rule in India which culminated into a battle famously known as the Battle of Khonoma, 1879. At present, Khonoma has three *khels* namely, *Merhükhel*, *Thevokhel* and *Semokhel*. The different clans of Khonoma village are also categorized under the three *khels*. Clans that can be found under *Merhükhel* are Gwizantsu, Lievuse, Meyase, Savino, Meru, Sokieli, Nisenyu, Richalie, Dolie, Chase, Liegise, Khate, Terhuja, Tho-u, Sakhrie, Zetsuvi, Pfulise, Kenieu, Iralu, Sanyu and Khwukha. *Thevokhel* comprises of Kotsu, Phetsu, Chatsu, Pieru, Kruse, Whiso, Hiekha, Punyu, Yalie, Chasie-Zinyu, Khahino, Sophi, and Ziekhuno clans. Lastly, *Semokhel* have clans comprising of Kuthotsu, Secu, Vupru, Zhunyu, Rurhie, Chalieutsu, Seyie, Mor, Ratsa, Vohka, Rulho, Chucha and Viyie. Khonoma villagers practice both wet terrace cultivation and traditional alder based shifting agricultural system for high yield. The village still raises Mithun<sup>32</sup> in a traditional way<sup>33</sup>.

An oral narrative<sup>34</sup> states that Naga migration occurred from the East believed to be Mongolia. Nagas migrated and settled in Myanmar (Burma). It is said that there were two brothers named Tani and Kherenuo. One of the brothers stayed behind in Myanmar and the other brother migrated towards the Naga Hills. The one who migrated towards the Naga Hills is said to have reached Kesora (Khusomi<sup>35</sup>) and Keteo, one of his descendant established Khusomi village. Keteo had two sons named Vadeo (older brother) and Kevi (younger brother). It is believed that Kevi migrated towards present day Lotha area (Wokha district) while the older brother Vadeo migrated to Makhel village (Senapati district, Manipur). Vadeo carried with him a spiritual stone, cow and fowl. After reaching Makhel, the cow mooed, the fowl crowed and on hearing the sound

<sup>31</sup> Researcher could not find the meaning.

<sup>32</sup> Mithun is a valuable bovine species of North-East Hill region of India. This animal can also be found in China, Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

<sup>33</sup> This method was even practiced in Khezhakeno village but now they keep water buffalo which is more beneficial for them economically. They inhabitants apply the same traditional methods to rear the water buffalos. In this method, the animals are not kept inside the village but were made to roam in the jungle. Occasionally, the owners would carry salt (traditional method to lure Mithun and water buffalo) and check their animals from time to time.

<sup>34</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Sedevi Shüya of Meriema village on 15/12/21.

<sup>35</sup> Khusomi is presently a village located in Phek district.

of water flowing, he formed a village over there and settled. Vadeo's eldest son is said to have migrated to Khezhakeno and stayed there<sup>36</sup>.

**Kohima Village:** Kohima village also known as Bara Basti<sup>37</sup> is the second largest village in Asia (Dey, 2019). However the natives of the village prefer to call themselves as *Kewhimia*. The village is located on a hill top with an altitude of 1552 meters. Kohima village lies between 25°40' 41.645"N latitude and 94°06' 51.850"E longitude and belong to the Northern Angami region. The village is bounded by Meriema village (Kohima district) in the North, Pfuchama and Phesama villages (Kohima district) in the South, Sakhabama (Kohima district) in the East and Jotsoma village (Kohima district) in the West. As per population census of India 2011, Kohima village comprises of a total population of 15,734 of which 7,818 are males and 7,916 are females with a total household of 3,374. According to a narrative<sup>38</sup>, Kohima village used to have seven *khels*: *Üsuokhel*, *Pfuchatsumakhel*, *Tsütuonuoma khel*, *Dapfütsamakhel*, *Huoruotsu khel*, *Rhiepfu khel* and *Tsiara khel*. However, at present, the village is divided into four *khels* i.e. *Dapfütsuma* (known as D. *khel*), *Lhisema* (known as L. *khel*), *Pfuchatsuma* (known as P. *khel*) and *Tsütuonuoma* (known as T. *khel*). According to Sanyu (1996), clans of Kohima village has been organized under different *khels*: *Lhisemakhel* comprises of clans belonging to Huoruotsu, Tsiara, Rhiepfu, Sorhie, Liezietsu, Kesiezie, Rulho, Yaotsu, Cielieotsu, Mepfhü-o, Tseikha, Vizonuo, Yhome, Dzüvichü, Suokhrie, Linyü, Khelietsu, Kelio, Miachieo, Kratsü, Tsiesotsu and Khruomo. *Tsütuonuomakhel* comprises of Sekhose, Belho, Solo, Whuorie, Kuotsu, Geisuo and Khemieo. *Dapfütsamakhel* comprise of Kirekha, Khezhie, Sachü, Keretrü, Kreditsu, Rhiepfumia and Yiese. *Pfuchatsumakhel* comprise of Usuo, Kerutsa, Pienyü, Sote, Rame and Keyho. Members to these *khels* are either determined by birth or inheritance. Village decisions cannot be taken without the consensus of all these through *khel* representative.

Khezhakeno people calls Kohima village *Kabvü* and its inhabitants *Kabvümi*. According to Lucy & Zehol (2009), *Kabvümi* is derived from a Mountain peak named *Kabvünhou*<sup>39</sup> (*Abvünhou*) which is a sacred forest located in Khezhakeno village. Oral narrative states that some people climbed this mountain peak and scouted for their settlement from there, towards

<sup>36</sup> However it is not sure whether Vadeo's eldest son founded Khezhakeno or joined later.

<sup>37</sup> *Bara* means big and *Basti* means village

<sup>38</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Viletuo Pienyü of Thizama village on 01-04-2023.

<sup>39</sup> *Kabvünhou* is derived from two Khezha words *Kabvü* means 'Kohima' and *Nhou* meaning 'Sitting Place', *Kabvünhou* is 'The Place where Kohima can be seen'.

present Kohima village. These groups/people saw wild grain known locally as *Akube* growing in abundance in this area (present Kohima village area) and were prompted to move and settle there. Neighbouring present Lothas tribe refer to Kohima village as *Khayima* or *Khayama* while the Semas called the Angami people (including the Kohima village) as *Tsugami* which means, ‘Those who came after’.

**Meriema Village:** Meriema Village is part of the Northern Angami region and is located in Chiephobozou circle under Kohima district. Meriema is located close to Kohima town which is 6 kms away from the main town (Kohima). The village lies between 25°42’49.879”N latitude and 94°08’22.138”E longitude and is situated at an altitude of 1397 meters. As per census of India 2011, Meriema village has a total population of 1,233 and comprises of about 239 houses. It is considered to be one of the oldest villages among the Northern Angamis. At present the village comprises of six *khels* and it is surrounded by Thizama village (Kohima district) in the North, Jotsoma and Kohima villages (Kohima district) in the South, Rüsoma village (Kohima district) in the East and Sechu (Zubza) (Kohima district) in the West. According to a narrative<sup>40</sup>, there was a huge man named Meriethor with big ears and eyes. His appearance used to scare away enemies and because of this, Meriema<sup>41</sup> village was named after him.

### 2.3.2. Phek District

Phek district is located in the South-Eastern part of Nagaland and is bounded by Zunheboto district in the North, Manipur state in South, Burma in the East and Kohima district in West. As per census 2011, the district comprises of 117 villages and covers 12.22% (2026 Sq. Km.) of the total geographical area of Nagaland which is inhabited mostly by the Chakhesang and Pochury Nagas. The district has 8 blocks with 95 villages. Initially, Phek was a sub division under Kohima district and it was only after its formal inauguration in 1974 that it became the 7th district of Nagaland. These people were also known as Eastern Angamis by the British and it was only after 1946; they came to be called by the name Chakhesang. The name Phek is derived from a word, *Phekrekedze* which means *Watch Tower*. Furthermore, Chakhesang is a combination of three words:-*Cha* from *Chokri*<sup>42</sup>, *Khe* from *Khezha/Khuza*<sup>43</sup> and *Sang* from Sangtam.

<sup>40</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Zaripralie Vilhou of Meriema village on 20/12/2021

<sup>41</sup> *Merie(thor)* is the ‘Name of a Person’ and *Ma* means ‘People’.

<sup>42</sup> Chokri is a language spoken by a group of Chakhesang tribe. Majority of the villages in Phek district belong to this group.

Chakhesang tribe was formed with the coming together of these three linguistically different groups of *Chokri*, *Khezha/Khuzha* and Sangtam (present Pochury Nagas<sup>44</sup>) (Krocha & Dukru, 2011). The inhabitants of Phek district being mostly farmers, agriculture remained their main occupation, practicing both Terrace Rice Cultivation (TRC) and Jhum or Shifting cultivation. The district is also famous for salt making, weaving, bamboo and wood carving. Village under study from this district includes Khezhakeno, Khumiasu, Lephori, Meluri, Pfutseromi, Sohomi, Sumi (Swemi) and Yoruba have been conducted.

**Sümi Village:** Sümi<sup>45</sup> village is a part of Chizami circle which is located in South Western part of Phek district. It lies between 94°23' 36.319"E longitude and 25°35' 44.050"N latitude and is bounded by Chizami village (Phek district) in the North, South and West and Losatephe village (Phek district) in the East. The village is located at an altitude of 1465 meters. As per 2011 census of India, the village has a total of 508 populations (263 males and 245 females) residing in 112 households. Even though most of them can speak Sumi language, they belong to the Chakhesang tribe. The village is also surrounded by the Khezha/Khuzha speaking villages. Sümi oral narrative states that a leader by the name *Süpu*<sup>46</sup> came and formed this village and so the village was named after him<sup>47</sup>. The village name was later changed to *Swemi* during the colonial period. *Swemi* is derived from three Sumi words- 'S' for *Sü*, *We* mean 'Old' and *Mi* stands for 'People'. Thus *Swemi* means 'Oldest People' or 'Oldest Village'. Sumi village was acknowledged as an old and powerful village by the neighboring villages. Later in 1992, the village name was officially changed to Sümi village (Sümi Village Baptist Church, 2015). Khezha/Khuzha people usually called Sumi people *Tsumi*. The village has four *khels* namely, *Akrakhel*, *Atara khel*, *Kunuzukhel* and *Apfutokhel*. Initially, the village had 300 houses but as people continued to grow, a person named Lele selected one *Mowo* (Priest) and went to form Lelie colony with 400 houses. So, at one point of time, the village had a total of 700 houses. When the village was prospering their village was the only village that existed in the area and

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<sup>43</sup> Khezha/Khuzha is a group speaking Khezha/Khuzha language. This language is predominantly spoken in Pfutsero and Chizami region under Phek district.

<sup>44</sup> When Pochury became a separate tribe, a minority group from Razeba area, consisting of four villages from Poumai (Poumai Naga tribe are geographically located in Manipur state and Phek district. The word Poumai is derived from two words, *Pou* which is 'the name of their ancestor' and *Mai* means the 'descendants'. Hence Poumai means the 'descendants of Pou.' community (although they spoke different dialect and not Sangtam) at present this group stands in place of *Sang*

<sup>45</sup> Discussed about this village in chapter 3

<sup>46</sup> *Süpu* literally means 'Father of the Trees'.

<sup>47</sup> *Süpumi* where *Süpu* was the founder's name and *Mi* meant 'People'. Hence, *Süpumi* meant 'People of Süpu'

oral narration states that for Jhum cultivation (*Achiphilu*) they would go as far as present Pfutsero and Phek.

**Pfutseromi Village:** Pfutseromi village is located in Pfutsero circle, Phek district. It is the coldest area in Nagaland with an altitude of around 6998 feet above sea level, making it a town with the highest altitude in Nagaland. It lies in South Western part of Phek district and is 70 kms away from Kohima and 3 kms distance from sub-division Pfutsero. It is located at 25°33'32.419"N latitude and 94°17'5.838"E longitude. As per 2011 census of India, the village has a total population of 3378 (1745 males and 1633 females) living in 618 households. The village is bounded by Porba village (Phek district) in the North, Kami and Lekromi villages (Phek district) in the South, Mesulumi village (Phek district) in the East and Kikruma village (Phek district) in the West. In Khezha language, *Pfutsero* means 'New Village' and *Mi* means 'People'. Khezhakeno people refer to them as *Pfu Kholobemi* as the village is surrounded by paddy fields. The village is divided into seven *khels* and these *khels* are named after the name of each clan's forefathers. The *khels* and clans of Pfutseromi village can be systematized into- *Chichuniümikhel* comprising of Medo clan, Ritse clan and Dianu clan (These three clans are brothers and sons of a man named Chichu); *Merotsamikhel* and *Leniinumikhel* comprising of Mero clan; Ngachumi *khel* inhabited mostly by the Ngachu clan and, *Prilhokhel*, *Sachukhel* and *Thsüzhiekhkel* comprising of Kapfo clan.

**Yoruba Village:** Yoruba village is located in Sekruzu circle, Phek, Nagaland and is 68 kms away from district headquarter Phek. As per census 2011, a total household of 690 resides in the village with a total population of 3353. The village lies between 25°44'15.408"N latitude and 94°20'21.998"E longitude. It is bounded by Suthozu Nasa (Phek district) in the North, Thüvopisü villages (Phek district) in the South, Suthozu Nagwe (Phek district) in the East and Chozuba village (Phek district) and Zunheboto district in the West. According to the census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 3353 (1752 males and 1601 females) with 690 households. The village was founded by a man named Posenyi Phesao and so initially the village was called as *Poseamiba* which means 'Place of Posenyi'. However due to a misunderstanding Posenyi left the village. For this reason the village was renamed as Yoruba which was named after the second inhabitant of the village named Yori/Yorü Veswüh. Yoruba village is presently divided into two areas i.e. *Nasa* (new village) and *Nagwe* (old village). Majority of the Lohe clan

resides in *Nasa* area while the older clans of Veswüh, Phesao and Nyekha reside mostly in Nagwe area. The village mostly practices terrace cultivation and less of jhum or shifting cultivation.

**Sohomi Village:** Sohomi village is part of the Phek circle under Phek district. The village is located at 25°43'7.593"N latitude and 94°29'38.449"E longitude and 17 kms away from Phek town. It lies at an altitude of 1055 meters. The village is bounded by Khutsokhuno village (Phek district) in the North, Kotisu village (Phek district) in the East and Phek town (Phek district) in the South and West. The inhabitants speak Chokri, *Nthini* Rengma and Pochury languages but Chokri remained their main medium for interaction. According to the census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 558 (284 males and 274 females) residing in 139 houses. Initially, Sohomi was known as *Rehope* which means 'Guarding spot'. It is a place from where they stand and guard. Later the village name was changed into Sohomi which is derived from two words *Soho* means 'Hunter' and *Mi* means 'People'. Farming is the main occupation for the inhabitants of this village and they practice both Terrace and Jhum cultivation. The village comprises of four *khels* namely, *Anorikhel* (Those who live on the side of the village), *Zhekurikhel* (Those who live in the plain area), *Zilarikhel* (Those who live in the centre of the village) and *Shithorikhel* (Those who live on the upper *khel*).

Common oral narratives state that the present Sohomi, Lephori and Meluri villages (Phek district) migrated from Northern Rengma towards the east and for this they are popularly called as Eastern Rengmas. These three groups are also known as *Mluori* (Meluri), *Mipfuri* (Lephori) and *Tüphruri* (Sohomi) and they speak *Nthini* Rengma dialect. As per J.P Mills (1982), they migrated from Kithaga/Nsynyu (Tseminyu district). However, Sohomi narrative refers to Kandinu village (Tseminyu district) as the place from where they migrated and reached the present settlement. According to Thong (2016) migration towards Meluri occurred from Kandinu and Kithaga village (Tseminyu district). In the past, these two villages have stayed together in a place called Aghonshü (Tseminyu district) and when Kandinu was abandoned, the inhabitants shifted to Kithaga. An oral narrative says that when a Sohomi gospel<sup>48</sup> team in the year 1918 visited Kandinu, they were shown the location where the Eastern Rengma group were said to have stayed before the migration. Elders of Kandinu village further asked Sohomi to return to the

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<sup>48</sup> Christianity came to the region around 1907, with first convert Lt. Lokhin Nsü from Zisunyu village, Tseminyu. Source-Nagaland Post April 30, 2015.



same place if any problem arose and they could also use the resources that they were using in the past. But Sohomi group stated that they were comfortable in their present village. On the other hand, Lephori villagers believe that they came from Aghonshu (presently an abandoned site), Tseminyu district.

**Lephori Village:** Lephori is a village located under Meluri sub-division, Phek, Nagaland. It is located at 25°36'37.166"N latitude and 94°37'28.765"E longitude and is 23.4 km away from Phek district. As per the census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 1355 (685 males and 670 females), comprising of 262 households. The village is bounded by Meluri village (Phek district) in the North, Kanjang village (Phek district) in the South, Molen village (Phek district) in the East and Matikhrü village (Phek district) in the West. The old name for this village was *Luopfürü* but when the village was officially recorded, the British government misspelled it as Lephori and so the name Lephori has no meaning.

**Meluri Village:** Meluri is a sub-division under Phek district, Nagaland. The village lies between 25°40'44.108"N latitude and 94°37'15.154"E longitude and is located at an altitude of 1243 meters. Meluri village is bounded by Akhwego village (Phek district) in the North, Khumiasu village (Phek district) in the South, Weziho town (Phek district) in the East and Manipur district village in the West. According to the census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 2723 (1393 males and 1330 females) with 582 households. The original name for Meluri was *Müluori* but during the colonial period, the name was changed into Meluri village. *Müluori* (Meluri) derived its name from two words *Müluo* which means 'Abundance' and '*Ri*' means 'People', hence *Müluori* means 'land of abundance'. A man named Nyurhietha was the first *Kajiwa* (chief) of *Müluori* village. It is divided into old Meluri and New Meluri (Meluri town). Old Meluri is also popularly called as Hindu *khel*<sup>49</sup> because of their rituals and majority of the inhabitants followed animism. Old Meluri had four *khels*-*Khutsorykhel*, *Phrütherikhel*, *Zhiekuri khel* and *Yithsuri khel*. Though some Christian converts continue to stay in the old Meluri, majority have moved up to Meluri town. Catholics on the other hand moved further down and formed a new village called Khumiasu village. Meluri comprises of the following clans: Myuwi, Ngouri, Nyuthe, Nyusou, Phoji, Tsuori and Kajiri. The first inhabitants of the village came from

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<sup>49</sup> Since these inhabitants of the old Meluri practice animism and animistic rituals, the converts which were occupying the present Meluri town and Khumeise village used to call them as Hindu *khel* however this does not have anything to do with the Hindu religion

Rengma area but later people from Tankhul area Sangtam tribe and migrants from Myanmar came and settled there.

**Khumiasu Village:** Khumiasu Village is a part of Meluri sub-division under Phek district. The village was formed in 1975 and is considered a Catholic village. It is located at 25°40'15.999"N latitude and 94°36'45.784"E longitude. The village is bounded by Meluri village (Phek district) in the North, Lephori village (Phek district) in the South, Rhiehupie village (Phek district) in the East and, Manipur district in the West. As per the census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 407 (192 males and 215 females), comprising of 90 households. The inhabitants moved out from Old Meluri (Hindu *khel*) village due to differences in their religious practices. In olden times, the present Khumiasu was famous for tigers that roamed around. It is said that in the past, many tigers lived there and even attacked and ate humans; tigers would bring their hunts and eat at this location. Since the location was inhabited by many tigers, the villagers named the village as Khumiasu.

**Matikhrü Village:** Matikhrü Village is a part of Meluri sub-division under Phek district and lies at an altitude of 1072 meters. It is located at 25°35'41.344"N latitude and 94°34'52.546"E longitude. The census of India 2011 shows that the village has a total population of 623 (324 males and 299 females) and a total household of 154. The village name Matikhrü is derived from two Mao words, *Miti* which means 'Salt' and *Khru* meaning 'Salty'. The village is very popular for traditional salt making since early times. It is bounded by Kanjang village (Phek district) in the South, Lephori village (Phek district) in the East and Manipur district in the North and West. Matikhrü Village was first established in the year 1817 by a man name Melatho who belonged to the Tankhul tribe of Manipur district. He married a Khezha lady after which Khezha language became more popular in the village. On 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1960, the village experienced a tragic incident, popularly called 'Matikhrü Massacre' wherein all the adult males of the village were captured by the Indian army and beheaded in front of family members. For this reason, the village was abandoned and got re-established only in the year 1963. At present, the village comprises of people coming from different areas viz Khezha (Chakhesang), Chokrii (Chakhesang), Sema, Thankhul, Samphory (Sangtam), Meluri (Pochury), Lephori (Pochury), Phor (Pochury) and Weziho (Pochury).

### 2.3.3. Tseminyu District

Separated from Kohima district, Tseminyu became the 13<sup>th</sup> district of Nagaland on 18th December, 2021. The district is surrounded by Wokha district in the North, Kohima district in the South, Zunheboto district in the East and Assam state and Niuland district in the West. Tseminyu district is inhabited by the Rengma Nagas. Apart from Tseminyu, Rengmas are also found in Phek district (Eastern Rengma) under Nagaland state and in Assam (Western Rengma). As per census 2011, Tseminyu district comprises of 39 villages with a total population of 63,269 people and covers a total area of 256 sq km. Based on linguistic variation Tseminyu district can be divided into two areas i.e. Southern area of Tseminyu (Nzongkhwe speakers) and Rengmas of the Northern area (Nthenyi speakers).

Rengma Nagas calls themselves *Nzon* (name of their ancestor) or *Nzonyu* (People of Nzon) (Jochuhyulo, 2011). The name Rengma is said to have been given by others and the Rengmas themselves are not sure on how they were called by this name. Some argues that the name was proposed by the British. The narration states that a British officer Grange came to Assam to meet the Ahom king. However, the king did not want to meet the British officer thinking that he had come to make him surrender his kingdom. So instead, the king sent *Nzon/Nzonyu* warrior named Keyhong Bhugan. Keyhong was said to be a very tall man and had giant like structure. When he went to meet Grange he wore his full Naga warrior attire. Grange was said to be dumbfounded with his appearance and asked him via a translator the local name for 'ghost' or 'nightmare'. Keyhong replied to Grange that they addressed 'Ghost' as *Reme*. Grange took it as 'Rengma' and wrote in this diary by that name. It is believed that from that incident onwards, this group of people came to be known as Rengma<sup>50</sup>. Another narrative is that, the name originated from Khezha language *Remime* which means 'the one who vanished'. Oral narratives state that, in Khezhakeno there was an old man who had 7 sons. Everyone was married and well settled except the youngest son. This youngest son was believed to be the son of the second wife. As the father was getting older, the wife asked him to give the flat stone to the youngest son as he was still young and unmarried. The father agreed to her request, however misunderstanding started among the children. In the midst of this conflict, a couple defiled the stone by doing immoral activity on the stone. As the stone was defiled, it started producing fewer

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<sup>50</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Khinyi Woch of Kithaga/Nsunny village on 03-09-21.

grains. Some were not happy and burned the stone by putting fire underneath the stone. After this the stone bursted and the bigger portion of the stone went towards Manipur side. As the bigger portion or the spirit of the stone went towards Manipur side it is believed that they harvested more paddies. After the incident the mother took her son and left Khezhakeno. Some believes that they reached Rengma area and thus tried to relate this folktale with the word *Remime*. Under Tseminyu district, study has been conducted in the villages of Nsunyu, Phensenyu Terigonyu, Tesophenyu and Tseminyu. The Angamis and Chakhesangs call the Rengmas, Aos, Lothas and Semas *Mezami*<sup>51</sup>. Since the former groups cannot understand the latter's language, the latter came to be commonly called as *Mezami*. The Rengmas mainly practiced Jhum cultivation producing crops like rice, beans, yam, millets, corns, sesame etc.

**Nsunyu Village:** Nsunyu village is located under Chunlikha circle, Tseminyu district. It is a village situated in the Northern part of the district and lies between 25°58'51.144"N latitude and 94°14'19.102"E longitude in an altitude of 1281 meters. Nsunyu is surrounded by Chunlikha village (Tseminyu District) in the North, New Tesophenyu village (Tseminyu District) in the South, Ehunnu village (Tseminyu District) in the East and Sewanu village (Tseminyu District) in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 2,868 (1430 males and 1438 females) and comprises of about 477 houses. The inhabitants that belong to the Northern area group speak Nthenyi language. Nsunyu village was originally called Kithagha which means '*Let's go up to that hilltop and settle there*'. Name was changed in 1948 to Nsunyu by bench court chairman without the consent of the villagers and only in 2023 the name was changed back to Kithaga. For the natives, the word Nsunyu has no meaning. They believe that a man from Tseminyu first started to call the village Nsunyu after which the word spread. The village has five *khels* namely: *Khalatokhel* (Upper *khel*), *Kagankhel*, *Amonkhel* (Centre *khel*), *Tangkhel* and *Sengkhel* (Lower *khel*). Earlier the village had nine clans but at present the village has only eight clans: Magh/Mahathung, Wochang, Thongtu, Kathu, Kent, Seb, Tep/Tepenyu and Semy.

**Phenshunyu Village:** Phenshunyu village is part of the Tseminyu circle under Tseminyu district. They belong to the Southern Rengma group speaking Nzongkhwe language. The village lies between 25°55'49.716"N latitude and 94°09'58.187"E longitude and has an altitude of 1382

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<sup>51</sup> Mezami means 'Cannot Understand their Language'

meters. It is surrounded by Wokha district in the North, Phentejon Model village (Tseminyu District) in the South, Tseminyu town (Tseminyu District) in the East and New Sedenyu village (Tseminyu District) in the West. According to the census of India 2011, Phenshunyu village has 459 households with a total population of 2,675 of which 1,337 are males and 1,338 are females. Phenshunyu derived its name from three Rengma words where, *Phen* means 'Village', *Shun* means 'New' and *Nyu* means 'Man or People'. Thus Phenshunyu means 'New People Village'. Apart from the Magh clan, some inhabitants from this village were the only people that migrated along with some Angami group. According to Thong (2012), the present site of Phenshunyu village is an old abandoned site of the Lothas and Semas. Phenshunyu village has three *khels* comprising of *Teshojunyukhel*, *Lorinyukhel* and *Phenwhenkinyukhel*. At present, the village has ten clans namely- Keppen, Lorin, Kesen, Himb, Tep, Seb, Kent, Semy, Kemp and Thong.

**Tseminyu District:** Terogunyu village is located in Tseminyu circle under Tseminyu district. The village lies between 25°53'16.008"N latitude and 94°11'33.464"E longitude and is at an altitude of 1529 meters. It is bounded by Phenwenyu village (Tseminyu District) in the North, New Terogunyu (Tseminyu District) village in the South, Kashanyu village (Tseminyu District) in the East and Kohima district in the West. They belong to the Southern Rengma group that speaks Nzongkhwe language. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 1,559 (753 are males and 806 are females) and comprises of about 325 houses. The inhabitants belong to the Southern Rengma group that speaks Nzongkhwe language. Terogunyu village is named after Mount Terogvüthün which has historical significance, especially on the migrations of the Rengmas and Lothas. The village has six *khels* namely, *Jühünyukhel*, *Günyonyukhel*, *Lopinyukhel*, *Tesokhel*, *Kamvudyunyukhel* and *Kanekhel*. At present six clans can be found in Terogunyu village: Tep, Semp, Semy, Thyug, Seb and Cheng.

**Tesophenyu village:** Tesophenyu village is located in Chunlikha circle under Tseminyu district. It is located 70 km away from the state capital, Kohima. The village lies between 25°58'16.154"N latitude and 94°12'46.708"E longitude, at an altitude of 1554 meters. It is surrounded by Sewanu village (Tseminyu District) in the North, Ziphenyu village (Tseminyu District) in the South, New Tseminyu village (Tseminyu District) in the East and Wokha district in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 11,116 (5395 males and 5721 females) and comprises of 1836 houses. Based on linguistic differences the

village is divided into two areas- the Upper Tesopenyu speaks Nthinyi or Northern Rengma language and Lower Tesopenyu uses Nzonyu or Southern Rengma language. Despite the language differences, the villager used to observe the same rituals and Genna. When a man named Tsela (founder of the village) was clearing the jungle in the present Tesopenyu site, he came across many black ants. He thought that since the ants were many and uncountable, if he settles there his people would increase in the same manner. Tsela took it as a good omen and started a village there. In Rengma language, *Teso* means ‘Ant’ and *Penyu* Means ‘Village’. Thus Tesopenyu means ‘Ant village’. Initially there were only seven clans but at present the village has 14 clans. They are Tsela, Chung, Jemu, Kath, Khing, Kez, Magh, Makh, Mesung, Seb, Semy, Tep and Woch exist.

**Tseminyu Village:** Tseminyu village is located under Tseminyu circle, Tseminyu district. The village lies between 25°55’32.314”N latitude and 94°13’02.391”E longitude. The altitude of the village is 1405 meters. Tseminyu village is surrounded by Phenda and Ngvuphen villages (Tseminyu District) in the North, Zisunyu village (Tseminyu District) in the South, Gukhanyu village (Tseminyu District) in the East, and Phenshunyu village (Tseminyu District) in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 2863 (1398 males and 1465 females) living in 602 houses. The village derives its name from two Rengma words wherein *Tsemi* (Tsenmhi Khing) was the name of the founder and *Nyu* means ‘Village’. Hence, Tseminyu means Tsenmhi Khing’s village. This village belongs to the Southern Rengma group that speaks Nzongkhwe language. Tseminyu village has seven clans namely, Khinhzonyu, Tepenyu, Sibenyu, Pasünyu, Sempvünyu, Nsünyu and Kentyünyenyu. The village is further divided into five *Kasuns* (*khels*) namely: *Sempvunyu/ SempfunyuKasun*, *TsophaKasun*, *TsosunKasun*, *ZihyünyuKasun* and *RensikkedaKasun*.

**Khwenphen Village:** Khwenphen village is presently an abandoned site located between Kasha (Tseminyu district) and Pogoboto (Zunheboto district). It was the first settlement site that was built in the present Tseminyu district headed by Nzonyu families. The Rengmas, also called as Nzons inhabited this area for a long period of time. In Rengma language, *Khwe* means ‘Banana’ and *Phen* means ‘Village’ and so *Khwenphen* literally means ‘Banana village’. It was said that a lot of wild banana plants used to grow in this area so the inhabitants who arrived there named the site *Khwephen*. However, when the population began to grow, Nzon families spread to different

parts and formed the present Rengma villages. Khwephen is also the only village after Khezhakeno where the different groups of Rengmas stopped and settled.

### 2.3.4. Wokha District

Wokha is situated on the mid west of the Nagaland state and covers a total geographical area of 1,628 sq. km (9.81%), comprising 7 blocks and 133 villages. The district is inhabited mostly by the Lotha Nagas who called themselves ‘*Kyong*’. The district is surrounded by Assam state in the North and West, Tseminyu district in the South and Zunheboto and Mokokchung districts in the East. Earlier Wokha was a sub-division under Mokokchung district and it was only on December 1973 that a separate Wokha district was created. In Lotha language, ‘Wokha’ literally means ‘Census or Recounting’. It was a place where the Lotha Nagas stopped to head count for a second time and was successful. In the first attempt, they tried to head count all the Lotha warriors when they were temporarily settled in Kohima but every time they counted the numbers would be different, so the second counting was done at Wokha and accuracy was achieved. An oral narrative<sup>52</sup> states that some Nagas were believed to have come from Kyin state in Myanmar. They came in big groups and settled at Khezhakeno village. Later after surveying the lands for settlements, they went towards north to the Lotha area and settled there. This group called themselves *Kyong*, those who shared the Khezhakeno magical stone narrative call it ‘*Phitson Yan*’. Meanwhile, Lazami Semas called the Lothas *Chuyimi*<sup>53</sup>. Lothas were said to have slender arms and legs like deers and due to this they were very smart in climbing steep areas so they were called as *Chuyimi*. The people of Wokha practice mainly jhum or shifting cultivation due to its topographical terrain. They also practice certain traditional cottage industries like black smithy, weaving, carpentry and handicraft etc. Under Wokha district, study has been conducted in the villages of Humtso, Longsa, Wokha and Yikhum.

Common oral narratives of the Lothas point towards Mongolia and Manchuria China as the places where their ancestors have migrated from. Oral narratives<sup>54</sup> state that the Lothas migrated from Chin (China) crossed Himalat (Himalayan) and stayed in Burma<sup>55</sup> for some time.

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<sup>52</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Zapra Chakhesang of Yoruba Village on 13-03-2023.

<sup>53</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. P. Saluvi Swu, Mr. Maghipu Swu & Mr. Mixeni Tiji of Lazami village on 13-02-2021.

<sup>54</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. S. Chumdamo Ezung of Longsa village on 17-04-2019.

<sup>55</sup> Lothas refers Myanmar as Burma *Ochongo* (Inner Burma), Burma *Opomo* (areas bordering Naga Hills/ our side) and inner Burma as *Liko Emoyomolo* (Soil Red in colour).

From Burma, Lotha group reached a place called *Kviütsa*<sup>56</sup> which they believe to be located in the Chakhesang area and later moved to a place known as *Tsupok Yan* or *Tsupokronsü Yan*<sup>57</sup>. ‘*Tsupok*’ means ‘Rice’ and ‘*Yan*’ means ‘Village’; the area was said to have been famous for cultivating large quantity of rice. An oral narrative<sup>58</sup> suggests that *Tsupok Yan* might be the present Mao area (Manipur). From *Tsupok Yan* they moved further towards Phitson Yan (Khezhakeno) and settled there.

**Humtso Village:** Humtso village is located under Wokha sadar circle, Wokha district. The village lies between 26°05’19.622”N latitude and 94°12’18.396”E longitude, at an altitude of 1104 meters. Humtso is surrounded by Tsopo village in the North, Pongitong village in the South, Wokha town in the East and Elumyo village in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 2,032 (1002 males and 1,030 females) and comprises of about 435 houses. The village was named Humtso village because, at that time majority of the inhabitants belong to the Humtsoe clan. The village used to be comprised of five clans but presently there is no inhabitant member belonging to the Kikon clan. The village presently comprises of four clans namely, Humtsoe, Yanthan, Shitiri and Enny.

**Longsa Village:** Longsa Village is part of Wokha sadar under Wokha district. The village lies between 26°03’35.253”N latitude and 94°14’38.994”E longitude and is located at an altitude of 1448 meters. Longsa is surrounded by Ekok-Ju village in the North, Tseminyu district in the South, Longsachung villages in the East and Pongitong village in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 1,452 (628 males and 824 females) and comprises of about 395 houses. Longsa village is considered to be one of the oldest villages under Wokha district. The village name ‘Longsa’ derives its name from two Lotha words, ‘*Long*’ which means ‘Stone’ and ‘*Sa*’ mean ‘Scattered’. Hence, Longsa literally means ‘Land of Stones’. A folksong of Longsa village tells about the four clans i.e. Kikon, Humtsoe, Murry and Ezung clan planning to form Longsa village. The village initially had three *khels*- *Yonton Chumpo* (*Chumpo* means *Khel*), *Hayi Chumpo* and *Risunga Chumpo* and each Chumpo had a morung for the young boys. At present, with Christianity, the village doesn’t have any morung; the *khels* were also renamed and two more *khels* were added increasing it to five *khels*- A *khel* (earlier

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<sup>56</sup> Location unknown

<sup>57</sup> Location unknown

<sup>58</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Etsümo Murry of Wokha on 18-04-2019.



known as *Yonton Chumpo*), *B khel* (earlier known as *Hayi Chumpo*), *C khel* (earlier known as *Risunga Chumpo*), *D khel* and *E khel*. Presently, the village comprises of five clans Ezung, Humtsoe, Kikon, Murry and Yanthan.

**Wokha Village:** Wokha village is located in Wokha district. The village is situated at an altitude of 1185 meters and lies between 26°03'10.229"N latitude and 94°12'12.132"E longitude. It is surrounded by Vankhosung Mission Compound in the North, Ekok-Ju village in the South, Mount Tiyi in the East and Humtso village in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 4,724 (2,359 males and 2,365 females) with a total household of 931 houses. As mentioned before, 'Wokha' literally means 'Census or Recounting'. At present, the village has five *khels* namely, *A khel* comprising of Yanthan, Erie, Kithan and Murry clans; *B khel* consist of of Murry, Kithan and Erie clans; *C khel* comprises of Murry clan; *D khel* includes Kikon clan and *E khel* comprising of Tungoe clan.

**Yikhum Village:** Yikhum village is located in Englan circle under Wokha district. The village lies between 26°09'51.336"N latitude and 94°14'39.176"E longitude. It is situated at an altitude of 857 meters. Yikhum is bounded by Englan village (Wokha district) in the North, Vankhosung Mission Compound (Wokha district) in the South, Nungying village (Wokha district) in the East and Tsopo village (Wokha district) in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 3,174 (1,571 males and 1,603 females) and comprises of about 461 families. Initially the village was called Khumyanben<sup>59</sup>. In Lotha, *Khuma* means 'Worship', *Yan* means 'Village' and *Ben* means 'Fulfilled'. *Amotsü* (grandfather) Tsungsotsü, the first priest of the village first performed all the required rituals and prayers to form a new village and so the inhabitants decided to name the village Khumyanben. Later *Amotsü* Tsungsotsü again changed the village name to Yikhum. Oral narratives state that though Tsungsotsü was at that time the village priest, other clans had no regard for him since he belonged to a clan with less population. He was also not rich and not very renowned. In the past these were the two major requirements to gain respect. As the villagers thought he was not fit for the priestly position, they planned to choose another priest who was both rich and popular. When a meeting about it was being conducted, Tsungsotsü's wife heard and informed Tsungsotsü. This made him feel bad and he decided to go back to the previous settlement site of Longlaba. On his way, in the jungle he came

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<sup>59</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Hayuo Kithan & Mr. Zambemo Kithan of Yikhum village on 01-05-2022.

across a *Songkhong* (log drum) that was made from a big tree trunk of about 6 to 7 feet long which was supposed to be dragged into the village. Tsungsotsü performed a ritual on *Songkhong* and ordered *Songkhong* to just stay like that and not to move. After this he left for Longlaba. When the villagers came to pull *Songkhong* it did not move at all. The villagers realized their mistake and went to Longlaba to ask for Tsungsotsü's forgiveness and requested him to come back to Khumyanben. Tsungsotsü replied that since the villagers have hurt his feelings badly, they have to bring meat for he and his wife as a sign of respect. Fulfilling that, he will return. As per the request, the villagers killed a pig and offered the meat to the couple. Tsungsotsü went back and performed some rituals on *Songkhong* telling the drum to use its hands and legs and come to the village. After this Tsungsotsü dragged *Songkhong* for a short distance and later made the villagers pull the log which could be pulled easily. When he went back to the village he again performed rituals and changed the village name to Yikhum ('*Ya*' mean 'Come', *Yi* means 'Came Back' and *Khum* means 'Worship/Ritual'). At the time of village formation, eight clans came together along with Tsungsotsü. They were Kithan, Odyuo, Murry, Jungi, Kikon, Jami, Ezung and Khenjung. However, at present the village comprises of only five clans (Kithan, Odyuo, Murry, Jungi and Kikon) and the remaining three clans of Jami, Ezung and Khezjung have already left the village. Jami clan went towards Chuti and Pangti side, Ezung clan to Aree area and Khenjung clan went towards Wokha lower range.

**Honohon Yanton:** The site is located on Mount Terogvünthüng (Tseminyu district) and lies between Latitude 25°53'58"N and Longitude 94°11'50"E. For the Lothas, Honohon Yanton is the site where the second major population dispersion after Khezkaheno occurred. According to Sangma (2017), in Lotha language, *Hono* means 'Fowl'. The reason behind the name Honoho Yanton is because the village landscape resembles the crown of a fowl. Thus, the name of the place was given as Honoho Yanton (Crown of a Fowl). Later two villages were built for different purpose at Mount Terogvünthüng. The first village was established on the top of Mount Terogvünthüng (*Thung* means 'Mountain') for security reasons but as there was scarcity of water, another village in Terogunyu area was established for cultivation and water resources. When any enemy tried to raid their village, they ran up to Mount Terogvünthüng village and when things got back to normal, they would come down to Terogunyu village. Honoho Yanton is considered as one of the major population explosion site after Khezhakeno for this group of people. It was here that both the Lothas and the Semas settled once.

**Tiyi Longchum:** During the course of migration, majority of the Lotha group came to Mount Tiyi (Wokha district) and established a village known as Tiyi Longchum. The mountain is located between Latitude 26°05'58"N and Longitude 94°17'03"E. In Lotha language<sup>60</sup>, *Longchum* means 'Water' and *Tiyi* means 'Mountain'. There was a small pond on the mountain and it is said to have been the only water source available in the region; so they settled there and formed a village. As population grew, the inhabitants started experiencing shortage of water. At the same time, the constant attack by the tigers forced the inhabitants to abandon the village and migrate. The inhabitants migrated and formed many villages eg. Wokha and Longsa villages. Today, Tiyi Longchum is an abandoned site (Some archaeological works have been carried out in this site, refer Ngullie, 2014).

### 2.3.5. Zunheboto District

Zunheboto district forms the central part of the Nagaland state. As per census 2011, the district covers 7.56% (1255 sq. km.) of the geographical area of Nagaland with a total population of 1,14,014. The number of villages under Zunheboto district inhabited by the Sumi Nagas comprises of 168 villages and is predominately inhabited by the Sumi Naga. The district is surrounded by Mokokchung district in the North, Phek district in the South, Kiphire and Shamator districts in the East and Tsemnyu and Wokha districts in the West. The district is located 150 kms away from the state capital, Kohima. The name Zunheboto is derived from two Sema words, *Zunhebo* which is a name of a flower shrub with white leaves and bear sponge like ears containing sweet juice and *To* means the 'top of the hill'. So Zunheboto was named after a flower that is found on top of a hill. Until 1973, the district was part of Mokokchung district and it was only in 1973 that Zunheboto became a separate district. Agriculture is the main livelihood for these people with majority practicing jhum/shifting cultivation and few practicing terrace cultivation (bank of River Tizu). Sumis are also skillful in iron works, pottery, bamboo crafts and weaving etc. Under Zunheboto district, study has been conducted in the villages of Ghokimi, Ighanumi, Mishulimi and Lazami.

**Ghokimi Village:** Ghokimi village is located in Pughoboto sadar under Zunheboto district and is 26 kms away from Phugoboto. The village lies between 25°58'13.101"N latitude and

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<sup>60</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. S. Chumdamo Ezung of Longsa village on 17-04-2019.

94°18'24.667"E longitude and is located at an altitude of 1275 meters. Ghokimi is surrounded by Asukiqa village (Zunheboto District) in the North, Awohumi village (Zunheboto District) in the South, Usutomi village (Zunheboto District) in the East and Wokha district in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a population of 1,029 (534 males and 495 females) and has a total household of 198. The village was named after one of their forefather named *Ghoki* and *Mi* meaning 'People' and so Ghokimi means people of grandfather Ghoki.

**Ighanumi Village:** Ighanumi village is located in Ghathashi sadar under Zunheboto district. The village lies between 25°45'33.009"N latitude and 94°18'39.407"E longitude and is situated at an altitude of 1275 meters. It is surrounded by Tukuliqa village (Zunheboto District) in the North, Phek district in the South and East and Ighavito village (Zunheboto District) in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 1,331 (665 males and 666 females) and comprises of about 310 houses. Apart from speaking Sema language, the inhabitants can also speak Chokri Chakhesang language very fluently. This is because the nearest town in the area for Ighanumi is Chozuba village, Phek district. The village is considered one of the oldest in Zunheboto district. Ighanumi village is named after the founder of the village named Igha.

**Lazami Village:** Lazami Village is located in Pughoboto sadar under Zunheboto district and is 57 km away from Kohima capital. The village lies between 25°51'22.034"N latitude and 94°14'48.288"E longitude. It is surrounded by Mishilimi village (Zunheboto District) in the North, Kohima district in the South, Ghathashi village (Zunheboto District) in the East and Kohima and Tseminyu districts in the West. As per census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 2,936 (1426 males and 1510 females) and comprises of about 654 houses. The village is considered to be one of the oldest villages in the district. The village derives its name from the founder named Lozu. The Angami called them *Lozema* (*Loze* is the village founder's name and *Ma* means people) and Chakhesangs called them *Lozemi* (*Loze* is the village founder's name and *Mi* means people). The original village name was Lozemi but during the colonial time the village name was changed into Lazami. Another derivation of the village name is from a Sema word *Lanzumo* which means, 'Wait on the Road and Ambush the Enemy'. At present, the village has four *khels*- *Lyinukhel*, *Lazakitokhel*, *Khuluqakhel* and *Ayizhuqakhel*. The village also cultivates ginger for commercial purposes.

**Mishilimi Village:** Mishilimi village is located in Pughoboto sadar under Zunheboto district. The village lies between 25°52'59.913"N latitude and 94°15'34.608"E longitude. Mishilimi village is bounded by Pughoboto town (Zunheboto district) in the North, Lazami village (Zunheboto district) in the South, Mukhalumi village (Zunheboto district) in the East and Tseminyu district in the West. According to the census of India 2011, the village has a total population of 1,446 (741 males and 705 females) and the total household comprises of 319. Mishilimi was called the 'Land of Spirits' as it was believed to have been inhabited by many spirits who made a pact with the village forefathers long time ago to defend the village from enemy attack. The old name of Mishilimi village was Mushulumi village. Oral narrative states that Asu Sheqi had a son named Kati who married the daughter of then Lazami chief (Mishilimi Student's Union, 2008). The wife was pregnant, however even after crossing the expected time for the delivery; she was not able to give birth. Her mother performs a ritual, by spitting on the daughter's pregnant belly and gently touching it. After that she was able to give birth. In Sema language, *Mushu* means 'To Spit' and *Mishi* means 'Pregnant'. The word *Mushu* was not favored by the inhabitants. So they changed it to Mishilimi through a common consensus. The village presently has six *khels*- *Attomi khel*, *Aqami khel*, *Ahemi khel*, *Khakhuluto khel*, *Achemi khel* and *Yepaqami khel* and twenty clans.

Except, Sohomi village (Phek district), all the villages under the study area are located mostly at the mountain tops. In the past except for barter and headhunting, there were hardly any contacts between villages. Each village had to stand and survive by its own. With the progress of time and political and social changes (colonial period, education, Christianity, statehood etc), contacts between villages became more frequent and the association and grouping together within a district or tribe happened. The present study emphasis more on the villages/groups that migrated from Khezhakeno and does not focuses much on the tribe. Thus this chapter provides only the information on the areas pertaining to the study. For better understanding, this chapter highlights the location of the villages visited and some salient features of each village.



**Figure 1: Map of Nagaland**



**Figure 2: Coordinates of all the Study Areas**





**Plate 1: *Zhi Nhaka* located at Khezhakeno village (Phek district)**



**Plate 2: *Khwüno* or *Pfüno* (*Glouthera FrAGRANTISIMA*)**

Courtesy: flowers of india.net



## CHAPTER 3

### ROUTES OF MIGRATION: FROM KHEZHAKENO TO PRESENT HABITATION

One of the earliest literary comments regarding the region of Northeast was made by Mohammed Cazim in 1799 in his account on the geographical location, society, economy and the political set up of the region. He wrote ‘....when we consider the peculiar circumstances of Assam; that the country is spacious, populous and hard to penetrate; that it abounds in perils and danger; that the path and roads are beset with difficulties; that the obstacles to conquest of it are more than can be described; that they are of gigantic appearance, enterprising, intrepid, treacherous, well armed and more numerous than can be conceived; are always prepared for battle;....that the way was obstructed by thick and dangerous bushes and broad and boisterous rivers’ (Cazim 1799: 171). Thus, the various movements undertaken by the Nagas during the pre-colonial must have been very challenging. The Naga Hills must have been covered with thick uncleared forests with no route paved out, disturbing blood-sucking leeches, insects, wild animals, and even the fear enemies always at prey to hunt for heads; early individuals and groups must have moved in fear and vigilance. Even with such obstacles and more, people migrated and settled in different areas of the region, primarily unexplored and new to them. These groups took the guidance of supernatural beliefs and instincts which are reflected in several oral narratives passed on through individuals from generation to generation.

The classic migration, settlement and abandonment associated with Khezhakeno have been approached mainly based on oral narrations indicating widespread dispersal. It has demonstrated that Khezhakeno, one of the ancestral settlements, was once the home for the ancestors of different groups of the Angami, Chakhesang, Lotha, Pochury, Rengma, and Sema Naga tribes. However, as mentioned in chapter one, Khezhakeno was not the only place from where all the groups belonging to these tribes migrated. Migrations also happened from other ancestral sites of Akhwego (Phek district), Kigwema (Kohima district), Khusomi (Phek district), Lüradvü (Phek district), Phor (Phek district), Viswema (Kohima district) and more. Thus,

tribes/villages (inhabitants) are a mixture of different groups who, by undertaking different migration routes, reached the present inhabited area.

While locating the route of migration and settlement from Khezhakeno to their present settlements, the migrants would form a new village or get assimilated into an already existing group/village. Nonetheless, this chapter emphasizes on the route of migration taken by different groups from Khezhakeno.

### 3.1. Khezhakeno and the Formation of Seven Villages

A common narrative states that majority of the Nagas during the course of their migration reached, *Mokhromi* (*Mokhro* in Khezha means 'Boiling,' and *Mi* means 'People') and stayed there for some time. When the Khezhakeno group and the other migrants heard a gurgling or boiling water sound upon reaching, they decided to name the place *Mokhromi*. *Mokhromi* today is known as *Makhel* village, located in Senapati district, Manipur, which is an important site of consideration to understand the Khezhakeno group migration. In *Makhel*, a man named Koza and his wife Kolao, taking the hovering of a bird *Chitou* (swallow) as an omen, took a group of people and decided to move out following the swallow. From *Makhel* they reached the present Khezhakeno site<sup>61</sup>. On reaching Khezhakeno, Koza saw a frog/toad sitting on a flat stone, holding a paddy stalk in its mouth. When the stalk dropped on the stone, it turned into two. Taking this as a good omen and a blessing from *Chükeci-o* (Creator), Koza decided to settle there. Another belief is that Koza saw the sign only after the settlement. According to Akhro<sup>62</sup> (2021), upon reaching Khezhakeno, Koza offered his worship to *Chükeci-o* and settled there with his followers and only then experienced the existence of supernatural power in the flat stone. In the first instance, a hen had eaten up the stalk of grains brought by a frog. Koza killed the hen and collected the grains from the hen's crop, which he later scattered in his field and received a good harvest. He later named the grain, *Fürübe* (See *Plate 3*) which means 'A Hen's Paddy Rice'. *Fürübe* was cultivated by every household in the village<sup>63</sup>. The second instance was when he dried a basket full of paddy grains which by evening had doubled. Because of the significance and ability of the stone, it came to be known as *Tso Tawo or Spirit Stone* (See *Plate 4*).

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<sup>61</sup> Distance measured through Google Earth, from *Makhel* to Khezhakeno is 12 kms. Oral narratives does not talk about any settlement between *Makhel* and Khezhahekeno.

<sup>62</sup> Today it is common to have varied versions on the same story.

<sup>63</sup> The crop is cultivated even at the present time.

An oral narrative<sup>64</sup> suggests that the village's first settlers settled in and around a magical stone which is presently located in Kumuno *khel*. Khezhakeno settlers seeing the ability of the stone took turns to dry the paddy on *Tso Tawo* (Spirit Stone). Because of *Tso Tawo* the people prospered. Unfortunately, one fateful day the stone slab was destroyed, and their prosperity was brought to an end. It is said that, Koza<sup>65</sup> had three sons who would take turns and spread the paddy on *Tso Tawo*. One day the eldest son refused to let his youngest brother spread the paddy even though it was his turn. An elderly woman, seeing the injustice done to the youngest and devised a plan. She collected some dried branches of wild sesame plants (*Keni* in the Kheza language) (See Plate 5) and burned the spirit stone<sup>66</sup>. As a result, the spirit inhabiting the stone vanished into the sky, giving a big thunder-like sound, dividing the stone into pieces and scattering it in different directions. Because of the incident, the magical stone lost its charm, making the settlers leave the village and migrate to different areas. However, some settlers stayed back.

### 3.2. The Formation of Seven Villages

According to oral narratives, because of the destruction of *Tso Tawo* (Spirit Stone), many groups left Khezhakeno at different phases. After the incident, within the village itself, it led to the formation of seven villages. However, Lucy and Zehol (2009) contradict this view and state that population growth led to the formation of six villages surrounding Khezhakeno village.

After their first settlement in Kozabomi, some settled in a new area and formed *Tepfülu* village, also known as *Tepfülumi*. *Tepfülumi* is located on the north-western side of the present Khezhakeno village. Oral narratives state that the village prospered greatly. There lived a family in the village with seven sons headed by their father, Thochu. This family was wealthy and had many capable sons, which made the mother proud. Because of her bragging and not thanking *Chükechi-o* (Creator), *Chükechi-o* was offended and cursed them. Disputes arose between the brothers creating many misunderstandings in the village and making the inhabitants abandon the village.

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<sup>64</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Thochu Koza, Mr. Meze, Mr. Kepfelhou Ladu & Mrs. Terilhou Koza of Khezhakeno village on 18-06-2018.

<sup>65</sup> There is another version where instead of Koza, they have mentioned a family and do not say it is Koza's family.

<sup>66</sup> Different groups, who are connected with the Khezhakeno migration, have the different narratives. Some believes it was Koza's wife while others states that the youngest son have burned *Tso Tawo*.

A group from *Tepfülu*<sup>67</sup> village formed another new village called *Lathsolumi*. The village site is in the southwestern part of the present Khezhakeno village. Unfortunately, this site was also unsuitable for habitation due to termites (*Mekhrü*) eating up the house structure, especially the wooden post. Because of the constant damage by the termites, it was difficult for the villagers to live and they had to abandon the village. *Tepfülu* still exists, but *Lathsolumi* is now an abandoned site with dense jungles.

After *Lathsolumi* was abandoned, various groups migrated to different areas, and those who stayed back formed a new settlement site called *Chilumi* village. The village is located towards the southeast part of the present Khezhakeno village. Unfortunately, it was not a strategic area, providing easy access to enemies who constantly attacked them. In contrast to the above view, Lucy and Zehol (2009) stated that the village was abandoned due to the rivalry between *Kapemi* and *Kozami* groups. Despite the different views, it is accepted that the village was abandoned, and the inhabitants moved to a new settlement site of *Pfülumi* village.

*Pfülumi* village once existed near the first settlement site of Khezhakeno. This first settlement site is currently under *Kumuno khel*, located in the eastern part of Khezhakeno. Unfortunately, the settlers were disturbed by an animal called *Vo-Ngo* (Khezha dialect). Some believes it to be an evil spirit in animal form. Oral sources describe the animal as having human-like fingers and looking like a pig that digs holes in the ground<sup>68</sup>. It was represented as an evil spirit that brings bad luck. This animal destroyed many houses by digging holes around them. The inhabitants thought constructing houses was a waste of time and decided to abandon the village. The inhabitants built a new village called *Chichülumi*, located near the abandoned *Chilumi* village. Unfortunately, an epidemic occurred while staying there, where almost every day, five to six people died. The epidemic became a severe problem for them, and to avoid further demise, the villagers decided to abandon the area.

After abandoning *Chichülumi*, the villagers moved to another site called *Mobvolu* (located below *Tepfülu* village). Near *Mobvolu* village, there existed a lake

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<sup>67</sup> When a person by the name Kachulo tried to first bring Christianity, he was chased out from the village. Kachulo stayed in a jungle (present Tepfülu site) and continued his work of conversion. Once Christianity was accepted, the first Christian Baptist church was constructed in this area. With this, people started resettling in the area and population also grew. Recently, Tepfülu became a separate village.

<sup>68</sup> Even to this day, the villagers believe that those who see the animals will not live long. Examples with names were mentioned to justify the statement. However, on the other hand, *Vo-Ngo* were hunted and consumed in the past.

known as *Pfulie* Lake. One unfortunate day the lake broke out, causing a massive landslide that fell toward *Mobvolu* village. The landslide brought death to many, bringing misfortune to the village. Because of the natural calamity, the site was abandoned. From *Mobvolu*, some decided to go back and settle (join) in their first settlement site, i.e., Khezhakeno, while others migrated to different directions.

Today *Lathsolu* is an inhabited area, *Tepfülu* an existing village and for *Chilumi*, *Pfülumi*, *Chichülumi*, and *Mobvolu*, they are abandoned. After the formation of seven villages, other settlements and migrations also took place. However, not much source is available on which group migrated out of Khezhakeno during this time. The destruction of the spirit stone became the main reason for migration. At one time, in Khezhakeno, migration, settlement, and abandonment might have been a continuous process. Individuals, families, clans, and groups migrated from Khezhakeno. New inhabitants came and settled, and some of the groups that moved out from Khezhakeno returned to the village. Due to all these, the present settlers of Khezhakeno may be a mixture of different groups of people who may also not be direct descendants of Koza<sup>69</sup>.

### 3.3. Signs/Omens' Influence on the Selection of New Settlement Sites

In settlements, especially under permanent settlements, individuals/groups kept specific criteria before selecting a new settlement site. For the Khezhakeno group, a preferred settlement site would be one with good water source, fertile land, and a strategic location for defense. In most cases, even after selection, they would only settle once they had confirmed it through signs/omens, only then they would clear the jungle and form a new village or settle. Some individuals/groups relied entirely on signs and omens, and without any pre-surveying, they would take it as a suitable site for settlement. For the Semas, the inhabitants that intend to migrate should get the blessing from their elders, hoping to avail fortune in the newly formed village.

During migration, individuals/groups carried along with them animals and specific items as ritualistic significance. These acted as a tool to help them find new settlement site. Dogs and fowls were the most common animals the migrants took along with them for site identification

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<sup>69</sup>Group interview conducted with Mr. Thochu Koza, Mr. Meze, Mr. Kepfelhou Ladu & Mrs. Terilhou Koza of Khezhakeno village on 18-06-2018.

and confirmation. The other item includes leaves (of specific plants), some manmade objects, and supernatural stones. Using Dogs, fowl, and stones, acted as a mediator between man and spirits, the spirits would guide them and show them the location best suited for settlement. Once a group/individual reached a marked site, they wait for signs like the making noise by the animals, leaves tearing up, and stones falling to the ground etc. Until and unless such signs were shown or fulfilled, they would roam around and only temporarily settle.

<b>Signs and Omens through</b>			
<b>Animals/Birds</b>	<b>Items Carried</b>	<b>Fire Smoke</b>	<b>Interpretation of Dreams</b>
Khezhakeno, Phek: Bird, Frog/Toad	Lazami, Zhunoboto: Leaf (Carried item) and Stone	Kandenyu, Tseminyu	Mishilimi, Zhunoboto
Mishilimi, Zhunoboto: Dog			
Kithaga/Nsunnyu, Tseminyu: Female pig (saw)	Ighanumi, Zhunoboto: Stone, Leaf and White rooster	Tesopenyu, Tseminyu	Phensenyu, Tseminyu

**Table 2: Signs and Omens referred to at the time of village formation**

Some groups would even take fire flame from their previous village while forming a new village. Some individuals/groups, after surveying the area, performed rituals, only then they settled. The following are some signs, omens, beliefs and rituals observed by the Nagas before settling at a particular place.

### **3.3.1. Signs through Animals**

Animals played an important role in helping people find a suitable settlement sites. They believed that being led by animals/birds was a good sign. Khezhakeno village, Mishilimi village, and Kithaga/Nsunnyu village are some examples where animals/birds acted as mediators and helped the settlers establish their villages (present). Considering the hovering of a swallow, Koza took his people and led them toward Khezhakeno. It was through a frog which made Koza

decide to settle and form a village. Visho and Kisho would go to a certain site<sup>70</sup> along with their dog to hunt for deer. The dog used to vanish for some time whenever they went there, and upon returning, it would be all wet. To know the water source's whereabouts, they wrapped husks in some leaves and tied it on the dog's tail. The husk left trails for them, and following the trail, they could find the water source. Finding it as a congenial place for habitation, they decided to abandon Phuyeto (the earlier settlement) and settle there. They also invited their other brother, Sheqi, and the three brothers together formed the present Mishilimi village (Zunheboto district).

Founders of the Kithaga/Nsуну groups were led to the site by a sow (female pig). As per narration<sup>71</sup>, a saw did not return to the village for several days. The owner of the saw<sup>72</sup> searched around their village (Aghoshü) but could not trace it. They thought that some wild animals might have killed it. However, the sow returned to the village after nine days. Since the saw was pregnant and had given birth while roaming around, to find the piglets, the owner sprayed husk on the pig's body so that it would leave trails for them to follow. Following the trails, the owner finds the piglets near Tang *Khel*, Kithagha village, Tseminyu district (1st settlement site). The men surveyed the area and found it to be an excellent location for habitation. Taking the pig and the piglets as a blessing, they decided to settle over there. They also invited some clansmen and formed a new village.

### 3.3.2. Signs Produced through the Items Carried

Some groups believed that carrying certain items having a supernatural ability will guide them to the rightful site. An example can be drawn from the narrative of Lozu of Lazami when he decided to migrate from Khezhakeno. His older brother Koza instructed him to carry a leaf locally known as *Ammutsüsümi* (See Plate 6) and search for a piece of stone that bursted out from *Tso Tawo*. Lozu was told to beat the stone fragment by the *Ammutsüsümi* leaf, which then will start moving.

Following the stone, Lozu was able to find a suitable site where he formed his own village. As per the narration, Lozu followed the stone till the present Chesezü<sup>73</sup> village, Phek district. When Igha of Ighanumi (Zunheboto district) decided to migrate and form a new village,

<sup>70</sup> In the past, the place is known by the name by another name, '*Ajukumunatu*'.

<sup>71</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Khinyi Woch of Kithaga/Nsуну village on 03/09/21.

<sup>72</sup> Saw's owner was said to be the Jimu and Woch brothers.

<sup>73</sup> The stone has been retrieved, and is said to be presently kept near the Chesezü Baptist Church, Chesezü village.

his father gave him a stone (*Aghatu*), a white rooster (*Avudu Kimiji*), a traditional fire-making tool (*Achichi*), and a leaf locally known as *Ajaphaje* (picture required). The leaf should be enough to hold the stone (*Aghatu*). Igha was instructed to keep walking until the leaves tears up and the stone falls; the white rooster would crow, all at the same time. Once these signs were conveyed, Igha could form a village in that particular site<sup>74</sup>.

### 3.3.3. Signs through Smoke

Khezhakeno group also checked for signs and omens by making fire and observing the direction of the smoke direction. The intended settlers would first make a fire at the desired location where he/they wishes to settle down. If the smoke goes straight upwards, it was considered a good omen, but they believed it to be bad if it disperses. When Tsela from Tseminyu reached the present Tesophenyu village, he confirmed it through smoke by making fire.

### 3.3.4. Signs through Interpretation of Dreams

Dreams played a significant role in selecting sites and settlements. Groups before deciding to settle would usually spend a night in the preferred location with the hope that the spirits there would talk to them in their dreams. Nagas have strong faith in their dreams and their interpretation. In the case of Mishilimi<sup>75</sup>, the three founders, Kisho, Sheqi, and Visho, spent a night on the site, and each one saw different dreams<sup>76</sup>. Sheqi dreamt of a python and a king bee who requested him not to kill them and, in return, promised that if any enemy attack occurred, they would protect the village. Taking Sheqi's dream as a good sign, they decided to form a village there. As predicted through Sheqi's dream, whenever the enemy attacks the village, wild pythons and king bees help them fight against the enemies. Even the Keppen brothers Kenghweni (elder) and Braye (younger) did not just settle at the present Phensenyu village. Kenghweni, the elder brother, decided to spend a night at the location and in hope that the spirits would talk with him through dream. Getting positive signs, they decided to go and settle there.

### 3.3.5. Other Requirements

<sup>74</sup> On happening that, he founded the new village, Ighanumi.

<sup>75</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Akhalu Sheqi & Mr. Zaniu Sheqi of Mishilimi Village on 09-02-21 & 12-02-21.

<sup>76</sup> In Visho's dream, he saw a male figure with a female name (Ghuvili). This dream was taken as a bad sign, and the Mishilimi people believe that this dream is yet to happen. Kisho, on the other hand, dreamt of a particular rat species called *Pokuna* in the Sema language. *Pokuna* means "defeated and scattered," and so predicts that the inhabitant villagers in the future will be scattered.



Before settlement, the Wokha<sup>77</sup> village (Wokha) ensured that the required clans were present. The village is said to have been formed by seven clans; Murie, Kikon, Tungoe, Kithan, Humtsoe, Yanthan and Ezung. Their first priest, or the head of the village, was Shimangtong Kithan. According to the oral narrative, Longsa village existed when the Wokha men planned to form a new village; some members went to Longsa village and invited the Kikon clan to come and stay with them. As for Meriema<sup>78</sup> village (Kohima), they gave importance to Thevo (Older brother) and Thepa (Younger brother) traditions when settling in a new site. Thepa and Thevo division was said to have been practiced since ancestral times. The three village founders of Meriema, Sua and Keyio belong to the Thepa group, and Usau as Thevo. A Sumi village oral narration states that Zhesa, the founder of the Jesami village (Originally called Zhesami, but the British changed the name to Jesami), initially took fire from the Sumi village and migrated to form a new village. Unfortunately, the fire went off before he could reach his destination. As Sumi village was very far, Zhesa decided to take fire from Losami, knowing that Losami originated from Sumi. He took the fire and formed Jesami village. Possibly three reasons can be identified for such actions wherein the migrants carry the flame from the former village:

1. The fire was not readily accessible in the past, and specific tools were required to make fire. As in the case of Igha of Ighanumi, Igha's father gave him a fire-making tool when he decided to form his village.
2. Fire taken from a parent village was a sign of blessing from the elders.
3. Gesture of taking fire reflects the migrant's acknowledgment and respect towards his former village.

### **3.4. Naming of Villages**

The custom of naming the village differs from group to group and village to village. Sometimes, a village uses the founder's name as the village's name. Nevertheless, if the founder leaves the village or fails to follow certain customary practices, the village could be named after the first priest or second inhabitant's name. Nagas were also influenced by nature or certain significant events that prompted them to name their village after such occurrences.

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<sup>77</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Ezamo Kikon of Wokha village on 18-04-2019.

<sup>78</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Sedevi Shüya of Meriema Village on 15/12/21.

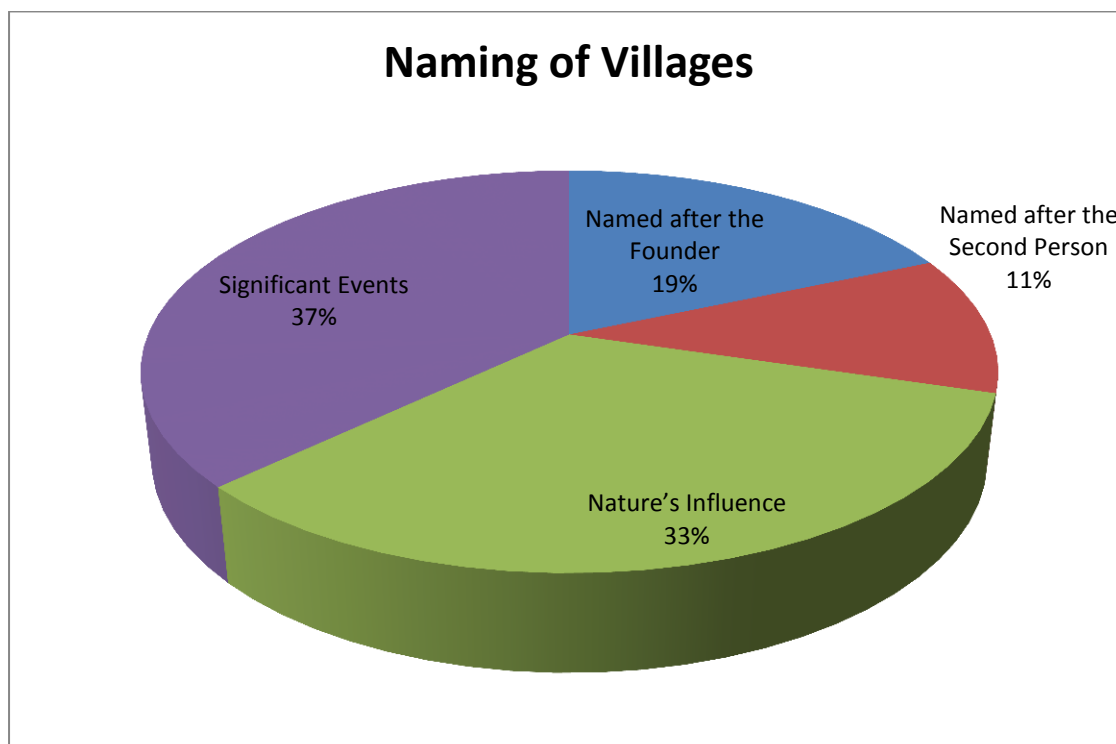
Sl. No.	Naming of Village		
1.	<b>Named after the Founder</b>	<b>Village names</b>	<b>Founders of the village</b>
		Ighanumi village	Igha
		Zhuneboto	
		Khezhakeno village, Phek.	Koza
		Lazami village, Zhuneboto	Lozu
		Sumi village, Zhuneboto	Süpu
2.	<b>Named after the Second Person</b>	Tseminyu village, Tseminyu	Tsenmhi
		<b>Village names</b>	<b>Village named after a person other than the founder</b>
		Ghokimi village, Zhuneboto	Ghoki, a grandfather
		Meriema village, Kohima	Merie(thor)was a huge man
3.	<b>Nature's Influence</b>	Yoruba village, Phek	Yori/Yorü, the second inhabitant of the village
		<b>Village names</b>	<b>Village named after a natural objects</b>
		Khonoma village, Kohima	Named after a flower called <i>Khwüno</i>
		Khwenphen village, Tseminyu	Named after a wild banana orchard
		Kohima village, Kohima	Named after a wildflower called <i>Kewhi</i>
		Longsa village, Wokha	A village is known as the 'Land of Stones'
		Mathikru village, Phek	A village named after 'Salt'
		Meluri village, Phek	A village called as 'Land of Abundance'
		Khumiesü village, Phek	The village was a Tiger inhabited area once
		Tesophenyu village, Tseminyu	The founder came across a huge colony of Ants
		Tiyi Longchun, Wokha	The mountain where water is available

4.	<b>Significant Events</b>	<b>Village names</b>	<b>Significant events: Meaning of the village name</b>
		Honoho Yanton, Tseminyu	Mountain resembles the crown of a fowl
		Humtso village, Wokha	Humtsoe clan majority
		Kithagha/Nsunnyu village, Tseminyu	Meaning, 'Let us go up to that hilltop and settle there'.
		Mishilimi, Zhuneboto	Meaning, 'Pregnant'
		Pfutseromi village, Phek	Meaning, 'New Village'
		Phensenyu village, Tseminyu	Meaning, 'New People Village'
		Sohomi village, Phek	Meaning, 'Hunter People'
		Terogunyu village, Tseminyu	Named after Mount Terogvüthün
		Wokha village, Wokha	Meaning 'Census or Recounting'
		Yikhum village, Wokha	Meaning 'Came Back and Performed Ritual'

**Table 3: The reasons prompting each village in naming the villages**

As portrayed (Table 3), different conditions prompted the inhabitants to name their village accordingly. Some of the old villages prefer to use the founder name as village names, like Igha of Ighanumi, Koza of Khezhkeno, Lozu of Lazami, Süpu of Sümi village, and, Tsenmhi of Tseminyu village. Some villages also use people's names, like the Ghoki of Ghokimi village, Merie(thor) of Meriema village, and Yori/Yorü of Yoruba village. These people are not the founders of the village but men with good status in society. Many villages also name their village after being impressed with nature's beauty, Landmarks, resources, and forces. Khonoma and Kohima villages were impressed with the wildflowers that once grew in abundance in their present location. Villages of Khwenphen, Longsa, Mathikru, and Meluri found an abundance of resources in the form of food, stones, and salts. In the case of Khumiesü and Tesophenyu villages, the tigers and vast colonies of ants influenced the name of their villages. In contrast, Tiyi Longchun, an abandoned village in the Wokha district, was named after pond water availability in a mountain. Most of the villages that have migration affiliation with Khezhakeno

gave names to their village after experiencing or fulfilling some important significant events. Villages of Honoho Yanton, Humtso, Kithagha, Mishilimi, Pfutseromi, Phensenyu, Sohomi, Terogunyu, Wokha, and Yikhum belonging to Lotha, Rengma, and Chakhesang tribes used similar methods to name their present village names respectively.



**Figure 3: The Chart shows the percentages of different reasons applied while naming a village**

Using twenty-seven villages associated with Khezhakeno migration as a sample, the above chart (Figure 3) shows that the inhabitants, while naming their village, were primarily influenced by significant events on the designated site where the first inhabitants intended to set up a village. Nature also plays a vital role for the Nagas, even in village naming. Different living and non-living things mentioned here which don't relate to social and religious functions were used as references in village naming (See Table 3). Though practiced, it was also not common to name the village after the second person who was not its founder. Instead, the inhabitants prefer to use the founder's name as the village name.

### 3.5. Routes of Migration

Migration from Khezhakeno occurred in different waves. As Pou (2006) mentioned, ancient migrations had occurred along the rivers, some groups migrating from Khezhakeno also chose the migratory routes adjacent to the rivers. Likewise, rivers like Dzü and Sidzü, Doyang, and Tizu played a significant role in Naga migration. The research also reveals that Naga usually preferred to settle at those sites previously settled and abandoned. Sometimes it can be more than one group, re-settling (occupying) an abandon site. The routes undertaken by different groups migrating from Khezhakeno also shows similar patterns and directions.

### 3.5.1. Angami (Kohima District)

Angamis mostly points towards Khezhakeno, Kigwema and Viswema as the places from where they migrated. So for this group, Khezhakeno was not the only site from where they migrated and formed settlements at their present habitation. Oral narratives state that some groups from Khezhakeno moved out and migrated to their present villages. Such villages are known today as Kohima village, Meriema village, and Khonoma village (all under Angami tribe). However, each groups migrated separately and at different points in time.

Kohima	Meriema	Khonoma
Khezhakeno		
Tsierazou (Kigwema)	Kohima (Dapfütsüma <i>khel</i> ): Rested here	Kigwema
		Jotsoma
Kohima	Meriema	Khonoma

**Table 4: Route of Migration undertaken by some Angami Tribe**

**Kohima Village:** According to the oral narratives<sup>79</sup>, while staying at Makhel, one group went towards the Chakhesang area (Khezhakeno) and another migrated towards the present Kigwema and Viswema areas (Kohima district). The first hypothesis suggests that some groups belonging to the present Angami tribe branched out from Kezami (Khezhakeno village). Group of people

<sup>79</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Meguoo Mechülho of Kohima village on 13/02/2019.

came out from a cave in the eastern part of the world. From there, a man named Thepau, surviving a snake bite, settled in Mekhrora or Sopfümia (*Makhel*). Different people joined, and as people multiplied, one of the descendants of Thepau, called Koza, left *Makhel* along with his followers and formed Khezhakeno village. As Koza's people began to prosper and multiply, it resulted in the formation of several villages. Slowly the population grew up to seven thousand. However, the land was insufficient for them. Thus the people migrated to different areas in search of land and food. Around that time, some of the inhabitants climbed up to a mountain top in the village called as 'Gavunyuo'<sup>80</sup>, where one can see the present Kohima village. It is the highest peak and a sacred forest, located three kilometers south of Khezhakeno. The oral narrative says that Khezhakeno inhabitants used to climb this mountain peak and scout for new settlements from there. Looking towards the horizon, they saw a type of grain called '*Akube*' growing in abundance, and this prompted some of the villagers to move towards the ripened '*Akube*', and they settled there. The fertile location is said to be the Kohima village area which Khezhakeno people called '*Kabvii*,' and they called the Kohima people '*Kabvümi*'.

According to another oral narrative<sup>81</sup>, a man named Tsiera noticed the present Kohima village from 'Gavunyuo' hill (located at Khezhakeno) and said to have surveyed the area three times. On his first visit to Kewhira (Kohima), he trimmed a tall tree as a marker of the site, however on his return; he could not see the trimmed tree from *Gavunyuo*. On his second visit, he made a fire to make the smoke visible. The fire-making also failed to locate the site. On his third visit, he made a bamboo mat using a small variety of bamboo (*Tekhrrie*) and hung it on top of a tall tree. This time, he was able to locate the bamboo mat. From then, he was convinced that he had selected the right location and decided to set up a village there. On his way toward Kihwera, he stayed at Tsierazou<sup>82</sup>. He also met a person<sup>83</sup> from Meriema village who was planning to form a village like him. Together they reached the site and settled over there<sup>84</sup>. When the man questioned Tsiera the name of the village, he said he would call it *Kewhir* village, which means 'welcoming all people to come and settle'. Another hypothesis<sup>85</sup> is that the founder of Kohima

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<sup>80</sup> This same place is also mentioned by Lucy and Zehol (2009), wherein they called the place *Kabviihou*, which derives its name from two words, '*Kabvii*', meaning 'Kohima', and '*Nhou*', meaning 'Sitting place'.

<sup>81</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Thinuozequoie Dzüvichü of Kohima Village on 06/10/2019.

<sup>82</sup> An area located between Kigwema village and Mima village in the Kohima district

<sup>83</sup> Name unknown

<sup>84</sup> Both selected a plot each at the present location in Dapfüsumia (D. *Khel*), Kohima village.

<sup>85</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Meguo Mechülho of Kohima village on 13/02/2019 & Mr. Thinuozequoie Dzüvichü of Kohima Village on 06/10/2019.

village was Usou and Rhieo, along with their sister Mesei-ü and her son Tsiera. Contradicting Mesei-ü and Tsiera's relationship, another narration states that Tsiera had brought his wife from Mekroma village. When his wife died, he married another wife, Mesei-ü, the sister of Usuo and Rhieo, and had four sons named Viyielie, Zushu, Khriemenyu, and Ketsezie. When they were at Kigwema (before reaching the present Kohima village), they saw from afar a massive tree on a hillock. They started to search for the location of the massive tree on a hillock which took them seven days to locate. Eventually, they found the tree and decided to migrate and settle in the area now known as Kohima village. Some believe that the village's founder was Rhieo, so *Kewhira* was named after him. There is a common consensus that the inhabitants of Kohima village came from the ancestral sites of Khezhakeno and Kigwema<sup>86</sup>. As the population expanded, some inhabitants further migrated to formed new villages like the Thizama village who acknowledges Kohima village as their father.

After the death of Tsiera, his wife took care of their four sons. Later many came and settled in the village. Soon Kewhira village became prosperous, and the village wanted to conduct a village feast. As per tradition, the founder was supposed to do the rituals of the feast. Since Tsiera was dead, his wife had no right to undertake the rituals, the people of Kewhira unanimously extended their blessings to Mesei-ü, and authorized her to do the rituals of the first village feast (*Sa*) along with her eldest son, Viyielie. Since then, the inhabitants have celebrated the village feast (*Sa*), and till today, only female members of the descendants of Tsiera are allowed to conduct the village feast. This unique relaxation and blessings extended to the descendants of Tsiera supports that Tsiers may be the founder of Kewhira village. At present, the descendants of Tsiera comprise the clan of Dzüvichü, Yhome, Vizo, Tsiekha, and Mepfuo. They inhabited lower L. *khel*.

**Meriema Village:** According to oral narratives<sup>87</sup> of Meriema, Naga migration occurred from the east direction. The Nagas are said to have stayed at '*Hedzüra*'<sup>88</sup>, which believed is to be in Mongolia. Nagas further migrated and settled in Myanmar (Burma). While staying in Myanmar, there were two Naga brothers named Tani and Kherenuo. One of the two brothers<sup>89</sup> stayed

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<sup>86</sup>Even though each group does not agree with the village's founder

<sup>87</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Zaripralie Vilhou of Meriema village on 20/12/2021.

<sup>88</sup> A very windy place

<sup>89</sup>Though it is unknown which one stayed behind.

behind in Myanmar, and the other brother migrated toward the Naga Hills. The man who first reached the present Khusomi village (Kesora) and established this village was Keteo. He had two sons, Vadeo (older brother) and Kevi (younger brother). Kevi migrated towards Lotha direction while the older brother Vadeo migrated to *Makhel*. Vadeo carried with him a spiritual stone, cow and fowl. As he reached *Makhel*, the cow made noise, fowl crowed, and he also heard the sound of water, so he formed a village and settled there. Vadeo's eldest son is said to have migrated to Khezhakeno and stayed there. But it is not sure whether he founded Khezhakeno or the settlers did.

Meriema village is said to have been founded by three men named Suya, Keyio and Usau<sup>90</sup>. From Khezhakeno, the present Meriema village site was visible, and before coming and settling, these three men surveyed the area. While exploring, to mark the area, they decided to peel the branch of a wild fruit *Zomhou* (*Rhus Chinensis* Mill) (See **Plate 7**) and erect it on a favored site which would help to locate the site from Khezhakeno. After this, the three men decided to move out of Khezhakeno. It is said that, on their way, they rested for a while at Shadze<sup>91</sup> and later moved to the present Meriema site and formed the village. At present, inhabitants from other villages also came and settled in the village and also, many from the village migrated out as well. Some new offshoot villages are -Tsephema, Viphome, Chounu, Kedima, Kohima and Chedema.

**Khonoma Village:** Oral narratives<sup>92</sup> state that the inhabitants of Khonoma migrated from Khezhamia (Khezhakeno) and before moving towards Khonoma; they have stopped and settled temporarily in Kigwerie (Kigwema). Yhokha (2022) believes that the Khonoma and Kigwema could have migrated together and settled close by once where, Khonoma settled at the current Kigwema village and the present inhabitants of Kigwema settled at Seiterhaphe<sup>93</sup>. Over some time, with increasing population and looking at the fertile lands Khonoma benefits, the upper inhabitants, i.e., Kigwema, succeeded in making the Khonoma people migrate and move out from the present Kigwema village. After pushing the Khonoma inhabitants out from the

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<sup>90</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Sedevi Shüya of Meriema Village on 15/12/21.

<sup>91</sup> Shadze was a place where one stood and howled located in present Dapfütsuma *khel* of Kohima village. During this time, Kihwera village was not formed and was a forested area.

<sup>92</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Vikehie Mor of Khonoma village on 06-05-2023.

<sup>93</sup> Kigwema group settling at Seiterhaphe and the literal meaning of the village name is supported by a narrative provided by Mr. Tsilie Yhoshü of Kigwema Village on 27-11-21.



previous village, the Kigwema inhabitants came down and inhabited the site. For this reason, the village became known as Kigwema, where *Ki* means 'House', and *Gwe* means 'Occupy'. The present Kigwema inhabitants occupied the houses vacated by the original inhabitants, i.e. Khonoma people. On the way, Khonoma group temporarily settled at Jotshümie (Jotsoma) and migrated to the present Khonoma village.

Oral narratives state that all the present inhabitants of Khonoma do not affiliate themselves with Khezhakeno. Though most of the Khonoma people migrated from Khezhakeno and Kigwema, there are two conflicting hypotheses regarding the founding of the village. One group suggests that the founder came from Khezhakeno, while another believes a man from Kigwema along with a friend established Khonoma village. One group came from Kigwema to Khonoma and later moved around present Sema and Rengma area, after which this group returned to Khonoma village.

### 3.5.2. Chakhesang and Pochury (Phek District)

Chakhesang tribe points out Khezhakeno, Viswema and Kigwema to be the villages from where they got dispersed. Under the Phek district, the researcher collected oral narratives and literary sources from the Pfutseromi, Sumi, Thetsümi, Chozuba, Yoruba, Kikruma and Sohomi villages. These are some villages in regard to the early migration of the tribe.

**Pfutseromi Village:** Pfutseromi village was formed<sup>94</sup> by Medonyi, Zano (Lenhu, Mero), Elu, Rasuo (Nachu), Puluo, and Sachu (Kapfo) who came along with their wives and children from *Etsemi* (Khezhakeno). An oral narrative<sup>95</sup> states that while staying at Khezhakeno, these six people have already claimed the land, but they did not directly settle in the present Pfutseromi site. Initially, they went to Lekromi village, stayed there for some time, and then moved up to form Pfutseromi village. Another narration<sup>96</sup> states that from Khezhakeno, Medonyi migrated with his father, Chichü but later decided to live separately. Chichü went to settle at Leshemi village, and Medonyi settled at Pfutseromi village. The present Pfutseromi site was said to have been covered entirely with cane in the past. Later as the village prospered, people from different

<sup>94</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Mehomvü Mero & Mr. Diwelhie Kapfo of Pfutseromi village on 8-1-2020.

<sup>95</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Lonyo Mero of Pfutseromi village on 10/01/2020.

<sup>96</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Kedounyi Medo of Pfutseromi village on 08-01-2020.

areas came to live with them. The Mero (Zano) clan of Pfutseromi village believes that their lineage (then called *Etsemi*) is to be found still living in Khezhakeno.

Pfutseromi	Sohomi	Sumi	Yoruba	Thetsümi	Chozuba
Khezhakeno					
Lekromi	Kontsunyü (Kandinu)	Leshemi	Khusomi	Tshü-kelhilu (Zavami)	Zeliang area
	Cezurü (Cheshüirüku)	Kami- Lekhromi			Jotsoma
					Kigwema
Pfutseromi	Shihaho (Mütsale)	Runguzu (Kikruma)	Sukemüvo (Abandoned Site)	Venuhba (Thetsümi)	Meriema
					Chedema
	Kütsape (Kütsapo)	Sumi	Yoruba		Chiesezu
	Khuza				Runguzu
	Tsukhuno (Khutsokhuno)				Khusomi
	<b>Rehope (Sohomi)</b>				Chozuba

**Table 5: Route of Migration undertaken by some Chakhesang tribe**

**Sumi Village:** Oral narratives<sup>97</sup> of the Sumi village<sup>98</sup> state that they came from *Makhel* and stayed at Khezhakeno for some time. The groups decided to move from Khezhakeno and wandered around, settling temporarily at different places before permanently settling at the present Sumi village site. From Khezhakeno, they temporarily stopped for a while at Leshemi

<sup>97</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Kekhwelhilo Tara, Mr. Neitelo Rhakho & Mr. Zütsanyi Tara of Sümi village on 09-01-2020.

<sup>98</sup> Sumi village originally belonged to the Sema group but during the course of migration, this group did not migrated with the majority Sema group and reached the present site in Phek district.

after which they stayed in an area above present Kami and Lekhromi villages (Phek district). Kami village narration supports this view where they mention the Sumi group being settled above the Kami village and later shifted below it. From Kami-Lekhromi, they further moved forward and settled in a place called Ranuzu, located below present Kikruma village (Phek district). From there, they migrated further; crossed Pfutsero via a site called Aphothibo or Rakhube, and reached the present Sumi village. The inhabitants named the village Sumi, after their leader, Suppi or Süpu, wherein, in Sema language, *Su(ppi)* is the name of the village founder, and *Mi* means 'People,' thus Sumi means 'People of Suppi.'

Sumi village was once a powerful village and the neighboring villages acknowledge it as the oldest village in the area. At one point, Sumi had 300 households, and people continued to grow. Later a man named Lele selected a new *Mowo* (priest) and formed Lelie *khel* with 400 houses. So the village had in total of 700 households. Unfortunately, the number of families in the village declined rapidly when the *Mowo* relationship with the villagers became stranded. It was a common practice that the whole village went for community fishing every year. *Mowo* would stay in the village. As per tradition, *Mowo* was supposed to get the biggest fish. Once, some boys hesitated to give the best fish to *Mowo* and took turns beating the fish on a stone before giving it to him. When *Mowo* was about to cook the fish, he noticed that the fish was smashed, so he questioned the villagers but did not get any satisfactory answer. It so happen that an orphan told *Mowo* that he knew how the fish got smashed and narrated the whole story. On learning the reason, *Mowo's* behavior towards the villagers became very harsh. Due to his ill temper, some of villagers moved out of the village without informing him. Some stayed back, but many migrated to different directions. Those who migrated comprised mainly Lelie *Khel*. Some have migrated toward the Ighanumi, Chisolimi, and Lazami villages of the Zunhoboto district, Losami village (Phek district) and Jessami village (Ukhrul district). Some went towards the Manipur side and settled at a place known as Chethatsukhomi<sup>99</sup> and called themselves *Reme*.

**Thetsümi Village:** According to Venuh (2014), a person name Venuh (Khezhaz know him as Whenu) migrated from *Makhel and* reached Tshemi/Etsemi (Khezhakeno). He stayed there for some time but later migrated towards the Northeast and reached an area known as Tshü-kelhilu, located near present Zavami village (Phek district). While migrating, he carried along with him a

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<sup>99</sup> Location unknown

rooster and a charmed stone and decided to stay there. because as he reached the location, the charming stone rolled down, and the rooster crowed showing a good sign. Unfortunately, the place was infested with fleas, which made him to move out to a new site, Venuhba<sup>100</sup> (Venuhba means ‘Venuh's Place’) where he permanently settled down.

**Chozuba Village:** A monolith erected (see Plate 7) at Chozuba village (Phek district) mentions the migration of three clans which provides detailed information on the genealogy of these clans. It mentions that the ancestors of the Luruo, Nyekha, and Phesao clans migrated from Mongolia, crossed China, and then entered Burma (Myanmar). From Myanmar, they reached Khezhakeno and went towards the Zeliang area, Peren district (Location unknown). From the Zeliang area, the group returned back and settled at Jotsoma village (Kohima district) for some time. After abandoning Jotsoma, they further migrated towards and settled at Kigwema village and Meriema village (Kohima district), which were already existing. The group further moved and settled at a location presently known as Chedema village (Kohima district), and after temporarily settling there, they went and settled at Chiesezu village (Phek district). Luruo, Nyekha, and Phesao clans have also stayed at Runguzu village and Khusomi village (Phek district). From these two places, they migrated and permanently settled in the present villages of Chozuba, Suthozu, and Yoruba.

**Yoruba Village:** A man named Posenyi Phesao founded Yoruba<sup>101</sup> village around 1753<sup>102</sup>. He came from Chesezü and founded the Yoruba village, and in 1773, another name named Dihochrü Kheso, who also came from Chesezü, established a new Yoruba village. Oral narratives state that Posenyi was assaulted by a group of men belonging to the Lohemi clan from Phüyo village (located below Thevopisü village) at one point in time. He sought justice but did not get much support from his fellow villagers. Feeling humiliated, he moved out of the Yoruba village, migrated to Sethazu Nawe (Old) village, and settled there. After Posenyi, a man named Yori/Yorü Veswüh from Jakhama came to Yoruba. However, before reaching Yoruba, he stayed at Chesezü for some time. Yorü had three sons; one stayed at Yoruba, one went to Chethazu, and the third went to Khetsa. Yori was also a warrior, so he traveled to many places. He went to Khutsa and from there to Porba. Later, Yori went and established Phek village. There he married a new wife, and even to this day, his descendants live in Phek. Since Posenyi left the village,

<sup>100</sup> Present Thetsümi village (Phek district),

<sup>101</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Zapra Chakhesang of Yoruba village on 13-03-2023.

<sup>102</sup> Oral narratives states that by the time the Khezhakeno migrant came, the Yoruba village was already well established.

Yori became the first chief priest of the Yoruba village. The village later came to be called after Yori's name. Another man named Keyietsomi came from Kikruma via Chesezu and later settled in a Yoruba village. As Yori migrated elsewhere in his latter days, Keyietsomi became the village's next chief. The Lohemi group also came from Sakraba- Zanebu-Thevopisü-Phüyo and settled at Yoruba Nasa (New) village. Oral narratives (Zapra) state that from Khezhakeno, during an epidemic, the Demo clan, which is part of the Shijoh clan (in the Chokri dialect, Shijoh means Khezha), came and settled at Khusomi village. From this clan, Rudemo went to Sükemüvo (presently an abandoned village) and settled there for some time. In the Chokri dialect, *Sü* is called 'Semas' and *Kemuvo*, meaning 'Priest'; Sükemüvo means a village ruled by a Sema priest. Later, when others abandoned Sükemüvo, Rudemo also decided to leave the village, but while returning to Chozuba or Yoruba (closely located), Rüdemo died due to bleeding. His sons and descendants call themselves as Demo who still resides in Yoruba village. However, the monoliths at Chozuba depict that the Yoruba group migrated along with Chozuba and Suthozu, where the ancestors of Luruo, Nyekha, and Phesao migrated together, crossing Mongolia- China- Burma (Myanmar) - Khezhakeno village - Zeliang area- Jotsoma village- Kigwema village- Meriema village- Chedema village- Chiesezu village- Runguzu village- Khusomi village and towards their present inhabited villages.

**Sohomi Village:** Oral narratives of Sohomi states that the group stayed at *Makhel* for some time before migrating to Khezhakeno. From there, they relocated to Tsesezu<sup>103</sup> (Rathuküsa or Kathusa). After settling at Tsesezu for a certain period, they migrated to a Rengma village called Kontsunyü (Kandinu)<sup>104</sup>. Sohomi of the present Chakhesang tribe, Lephori, and Meluri of the current Pochury tribe used to occupy the lower *khel* of Kontsunyü village, Tseminyu district, during the early time. At Kontsunyü, a white antelope/stag used to come near their village. Another narration states that the white stag entered the village and jumped around (Rengma, 2018), while some suggest that the stag walked over the grains<sup>105</sup>, where the womenfolk were drying paddy. Another narration from Lephorivillage further states that the stag was destroying their gardens. The men folk of Sohomi, Lephori, and Meluri decided to hunt down the animal but failed to catch and kill it. The three groups chased the white antelope/stag for nearly three days

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<sup>103</sup> Location unknown

<sup>104</sup> Presently located in Tseminyu district

<sup>105</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Khinyi Woch of Kithaga/Nsunyu village on 03-09-21.

but could not find it. By then, it was too late to return to the village, and they decided to spend a night in a bamboo grove. They were unable to catch the stag and, at the same time, faced food shortages. Surprisingly, when they cut the bamboo for shelter, wine and rice came out of the bamboo. So they decided to settle there and named that place Cezurü<sup>106</sup> (Cheshüirüku)<sup>107</sup>. Lephori narrative contradicts this view and opines that finding rice and beer out of the bamboo occurred at Metsale/ Mütsale<sup>108</sup>, which they took as a sign of prosperity.

After some time, the inhabitants abandon Cezurü and migrate to a different location. Remains of handmade pots can still be found while digging in this area. The group then stayed at present Metsale/ Mütsale village, Phek district (*Amitsa* means 'Ant' and *Mitsalu* means 'Ant Nest'), but could not stay there for long because the place was full of ants, which spoiled their food and vegetables. From there, they decided to change their location and migrated to a place presently called Kütsape village, Phek district. (*Kütsape* means 'Place where you sit' and *Pe* means 'Sit'). Familiar oral narratives of Lephori, Meluri, and Sohomi state that, at Kütsape, a king had three sons. Unfortunately, these three brothers used to have conflicts, and so the king thought that they would not be able to stay together. One fine day, the king killed a buffalo and fed his sons. The king divided the buffalo tongue into three and gave it to his sons. The youngest son (Sohimi) got the tip of the buffalo tongue, the eldest son (Lephori) got the innermost part of it, and the middle son (Meluri) got the center portion. Thus, the language-speaking tone of these three brothers changed from there. After the feast, the king asked his three sons to go their own way and form their villages.

From Kütsape, the Sohomi group went and settled for some time at a place presently called Khuza village, Phek district, and from there, they moved to Tsukhuno (Khutsokhuno) village, Phek district. Sohomi group later migrated to Khevüso<sup>109</sup> and temporarily settled there. At Khevüso, the Sohomi group was frequently attacked by a tiger, affecting the inhabitants' lives. The oral narration states that this tiger was killed by a man named Lüsüthi, after which the place was renamed as Palachi (*Palachi* means 'Call Again').

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<sup>106</sup> Located below Dzülhami village, Phek district

<sup>107</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Venuzo Neinu, Mr. Retsathi Nuwiry & Mr. Nucitso Nuwiry of Sohomi village on 05-05-23.

<sup>108</sup> Mütsale village is a village located under Phek district. The village lies National Highway 702A.

<sup>109</sup> Location unknown

From Palachi, the group moved and settled at a new site called Terehaku or Khakhuzi (located by the bank of river Tizu). Here the population grew so fast that they were around 700 households. As they became prosperous and powerful, the people became arrogant. Still, after some time, the inhabitants were forced to abandon the village for two reasons: an epidemic occurred, killing many people. Secondly, the village was infested with blood-sucking mosquitoes, making living conditions unbearable. From there, the villagers migrated to different directions. At that time, one group of 22 households migrated toward the present Rehope (Sohomi) village and settled there permanently.

### **Pochury (Phek District)**

Both Lephori and Meluri villages migrated along with the Sohomi village, and only from Kütsape the three decide to go their separate ways. However, Lephori villagers point to an abandoned site known as Aghoshü village (Tseminyu district) as the place from where they migrated, unlike the Sohomi village who point towards Kontsunyü (Kandinu), Tseminyu district as the dispersal point. Lephori group also does not mention anything about settling at Cezurü (Cheshüürüku), located below present Dzülhami village. They came directly from Aghoshü and settled at Mitsalü/ Mütsale, Chakhesang area, and later at Kütsape (Kütsapo) with Sohomi and Meluri groups. From Kütsape, the Lephori group took a shorter route known as Süpiöküthuo through the present Phek village to Meluri and reached a place which they named Luopfüzechi (*Luo* means 'Place' and *Pfü* means 'Making Fire to create smoke' and *Zechü* means 'Temporary settlement site').

The group abandoned this settlement and moved to another location, Pfüwe (*Pfü* means 'Lit fire' and *We* means 'Old'), and stayed there for a long time. Today Pfüwe lies between present Lephori village and Mathikru village. From Pfüwe, they shifted temporarily to another settlement site in the Rüwhihu range, less than 1 km from the present Lephori village. Later they moved upwards and permanently settled at Lephori village. From Lephori, some inhabitants migrated out and formed the villages of Kanjan, Regury, Molen, Mathikru, and Aken. Meluri group settled temporarily in a place called Lokrüju. From there, they moved to another place called Zhepruosou, present Meluri village, Phek district, and made this the permanent settlement site for themselves. From Meluri village, some inhabitants also formed the villages of Khumiasü and Mathikru.

Lephor	Meluri
Khezhakeno	
Awonshü /Kandinu/Kithaga(Nsunyu)	
Mitsalü/Mütsale	
Kütsape (Kütsapo)	
Pfüwe	Zhepruosou (Meluri)
Lephor	
Matikhrü	
	1. Matikhrü
	2. Khumeisii

**Table 6: Route of Migration undertaken by some Pochury tribe**

### 3.5.3. Rengma (Tseminyu District)

A standard oral narrative among the Rengam Nagas is that during the construction of the Great Wall of China, Rengmas (along with other Nagas) worked as forced laborers. However, they were subjected to physical torture, did not have enough food to eat, and many died (Jochuhyulo, 2014). The harsh living condition became the reason that led the ancestors of the Nagas to move from South-East Asia across the Yunnan mountain ranges and settle down in Upper Burma before they moved towards the northwestern area. Thong (2016) stated that the four brothers, Tepu, Sebu, Himbu, and Nyenthong, started the journey from a place known as Aseronyu towards the east. At Kempera (Himalayan range), a warrior named Konrhe, the eldest son of Tepu, had killed a lion while staying in a stone cave. Kempara means the cracking sound of the snow when it melts, so the place is believed to be located at a place where snowfalls and stone caves exist. The descendants of the four brothers later reached *Makhel* and stayed there. While staying at *Makhel*, a conflict started among the inhabitants over land ownership, so an older man forced all the inhabitants to migrate to different directions. Some migrated towards the present Kezhakeno site.



Rengma migration from Khezhakeno occurred in different waves, undertaking different migratory routes. They are said to have migrated along with the Angami, Chakhesang, Lotha, and Sema tribes. Common oral narratives of the Rengmas also mentioned regarding the magical stone *Tso Tawo* in Khezhakeno. Rengma group states two reasons for the bursting of *Tso Tawo*. Firstly, a couple conducted immoral activities on top of the flat stone and defiled the *Tso Tawo*. Secondly, *Tso Tawo* was burned<sup>110</sup>, forcing the spirit to fly away. When the stone burst, a mother took her younger son and migrated toward the present Rengma area<sup>111</sup>. Another narration<sup>112</sup> states that the Rengma group came to Khezhakeno from *Makhel* along with the others. They stayed there for a long time, but the land and economic resources became limited as the population grew. So some groups decided to move out from Khezhakeno. The oral narration states that those planning to move out of Khezhakeno divided themselves into two groups. One group was led by a man named Khümo, and the other by Tsemho. These groups left trails on their migration route and allowed the later migrants to follow them. Both groups used sticks (cut out from nearby trees) and erected them along the way as markers. Khumo used a branch collected from a tree that produces a spice, locally called *Amithi* (*Sichuan pepper*) (see Plate 8) in the Nithini Rengma dialect, and Tsemho used the branch of wild sour fruit called *Athama* (*Rhus chinensis*) (see Plate 9) in the Nithini Rengma dialect as markers<sup>113</sup>. The Rengma group had followed the trails left by the *Mu* marker.

After Khezhakeno, Kithaga (Nsunyu) group mentions stopping at Viswema village (Kohima district) before joining the others for settlement at Kagwenyu (Kigwema), Kohima district. From Kagwenyu, they migrated and stopped at Chudebinshunyu<sup>114</sup> (Chedema village), Kohima district. The group stayed there but later abandoned the site and migrated to another settlement. From Chedema, they stopped and had *Penshvu* (*Penshvu* means to eat the leftover food of the mid-day meal when returning home from the field) near present Chiechama village (Kohima district). The Rengmas call this place ‘Peshvünyu’. An oral narrative<sup>115</sup> of the Rengmas also authenticates their stay there.

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<sup>110</sup> Story explained in Chapter II

<sup>111</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Khinyi Woch of Kithaga/Nsunyu village on 03-09-21.

<sup>112</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Yhunsinlo Khing of Tseminyu village on 23-04-19.

<sup>113</sup> This story is also popular among the Lothas and Chakhesang tribes.

<sup>114</sup> In this place, a particular species of tree is found, and when cut, it produces a white color-like fluid, and because of this, the place came to be known as Chudebinshunyu.

<sup>115</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Daniel Tep of Terigonyu village on 23-04-2019.

Tseminyu	Tesophenyu	Kithaga (Nsunyu)	Terogunyu	Phensenyu	Magh clan (Rengma tribe) and Humtsoe clan (Lotha tribe)
Khinzonyu (Khezhakeno)					
		Viswema			Kigwema
Kigwema					Khonoma
Chendenbinshong/ Chudebinshunyu (Chedema)				Khünyu (Khonoma)	
Pensvünyu (Chiechama)				Sedemi (Sinkeduyü)	Thekhrüjüna (Near Medziphema)
Jüshünyu (Zisonyu)	Hereuphenyu (Gariphema)				
	Nyerhenphen (Nerhema)				
Khwenphen/ Ngachuki					Moilan
Tseminyu	Tseminyu	Awonshü	Lolaphenyu	Thongsünyu	
	and Awonshü		Mount Terogvüthün	Phensenyu	Tesophenyu (Magh Clan)
	Tesophenyu	Kithagha / Nsunyu	Terogunyu		

**Table 7:Route of Migration undertaken by some Rengma tribe**

The narrative opines that, while staying there, Rengmas had a king named Ronthonbu, and the whole village had a goiter except him. He was also a brilliant and brave warrior. So the enemies always looked for an opportunity to kill him. The enemies enquired from the village women and

children about their king, and they replied that he used to come along with them and guard them. One day the enemies traced his location and killed him. That morning when Ronthonbu got killed, the fowl did not crow, and the fire in every household also extinguished itself.

Tesophenyu village believes that while settling at Peshvünyu, one day, the village chief and his companion went towards eastern direction and did not return. They are said to have been killed by the enemies living there. On that fateful night, the rooster did not crow, and the fire burning in every household's hearth got extinguished automatically. Taking these signs as a bad omen, the inhabitants abandoned the site and migrated to Henrüphenyu (Garephima), Kohima district. A particular species of wild creeper plant that produces a white flower was growing in abundance at that site, and for this reason, the place came to be called Henrüphenyu by the Rengmas. At present, tribes of Angamis and Semas still inhabit Garephima. Some moved to Khwenphen and settled there, and some groups migrated toward the Lazami area. Khwenphen was the first village created in the Tseminyu district headed by the Nzonyu families. As the population grew, inhabitants dispersed to different parts to form new settlements. After Khwenphen, one group went towards Tseminyu village, and another group stopped at a place called Awonshü, located in present New Tesophenyu village, Tseminyu district. At Awonshü, Semas, Lothas, and Rengmas are said to have stayed together.

From Awonshü<sup>116</sup>, two new villages came into existence, wherein one party went and settled at present, Tesophenyu village, and the second party established Kethagha (Nsunyu) village along with a man named Tsela from Tseminyu village. Some<sup>117</sup> believe that the Eastern Rengmas (Pochury tribe) migration to the present Meluri area, Phek district occurred from Awonshü. The Tseminyu group (Tseminyu village) stopped moving around after reaching their current settlement and permanently settled there. When the Tseminyu group was at Khwenphen, they would come to the present Tseminyu village site for hunting. Initially, a hunting dog led a group of hunters there. Present Tseminyu village was an elevated plain area, and seeing the site's suitability, they decided to move and settle there.

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<sup>116</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Khinyi Woch of Kithaga/Nsunyu village on 03-09-21.

<sup>117</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Daniel Tep of Terigonyu village on 23-04-2019.

Oral narrative<sup>118</sup> states that a man named Tsela was living alone at Tesophenyu. He used to see Lotha warriors, which greatly scared him. Around that time, a man named Jemu from Awonshü was cutting bamboo on the foothill of the present Tesophenyu village for a sanctification ritual observed after every seven years. All menfolk from Awongshu village had to perform a ritual to sanctify a body by entering the jungle for self-purification. During the ritual process, only one species of bamboo, locally called *Aponkhü*, was used for cooking. As Jemu was cutting the bamboo, Tsela heard him and inquired who he was, '*Is it Amvü or Api?*' which meant Jemu or Teppi (Person names). So he answered, '*I am Amvü*'. Tsela then told Jemu that he alone could not withstand wild animals and invaders and requested that Jemu stays with him. Tsela agreed, and Jemu came and settled at the hillock of Tesophenyu, presently known as *Jemu khel*. Jemu also invited Ochon (Woch); therefore, Ochon also resided there in the village. After Jemu and Ochon came and settled in the village, they dug a pond and named it Jemu Pond. Offshoots of Tesophenyu, Sewanu, and New Tesophenyu also came into existence in the later years.

Oral narrative<sup>119</sup> suggests that the Magh clan of the Rengma tribe took a different route of migration to reach their present settlement site at Tesophenyu and Kithaga villages. From Khezhakeno, the Maghs stopped temporarily to settle at present Viswema village, Kohima district, before diverting their route and migrating to present Khonoma village, Kohima district. Later from Khonoma, they reached Awonshü village and migrated along with the Lothas and settled at Chiketon village, Wokha district, for some time. They again migrated and reached the present Moilon village, Wokha district. However, the Magh group decided to return back and settle in the Rengma area. They abandoned the site of Moilon and migrated to Tesophenyu village. Later some members of the Magh clan moved out again and settled in the present Kithaga (Nsunyu) village.

### 3.5.4. Lotha (Wokha District)

Common oral narratives state that Lothas have stayed and migrated from Phitson Yan/Tsupok Yan (Khezhakeno). It is said that, after leaving Khezhakeno<sup>120</sup>, they roamed around and

<sup>118</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Khinyi Woch of Kithaga/Nsunyu village on 03-09-21.

<sup>119</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. N.R. Magh, Mr. Agwoh Mesung, Mr. Mekhuseng Kath, Mr. Chenchenga Chung, Mr. Honbu Tep, Mr. Chenga Magh, & Mr. Gwachung Chung of Tesophenyu village on 22-04-2019.

<sup>120</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. S. Chumdamo Ezung of Longsa village on 17-04-2019.

settled in the regions of Thungpvütsara, Lungkha<sup>121</sup>, Shungma (Piles of stone), and Yorum<sup>122</sup>. However there are no further narratives on these four areas. Another narration<sup>123</sup> states that the Lotha group from Khezhakeno migrated via the present Mao Thana (Senapati district, Manipur) and reached Khayama (Kohima) area. In contrast, Humtso<sup>124</sup> group mentions about staying near Japfu Mountain before reaching Kohima (check clan). They roamed around the Naga Hills along with the Magh clan (Rengma tribe) and the Angamis and took the route via Kigwema- Khonoma and Thekhrüjüna (Near Medziphema) before reaching Moilan village (Wokha). Lothas in general believe that they stopped once at Khayama (Kohima) for some time before proceeding towards their present settlement.

From Khayama (Kohima), they further moved towards Sangsa Wozhü (present Thizama village, Kohima). In the Lotha dialect<sup>125</sup>, *Sangsa* means ‘*Genna*’ and *Wozhu* means ‘Lake,’ so Sangsa Wozhü means ‘*Genna Lake*’. Till today, we observed the existence of two ponds in the village. In the past, during the rainy season with heavy rainfall, overflow of ponds in the area were frequent, leading to the death of many people. At the same time, sand accumulates near the ponds during the rainy season, causing many casualties. Thus, Sangsa Wozhü was abandoned, and the Lothas moved to another area called Mora Yanke, presently located at Nerhema village (Kohima district). Mora Yanke was an abandoned<sup>126</sup> site when the Lothas came and settled there. However, the Lotha group did not stay there for long and migrated to another new site known as Honoho Yanton, located in Mount Terogvüthün (Tseminyu district). Oral narrative<sup>127</sup> further states that from Honoho Yanton, the group migrated to Sangsa. From there, the Lothas migrated to different locations and formed villages. Some migrated to even farboff places like Mekokla, while others dispersed or got merged with villages of other Naga tribes. Some reasons for abandoning Honoho Yanton were fear of headhunters, scarcity of water, and overpopulation of the area. The Lothas did not move out together; some left early, while others stayed for a while before dispersing to different areas.

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<sup>121</sup> In the Lotha language, *Olung* means *Big Stone*, and *Kha* means *Counting*. In this area, huge stones are found, and the older people in those times used to count the number of stones, so the site came to be called Lungkha.

<sup>122</sup> The Lotha group called the site Yorum because while staying there, the Lothas covered the food with leaves and put it inside the fire before consuming it. This practice was widespread here, and the name Yorum related to this practice came into being.

<sup>123</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Nyio Ezung of Longsa village on 18-04-2019.

<sup>124</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Renchio of Humtso village on 30-04-2022.

<sup>125</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. S. Chumdamo Ezung of Longsa village on 17-04-2019

<sup>126</sup> Nagas usually choose the same site to settle if they encounter any abandoned sites.

<sup>127</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Nyio Ezung of Longsa village on 18-04-2019.

Humtso	Longsa	Yikhum	Wokha
Khezhakeno (Phitson Yan / Phitssenyang)			
Japfu Mountain			
Kohima(Khayima/ Khayama)			
Thinza Wozhü/ Sangsa Wozhü (Thizama)			
Mora Yanke (Nerhema)			
Cheichema			
Honohoyonton (Mount Terogvüthün)			
Kisuyu/ Kisünyu (Nsunyu)	From Honohoyonton, Lothas were divided into three groups:		
	1. Koro		
	2. Phiro		
	3. Yosunki: Located between Satsuphen and Kankunyu (Kandinu)		
	Shanthaki		
Redutongti/ Redi Tongdi (Niroyo)			
Longsuo(Lichuyan)	Tiyi Longchüm		
Humtso	Longsa	Longlaba	Wokha
		Khumyanpen/ Yikhum)	

**Table 8:Route of Migration undertaken by some Lotha tribe**

The Humtso group from Mora Yanke (Nerhema) had temporarily settled at the present Cheichama village (Kohima district) before shifting to Jemung (Tseminyu district)<sup>128</sup>. Later, the Humtso group went to Honoho Yanton (Mount Terogvüthün) and stayed there following or with the other Lotha group. Sangma (2017) mentions that from Honoho Yanton, Lothas gets further divided into three groups: The first group surveyed the area from Mount Terogvüthün in search of a suitable settlement site and finally decided to settle at the present Kora village (Wokha district). The second group went to Ngochiphen, also called Echüi Yan (Village of the Dead). Many people died when this group was staying in Ngochiphen, so the inhabitants abandoned the village. This group established a new village called Phiro<sup>129</sup>, Wokha district. Most of the Lothas formed the third group who moved towards Tiyi Longchum. After Honoho Yanton, mention has been made on some settlement sites. However, except for Sangsa, other areas like the Yosunki, Kitsuyo, and Joritabhen (resting places cannot be identified).

Before reaching Tiyi Longchum, the third Lotha group<sup>130</sup> briefly stopped in a place called Yoshümüki<sup>131</sup>. The site lies between the present Satsuphen village (Wokha district) and Kankunyu village (Kandinu) (Tseminyu district). They also stopped at Shanthaki, located above present Satsuphen village (Wokha district). While staying at Shanthaki, the Lothas were always cautious of the surrounding enemy villages and for this reason they did not seopped there for long. Another narration<sup>132</sup> mentions that after Honoho Yanton, the Humtso group further stopped in two places, Phensika<sup>133</sup> and Kisuyu/ Kisünyu (Nsunyu).

The subsequent temporary settlement for the Lothas was Redutongti/ Redi Tongdi (present Niroyo village). But they did not stop there for long and migrated uphill towards Mount Tiyi (Tiyi Longchüm), where they found a small pond (the only water available) and established a village. While staying at Tiyi Longchüm, the population began to grow, and the village expanded. About 900 households<sup>134</sup> inhabited the area, but facing acute water shortage, the villagers had to walk long distances to fetch water. This became a problem for some, and they

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<sup>128</sup> Location unknown

<sup>129</sup> The leader of this clan/group was Lanzumo, who also took the role of a priest. Hanku, Longchum, Vorokvü, Longtsung, Melaneli, and Meshangben were the groups also known as Trulaneli who were a part of the Phiro group. They moved out of Phiro and formed these villages: Zum means ambush. Lazumo means, Wait on the road and ambush the enemy. As narrated by Etsümo Murry of Wokha village.

<sup>130</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. S. Chumdamo Ezung of Longsa village on 17-04-2019.

<sup>131</sup> The name *Yoshümüki* came into being as in this site, a particular plant was found wherein two leaves shoot out from a single stem.

<sup>132</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. N. Renchio of Humtso village on 30-04-2022.

<sup>133</sup> Location unknown

<sup>134</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Ezamo Kikon of Wokha village on 18-04-2019.

decided to look for different territories with better water sources. Another problem faced by the inhabitants of Tiyi Longchum was the constant attack by a tiger, which became a threat to the inhabitants. One day, while on their way to fetch water, nine women, including a pregnant woman, were attacked by the tiger and got killed. The pregnant lady was the wife of a warrior named Ramphan. He was disheartened, but this prompted him to kill the tiger. The incident considerably shook the inhabitants of Longchum, and they decided to abandon the place and migrate to another location. Meanwhile, Ramphan left the village in search of the tiger and, after much scuffling with the tiger; he was able to kill it. Oral narrative states that Ramphan used a massive machete<sup>135</sup> to kill the tiger. After the killing of the tiger, Ramphan requested the people to return, but the inhabitants have already left the village. With no other option, he also left Tiyi Longchum. Thus, Tiyi Longchum was abandoned, and the site remains abandoned even today.

Lothas preserved their oral tradition not only through the narratives, but there are also Lotha folksongs that sing about the group/clan migrations. A folksong of Longsa village tells about the dispersal of the different Lotha clans from Tiyi Longchum. The song depicts Tiyi Longchümo as vibrant and the place reminds about the youthful life. The song also tells that the dispersal did not happen due to any conflict among the clans but it was for other reasons that the Tiyi Longchum inhabitants were forced to migrate. As per the folksong, Ezungo went to form Longsa village, Pattomo went to form Riphyim village, Odyuo went to form Yikhum village and Ngullie Shitiri went towards Pangti side.

*Tiyi Longchum Yan Epyom Chungina Rakhentao Khenji*

*Emungyanti Tiyi Longchümo Jaliroden*

*Yanpyonti khentasi jotung lia nshan*

*Yanpyonti khentasi otsen lia ntsso*

*Yanpyonti khentasi moyingoli lia nnan*

*Ezungo jali na Longsa tssovo ko*

*Pattomo jali na Riphyim tssovo ko*

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<sup>135</sup>The machete is still preserved at Akok village, Wokha district.



*Odyuo jali na Yikhum tssovo ko*

*Ngullie Shitiri na Pangti lishako*

*Echuti schumcho ntana*

*Luptong sisi jiyia ashaw*

*Luptongo thera ncheta*

*Nzyu taro yaksalia*

*Shawo luptong se to tiyasa woro*

*Hoji to shiloli na tiyi longchumo pvüti tsoa vanathung*

*Kyon shiang na jiyi*

*Longsa yan tsvo chungu na rakhentacho*

*Okhen heto lia*

Another folksong also portrays the youthful memories at Tiyi Longchum. The song depicts how the four ancestors belonging to the clans, namely- Ezungo, Kikomo, Humtsovo, and Murrü acted as the leaders and established the present Longsa<sup>136</sup> village (existing till today). The folksong goes as-

*Longsa Tantsso Khen*

*Emungyanti Tiyi Longchümo Jaliroden*

*Kvüiwovu chungu na rakhentavala*

*Longsa tssov chungu na rakhentala*

*Longsa lojo ochona pongale jowo*

*Ezungo jail na shanrhumo Rachen*

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<sup>136</sup> Longsa village is considered as one of the oldest village in Wokha district.

*Kikomo jail na Atunga Tssoren*

*Humtsovo jail na Rusang yimpvuthung*

*Murri khyingro na Melensango*

*Yonjomo tssenro khophito melen*

*Eng na jopha janathung*

*Emoyo lani nri ekhuruni phaja tssoa melen*

*Hoji to jipvü mezhu shina*

*Esopvui tssoa Longsa yanji tsscho*

An oral narrative<sup>137</sup>, Longsa village was already formed when the Wokha village was planning to start a new village. Before the village formation, the Wokha group went down to Longsa village and invited the Kikon clan. Later, Wokha village was formed by seven clans: Murry, Kikon, Tungoe, Kithan, Humtsoe, Yanthan, and Ezung, with Shimangtong Kithan as the first priest.

The Humtso group however did not reach Tiyi Longchum. Oral narratives state that from Redutongti/ Redi Tongdi (present Niyoro), they diverted their migration route from the rest and went to Kisuyu<sup>138</sup>. After Kisuyu<sup>139</sup>, they stopped at Longsuo<sup>140</sup> (Lichuyan) (located between the present Longsa and Pongitong). The group later temporarily settled at Esa Tongti (below the present Humtso village) and from there went to their current inhabitant site, Humtso, and settled there. Humtso is very fertile village known for growing plants like chilies and cotton.

As for the Yikhum group, oral narratives<sup>141</sup> states that from Tiyi Longchum, they went to Longlaba (located below Wokha village) and settled there temporarily. After abandoning Longlaba, a group led by Tsungsotsü Kithan came to the present site of Khumyanben/ Yikhum (Wokha district). Yikhum village was very fertile, and whatever was sown yielded a good

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<sup>137</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Ezamo Kikon of Wokha village on 18-04-2019.

<sup>138</sup> Location unknown

<sup>139</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Nyanthung Humtsoe & Mr. Yantso Humtsoe of Humtso village on 30-04-2022.

<sup>140</sup> Longsuo site was covered with bamboo forest

<sup>141</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Hayuo Kithan & Mr. Zانبemo Kithan of Yikhum village on 01-05-2022.

harvest. Because of the fertility of the soil, Tsungsotsü Kithan and his group decided to settle there. From Yikhum village, new villages were further formed- Changpang and Tssori villages acknowledge Yikhum as their mother village. In the later years, the inhabitants migrated to different areas. For instance, the Jami clan went to Chuti and Pangti area, the Ezung clan went and settled at Aree village, and the Khenjung clan went towards the lower range.

### 3.5.5. Sema (Zunheboto District)

The Semas also known as the Sumis (in general) associate their origin and dispersal from Khezhakeno in Phek district. They believe that their forefathers stayed in Khezhakeno and migrated from there to their present settlement site.

Oral narrations<sup>142</sup> states that when *Tso Tawo* (magical stone) was destroyed, two white roosters (spirit of the stone) flew out from the stone. One flew towards present Manipur district and the other<sup>143</sup> flew towards Dzü and Sidzü River<sup>144</sup>. A man named Lozu<sup>145</sup>, decided to move out from Khezhakeno village and followed the spirit rooster/stone that went towards Dzü and Sidzü River. When Lozu found the stone, he beat the stone with a leaf and the stone started moving. Lozu followed the stone and reached a place called Labushami, presently located in Chesezü village, Phek district. While at Chesezü, Lozu saw three spirits in human form and as he was talking to them the stone sank deeper into the ground and only half of the stone lay on the surface. Lozu stayed in the area for about 10-15 years all by himself. Since he was alone at Chesezü, he decided to abandon the place and migrate to another new site. From there he reached another area, Khughuboqa presently called Khusomi village, Phek district.

When Lozu was sleeping under a *Khughobo* (Fig Tree) (see Plate 10), he had a strange dream in which two trees were having a conversation. One tree (tree name unknown) sent a message to the *Khughobo* tree informing that its mother (locally called *Achuiibo* tree) was very ill and about to die and that the *Khughobo* tree should meet her once before she dies. However *Khughobo* tree refused stating that a guest has come and it will not be possible to move out from there. In the morning when Lozu woke up, he saw that the fig fruits had all ripened. Lozu ate the

<sup>142</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. P. Saluvi Swu, Mr. Maghipu Swu & Mr. Mixeni Tiji of Lazami village on 13-02-2021.

<sup>143</sup> The spirit is also referred as a piece of magical stone that bursted out from Tso Tawo.

<sup>144</sup> Located between present Kohima and Phek district

<sup>145</sup> Younger brother of Koza and the first Sema for those groups that acknowledge a place call Fuyaqa as their ancestral site.

fruits and as he turned towards the other direction, he saw the mother tree (his dream) *Achui* had fallen and died. Relating to this dream, the place came to be known Khughuboqa where ‘*Khughobo*’ means ‘Fig Tree’. While staying there, Koza went to call Lozu back but he refused to return<sup>146</sup>. At that time, Koza was accompanied by a woman named Wolla whom Lozu later married and they had two sons, Ikato and Kaku.

Ighanumi	Ghokimi	Lazami	Mishilimi
Khezhakeno			
Ighanumi	Lazaphuyeqa	Labushami (Chesezü)	Tuba
	Awohumi	Khughuboqa (Khusomi)	Mishiluga (Ighanumu)
	Ghokimi	Fuiqa (Lazaphuyeqa)	Yeti
		Lazami	Taku (Doyang area)
			Mishilimi

**Table 9: Route of Migration undertaken by some Sema tribe**

After some time, Lozu along with his family abandoned Khughuboqa and migrated to Fuiqa where they settled for a long period of time. Fuiqa is an old settlement site which is located 4-5 kms away from the present Lazami village, Zunheboto district. While settling at Fuiqa, migrants from other areas also came and settled along. Lozu also made a long wooden stand made from a wild fruit tree *Mü* in Khezha language (*Rhus chinensis*) (see Plate 9) and many saw the stand from Khezhakeno. Thus following the wooden stand many followed Lozu to Fuyuqa. Likewise, the village became a big settlement. Fuiqa expanded largely and prospered but slowly with the rise of population, water source became less and even the land for cultivation became limited. There were also occurrences of enemy attacks in the village. The period itself was also a period of venturing into new areas and creating settlement places. Many wanted to

<sup>146</sup> As Lozu refused to return, Koza and Lozu made a promise that whosoever dies first will transform into a bee and visit the other one.

become a leader and many wanted to follow a leader. For all these reasons, Fuiqa was abandoned and the inhabitants migrated to different directions. This was however the last destination for Lozu.

From Fuiqa a group led by a man named Keviye and his son Lozu (they were the first settlers) went and settled at the present Lazami village. Some groups from Fuiqa are even believed to have migrated towards Tikhir<sup>147</sup> side and settled there. Another man named Tuko<sup>148</sup> migrated to Japfu Mountain and settled there. Later Tuko's descendents migrated to a place in Aghunato district and named it 'Toku'. From Fuiqa some are believed to have moved towards Khezhakeno and settled at present Tadubi and Mao areas, Manipur district. From Mao area they again entered Phek and formed the villages of Kutsaboto, Cheboketa, Phoghiimi, Mutsale, Ahyephiii and Khuzami etc. Likewise, around 13 to 17 Sema villages are believed to have been established by this group.

Oral narratives<sup>149</sup> state that the founders of Ghokimi village also stayed at Fuiqa<sup>150</sup> and migrated from there. From Fuiqa, they moved to a place presently called, Awohumi village (Zunheboto district). It is believed that in the past this village was a big village comprising of around 700 households. However, as population grew, it led to severe economic crisis in the village. It is said that there lived a family in the village. The husband went to the field and his wife went to collect firewood. They had a son who was left in the care of his grandfather. The child was hungry but there was nothing to eat. When the man and his wife returned from their work in the evening they found their child dead due to starvation. As per the folk narratives, the village was overpopulated and could not sustain the villagers. The grandfather after experiencing the death of his grandson was so grief stricken that he addressed the issue of overpopulation and encouraged the villagers to migrate and explore new settlements. After this incident a group of eighty warriors were forced to migrate towards a new settlement site called as Awoki Kibi<sup>151</sup>. But as Awoki Kibi was a small area, the inhabitants decided to abandon their settlement. Later the group reached a site called Aphukigheto, which was already occupied by the Lothas. They

<sup>147</sup> Tikhir is a Naga tribe inhabiting mostly in Shamator district. At present the tribe has 42 villages under its jurisdiction.

<sup>148</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. P. Saluvi Swu, Mr. Maghipu Swu & Mr. Mixeni Tiji of Lazami village on 13-02-2021.

<sup>149</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Pukhato Swu, Mr. Pukhavi Swu, Mr. Ahovi Swu, Mr. Shohe, K. Ghunakha, & Mr. Johan Wotsa of Ghokimi Village on 09-02-2021.

<sup>150</sup> Also known as Laza Fuiqa or Lazaphuyeqa

<sup>151</sup> A small village near Doyang river

chased the Lothas and settled there for some time. Ghokimi group further shifted their settlement and moved to a place called as Phuyekito, chasing the Lothas further upwards. Phuyekito is now a part of the present Ghokimi village (Zunheboto district). They further chased the Lothas and settled in another site called as Müboga which is also located near Ghokimi village and later permanently came to Ghokimi and settled there. By then, Lothas were forced to move out of Ghokimi area. Some of the villages that are off shoots of Ghokimi village are Asukeka and Lotomi villages.

The Ighanumi villagers took a different route and did not reach Fuiqa. According to oral narratives<sup>152</sup>, in Khezhakeno, there was a man named Holo and with his wife Heli they had six sons. Among the brothers, Ghathu and Vethu are the forefathers of present Angami and Chakhesang tribes while Igha, Hebo, Chiso and Chishi are the forefathers of present Sema tribe. Igha, the founder of present Ighanumi village migrated directly from Khezhakeno and settled at the present Ighanumi village while Hebolimi<sup>153</sup> (located near Dzulha), and Chisholimi and Chishilimi groups roamed around and settled later. Oral narration states that when Igha arrived at the present settlement site, there were no other villages/settlements around the surrounding area. However Venuh (2014), states that Igha and his group (indicating, that Igha did not migrate alone) crossed two villages of Cheswezu and Thenezu (Phek district) during the course of the migration though they did not stop or settle in that two villages. Following Igha, Hebo, Chishi and Chiso took the same route and crossing the two villages of Cheswezu and Thenezu (Phek district) migrated towards their present settlement sites of Hebolimi, Chishilimi and Chisolomi. From Ighanumi, the inhabitants also migrated to other areas and settled there. One offshoot<sup>154</sup> of Ighanumi village is Ighavito. In another case, a man named Sakha from Ighanumi migrated to the present Sakrabama area and formed a village there. Igha's descendents also founded a village called Chichimi village<sup>155</sup>. Another man named Sheqhina from Ighanumi went towards the present Dzulha area, Phek district and settled there but the site is believed to have been occupied by the Chakhesang tribe. Present Katsopomi village in Phek district also speaks the same

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<sup>152</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Pukhalu Achumi of Ighanumi village on 11-02-2021.

<sup>153</sup> Hebolimi stayed in the Kigwema area at one point, so maybe Hebo (Present) clan found in Kigwema may have a connection with the Hebolimi of the Sema tribe.

<sup>154</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Pukhalu Achumi of Ighanumi village on 11-02-2021.

<sup>155</sup> Location unknown

language as Ighanumi, so Ighanumi village assumes that these two groups might have stayed together once during their course of migration.

Another narrative<sup>156</sup> states that, Ighanumi group migration might have occurred during the third wave of Naga migration<sup>157</sup>. The migration started when an epidemic occurred in the Khezha area, Phek district, killing nearly 2/3 of the total Khezha population. Around that time many Khezhas and Semas (settled at Khekhakeno) migrated to the present Khusomi village. Those Semas were believed to have come up from Chin Hills, Myanmar. They first settled at Swemi village or Kotsumi village in Ukhrul district and later came up to Khezhakeno. This hypothesis states that the Khezhakenomi and Swemi might have had some sort of relationship and because of their cordial relationship the Semas might have migrated to Khezhakeno later on. However around 15<sup>th</sup> century, due to a great epidemic, some went and settled at Khusomi village. From Khusomi, Semas might have migrated to three areas of Ighanumi, Sukemüvo and Sumi villages near Chizami village. Till today, these three speak the same language. Sukemüvo village is now an abandoned village and its inhabitants have migrated or formed new villages like Kutsapo, Mutsale and Khuza in Phek district.

The Mishilimi group, after Khezhakeno settled at a place called Ghatukusa<sup>158</sup> before migrating to another settlement, Tuba, a Sema village located in Phek district. From Tuba, the group further migrated towards present Ighanumi and settled temporarily at a place called Mishiluga. Later they went towards Kohima and settled around Yeti<sup>159</sup>, for some time. From Yeti area, they migrated towards Tapu (Doyang) River and reached a place called Khogho<sup>160</sup> but later shifted to another site called Kivine. Khogho and Kivine at present are located under Mishilimi jurisdiction.

The credit for founding Mishilimi village goes to three men, Visho, Kisho and Sheqi. These three men went separate ways at Yeti. Sheqi migrated to Pughboga, Kisho to Phuyeto while Visho settled in Tsüyi village<sup>161</sup>. He lived there with his wife and children. One day when

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<sup>156</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Zapra Chakhesang of Yoruba village on 13-03-2023.

<sup>157</sup> The seven waves of migration as discussed in chapter 1.

<sup>158</sup> Location unknown

<sup>159</sup> According to oral sources Yeti River is said to be located within today's Kohima jurisdiction. However in the geographical map Yeti is associated with Dzüi and Sidzu river which is located between Kohima and Phek district.

<sup>160</sup> *Khogho* means Mountains on both the sides and river flowing in between.

<sup>161</sup> Pughboga, Phuyeto and Tsüyi villages mentioned could not be located.

Visho and his friends went for hunting, they hunted down a Bison. As they divided the meat, someone put the bison's genital part in Visho's bag which created misunderstanding. Making it more complicated, the villagers were devised to catch and punish Visho. This forced Visho to abandon the village with his family. On the way, Visho decided to search for Kisho, leaving his family in a shed. He told his wife that if she hears a dog barking or pig grunting, she has to assume that he is dead and if they don't hear any then he would still be alive. Visho was able to find Kisho's house at Phuyeto and he knocked at the door. At that time Kisho's wife was alone at home and fearing it to be an enemy, pretended to struggle opening the door. At that moment, Kisho crept up from behind and tightly held Visho's waist. Kisho could identify that it was Visho. Visho lived with Kisho at Phuyeto for some time. While at Phuyeto, these two men usually went to a place known as Ajukumunatu (presently called Mishilimi village) and hunt for deer. With the help of their hunting dog, Visho and Kisho were able to find a good water source. They decided to shift there and also invited their third brother Sheqi to stay along with them, thus forming, the present Mishilimi village. It is said that the remaining group that went till Kivine might have later joined them at Mishilimi village. It is believed that the villages of Lazami and Natsumi were already in existence when Mishilimi village was formed. The village later grew and some inhabitants migrated to other places of Lichephumi/ Lhachepumi (presently called ToupHEMA), Muzhumi (Tseminyu) and surrounding villages, Kita (Ghokimi area) and Lazakito (a *Khel* in Lazami village).

### **3.5.6. Sangtam (Kiphire district)**

According to Venuh (2014), Sangtam oral narrative states that some Sangtam groups migrated with other Nagas and came via China- Thailand-Myanmar. At the foothill of Irrawadi River, this group inhabited for a long time before migrating to a place known as Singkongkukoh<sup>162</sup>. They later migrated to a location known as Makur (possibly *Makhel*) near Zinki River. From Makur, the Sangtam group further migrated and settled at Khezhakeno. While settling at Khezhakeno, they had an argument with the other groups and decided to move out. They later migrated to a place known as Khirü Kyong (Chakhesang area). From there the group migrated to another location, Anihato (Chakhesang area) and settled there temporarily. Later they moved to another settlement site known as Tuka (Chakhesang area) and from there they went

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<sup>162</sup> Location unknown



and formed Yimphir village, (Sangtam village). From Yimphir, some inhabitants migrated further towards Kiphiri area and settled there.

From the above discussions, it can be accepted that migration from Khezhakeno was not undertaken at once. There were batches of migration with most of the groups those who went ahead. Khezhakeno groups also settled temporarily during the course of their migration. Some of these sites still exist in the form of villages while numerous sites are abandoned. It has also been acknowledged that major population explosion occurred at Khezhakeno and other ancestral sites after Khezhakeno. These ancestral sites played a major role in shaping the present village under various tribes.

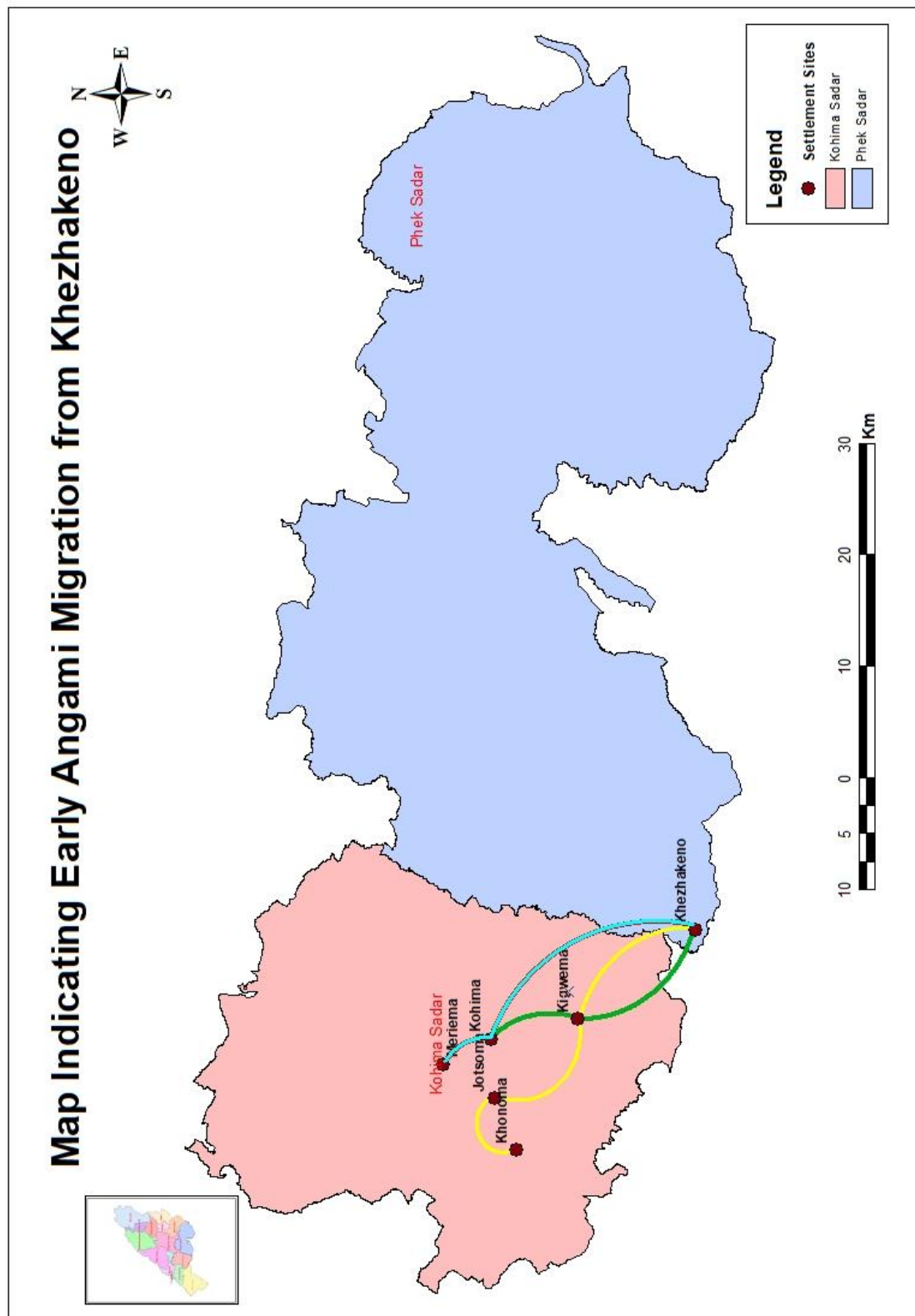


Figure 4: Map Indicating Early Angami Migration from Khezhakeno

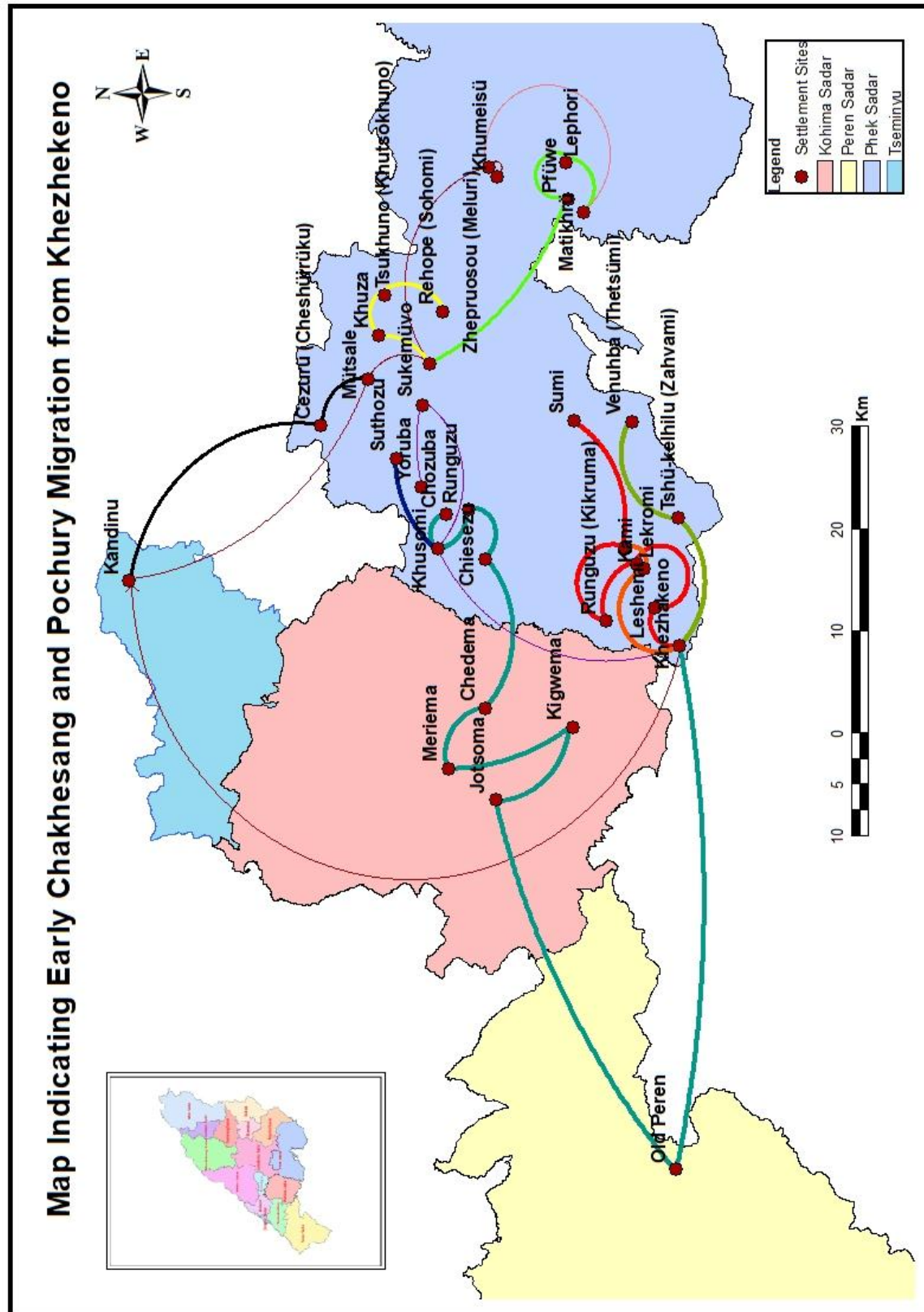
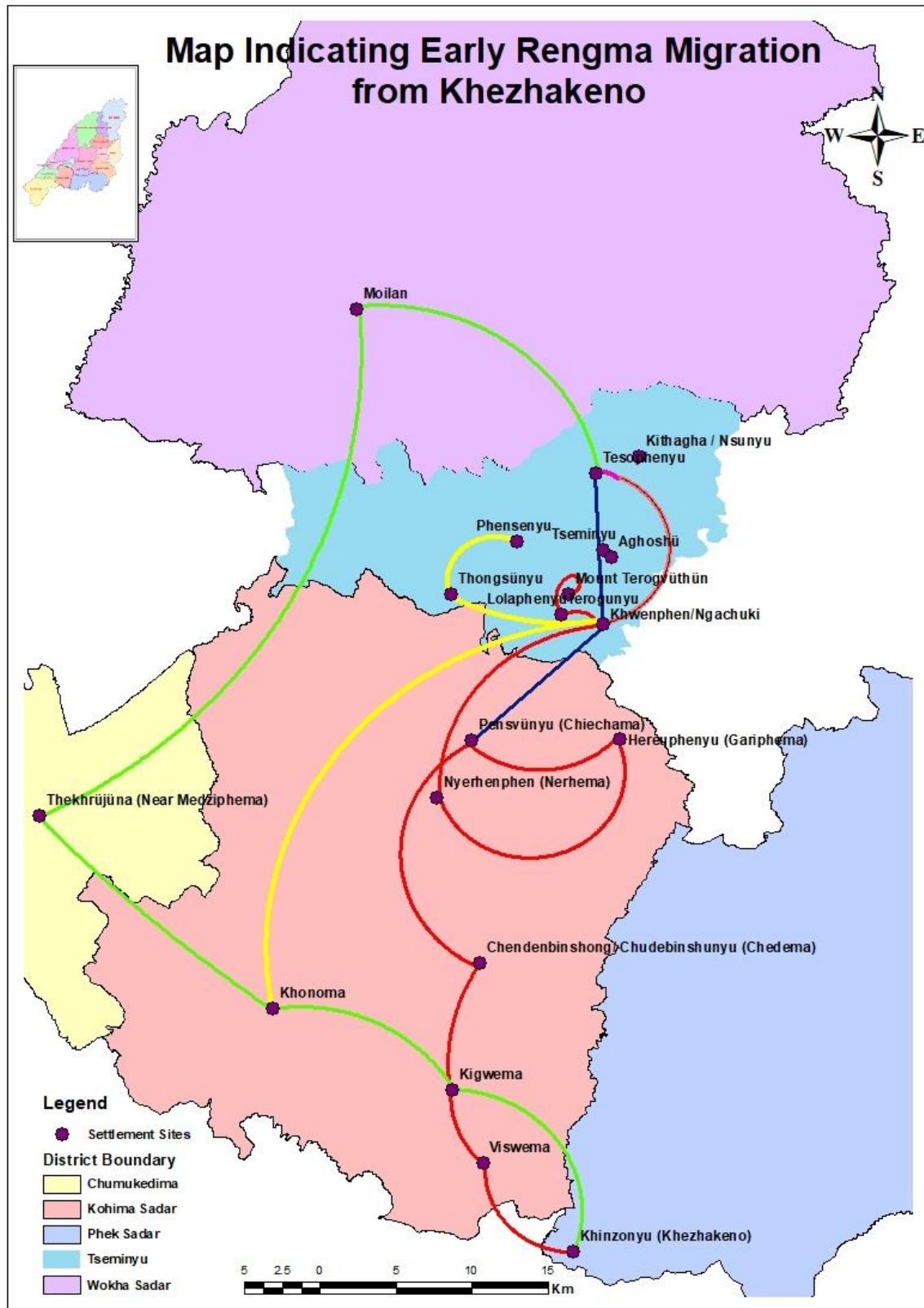
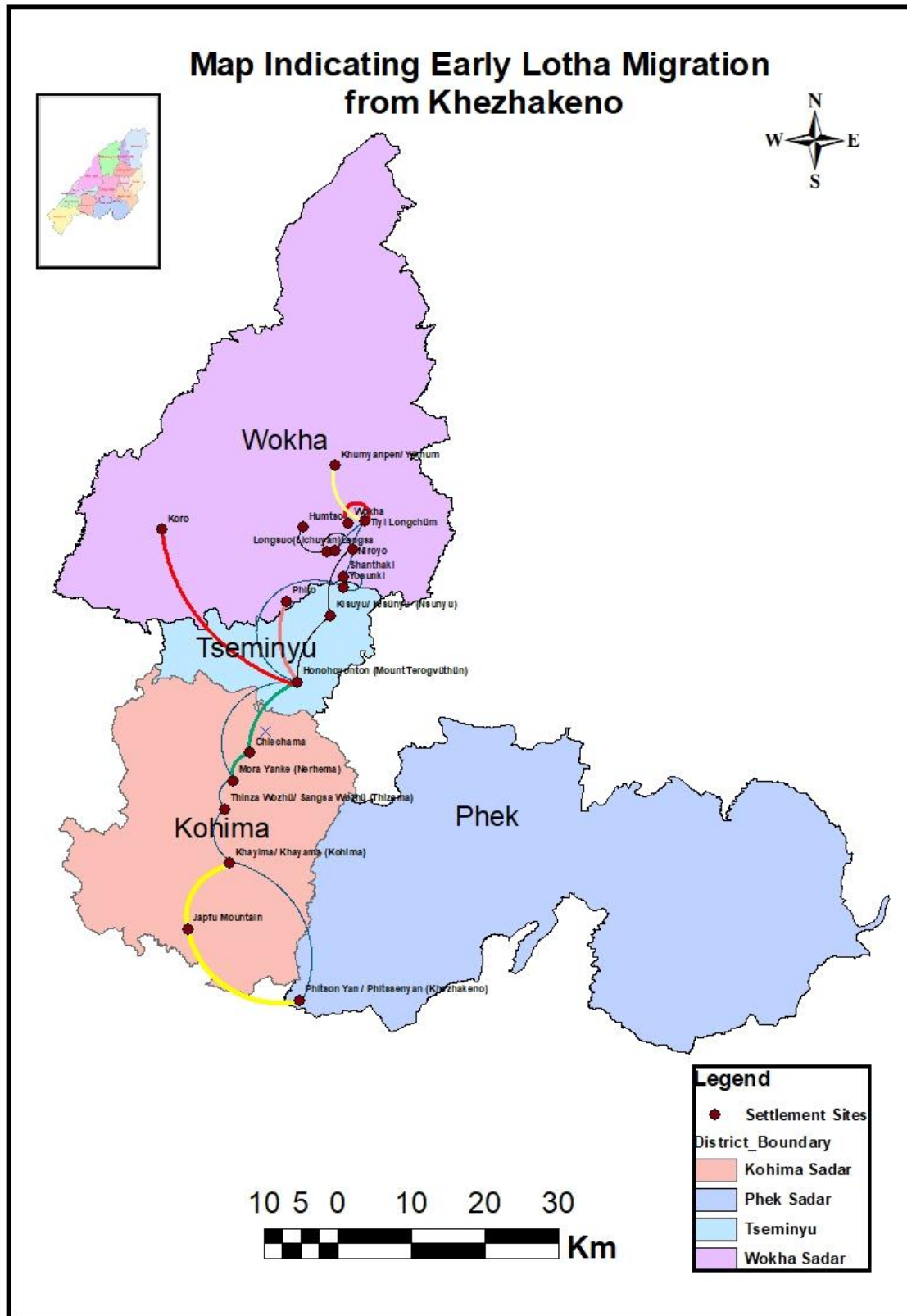


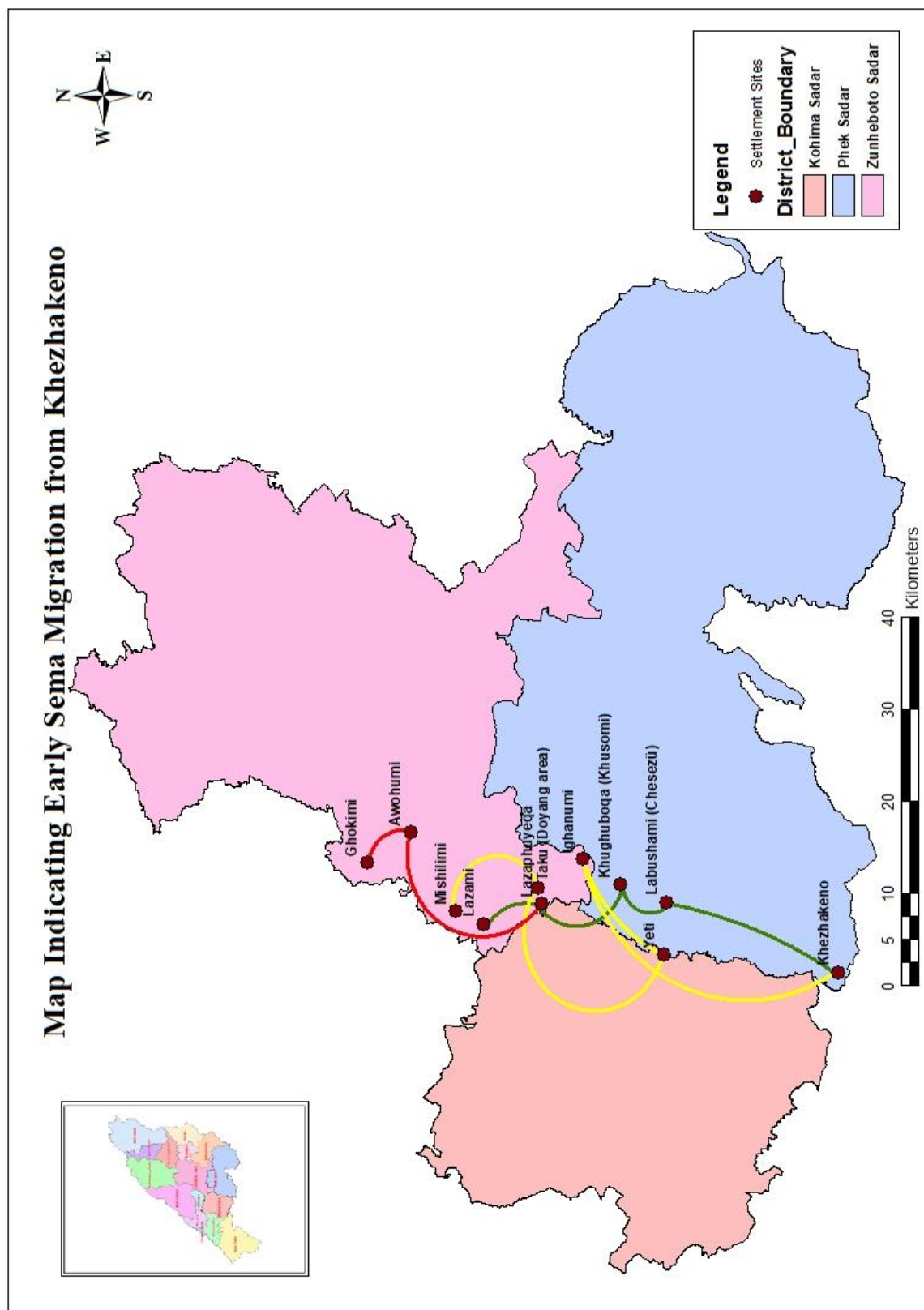
Figure 5: Map Indicating Early Chakhesang and Pochury Migration from Khezhekano



**Figure 6: Map Indicating Early Rengma Migration from Khezhakeno**



**Figure 7: Map Indicating Early Lotha Migration from Khezhakeno**



**Figure 8: Map Indicating Early Sema Migration from Khezhakeno**





**Plate 3: *Fürübe* (A Hen's Paddy Rice)**



**Plate 4: *Tso Tawo* (Spirit Stone) located at Khezhakeno**





**Plate 5: *Keni* (Wild Sesame plant)**  
**Courtesy: [Eiferpiku.blogspot.com](http://Eiferpiku.blogspot.com)**



**Plate 6: *Ammutsüsümi* plant**









**Plate 8: *Amithi* (*Sichuan pepper*)**



**Plate 9: *Athama/Mü* (*Rhus chinensis*)**



**Plate 10: *Khughobo* (Fig tree)**

## CHAPTER 4

### CULTURAL AFFINITIES

The present chapter discusses some cultural affinities of the Nagas with the Khezhakeno groups. The rich Naga culture finds importance in society even today. Culture refers to the beliefs, values, traditions, rituals, customs, objects, etc., of a group that distinguishes them from other groups, and affinities express a more profound sense of connection that goes beyond the surface level. The Naga cultural practices are passed on through actions and verbally from generation to generation. Each village, range, and tribe has different cultural traditions, yet they are affiliated with each other in some way, sharing similar cultural traits and practices. Through the study, an attempt is made to draw certain perceptions:

1. One cannot validate that because of similar origin and migration, one should share cultural affinities or vice versa.
2. Certain groups having similar migration may have cultural associations, but there can be groups with no migration affinity, yet have cultural relationships with specific groups.
3. Certain groups with similar migration have their distinct cultural markers.

Cultural similarity among the different groups can take place because of various reasons:

1. It can happen due to intermarriage and contact between Khezhakeno groups with other groups.
2. The inter-changing of settlement or the formation of new settlement areas by migrants from different groups may have created the inculcation and fusion of cultural practices since culture is fluid.
3. It can also be because a group copying another group's culture, instigated by acceptance and rejection from a wider group.

In many cases, groups replicate each other's culture to be accepted in a society. However, there can still be certain groups that are geographically close to Khezhakeno, but they did not

imitate and maintained their distinct cultural traits. Yet, it is improbable that groups would remain unaffected by the cultures of the neighboring villages. All these must have been extensively going during the pre-colonial period. Based on the study of Khezhakeno migration study, cultural affinities can be classified into four groups:

1. Groups that affiliates with Khezhakeno migration, having cultural affinities.
2. Groups that affiliates with Khezhakeno migration and don't have cultural affinities.
3. Groups that don't affiliates with Khezhakeno migration but have cultural affinities.
4. Groups that don't share in the Khezhakeno migration and don't have cultural affinities.

Park (1928) has rightly stated that every advance in culture commences with a new period of migration and movement of populations. The migrants are likely to assimilate into a higher technological culture, which usually results in adopting the language, beliefs, and values of the foreign (other) cultures. However, the superior technological culture (Heberle, 1955) remains aloof from the inferior natives and attempts to preserve their way of life. Unfortunately, in Naga society, it is not possible to differentiate between a superior technological culture and an inferior technological culture. However, advanced tribe and backward tribe distinctions exist in Naga society, originating during the colonial period and its aftermath. But by then, most of the cultural changes and assimilations had already occurred. In Naga society, no classification has been made to figure out what makes a Naga culture superior or inferior. Yet, Nagas have always acknowledged powerful and dominant villages. Usually, villages with many households and warriors (determined by the number of kills or human heads taken) were the powerful and dominant ones. Ancestral villages were also considered dominant, garnering respect especially from the offshoot villages. Villages having smaller number of households and fewer warriors were also sometimes considered as weaker sections (villages). These groups can become subordinates and on certain situations pay taxes to the dominant ones. The superior villages in return protect the weaker ones. Through all these processes, cultural traits were shared, and

affinities among the Khezhakeno group and its neighboring villages increased. The following are some aspects of the study that reflect the cultural affinities.

#### 4.1. Beliefs and Practices

Nagas believes that a Supreme Being is the creator of all things. Angamis called their god *Ukepenuopfü* (*Kepenuopfü* means 'Birth Spirit'), Khezha Chakhesang as *Chükeci-o* (Creator), and Rengmas as *Songinyu* or *Aniza*, who was believed to have lived in the sky and was the father of all living being. For the Lotha's, *Potsow*, resided in the sky, kept contact with the humans, and bestowed help. Through *Potsow*, the Lothas could foresee any good or bad occurrences that were supposed to happen. Semas called their god *Alhou* (*Lho* means 'Create') or *Timilhou*, the Creator and Supreme god residing between heaven and earth.

According to an oral narrative<sup>163</sup> from Makhel, it is said that a god (Creator) created a lady named *Dzüliamosüro/ Dziiliamosüa*, famously known as 'First Lady'. One day as she was lying under the banyan tree, the creator made her pregnant, and *Dzüliamosüro* gave birth to three sons- a Tiger, a Spirit, and a Human (First Human). Later, when the supposed, 'First Human' entered the marital stage, his mother started looking for a wife but could not find any as there was hardly any human being during those days. One day she had a strange dream, and in her dream, the Creator asked her to go to the Northern side and walk for a distance where she would find a wife for her son. When the mother found a lady, she brought and married her son to the young lady. Later, with this union, three sons were born. The first son became the ancestor of the Plains, i.e., Assamese, the second son became the ancestor of the Mieties, and the third son became the ancestor of the Nagas. When they all grew old, the youngest son (ancestor of the Nagas) stayed back for a while, and the other two migrated to their present settlement areas. It is said that stones (megaliths) in memory of these sons inside the Shajouba village<sup>164</sup>. The Khezhakeno group stayed at Makhel along with the other groups. Regarding to the belief of 'Supreme Being', taking the example from the Ao tribe (No affinity with Khezhakeno migration), they reject the concept of the 'Supreme Being'. However they believe in two creators, *Lichaba* (*Li* or *Ali* means 'Earth,' *Cha* and *Aja* means 'To Call/ Caller') as the 'Creator of Earth' and *Lunkizunba* (Chief of Heaven) as the 'Creator of Man' (Shohe, 2020). Many a

<sup>163</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Mathibo of Makhel village on 29-08-2018.

<sup>164</sup> The wild pear tree which has significance on the Naga migration is also located at Shajouba village.



times the 'Supreme Being' is believed to be a single male deity but it can also be a genderless god as believed by the Angamis.

Nagas also believed in the existence of good and evil spirits surrounding them. These spirits resided in caves, hillocks, trees, forests, rocks, and streams. Spirits were feared, and in order not to let ill luck fall upon them, the Khezhakeno group performed rituals and sacrifices to appease the gods and spirits. Mishilimi<sup>165</sup> village (Zunheboto district), which affiliates with the Khezhakeno migration, also known as the 'Land of Spirits,' believed that they made a pact with the spirits at the time of village formation. There is a belief that whenever an enemy attacked Mishilimi village, the spirits would protect them by blocking the enemy's way. In Thizama village (Kohima district), there are two lakes where supernatural beings are believed to have resided. Thizama village was initially known as *Chüzieze* (*Chü* means 'Make' and *Zieze* means 'Lake'), which literally means, 'the lakes came and made this place its'. It was assumed that these two lakes existed at Makhel in the past, but as there was no land for them there, they shifted their location to the present Thizama village and permanently stayed there. The water in these two lakes never gets dried up, and during monsoon, the surrounding areas get flooded. Before the arrival of Christianity, whenever any Naga pagans crossed these lakes, they used to stop and perform rituals to appease the lake spirits. Nagas believed that spirits were powerful, and in order to appease these spirits, they performed different kinds of rituals and ceremonies.

Priesthood remained an essential position for the Nagas in religion and society. In Angami, Chakhesang, Sema, and Lotha tribes, the priest performed all the significant rituals. However, in the case of the Rengmas and the Pochury, rituals could be performed by any qualified individual who knew about such rituals. Among the Khezha Chakhesang tribe, the Khezhakeno and Enhulumi village (Phek district) share a similarity<sup>166</sup>. Though it is not practiced anymore, priesthood was hereditary for both. It is said that, Theriemie village (Phek district), which is now an abandoned site, had two *Mowos* (priests) in the village. First, *Mowo* was called *Rhi Wowo* (War priest), that resided in the Upper *khel*, and his job was to check for signs and omens. Second, *Mowo* was called '*Ne Mowo*' and looked after agriculture-related affairs. *Ne Mowo* resided in the Lower *khel* of the village.

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<sup>165</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Akhalu Sheqi & Mr. Zaniu Sheqi of Mishilimi village on 09-12/02/2021.

<sup>166</sup> These two villages do not share similar migration route.

For the Chakhesang tribe, the village's founder usually became the village's first *Mowo* (Priest). However, if he participated in the act of taboo, the second founder would become the *Mowo*. Once in Khezhakeno<sup>167</sup> village, when it was time to choose a new *Mowo* from a family with three brothers. In order to test them, their mother assigned them a task. She asked them to make *Maphou* (Fireplace) for cooking. The eldest son made the *Maphou* using four *Pachu* (Stone Stand) and the middle son used two *Pachu* (which could not support the pot while cooking). The youngest son named Tsie who had already learned to make *Maphou* from his mother, used three *Pachu* (see Plate 11) to make the fireplace. Since the youngest son followed the norms, he became the *Mowo*. Similar to this narration is a narration from Lekromi<sup>168</sup> village (Phek district) where two men named Zhe and Nachu (the first two inhabitants of the village), once lived all by themselves. One day, Zhe wanted to cut his hair but could not do it himself. He went to Nachu for assistance but had to wait since Nachu was cooking. Even after repeated requests, Nachu told Zhe to wait. Since Zhe waited long, he asked, '*Are you cooking with two Pachus and holding one side that you cannot come out?*' Saying this, he went inside Nachu's house, and surprisingly, he was cooking precisely in that manner. Since it was taboo to hold a pot by hand while cooking, and a person who had performed such an act could not become a *Mowo*, Zhe became the first *Mowo* of Lekromi village.

According to Meriema villagers (Kohima district), when the village's first inhabitants, Usau, Suya, and Keyio came and settled; Usau owned three mountains. Since owning three mountains was a taboo, he gave one to the other two inhabitants, Suya and Keyio. Lekromi village does not have any migration affiliation with Khezhakeno and Meriema, but they observe similar beliefs. Such similarities could be due to contacts and cultural influence, or the possibility of similar migration routes taken though not reflected in the oral narratives.

Every Naga tribe performs a series of rituals and ceremonies to appease supernatural forces. Taking some examples of rituals (using fowls and rice beer) that were performed at the time of village formation, this study also analyses common practices between those villages that affiliate with Khezhakeno migration and that do not. In the first case, when Koza first led the group to Khezhakeno, upon reaching, he offered worship to Chükeci-o (Khezhakeno Baptist Church, 2021). Koza performed another worship act before a meal, taking a pinch of the food

<sup>167</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mrs. Terilhou of Khezhakeno village on 10/11/2022.

<sup>168</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Kedolhinyi of Lekromi village on 12-01-2020.

and throwing it on the ground. He then dropped some drinks on the ground and, with his finger pointed at his forehead and chest, worshipped his creator Chükeci-o after which Koza and the group had their food and settled there.

Similar to Khezhakeno, Yikhum village<sup>169</sup> (Wokha district) performed a ritual using local rice beer during village formation. In this ritual, the priest bit a piece of ginger and, after crushing it in his mouth, sprayed it around the new site from his mouth, local beer was also sprayed similarly, and some words were uttered. At the time of migration, Kigwema<sup>170</sup> village (Kohima district) stopped at Seiterhaphe<sup>171</sup> before reaching the present Kigwema village. According to Yhokha (2022), the word Seiterhaphe originated from three Angami words where *Sei* means 'Tree', *Terha* means 'Outskirt' and *Phe* means 'Village'. Hence, Seiterhaphe means, 'Woodland Outskirt Village'. At Seiterhaphe, the Kigwema group erected a stone where they performed rituals and acknowledged the site as their previously inhabited location. This ritual was performed for a long time, and even after settling at Kigwema, the inhabitants used to take rice, beer, and meat and visit Seiterhaphe. A leader would take rice beer from the traditional gourd mug and pour it into a banana leaf cup as part of the ritual. He would eat and drink as much as he could and pour the remaining around/near the monolith in Seiterhaphe. After performing this ritual, the others who came along with the leader could eat and drink.

In some rituals, to avoid any unfortunate event to happen, Naga offered sacrifices to the spirits. The evil spirits who also cause suffering, sickness, misfortune, and death disturb the spiritual repose. To ward off these sufferings, people propitiated the evil spirits by offering eggs, fowls, pigs, dogs, and other domesticated animals. Apart from other animals, the Nagas extensively used fowls, especially those groups that migrated from Khezhakeno. Khezhakeno<sup>172</sup> villagers used a plant known as *Nenu* (see Plate 12) in the Khezha dialect to perform a ritual at the time of childbirth by the newborn child's father. The *Nenu* stem would be cut into 5 or 7 pieces of 2 ½ inches long each. He would go to a specific location and place the cut part of the *Nenu* stems along with a dead chicken there. He would then utter, *'Let this child become great and honorable; even if others cannot go up, may this child go up; even if others*

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<sup>169</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Hayuo Kithan & Mr. Zambemo Kithan of Yikhum village on 01-05-2022.

<sup>170</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Neisakolie Mera of Kigwema village on 05/12/21.

<sup>171</sup> The site is located on the spurs of Vipikhowo range of Japfü Mountain.

<sup>172</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mrs. Terilhou of Khezhakeno village on 10/11/2022.



*cannot, may this child enter. Like the moon and sun that appears brightly, may this child shine brightly; even if others complain or speak bad, let it not befall upon my child'*, saying this he would return home. When the child completes one year, another fowl would be killed, and a ritual was performed; also, at the time of naming the child, a fowl would be killed and rituals performed (Lucy & Zehol, 2009). In the naming ritual, a sacrificial leaf was torn into two halves and dropped to the ground. If the leaf fell on the ground facing up, it was considered a good omen, and the baby's name would be pronounced. If there was any death in the family, as part of the ceremony, till the burial of the body, a fowl was killed and hung on the wall of the house. In Khezhakeno village<sup>173</sup>, at the time of observing *Porlho Minia Ke* (one-day genna<sup>174</sup>), a strangulated chicken (sometimes a severed cat with head and body detached would be used for this ritual) and a plant locally called *Thopi* (see Plate 13) would be kept in front of one of the khel gates and *Porlho Minia Ke* was performed. One huge bamboo was used to block the entrance gate, after which *Mowo* (Priest) would announce that it would be a genna to pass through that gate for that particular day. At Ghokimi village (Zunheboto district), all the male members would offer fowl sacrifices after a religious ceremony. Among the Lozu descendants<sup>175</sup> (Lazami village of Zunheboto district), if anyone died, they buried a fowl with the corpse. After the burial of a dead body, a chicken or fowl was laid on top of the grave and then covered with soil. They had the supernatural belief that after death, the fowl would go ahead of the man's soul and send an advance message in the land where souls reside; that the man was coming. The Lothas, on the other hand, while staying in Honoho Yanton, performed<sup>176</sup> a purification ritual wherein a rooster's neck would be slit, after which bamboo was stuck inside its neck and hanged in a specific place. The usage of fowls during sacrifices and rituals was common even among those groups that did not have any affiliation with the Khezhakeno migration. Even to this day, for the tribes of Aos, Angami, Chakhesangs, Lothas and Rengmas, giving a fowl or hen to the mother during childbirth signifies some continued cultural practices.

In Meluri village (Phek district), the group that still practices the age-old Naga religion, the use of dry fish and ginger remains essential for any ritual. They also use a locally

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<sup>173</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mrs. Terilhou of Khezhakeno village on 10/11/2022.

<sup>174</sup> Genna means restriction or specific rules to be followed while performing rituals.

<sup>175</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. P. Saluvi Swu, Mr. Maghipu Swu & Mr. Mixeni Tiji of Lazami village on 13-02-2021.

<sup>176</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. S. Chumdamo Ezung of Longsa village on 17-04-2019.

known *Aruna* (leaf used to wrap fermented *Axoni*) during rituals. If the inhabitants decide to perform genna, they would only talk to people once the ceremony ends.

## 4.2. Signs and Omens

Nagas relied a lot on signs and omens before the start of anything. They would check for signs and omens before village formation, when sowing and harvesting, headhunting, or even hosting a feast/festival. Different Naga groups followed various methods to check for these signs. However, verifying the signs and omens varies even within groups with similar Khezhakeno migration history. For the Khezhakeno inhabitants, checking signs and omens was called *Thozo*<sup>177</sup> (*Tho* means ‘Sign’ and *Zo* means ‘Look’) and there are different methods to check for signs and omens. For Venuh (2014), *Thozo* is derived from two Khezha words where, *Tho* means ‘Thorn’ and *Zo* means ‘Look’. In Khezhakeno village, one method<sup>178</sup> to test their luck was to hold a fowl by the neck and throttle (strangulate) it, and if it dies with its right leg slightly crossed over its left, it was a favorable omen. Khezhakeno inhabitants also practiced another *Thozo* to check whether the day would be good. The ritual was performed early in the morning before going outside on an empty stomach. The person conducting the ceremony would take a bamboo cup filled with clean water. He would then go near the hearth to put a piece of charcoal inside the cup. If the bubbles come up, then it is considered a good sign. Another way to check for signs practiced by the Chakhesang group is that, before going on a head-hunting expedition, they first meet someone who can read signs of *Thozo* and make predictions (Venuh, 2014). Taking two short stems from a tree *Potsii*, the stems would be dropped on the ground. It was a good sign if the right stem fell over the left, but if the stems rolled off or did not touch, it was considered a bad sign.

For Sumi villagers (Phek district), the reliance was on a charmstone known as *Akumughatu* (*Akumugha* means ‘Blessing’ and *Atu* means ‘Stone’) or *Atu Kirhe* (see Plate 15) in their village. They believe in the two stones where- one appeared like an anvil, and the other was rectangular. It is said that these stones were brought to the village by their forefathers, who found them during their headhunting expeditions. Besides the ability to control the weather, the villagers consulted these stones before they ventured into any headhunting expeditions. They

<sup>177</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Velhou Koza of Khezhakeno village on 06-07-2022.

<sup>178</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mrs. Kapochü-ü of Khezhakeno village on 03-10-22.

will wait for a sign to be shown on the supposed neck of the charmstone- yellow indicates victory, while red indicates failure or defeat. In the case of Lazami village (Zunheboto district), whenever the village planned to go for any war, journey, or take up cultivation, they used to check for signs or omens using the stem of a particular plant that would be sliced by *doa* (machete) from different sides. They would hold the *dao*, and the cut parts were made to fall on the tip of the *dao*. If the ones that fell on the *dao* fell one layer upon the other, it was considered a good sign, and if it didn't, they would lose a war, or any expedition undertaken would be unsuccessful. This method of checking good and bad signs was also practiced by Ghokimi village (Zunheboto district).

At the time of setting up a new village, Khezhakeno group villages of Mishilimi (Zunheboto district) and Phensenyu village (Tseminyu district) checked for signs and omens through dreams (discussed in Chapter II). Likewise, in Kami<sup>179</sup> village (Phek district), even though the inhabitants did not have an affiliation with the Khezhakeno migration, the village's founders, too, relied on the interpretation of dreams before the village formation. In their dreams, the first inhabitants, Tsulu and Lakhamu, were asked to choose whether they wanted to become Yemi (Rich) or Kami (Warrior). They chose the second option, and per the dreams interpreted, they are called Kadume (*Ka* means 'Warrior' and *Dume* means 'Big') by the neighboring Mao villages.

Similarly, affinities among the Khezhakeno and non-Khezhakeno groups can also be observed in the items carried during migration and in the signs and omens. In the Khezhakeno group, the Ighanumi village (Zunheboto district) may be taken as an example of a village that made use of leaves, stones, and a white rooster, which acted as a tool and guided towards the present village; similar incidents can be observed in some groups that don't associate with Khezhakeno migration. When the first migrants of Lishemi village (Phek district) arrived at the current village location, they brought with them *Zhilekhira-a* (Metal Stool), *Tsü* (Dog), and *Füdzü* (Rooster). As they reached the village site, *Zhilekhira-a* fell, the dog started barking, and the rooster crowed (Venuh, 2014). Even in the case of Kikruma village (Phek district), the first migrants were not part of the Khezhakeno group. These migrants also carried a stone tied with a rope made of coiled straw, a dog, and a rooster. Reaching the present Kikruma village, the

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<sup>179</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Khwezü Kupa of Kami village on 22-02-2020.

rope snapped, and the stone fell. At that time, dogs started barking and the rooster crowed, similar to the Ighanumi village incidents. After *Makhel*, groups that do not have any migration affiliation; reflects similar village formation. Theriemie village (presently an abandoned village in Phek district), that does not associate with the Khezhakeno group; its founder Therie while migrating from Pudonamai village (Manipur) brought certain items with him. He carried four tools and weapons- *Pezhü* (Shield), *Kejü* (Spade), *Riingou* (Spear) and *Zie* (Dao), a dog, a cock, and *Thozo Zhikhu or Zhikhuphi* (Iron plate). As Therie reached the destined location, the cock flapped its wings and crowed, *Zhikhuphi* made a sound, and through the spade, many *Tsülhi* (flee) sprang out. Taking all these as a good omen decided to settle there. It was not just the group that migrated from Khezhakeno, but also the others who didn't affiliate with Khezhakeno migration, carried similar items and searched for similar signs and omens during the village formation.

#### 4.3. Stones that have Control over Nature

Another common cultural practice followed by the Khezhakeno group and those villages that don't affiliate with the Khezhakeno migration was a belief in specific stones that could control nature. In Khezhakeno village, there is a place called *Tawo Bu*, which, if meddled with, was believed to affect the weather, leading to severe thunderstorms (Khezhakeno Baptist Church, 2021). Sumi village (Phek district) also claims that the stone *Akumughatu* or *Atu Kirhe*<sup>180</sup> (see Plate 16), when touched, would cause heavy rainfall and strong winds would blow. Folktale narrates that to invoke rain in times of drought, touching the stone was enough to provide them with rainfall. In the case of Humtso<sup>181</sup> village (Wokha district), a stone brought at the time of village formation has some supernatural power that could also control the weather. Since the rock was heavy, the Humtso group thought about dropping it and migrating without it. But the spirit of the stone spoke through a dream and conveyed a message to the founders: '*If you are thirty in number, then I am also thirty in number, and if you leave me, it will not be good for you also*'.

Humtso people brought two stones, believed to be a male and a female, to the village and called it *Mhankitongnong* (*Mhanki* means 'Stone' and *Otong* means 'Tree Shed') (see Plate 11).

<sup>180</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Neitelo Rakho of Sumi village on 14-01-2020.

<sup>181</sup> Group interview conducted with Mr. Nyanthung Humtsoe & Mr. Yantso Humtsoe of Humtso village on 30-04-2022.

The stone was put under the *Mhankitong* tree (see Plate 14). The spirit stones proved to be a blessing for the villagers as during wars, *Mhankitongnong* would transform into a wild cock and go to the enemy and confuse them. It would also create a rainbow that directly reached the enemy village/camp, frightening the enemies and compelling them to disperse. Headed by a priest, they would perform rituals on these stones using local rice beer, rice, and ginger (chew and offer it to the stone) and worshipped it. An ordinary person could not approach the stones; only a priest with proper rituals could approach it. Once, an incident happened concerning the *Mhankitongnong* stones, wherein an individual used one of these stones as a pestle to pound a pickle. Suddenly, a big storm came, and the man fell and died. Even in the recent past, when three miscreants humiliated *Mhankitongnong*, saying that it were just stones and touched it, that moment two of them fell, after which strong wind and heavy rainfall occurred in the village. Hence, the villagers believe that the stones had magical power. Unfortunately, when the Indian army arrived in the village, they destroyed these stones. The stones can still be found in the Humtso village but most of its portions are buried underground and only a small part is visible.

Villages close to Khezakheno groups but don't associate with Khezhakeno also share similar narrations. Lekromi village (Phek district) possessed *Zhi Khu* (Iron Plate), which was believed to have some supernatural power that could control nature. An oral narrative states that, once, a renowned man died, and as a sign of respect, the inhabitants buried *Zhi Khu* alongside the body. However, the village started experiencing heavy rain and wind right after the incident. This harsh weather lasted seven years, making it difficult for the inhabitants to survive. So they went westward (present Japfu area located in Kohima district) and consulted a soothsayer who informed them that all the effect was because they had buried the *Zhi Khu*. With the help of a dog, they could locate the exact location where *Zhi Khu* was buried. The inhabitants retrieved *Zhi Khu*, but unfortunately, it got damaged when the diggers hit the plate at the time of digging. As soon as the item was brought back to the village and left untouched, the occurrences of heavy rain and windy weather stopped.

Similarly, at one time, when the Manipur troops chased the inhabitants of Lekromi, the inhabitants attempted to flee from the village, taking along with them *Zhi Khu*. During that time, too, the area experienced heavy rain and windy weather conditions. Similar to this, Kami village

(Phek district) also claimed to have *Tsü Kawu*, and when touched, the weather would become very sunny, making the area prone to drought.

#### 4.4. Spirit Stones that Almost Touched the Sky

The villages of Khezhakeno (Phek district), Ighanumi (Zunheboto district), and Chiechama (Kohima district) find similarities in their oral narratives, where each village possessed stones that almost touched the Sky. The two stones found in Ighanumi village (Plate 13) were believed to be a male and a female. One day, these two stones competed to see who would touch the Sky before dawn. By nighttime, they started growing and almost touched the Sky, but suddenly a cock crowed, and at that moment, they stopped growing and cracked. The stones rose so tall that when they burst, the inhabitants of Ighanumi believed that a small stone fragment had fallen at Chiechama village (Kohima district). Chiechama village, in their narration, claimed to have such stone (Plate 14) that once almost touched the Sky. As per the narratives, one night, a man had a dream in which the spirit of the stone appeared and told the man that night, till the rooster crew, it would grow and touch the Sky. The man narrated the dream to his wife, and when evening came, they sat near the stone to check. To their surprise, the stone started growing, but a weak crowing by a young chicken stopped the stone from increasing. It began to crack and fall to the ground breaking into small fragments. It was believed that the top portion of the stone landed in Lazami village (Zunheboto district) while the middle fell into Gariphema village (Kohima district). Khezhakeno village also has a narrative about a stone named *Tsopoupe Chitude* (*Tso* means 'Stone,' *Poupe* means 'Sprout,' and *Chitude* means 'Touch Sky') (Plate 15) that tried to touch the Sky. However, unlike the Ighanumi and Chiechama stones, *Tsopoupe Chitude's* growth was gradual and took time to grow. Khezhakeno and Ighanumi villages have similar migration routes. Still, in the case of Chiechama village, the migrants don't claim to have any affiliation with Khezhakeno (except that the Khezhakeno group stopped at this site temporarily during the course of migrating). Yet, the unique folktales on magical stones that grew and almost touched the Sky are known to these three villages.

#### 4.5 Charmstones

Another stone, known as the charmstone, was popular among the Nagas before the arrival of Christianity. Though charmstones are less discussed, understanding the Naga charmstones

becomes essential as it becomes a source to study the cultural affinities of the different Naga tribes. Charmstones are assumed to be possessed by some supernatural being with a mystical power that can bring good or bad luck. They are called by different names- *Thegotsie*, where *Thego* means 'Luck' and *Tsie* means 'Stone' in the Angami dialect, *Wu Tso*, where *Wu* means 'Charm' and *Tso* means 'Stone' in Chakhesang Khezha dialect, *Ahvülu*, where *Avü* means 'Lucky' and *Alu* means 'Stone' in Pochury dialect and *Atugha*, where *Atu* means 'Stone' and *Gha* means 'Charm' in Sema dialect. Though called by different names, one common feature about these stones was that they produced smaller pebbles, and the smaller rocks would later detach themselves from the mother stone. In due course, the smaller ones would grow into adult size and repeat the same cycle. These stones were naturally occurring and didn't require grinding, pecking, or polishing. They were believed to have a wide range of supernatural powers that could influence natural or social phenomena like drought, heavy rainfall, prosperity, war, sickness, or human behavior. The functions of these stones are more aligned with cultural beliefs and ceremonies rather than practical uses. Interestingly, the early uses of charmstone are associated with the Naga migration, as some migrants brought these stones during the village formation. Spirits were believed to reside in these stones, and in olden times, the elders of the village claimed to have seen the supposed stone- flying in the sky at midnight

The most common charmstone that produced smaller stones was oval-shaped. Oval-shaped stones were believed to have existed in Kohima, Phek, Zunhebto, Tseminyu, and Wokha districts. These charmstones also made a particular sound of 'tsü tsü' that resembles a sound made by a chicken. These oval-shaped stones were commonly jet-black and glossy, but some appeared to be ashy or off-white. It had a rough surface and could be very light or heavy. The stone resembles a chicken egg in terms of its size and shape. The smaller stones detached from the mother would also have the same physical features. Based on their functions, oval-shaped stones can be categorized into two- blessed and cursed stones.

One could make out whether the stone was blessed or cursed from their movements. Sacred stones left some wet trails along the way. On the other hand, the cursed stone hopped and did not leave any tracks. Locals believe the charmstone shows itself to the person it wants to stay with. In other words, the stone chooses its owner. The owner could be of any age or gender. The blessed stone was found chiefly by those with good moral character, and the cursed stone would

show itself to the unfortunate. In Khezhakeno village (Phek district), a mother often warned her kids about the cursed stones<sup>182</sup>. Anytime on their way to and from the field, small children were instructed not to pick any jet black stones, round in shape, and hops, even if they saw one.

In Khezhakeno village, charmstones were reared and lived in the house of a *Mowo* (Priest) during the pre-Christian era. These charmstones appeared before *Mowo's* home and started living with him. Later the stones produced more stones. Except for the *Mowo*, if anyone touched the charmstones, they would have symptoms like itching (skin irritation). *Mowo* also performed rituals using this charmstone. During the animism period, the *Mowo* had to maintain a strict diet, and if he consumed anything that was not supposed to be in his diet, the stone would disappear, but once he went back to his routine, the stone would reappear in his house. Since *Mowo* used these charmstones during religious ceremonies, it can be assumed that the stone was blessed. A narrator<sup>183</sup> claimed that he had seen the stones lying in one of the dark corners of *Mowo's* house some years back. At present, *Mowo's* house is locked, and all the charm stones are still believed to exist inside.

People of Matikhru village (Phek district) believe that the stone owner would be prosperous, healthy, and get all blessings, but only the Raja clan is qualified to keep such charmstones. In Khumiesü village (Phek district), *Ahvülu* (charmstones)<sup>184</sup> was reared, and the inhabitants believed that *Ahvülu* brings prosperity to the owner. There was another type of *Ahvülu* found in Khumiesü village which could create an illusion making the owner appealing to the girls. They didn't usually touch these stones, kept *Ahvülu* in an earthen pot, and buried them underground inside the kitchen. The stones would come and go as it wished. In Lephori village (Phek district), two sticks were put on the *Ahvülu*, and when the sticks spun, it signified that the stone was alive. If it did not spin, then the stone was assumed dead. Only lucky ones found the stones, and as in Khumiesü village, they similarly hid *Ahvülu*. Lephori's version also talks about the existence of two types of stones. The first was the Hunter/ hunting *Ahvülu* that brought prosperity, and another was the physical attraction stone. The stones could not be touched directly with the hand, and if anyone tried to do so, their body would be infested with boils.

<sup>182</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mrs. Kapochü-ü of Khezhakeno village on 13-02-2020.

<sup>183</sup> Personal interview conducted with Lt. Mr. Ngopeni of Khezhakeno village on 12-03-2020.

<sup>184</sup> Narrator's uncle used to rear the charmstones.



Charmstones were mainly found in the Tizu River<sup>185</sup>, inside a nest made of leaves. If anyone sees the stone, he would pick it up and hide the stone in the nearby jungle. He would first check for good signs through dreams, and only then would he return the next day to collect the charmstone. After bringing it home, the finder would take the stone inside the house. They were put inside a pot and kept underground. These stones were fed meat wrapped in banana leaves from time to time. As for Lephori villagers when they shifted their settlement, they left all the charmstones in the old location. The inhabitants still believe that if one digs the soil in the previous settlement site, the remains of the charmstones would still be found.

Charmstones (Plate 18) believed to have brought prosperity to the owner were found in Ighanumi village but destroyed by the Indian army. It was the rich people that possessed such stones. They kept it on top of the granary to multiply the grains. When these charmstones produced smaller stones, the detached stones were collected and kept in another granary; likewise, the process continued. Ighanumi inhabitants believed that with the usage of charmstones, incidences of granary overflowing were also believed to have occurred. These charmstone stones also produced signs to signify whether the family harvest would be good or not- if the stone appeared dry, the yield would be bad, but if the surface looked glossy, the yield would be bountiful. Lazami village also claimed that the rich used to own such charmstones, but it was not determined whether they produced smaller stones. Similarly, Meriema village claims that these stones existed in the village, but with the coming of Christianity, all the charmstones were disposed of or destroyed.

Mishilimi village<sup>186</sup> (Zunheboto district) inhabitants believed that the charmstones found in their village could be male or female charmstones. The charmstones had strips on them, and if the stone was white stripped, it was considered a female stone. On the other hand, if it had a red strip, it was considered a male stone. Rich people usually reared such stones, and as per the appearance of the charmstone, the owner could predict whether the harvest would be good or bad - an oily and shiny look signified a good harvest and a dry appearance signified a bad harvest. The two charmstones familiar to Mishilimi village were *Akinigha* (*Akini* means 'Rich' and *Gha* means 'Stone') and *Anagha* (*Ana* means 'Rice' and *Gha* means 'Stone').

<sup>185</sup> The Tizi River flows through Zunheboto and Phek districts and join the Chindwin River in Myanmar.

<sup>186</sup> Narrator Akhalu's father of Mishilimi village had a pair of charmstone.

Ghokimi villagers (Zunheboto district) claim that the village possessed seven charmstones, but with the coming of Christianity, these stones were either destroyed or disappeared. Ghikimi village charmstones come in different shapes- fish shape, apple shape, chicken-shaped, duck-shaped, monkey-shaped, and male private parts. Monkey-shaped stones jumped from tree to tree during the daytime and turned into stone at night. Sometimes these stones would take the form of a chicken, and whosoever saw the animal form belief would die. The size of the charm stones ranged from one foot to half feet long, and they lived under a bigger rock. The biggest charmstone was known as *Aghükütsü Kighiyeu* (*Aghü* means 'War,' *Kütsü* mean 'Head,' and *Kighiyeu* means 'to hit something'). This rectangular stone was used as a hammer to hang the enemy's skull in the tree. Ghokimi inhabitants believed that there were both male and female (could not be differentiated now) charmstones that produced smaller stones. The stones were consulted for different reasons- before venturing into any adventure, before sowing by performing rituals, during pregnancy, and more. They were also offered chickens as sacrifices<sup>187</sup>. It was a good sign if a liquid form came out from the stones or patches/marks on the stone. It was a bad sign if the black-colored charmstone appeared clean but dull.

The Lothas had charmstones, but they did not mention anything about stones producing smaller stones. In Yikhum village (Wokha district), Ponglong Amotsu found the charmstone in the Jungle. It was on top of neatly arranged leaves, and a flat-shaped stone was below them. The stone was round but much bigger and looked like a human face with a mouth, eyes, and nose. The stone was brought into the village and kept under Menkitong (*Menki* means 'Enemy Head' and *Tong* means 'Tree'). The stone is said to be grey but not shiny. The weight of the stone is believed to be not less than 30 kg. It made a sound like the sound of a small chicken (*tsik tsik*). The way the stone was found was quite astonishing, so the founder believed it to be a blessing stone and decided to bring it to the village. It was stated that once a drunkard broke a small part of the stone, after which the stone moved (not rolled) downwards around the village granary and disappeared.

Kithaga/Nsunnyu villagers (Tseminyu district) also mention a charmstone kept under the head-hanging tree. The sizes vary, with the biggest one weighing around one kilogram. Oily

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<sup>187</sup> Some narrators of Ghokimi village have experienced the ritual performed at young age.

stones were signified as a blessing stone, and stones with marks were signified as bad stones. The rich people mostly kept such stones, or they could be kept in the morungs.

Charmstones found in Sumi village (Phek district) called *Akumughatu or Atu Kirhe*<sup>188</sup> (Plate 16) produce smaller stones and are used as a means for the villagers to look for signs and omens (discussed above). *Akumughatu or Atu Kirhe* could also control the weather. Unlike the charmstones found in Khezhakeno, Kami, Lekhromi, and Ighanumi villages, Sumi village charmstones are bigger. It is stated that the bigger portions of these stones are buried underground, and in it, many smaller stones are attached. The villagers believe the two charmstones are male and female, while the attached smaller stones are their children.

Kigwema village and Viswema village (Kohima district), who don't share any affiliation to Khezhakeno migration, also stated that their village inhabitants used to keep charmstones. Kigwema village (Kohima district) claims to possess different charmstones of red, brown, and black; they could be found anywhere. The inhabitants believe a particular charmstone with a rough surface exists, which, if one possesses, the owner would always tend to steal. Another charmstone, *Tsie* (Luck stone), would bring prosperity to the owner. The third charmstone, *Mi Thego Tsie* (Fire Luck stone), also brings wealth to the owner, but his house would soon be burned down. Children could not touch the stones, and were kept on the granary. Unfortunately, when the Indian army came, all the stones got destroyed. Similar to Kigwema village, Viswema village talks about three types of charmstones- First was the *Thego Thie* (Fortune Stone) brings prosperity to the owner. Still, if the stone gets destroyed, the owner gets affected and loses sense. The second was a green<sup>189</sup> charmstone, which would fill it with weeds upon falling in a particular area, but the owner would become rich. Thirdly, there was the red stone, where the owner of this charmstone would become rich, but his house would be burned by all means. Similarly, though the villages of Kami village, Lekhromi village, and Zapami village (Phek district) don't share any migration affiliation with the Khezhakeno group, they share similar charmstone beliefs.

<sup>188</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Neitelo Rakho of Sumi village on 14-01-2020.

<sup>189</sup> Narrator Mr. Daniel Kikhi of Viswema village (interview conducted on 5/12/21) has seen the green stone.

The oral narrative<sup>190</sup> of Kami village (Phek district) states that there were different kinds of charmstones. These charmstones can be categorized into different groups: *Rhi Wu* (*Rhi* means 'War' and *Wu* means 'Charm') was said to have been brought to the village at its formation. The stone possessed mystical powers that helped the village win wars, so it was passed down from generation to generation. Unfortunately, the house where the stones were kept caught fire at one point, and all the stones disappeared amidst the chaos. Another charmstone *Kinyie Wu* (*Kinyie* means 'Rich' and *Wu* means 'Charm'), was also a blessed stone that brings wealth to the owner. There were also cursed stones; one charmstone was called *Kenei Wu* (*Kenei* means 'Shame' and *Wu* imply 'Charm'). The owner of this weird charmstone felt thrilled whenever anyone cursed him. To stir up trouble, the stone owner did things that would disgust others, like pooping on the roadside, and while anyone felt disgusted upon seeing the poop, it would give immense pleasure to the stone owner. Another bad charmstone was *Kewu Wu* (*Kewu* means 'Thief' and *Wu* means 'Charm'). If a person held possession of this charmstone, he would have an uncontrollable urge to steal<sup>191</sup>. The owner became possessed by this stone and would not part with it even if tortured physically or emotionally. The person owning *Kewu Wu* was believed to have a supernatural ability that allowed the owner to see through walls and locate valuable items. The next charmstone is called *Tekhro Wu*, which is related to physical attraction from the opposite sex. Usually, men owned this stone, and if an ugly man could attract many women, the talk was that he must possess *Tekhro Wu*, and for this reason, women found him attractive.

The ancestors of Lekromi village (Phek district), while migrating from China, *Makhel*, and to the present settlement site, were assumed to have brought a *Zhi Khu*<sup>192</sup> (Iron Plate) (see Plate 17) along with them. Inside the Iron Plate were many smaller stones. The narrator stated that when he first saw the stones, there were only five to six of them, but after some years, the stones on the plate increased to nine or ten. *Zhi Khu* and the charmstones are currently kept in the *Mowo* (Priest) houses. Another charmstone called *Mhe To Pu* in the Khezha dialect is in Zapami village<sup>193</sup>. These stones were believed to possess some supernatural power of granting prosperity to the village as a whole or an individual. The village currently owns eighty-five *Mhe*

<sup>190</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Khwezü Kupa of Kami village on 22-02-2020.

<sup>191</sup> An incident occurred a few years ago in one of the Khezha villages where the villagers caught a teenage girl stealing. The accused was believed to have possessed *Kewu Wu* charmstone, but even after interrogation, she never revealed the hiding place of the stone, so the stone was never found.

<sup>192</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Kedolhinyi of Lekromi village on 12-01-2020.

<sup>193</sup> Telephonic interview conducted with Mr. Dikhalo Khutsoh of Zapami village on 06-08-2020.

*To Pu* stones, of which sixty-one are located in the house of Bulechu, and twenty-four stones can be found at Lt. Zhielo Putse's home. The stones are said to have been brought by two great-grandfathers, Ketsu and Wukhu from Makhel. These stones were oval in shape and dark in color but heavier in weight. In olden times, the *Mowo* used these stones to perform rituals to bring prosperity to the village. Apart from *Mowo*, if anyone touched these stones, they would get skin irritation all over their body.

The charmstone had the unique feature of having supernatural abilities. This magical ability is believed to come from the spirits that reside on such stones. Belief in such charmstones was famous not only among those groups that had migration affinities with Khezhakeno but such charmstones were widely used even by those groups that did not affiliate with Khezhakeno migration, proving that cultural affinities existed among different groups of people even though the migration routes were different.

#### **4.6. Folktale on Three Brothers: Man, Spirit and Tiger**

The story of the three brothers- Spirit, Tiger, and Man, is also popular among the Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, and Sema tribes. A familiar Khezhakeno folktale<sup>194</sup> describes the three brothers- Man, Tiger, and Spirit. According to the narrative, a mother had three sons- Man, Spirit, and Tiger. One day when the mother fell sick, the three brothers took turns to care for their mother. When the spirit took care of the mother, she felt sicker. When the tiger cared for the mother, it would pester the mother by saying, '*When you die, I will eat this portion, and I will eat that portion.*' But when the man cared for the mother, she felt much better. Mother knew that once she died, the tiger would try to eat her, so she asked her human son to bury her body under the hearth so the tiger would not find her body. The human son followed the instruction and, after the death of their mother, buried her body under the hearth. After the demise of their mother, the man told the spirit to move out of the house and live in the steep areas. The spirit agreed and went away.

When he told the tiger to go and live in the jungle, the tiger refused to leave the house. Finding it hard to continue living with his tiger brother, the man asked the tiger what he feared

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<sup>194</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mrs. Terilhou of Khezhakeno village on 10/11/2022.

most. The tiger replied that he feared the loud noise of '*Bee Bee and Pu Pu*<sup>195</sup>', the most. The man was cunning, so one day, in the pretext of beautifying the tiger, hanged hollow items that made the most noise on the tiger's ear and tail. Once it was tied, the man blew a trumpet loudly near the tiger's ear. After which, the tiger started running, but the faster it ran, the louder the tied items made noise. Likewise, the tiger ran far into the deep jungle.

Kithaga/Nsunyu village (Tseminyu district) also shared a similar narrative about the 'Spirit, Tiger, and Man'. The spirit and the man buried the mother's body under the hearth and built a fireplace. When the tiger returned from the field, on learning about his mother's death, he pounced all over the floor, searching for the body. When he could not find/locate the body, he got upset and asked the two brothers to tell him where they had buried their mother's body. As the man and spirit did not say to the tiger about the whereabouts of their mother's body, the tiger decided to leave the house. Man asked the tiger, '*Since you are the eldest amongst us, what do you suggest we do?*' They came up with an agreement. One of the agreements was that the man and spirit were forbidden to cultivate in the four places/areas: 1) *Amangpfü Tilawa*, 2) *Akapang Tilawa*, 3) *Apfughu Pfü Kentonnenwa*, 4) *Asayi Kenjuki*. When the tiger was about to depart, he told his two brothers never to enter the jungle before the sun rose and just before sunset. He said that his eyes become blurry then, and could not differentiate between man, spirit, and animals. Saying this, the tiger disappeared into the jungle. Kithaga people believe that tigers warned the human because they come from the same mother. Because of this the tiger never attacks a man. He will only do so when being instigated by man, and in case he devours man's flesh, the tiger will die of loose motion.

This story of a 'Man, Tiger and Spirit' is also shared by the Mishilimi village (Zunheboto district). In their narrative, when man and spirit cared for their mom, she would be healthy and beautiful, but when the tiger cared for her, she did not feel well as the tiger kept saying words like, '*eat mother's flesh.*' Man and spirit hatched a plot and made the tiger flee into the jungle. Man and evil spirit lived together for a while, and with no record of reason, the two separated.

Similar narratives are also popular among the Makhel<sup>196</sup> villagers. According to the narratives, there was a banyan tree where the creator god lived. He created a lady, and she came

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<sup>195</sup> Random noises

<sup>196</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Mathibo of Makhel village on 29-08-2018.

to be known as Dzüliamosüro/Dzüliamosüa. Later, lying under the banyan tree, she conceived and gave birth to three sons- a tiger, a spirit and a human.' They lived and grew up together. When it was time for the brothers to live separately, the mother decided to hold a competition, and the winner would inherit the land and the house. She placed a bunch of grass before them and said the one who touched the grass first would be the winner. The tiger being strong quickly jumped and touched it. However, the mother said she gave no warning and was invalid.

Meanwhile, the middle son, spirit, loved his younger brother, the human, and said that he would give him an arrow, and when the mother sent the signal, he asked him to shoot at the grass. The human obeyed, and when the signal was given, he hit the grass first and was declared the winner. Thus, the human stayed with his mother, the tiger went into the jungle, and the Spirit went where no man could. Before departure, three stones were erected in memory of their stay<sup>197</sup>.

Khonoma village (Kohima district) that have migration affiliation with Khezhakeno migration also shares similar narrations about the 'Man, Spirit and Tiger'. At the same time, Phesama village (Kohima district) that does not share any affiliation with Khezhakeno migration, share the similar folk narrative of 'Man, Spirit and Tiger'. In the narrative, the spirit loved his younger brother, so he helped the man chase the tiger away into the jungle. Similar to the Khezhakeno and Kithaga/Nsunyu narration, Phesama narratives also mentioned that when the mother falls ill, the tiger pesters the mother, saying, *'When you die, I will eat this part of your body; it looks delicious'*. After the mother's death, the spirit and the man buried the mother's body under the hearth when the tiger fetched water from an earthen pot with a hole in it. Later spirit volunteered to move out from human habitation and told the tiger to go and live in the forest. The man said, *'I am a man, and I am the youngest, so the house is mine.'* But the tiger insisted that it would also live in the village. They decided to do a race and whosoever won would stay in the village. Since man could not outrun the tiger, he devised a plan, and in the race, he used his spear and touched the target, thus winning the race. Tiger did not acknowledge it. The man won by cheating. With no other option, man and spirit burned the tiger's tail when the tiger was sleeping, and the tiger was finally chased away using fire. After this, the tiger feared fire, and as for the man and spirit, they agreed never to cross each other's path again.

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<sup>197</sup> Located somewhere two and a half kilometers towards the Southern side of Shajouba village

#### 4.7. Burial

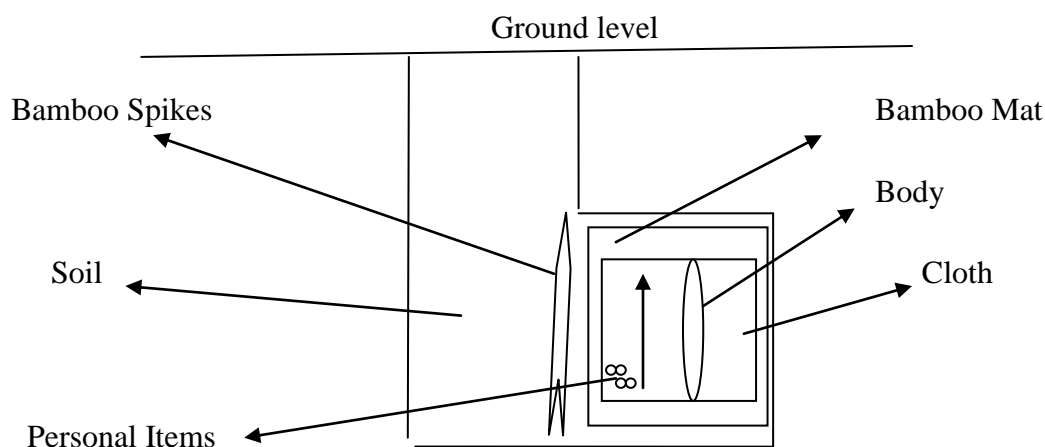
Beliefs in life after death are common for all Nagas. However, a significant disparity was found in disposing of dead bodies and the burial system. It is a common practice among the Nagas that after the death of a person, his body is washed thoroughly by the family members. The body would then be buried or placed on a raised platform to dry out. Generally, when a person dies, as funerary tradition, the family of the dead would kill fowl, pigs, cows, or buffalo and distribute the meat or give a feast to fellow villagers as a mark of respect as the last feast of the deceased. Some Naga groups also believed that after death, especially of men, his belongings would be carried to the land of death by those whose heads he had taken during headhunting.

The tradition of keeping the dead body on a raised platform was practiced by the Ao tribe and Laruri village from the Pochury tribe. For the Aos, when a person dies, the body is placed in a bamboo coffin supported by some stakes in the ante-room. The body would be kept there for weeks or months, and dried over a slow smoky fire. The body would be later taken to the cemetery at harvest time. However if the body is not dried enough, it would be kept in the house for drying process until the next harvest (Smith, 2009). Lauri village (Phek district) also used a similar method where a wooden coffin would be carved after the death of a family member, and the dead body would be placed in it. The coffin was then placed in the front room of the house, and beside the coffin, a fire would be burning to dry up the body. A bamboo mat was used to cover the body, and a small hole was created for the body fluid to pass through and enter an earthen pot. Once the body fluid fills the pot, it would be emptied and returned to the same position to be refilled. The body was kept like this until the next sowing season. Collecting the bones would start when the time came, regardless of whether the body was thoroughly dried. On reaching the spot, the bodies were dismembered, and bones collected to be placed in an earthen pot. Lauri villagers did not bury the dried corpse but disposed of it through an earthen pot. Normal, sick, and warrior bones were kept separately (Saul, 2003). Laruri village of the Pochury tribe and the Ao tribe do not claim affiliation with the Khezhakeno migration. The traditional burial system practiced by these two parties was unfamiliar to the Khezhakeno group, who don't practice such a burial system.

Most of the Nagas disposed of their dead bodies through the burial system. Different methods were practiced by those groups that dispose of bodies through burial. Among the



Khezhaeno group, three different types of burial systems have been observed. In the first case, we have the Khezhakeno and other Chakhesang tribes; their grave structure is different from the Lotha, Eastern Rengmas, which comprises of Sohomi village, Meluri village, and Lephori village, Khumiesü village, Matikhrü village, Akhwego village from Pochury tribe and Thizama village of Angami tribe. The burial structure of the Semas is also different from the first two groups. Among the first group, graves were usually simple. The depth of the grave underground was about 5/6 feet deep straight, and the dead, covered with a cloth and a mat, would be buried. Some of their personal belongings were buried along with the body. Rich people would later use stone slabs to cover the body. Halfway through the grave, some space would be kept to support the stone slabs. A small space was also kept between the body and the stone slab. Those who could not afford to get stone slabs use scented wood to cover the body. After the body was covered with stone/wood, the remaining portion of the grave was filled with soil. In the case of Khezhakeno village, food was placed on the grave, for they believed that the spirit of the dead would return and eat it. The man would be buried with a spear, dao, and other weapons, and the woman would be buried with her walking stick (Zehol, 2009).



**Figure 9: Traditional Underground Burial Structure practiced by some Naga**

In the case of the Lothas, Sohomi village (Phek district), Meluri village (Phek district), Lephori village (Phek district), Khumiesü village (Phek district), Matikhrü village (Phek district), Akhwego village (Phek district), and Thizama village (Kohima district), the grave structure was different from the previous burial system (see Plate 20). But after digging about 5-6 feet deep,

they would dig horizontally and create space to keep the body. The direction could be any side. After this, a bamboo mat would be first spread, followed by a piece of cloth above the mat. Then the body would be kept and covered with cloth. The deceased would wear the full traditional attire, and some of the deceased's remaining items were put on the side of the body. There would also be another area where the remaining items would be placed- dao, axe, spear, necklace, grains, beer, etc. which could not fit inside the grave (Plate 21). If the man was rich, additional shawls were placed near the body, but it would not be more than ten shawls. Spears and ornaments were also put on the grave. Afterward, the bamboo mat would be folded to cover the items and the body. Then bamboo spikes were used to seal the horizontal portion of the grave to prevent soil from directly touching the body. The grave was then filled with the remaining soil.

The Sema grave structure comprises three shapes: circle-shaped, half-circle, or moon-shaped, and graves built as side walls. Circle-shaped graves were constructed for the rich who had feasted the whole village for about ten years and had pulled stones in his name. Such a man was eligible to be laid in a circle-shaped grave. Half-circle or moon-shaped graves were built for men who had hosted a feast for the village but could not complete the whole process or a man who had died with unfulfilled wishes. As for an ordinary person, his grave would be located against the side wall of the footpath. In Mishilimi village (Zunheboto district), similar grave structures were observed. Several graves were built as side walls along those paths that led to the jungles. Graves were constructed both inside and outside of the village. In olden times, a man's dead body could be rested anywhere, even in the jungle, but a woman's grave was inside the village gate. The belief was that women's soul or spirit was weaker than men's.

The above discussion shows that though the Khezhakeno group migrated together, their burial system differs. On the other hand, the burial system of the Lothas, Sohomi village, Meluri village, Laruri village, Khumiesü village, and Matikhrü villages, affiliated with the Khezhakeno migration, is similar to those of the Akhwego and Thizama who don't have any affiliation with Khezhakeno migration. Likewise, the burial system of the Ao, Chang, and Laruri groups don't connect with the Khezhakeno migration, and their cultural practices are also entirely different. The Khezhakeno group did not put the dead body on a raised platform like some Pochury and the Ao tribes but buried the dead. On the other hand, the Semas practiced a different burial system from all the other groups.

#### 4.7.1. Folk Tale of Log Burial

According to a Chakhesang oral narrative (also see Venuh 2014), there was a village known as Venuhba<sup>198</sup>. The inhabitants of Venuhba used to live very long, and people hardly died. As per the Chakhesang custom, cattle like pigs, cows, and buffalos were killed when a person died, and their meat would be distributed to fellow clan members. But since hardly anyone died, they could not perform this ritual and only observed others perform it and eat meat frequently. Venuh clan also wanted to eat meat very much, so one day, the clan decided to fake death so that they could kill animals and consume the meat. They used a log as a dead body and performed all the funerary rituals, including killing animals and distributing meat. The fake death performance offended the spirits and led to the death of clan members at a fast rate. The population started to decline, and people realizing it to be a curse for their actions, decided to abandon the site and migrate to other areas. Similar activities of log burial were also performed by the ancestors of Phensenyu village (Tseminyu district), Lephori village (Phek district), Mima village (Kohima district), and Sirhi village (Kohima district).

Phensenyu group (present Tseminyu district) settled at a site known as Sedemi/ Sinkeduyü (wood cutting place), which used to live a long life, and hardly anyone died. So this group also performed fake death by burying a log and feasting. After this, the Phensenyu people started dying, and so they migrated toward the Rengma area. Among the Chakro Angamis, there is a village named Sirhi, and the village is located between Mezoma and Medziphema villages (Kohima district). In the Angami dialect, 'Si' means 'Wood', and 'Rhi' means 'Draw or Craft.' The incident of log burial is also said to have taken place in this village. After studying the site mentioned by Phensenyu village and Sirhi village, the literal meaning appears similar. Phensenyu inhabitants cannot locate Sedemi/ Sinkeduyü site; it is possible that the village mentioned by Phensenyu village and Sirhi village is the same, or these two sites mentioned may have some connection. Mima village also shares similar oral narratives on log burial. Before settling at the Mima site, the inhabitants lived at Miphe<sup>199</sup> in the Mao area. Living at Mipha, the Mima group also experienced long life, but as they wanted to eat meat, this group also performed fake death. This action resulted in the death of many people compelling the inhabitants to

<sup>198</sup> This is an abandoned site at Thetsumi village (Phek district) today.

<sup>199</sup> Location unknown

migrate in different directions. Likewise, after settling temporarily at other sites, the Mima group finally reached the present Mima village and permanently settled there.

In a similar incident, in Lephori village (Phek district), it is said that once upon a time, when the ancestors of Lephori were still settled at the old site of Pfüwe (maybe), there used to be a big clan by the name, Joshury clan. Like the narratives mentioned above, Joshury clan members lived a long life, and so they didn't get much reason to cut and eat animal meat. Instead, they used to eat meat given mainly by the other clans. So they also performed a fake death using a bamboo pillow<sup>200</sup>. But after the act, Joshury clan male members began to decline. Mothers hardly gave birth to baby boys, significantly reducing the clan's population. For this reason, even today, the Joshury clan is said to have a less male population.

#### **4.8. Social and Political Practices**

During the pre-colonial period, every village functioned independently. Though different villages hardly interacted with each other, the Nagas, in general, share a similar social structure and political functions. Naga society could be divided into two groups- rich and poor; the rich dominated the poor. In the chief-ruled villages, the chief held the highest position in the social hierarchy. But among those tribes/villages where the chief was just a nominal one, the man with the most cattle, cultivable land, or if the family had hosted feasts for the whole village, could claim the highest social status in a village. Among the Semas, chieftainship was hereditary, and pioneers and their descendants could claim the rights of the chieftainship. Sema chiefs were very powerful.

Among those groups that share similar migration with Khezhakeno, the Semas had a powerful chief. In other villages, the pioneers usually became the village priest and acted as the chief. Though they were socially respected, their powers were limited. They received the best portions during community fishing or hunting, as was the case of the Sumi village priest. The Pochury rajas/chiefs also enjoyed high social status, but their powers were limited. The only other Naga tribe whose chief was as powerful as or more powerful than the Sema chief was the Angs of the Konyaks. Angs lead a royal lifestyle, availing almost anything he wants. Semas and

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<sup>200</sup> Nagas used to make pillows out of bamboo in the past, and its usage was popular among the Nagas.

the Konyaks do not share any migration history; however, their social and political systems were very similar.

Zhimo (2011) states that Sema village social status was divided into Akukau (Chief), Chhochhomi (Counselors), Awou (Priest), Amthau (First Reaper), Lapuu, and Amoshou (Grave Diggers). The lowest positions in social standing were the Mighimi (orphans). Orphans included poor people who had no food, clothes, or land and were forced to live under the generosity of the rich. It was common among all Nagas for orphans to avail low status in Naga history. Folktales also talk about incidences where the rich and the warriors were looked up to while the orphans and the poor were disrespected. Naga folktales on love stories and marriage proposals also clearly distinguish parents favoring rich and powerful in-laws and strongly opposing the union of a daughter with a poor or orphan lover. Angami folktale on Mehoviu and Morusa is a sad story of Naga's headhunting practice, but the narration also depicts Morusa as a famous warrior whom everyone liked. Ao folktale on Jina and Etiben is another sad love story about a poor boy that could not be with his lover due to his low social status. However in Naga society, a man could change his social position by bringing an enemy head. During the pre-colonial period, headhunting was common among the Nagas, so warriors were revered and given high social status for protection.

#### **4.8.1. Thevo and Thepa Tradition**

The tradition of *Thevo* (older brother) and *Thepa* (Younger brother) provides a picture of the social structure that existed in the past. Though not practiced by the other tribes, this tradition is popular among the Angami villages of Kigwema, Meriema, and Khonoma. According to tradition, if anyone wanted to form a new village, the group had to make sure that both *Thevo* and *Thepa* were a part of them. Under this system, *Thevo*, the older brother, got a special position in society and was respected by the other groups. When a ritual was performed in the village, *Thevo* would start, and the others would follow. Also, when animal meats were distributed in the village, *Thevo* would get the best and most nutritious portion example lower portion of the pork leg. Since this practice started long ago, its origination needs to be clarified.

Kigwema village (Kohima district) also refers to *Thevo* and *Thepa* as Apo and Apfü<sup>201</sup>. At the time of village formation, clans belonging to these two brothers reached Kigwema and formed the village together. Among the groups, Khami, Seca, Mera, and Pfücha clans are the *Thevo* and Makhu clan falls under *Thepa* (Yhokha, 2022). Similarly, during the formation of Meriema village (Kohima district), Usau, Suya, and Keyio arrived first and formed the village together. In their case, Usau is *Thevo*, while Suya and Keyio are *Thepa*. The village calls *Thevo* and *Thepa* by a different name of, *Pepo* and *Phechü*, where *Pepo* is *Thevo* and *Phechü* is *Thepa*. Khonoma village (Kohima district) also practiced this tradition, where *Thevo* got more acknowledgment and respect. According to Khonoma (Kohima district), *Thevo* and *Thekru* (*Thepa*) emerged from the magical stone in Khezhakeno and founded Khezhakeno village. This tradition, however, is not mentioned by the Khezhakeno village or the other Naga groups that migrated from there. On the other hand, the mention of Khusomi village (Phek district), which is acknowledged by some as a place from where their ancestors migrated, has been made about older brother Vadeo and younger brother Kevi/ Chevio. As per the narrations, Vadeo is more well-known and acknowledged than the other brother. However, for Khusomi, the criterion of older and younger brothers migrating together was not compulsory. *Thevo* and *Thepa* tradition is more common among some Angami villages. But some villages that practice this tradition don't seem to have any migration affiliation with each other, as was the case of Kigwema and Meriema villages (Kohima district), which undertook different migrations. On the other hand, Thizama village (Kohima district) doesn't practice *Thevo* and *Thepa* traditions, which shows that not all the villages under the present Kohima jurisdiction practice these traditions.

#### 4.8.2. Clanship

The clan is a primary social organization and one of the most common features practiced by the Nagas. Oral narratives stated that clanship was already developed when they entered the Naga Hills. Thong and Kath (2012) opines that clans comprising members of the same ancestor were essential for the Nagas. They share a strong bond among themselves that became more effective, especially during headhunting. Every Naga is part of a prominent clan, and the clan system also plays a vital role in determining an individual's status in society. The more warriors

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<sup>201</sup> Lothas calls their father *Apo* and their mother *Apfü*.

or male clan members had, the more they were respected and feared. At the same time, if a clan had a less male population, they were not respected in society. The clan system has also played its role in contributing to the spread of cultural affinities. There have been incidences where clans, for different reasons, got scattered to different areas. Clan members also migrated to other locations due to population growth. These scattered clan members become a medium for the inter-mixing of different cultures.

Research by the Vadeo Descendants Association (2017) signifies that most Southern Angamis have the same ancestor by the name, Vadeo. Kigwema, Viswema, Jakhama, Phesama, Pfuchama, Khuzhama, Kezoma, Kedima, and Mima villages under Kohima district have inhabitants from the Vadeo generation. Also, many of the Chakhesang villages trace their origin to Southern Angami. According to this organization, Vadeo had seven sons- Tenyi, Zu-o, Zhieo/Keyho, Zakepe, Kejokure, and Thejokure (all the names could not be remembered). One son named Zu-o went to Kigwema and settled there. From Zu-o, Yaleo (elder) and Hono-o (younger) were born. It is said that Yaleo later had five sons, and Hono-o had one son, and through them, more clans originated again dispersed in different directions. In Kigwema village, the descendants of Yaleo call their father *Apuo*, and the descendants of Hono-o call their father *Apfu-u*. Suppose this is so, then apart from the Angamis and the Chakhasangs. In that case, there are also other tribes like the Rengmas, Sema, Lothas, and Laruri village (Phek district) who calls their father *Apvii*, *Ipuh/Ipu*, *Apo*, and *Epo*, respectively. It is also said that Vadeo had a brother named Chiveo who migrated towards the Lotha area from Makhel<sup>202</sup>. Unfortunately, Nagas habitually use the father's or great-grandfather's names as titles. However, the formation of new clan names created confusion, and tracing out the genealogy of a particular clan or family line became challenging.

Oral narratives<sup>203</sup> state that there was a man named Therie who came and formed Theriemie village (presently abandoned site) along with his two sons from Pudunamei (Pfülhüra), Mao Manipur. They have temporarily stopped in two areas of Terozhimipfü-o (located between Kidima village under Kohima district and Khezhakeno village under Phek district) and Selonhu (located between Lishemi village and Lasumi village of Phek district). When he reached the abandoned site called Theriemie (Phek district), he settled there. His

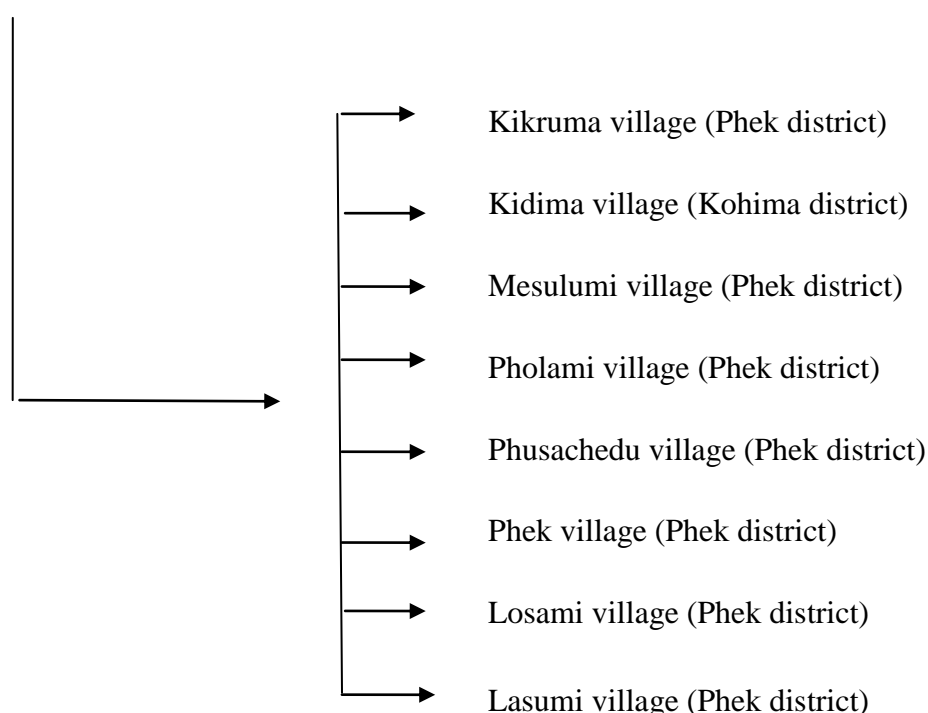
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<sup>202</sup> Supported by Zapra

<sup>203</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Tshulo Therie of Lasumi village on 13/01/2020.

descendants also stayed here for a long time. The village prospered, and at one point, it had a total household of 300 houses. Unfortunately, a misunderstanding arose between the Upper *khel* and lower *khel* villages, ultimately leading to internal conflicts. After this incident, the majority went to Manipur and settled in a place known as Vapfümi<sup>204</sup>. Their clan got scattered and migrated to different villages. Today Therie clan can be found in the villages of Kikruma (Therie clan), Kadima (Therie clan), Mesulumi (Therie clan), Pholami, Phusachedu (Sapu clan), Phek (Sohonomi clan), Losami (Mekrisuh clan), Lasumi (majority are Therie clan).

Therie clan can be found in the villages of



**Table 10: Spread out of Therie Clan from Theriemie Village**

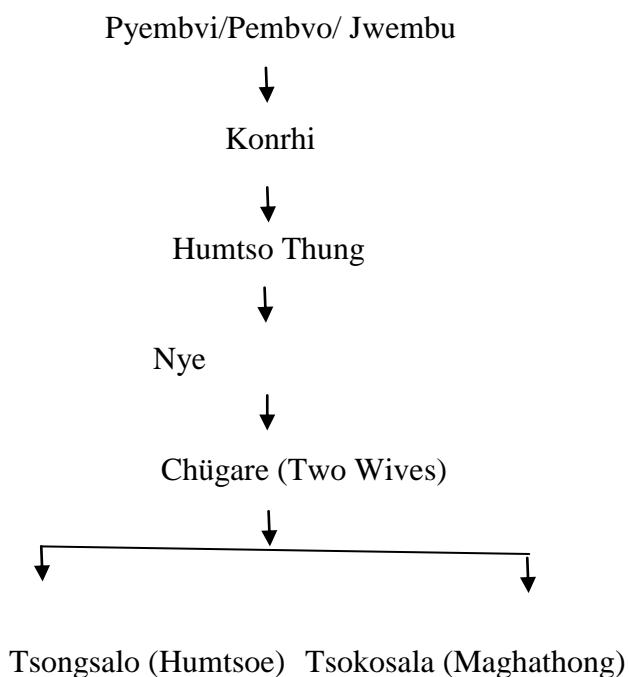
Magh (N.D.), in his 'The genealogy of Maghathonza (Magh) clan', states that the present Magh clan (Rengma tribe) and Humtsoe clan (Lotha tribe) have the same ancestor. The ancestors of these two brothers migrated together from Khezhakeno (Phek district). When this clan was staying at Khonoma, their name was Khwükha<sup>205</sup>.

<sup>204</sup> Location unknown

<sup>205</sup> In the past, both the Magh clan and Humtsoe clan were a part of the Khwükha clan.



Magh clan and Humtsoe clan Ancestors:



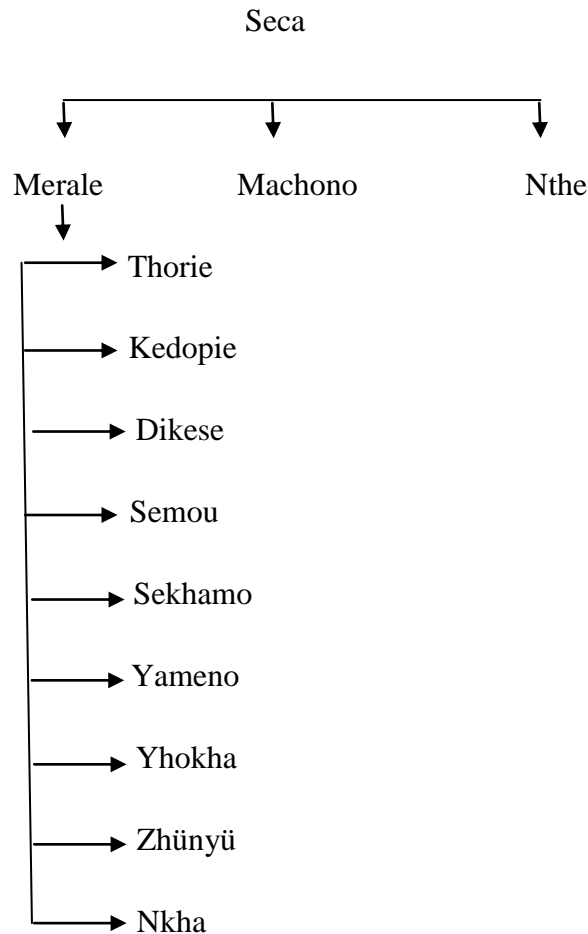
**Table 11: Common Ancestors of the Magh Clan and Humtsoe Clan**

At one time, their clan member had killed someone, and though this clan was not chased out, feeling uncomfortable, they encamped out of Khonoma village for some time before migrating to a place known as Thekhrüjüna. At Thekhrüjüna, the Khwükha clan became rich and feasted almost daily. Unfortunately, they faced a severe famine soon after, forcing the inhabitants to migrate. A group of hunters under Pyenbvi/Pyenbvo belonging to the Khwükha clan reached the Moilan range and settled there. It is stated that today's Magh clan (Rengma tribe) and Humtsoe clan (Lotha tribe) were part of this hunting party that reached the present area under the Wokha and Tseminyu districts.

In some cases, it has been observed that once a clan migrated, they also changed the clan name (clans can be named after the name of a leader who leads them). The Sekhamo clan from Enhulumi village (Phek district) has the same ancestry as the Yhokha clan from Kigwema village (Kohima district). These two clans are the descendants (see Table 12) of a much larger Seca clan from Kigwema village (Yhokha, 2022). At Kigema, a man from the Seca clan had nine sons, and out of these sons, the eldest one, Thorie, and the 7th son Yhokha stayed back while the remaining eight migrated to different areas. The fifth son Sekhamo and his descendants live in

Enhulumi village. When the Sekhamo group migrated, they changed the clan name to Sekhamo; Yhokha of Kigwema village also became a separate clan name.

Common ancestry for Sekhamo clan and Yhokha clan started with:



**Table 12: Genealogy of Sekhamo Clan and Yhokha Clan**

Taking these clans as an illustration, it is clear how clanship plays a vital role in the spread of cultural affinities among the different groups. The clans mentioned above, and many others that have moved around the Naga Hills have acted as the medium through which cultural fusion was taking place.

#### 4.8.3. Dormitory system

Nagas are also very famous for their traditional morung system, providing young people with a platform to socialize. Morung (dormitory) was where young and unmarried men would

come and stay together. They learn all the basics in this institution, molding them into becoming a man. According to Thong and Kath (2012), morung served as a guard house, recreation club, and education center. In most cases, each *khel* or clan would have its morung, meaning a village could have more than one morung. Among the Angami and the Chakhesang tribes, morungs were attached to the residence of someone who was well respected in the society and knowledgeable. Usually, an average of 7-8 boys would stay in one house, and apart from learning, they would also do all the household chores of the house owner. Among the Ao, Lotha, Rengma, and Sema tribes, each *khel* or clan built a separate morung for the young boys headed by an older adult. Like the morung, every village also has girl's dormitories. But unlike the boys, no separate house was built, and the girls usually stayed in a rich man's house. Girl's dormitory was known as *Katsen* in Rengma dialect (Thong and Kath, 2012 ) and *Lüzü* in Khezha Chakhesang dialect. In the case of the Chakhesangs, a girl's dormitory would be attached to the residence of a widow and usually, 8-9 girls would stay in one dormitory.

In Khezhakeno village, youth gathering of the boys and girls was common. In the past, a group of boys would select one particular *Lüzü* (Girl's dormitory) of their choice and offered *Se* (basket of meat), which they shared. In return, the girls would invite the boys and provide brewed rice beer for them. On that day, the boys would sit in one corner and the girls in the other. They would drink beer and tease or praise each other. The girls were so bashful that they would show only their faces and cover everything with a shawl. The boys teased them, stating they could see their toe and the girls would quickly cover it. In Khezhakeno village (Phek district), the boy's dormitory was attached to an older man's house. A similar practice was followed by Pfutseromi village (Phek district). They would not indulge in immoral activity, but boys frequently visited girls' dormitories and sang songs or enjoyed each other's company.

In Kithaga/Nsunyu village (Tseminyu district), each *Kasun* (*khel*) would have a morung- Khalato *Kasun* had Tep morung, Kagan *Kasun* had Seb - Magh morung, Amon *Kasun* had Wochang morung, Tang *Kasun* had Jemu morung, and Seng *Kasun* had Seng morung comprising of Semi, Magh, and Thong clan. Sema male dormitories were known as *Apuki*. Every villager would be present on the day of morung construction, but women were not allowed to come near the construction site nor touch any items used for building morung (Zhimo, 2011).

In the villages of the Angamis and Chakhesangs, since the young boys' and girls' dormitory was someone else's house, traces of the morungs that were significantly utilized in the past may be difficult to trace now. However, among the tribes of Aos, Rengmas, Sangtams, Semas, and Lothas, it was common for them to build a separate morung, and most of the villages from these tribes continued to preserve their respective morungs. The traditional practice of morung maintenance made one understand that two groups with similar migration histories didn't need to follow the same cultural practice. Likewise, two groups having different migration histories can have a common cultural practice.

#### **4.8.4. Marriage and practices**

Khezhakeno village permitted a monogamous form of marriage. The marriage system in the traditional and modern days in Khezhakeno village is different. The study indicates that their traditional marriage system was ceremonial. When the son attains the age of marriage, his parents sent proposals through elders who acted as middlemen. Once consented, two older adults would go to pick up the bride. On their way back, one older man would walk in the front and the other behind the bride. The bride would carry local rice beer, which would be consumed after they reached the groom's house. The man walking behind would not enter the groom's house, and the front-man would take the bride inside. He would first place an iron item on the doorway, usually a spade (*Kapfü*), and let the girl step on it before entering. This custom was practiced so that the bride maintained her calm temperament. Later two young boys would be invited, and sweet rice beer would be offered. These boys would be asked to sing a song, and once they did, the marriage ceremony would be considered complete. Among male children, the older brother had to leave his parent's house and live separately; however, he would get the better field. When the youngest son got married, the parents usually left the house and gave the place to the youngest son.

Trial marriage in olden times was also practiced in Khezhakeno village in olden times. It signified the traditional way of selecting life partners for a boy and a girl by undergoing the procedures of the marriage system. The bride and groom performed a ritual known as *Bo De*, wherein they would remain locked inside the house on the first day of marriage. The *Kozabomis* (people of Khezhakeno) practiced trial marriage for three days. In the olden days, it was customary for girls to have short hair before marriage, so the desire to keep long hair

made them agree to marry anyone who proposed to them. The girl could stay or leave her husband when the trial marriage was completed. She would be called *Nheyi/Lheyi* (Once Married) if she decides to leave and return to her parents. With the change of time, various changes were brought into the marriage system.

Pfutseromi village (Phek district) also practiced trial marriage and the custom of girls keeping bald hair before their wedding. Generally, when girls reach the marriageable age, most of the time, all the girls staying in one dormitory usually marry in one day. The next day all the girls would go to their respective houses, after which an old lady would bring the girl to the man's house. She would carry a black shawl and rice beer in the basket. Then the man and wife could stay together for one month, and after completion, it depended on the man and wife whether they wanted to continue staying together or separate. Thus trial marriage existed in Pfutseromi village. Girls in the dormitory were not allowed to keep long hair, and it was only after the engagement that girls could start growing hair.

Similarly, Khonoma girls would also shave their hair and be allowed to grow hair only after marriage. Long hair before marriage was considered useless. According to Khonoma village (Kohima district), women's hair signified beauty, and a woman was seen as beautiful only after she grew her hair. There must be a reason why girls were allowed to keep long hair only after marriage. Thizama village (Kohima district) also practiced the same tradition of girls shaving their hair before the wedding and keeping long hair only after marriage. However, the villages don't claim to practice trial marriage like the Khezhakeno and Pfutseromi villages. Taking the example of the Kithaga/Nsunyu village, one could also assume that Rengmas girls, before engagement, were made to shave their hair, and it was only after the meeting that they could keep their hair long.

Hair being shaved for the girls before marriage was another unique practice popular among those tribes affiliated with the Khezhakeno migration. However, there were differences of opinion in the context of trial marriage, and it cannot be assumed that all groups migrated from Khezhakeno practiced trial marriage.

#### 4.8.5. Feast of Merit

Feast of merit refers to a Naga ceremonial feast given by wealthy men to acquire status in society. For a man to attain the highest position in society, completing several stages of hosting a feast was required. Depending on the villages, these stages could range from ten steps, as followed by Akhwego village (Phek district), eight stages, as followed by Khumiesü village (Phek district), or four steps, as practiced by Matikhrü village (Phek district). Feast of merit was a common traditional practice among the Nagas; however, hosting a feast was not easy, and hosting it more than once a year would be challenging. For this reason, the host conducted a feast once every year or once in two years. The duration to complete the different stages of the feast depended on the host's capability.

Khezhakeno village practiced the feast of merit, and once an individual completed a series of feasting rituals, a status called *Zatsü* was given to that person. A ceremony performed under this was systematic and took years to complete. Hosting a feast for the whole village was not easy, so not everyone could perform this ritual. Any person who planned to host a feast for the village would butcher three or four buffaloes, and its meat would be distributed to the whole village so that they could cook and bring it on the feasting day. On that day, the owner would provide them with local rice beer. In the first year, after harvest, the person hosting the feast gives the first feast called *Meyie*, where he hosted a feast for the whole village with local rice beer. After a year or two, he could perform *Yiepa* for the entire village if he could afford another feast. In the succeeding year, he performed, *Zatsu*, which would last for two days (also called *Lhepho* and *Tasiso*). After this, the villagers would erect a monolith in his name. He would also be eligible to wear two shawls, i.e., *Liketsura* (buffalo head shawl) and *Terüde* (shawl with big white stitch). Only those who had performed a ritual called *Zatho* could also use a cup known as *Whutha*. In the Khezha dialect, *Whu* means 'Banana', and *Tha* means 'Long'. *Whutha* is derived from how the cup is made, a banana leaf stitched with bamboo fiber.

In the case of Khumiesü Village<sup>206</sup> (Phek district), the person hosting the feast had to complete eight stages to attain the highest social status. During the entire feast, local rice beer would be continuously offered to the guest, and until the rice beer was over, the host would

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<sup>206</sup> Group interview conducted with Mrs. Marhütshü, Mrs. Sakhatshü, Mrs. Zhütetshü, Mr. Nyiluotho Nyusou & Mr. Thokhusie (Phoji) of Khumiesü village on 06-09-21.

invite the guests every evening for a drink. Khumiesü people took this as a sign of pride. These feasts were usually given during February when the villagers had less field work.

Before the feast started, a ritual known as *Anasükütu* would be performed, where two of the relative's sons would be called to stay in the host's house the night before the actual feast. These two boys would sleep in the host's house in an *Awepa* (hall, corridor attached to a kitchen). These boys were made to climb the middle post and reach the roof; a hole would be made to hang meat (this meat was attached to a stick). This process was called *Thaji/Thawu Küjüle* and was taken as a sign of talking to god. The ritual of climbing the post to hang meat was performed before every feast. Following are the stages of a feast that a host had to fulfill to attain the highest social status.

1. The first feast was called *Awushie Küpe* (Starting). In this first stage, a pig would be butchered and distributed.
2. The second feast was named *Azhieza* (Small feast), and a pig would be butchered in this feast. However, curry cooked from animal hide would be the main dish.
3. The third feast was *Achu Küchu*; in this feast, pig and cow or buffalo would be butchered and distributed to the people. That year, the one hosting the feast would not work in the field, and his clan members would do all the fieldwork for him. The husband and wife hosting the feast would skip mid-day meals for 90 days<sup>207</sup>. As a ritual, the host also hung a small basket on the neck for ten days.
4. The fourth feast was *Atsa Lia*, where the host would kill a Pig and cow or buffalo.
5. After hosting the fifth feast, *Amünyi Küza*, the wife would be eligible to wear a particular type of mekhala.
6. The sixth feast, *Rüli Tsethe*, was hosted mainly for the husband because, after the feast, the husband would be eligible to wear a shawl named *Lüpuothsü*. He could also put on an armband known as *Satürü*, made from an elephant tusk, and a necklace called *Azoka*. Until the sixth stage, the feast was limited to the clans/relatives/neighbors.

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<sup>207</sup>Nagas had the habit of eating food three times a day.

7. From the seventh stage, more people would be invited. The seven, called *Aküzü Küsa*, was hosted for the whole *khel*. *Aküzü* meant 'White Shell in Waist Band', and *Küsa* meant 'Got/Found/Take'. *Aküzü Küsa's* literal meaning means to get the white shell. Here people sang, danced, and drank local rice beer. Anyone who had hosted the feast could wear a big shell necklace, and it would be a genna if anyone wore that necklace without hosting this feast.
8. Even for the eighth feast, called *Awie Kuo Siezu/Awiekuo*, the whole *khel* would be invited.

During the feasting period, as the owner would be busy with the feast, relatives would bring vegetables, etc., for them from the owner's field. After the end of every feast, the relatives would give *Akünyuo* to the owner. *Akünyuo* was a ritual in which one of the host's relatives provided the host with local rice, beer, and fish. Once the *Akünyuo* ritual was complete, the host would go to the pond and clean himself, breaking a bamboo cup and returning home. This ritual was known as *Aküza*. In the evening, they would visit a relative's house to have food there. The relative would invite the couple depending on their convenience. However, the host would be offered only pork and local rice beer.

In the case of Matikhru village, the feast of merit had four stages, i.e., *Azekiisa* (First Feast), *Aze Keniwa* (Second Feast), *Aze Kechowa* (Third Feast), and *Aze Diwa* (Fourth and Final Feast). Yikhum village (Wokha district) pulled a stone before the feast. During the feast, the host served local rice beer, meat, and rice to the entire guests. Once the feast was provided to the whole village, the owner would have the liberty to use a shawl named *Longpensu*, signifying the highest merit. After this, another smaller stone was pulled and brought into the village as a sign that everything was complete. Smaller stones could be picked up even by an individual and brought.

Akhwego village (Phek district) does not share migration affinities with the Khezhakeno group but performed similar feasts of merit in which, to achieve the highest status, a man had to perform a series of feasts. To complete this ritual, a person has to host ten feasts<sup>208</sup>. During the feast, the host would provide meat, the best local rice beer, and rice in all the feast. If the rice is

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<sup>208</sup>The present Chief, named Temung, who narrated the different stages of the feast, completed the entire ten feasts ritual, thus earning the highest social status.



limited, they could also offer millet (jobs tears) in place of rice. During the entire feast, intestine, flesh, fats, and skin portions of the animal butchered for the feast were served separately and not mixed. Rice beer would be available unlimitedly. Animal skulls were used, and the host's house was decorated 4-5 days before the feast. The ten feasts practiced under the feast of merit by Akhwego village were:

1. The first feast was called *Azhunyah* (*Azhu* means 'Drink' and *Nyah* means 'Together'). This feast would be celebrated for two days and one night.
2. The second feast was called *Achupauta* (*Chupa* means 'the first Chief'<sup>209</sup>, and *Achupa* means 'Chiefs'). In this feast, if the first chief were hosting the feast, the second chief clan would come to sing and dance to praise the host and serve the first chief. This feast was celebrated for three days and two nights. This feast was given within their *khel* or the village.
3. The third feast was called *Fuchok* (*Fu* means 'Pot' and *Chok* means 'Given to others'). At this feast, meat and rice would be distributed to the fellow villagers for cooking, and after that, everyone would bring the cooked food and meat curry, and they would eat together. This feast was celebrated for four days and three nights.
4. The fourth feast was called *Tsangsang* (*Tsang* means 'Someone who is very capable'<sup>210</sup>, and *Sang* means 'Long'). The one hosting a big feast would cook a large quantity of rice for the villagers. Later the villagers would visit the host's house and again enjoy a feast. This feast was celebrated for five days and four nights.
5. *Khianhuuh-I* and *Khainhuuh-II* (*Khian* means 'Basket' and *Huuh* means 'Carry'): These two feasts are interconnected. The hosts would help each other to cross the fifth and sixth stages. When two people planned to host *Khianhuuh-I* and *Khainhuuh-II*, *Khianhuuh-I* helped *Khianhuuh-II* in the feast. And when *Khianhuuh-I* hosted the feast, *Khianhuuh-II* would help *Khianhuuh-I*. The help was primarily given to each other by offering meat and rice when the other party brought stones related to the feast ritual. *Khianhuuh-I* feast

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<sup>209</sup>The village also had a second chief selected from the Tsang clan.

<sup>210</sup>The term 'capable' here describes someone who could provide food to many people.

was celebrated for six days and five nights, and Khianhuuh-II would continue for seven days and six nights.

6. The seventh feast was *Hungzhu* (*Hung* means 'Stone' and *Zhu* means 'Drink'). The person hosting the *Hungzhu* feast could take help from other village members. But this help should come from someone other than the same man who had helped in Khianhuuh-I and Khainhuuh-II. The host would bring a specific 'Y' shaped stone at this stage. According to the Akhwego group, the 'Y' shape symbolized a man and wife having different bodies but one blood. It was also taken as a symbol of blessing.
7. In the *eight Shiuzhu* (*Shiu* means 'Pull' and *Zhu* means 'Drunk') feast, everyone would be invited and served meat, rice, and local rice beer. *Shiuzhu* would continue for eight days and seven nights.
8. The ninth feast was called *Azuzhu* (*Azu* means 'To gather' and *Zhu* means 'Drink'), and during this feast, the host would offer the best quality rice beer would be taken to the neighbor's house and drank from there. The feast was conducted in the neighbor's house. The purpose of hosting a feast at the neighbor's house was to allow the guests to drink and eat as much as they wanted without being conscious of the owner watching. *Azuzhu* feast was celebrated for nine days and eight nights.
9. The tenth and last feast was called *Zushuh*, which meant 'All Accomplished.' In this feast, the neighboring villages were also invited, but it depended on the host's capability regarding the number of guests to be invited. Special Shawl and Iron Rod would be given on this day. This feast was celebrated for ten days and nine nights. Some guests would only go home after the end of the feast, and before that, they would drink all the time from the host's place.

To collect the stones for the feast, the host usually went to the forest or a riverside and searched for the stone in advance. On the feast day, he would go to collect the stone. Once the stone was brought, it would be kept at a particular place toward the village field. All the stones put there during the feast would have separate owners.

Venuh (2014) states that Kami village (Phek district), which doesn't share any migration affinities with the Khezhakeno group, also actively performed the feast of merit. Khezha Nagas usually conducted a feast of merit during *Zhatho Khru* (around January) period. To complete the whole process, a Kami had to perform six feasts, namely, *Se She* (starting and so no status was earned at this stage), *Trilo* (right to wear a white shawl), *Zhatho-Dzüze* (Right to wear *Eliketsüra*, right to carve animal motifs in the wall of the house and right to put Kechike (house horns), *Zatho Zati* (Menhir would be erected) and in the fifth and sixth feasts too, the host erected Menhir.

Using the examples from the villages of Khezhakeno, Khumeisü, Matikhrü, Akhwego, and Kami, it can be ascertained that different groups that undertook different migration routes can share similar cultural affinities. From the above discussions, it can also be assumed that some of the cultural traits were acquired after the village formations where they influenced each other. Similar cultural traits could also have been acquired before the arrival of the Nagas into the Naga Hills.

#### **4.8.6. Head Hunting**

Every Naga village practiced the tradition of headhunting. Whoever could take the most heads was regarded as a great warrior and greatly respected in society. It was a seasonal practice and a ritual, so unless the chief or a priest directed the village warriors, the men folk did not indulge in headhunting. Anyone bringing a head acquired a good position in the village. The more heads he brought, his status was raised. Warriors claimed the top position in the social hierarchy alongside those hosting feasts for the village. Nagas believed that getting the enemy head promoted fertility in the village, and for some, it was thought that after a warrior's death, the enemies he killed would carry his luggage to the land of the dead. With all these beliefs, headhunting became very popular among the Nagas.

For the Aos, headhunting started while settled at Chungliyimti when the ancestors witnessed a red ant taking the head of a lizard after killing it (Venuh, 2014). Like the Aos, Khiamniungan ancestors saw two ants fighting, and the red ant defeated and beheaded a bigger ant. Then, the Khiamniungan group started practicing headhunting (Khaikho, 2012). Venuh (2014) stated that the Phoms started practicing headhunting after observing a fight between

a *Mak* (Spider) and *Pinung* (Bee). In Khezhakeno village, there is a story related to headhunting. The oral narrative<sup>211</sup> states that in Khezhakeno village, there lived a charming woman named Grandmother Chulo. One day as she was crossing a jungle near the village with her husband, they came across a group of dark and massive structured head hunters. Both Chulo and her husband were injured in the attack. The husband succumbed to his injuries and soon died. However, when the head hunters saw Grandmother Chulo, they regretted injuring her and said it would be a significant loss for such a beautiful woman to die. Due to the injury, the tissues surrounding her spleen came out, so the headhunters put those tissues back inside and left her there. She survived the injury and lived for a long time. This narration gives a picture of the events of headhunting and how people could be attacked anytime. Another incident was when Tsela from Tesophenyu village (Tseminyu district) saw some Lotha headhunters. He invited others to the village. In Yikhum village, like all the other Lotha villages, they had a Menkitong tree<sup>212</sup>, and whenever a villager hunted any head, they would bring it and hang it on the tree.

Some tribes, like the Lothas, Aos, and Rengmas, hung their enemy heads in a tree popularly called 'Head Hanging Tree'. The tree was called *Mangkho Tong* by Ao, *Anitong* by the Rengma and *Menkitong* (*Menki* means 'Enemy Head' and *Tong* means 'Tree') by the Lothas. Every Ao village had *Mangkho Tong*, and these heads were again taken to and hung on the log drum for some time, after which a morung member would take it to their morung while the others took the head home (Venuh, 2014). Nevertheless, maintaining a 'Head Hanging Tree', was not practiced by groups belonging to the Angami and Chakhesang tribes. The Konyaks, which do not have any affiliation with the Khezhakeno migration, the tribe were well known for their headhunting practices in the past. For the Konyak and Sema chiefs, being powerful, if any warriors took the enemy heads, they would be brought to their chief's houses (Thong & Kath, 2012). With the coming of the colonials and the American Baptist missionaries, the practice of headhunting ended.

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<sup>211</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mrs. Terilhou of Khezhakeno village on 10/11/2022.

<sup>212</sup> Later when the Menkitong tree died, the villagers brought a new sapling (same species, i.e., oak tree) and planted it in the same spot to preserve the site and the traditional practice.

#### **4.9. House Structures**

Observing old Naga houses, especially those inhabited by older people, one perceives that houses were constructed in a simple way. Rengma houses were mostly rectangular and usually had two rooms; one room would be the kitchen, with a hearth built in the middle. For the Rengmas, the kitchen was also the bedroom, and the families would surround the hearth and sleep in the kitchen. Beds were laid in the four corners of the room. Another room was reserved as the delivery room. Rengmas kept their granaries outside the village, and the Semas and Pochuris also practiced this tradition (see Plate 24). Animals like dogs, pigs, and fowls were also reared outside the house and kept in front of the main door. Angami houses were divided into three rooms. In the first room, all the animals and domesticated fowls were kept. The middle room was the kitchen with the hearth built in the middle like the Rengmas. The family members would sleep in the kitchen. The third room was the storage room where grains, brewing of rice beer, and other storage items were kept.

Chakhesang also built houses comprising two rooms; the first room was a storage room to keep the granaries, and the second was the kitchen and the bedroom. The hearth was built in the middle, which provides warmth to all the family members. Usually, Naga houses had doors on both sides of the house, but windows were hardly built. The materials used to build the Naga houses comprised thatch, wood, and bamboo. In maintaining the granaries, two variations were observed where groups like the Angami and the Chakhesang kept their granaries inside the house (see Plate 25). Another group comprising the Semas, Rengmas, and Pochuris preferred to keep their granaries outside the home.

#### **4.10. Tradition of tattooing**

The cultural practice of tattooing among the Nagas signifies social status, a warrior, beauty and the different stages in human life. It is a non-verbal communication to let people know about oneself. Krutak (2020) has done detailed research on tattoo practice by some Naga tribes viz Ao, Sangtam, Konyak, Chang, Khiamnuingan, Phom, Pochuri and Yimchunger. The Sangtam warriors marked themselves with tattoos on their chests once they had taken the enemy heads. They had a religious belief that if they were not marked with tattoos, their soul would not get food and drinks after death.

Similarly, Konyak's facial tattoos depict headhunting, and if a man does not get a tattoo and spill his own blood after the killing when they die, their soul would be constantly tormented by spirits. The Khiamnuingans, after taking an enemy head, warriors were allowed to tattoo a sizeable V-shaped design on their chest, after which the warrior would become tiger-like. The tribes of Phom and Yimchunger also made the tattoo on the chest in a V-shaped design. Konyak, Chang, and Ao Naga women also got tattooed to signify their husband's heads taking success, signifying the different stages of life, and denoting clan membership. Tattooing was, however, not practiced by the Angamis, Chakhesang, Sema, Lotha, and Rengmas (Khezhakeo group).

#### **4.11. Other Affinities**

A common oral narrative of Sohomi, Meluri, and Lephori villages (Phek district) states that during their migration, these three stayed together at a place known as Kütsape village. There in one feast, after eating the tongue of a buffalo, the dialect tone of these three brothers (ancestors of Sohomi, Meluri and Lephori villages) changed. The youngest son (Sohimi) got the tip of the tongue; the eldest son (Lephori) got the innermost part of the tongue, and the middle son (Meluri) got the central portion of the buffalo tongue. From there on, Lephori people spoke in a low pitch, Meluri people's tone was middle pitched, and Sohomi people in a high pitch. Even though they understand each other, their dialect evolved.

Nagas comprise of several tribes speaking different languages which is supported by Nekha (2015) where he stated that, Nagaland has about sixty eight tribes, speaking more than 100 languages and dialects. There are also tribes like the Ao, Chakhesang, Konyak, and Rengma that speaks more than one language. Similar usages of words are also observed among the groups that migrated from Khezhakeno as well as those that don't affiliate to Khezhakeno migration. Further researches on historical linguistics can contribute immensely towards Naga migration and origin. In the case of the Rengma tribe that migrated from Khezhakeno, linguistically they are divided into two groups- Nsongkhwe speakers inhabiting the Southern area and Nthenyi speakers inhabited in the Northern area of Tsemnyu district. This difference can be due to the different migratory route undertaken by the Rengma inhabitants where in the process came into contacts with the other tribes. Example can be taken from the two clans- the Magh clan (Rengma) and the Humtsoe clan (Lotha), who migrated together and reached the present Wokha district. Nagas comprise several tribes speaking different languages. Supported by Nekha (2015),

who stated that Nagaland has about sixty-eight tribes speaking more than 100 languages and dialects. There are also tribes like the Ao, Chakhesang, Konyak, and Rengma that speak more than one language.

English	Khezha Chakhesang	Chokri Chakhesang	Angami	Sema	Rengma Southern	Rengma Northern	Lotha	Ao	Laruri
One	Kele	Pu	Puo	Lakhi	Nme	Kisü	Motsunga	Kha	Kha/Khü
Two	Kenhi	Küna	Kenie	Keni	Kenyhun	Keni	Eni	Ana	Ni
Three	Ketsü	Süü	Se	Kuthu	Kenshen	Kechu	Ethum	Asem	Ssüm
Four	Pedi	Da-a	Dia	Bedi	Pezi	Mezhü	Mezhu	Pezü	Bhüzü
Five	Pangu	Pungu	Pengou	Pungu	Pvün	Menga	Mongo	Pungu	Phangnga
Six	Sarü	Sa-a-re	Sorou	Tsugho	Tsero	Turo	Tirok	Terok	Dhürok
Seven	Senhi	Thüna	Thenie	Tsuni	Tsenyü	Tevü	Tiying	Tenet	Dhüzü
Eight	Teche	Tütha	Theta	Tache	Tetse	Taza	Tiza	Thi	Düyü
Nine	Taku	Thüchi	Thepfü	Toku	Tekü	Tuko	Tuku	Thuku	Dagkvü
Ten	Cerü	Keri	Ker	Chighi	Tserü	Tara	Taro	Ther	Dhara
Twenty	Mechi	Müchi	Mepfü	Muku	Nki	Mkhyu	Mekhyu	Metsu	Mütsü
Father	Apfü	Apo	U Puo	Ipuh/Ipu	Apvü	Epa	Apo	Oba	Epo
Mother	Azu	Azu	U Zuonuo	Iza	Ajvü	Eja	Apfü	Oja	Epe

**Table 13: List of words in different Naga tribe dialects**

In the case of the Rengma tribe that migrated from Khezhakeno, linguistically, they are divided into two groups- Nsongkhwe speakers inhabiting the Southern area and Nthenyi speakers inhabiting the Northern region of the Tsemnyu district. These differences can be due to the different migratory routes undertaken by the Rengma inhabitants, who, in the process, came into contact with the other tribes. For example, the Magh clan (Rengma) and the Humtsoe clan (Lotha) have migrated together and reached the present Wokha district.

Similar usages of words are also observed among the groups that migrated from Khezhakeno. It has also been analyzed that there are certain words that appears same or very similar and is used by even those tribes that don't affiliate to Khezhakeno migration.

The usage of logdrum by a tribe can also reflect the migration route taken. Most of the log drum usages and practicw is by the tribes of Konyak, Phem, Ao, Chang, (check more) and not by the Khezhakeno group. The mention of log drum however is reflected in the narratives of the Lotha tribe (discussed in Chapter 3) where Tsungsotsü helped the Yikhumvillagers in bringng the log drum. Such practices can be due to the similar route of migration, influence or other reasons. Also when the earliest Europeans came in contact with the Nagas, they divided the Nagas into two groups- Kachcha Nagas and Pakka Nagas. Pakka Nagas went naked, and the Kachcha Nagas wore a short black kilt. The Konyaks and the Ao males went naked, while the Angami or Kachcha Nagas wore a black kilt from the waist to halfway down the thigh. Likewise, the Aos and Eastern Nagas show more cultural similarities, and the Angamis and Chakhesang show similar cultural traits. The Lothas, Semas, Rengmas, and Pochury have identical cultural characteristics. At the same time, similarities were observed even among those tribes that do not share similar migration routes.





**Plate 11: *Maphou* (Fireplace) with three *Pachu* (Stone Stand)**



**Plate 12: *Nenu* Plant**





**Plate 13: *Thopi* Plant**



**Plate 14: *Mhankitong* tree at *Humtso* village**



**Plate 15: *Mhankitongnong* Stone**





**Plate 16: Male stone at Ighanumi village**



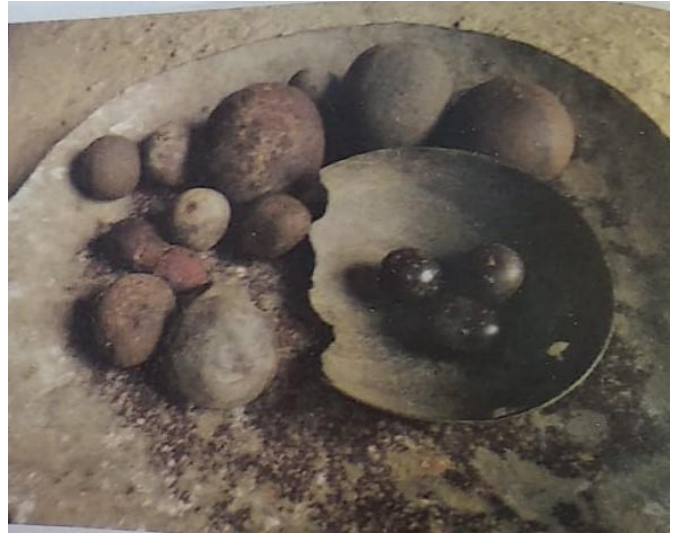
**Plate 18: *Tsopoupe Chitide* at Khezhakeno village**



**Plate 17: Growing stone at Chiechama village**



**Plate 19:** *Akumughatu or Atu Kirhe*  
in Lekhromi village



**Plate 20:** *Zhi Khu (Iron Plate)*  
in Sumi village



**Plate 21:** Charmstone found in Ighanumi village





**Plate 22:** As a boy, he touched *Ahvülu* (charmstone) with his hand and a huge boil came out on the right side of his forehead (Lephori village)



**Plate 23:** A site in the jungle built to keep the dead person's belongings (Khumeisü village)





**Plate 24: Granary house in Ghokimi village**



**Plate 25: Granaries kept inside the house in Kohima village**

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research is an attempt to understand the pre-colonial Naga migration, the routes undertaken by various groups in the course of migration, settlements, the reasons for abandonment/ the creation of villages/sites, its impact on the landscape as well as the cultural repercussions and the outcomes through it. This study focuses on those Naga groups, whose oral narratives are associated with the common migration from the ancestral site of Khezakheno. Their movements, settlements, abandonments, and contacts were part of the process of framing and forming, firstly, as a group, secondly, as a village, and later amalgamating to the larger tribes of Angami, Chakhesang, Lotha, Pochury, Sema, Rengma and Sangtam. Snead (Snead et al., 2009) remarked that studies on movements and settlements in the landscape unfold traces of ancient paths, through which it is possible to understand the social complexity and the deep connection between communities and the land, providing pathways for understanding the meaning of their surrounding space. The study on Khezakheno migration reflects on how early Nagas had the instinct to frame a mental route, a mental map while understanding the wide landscape they were exploring. These early movements gave shape to the present landscape as well as outlined a cultural map of the Nagas. The ancient settlements and sites are spaces of memory of which the community is aware and knows<sup>213</sup> its location, and is part of their ancestral territory claimed which is supported by each group(s), and village (s). The study though preliminary can be relied upon by future researchers as a concept and as an analytical framework, for the study of routes taken as a tool for understanding the past, the history of such communities, and their social structure. It will also benefit those seeking to understand the early Naga origin, migration, and settlement.

Information about early Naga (pre-colonial) settlement in the present landscape can be based on two principal sources- oral traditions and archaeological work. The archaeological data (Refer to Toshi, et al., 2014 Vol. 1 & Vol. 2 ) is limited to structural and its associated

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<sup>213</sup> With the demise of elderly people who knew the history, the identification of sites are less known by the present generation.

assemblages like pottery and its dates, which only provides limited information about the society and extant practices subjectively. This research draws its maximum data from oral sources. Nagas with no written records till the arrival of the British, had to rely on oral sources for its pre-colonial history which definitely will have (or has) its drawbacks and limitations. In the course of the study, it is noticed that many a time the oral sources are observed to be tampered with, having different views and perspectives even within a clan or a village which sometimes can corner a researcher. However, the positive application of the oral narratives should not be denied and are largely objective in understanding the questions posed by the research. Today, Nagas with several tribes and sub-tribes, linguistic variations, and the spread of hundreds of villages divided into several clans and sub-clans, all these and more make the study extremely challenging yet productive. Though some have worked (refer to Alemchiba, 1970; Sanyu, 1996; Venuh, 2014 & Aier, 2018) etc. on the migration of the Nagas, nevertheless this work for the first time gives new insights into Naga migration from Khezakheno and highlights certain issues in a wider perspective about Naga migration and settlement. The following are some findings through the research which are discussed below.

1. The various tribes inhabiting the present state of Nagaland comprises a mixture of varied groups of people with different cultural traits. Today these areas and groups are demarcated by political and geographical boundaries, designated as villages under tribes and sub-tribes, scattered in various districts within the state bringing all under the umbrella of 'Nagas'. However, certain questions arise on what makes a Naga. Where and how did they migrate? Do their cultural affinities/differences reflect similar/different migration or origin? What are the common features of these groups/tribes? Do they have any cultural affiliations? Such questions and more arise when one seeks deeper into the question of Naga migration
2. Khezhakeno oral narratives are unclear about their migration before Makhel. An Oral narrative<sup>214</sup> from Pudunamei village<sup>215</sup> states that a huge group of migrants (including them), came to Makhel via present Viswema village direction (located in the Southern part of Kohima district). They also point towards present Khusomi village<sup>216</sup> location as their temporary settlement before taking the Viswema route to Makhel. Pudunamei village

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<sup>214</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Sanihe Ariji George of Pudunamei village on 22-10-22.

<sup>215</sup> An old village located under Senapati district, Manipur.

<sup>216</sup> At that time Khezhakeno village was not formed.



narratives states that, unlike the Khusomi narratives (discussed in chapter 1), the Nagas which includes the Khezakhenos group migrated together and none were left behind at Khusomi till their settlement at Makhel. Again, some oral narratives (discussed in chapter I) opines that a huge number of migrants came to Khusomi village from Burma. However, the village could not accommodate all and so under the leadership of a man named Muro and his two sons, two great migrations took place<sup>217</sup>. The first group under Chevio was believed to have migrated towards present Lotha area however, nothing is known about them beyond that. Vadeo (the eldest son of Muro) took the second group and went to Makhel<sup>218</sup>. Some clans that followed Vadeo were Chepvo/Chepfo/ Chepfü, Meo, Po/Pou (Poumai), Pao, Sgao (Keren), Chuzu, Meitei, Lahupa and Mekri. It is only after their migration to Makhel that another group further went to Khezhakeno and others also dispersed to different directions. It is possible that Khusomi was occupied more than once and its earliest occupants were migrants who rested in this ancient site during the course of its migration. Migration of the Nagas through the above narratives can also be understood through the perspective of not just Burma-Makhel-Khezhakeno but also through Burma-Khusomi-Makhel-Khezhakeno and with further researches, one can come up with various routes as well. Thus migration of the Nagas can also be understood through the route of Burma-Khusomi-Makhel-Khezhakeno and not just through the popular route of Burma-Makhel-Khezhakeno.

3. Oral narratives of the Nagas talk about Makhel as a central place from where different groups of people migrated towards different directions. An oral narrative from Khezakheno<sup>219</sup> mentions that when they migrated towards Khezakheno, the Tangkhul<sup>220</sup> group also migrated towards Ukhrul at the same time and the Meitei towards Imphal. Present Lothas and Semas<sup>221</sup> believe that some groups within the present Ao tribe migrated ahead of them from Khezakheno. Another argument can be posited here again on whether there were any other settlements not associated with the Koza group who had settled before the Koza group came and settled. Secondly, were there any other offshoots from Khezakheno where oral narrative is silent regarding their migration (as mentioned above).

<sup>217</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Zapra Chakhesang of Yoruba village on 13-03-2023.

<sup>218</sup> So it can be argued that Khusomi village was formed before or contemporaneous with Makhel.

<sup>219</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Thochu Koza of Khezhakeno Village on 15-01-2020.

<sup>220</sup> Tangkhul tribes are the Nagas presently inhabiting the Ukhrul district Under Manipur state.

<sup>221</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Nyio Ezung of Longsa village on 18-04-2019.

4. Oral narratives of the Nagas do not mention anything about any other inhabitants at Makhel when Vadeo's lead group arrived and settled. The narratives only mentions about hearing of the gurgling sound of the water and because of that they decided to settle there. Makhel is also assumed to be a resting place for the Nagas from where different groups migrated towards different directions. A monolith erected at Makhel states about Naga brotherhood and how the settlers took a vow under a wild pear tree<sup>222</sup>, stating that they will come back one day to this very place. This monolith accepts Makhel to be an ancestral site not just for the Khezakeno group but for many other different groups beyond the Nagas.
5. Generally, Naga history is divided into pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. However, through the study of migration and settlement one can further periodize the Naga history. Jamir (2014) excavation of Mimi cave (not an ancestral site because of no oral narratives associations) located at Kiphire district pushes human activities in the region further to 4450-4350 B.C. However, examples like Mimi cave do not associate with any local oral narratives of the Nagas. There could have been phases/phase, before, for example Khezakheno or Chungliyimti settlement<sup>223</sup> where oral narratives are silent, or not clear. Since oral narratives of the Nagas cover those 'ancient' with which they can relate to or have an affinity, one can hypothesize through this research some divisions within pre-colonial period. Taking the radiocarbon dates from archaeological excavation at Chungliyimti (Cal AD 1018 +/- 98), Khezakheno (Cal. AD 1320 to 1350), we can suggest that somewhere around 10<sup>th</sup> century AD- 18<sup>th</sup> Century AD was a period of settlement, migration, merging and dispersal in the present Naga inhabited area as well as the formation and framing of the Naga identity. It was during this period that major population explosion occurred and enabling the inhabitants to disperse towards different directions. During the course of dispersal groups merged where villages were formed and later outcome to tribes. Thus, one can argue that pre-colonial period can be sub divided into two- the earlier ancient before 10<sup>th</sup> century AD which are beyond oral narratives and the later ancient 10<sup>th</sup> century AD till the colonial period, covered by oral narratives and some literary documents (like the Ahom Buranji)
6. One can presume that the migrants during the Khezakheno migration were in the process of shifting from nomadic lifestyle to a settled lifestyle. No permanent forts, no solid habitation

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<sup>222</sup> Situated in Sajoba village, Manipur

<sup>223</sup> These two settlement names were used since they are some of the two sites where major population explosion took place.

structures, minimum usage of everyday objects etc is observed. When one visits the abandoned sites today we don't come across much artifacts nor features. For example, Lozu of Lazami slept under a fig tree during the course of migration, Sumi people (Phek district) also took shelter under the trees during the migration process and does not mention about any structural activities before reaching the present Sumi village (Sumi Village Baptist Church, 2015). Oral narratives also hardly mentions about construction of houses, social structure etc. initially. It is only during later migration and settlement that the narrative talks about house construction, for example, during of Pfutseromi village formation they have mentioned about constructing houses. The flora and fauna mentioned are mostly wild varieties unlike commonly domesticated by Nagas today. Thus the early Naga settlers have just started exploring the areas he/she was to settle as well as making the best use of it. However, we see a continuation of usage of such flora and fauna by all these groups today. Trees like Khughobo (Fig tree), *Mejenga* (Sichuan pepper) and *Mü/Zomhou* (*Rhus Chinensis* Mill) mentioned in the oral narratives are still popularly used by such groups.

7. A problem faced in the course of the research is the different versions of narratives by different groups. Taking the example of *Tso Tawo*, there are different opinions on the explosion and destruction of *Tso Tawo*. Present Khezhakeno village assigns an old woman to be behind the destruction, Kohima village assigns it to be Koza's wife, present Rengma tribe, asserts it to be defiled by a couple and later burst after an unknown person destroyed the stone by putting fire underneath. Lotha's oral narrative stated that *Tso Tawo* lost its power when an old man and woman slept on the stone. The Lothas migration happened in groups, so they don't claim any of the people directly involved when the bursting of the stone happened, as their ancestors thought they agree that the Lotha migration took place after the bursting of *Tso Tawo*. Lazami village (Zunheboto district), on the other hand, believes that their ancestor's name was Lazu who was the younger brother of Koza and Chüvey/ Tsüvei (Chüvey in Chakhesang and Tsüvei in Sema). Koza and Tsüvei were already married when their father Tseo was still alive while Lozu was unmarried. Before Tseo died, he divided the assets between his sons. Lozu was given the *Tso Tawo*, also known as *Kükümgha Tupa* or the *Spirit Stone*. However, after the death of their father, Lozu was never given a chance to dry the paddy on *Tso Tawo*. Lozu felt so bad that one day he used wild sesame (Khezha and Sema language calls as *Kini*) dried branches and burned *Tso Tawo*. With the passage of time

and the formation of different groups, the differences in the oral narratives may have taken place. However, all these narratives are aligned towards a common objective, ie the *Tso Tawo* which can confirm to us on the belief on *Tso Tawo* by all (though different versions). Likewise, there can be other oral narratives where changes may have taken place due to various reasons.

8. Migrations from Khezhakeno happened in different waves. The Semas and Lothas were believed to have migrated together from Khezhakeno<sup>224</sup>. During the migration process, the Lothas who migrated ahead were left trails by sticking a branch of a tree as marker for later followers. Lothas used particular species of tree branch where its colour changes to appears rustic once cut. The Semas came across the marker but thinking it to be an old one and not recent, they took the different direction and got separated from the Lothas. Another group would be the Magh clan of Tseminyu district and Humtsoe clan of Wokha district who migrated together and did not join the majority group. Phensenyu village under Tseminyu district talks about a separate migrating via Khonoma route. Semas also had waves of migration where Igha of Ighanumi village and Lozu of Lazami village migrated separately. Kohima village and Meriema village under Kohima district undertook migration separately and at different time. Even among the Chakhesangs, Thetsumi village, Chozuba village and Yoruba village were formed separately. Oral narratives<sup>225</sup> of the Lothas also states that when a huge group belonging to the present Lotha tribe was migrating, they came across an abandoned site of Mora Yanke (present Nerhema village), signifying previous migrations. They also believed that the Angamis migrated after them and settled in Kohima area.

It is also observed that once a clan expands or faces some issues, the clan members tend to migrate and settle in different villages. Like the Venuh clan who dispersed from Venuhba after the inhabitants began to die. Today Venuh clan can be found in different villages. In some cases, a clan gets dispersed and can be found in different tribes (discussed in chapter 4). The Yhokha clan of Kigwema village (Kohima district) and the Sekhamo clan of Enhulumi village (Phek district) claim to be brothers and point towards the same ancestors. Likewise, when one looks at the genealogy of Luruo, it is believed that the clans of Nyenu,

<sup>224</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Ezamo Kikon of Wokha village on, 18-04-2019.

<sup>225</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Nyio Ezung of Longsa village on 18-04-2019.

Nyekha, Nyenga, Kezo, Zhale, Zhomu, Kidio, Phesao, Risu, Poru, etc belonging to Angami and Chakhesang tribes are brothers. Similarly, Vadeo generations are said to be the present Tenyiu, Lotha, and Sema groups. In all these villages there is more than one clan today. Thus, migration of the Nagas during the pre colonial period was a process which might have happened in phases. Members of a tribe today are an amalgamation of different groups of people. Oral narratives talks about different groups undertaking different routes of migration at different phases coming and merging with a group or bigger tribe. Thus, a Naga tribe today is a blending of various groups of people and cannot be just a single groups undertaken a single route of migration.

9. Another finding made through this research is the naming of a group, village, and even tribe which was given by others and always had a meaning. The Nzon (name of their ancestor) even today have different hypotheses on the origination of their tribe name 'Rengmas' (Discussed in Chapter 2). Lothas known as Kyong opines that they are sure who gave the name 'Lotha' to their tribe. For the Nsunyu village (Rengma tribe), it was the Tseminyu people who started calling them by this name (meaning unsure). Khezha Chakhesang calls Khezhakeno people Etsemi (discussed in chapter 2 its meaning), Viswema as *Esemi*, Kami as *Kalumi*, Lekhromi as *Nakrami*, Kedima as *Dami*, Kikruma as *Sumi*, and Sumi people as *Tsümi*. Kohima is called by the Khezhakeno as *Kabvü* (discussed in chapter 2) and Khezhas calls Kohima as *Kehu*. Even to this day, the locals especially the elderly folks while referring to each other uses these early names, than the official names. Secondly, Ahom Buranji (13th century- 19<sup>th</sup> century AD) also never mentioned hill people with whom they had contact as Angami, Lotha, Ao, etc. They are mentioned according to the passes they took like the Namsangias, Hatigurias, Tablungias, Jaktungias, Mulungias, Tablungiasetc. It was the Ahoms, who gave such names to the hill people with whom they had contact. If during the Ahom rule, the concept of Naga and even tribe had formed and existed; Nagas in contact with the Ahoms would have introduced themselves in that name and could have been mentioned in the Buranji. This reflects a lot on how pre colonial period was still in the process of formation of the 'Nagas'.
10. History of the Nagas started to be documented and recorded only with the arrival of the British colonials and American Baptist missionary. Important incidents and knowledge were

passed down orally from one generation to another before their arrival. Even though their writings contributed greatly in understanding the primeval period of the Nagas, it cannot be denied that colonial writers and ethnographers' information on the Nagas may suffer from being one-sided (Aier 2018). Even the generic name *Naga* was given by the Europeans and is not a native origin (Aier, 2018). The Nagas that the colonials were referring also included some tribal inhabiting in Myanmar and the districts of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. This view is supported by Robinson (1975), who mentioned that the term Naga is entirely unknown to any of the hill tribes themselves. In the past, they know themselves by their respective group names only.

One has to be cautious while referring colonial writings on the Nagas, and preferably refer other sources as well (especially the oral narratives). Mackenzie's (1884), 'The North East Frontier of India', mentions that Nagas east of the Doyang was divided into great clans ruled by hereditary chiefs (could be referring to the present Semas) while the west of the Doyang (could be referring to the Lothas) were democratic. The colonials have mentioned Kutcha Nagas (Zeliang), the Angamis and Chakhesangs as Eastern Angami. In 1844, when Brodie toured the Naga Hills (Mackenzie 1888), he mentioned the Lotha Naga tribe and the powerful Sema chiefs. It was also during the colonial period that for the sake of convenience for administrative purposes, Naga Hills was further divided into administered, un-administered, and politically controlled areas. In 1866, after the non-intervention policy of the British was annulled, Naga Hills became a district under the governorship of Assam. Naga Hills was a district under the governor of Assam. Slowly Kohima became headquarters for the British in 1878 followed by the creation of a sub-divisional headquarter at Wokha in 1875 but later shifted to Mokokchung in 1890. This shows how the present Nagaland state and districts (occupied by various tribes) took a proper shape and formed only during the colonial period. Likewise, the idea of different groups coming under the umbrella of a single tribe took a proper shape only during the colonial period.

11. The primary function of routes of ancient times is connecting people to resources or connecting people to people (Darlin, 2009; Erickson, 2009; Grant, 2012). The Lothas, Rengmas, Angamis and Semas who associates themselves as Khezhakeno group, took similar routes and probably followed each other. The ancestors of those Naga groups that

migrated from Khezhakeno had the habit of settling on sites abandoned by earlier settlers. As mentioned above, the migrant groups that went ahead used to mark the route they had taken with tree branches so that the others can follow them and catch up with them later. Possibly, when the later migrants come across any abandoned sites they usually settle there thinking that their predecessors might have stayed there once. It is also possible that, the Naga ancestors instead of clearing the jungle and forming a new settlement sites, they found it more convenient to settle in abandoned sites. As per the oral narratives of the Lotha, Chakhesang, Pochury and Rengma, sites like Kutsapo, Mutsale, Kohima, Thizama, Nerhema, Gariphema etc were once temporary sites of certain groups which are today formed as villages under Kohima and Phek districts.

Migration during this time was also for basic survival and livelihood. The founder of Ghokimi village for example migrated to the present settlement after the previous inhabited village started facing shortage of food. Mount Tiyi in Wokha was abandoned due to water shortage and the menace from the tiger. One reason for the abandonment of Fuiaga in Zunheboto district was also abandoned due to water shortage. Visho, of the founders of present Mishilimi village was forced to leave his former village out of fear that he might be killed. Also during the process of migration from Khezhakeno, they had an idea of the landscape. Lazami people still calls Dzü and Sidzü River as Yeti River. At the same time mountains like Mount Japfü and Mount Tiyi are mentioned in the various oral narratives where its importance was felt. This also proves that the pre-literate societies did not just randomly settle but had a lucid perspective towards his/her surroundings.

12. In the migration oral narratives of the Nagas, we hardly come across the mention of women's participation. Why participation of women is silent? Were women not allowed to take roles in course of migration and settlement? Such questions and more are posited in the course of the research. Oral narratives continuing today are more inclined towards man's contribution and roles they played. It is said that <sup>226</sup>even while counting the family members in olden times women were not counted and it was only the male member that would be counted. If a family has 5-7 male members it was considered to be honored and that family was respected. Though a family with more female members benefits more economically, it is the family

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<sup>226</sup> Personal interview conducted with Mr. Khinyi Woch of Kithaga/Nsunny village on 12-03-23.

with more male members that received more respect. Migration narratives mostly concerns lands and rights. Thus this may be one of the reasons for non mentioning of women's participation in the narratives. One argument which can be placed that, in the course of formation and framing of the identity of a group or tribe during the pre-colonial period along with the modern education and awareness that came along during the early colonial period, it might have re-shaped the orientation of the passing on of the narratives because oral natives is fluid and tends to be distorted through time as well. However, one needs to dwell more with in-depth research on such cases.

13. Anthropogenic induced changes in the landscape began with human colonization of nature. During the Khezhakeno migration and the course of various offshoot settlements, there was no ownership of land or owning, anyone can own and demarcate land without taking the permission of anyone. It was just verbal and sight verification on boundaries where the demarcations were laid through some natural and man-made features like rivers, trees, pond, neighboring land etc. Later with the growing population came along alteration, formation of new settlements and various activities played their part in the shaping of cultural landscape. The population started growing significantly along with agriculture its harvest resulting in surplus production and giving rise to stratified society. The landscape particularly, settlements and agriculture underwent substantial expansion during this period. With further expansion of population and the awareness towards ownership, it created especially during the colonial and post colonial, the occurrence of land disputes between clans, villages as well as tribes.
14. This research also offers a practical approach where intangible cultural heritage is endangered. Today, there are very less people who are aware or have the knowledge of the ancient migration and settlements. These people were also not the ones who experienced it. Their narratives are only passed on information, added by being influenced or remodeled centric narratives. Young generations are less aware of all these. Most of the informants for this research are 50 years and above, mostly male. Will the oral narratives be preserved and with us after 10-15 years? is something to be thought about. Also, many abandoned sites are difficult to trace today and those existing abandon sites- Sekemüvo village in Phek district, Venuhba village in Phek district, Tiya Longchüm village in Wokha district, Pensvünyu village located near Chiechama village in Kohima district, Aghoshü village in Tseminyu



district, Fuiqa / Lazaphuyeqa village in Zunheboto district and many more with no visible construction or traces of previous cultures are not protected by law; exposed to a range of potential hazards in terms of heritage protection. Today, most of the ancient settlements are no longer used or visited by the communities and are not even recognized as valuable heritage. However, it can play a major role in understanding communities past history.

15. The traditional practices of the Nagas promoted environmental growth. Nagas belief that spirits reside on stones, trees, rivers and mountains has helped preserve the environment. The Lothas especially Longsa village practiced planting a tree (Menkitong tree which was also used to hang enemy heads) as a marker for new village formation. There are also several sacred groves found in every corner of Nagaland. Almost every village have a narratives about a particular forest inhabited by spirits, a lake or pond where they perform rituals and on stones having miraculous origin or having supernatural powers. The Nagas knew that if any disturbance is made towards nature, then the weather would be affected. Taking the example of *Zhi Khu* (Iron Plate with charmstones) and Sumi village's *Akumughatu* or *Atu Kirhe* (charmstone), both have supernatural power that can control weather. In Khezhakeno village, there is a jungle, where if anyone go and cut trees from there than the village would face drought and until Mowo (priest) goes up and performs ritual, the village would face shortage of rainfall. From the oral narratives of Man, Spirit and Tiger, one can assume man's close bond with supernatural being and nature which are depicted by the spirit and the tiger respectively and how the human respects the jurisdiction areas of these two beings. Taking all these as examples, it can be concluded that Naga ancestors valued nature and came up with ways to protect the environment.
16. Initially oral narratives of settlement and migrations show a close human-nature relationship. In earliest migrations example, Koza, was led by a bird and later saw a frog. His brother Lozu also used leaf to make a stone move and also dreamt about trees having a conversation. These narratives clarify that human-nature relationship was symbiotic. Later the narratives changes where the migrants see the location and migrate example, Kohima village. The oral narratives further changes where migrations and settlements takes place mostly due to inhabitants having differences or due to conflicts and less of or differences in their beliefs; some group migrated to form a new village eg. Khumeisü village. With the progress of culture brought along by the new settlements came along changes and improvements in

technology the exploitation of nature commenced. New settlements led to wide usage of the land, the slash and burn agriculture method induced alteration to the landscape. We see how from human-nature close relationship, humans in recent times are exploiting the natural resources for one's own benefit and forgetting the once ancestral strong bond with nature.

17. The engagement with different groups and villages regarding settlement and migration can contributed a lot to migration and settlement concepts framing. Hopefully, the results of this research will be used as a statement for an approach towards indigenous participation. The research has tried though preliminary in nature by putting together all the ancient settlement sites in map and marking its geographical details so that they acquire value as a whole as part of their cultural heritage. Geographical extension of each group becomes clearer. This research not only studies the route of migration, settlement and abandonment sites but it makes an attempt to study Naga migration through socio-economic, cultural and political perspectives. In this manner, it hopes to open new areas for future researches.

## **Conclusion**

Migration study of the Nagas thus can be very challenging, firstly, due to the existence of diverse versions, elevating one's ancestry. Not just in the present research study area but it's a general practice by many Naga groups today to bring to the fore one's own group, which leads and can lead to controversies and issues. Secondly, though there are some accepted common narratives on migration and settlements, there are disputes within clans, and villages on who came first (first settlers), who is older, who is accurate and true etc. There are disputes on the location of settlement markers (landmark areas) within a village or a landscape between various clans, groups, and villages. Naga's like many indigenous communities also tends to be ethnocentric where one prioritizes their own culture and evaluate other cultures based on their perceptions. All these and more are ever going issues with no common platform to discuss and conclude. With all these internal issues the researcher was not allowed to even undertake or visit certain villages which are important to the present study. Many times in the course of research especially while doing interviews for documentation of oral narratives the oral source personnel will try to protect their cultural heritage and make their own decisions about what they want to share (many a time involving the village councils as well). Also, certain villages requested the researcher to produce work related to their village/group before publication. All these reflect that

the findings of the research can also become a weapon against the communities that value them when it becomes information they do not want to share. Thus this research will not reveal some specific issues about migration, although the researcher is aware of such groups. All these and more raises certain questions in academia. Did the ancestor have all these in mind in the course of their migration? Did ethnocentrism start during the process of the settlement? Or our oral sources are becoming politicized today? Colonial period with education did it play a role in this factor? And will we be able to justify past reconstruction if all these issues are permissible.

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