SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORMATION OF THE KHIAMNIUNGAN NAGAS

Thesis Submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfillment for the award

Of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

HEME

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the research data presented in this accompanying thesis titled **"Socio-Economic Formation of the Khiamniungan Nagas"** has been carried out by Mr. Heme, bearing Regd No. Ph.D/HAR/00063, (2017) under my guidance and supervision.

The present work is original in its content and has not been submitted in part or full 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 the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History under Nagaland University.

Dated:

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DECLARATION

I, Heme, hereby declare that the thesis titled **"Socio-Economic Formation of the Khiamniungan Nagas"** is the record of an original 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, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institution.

This thesis is submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History and Archaeology.

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Heme

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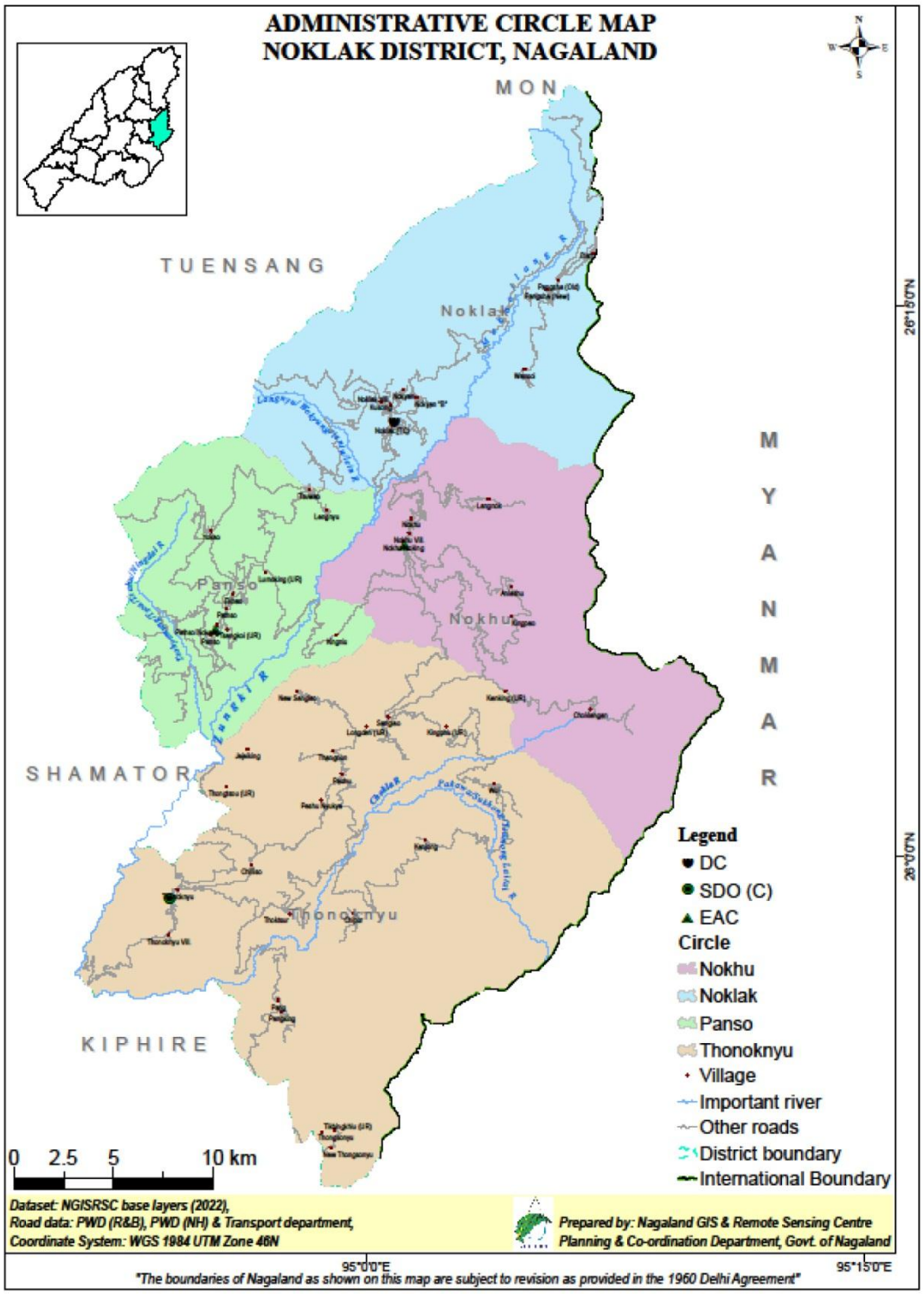
Area Map of Study



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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Background

Khiamniungan is one of the major tribes of Nagaland. Noklak is the district headquarters of the Khiamniungan people. Standing at an altitude of 1524 meters above sea level, Noklak (Plate 1) is situated in the easternmost part of Nagaland bordering Myanmar in the East, Tuensang and Shamator in the West, Mon in the North and Kiphire in the South. The district covers an area of approx. 1152 Sq. Kms. As per the 2011 census, Noklak Sub-Division had 39 villages with a total population of 59,300. There are three Sub divisions; Panso (Pathso), Nokhu and Thonoknyu. The Khiamniungan area is divided into 5 regions, namely, Thang(Noklak), Wolam (Pangsha), Nokhu, Pathso, and Peshu ranges. The people inhabit within the territories of Myanmar and India. There are around 160 villages in Myanmar and 38 villages and 3 towns in India (Union, 2013). The people speak their own distinct language, Khiamniungan, which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language family (Bareh, 2001). Each range has a variety of subtle tonal differences. However, despite these differences, the Khiamniungans understand each other clearly and can communicate fluently with each other. Like The term "*Khiamniungan*" is a compound word consisting of various lexicons, '*Khiam'* meaning water '*Niu'* meaning mighty or great and '*Ngan'* meaning Source. Thus Khiamniungan means 'Source of Great Water'. The Government of India established an administrative Headquarter at Noklak during the erstwhile North-East Frontier Agency (N.E.F.A) in 1952 with the creation of Assistant Political Officer (APO). Noklak Town was upgraded to the post of Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) in 1982 and to Additional Deputy Commissioner post in 1992(Jubilee Souvenir, Noklak Town, 2002). On the 21st of December 2017, the Government of Nagaland upgraded Noklak as the 12th District of Nagaland.

The Khiamniungan history which have put into writing has been passed down from generation to generation through oral means. Some of the tangible cultural heritage which is kept alive to this day is the practices of pottery making, blacksmithing, cotton and other tree fibre textiles. Substantiating and supporting the oral folktales of the tribe, there are various places and monuments which still stand to this day. Some of the affiliated objects of the folktales are *Lungjeijein* (A Flying Stone), *Sukekhan* (Cave at Noklak), *Hangmengdong* and so on. Like many Naga tribes, the Khiamniungans have traditional attire that reflects their cultural heritage. For men, this often includes a shawl called *Nejet* and *Khaone* worn by men and women respectively. Traditionally while the women clad themselves in Mekhela known as *Netsam*, the men wore loincloth popularly known as *Sangpuo* or *Ehlei*. In line with their agricultural practices and the seasonal cycles they followed, the people held special occasions and festivals during various stages of the agricultural year. The most significant among the agricultural occasion and festivals are the *Beiam* and *Tsokum* festivals. Along with those, *Khaotzaoshie-Hok-Ah* and *Miu* are also significant festivals.

1.2. The Socio-Economic Formation

The socio-economic systems of indigenous tribal communities are deeply intertwined with their environmental contexts, where each aspect significantly influences the other. Nature and culture converge in many ways that span values, beliefs and norms to practices, livelihoods, knowledge and languages, resulting in a mutual feedback between cultural systems and the environment, with a shift in one often leading to a change in the other (Pretty, 2008). To fully understand these systems, it is essential to analyze how economic practices, social organisations, religious beliefs, and political structures are shaped by and adapted to their ecological conditions. This is particularly evident in the case of the

Khiamniungan Nagas, a community whose familial, lineage, clan, and moiety institutions are intricately linked to their environmental milieu.

By examining the socio-economic formation of the Khiamniungan Nagas through the lens of cultural ecology, this study provides valuable insights into the interplay between their economic activities and the surrounding environment. This field examines the relationships between culture, environment, and the economic and social systems that arise from these interactions. Steward (1955) asserts that cultural ecology explores the adaptive strategies that the societies employ in response to their environments, with a particular focus on the role of cultural practices in facilitating these adaptations. It highlights the dynamic relationship between society and environment, emphasizing how economic practices are both influenced by and adapted to ecological conditions. This perspective is crucial for understanding the socio-economic formation of the people.

Steward's pioneering work on cultural ecology offers a foundational framework for understanding how communities adapt to their environments through economic practices and social structures. He elaborates that the concept of the 'cultural core' relates primarily to those social, political, and religious patterns which are most closely connected with the subsistence activities and economic arrangements. These patterns are seen as the most critical in influencing the basic structure and organisation of any society. The study of how these subsistence strategies shape and are shaped by the environment is central to understanding the unique adaptations and cultural forms that arise in different ecological contexts (Steward, 1955). Building on this foundation, Roy Rappaport's research (1968) further underscores the role of ecological factors in shaping social and economic systems among indigenous communities. These theoretical perspectives provide a robust basis for analysing the socio-

economic formation of the Khiamniungan Nagas, where social and economic practices are intricately linked to their environmental context.

Pretty (2010) observes that ecological knowledge also gives rise to socially embedded norms and regulations. These norms govern human interactions and behaviors towards the natural environment and have often co-evolved to sustain both people and Nature. They frequently take the form of common property rules that govern the use of resources from forests to fisheries. This perspective is crucial for understanding the socio-economic formation of the Khiamniungan Nagas.

This study aims to assess traditional economies within the framework of indigenous practices, exploring the complex interrelations between cultural practices, environmental stewardship, and economic activities. It investigates traditional agricultural systems, revealing how they extend beyond mere crop cultivation to include intricate networks of social, cultural, and economic interactions that have sustained the people.

The research examines how traditional economic systems among the Khiamniungan Nagas are characterised by a combination of ritualistic observances, communal labor, and sustainable agricultural practices, reflecting a relationship between human societies and their environments. Furthermore, the study explores how the traditional economy functions within its broader socio-cultural context, analysing how economic practices are influenced by and, in turn, influence the social, religious, and political dimensions of Khiamniungan life.

Trade within the Khiamniungan society was not merely an economic activity but also a vital means of fostering social ties, enhancing cultural cohesion, and stabilizing the region. The goods exchanged were often imbued with cultural significance, playing critical roles in ceremonies and serving as symbols of wealth and social status. As such, the accumulation of

wealth through trade was directly linked to an individual's social standing within the community. Furthermore, the mutual dependence created by trade helped to mitigate the isolation caused by frequent conflicts, promoting periods of peace and cooperation that contributed to the overall stability of Khiamniungan society. The economic interdependence facilitated by trade supported not only the sustenance of the community but also the preservation of cultural and environmental integrity, underlining the importance of traditional economic systems in maintaining the social fabric and political stability of the Khiamniungans.

This research seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of how trade functioned as a bridge for interaction and mutual dependence among various villages and tribes, particularly in overcoming the isolation caused by frequent warfare. By examining the central role of the Thang village market in facilitating the safe exchange of goods, cultural practices, technologies, and ideas, the research demonstrates how trade contributed to the strengthening of social ties and the creation of a shared sense of identity within the society. The research delves into the ways in which trade influenced wealth accumulation and social status, highlighting the cultural significance of traded items in ceremonies and as symbols of prestige. Through this analysis, the study attempts to show how the economic interdependence fostered by trade led to periods of peace and cooperation, thereby stabilizing the region and supporting the social fabric, cultural cohesion, and political stability. By incorporating these insights, the research sheds light on how a broader understanding of traditional economic systems, including trade, plays a vital role in community sustenance while upholding cultural and environmental integrity.

Textile production, basketry, pottery, and wood crafting represent vital cultural practices among the tribe. This study provides an in-depth analysis of these traditional processes,

including textile production, basketry, pottery, and log drum crafting, which demonstrate a profound understanding of local flora and fauna. By systematically examining the reliance on specific plant species and bamboo, the research elucidates how these practices are deeply embedded in ecological knowledge. Furthermore, the study critically evaluates how these traditions contribute to sustainable resource management and foster a balanced interaction with the natural environment. The study also explores the significance of sacred sites like the cave Sukekhan and the stone at Lumo Keng, examining their role in rituals and spiritual beliefs. Furthermore, the research examines the festivals *Beiam* and *Tsokum*, focusing on how they integrate cultural and ecological practices.

The socio-economic systems of the Khiamniungans are connected with their cultural practices of warfare and associated rituals. Historically, the belief in the human head as a source of prosperity reflects an economic rationale where such rituals substituted for warfare in maintaining village well-being (Hutton, 1969). The elevation of warriors and the economic demands of these rituals reveal the complex interplay between social status and economic stability. The study investigates the effects of the end of warfare on the region's socio-economic dynamics, including shifts in power and communal identity. Efforts have been made to examine the economic impact of disrupted trade, the role of slavery in commodifying human lives, and the challenges of preserving cultural heritage. Through this analysis, the research seeks to understand how indigenous beliefs and rituals continue to shape social and political structures in the face of modernity.

1.3. Migration

An outline of the process of migration from Khiamngan (first settlement site of the Khiamniungans, and the name of the tribe nomenclature) to the present sites has been

surveyed to give insight into the settlement pattern, formation of the clan system, social organisation and the role of each clan in the village activities.

The migration history of the Khiamniungan Nagas reflects the complex socio-economic and cultural dynamics that have shaped their identity over centuries. According to Sardeshpande (2017), the Nagas once lived in harmony in the plains around Thang, experiencing a period of stability without distinct tribal divisions or external influences until a deluge took place which destroyed the peace and the plain. Alemchiba notes, "The Yimchunger and the Kheinmunghan formed another wave of immigrants, who entered the present home from Burma by taking trek directly westward" (Alemchiba , 1970. p. 21). However, this account remains unverified by oral traditions or other corroborative sources.

According to a traditional Khiamniungan narrative, a catastrophic flood once engulfed the surrounding plains and mountains, compelling the people to seek refuge on the summit of Yakao Keng. After ascending to the hilltop, they paused to rest, hoping the floodwaters would eventually recede. However, as the waters showed no signs of abating, the community faced the daunting reality that returning to their former homes might not be possible. In response to this crisis, the people resolved to sacrifice a person among themselves. A young woman of exceptional beauty was chosen for the sacrifice, after which the floodwaters began to subside. This act allowed the people to descend back to their lands. Following this event, the people sought shelter in their respective place where they lived for some time. After which they began to disperse, initiating a series of migrations to new locations (Personal Communication: Puhiu, Thang, 21st January, 2019).

The Khiamniungan folktale of the great flood and the subsequent sacrificial offering reiterate the collective response of the people to existential threats. This narrative, while mythological, reflects real historical pressures that likely led to the migration and

resettlement of the Khiamniungan people. As the floodwaters in the story subside, so too does the attachment to their former lands, marking the beginning of a new chapter characterised by exploration, migration, and the establishment of new settlements. The folktale thus serves not only as a cultural artifact but also as a symbolic representation of the historical processes that shaped the Khiamniungan diasporas.

The initial migration wave can be traced back to a figure known as Lathon, revered as the progenitor of the *Haimi* group. This migration is distinguished by its non-permanent nature; Lathon and his followers traveled from their primal habitat without the establishment of long-term settlements or engaging in any form of land acquisition (Personal Communication: Suthem, Thang, 26th February, 2019). This transient phase was marked by a quest for suitable locations that could sustain their livelihoods, a journey that would ultimately shape the spatial distribution of their descendants. His descendants eventually settled to the east of the *Khelia* mountains, establishing a locality known as Paikhou, which in contemporary geography corresponds to Lahe. The settlement gradually expanded, ultimately reaching and establishing what is now known as present-day Khamti in Myanmar. This settlement marked a significant transition from their nomadic lifestyle to a more stable existence, where the community began to interact more deeply with their environment, forming the basis of what would become a defining characteristic of the Khiamniungan way of life.

The migration narrative takes a further turn with the arrival of a Tsam (Konyak) forefather named Mutho Leng, who is venerated in oral traditions as a warrior figure. Mutho Leng's migration, following in the footsteps of Lathon, signifies a continuation of the search for new territories that could support their growing population. This phase of migration reflects a period of expansion and consolidation, where the community began to establish

more permanent settlements, thereby laying the groundwork for future socio-political development (Personal Communication: Suthem, Thang, 26th February, 2019).

Another significant migration wave involved a forefather from the Hempu lineage, who departed from Khiamngan. This movement was characterised by a well-coordinated gathering of people at Dangkhiam, a site of historical importance located near the present-day AYUSH Hospital in Noklak. From here, they embarked on their eastward journey to Nyungkeng, situated below present day Nokyan B village. Evidence, including pottery and slate remnants were discovered in this vicinity during the early 2000s (Personal Communication: Buniom, Noklak Village, 5th February, 2019).This corroborates the historical accounts of Tsam migrants having settled in this area. These artifacts not only serve as a tangible connection to the past but also provide insights into the material culture and daily lives of the migrants during this period. From Nyungkeng, the migration continued toward the present-day Konyak areas of Tobu, marking the culmination of this particular migration wave originating from Khiamngan. This movement represents a significant phase in the demographic expansion of the Khiamniungan Nagas, as they extended their influence and established new communities in previously uninhabited or sparsely populated regions. Sardeshpande (2017) suggests that the Khiamniungans migrated from the present-day Noklak village to other locations. However, this perspective contrasts with the broader consensus in oral traditions and historical narratives, which identify Khiamngan as the primary place of origin for the Khiamniungan people. While it is possible that some groups may have traversed or passed through the area now known as Thang Village during their migrations, there is a notable absence of oral or written evidence indicating that this location served as a significant settlement or point of origin for any substantial population group.

The initial migration wave set the stage for subsequent movements, each contributing to the evolving socio-cultural landscape of the Khiamniungan Nagas. The first of these successive waves involved the departure of the Peshu forefathers from Khiamngan, who were followed by the Nokhu forefathers. The Pathso forefathers initially migrated to Lumo Keng. From there on the people migrated to present day Pathso. Their decision to relocate from Lumo Keng to Pathso highlights the importance of environmental suitability in the selection of settlement sites.

The final group in this migration narrative, the Thang forefathers, initially inhabited the region for certain duration before initiating their migration, descending to a place known as Nyuko Thangsoun. Despite gathering at this location, they did not establish a permanent settlement, likely due to the unsuitability of the terrain for sustained livelihoods (Personal Communication: Puhiu, Noklak, 21st January, 2019). This decision reflects the pragmatic approach in their settlement strategies, where environmental factors played a crucial role in determining the viability of long-term habitation. Recognizing the inhospitable conditions of Nyuko Thangsoun, the Thang forefathers continued their migration, traveling through Thangkang Keng, and progressing via Ngonson and Shingtzong Keng. Their journey eventually led them to the present-day Thang village (Plate 2), which is also referred to as Noklak (Personal Communication: Suthem, Noklak, 26th February, 2019). This migration route, marked by a series of waypoints, provides a glimpse into the arduous and deliberate process of exploration and settlement undertaken by the Khiamniungan Nagas.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the Khiamniungan community by exploring several key aspects of their socio-cultural and economic life. Firstly, it traces the historical process of migration from Khiamngan, the initial settlement site of the

Khiamniungans, to their current locations. This historical overview sets the foundation for understanding the evolution of their social structures. The study also delves into the intricate social organisation and clan system, highlighting the specific roles and responsibilities each clan held within village activities, thereby illuminating the community's internal dynamics.

Furthermore, the research examines agricultural practices, focusing on how these practices have historically sustained the socio-economic fabric of the village community. The role of agriculture in maintaining social cohesion and economic stability is a crucial area of analysis. In addition to agricultural practices, the study investigates the nature of trade among the Khiamniungans, identifying their trading partners, the items exchanged, and the mediums of exchange utilized, thus providing insight into their economic interactions with neighboring communities. The study also explores the cultural and social significance of key institutions such as the morung, the log drum, and the dormitories, alongside examining the historical practices of slavery and headhunting within the Khiamniungan community. By addressing these constituents, the research expounds onthe nuanced understanding of the traditional way of life of the Khiamniungans and the factors that have shaped their socio-cultural identity over time.

1.5. Hypothesis

- The socio-economic formation of the Khiamniungan Nagas exhibits a significant correlation with environmental factors, highlighting their adaptive strategies in response to their surrounding ecological conditions.
- Khiamniungan headgear and other ornaments used by other Naga tribes may suggest contact through sporadic trade relations between the Khiamniungans and other Naga tribes.

- The use of slate and erection of wooden post signifies the practice of megalithic tradition and feasts of merit in the socio-economic formation of the Khiamniungan Nagas.

1.6. Methodology

The non-random sampling approach was strategically employed in this research to align with the study's specific objectives and practical considerations. This method facilitates focused exploration by allowing the selection of individuals and elements directly relevant to the research themes, such as cultural practices, material culture, agricultural techniques, trade, etc.Following the qualitative method of research, the data collection was done on the primary as well as secondary sources of data.

(a) The primary sources of collection of information were based through in-depth and revelatory method of oral interviews, personal observation and other local sources.

(b) Secondary source of information was collected through documents suitable for analysis. These documents included books, journals, independent inquiries, reports, newspapers, magazines, souvenirs, personal records, official information, etc.

1.7. Literature Review

Aglaja Stirn and Peter van Ham (2008) in their work *The Hidden World of the Naga: Living Traditions in Northeast India and Burma*, offer an extensive exploration of the tribal communities residing in India and Myanmar, with significant attention to the Naga peoples, including the Khiamniungans. Their study provides a broader perspective on the traditional social and economic practices of these communities, encompassing a wide array of topics such as village organisation, the morung system, religious customs, warfare, crafts, and ornaments. The authors employ a rich photographic presentation that enhances the understanding of these practices through visual documentation, offering valuable

ethnographic insight. Notably, their work underscores the continuity and adaptation of traditional practices among the Nagas, positioning these cultural elements as integral to the socio-economic structures that are pivotal in the formation of Naga identity. This visual and narrative documentation is instrumental in contextualising the socio-economic practices of the Khiamniungans within the broader spectrum of Naga traditions.

In his book "*The Khiamniungan Nagas: Pioneers and Achievers*," Buhiu B. Lam (2021) provides a comprehensive account of various aspects of Khiamniungan history. The text thoroughly documents the pottery traditions of Wui, offering valuable insights into the techniques and cultural significance. Additionally, Lam examines the arrival of Christianity in Thang village. The political dynamics that played a pivotal role in standardizing the name of the tribe from its various appellations to "Khiamniungan." is also addressed. This work contributes to the understanding of the socio-cultural transformations experienced by the Khiamniungan community, particularly in relation to their religious and political identity.

Haimendorf's*"The Naked Nagas"*(2016) is among the earliest works to focus on the Khiamniungan Nagas, marking a significant contribution to the study of this society. Through his direct interactions and the collection of first-hand information, Haimendorf provides an account that offers a foundational understanding of the Khiamniungan Nagas. His descriptions of the landscape, economic system, practices of warfare and slavery, and the people themselves have become essential reference points for subsequent research on the Khiamniungans.

J.H. Hutton's work *"The Angami Nagas"* (1968) is the earliest documented reference to the Khiamniungan people under the name *Kalyo-kengyu*. In his book, Hutton provides an initial description of the material culture of the Khiamniungans, including items such as bows and arrows. This early account, though limited in scope, offers valuable insight into the

material aspects of Khiamniungan culture and serves as a foundational reference for subsequent writings.

Julian Jacobs*(2012)*,, in his seminal work *The Nagas: Society, Culture and the Colonial Encounter* provides a comprehensive exploration of various Naga practices, including environmental interactions, social organization, feasts of merit, technological advancements, rituals, and warfare, all of which are foundational to this thesis in understanding the socio-economic formation of the Naga tribes. His ethnographic study extends to the Khiamniungans, referred to as the Kalyo-Kengyu, particularly in the context of their procurement of iron, tin, and sheet brass from the plains' tea estates. Jacobs positions both the Konyaks and Kalyo-Kengyu as pivotal in the production of iron tools, underscoring their expertise in metalwork. Furthermore, he documents the Kalyo-Kengyu's significant role in regional trade, highlighting their production of distinctive conical red-and-gold cane hats, which were exchanged with various Naga tribes, including the Aos, Konyaks, Phoms, and Changs. This account illustrates the Khiamniungans' active participation in broader inter-tribal trade networks, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of their socio-economic dynamics within the region.

Julian Steward's *"Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution"*(1955) offers a foundational framework for analysing the intricate relationship between culture and environment, a concept he termed "cultural ecology." Steward posits that cultures evolve in response to specific environmental challenges, with human societies not only adapting to but also actively modifying their surroundings. This interaction creates a dynamic feedback loop where both cultural practices and the environment influence each other's development. Crucially, Steward's work diverges from unilinear evolutionary models by advocating for a multilinear approach, which acknowledges that different societies can develop unique cultural traits even when faced with similar environmental conditions. His

contributions have been instrumental in shaping the study of how environmental factors impact social organisation, subsistence strategies, and technological innovations, making his work a cornerstone in the disciplines of anthropology and environmental studies. This theoretical framework is particularly relevant to understanding the adaptive strategies of the Khiamniungan Nagas, whose socio-cultural practices have evolved in close interaction with their environment.

Milada Ganguli's *"A Pilgrimage to the Nagas"* (1984) offers a detailed examination of the social conditions and village life among the Khiamniungans. Ganguli provides insights into various aspects of their material culture, including granaries, morungs, dormitories, and house structures. Her observations extend to the roles of women, agricultural practices, household tools, and funeral customs, which collectively reflect the socio-economic conditions of the community. Additionally, Ganguli's account includes discussions on village warfare and headhunting, shedding light on the socio-political dynamics of the KhiamniunganNagas.

A. Nshoga's *Traditional Village Naga System and its Transformation* (2009) provides a comprehensive account of Naga society, focusing on the social, economic and cultural practices of the Nagas. It provides a cultural and spiritual significance of ritualistic head-hunting, which was deeply intertwined with social status, fertility, and communal well-being. The book details how these practices were governed by strict norms and omens, reflecting the complex interplay between warfare, religion, and survival in traditional Naga life. It also examines the transformative impact of Christianity, introduced by missionaries like Rev. E. W. Clark, which replaced traditional religious practices and brought significant socio-cultural changes. Additionally, the book highlights the shift from jhum to terrace farming and the evolution of trade from barter to early currency forms, illustrating the broader socio-economic transformations within Naga society.

In *"The Patkoi Nagas"* Sardeshpande (2017) provides an in-depth examination of the Khiamniungan and the Upper Konyaks. The book addresses a range of topics including migration patterns, folktales, social organisation, and systems of property and inheritance. Sardeshpande also explores aspects of the people's everyday life, language, and the impact of modernity on their traditional practices. His comprehensive analysis offers valuable insights into the cultural and social dynamics of these Naga groups, documenting both historical and contemporary changes within their communities.

"*Thang Ngiolat: Volume-1*," published by the Thang Students' Union (2023), provides an extensive examination of the socio-economic system of the Khiamniungan community. The volume encompasses a wide range of topics including traditional attire, morung (communal houses), log drums, and dormitory structures. Additionally, it explores practices such as hunting, games, trade, and tattooing. This book offers a thorough analysis of various facets of Khiamniungan cultural heritage, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of their traditional systems and social practices.

In "*Nagaland"* (1997), Verrier Elwin delivers a comprehensive ethnographic analysis of the Naga people, examining their social structures, cultural practices, and traditional customs. The text provides an extensive review of Naga society, including their clan systems, village organisation, and ceremonial practices, and situates these elements within the broader socio-political context of mid-20th century India. Elwin's work is distinguished by its detailed field observations and critical insights, offering a foundational understanding of Naga cultural heritage and its response to historical transformations. This book is a significant contribution to the study of Naga culture and its evolving dynamics during a period of substantial change.

Chapter 2

The Social Structure and Organisation

Social structure refers to the organised patterns of relationships and institutions that shape and influence society. It encompasses the various statuses and roles individuals occupy. These roles come with expectations and obligations that guide behavior and interaction (Weber, 1978). Social structure also includes key institutions like the family, education system, religion and economy each playing a crucial role in maintaining societal functions and addressing collective needs. These institutions provide the framework within which individuals interact and fulfill their societal roles.

In addition to roles and institutions, social structure encompasses social networks and stratification. Social networks represent the web of relationships through which individuals gain support and access resources. Social stratification refers to the hierarchical arrangement of people based on characteristics such as class, race, or gender, which affects their access to resources and opportunities. This hierarchical structure can lead to varying levels of privilege and inequality within society. Social structures are dynamic and evolve over time in response to cultural, economic, and technological changes, reflecting shifts in societal norms and power dynamics.

The social structures of indigenous tribal communities frequently manifest a profound interdependence with their environmental contexts. Analysing these relationships necessitates a thorough examination of how cultural practices and social organisations are both shaped by and adapted to ecological conditions. Such analysis is especially insightful in the case of the Khiamniungan society whose familial, lineage, clan, and moiety institutions exhibit intricate

connections to their ecological milieu. Here, major sources of information had been gathered from field work by means of personal interviews.

Social organisation refers to the structured arrangement of individuals within a society, guided by shared norms, values, roles, and relationships. It encompasses the mechanisms through which societies maintain order and cohesion, facilitating the interactions necessary for societal functioning. Central components of social organisation include social groups, institutions, and networks. Social groups are divided into primary groups, such as families or close-knit communities, characterised by intimate, direct interactions, and secondary groups, which are larger, more impersonal, and goal-oriented, such as work teams or political organisations.

Institutions represent established norms and practices governing behavior in specific areas of social life, such as education, religion, and the economy, contributing to the stability and continuity of social order. Social networks, defined by the relationships that connect individuals, play a crucial role in communication, support, and resource exchange, influencing social mobility, access to opportunities, and overall well-being (Ahrne, 1994).

The function and significance of social organisation lie in its capacity to maintain social order and promote social cooperation. By providing a structured framework for interactions, social organisation regulates behavior, coordinates actions, and ensures that societal needs are met (Durkheim, 1997). It also fosters a sense of identity and belonging, integrating individuals into the social fabric. Parsons (1951) asserts that the social system is organized as a network of relationships among individuals, whose actions are motivated by cultural values that shape their behavior and legitimise the norms they adhere to. Additionally, social organisation is pivotal in managing social change, as shifts in social structures are often necessary to address emerging challenges and opportunities. For example,

the advent of digital technology has transformed social organisations by altering traditional institutions, such as work and education, and reshaping social networks, thereby influencing contemporary social dynamics.

The study of indigenous tribal societies through cultural ecology offers insight into the interplay between cultural practices, social structures, and environmental contexts. Julian Steward's (1955) foundational work in cultural ecology, along with Roy Rappaport's research (1968), underscores the role of ecological factors in shaping social structures and cultural practices, providing a valuable framework for analysing the Khiamniungan social system.

2.1. The Family

In introducing the Khiamniungan society, Sardeshpande (2017) describes, "they have no caste system in terms of high and low, pure and untouchable, or rich or pure" (p. 17). The Khiamniungan social structure is prominently centered on the institution of family, lineage, clan and moiety, wherein the family serves as the fundamental unit within the society. The family structure is characterised by its nuclear composition and adherence to exogamous practices, coupled with a patriarchal and patrilineal orientation. The father assumes the role of household head, wielding authority over family affairs. This paternal leadership persists until the father either advances in age or experiences mental incapacitation, at which point the mother may assume responsibility. However, in exceptional cases, the eldest son may assume the role if the mother is unable to undertake the responsibility. Instances also arise where both parents choose to reside with their son, relinquishing their rights in favor of their children.

Central to the Khiamniungan family dynamic is the pivotal role played by the father, who exercises considerable influence in all family matters, particularly in decision-making processes. The father assumes the primary responsibility for the provision, care, and overall maintenance of the family unit (Personal Communication: Buniom, Thang, 5th January,

2022). A father characterised by intelligence, eloquence, and bravery commands respect within the community and may hold significant positions of authority within the broader societal framework.

The father's involvement extends to pivotal life events such as the marriage of his children, wherein he assumes an active role in arrangements and ceremonies. Additionally, the father fulfills religious obligations during festivals and other significant occasions, symbolizing the family's participation in communal and cultural traditions. Furthermore, the father represents the family's interests in clan assemblies, articulating familial concerns and grievances in village judicial proceedings when disputes arise. (Personal Communication: Suthem, Thang, 31st January, 2019).

2.2 Lineage, Clans and Moieties

The Khiamniungans accord significant importance to the concept of family, with familial ties extending to other families through lineage. Multiple families who trace their ancestry to the same person form a group of people holding a very close bond and relationship. The people and family who hold onto this relationship are called *yasangla.*[1]They form the basic social institution outside of the family. The members of the same *yasangla* share lands and other resources. The clan system not only dictates social organisation but also plays a pivotal role in the allocation of communal responsibilities and the preservation of cultural heritage. Each clan within Khiamniungan society is assigned specific roles and duties, ensuring a balanced and cooperative community structure. Respect for elders and adherence to clan exogamy norms in marriage are integral aspects of Khiamniungan culture, with the eldest members assuming leadership roles in dispute resolution and ceremonial

[1]It can be understood as a lineage group that traces its descent through the paternal line from a common ancestor.

activities. The clan system functions as an extended familial network where each member maintains direct relationship with others.

This social organisation maintained through generations, highlights the importance of clan affiliations in Khiamniungan society. The preservation and promotion of clan identity maintains its cultural legacy and social unity. As such, the clans not only serve as the primary social units but also embody the values and traditions involved in it.

The clan system, a longstanding customary practice, remains integral to Khiamniungan society, comprising multiple nuclear families. The clan is not confined only to a single particular lineage but it is formed when a group of families traces its ancestry back to a common progenitor. The relationship of clan members extends beyond the village. In different villages, there are group of people from the same clan who holds a group affinity and lineage to a common ancestry. Ancestral lineage within clans typically follows a patrilineal descent pattern, with adherence to clan exogamy norms in marriage partner selection. While villages hold significance in the political and religious spheres, clans represent the primary social unit. Within the village, the different clans live within a designated area, although some other clans may also live in the same area, but rarely. These clans form a greater social group of moiety. (Personal Communication: Menya, Thang, 30th January, 2019).

Clan members collaborate collectively on various communal tasks such as village establishment, infrastructure maintenance, and construction of a member's house or the clan or khel morung. Additionally, clan solidarity manifests during significant life events such as marriages, festivals, and funerals, where members offer mutual support and assistance. In the village, people are often identified by their clan associations, residing in close proximity to

fellow clan members within designated areas. The communal ethos within clans fosters a sense of collective responsibility, with mutual aid and support integral to everyday life.

Respect for elder clan members is deeply ingrained within Khiamniungan society, with the eldest member assuming leadership roles and responsibilities within the clan. Their authority extends to resolving disputes, overseeing ceremonial rites, and coordinating communal activities. The preservation and promotion of clan identity are cherished values among Khiamniungan families, reflected in their active participation in clan-related events and traditions. Horam (1997) notes that Naga society is essentially a classless society where a man is respected for who he is rather than what he has. There is not even a hint of any caste system or resulting social stratification, a point that corroborates the egalitarian nature of Khiamniungan clan organization, where respect and status are derived from one's role and contributions to the community, rather than material wealth or social hierarchy.The traditional customary law of the Khiamniungans, which includes unique forms of dispute resolution through oath-taking, remains active and has effectively maintained domestic peace.

2.3. Division of Responsibility

2.3. (1)Agricultural Roles: The social system is a network of interconnected roles that are structured within institutions, which collectively work to maintain societal stability and integration (Parsons, 1951). The tribal structure maintained an egalitarian social system. Certain clans had specific duties that are not performed by other clans, creating a system of interdependence between them (Sardeshpande, 2017). As observed by Jacobs (1990), the Khiamniungan society is sub-divided into hereditary clans of occupational nature, with leadership and religious responsibility devolving on the most senior clan subgroups. This hierarchical arrangement was strictly adhered to, prohibiting the intermingling of duties

among different clans. From the role assigned, one could discern the economic aspect which reflects the agrarian nature of the traditional Khiamniungan society.

However, today the scenario has changed and the responsibilities in agricultural operations are conducted by the Gaonburas and the village councils (Personal communication: Aokho, Peshu, 12th February, 2019).An analysis of traditional agricultural practices, along with the delineation of various duties and responsibilities, is intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of how agrarian life was systematically organised among the people. This examination elucidates the structuring of agricultural activities and the roles assigned within this framework, offering insights into the organisation and function of traditional agrarian societies.

Eiuphongya: He was the individual responsible for initiating the slashing and clearing of jungle areas for Jhum cultivation. This position was traditionally held by the *Lamthaiu*[2] clan. He initiated the cutting and cleaning process of the forest cover for the new cultivation. The designation of a new jhum cultivation area was overseen by the village elders, with the Lamthaiu clan responsible for the final decision, made privately and revealed later only. This announcement, detailing the chosen region for the upcoming year's cultivation, was communicated to villagers and neighboring communities. Clearing of the forest began thereafter, with the process involving the removal of vegetation over two days. On the first day *Eiuphongya*, supported by his morung members and *Meya* clan members, conducted the ceremonial jungle clearing. This included rituals such as pouring rice-beer around a chosen tree to ensure a bountiful harvest, with omens observed from the resulting dust cloud to predict future outcomes. Following the initiation, work proceeded systematically as the group cleared the jungle row by row. The day concluded with a communal feast, funded by taxes

[2] The major clans, *Lamthaiu, Lamnyah, Longshen*, and *Meya*, are primarily responsible for key roles in agricultural activities and various social events.

collected during the Beiam festival, and a ritual augury using a chicken to forecast the harvest's success. On the subsequent day, participants refrained from fieldwork and adhered to dietary restrictions to prevent pest problems in the agricultural fields (Personal Communication: Buniom, Thang, 5th January, 2022).

Eiujek Inthongpao: The individual was tasked with announcing the burning of felled trees for new Jhum cultivation. The announcement was made in the early morning of the designated day by beating the log drum and conveying the news to the villagers. This role was carried out by the *Lamthaiu* clan. After the announcement, youths and hunters used sticks and bamboo scraps to interpret omens, predicting whether animals would be hunted or any injury could befall them during the jungle burning. Prayers were offered for a successful burning and to avoid misfortune. The *Lamthaiu* clan lit the first fire, with no one else allowed to start the burning process. Subsequently, others ignited fires at various locations, while young and able-bodied individuals handled the field burning. The next day, the village observed a genna, avoiding fieldwork to prevent fire hazards. Bringing fresh firewood or sticks into the village was prohibited to avoid accidental fires, although activities like basketry, wood carving, and weaving were permitted (Personal Communication: Lam, Thang, 28th December, 2022).

Eiu-Amya:Eiu-Am represents the inaugural agricultural festival, observed on an annual basis in March. During this festival, the incumbent bore the responsibility of inaugurating the festival within the newly cultivated jhum. The role of *Eiu-Amya* was vested with the domain of the *Lamthaiu* clan. The designated family assumed considerable responsibility and adhered to specific protocols in orchestrating the festival. Their duties encompassed the execution of worship and offerings on behalf of the entire community. Adherence to prescribed regulations was imperative for the initiator's family throughout their tenure.During the

festival, the initiator's family, alongside other villagers, engaged in particular rites and offerings. Menya informed that the husband played a pivotal role in the ceremonial aspects, ensuring thorough attention to worship protocols to avert any inadvertent errors that could potentially lead to adverse repercussions such as ill health in the family or agricultural ailments. While the husband primarily conducted the worship, the wife also contributed, assisting and advising him as necessary. Additionally, the preservation of materials for offerings and worship predominantly fell under the purview of the housewife.These delineated responsibilities constituted the core duties of the initiator of the *Eiuam* festival, reflecting the solemnity and precision with which the festival was conducted within the community (Personal Communication: Menya, Thang, 22nd Jan. 2019).

Eiukamya: He assumed the role of initiating the cleaning process of ashes and soil within the post-burn jhum field. It was his obligation and responsibility to oversee the execution of the ashes clearing work. This designation was typically bestowed upon individuals affiliated with the *Lamnya* clan. The Initiator assumed leadership in the commencement of the land and ashes clearing activities. In accordance with the agricultural calendar, he established the appropriate date for the initiation of these activities and oversaw thecommencement. Alongside the clearing of burnt debris and dedication rituals, he is also assigned with the sowing of various vegetable crops such as beans, Naga dal, and mustard. Additionally, he was entrusted with the responsibility of dedicating the sowing of maize..With these works ongoing, he also constructed a rudimentary shelter. During the dedication ceremony, the father assumed the principal role, overseeing the offering of a domestic fowl on behalf of the entire village populace. While the offering of a fowl is optional for individual villagers, it was deemed obligatory for the initiator's family.

The ritual commenced with the marking of a worshipping site. Surrounding the hut, weeds and grass were cleared, and various seeds were sown. With the assistance of the

housewife, the husband conducted the offering and worshipping ceremonies. A domestic fowl was sacrificed, and its blood collected in a conical banana leaf placed at the worshipping site, marking the first offering of animal blood to the land deity. The blood offering was performed with the belief that it would ensure the health and vitality of the crops. During the sacrifice, omens were interpreted based on the movements of the fowl's legs; if the right leg moved last, it was considered a positive omen indicating favorable crop growth, whereas if the left leg moved last, it was interpreted as a negative omen.These ceremonial rites were observed both in the agricultural fields and within the household, with the assistance of his wife. The housewife assumed a pivotal role in overseeing worship rituals and offerings. She provided directives to her husband to ensure the ceremony was executed accurately. It was her responsibility to prepare offerings such as rice-beer, rice, and curry, and she also maintained the preservation of worship materials. Without her presence, the father was unable to conduct the ceremony. The father's primary duties included praying and exercising vigilance during the worship process. Mistakes committed in worship could lead to infertile growth of crops and potential bad circumstances in the family.Consequently, the initiator approaches the ceremony with care. It was customary for the family of the clearing Initiator to refrain from consuming food until evening. The consumption of perilla was strictly prohibited. This prohibition aimed to mitigate the risk of pest infestation and ensure optimal conditions for crop growth.The following day after the work was initiated, the entire village observed a genna (Personal Communication: Buniom, Thang, 5th Feb. 2022).

Lengkiya: The initiation of planting of taro in the new jhum was traditionally conducted by the designated planting initiator, called as *Lengkiya*, who held a significant role in the community. Prior to his involvement, no villager could undertake the planting of taro. This responsibility was exclusively reserved for members of the *Lamnya* clan; individuals from other clans were ineligible for the position. It was believed that if someone from a different

clan assumed the role and proceeded with planting a taro, the yield would suffer. Consequently, only members of the *Lamnya* clan were considered for this role, with elder members of the clan consulting and reaching an understanding with village elders to select a suitable family for the position.On the inaugural day of jungle cutting and clearing for the jhum cultivation, the planting initiator would carry pieces of taro in a bag and proceed to the field. He would then ceremoniously dedicate the planting of taro seeds, uttering words intended to ensure healthy growth and a bountiful harvest. Additionally, prayers were offered to the land's deity to ward off diseases that might affect the taro, while blessings were invoked for the prosperous growth of the crop. This ritualistic dedication of taro planting was conducted discreetly on the first day of jungle clearing. However, the actual planting of taro seeds took place during the subsequent stages of ash clearing and soil tillage (Personal Communication: Thangpong, Peshu, 13th Feb. 2019).

Loplaya: Field hut which was initially erected in a temporary mode prior to the *Eiu-Am* festival renovates a permanent structure. The individual entrusted with initiating the construction of field huts in the new jhum field bore the title of *Loplaya*. Prior to his undertaking, villagers were unable to commence the construction of field huts in the area. Preparation of materials followed the slash-and-burn practice. However, the actual commencement of construction occurred subsequent to the observance of the Eiu-Am festival, traditionally held in the month of March. The construction of the field hut commenced with the designated construction initiator. If the position became vacant, it had to be filled through a structured selection process. This process commenced with ensuring understanding among clan members, followed by consultation with village elder members if deemed necessary. The village elders, alongside other clan elders, provided counsel to the field hut construction initiator (Personal Communication: K. Tamong, Peshu, 15thFeb. 2019).

Tsoukiya: Upon the readiness of the field for the sowing of rice, individuals diligently prepared the rice seeds they had amassed for sowing in their new jhum fields. A designated individual known as *Tsoukiya*, assumed the role of initiating the rice sowing process in the field. Vacancies for this position arose in several scenarios. If the head of the designated family passed away, the position could be filled. Similarly, in the event of the demise of the designated wife, a replacement had to be appointed. Furthermore, if the designated individual remarried, the responsibility continued to be incumbent upon them. In cases where the presently designated family declined to serve, an alternative family from the same clan had to be selected.The selection process was strictly conducted, typically involving the presentation of a ceremonial dao. Elder members within the *Lamnya* clan deliberated and sought counsel from village elders. Initially, discussions among elder *Lamnya* clan members culminated in the identification of a suitable family to undertake the role of the sowing initiator. Subsequently, village elder members were formally approached to facilitate the selection process.After receiving the endorsement of the village elders, the village representatives proceeded to the residence of selected family with the ceremonial dao to engage in discussions and convey the community's decision(Personal Communication: Thangpong, Peshu, 15thFeb., 2019). Following the acceptance of the presentation, the designated family assumed the title of *Tsoukiya.* On the day of sowing dedication, all family members except the ill joined the *Tsoukiya* in the field to commence sowing activities. He performed worship and offerings meticulously to avoid misfortune and ensure a successful harvest. The sowing of rice, typically starting in May after the Miu festival, involved bringing even nursing infants to the fields. Seeds and worship materials were carried to the field, where grass and weeds were cleared, and ceremonial rites were performed by the head of the household with the spouse's assistance. Following the rituals, the *Tsoukiya* sowed rice and other seeds using a modified stick and preserved the site for worship. Various vegetables were also planted

around the field hut. Rice beer and traditional meats were ceremonially consumed, and the family returned home after completing the dedication and worship. Though approached differently, similar practices are observed among the Aos, where a priest ceremonially clears a small area, sows rice, and then encloses it with a fence, signifying first sowing in the jhum field (Mills, 2003).

Pepheya: Upon the completion of rice harvesting in the field, the harvested field is allocated for millet sowing in the following year. Subsequently, the residual rice plants were cleared, marking the commencement of preparations for millet sowing. The individual entrusted with the responsibility of inaugurating millet sowing held the title of *Pepheya.* When establishing a new village, it is imperative to ensure the presence of at least one family from the *Lamnya* clan to assume the responsibility of sowing initiation. In instances where no *Lamnya* clan families reside in the village, a candidate may be sourced from another village, with selection procedures guided by mutual understanding among village elders.When a sowing initiator is sourced from another village, it becomes the responsibility of the host village to extend necessary assistance, such as field sharing and housing construction support. These procedures and protocols delineate the systematic approach employed in the selection of individuals and families for the role of Initiator of millet sowing (Personal Communication: K. Thangyo, Peshu, 15thFebrury, 2019).

Anouvepao: There were designated days where individuals abstained from fieldwork. On these occasions, an announcer, referred to as *Anovepao*, relayed important information to the public. This role was assumed by members of the *Yason* Clan. *Anovepao* held the responsibility of disseminating message regarding essential holidays and ceremonies such as *Chiuwan* and the millet harvesting dedication ceremony to the villagers (Personal Communication: Chemtong, Thang, 21st Jan. 2020).

The traditional duties and roles outlined for various clans reflect the agrarian nature of the Khiamniungan society. The responsibilities of each clan are closely tied to agricultural practices, from clearing land and initiating sowing to conducting ceremonies to ensure a good harvest.This role division helps in the efficient coordination of agricultural activities, ensuring that each aspect of cultivation and harvesting is managed by individuals with specific knowledge and authority in those areas.The clan-based system fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility. By assigning distinct roles and ensuring that these roles are performed according to traditional practices, the society maintains cohesion and respects its cultural heritage.

2.3. (2)Functional Roles: In addition to the diverse roles associated with agricultural activities, there were specific individuals entrusted with the management of broader societal affairs. The positions of *Khaiutaiu Meya, Meson, Een,* and *Ngeplaoyapao* illustrate a highly structured social organisation where responsibilities are assigned according to lineage, clan affiliation, and specialized skills. Certain roles are exclusively held by women, underscoring their profound and versatile involvement within the social structure. These roles, which encompass both ritualistic and practical responsibilities, illustrate the crucial contribution women make to cultural continuity, community well-being, and societal stability. Their involvement is not merely a matter of tradition but reflects a deep-rooted understanding of their integral position within the community. All these show how specialized roles are intricately linked to both ritualistic and communal functions, reflecting the complexity and depth of the traditional social structure.

Khaiutaiu Meya: During the *uowan (*Depositing of skulls) ceremony, the customary practice was to deposit the heads and skulls of the defeated enemies on the outskirts of the village. This task was entrusted to an individual known as *Khaiutaiu Meya.* He was given the responsibility of both safeguarding and placing the enemy skulls and also presided over

different worship rituals. This role was usually held by people from the *Meya* clan. The duties and functions assumed by *Khaiutaiu Meya* were of considerable significance, encompassing both cultural and agricultural spheres. In addition to the primary task of depositing and preserving enemy skulls, he fulfilled various roles within the community. Sardeshpande(2017) asserts, "One more sub clan, Meya is part of Sheev clan only. They keep in their houses all the heads brought by warriors and wipe the head-hunter's bloody hands after they return fromexpeditions and hand over the heads" (p. 18).

During ceremonies such as jungle cutting for jhum field dedication, the presence of *Khaiutaiu Meya* was indispensable for the proper conduct of rituals. Without his participation, the initiation of jungle cutting by the *Lamthaiu* clan was deemed incomplete. Additionally, he oversaw the post-burn land preparation process, ensuring the safe disposal of firewood and leading the villagers in the necessary rituals to mitigate fire hazards. The *Khaiutaiu Meya* was regarded as an intercessor entrusted with ensuring the protection of the people from fire-related dangers. Furthermore, during the construction of his own residence, strict observances were followed. The villagers abstained from fieldwork. The remaining materials from his house construction were not taken by the villagers for their own use. During the *Miu* festival, he assumed a central role as both the initiator and lead worshipper, conducting ceremonies distinct from those performed by other villagers. It was customary for villagers to refrain from slaughtering their cattle until the ritual conducted by the *Khaiutaiu Meya* had been completed during the festival. Central to *Khaiutaiu Meya's* duties was the preservation of enemy skulls, a task that involved overseeing the preparation and hanging of enemy heads. Moreover, warriors were obligated to ritually cleanse their hands using water provided by him. Failure to adhere to this tradition was believed to result in the acquisition of leprosy (Personal Communication: Thengeu, Thang, 24th Feb. 2019).

Meson: The individuals entrusted with conducting rituals for the well-being of the sick is known as the Meson. It is their duty to perform specific rites and make offerings on behalf of the afflicted. Within both the *Lam* and *Shiu* moieties, there were typically two or three Mesons. Specifically, the *Sumao* clan of the Lam moiety and the *Kampao* and *Phiandong Shiu* clans of the *Shiu* moiety performed this role (Personal Communication: Shiem, Thang, 8th Jan. 2020).

Een: The individual gifted with the ability to practice shamanism is known as *Een*. Within the village, there were several individuals chosen from select clans to fulfill the duties of this role. Both the *Lam* and *Shiu* moieties were traditionally selected to occupy this position. Their primary obligation entailed administering their craft to those in need within the community. Specifically, within the *Lam* moiety, in Thang village, individuals from the *Sumao* and *Sontsa* lineages assumed this responsibility. Similarly, from the *Shiu* moiety, members of the *Phiandong Shiu* and *Kampao* clans were selected to fulfill the role of *Een*. Notably, only elderly women from both moieties were eligible to undertake these duties. The responsible clan is mandated to appoint at least one individual to assume this role; failure to do so may result in adverse consequences, including mental instability. Individuals from other clans were ineligible to undertake the duties associated with this role (Personal Communication: Themsai, Thang, 12th Jan. 2022).

Ngeplaoyapao:The individual responsible for inaugurating the application of tattooing ceremony was known as *Ngeplaoyapao*. This role was fulfilled by the elderly women belonging to the *Lamnya* clan. Their duty involved looking after the application of tattoos on the people. It was necessary that an elderly woman from the Lamnya clan commence the tattoo marking, as failure to do so hinder the clarity and effectiveness of the tattooing process (Personal Communication: Shiem, Thang, 12th Jan. 2022).

Sardeshpande (2017) characterises clans such as *Meshwon*, *Ein*, *Sonlan*, and *Meya* as less numerous, thereby designating them as junior and less significant, often subject to pressure and discrimination. However, this interpretation is inaccurate, as it conflates the individuals occupying these positions with the clans themselves. The names mentioned refer to individuals who may belong to different clans and do not represent the clans as a whole.

The social organisation of the Khiamniungan Nagas is a complex and richly structured system that reflects their deep-rooted cultural traditions and functional roles within the community. Each role within their society is imbued with specific responsibilities, rituals, and customs that underscore the socio-cultural dynamics. This system not only delineates the allocation of duties among various clans but also illustrates how these roles are essential to maintaining social harmony and cultural continuity. Despite the hierarchical nature of the clan system, which assigns specific duties and responsibilities to different clans, the structure is designed to be egalitarian in that no single clan dominates the others. Each clan's role is vital and respected, and the division of labor is intended to ensure a balanced and functional community where every clan contributes to the collective well-being. The hierarchy within the system is not based on social stratification but on functional specialization.Each clan in the Khiamniungan society has a specific role related to agricultural practices and communal activities. These roles are traditionally assigned and are integral to the functioning of the agricultural cycle and cultural rituals. The system mandates that duties are not to be intermingled among clans. This exclusivity ensures that roles are performed with a deep understanding of tradition and ritual significance.

In the contemporary context, the traditional roles of custodians have been significantly diminished or entirely lost. These historically vital positions, which encompassed responsibilities from ceremonial rites to agricultural tasks, have largely been supplanted by

the functions of village representatives, known as Gaonburas. The Gaonburas now oversee critical decisions regarding the agricultural cycle, including the selection of cultivation areas, the timing of jungle burning, and the initiation of sowing activities. Despite this shift, decision-making processes remain rooted in consultation with individuals possessing traditional knowledge of agricultural practices. Additionally, the church has assumed a prominent role in the contemporary landscape, particularly in the realms of spiritual intercession and prayer. The church now conducts prayers for successful cultivation, further highlighting the evolving but still significant interplay between traditional practices and modern institutions in shaping community life and agricultural practices.

2.4. Social Customs

2.4 (1).Marriage Ceremony

In the Khiamniungan society, the prevalent marriage customs are characterised by monogamy and exogamy. Polygamy is strictly prohibited, and marriage is primarily organised between two main moieties: the Lam and Shiu moieties. Inter-moiety marriages are permitted, whereas intra-moiety unions are forbidden.

There are numerous accounts that attempt to reflect the traditional marriage system of the Khiamniungans. Singh (1995) states, "A Khemungan boy wanting to marry a particular girl merely tells his father, brother or other near relatives of his choice. These people raid the girl's house, and abduct her. It is marriage by capture in the style of medieval Rajputs."(p.44). Chib (1980) further elaborates on this by drawing comparisons between the Khiamniungan marriage system and those of other groups, such as the Kinners in Kinnar. This practice has been likened to those found among medieval Rajputs and is also observed in contemporary communities such as the Bhuiyas of Orissa, the Hos of Bengal, and certain groups in Assam. However, this interpretation is overly simplistic and not fully representative

of the nuances involved. In reality, the process often involved extensive discussions between the couple and their respective families, suggesting a level of consent and negotiation not captured in earlier descriptions. The characterisation of this practice as a mere act of abduction may stem from a superficial understanding or a loss of nuance in translation. The observations made by these writers appear to have been derived from secondary sources rather than from a direct and comprehensive study of the social system of the Khiamniungan people, leading to potential misinterpretations.

The selection process for a fiancé varied among individuals. Some chose their marital partners autonomously, while others relied on familial arrangements facilitated by parents, uncles, aunts, and other relatives. After establishing a bond, the prospective couples resided separately with their respective families. During this period, mutual assistance in household and field works and the exchange of gifts, such as baskets, umbrellas, bags, or clothes, served as expressions and manifestations of their affection. When an individual decided to formalise the union, he informed his peers in the male dormitory of his intentions. The man selected one of his close and trusted peers as his best friend. The chosen best friend then accompanied him to the prospective bride's residence. Upon arrival, the groom remained outside while the best friend and his companions escorted the bride to the groom's house. Although the bride may have consented to the marriage, she often feigned displeasure, displaying her reluctance through symbolic gestures (Personal Communication: Tsuchoi, Thang, 12th January, 2022).

The marriage ceremony itself was a modest affair, witnessed solely by the couple and the chosen friend. A ritual involving the sacrifice of a chicken was conducted to ascertain omens for the couple's future. Observing the movement of the chicken's legs post-sacrifice served as a prognostic indicator; a right leg crossing over the left was deemed auspicious, while the opposite was considered inauspicious. Subsequent to the sacrifice, the friend

collected the chicken's blood in a conical cup fashioned from a banana leaf. Both the groom and the bride were required to dip their right thumb or finger, respectively, into the cup. Despite the bride's evident reluctance, she was compelled to participate in this ritual, formalizing the marriage (Sardeshpande, 2017).

Following these rites, the friend prepares a meal for the newlyweds consisting of the sacrificed chicken and millet cooked in a small pot. Only millet was utilized for this occasion, with other grains being excluded. After the meal, the friend departs from the groom's residence. Upon reaching the groom's home, she had to demonstrate her domestic skills by pounding rice the following morning. Successful completion of this task was interpreted as an indication of her suitability for marriage and her qualifications as a competent spouse (Personal Communication: Themsai, Thang, 12th January 2022).

The marriage system of the Khiamniungan community provides valuable insights into the cultural practices and values that have shaped this society over time. Through its emphasis on monogamy, adherence to moiety boundaries, and the use of symbolic rituals during marriage ceremonies, the community exhibits a structured approach to familial relationships. While these customs may appear unique or unconventional from an external perspective, they hold significant cultural and social importance within the community.

2.4 (2). Divorce Practices

Within the Khiamniungan community, marriage is regarded as a sacred bond, and divorce is considered permissible only under specific circumstances deemed valid by customary laws and traditions. There are notable inaccuracies in the portrayal of the divorce system among the Khiamniungan Nagas. Singh (1972) inaccurately describes the practice by stating, "Among the Khemungans, divorce is as easy as marriage. The girl wanting to separate gets up early one morning, cleans the house, prepares the food, and then just walks

out!"(p. 45). This is however a misrepresentation of the Khiamniungan divorce practices, as divorce is generally discouraged and only occurs under specific circumstances. Grounds for divorce encompass various factors such as adultery, desertion, abusive behavior, and in certain instances, infertility (Bareh, 2001).

Adultery: In cases where either spouse breaches the marital commitment through extramarital affairs, divorce becomes an unavoidable recourse. For instance, should a wife be seduced or enticed away from her marital obligations, leaving her children and declining to return, the families involved convene to deliberate upon separation. Following divorce proceedings, the offending party forfeits any claim to the family's assets and properties acquired during the marriage. Moreover, a fine, ranging from one to three plots of cultivable land or domestic animals, is imposed on the offending spouse. This penalty is similarly applied if a husband abandons his wife for another woman against the counsel of the community and parents. Post-divorce, the wife typically relocates to her parental residence, while a representative is dispatched to the ex-husband's house to collect the stipulated fines, which can be in the form of land, livestock, or other assets (Personal Communication: Thangsoi, Thang, 27th December, 2020).

Divorce due to Desertion**:** Divorce may also result due to desertion by one spouse. For instance, if a husband departs from his wife and children due to mental health concerns, the wife faces a choice between remaining in her husband's house or returning to her parent’s house along with the children. Opting to reside in her husband's house grants her the right to cultivate his land and assert ownership over household assets. Conversely, should she choose to return to her parental home without the consent of her in-laws, she incurs a penalty, typically involving the relinquishment of a parcel of cultivable land. Similarly, a husband who abandons his family faces a similar penalty.

Divorce due to Abusive Behavior**:** Divorce may be initiated due to instances of abuse conduct by either spouse. In cases where a husband perpetrates abuse, neglecting his familial responsibilities and resorting to the sale of family assets, thereby causing deprivation and distress, the wife may seek divorce without incurring any financial penalties. Conversely, should the wife engage in abusive behavior, the husband retains the right to seek divorce, although with a nominal fine imposed (Personal Communication: Khunyu, Thang, 29th December, 2022).

Divorce due to Infertility: In situations where a couple remains childless due to the wife's infertility, the husband may express a desire to marry another woman to procreate. Upon mutual agreement, the couple may opt for separation. In such instances, the wife is permitted to relocate household possessions to her parental home, without any imposition of fines in the form of immovable property (Personal Communication: Thangsoi, Thang, 27th December, 2022).

Marriage is deeply rooted in tradition and custom. While the institution of marriage is held in high regard, divorce is acknowledged as a possible outcome under specific circumstances that are validated by the community's established norms. Each ground for divorce is accompanied by its own set of customary penalties or fines. In Pangsha, the parents of the husband or the wife had to give a piece of land as a fine to the other party, depending on who had divorced (Sardeshpande, 2017). This emphasises the commitment of community to maintaining balance and order within marital relationships. Despite the presence of these grounds for separation, the overarching ethos underscores the significance of family ties, mutual respect, and collective well-being. Thus, marriage among the Khiamniungans serves not only as a personal commitment between spouses but also as social relationship with the people of each party.

2.4 (3).Naming Ceremony

Khiamniungan names exhibit a distinctive simplicity, typically composed of one to three syllables within a single word. This naming convention stands in contrast to the practices observed among other Naga tribes, where names often carry explicit meanings or symbolic connotations. Among the Khiamniungans, however, the emphasis is less on the semantic content of the name and more on its function as a marker of cultural and social identity. Despite the absence of direct meaning, these names embody deep-seated cultural roots, transmitted across generations, and serve as vital indicators of an individual's lineage and moiety affiliation. Among the Nagas, Chowdhury (2020) notes, "Many a times, just by hearing someone's name, it is possible to trace the clan to which the person belongs to" (p.74).

Each Khiamniungan name is imbued with cultural significance that extends beyond mere identification; it is a reflection of the individual's place within the broader social structure. The name a person bears can immediately signal their moiety—whether Shiu or Lam, which is a crucial aspect of their identity within the community. This distinction is particularly pronounced in the naming practices for males, where names are not commonly shared between the two moieties. For example, names specific to the Shiu moiety are reserved exclusively for individuals within that group, while those belonging to the Lam moiety adhere to a similar exclusivity. Certain male names, such as *Lam*, *Lamthaiu*, *Lamnyah,* and *Longshen,* are especially indicative of the individual's clan, emphasizing the connection between personal identity and social structure (Personal Communication: Lamthaiu, Thang, 12th January, 2020).

In contrast to the rigid boundaries observed in male naming conventions, female names exhibit greater fluidity. Names for women are often used interchangeably between the

Shiu and Lam moieties, though some exceptions exist. This flexibility in female naming practices allows for a broader exchange of names between clans, further emphasizing the interconnectedness of different lineages within the Khiamniungan community. Additionally, the practice of naming a daughter after a grandmother or other maternal relatives highlights the importance of matrilineal ties, even within a primarily patriarchal society.

The transmission of names from one generation to the next serves both to honor ancestors and to maintain continuity within the community. It is common for a father to name his son after his grandfather or his daughter after his grandmother, thereby preserving the names of forebears and ensuring that the memory of ancestors is kept alive. This practice not only strengthens familial bonds across generations but also provides a mechanism for the perpetuation of cultural heritage.

The naming ceremonies for an infant male and female are conducted on separate days, with the male ceremony typically occurring on the third and second day after birth respectively. In cases where a child unfortunately passes away before receiving an official name, a clan title is bestowed upon the child. According to Bareh (2001), the naming of a child typically occurs two days after birth, a responsibility undertaken by the head of the family.During the naming ceremony, a necklace is presented to the child. A male child receives a male necklace, while a female child is given a female necklace. This necklace, known as *Niannian Lak* or the Name Giving Necklace, is believed to offer protection against sickness and unfortunate events (Personal Communication: Shiem, Thang, 8th Jan. 2020).

Several rituals are performed on the naming day, including ear piercing, dedication of first hair cut, and activities such as collecting firewood or visiting friends and neighbors. Additionally, an exchange of rice takes place with a selected neighboring family. The family chosen for this rice exchange is one that has not been visited by any guests. If a guest is

present during the rice exchange, it is considered inauspicious for the child; conversely, if no guest is present, it is seen as favorable.

Before the child is named or until three days post-birth, the mother observes specific dietary and behavioral restrictions. Activities such as visiting neighbours, taking items from others' houses, and consuming vegetables are prohibited. The diet during this period primarily consists of rice, sticky rice, and meat. Visitors, especially strangers, are not permitted in the household where the child is born. On the day of the ceremony, perilla curry is prepared in a separate earthen pot. The mother initiates the consumption of various foods by tasting the perilla curry from a separate pot, a ritual known as *Niamshep*. In the evening of the naming ceremony, she is free to engage in normal activities and consume any food she desires, signifying the completion of the naming and birth ceremonies.Comparable observations regarding taboos, such as the practice of a mother remaining at home for several days after childbirth, refraining from speaking to strangers, and consuming chicken of the same sex as the newborn, are also documented within the Sumi community (Hutton, 1968).

Subsequent to the naming ceremony, within a few days, the child is taken to his maternal uncle's place for the first time. The uncle prepares a meal for the family, including a chicken that he slaughters. Holding rice-beer in a bamboo mug, the uncle offers a blessing for his nephew or niece through a prayer. Following the prayer, he drips a drop of rice-beer into the child's mouth and presents the child with a necklace as a symbol of blessing. This ritual plays a pivotal role in strengthening the bond between uncles and their nephews or nieces (Langshen, 2013).

The analysis reveals that the familial, lineage, clan, and moiety institutions of the Khiamniungan are not only central to their social organisation but also serve as critical mechanisms for maintaining ecological balance and communal harmony. Through the lens of

cultural ecology, it becomes evident that the social setup, characterised by patrilineal descent, clan exogamy, and clearly defined roles within the tribe, is a dynamic adaptation to their environment, ensuring the sustainability of their social fabric across generations. The integration of these social customs with ecological practices highlights the adaptation and the continuity of their cultural identity in the face of changing environmental conditions.

The socio-cultural practices of the Khiamniungan community offer an insight into the fabric of their societal values and the mechanismsthrough which social order and continuity are preserved. The examination of marriage, divorce, naming ceremonies, and funerary practices reveals a community deeply rooted in traditional norms yet adaptive to changing circumstances. The adherence to monogamy and exogamy, alongside the regulated processes for divorce, underscores their commitment to balancing individual agency with responsibility, thereby maintaining social harmony.

Chapter 3

The Economic Structure and Trade

Understanding traditional economies and cultural practices offers valuable insights into the intricate relationships between cultural traditions and economic activities. In the case of the Khiamniungan community, traditional agricultural systems exemplify this interconnection, as they are not merely methods of crop cultivation but rather sophisticated networks that integrate social, cultural, and economic dimensions. These systems have sustained the community for generations, illustrating knowledge of environmental management and resource utilisation.

Furthermore, the study of traditional economies, particularly through the lens of trade and economic interactions, is essential for comprehending how communities have historically navigated resource scarcityand environmental challenges. Trade, both within and between communities, has played a pivotal role in the economic stability and cultural exchange, facilitating the dissemination of goods, knowledge, and practices. Analysing these economic systems allows for a deeper understanding of how traditional practices have adapted to changing circumstances and how they continue to influence contemporary economic strategies. In the context of the Khiamniungan Nagas, this approach reveals the complex interplay between agriculture, trade, and cultural identity, underscoring the importance of integrating traditional knowledge into modern economic studies.

Here, an in-depth study has been made projecting the trajectory of the network co-relating with aconfluence of ritualistic observances, communal labor, and sustainable agricultural practices, which collectively represent a relationship between human societies and their natural environments. Such practices are not merely utilitarian but are rooted within

cultural narratives and social structures. All these reflect the sophisticated interaction of economic behavior and cultural values. By scrutinizing these elements, this study seeks to elucidate how traditional economic systems contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, and the maintenance of environmental sustainability.

3.1. Agriculture

Agriculture played a central role as the primary occupation among the Nagas. As an agricultural society, this is well illustrated by Shimmi (1988), who noted that the Naga people lived by the sweat of their brow, with farming as their primary occupation. They cultivated a variety of crops, including rice, millet, maize, cotton, oilseeds, chili, taro, yam, and pulses on their jhum land.The agricultural practices are rooted deeply in their cultural heritage and these practices reflect not only their approach to farming but also the usage of the land and nature. Jacobs (2012) effectively highlights the profound dependence of the Naga society on agriculture, noting that the use of the land underlines all other aspects of Naga society. The Angamis practiced wet terraced cultivation while the neighbouring tribes such as Lothas, Aos, and the trans-Dikhu tribes practiced jhum cultivation (Hutton,1969). Khiamniungans are one of the trans-Dikhu tribes who practiced jhum. Through communal efforts and age-old rituals, the Khiamniungan Nagas have cultivated a sustainable agricultural system that has sustained them for generations. The traditional farming methods of the community members reflect the tools, and the rituals that accompany each stage of the agricultural cycle. The economic condition of the people was dependent and contingent upon the agricultural produce.

In terms of cropping patterns on jhum lands, mixed cropping is the predominant agricultural practice. Crop selection is largely consumption-oriented, with farmers cultivating a variety of produce to meet the subsistence needs of their households. Coarser varieties of

rice constitute the staple food in Nagaland, while other grains such as millet, small millet, job's tears, and maize are also cultivated. Additional crops, including pulses, vegetables, rapeseed, linseed, sesame, pineapple, cotton, ginger, indigo, oranges, sugarcane, yam, and taro, are grown in smaller quantities. In this mixed cropping system, soil-exhaustive crops, such as rice, maize, millet, and cotton, are cultivated alongside soil-enriching crops, such as legumes (Chib, 1980). Other crops sown in the old jhum are sorghum/jowar, foxtail millet, and pearl millet. Other items which are grown in both the new as well as the old field are ginger, perilla, soybean, pea, cowpea, pumpkin, mustard, cassava, etc.

Different kinds of agricultural implements, each designed in various shapes and sizes to fulfill specific functions within their agricultural practices. These tools are crucial for carrying out tasks throughout the agricultural season, with each implement serving distinct roles. In Naga agricultural practices, the principal tools used are the hoe, digging stick, sickle, rake, winnowing fan and the all purposedao, which serves as a cutting and chopping tool (Jacobs, 2012).

On agricultural tools, the versatile dao is common to all the Nagas. However, variations in the structure and uses of the agricultural tools and implements could be seen among different Naga tribes. The Khaimniungan Naga, like any other Naga tribes uses dao as the main tool in agricultural operation. Menya (Personal communication, Thang, 4th February, 2019) mentions that a notable implement is the dao, also referred to as *Sa*. This tool is essential from the commencement until the end of the agricultural season. Its application extends to both men and women during the clearing of jungle areas for jhum (slash-and-burn) cultivation. It is additionally employed for other tasks such as cutting firewood, crafting beams or pillars, and constructing houses or granaries as well as in hunting and fishing. Spade known as *chap* is also an essential implement. A significant agricultural implement

typical to the Khiamniugan people is the use of scraper, similar to the spade. This tool is made from iron, with a wooden handle. The scraper is employed for the purpose of weeding out unwanted grass. It is available in various shapes and sizes: the smaller version is typically used for clearing grass in jhum fields, while the larger version is utilized in terraced fields.

Another important implement is the weeder called *Thsunguom*. Crafted from hardwood, it features a head equipped with four or five times, facilitating the removal of weeds. The wood specifically used for this implement is known as *Thsunguompai*. In the absence of this wood, hard bamboos are sometimes utilized as a substitute. It plays a critical role in field preparation for clearing weeds prior to sowing seeds.

Additionally, there are varieties of baskets, trays and mats serving agricultural purposes. Sardeshpande (1987) details various basketry items, identifying them by their local names, such as *tongto, chakhap, kim, waihiuv, chha, echhamao,* and *nyaohai.*The cleaning tray called *Ein* is primarily used for cleaning grains and seeds. After the grains are threshed, the tray is employed to separate the grain from the chaff by winnowing. Within the household, the *Ein* is often used for cleaning and sorting food items like grains, legumes, and other small dry goods. *Gan*- grain carrying basket is used for transporting harvested grain from the fields to storage areas. It is designed to hold a substantial quantity of grain, making it essential during harvest season. Filtering tray *Nyaohai* serves a vital role in filtering process. The threshing basket *Nyaom* is specifically designed for threshing millets, where it is used to hold chaff that needs to be separated from the grain. It is an essential tool during the threshing stage of agricultural processing. Firewood carrying basket *Pailothsa* is primarily used for carrying firewood.A mat which is locally called *Shiam* is often laid out for the drying grains, seeds, or other agricultural produce. It provides a clean, elevated surface that helps in drying and prevents contamination from the ground. The basket *Thsaji* is a versatile

basket used for carrying various agricultural products, such as harvested crops, seeds, or tools, from the field to storage areas (Personal communication: Shiem, Thang, 8th January, 2020).

Land is cleared and cultivated for two consecutive seasons: the first season, referred to as *em* (new jhum), primarily involves the cultivation of rice alongside other crops; the second season, known as *bey* (old jhum), is characterized by millet as the dominant crop, supplemented by additional crops. After these two seasons, the land is left to regenerate, reverting to its natural state for a variable fallow period. Hutton (1968), in describing the Sema practice of leaving land fallow, notes:

> When there is enough land, seven years is usually reckoned the shortest time in which the land can become fit for recultivation, and ten or twelve years is usually regarded as the normal period for it to lie fallow, while fifteen to twenty is regarded as the most desirable time to leave it untouched, though land near a village, being more convenient for cultivation, is rarely if ever left so long as that. (p. 59)

The technique of leaving the land to fallow as observed among the Khiamniungans shares similarities with that of the Semas, with the notable distinction that fallow periods of fifteen to twenty years are not typically employed by the Khiamniungans. While both groups adhere to the practice of allowing land to lie fallow to restore soil fertility, the Khiamniungans generally observe fallow periods ranging from ten to twelve years. This variance likely reflects specific environmental factors and socio-economic conditions within the community, where extended fallow durations are less feasible due to land use and its availability. Agricultural practices are divided into distinct stages following definite with rites and rituals, each of which can be examined in detail to understand the process of cultivation

and the belief and taboos of the traditional society and also to give insight into the festivals associated with agriculture.

3.1 (1).*Eiuphong* (Felling of the jungle)

In many instances, an entire village engages in collective cultivation within a single block. However, in the case of larger villages, each *khel* may select a separate area for agricultural activities. This communal approach offers several advantages. It is more efficient to fence a larger area compared to numerous smaller plots, wildlife such as birds are less likely to cause damage than they would in isolated patches, and cooperation among villagers in tasks like weeding and harvesting is facilitated. Additionally, the community works collectively to maintain the field pathways. Within the area designated by the village elders for the year, most individuals hold land either independently or as part of clan-owned property. For those without land, renting is a viable option (Mills, 1980).

The cutting and felling of jungle for jhum cultivation typically occurs in the month of January each year. Dedication to cutting and clearing activities usually commence in November or December which is led by an initiator and his family. Individuals not otherwise engaged in other tasks could participate in December, although the majority of families undertake this work in January after the harvest season. The initiation of jungle cutting and slashing marks the beginning of all field-related tasks for the year.

On clearing and cutting of the jungle, Shimmi (1988) observes that taking of omen on egg was a feature of the Naga for a selection of farm land. First the spot was determined after which each family has to start clearing the jungle of ten to fifteen years growth. Having been cut down, the jungle was allowed to dry, so that it could be fired in season. Throughout the various seasons, individuals work either independently or in groups to accomplish field tasks. Youths, in particular, form groups and assist each field through rotations. Even in jungle

clearing endeavors, some work independently while others work in groups. In areas with dense and tall trees, more extensive efforts are required. Initially, smaller plants and grass covers are cleared using a dao or spade. The tall and large trees are felled and then cut into smaller lengths for efficient drying. Smaller trees are trimmed to heights of 5 to 7 feet, allowing for the growth of climbing plants. The dao is a primary tool utilized for the activity along with another tool, axe generally used for felling larger trees. Axes facilitated the felling of large trees, while daos were used to slash branches. Meals are typically prepared by the field owner during these activities, while individuals often bring rice-beer for personal consumption. Meals were commonly cooked and served in the field. Although the construction of rest houses was not obligatory, some opted for simple tent-like structures made from banana leaves and wild grass to provide shelter during rain. In instances where cultivation occurs far from the village, individuals would sometimes sleep in rudimentary rest houses at night. However, if the cultivation area is close to the village, constructing a resting hut was deemed unnecessary (Personal communication: Thangsoi, Thang, 27th December, 2020).

3.1 (2).*Eiujek* (Burning of the felled jungle)

The practice of clearing jungles for Jhum fields occurs between the months of Decemberember and January. The cut vegetation is left to dry for a period of time before the burning process commence. The burning process usually takes place in February. During this period of burning, specific customs and rituals are observed known as *Eiujek Amkham*. On the appointed day, it was customary for the Lamthaiu clan to announce to the villagers the intention to burn the jhum fields, typically early in the morning. Following the announcement, those youths and hunters engaged in this practice utilize sticks, split bamboo, and bamboo scraps to discern omens. These omens were interpreted to determine whether animals would be killed during the jungle burning and if any individuals would sustain

injuries. This process of omens took place before proceeding to the fields. Prayers were offered to ensure a successful burning along with the capture of animals, and to ward off any misfortunes. When the sun becomes bright, the first fire was lit by the Lamthaiu clan at his field. Then only it was followed by the others in their respective fields. This process was usually performed by young and strong individuals as it requires strenuous efforts and skill (Personal Communication: Buniom, Noklak, 5th January, 2022). The following day, the entire village observes a genna, refraining from fieldwork to minimise the risk of future fire hazards. Importing fresh firewood into the village was strictly prohibited to prevent accidental outbreaks of fire either in the village or in the fields. However, domestic activities such as basketry making, wood carving, and weaving were permitted.

3.1 (3).*Eiukam (* Post-burn clearing work)

Once the post-burn agricultural activities have been initiated by the Initiator and following the observation of the genna ritual, the villagers engaged in the preparation of their respective fields on the subsequent day. Subsequent to the observation day, each family tends to their own fields on tasks such as clearing ashes and tilling the soil. Various seeds of maize, pumpkin, beans, watermelon, gourd, chili, ginger, and yams, are sown during the post-burn preparation process. During this phase, partially burnt grasses are removed from the soil using implements such as spades or picks and are gathered in designated locations. Additionally, any excessive small trees, which were not cleared during initial jungle clearing efforts, are removed. Charred trees are collected and disposed off through controlled burning, while larger trees are sectioned into various lengths and utilized for constructing lines and platforms on slopes. These structures serve to mitigate soil erosion and ensure the equitable distribution of fertile soil. In flat terrain, log-steps are deemed unnecessary (Personal communication: Lamthaiu, 12th January, 2020).

Simultaneously, rudimentary temporary shelters are erected, with permanent structures being reserved for construction after the *Eiuam* Festival, although preparatory materials are gathered during this phase. Implements such as rakes, spades, dao, hoes, picks, and filtering baskets are utilized throughout these activities. Grasses are collected using rakes, necessary vegetation is trimmed with daos, while spades, hoes, and picks are employed for soil tillage and weed removal. Collaborative efforts are also common, with individuals forming groups known as *Sahoi* to distribute labor across fields. Members of these groups rotate tasks among each other until each member has attended to their respective fields. This practice of collective labor appears to be prevalent among several Naga tribes. Hutton (1969) documents a similar custom among the Angamis, where a man typically receives assistance from his friends or kin. In return, he contributes labor to the fields of those who have supported him. The field owner is expected to provide a midday meal for those working on his land, which is prepared in the field hut. Ininstances where cultivation sites are distant from the village, individuals may camp in the fields overnight, conducting work during the evening and morning hours. Charred and unburnt debris, along with plant roots, are incinerated when wind blows less, typically in the evening or early morning hours.Before sowing, sowing the fresh weed which may spring up again are cleaned away at least twice (Hutton, 1969).

3.1 (4). *Eiu-Am Miu Amkham*

In agricultural practices, certain fields necessitated ongoing worship and offering rituals throughout the annual cycle of cultivation. These designated areas, referred to as *Eiu-Am-Mium*, held significant religious and ceremonial importance in agricultural practices. The ritual and ceremonies conducted in such fields were called *Eiu-Am Miu Amkham*. This ritual was conducted both within the field itself during the sowing season and at one's own home. The *Eiu-Am-Mium* field required specific forms of reverence and offerings, rendering it

inaccessible to impoverished or widowed households due to the continuous sacrifices and rituals, often involving the slaughter of domestic animals. This ceremonial tradition served as a marker of social stratification and distinction within the village (Personal communication: Buniom, Thang, 5th February, 2022).

While differing in specific actions and sacrificial practices, a comparable form of sacrifice has also been documented among the Ao Nagas by Mills (2003).Wealthy individuals were granted the privilege of cultivating such designated fields, known as *Eiu-Am-Mium*. Families aspiring to cultivate these fields allocated ample time for meticulous preparation. Livestock, including pigs and other animals, were arranged in advance, and special rituals were conducted from the initial stages of cultivation until the completion of harvesting. During the ritualistic dedication ceremony of Jungle cutting, a sacrificial pig was offered to invoke divine favor for abundant crops and protection from misfortune in the family. This ceremony was integrated with the sowing activities in the field, and the specific date was determined by the field owner and his family to align with optimal sowing conditions. On the designated day, clan and khel members convened at the field, equipped with essential seeds, agricultural tools, livestock, and offerings. They provided voluntary labor for a day as part of the communal effort.

The ceremonial proceedings followed a distinct protocol and arrangement. Two separate elevated platforms were erected parallel to each other in front of the field hut. The first platform served as the primary seating area for two designated priests, while the second platform was allocated for the arrangement of worshiping and offering materials, as well as for the storage of provisions such as cooked food and meat. The owner appointed two priests to officiate throughout the duration of the ceremony. These priests assumed their positions on the first platform, where they were tasked with conducting rituals, organizing offering

materials, and overseeing the worship proceedings. Additionally, two assistants aided the priests in the execution of worship rituals. Their responsibilities included the transportation of worship materials to and from the platform, as well as the distribution of food, meat, and rice-beer from the platform to the workers under the guidance of the priests (Personal communication: Suthem, Thang, 3rd February, 2019).

This provides the significance of traditional agricultural practices within the community, where the cultivation of fields is not merely a physical task but an integrated socio-religious activity. The preparation and offering to invoke divine favor demonstrates the spiritual connection between the agrarian lifestyle and their belief system, highlighting how agricultural success is seen as dependent on supernatural forces. The gathering of clan members at the field to assist in the sowing process symbolizes strong community bonds, mutual cooperation, and the reinforcement of social networks. Rituals, organized and officiated by appointed priests, not only demonstrate the structured nature of the practice but also highlight the roles of religious leaders and their assistants in guiding these important cultural events.

The healthy and fat pig was selected for the sacrificial purpose. It was transported live to the designated field, where it underwent ceremonial slaughter as part of the ritual observance. In addition to the pig, chickens held significance in the offering rituals. Throughout the slaughtering process for both the pig and the chicken, divinatory practices were employed to interpret omens, foreseeing favorable or unfavorable outcomes, as well as potential afflictions or misfortunes in the family. Upon completion of the slaughter, specific anatomical portions of both the pig and the fowl were allocated for use in offerings. These segments, including small portions of the lung, heart, and neck, were taken in three pieces each. These organs are traditionally associated with life force and vitality, and their careful

selection and division into three pieces each may represent a triadic symbolism. Furthermore, the offerings included items such as ginger, salt, rice-beer, and other ceremonial requisites. Additional sections of both the pork and chicken were collected in five pieces each, each serving a distinct part in the ritual proceedings. The inclusion of these items in the ritual has both practical and symbolic dimensions. Ginger, often regarded for its medicinal properties symbolises health, vitality, and protection against malevolent forces. Salt, a preservative and purifier, represents purity, warding off evil spirits and preserving the well-being of the field owners. Rice-beer, a staple in many Naga communities, embodies nourishment, playing a key role in both spiritual and social functions during the ceremony.

The priest and the owner jointly appointed three individuals, referred to as *Poinoi*, to oversee the dedication of meat and cooked food. Initially, the priest presented the cooked food, meat, rice-beer, and other offerings to these three individuals before proceeding to offer them to the owner. Subsequently, the rice-beer, cooked food, and meat were distributed to the fellow workers in the field. On the designated day, the tasks of clearing, weeding, and sowing were meticulously executed. Throughout the labor-intensive process, workers were provided with a singular serving of prepared food and meat. Upon the conclusion of the sowing activities, dinner was served in the front yard of the field hut. During the distribution of rice-beer, food, and pork, precedence was accorded based on age, with children receiving proportionately smaller servings than adults. Additionally, six specifically allocated portions of pork were segregated for future consumption, excluding children. Termed as *Yanthsathaiu*, this portion was served only to men and women. Elders receive larger portions due to their respected status and life experience, while adults generally require more nourishment for their roles and activities compared to children, who receive smaller servings. Children were refrained from consuming this particular portion, although they were permitted to partake in any other portion of pork available. This practice highlights the importance of these portions

in rituals, deemed suitable only for adults who are fully integrated into community traditions and practices. This approach ensured that they are integrated into community rituals in a manner appropriate to their age, while certain portions are reserved for adults to maintain the sanctity and significance of the ritual. Throughout the dinner, individuals were encouraged to indulge in pork, rice, and rice-beer to their satisfaction. Any remaining meat, food, and rice-beer were then brought home and shared with their respective families.

Subsequently, in the village, the owner extended invitations to their close friends, relatives, and priests for an evening gathering at their residence, where ample provisions of food, rice-beer, and meat were served. This gathering marked the culmination of the *Eiu-Am Mium* field ceremony. The following day, the field owner and their family observed a day of rest, refraining from venturing to the fields. All family members remained within the confines of the village (Personal communication: Buhiu, Thang, 29th January, 2019).

3.1 (5).Construction of Field Hut

The ground being clear now, the first thing is to build the hut which is to be his shelter and resting place during all the weeks of toil which lie before him. In the context of establishing a new jhum field, the construction of a field hut was considered a crucial undertaking, with each family expected to contribute to its construction. Even widows were encouraged to participate in this endeavor, often receiving assistance from their closest relatives. Following the clearing of the slash and burn works, an initial rudimentary structure, termed the *Jenkhiu,* was hastily erected, typically resembling a tent shape and led by the family initiating the cleaning process.The formal construction of the field hut commenced subsequent to the *Beiam* festival, led by the initiator of construction and the respective family members. The earlier makeshift shelter would be dismantled, making way for the construction of a more permanent structure.

The construction was initiated by the designated field hut construction initiator known as the *Loplaya*. Construction activities were scheduled for specific days, with the initiator accorded priority in commencing the construction process over the villagers. Families prepared materials in advance, ensuring their availability at the designated construction site. The construction process extended over a span of two days. On the first day, the initiator and his family would construct their field hut, while other villagers engaged in preparatory tasks such as digging pillar holes and collecting vines from the jungle. Completion of the field hut construction occurred on the same day for the initiator, followed by genna, a day of rest. Subsequently, other villagers constructed their respective rest houses, a day known as *Lopla Ajekhaiu* (Personal communication: K. Tamong, Peshu, 13th February, 2019).

The size of the field hut was contingent upon the availability materials, typically spanning 10 to 12 feet in length and 6 to 8 feet in breadth. Construction materials were sourced from within the respective fields, with partially burnt or unburned trees utilized for the side walls and palm leaves and thatch for roofing. Drainage systems were implemented along the perimeter to prevent rainwater ingress, while additional trees were strategically placed on the front and the rear sides for wind protection. Inside, a fire hearth was established for cooking purposes, with elevated platforms above for grain drying and tool storage. Wall niches were carved to accommodate pots and other utensils. A platform, either at ground level or raised, known as *Bou* or *Phongthso*, was constructed in front of the hut. Construction culminated with the observance of *Lopla Ano*, where only the initiator would attend to the field, signifying the completion of the construction phase. If multiple fields were cultivated, field hut construction for additional fields was done after the *Lopla Ano.*

Each family undertook the task of constructing their own field hut to facilitate rest during work activities. Within these structures, cooking, food preparation, and consumption would take place. Given the varying seasons and the requirement of agricultural tasks,

multiple days were often spent in the field, necessitating accommodation to guard against potential damage from pests and animals. Consequently, owners would sometimes sleep in the field itself. The distance between the village and the field also prompted such sleeping arrangements, as daily commutes were arduous. Firewood was stored within the field hut to ensure dryness and ease of transportation. Additionally, agricultural implements and tools were kept in these shelters, providing protection from adverse weather conditions such as rain and wind(Personal Communication: K. Tamong, Peshu, 15th February, 2019).

Furthermore, the field hut served as a temporary storage facility, particularly during millet harvesting. After manually stripping the millet by hand and depositing it in baskets, these baskets would be stored in the field hut until threshing operations could commence. This practice was especially crucial during the midsummer and rainy seasons to safeguard the harvested grain from theft and inclement weather. Ultimately, once the millet harvesting was completed in the old field, the field hut would be disassembled, with materials either transferred to the new field or brought back home. In cases where trees were utilized for constructing walls and posts, they were brought for firewood, provided the distance for transportation was feasible.

The establishment of a jhum field and construction of the field highlights the values of cooperation, tradition, and practicality. The collective effort in building the hut, including the involvement of all family members and the wider community, emphasizes mutual support and solidarity. The structured construction process, led by the *Loplaya* and organised into specific stages, reflects adherence to cultural traditions. Locally sourced materials and the functional design of the hut, with features like drainage systems and storage areas, demonstrate practical adaptation to the environment.

3.1 (6).Rice Sowing

After the sowing of various crops such as maize and pumpkin, the sowing of rice occurs during the months of April and May. The responsibility of initiating the rice sowing process falls upon the individual known as the *Tsoukiya.* The rituals, typically conducted by either the head of the household or village ritual leaders, provide significant insights into the socio-cultural structure of Naga society. Similarly, among the Lotha Nagas, an elderly woman traditionally assumes the role of the ritual first sower. Prior to the sowing by the husband and wife, the first sower performs an initial offering in the fields, consisting of leaves and rice. This ritual underscores the intertwined relationship between fertility in marriage and agricultural productivity (Jacobs, 2012).

Unlike other agricultural tasks, sowing of rice requires pairs of individuals to work together. Typically, these pairs consist of husbands and wives, with both man and woman contributing to the sowing process. Additionally, groups of adult males and females, including widows and widowers, partake in rice sowing activities. These groups may also include boys and girls from the same clan, with familial relationships denoted as nieces, daughters, or granddaughters. However, it is strictly prohibited for individuals to pair with someone considered a sister or a brother. In a manner akin to the Sumi practice, sowing is conducted not through broadcasting the seeds, but rather by meticulously placing them into small depressions typically created by men using a small digging hoe. The women then carefully deposit the grains into these hollows (Hutton, 1968).

Various implements and tools are utilized during the rice sowing season, including scrapers, digging sticks, daos, wooden rakes, and different types of baskets. Scrapers are employed to till the soil and remove grass, while digging sticks and daos are used to create holes and eliminate roots and weeds. Wooden rakes facilitate the clearance of tilled debris,

while bamboo trays are utilized for transporting debris and stones from the field to designated areas. Small carrying baskets are employed for carrying rice and other types of seeds.During the initial stages of sowing, crops such as soybeans, perilla, and beans are scattered by hand onto cleaned soil. Subsequently, the scattered areas are tilled using scrapers. In the sowing of rice seeds, men undertake the task of digging holes, lining up in columns according to predetermined numbers. Following each man, women carry small baskets containing rice seeds around their waists. As the men dig holes, they move from one side to the other, with women following suit, depositing three to five grains of rice seeds into each hole dug by their respective partners. The children gathered branches and swept around the sown holes to cover them, thereby preventing the consumption of rice seeds by birds or other pests (Personal Communication: Thangpong, Peshu, 15th Feb., 2019).

The rice sowing process among the Khiamniungan people reveals important aspects of their socio-economic and cultural structure. The division of labor, where tasks are shared between husbands and wives, or between groups including widows, widowers, and children, underscores the emphasis on collective effort and family roles. Ritual practices, such as the initial offerings by the *Tsoukiya* and the role of the first sower highlight the integration of agricultural productivity with cultural and spiritual beliefs. The meticulous methods for sowing rice, the use of specific tools and the prohibition against pairing with close kin, reflect both the technical expertise and the social norms governing agricultural activities. These practices illustrate a complex interplay between traditional roles, communal cooperation, and the maintenance of cultural values within the socio-economic fabric of the society.

It is customary to complete the sowing of rice as expeditiously as possible within a few days. Any unfortunate incidents affecting the family or relatives, such as deaths or injuries, may disrupt and prolong the sowing period. Delays in sowing may result in uneven

growth and crop failure in the field, underscoring the necessity for diligent and timely work efforts by all involved parties. Following the completion of rice sowing, job's tears is sown in rows and designated platforms. Additionally, taro and yam are planted in various locations where soil accumulation is favorable. Certain individuals opted to exclusively sow job's tears without rice, despite the presence of rice cultivation. In contrast to the rice sowing process, job's tears seeds were planted with the aid of a spade. These seeds were typically carried in a bag. As the spade was wielded in the right hand for soil tilling and excavation, the seeds were simultaneously held in the left hand and placed within the excavated holes. The sowing season typically commenced after the *Miu* festival and extended until the celebration of the Y*apolaang* festival.

3.1 (7). *Tsouphaiuken* (First weeding)

Following the completion of sowing activities across all agricultural plots, the commencement of weed management operations proceeded. In alignment with traditional practices observed among the Angamis, Hutton (1968) describes that the land is cleaned three to six times after sowing before reaping. Among the Khiamniungans, cleaning or weeding is done for at least twice and at the most 4 times. Participants who were previously involved in going in group sowing works continue their joint efforts during this subsequent phase if needed. Primarily comprised of young individuals, with a balanced representation of both genders, they sustain the communal practice of seeding in one another's fields. This cooperative approach extended to the task of weed management. They worked in group and once the weeding was completed, they had a small feast in the village known as *Chithsokam.*

The initial phase of weed management, referred to as *Tsouphaiuken,* involves the meticulous removal of weeds using a hoe. A careful approach is adopted to maneuver the hoe among rice plants, ensuring minimal disruption to crop integrity. Soil displaced during this

process is systematically collected within designated areas where there is no risk of seed propagation. Preservation of diverse crops, including perilla and Jowar, is prioritized during the weed management treatment. Gathered weeds and grasses are methodically accumulated and left to dry out in allocated places. In fields exclusively dedicated to Job's tears cultivation, weed management is conducted meticulously using a spade, following the same methods observed in the rice fields. Simultaneously, displaced soil is strategically redistributed within areas devoid of growing seeds (Personal communication: Tsuchoi, Thang, 8th January, 2020). Fields are cleaned multiple times, emphasizing the importance of crop health. The continuation of joint labor from sowing to weeding, with balanced gender participation, highlights the collective effort and social bonds. Meticulous techniques, including careful handling of hoes and strategic management of displaced soil, demonstrate a sophisticated approach to preserving crop integrity and diversity. This displays a well-organized and inclusive agricultural system.

3.1 (8). *Naiu-Ah* (Second Weeding)

The second weeding work typically occurs in June within the context of agricultural practices in jhum cultivation. While it is not compulsory to work in the month of June, its execution is contingent upon the condition of the field and crops. Should familial obligations permit, this task is undertaken during June; however, it may extend into July. Unlike preceding agricultural activities wherein collective endeavors involving both genders are common, gender-segregated peer groups emerge for the second weeding stage. Male and female groups, inclusive of adults, engage separately in weeding works to facilitate optimal growth of tender rice plants.

As narrated by Themsai (Personal communication: Thang, 8th January, 2020), the significance of timely completion of the second weeding operation lies in its role in nurturing

the proper development of rice crops. Neglecting this task or delaying its execution jeopardizes the healthy growth of tenderly cultivated seedlings. Hence, families prioritize completing this task before embarking on millet harvest activities in old jhum fields. The method employed during the second weeding phase involves the use of small spades to remove weeds surrounding rice plants. Soil collected during the initial weeding phase is redistributed to enhance soil fertility around rice plants. Y-Shaped hoes are predominantly utilized to eradicate grass and weeds, while soil is strategically positioned around rice plants, with weeds and grass separated for drying.

Additionally, crops such as soybeans, sorghum, and perilla left during the initial weeding are removed to provide ample space for unhindered rice growth. The adjoining cultivation of varied crops inhibits optimal rice growth, necessitating selective retention or relocation of crops to alleviate spatial constraints. Similar agricultural practices are observed in fields cultivating job's tears, entailing weed removal, crop management, and soil enrichment similar to those in rice fields. Tools such as Y-Shaped hoes, hoes, and daos are employed in job's tears cultivation, with a focus on weed eradication and tree pruning. Overnight stays in fields during this mid-summer period are discouraged due to potential health hazards and untoward incidents. Families adhere to daytime work schedules, prioritizing timely return to mitigate risks associated with prolonged exposure to outdoor conditions.

The final weeding task typically occurs in September or October following the completion of millet harvesting. Referred to as *Jikanshi Eiu-Ah*, this activity takes place after the rice grains have sprouted. It holds significant importance in newly cultivated jhum fields, as neglecting it can lead to poor grain yields and susceptibility to crop damage by rats, insects, and other pests. Both rice and job's tears fields benefit from this process, as it contributes to maximising grain harvest.Separate groups comprising adult males and females

engage in weeding to promote the optimal growth of tender rice plants. Various songs and work-chants are sung during this activity. Unlike other agricultural tasks that often evoke uncertainty and fatigue among workers due to concerns about crop yield and harvest, the sight of well-developed grains during the final weeding alleviates such feelings. Workers are motivated to diligently complete the task, buoyed by the prospect of a successful harvest (Personal communication: Shiem, Thang, 8th January, 2020).

Different agricultural implements and tools are employed based on the type of field. Fields solely dedicated to rice cultivation typically utilize hoes for weed and grass removal, while those cultivating job's tears employ spades for the same purpose. Additionally, daos are used to cut tender tree branches. During the final weeding, soil is gathered around rice plants, while removed weeds and grass are stored separately for drying out. Dry leaves from rice plants are manually removed. In the fields where only job's tears are planted, soil around plants is cleared, and dying leaves are eliminated to prevent grain spoilage by rodents and insects, ensuring a robust harvest. This culminating agricultural task marks the conclusion of the farming year, motivating families to complete it before the harvest commences. Following this, harvesting commences with individual ceremonies dedicated to the process.

3.1 (9).Harvest

The *Tsokum* festival marks a significant event in the initiation of the harvest season. Prior to the festival, families refrain from bringing in any crops from the fields. It is only after the *Tsokum* festival, conducted in October, with prayers for a bountiful harvest, that the harvesting activities commence, often extending until December. In colder climates, such as in certain cultivation areas, harvesting may start as late as November and persist until January. Each family conducts a ceremonial initiation of the harvest known as *Shiamdangyan,* at the start. The concluding ceremony, termed *Shiamkan Sumai,* signifies the

end of the harvest. The duration required for harvesting in new cultivation areas is typically longer compared to those with established cultivation practices. While millet is the primary crop harvested in old jhum cultivation areas, various crops are harvested in the new jhum, including soybean, beans, and sorghum(Personal communication: Tsuchoi, Thang , 8th January, 2020). During the harvesting process, it is customary to adhere to certain practices to maximize grain yield. Harvesters employ baskets attached to belts to collect ripe grains, either by hand stripping or sickle cutting.

When the basket is filled, grains are deposited onto mats, ensuring a small amount remains in the basket before continuing. Once enough grain is collected, plucking of stalks ceases for the day. The harvested grain is then transferred onto mats and trampled or beaten with sticks to remove husks. Subsequently, the husked grain is winnowed to separate husks from grains. The cleaned grains are measured using specialized baskets and prepared for transportation home. The harvest process in jhum fields among the Nagas follows similar techniques across different groups. Hutton (1968) describes the Sumi practice, where filled baskets of grain are placed on mats in front of the hut and winnowed with a basket-work tray to remove stalks, grass, and other foreign materials. Grain that cannot be immediately transported is stored in the hut until it is ready for transfer to the village.

3.1 (10).Millet

Millet is a stable crop cultivated in the traditional shifting cultivation of old jhum. Irrespective of the climatic conditions, be it hot, moderate, or cold, the sowing season typically commences in February annually. The initiation of sowing activities in jhum agriculture typically commences with a designated sowing initiator, and follows a well maintained sowing calendar. This calendar organises the sowing period into three distinct phases for rice cultivation: *Lepiam* (Early sowing), *Levem* (Mid sowing), and *Lephi* (Late

sowing). *Lepiam* refers to the initial phase of sowing, typically undertaken in cold regions. This phase ensures proper germination and growth of millet seeds. *Levem,* the second phase, is engaged in regions experiencing both cold and hot climates. Finally, *Lephi,* the last phase, occurs in hot regions. The determination of these phases is guided by the observation of sunrise from specific vantage points, such as Waiujiukhaiu, overlooking various mountain tops from Khulia to the Dan range. The commencement of sowing aligns with the sunrise at distinct locations: Shapnoum for *Lepiam,* Kengthso for *Levem* and Athalium for *Lephi.* However, external factors, such as familial or clan events, can influence the timing of sowing. For instance, if a death occurs within the sowing initiator's family or clan, sowing activities may be postponed until after the observance of funerary rituals. The sowing initiator and their familial or clan circumstances often dictate the timing of sowing. Flexibility exists within the calendar, allowing initiation at the most suitable stage depending on prevailing conditions. These practices are integral to the millet seed sowing calendar observed within the Khiamniungan Naga community (Personal Communication: K. Thangyo, Peshu, 15th February, 2019).

3.1 (11).Millet Harvest

Preceding the harvest are two significant festivals: *Jikhaiokan,* or the Millet Greeting Festival, and *Jitap,* the Millet Harvest Dedication Festival. The commencement of actual harvesting follows the observance of the *Jitap* festival. The readiness of millet for harvesting varies depending on the climatic conditions of the cultivated area, with hot climates typically yielding ripe crops earlier than colder regions. Harvesting operations are generally undertaken during the months of July and August, coinciding with the summer season. Essential materials utilized in the millet harvesting process include carrying baskets, threshing baskets, filtering trays, bamboo or cane-plaited mats, and winnowing trays. The mat

holds particular significance during harvesting, as it facilitates both threshing and separation activities.

On harvesting procedures, Shiem (Personal communication: Thang, 8th January, 2020) describes the gathering of ripened crops in the field huts, particularly during sunny days, using baskets to pluck the millet at the base of the grain points. Once filled, these baskets are transported to the field hut for temporary storage. During inclement weather, such as rainy days, harvested crops stored in the field hut undergo threshing. This process involves utilizing a large millet threshing basket known as *Nyaom* and a filtering tray called *Nyaohai.* The millet stalks are put in the threshing basket threshed with feet to facilitate the separation of grains, followed by the removal of the stalks. Subsequently, the millet undergoes filtration to eliminate unwanted materials, such as small pieces of stalks and leaves. The filtered millet is then poured onto a mat on the ground from baskets placed above the head, while another individual employs a winnowing tray to blow away husks and other undesirable debris. Women further engage in winnowing using bamboo or cane-plaited trays.

In cases of abundant harvest and proximity of the field to the village, multiple trips may be made throughout the day to transport harvested crops. Families heavily involved in harvesting may make two or three trips daily. Given the perishable nature of ripe crops during rainy weather, families prioritise harvesting during sunny days to prevent spoilage. Threshing typically occurs in the field hut during rainy weather. In addition to millet, tender maize is also harvested for immediate consumption in the field. However, maize harvested in the traditional jhum fields is not stored in granaries but rather utilized as food and fodder for livestock such as pigs and hens (Personal communication: Chemtong, 21st January, 2020).

Other crops, including maize, pumpkin, watermelon, beans, and chili, are also sown in the jhum fields, although in smaller quantities. Millet remains the primary crop cultivated in the old jhum, with harvesting operations spanning from the *Jitap* festival to the conclusion of

the *Beiam* festival. During the *Jitap* festival, offerings comprising of ginger, food cooked of old millet, and fish, wrapped in banana leaves and tied with bamboo splits, are made to invoke blessings from the deities. These practices delineate the millet harvesting traditions within the Khiamniungan Naga community. Maize harvesting typically coincides with millet harvesting. Vegetables such as beans, mustard, pumpkin, brinjal, and chili are harvested during May and April, their ripening being subject to prevailing climatic conditions. In colder climates, vegetable harvesting precedes millet harvesting. For instance, in hot regions, vegetable crops may be ready for harvest as early as April, while in colder areas, harvesting might extend into May. Pumpkins, particularly, can be harvested as late as September in cold climates. The crop calendar thus adapts to the specific climatic conditions of the area of cultivation. This delineation summarizes the crop calendar within the old jhum cultivation practices.

3.2. Traditional Mithun Rearing

Livestock rearing has historically been a cornerstone of economic development in many regions. It provides a source of income, employment, and sustenance for rural populations. Understanding historical livestock practices helps illuminate how economies evolved and the role agriculture played in this process.Livestock practices often reflect how communities adapted to environmental and economic challenges. Chib (1980) highlights the significance of the mithun in Naga society, noting its role as a key source of wealth alongside land. The mithun is not only an important source of beef but also functioned as a form of bride price in certain tribal exchanges. Variations in the economic significance of mithun rearing among different Naga tribes are evident in Mills' account. Mills (2003) provides an overview of the mithun rearing practices among the Ao and Sumi tribes as follows:

> Very few mithan are kept by Aos. Wandering at will in the jungle they are terribly destructive to crops. A Sema chief has servants who can look after his animals and see that they do not break down fences. When they do get into anyone's fields the chief is a big enough man to face the angry owner. Among the Aos wealth and position are so evenly distributed that few men are either humble enough to work as servants or of such eminence as to be able to face righteous indignation with equanimity. So to save himself trouble the Ao does not as a rule keep mithan. He can get what he wants for sacrifices from his neighbours across the Dikhu. The few that are kept run more or less wild in the jungle, their owners going to them every few days with salt. (p. 132-133)

Rearing of mithun was an important economic occupation of the Khiamniungans. Mithuns were considered a prized possession and also served as a building network of social relationship in the community. The possession of mithuns, buffaloes and cows signified wealth and status of person. A rich person owned buffaloes and mithuns around 40-50 whereas some owned around 20-30. The share of one's part in the mithun served an important relational status among the sharers. During the purchase of mithun, several divisions of meat share were involved among the persons purchasing it. These shares are classified as *Nyeithom* (whole of mithun), *E-eh* (half or 1/2), *Oup* (one leg or1/4), *Tsanzu* (half leg or 1/8), *Nyeitham* (slice of beef or 1/16). Possession of the head of mithun when it was killed signified the share of ownership. When a mithun is killed, in case of sharing halves, the head is taken by each person alternately. The person who shares *oup* will get to take the head when it reached the 4th cycle of killing a mithun, or if the person possessing the bigger share cheerfully agrees to let his partner have it, he was entitled to take the head. For the share of *tsanzu*and *nyeitham*, sharing of the head was not entitled as such (Personal communication: Buhiu, Thang, 21st January,. 2019).

A penalty for theft of mithun incurred heavy fine. The penalty was charged on the count of each leg of the animal. Each leg was considered on a value of one field. As penalty, the culprit does give away the field on his own choice but the owner whose mithun was stolen chose the field according to his wish which was always the most fertile. The mithun was regarded as possessing substantial economic value. (Personal Communication: Beshim,Noklak, 12th February, 2020).

3.2 (1) Jangsangla: Within the clan, cluster of relatives who share a particular lineage was provided a share of meat. The relationship ties between uncle and nephews and nieces were strengthened and signified by the sharing of slice of meat. Another important traditional value of village community was the distribution of meat from the portion of neck, intestine and skin of the mithun among the people. Each and every individual who are present at the killing of the mithun were provided with some piece of meat. The sharing of slice and part of meat kept the cohesive and relational ties strong within the community.

Domestication of mithuns and buffaloes required constant lookout. To streamline the management of these animals within the extensive forested areas, designated zones known as *Jangnyu* or *Jangkhou* were established. These areas, characterised by expansive tracts of land with abundant green vegetation and a reliable water source, were specifically chosen for their suitability. The land was enclosed by fences to protect the animals from wild predators and to confine them within a designated area, thus facilitating more efficient management.

A key element of cattle ownership was the method of identifying mithuns through various piercings and cuts on their ears, with each owner's choice of markings differing according to personal preference. Within the demarcated area, owners were familiar with these identification marks, which allowed for precise tracking of the animals. In the event of the death of a mithun, the identification system enabled individuals to recognise the deceased

animal and notify the respective owner. This was particularly significant in cases where an owner was unable to regularly check on their mithuns due to fieldwork or illness. The ability to entrust another individual with the responsibility of monitoring the livestock ensured that any developments, such as the birth of a new mithun, were reported to the owner in a timely manner.

The communal aspect of this practice was integral to its success. By relying on a network of neighbors to oversee and manage livestock, the system reinforced social cohesion and mutual support within the community. Economically, the *Jangnyu* system proved beneficial by ensuring the protection and efficient management of valuable livestock assets. This approach reduced the risk of loss due to predation or mismanagement and allowed owners to allocate their time to other productive activities, thereby contributing to overall economic stability.

3.3. Hunting

The forests surrounding the villages have rich ecosystems teeming with diverse wildlife, offering both sustenance and valuable resources to the inhabitants. Hunting served as a significant means of livelihood in traditional societies. The forested areas, with even denser jungles lay further afield. These habitats were home to a diverse array of birds and animals. Some villagers relied on wild game as a source of meat, while successful hunts also yielded valuable resources such as tools like daos and spears, as well as grains, which were often exchanged through barter systems. While agriculture was the predominant occupation, with virtually every family cultivating their own fields, land ownership or use was often flexible, sometimes exchanged through various means including livestock like pigs. Hunting typically took place during periods when villagers were not engaged in agricultural activities but for some, it was a regular occupation. These hunting practices facilitated the acquisition

of valuable assets and resources. The diversity of hunting techniques tailored to specific fauna and environmental contexts exemplifies the ingenuity and adaptability of the people. From group hunts and dog-assisted pursuits to sophisticated trapping mechanisms, these hunting practices were embedded in the lifestyle. This influenced both their economic sustenance and cultural identity.

Various folktales and stories illustrate the practice of hunting among the people. One of the folktales is of a man and his hunting dog. When the Khiamniungans lived in Khiamngan, the place of Khiamniungan origin, the people engaged significantly in hunting activities. On a particular occasion, a group of hunters went for a hunting expedition. After a hunt, while returning to the village the weather conditions became inclement. Upon arrival at the outskirt of the village, they realised the absence of a fellow hunter named *Hangmeng* and his hunting dog. They went out search for their missing friend shouting and calling his name. Despite their attempts to locate him, they discerned only a faint humming sound in answer to their call. Following this mysterious answer, they discovered that Hangmeng, along with his hunting equipment and dog, had transformed into stones. These stones are still found at the location where the transformation purportedly occurred (Plate 6).

The transformation of *Hangmeng* and his hunting dog into stones symbolises the risks, dedication, and reverence associated with hunting. This legend emphasises the cultural importance of hunting within the community. This story suggests that hunting was a multifaceted practice that played an integral role in defining the socio-economic constituents of the Khiamniungan community, influencing both its economic structure and cultural identity.

There are various methods of hunting employed, each adapted to specific game and environments as practiced by the people. These hunting techniques are outlined below:

3.3 (1).*Ouhkom (*Hunting with dogs*):*The Nagas employed a variety of animals in their hunting practices, utilising dogs as detectors and trackers. Among the Angamis, hunting included wild species such as the serow, wild dog, bear, tiger, and leopard (Hutton, 1969). The Sumis adhered to specific and well-defined rules for distributing the game. The 'dog's share' is allocated to those who own or work with the dogs. The hunter who lands the first spear is awarded the head and neck, while the second spear receives the loin. Additional portions are given to any others who contributed spearing of the animals its death. The chief of the village is granted one whole quarter, and the remaining portions are divided among all participants in the hunt (Hutton 1968).

Similarly, through personal communication with Pushong of Thang village, it has been found that the Khiamniungan people practiced a method known as *Ouhkom* for their hunting endeavors. In the densely forested environments where visibility and tracking were difficult, dogs were essential for locating and flushing out game from concealed areas such as bushes or thickets. In certain hunting strategies, dogs were also used to drive animals towards hunters, who would then set traps and wait in ambush. Upon the successful capture or killing of the game, the owner of the dog received the head and one leg as their share, while the remaining portions of the animal were distributed equally among the hunters (Personal Communication. Pushong, Thang, 26th December, 2022).

3.3 (2). *Jinjin*(Trapping):Setting traps using trapping ropes was a year-round activity undertaken by individuals. Traps were placed in various locations to capture game. To retrieve trapped animals and reset the traps for continued use, regular checks were conducted at different intervals. As noted by Mills (2003), triangular traps, were traditionally utilised by the Semas, Lothas, Changs, and Angamis and later introduced to the Aos by the Changs. These traps consist of a small fence with gaps at intervals, each fitted with a trap to capture

birds or small animals passing through. More commonly, nooses are set at these gaps to snare birds by their feet. Baited nooses are used for ground-feeding birds, while fine nooses capture smaller birds drawn to insects and honey. The similarities in trapping techniques observed among the Semas, Lothas, Changs, Angamis, Aos, and Khiamniungan indicate a shared cultural affinity and knowledge transfer among these Naga tribes. The adoption and adaptation of these trapping methods across different groups suggest a dynamic exchange of practices and technological innovations within the region.

3.3 (3).*Demkaiu/Laojet*(Trapping with birdlime*)*: The use of traditional adhesive derived from trees is prevalent among the community members. Two distinct trapping methods are employed: Birds often visit small streams or ponds during the morning and evening hours. Trappers apply the processed adhesive to sticks and set them as traps or snares along these water sources to capture birds. This is called "*Demkaiu*." The other method, "*Laojet*," is made where a raised stick with adhesive is used to trap birds resting upon it. Regular monitoring is conducted to retrieve the trapped birds (Personal communication: Shing, Thang, 26th December 2022).

3.3 (4).*Paipan (*Drop Trap): A flat platform, typically constructed from materials such as wood or bamboo, is set on the ground for trapping purposes. A trigger mechanism, consisting of a bamboo or cane splint, is positioned under the platform and baited with food or worms to attract animals. When an animal attempts to access the bait, it inadvertently releases the trigger mechanism, causing the platform to fall and immobilise the animal. The trap is strategically placed in areas frequented by animals in search of food or scavenging opportunities. Regular inspections are conducted to assess the trap's effectiveness and retrieve any captured animals.

3.3 (5).*Paitaiu* (Bow Trap*)*: The practice of using poisoned arrows was prevalent among hunters. Hunters would position their bows alongside trails frequented by animals, attaching an arrow to a stick or rope that was fastened to a trigger mechanism. When an animal activated the trap by stepping on or pushing the trigger wire, the arrow would be released, incapacitating the animal. The arrow remained in place until triggered or rendered ineffective, for instance, by environmental factors such as falling vegetation. To alert other hunters or individuals using the trail, warning signs were often displayed on nearby trees or branches. This method of arrow trapping was employed to capture a variety of animals, including deer, bear, and tiger (Personal communication: Mongchon, Thang, 26th December 2022).

3.4. Traditional Fishing Practices

Traditional fishing holds long-standing significance among tribal communities in Nagaland, with certain practices still in use today. The fabrication and application of fishing gear vary depending on factors such as location, season, fishing grounds, water characteristics, fish migratory behavior, and available resources. Indigenous gear is primarily constructed from sustainable, biodegradable materials like cane, bamboo, wooden branches, stones, and other locally sourced materials (Kechu and Pankaj, 2023). Fish constitute a significant component of the Khiamniungan dietary habits. Additionally, fish play a crucial role in various rituals and religious ceremonies practiced by the community. Fishing activities predominantly occur during periods when individuals are not engaged in agricultural tasks. The Khiamniungan region boasts several major rivers, such *as Lein, Laang,* and *Chokla.* Fishing in these rivers predominantly occurs during the winter season, as water levels recede, facilitating easier access to fish. Apart from these prominent rivers, the region is also endowed with numerous smaller rivers where fishing can be conducted throughout both the summer and winter seasons. The Khiamniungan tribe employs specific systems and techniques for fishing which are elaborated below:

3.4 (1).*Ngouphek*: *Ngouphek*, or individual fishing, is a method employed throughout various seasons. This approach can be executed by both individuals and groups. The technique involves the use of a filtering tray designed to capture fish as they move downstream or along the river. Additionally, a plain tray equipped with a handle is utilized. In this method, the filtering tray is submerged to the riverbed and swiftly retrieved to ensnare the fish, preventing their escape. Subsequently, the captured fish is transferred to a *Jie*, a specialised basket used for transporting fish (Personal communication: Shing, Thang, 12th September, 2022).

3.4 (2).*Lukiukonla:* Commonly referred to as the Frog Trap, is specifically designed for capturing frogs, primarily between the months of July and January. This trap consists of a conical bamboo basket with an open front and a closed bottom.It is low cost and it requires only one or two people to operate for ease of operation (Kechu and Pankaj, 2023). Such traps are set against the water current. The construction and deployment of this trap can be undertaken either individually or by a group of three to four individuals within smaller streams. During the migration period from August to September, frogs from upstream regions of the river move towards the mainstream. The trap is set up in July and remains in place until it either captures prey or breaks due to environmental factors. To install the trap, two posts are erected on either side of the river, with bamboos laid across them. Additional beams are installed to reinforce the main posts and are securely tied to the bamboos. Three or four baskets are positioned along the river's flow, anchored to the bamboos and supported by rocks and logs to prevent them from being carried away by the river's current. These baskets are inspected daily, and any captured frogs, fish, or other edible animals found at the bottom are collected. After harvesting the catch, the baskets are cleaned of debris such as sticks and grass and returned to their original positions for continued use (Personal communication: Mongchon, Thang, 26th December 2022).

3.4 (3).*Tsaitsai:* As noted by Hutton (1969), a prevalent method of fishing among the Nagas involves the use of plant-based poisons. These poisons are derived from the roots, stems, leaves, or fruits of specific plants, the juices of which, when introduced into water, serve to intoxicate, stupefy, or in some cases, kill the fish. Although the specific poisons vary among tribes, the use of the root and stem of a particular reddish plant appears to be common across all groups. The Khiamniungans often refer to this as community fishing, is conducted by either a family or a group comprising ten to twenty individuals in larger rivers during the winter season. This method is characterised by its communal nature and is typically undertaken when individuals are available, free from other agricultural or household tasks. The fishing location is strategically chosen at a bifurcation point in the river, where water divides into two channels before converging downstream. A variety of tools, including dao (a type of knife), spades, as well as materials such as bamboo, branches, straws, and mud, are employed in this fishing technique. To redirect the water from the main channel to a dry one, a barricade constructed of wooden and bamboo posts is erected across the river, extending from the flowing channel to the dry one. Vertically placed bamboos are supplemented with branches, while straws of rice, rocks, and mud are utilized to seal off the main channel, diverting water to the dry channel. As the water level decreases due to diversion, the roots or bark of *Derris Elliptica* are crushed and introduced into the water. This substance temporarily stuns or poisons the fish, facilitating easier capture. Once the fish are immobilised, they are caught from the reduced water level. Subsequently, the catch is distributed equitably among all participants involved in the fishing activity, irrespective of age differences (Personal communication: Sangtsui, Pathso, 7th March, 2023).

3.4 (4).*Kiapla*: The trap method is a significant fishing technique that can be employed either individually in smaller streams or collectively by a group in larger rivers. This method stands out for its efficiency, as once the trap is deployed, it can remain operational for extended

periods, allowing continuous harvesting of fish. The autumn and winter seasons are considered optimal for executing this fishing method. The construction of the *Kiapla* trap involves setting up a barricade across the river using wooden or bamboo posts. Bamboo poles are horizontally placed across the river and securely fastened to these posts. To hinder the downstream movement of fish, branches and stalks of grain are affixed to the barricade. Within the spaces delineated by the posts, baskets are positioned at the outflow of the river. These traps are constructed so that fish can swim in but not out (Jacobs, 2012).Fish entering the trap are captured within these baskets and subsequently collected. The trap remains in place for several weeks or months, barring any disruption by the water current, which could lead to its destruction. During routine inspections and maintenance visits, any debris or obstructions collected in the baskets are removed to ensure the trap's continued functionality.

3.4 (5).*Longaiu*: *Longaiu* is a specialised fishing technique practiced within the Khiamniungan territory, characterised by its association with lineage-specific rights and resources. The region is endowed with numerous small rivers and streams that not only serve as sources of drinking water but also as vital food sources, particularly fish. These water bodies often contain tributaries that feed into larger rivers such as Lein and Laang. The *longaiu* fishing method is primarily employed during the spawning season, typically in the months of October and November. This technique involves the construction of a well designed trap known as the *longaiu* basket. Participation in *longaiu* fishing is restricted to members of specific lineages that possess the requisite resources for this method, symbolising the wealth and status of the lineage.

The construction of the *longaiu* basket was narrated and demonstrated by Buniom (Personal communication: Thang, 5th September, 2022) with the weaving of a large, rounded structure using bamboo splints. The body of the basket features a loose plaiting pattern that facilitates water drainage while preventing the escape of fish. The lid of the basket is circular

and employs a different weaving technique. Its sides are hard-plaited to provide structural integrity, while the inner portion features spaced splints that create openings for fish entry when the lid is in place. The *longaiu* basket is placed along the tributary stream at 10 to 15 feet before confluence into the main river, with supporting posts erected around it. A two-meter-long semicircular wooden pipe is placed above the basket in the stream, allowing water to flow over it and guide fish towards the trap. Small openings are incorporated along the stream's sides to facilitate fish movement.

During the spawning season, after depositing their eggs, female fish return to their original habitats. As they navigate downstream, they are directed by the current through the wooden pipe and into the *longaiu* basket. Lineage members take turns monitoring the trap daily, sometimes even spending nights by the riverside in makeshift huts to oversee the fishing activity. The catch is collected periodically, with the fish transported back to the village early in the morning for distribution among community members (Personal communication: Lungoi, Thang, 5th Sep 2022).

3.4 (6).Distribution of the *Longaiu* fish and its significance: Within the *longaiu* fishing group, which comprise of the families from a common descent, an individual is designated as the leader or custodian responsible for overseeing the fishing activity. All the day’s catch are subsequently brought to a predetermined house selected by the members. Upon returning with the catch, a portion of the fish is wrapped in banana leaves and secured with bamboo splints. This wrapped fish is traditionally offered to the first person encountered on the return journey. The remaining catch is distributed equitably among the lineage members and occasionally extended to outsiders or strangers. The distribution process prioritises equal allocation among lineage households. A residual portion of the catch is retained in the leader's house as a form of compensation for their role. In instances where the catch exceeds the immediate needs of the lineage, surplus fish is allocated to members of the morung (those

members who belong within the same khel of the morung) and to families of daughters who have married into other moiety groups. However, the quantity of fish distributed to these secondary groups is typically less than that distributed among lineage members. This system of distribution underscores the commitment to fairness and reciprocity, with a portion reserved for the household as compensation for their role. Surplus fish is allocated to members of the morung and families of daughters married into other moiety groups, reflecting the broader social networks and alliances (Personal Communication: Tsumang, Noklak, 9th September, 2022).

3.4 (7).Customs, Beliefs and Regulations in Fishing: Ritualistic practices and adherence to specific rules were integral components of the various fishing activities. Among these customs, particular regulations governed the transportation of the fish that has been caught. The individual responsible for carrying the basket of fish was prohibited from exchanging it with another person while en route from the river to the owner's house. Regardless of the weight or difficulty involved, the same individual who retrieved the fish was required to transport the basket to its final destination at the owner's residence. This practice suggests a profound respect for the sanctity and integrity of one's catch. By requiring that the same person who caught the fish also delivers it to its final destination, the community ensures that the fish remains under the control of its rightful owner throughout the process. This rule likely stems from the belief that maintaining continuous ownership of the fish preserves its value and sanctity, reinforcing the idea that the fish, once caught, is to be handled and respected by the original owner until it reaches its intended location.Upon the arrival of the catch, a portion of the fish was prepared and cooked, often accompanied by millet. During the communal meal, certain verbal expressions were prohibited, such as stating "I am satisfied" or "I don't want any more." Additionally, it was culturally frowned upon for children to cry while eating(Personal Communication: Buniom, Noklak, 9th September, 2022).Failure to

adhere to these prescribed rules and etiquettes was believed to have negative implications for future fishing yields. It was commonly held that non-compliance with these traditions could result in diminished fish catches in subsequent years. These restrictions illustrate the community's belief in the power of words and behaviors to influence practical outcomes, such as the success of fishing endeavors. The idea that non-compliance with these rituals could result in reduced fish catches in future years highlights the connection between ritualistic adherence and perceived environmental or supernatural outcomes. It underscores the cultural significance of maintaining proper etiquette and adherence to communal norms as a means of ensuring continued prosperity and avoiding negative consequences. This belief system suggests that communal harmony, respect for traditions, and the careful observance of rituals are integral to the well-being and success of the community, linking social behavior directly to the practical aspects of fishing and resource management.

The taboos and *genna* related to fishing among the Nagas, similar to that of the Khiamniungan practices are found. As observed by Hutton (1968), among the Semas, if a birth occurs within a household, whether of a human or a domestic animal, on the morning of a fishing event involving the use of poison, the affected family is prohibited from participating. The bundle of poison prepared by the individual is removed from the collective pile and discarded, as it is forbidden to be brought to the river. Additionally, when a man engages in fishing with a rod and line, he refrains from speaking to anyone throughout the day until his angling is complete, as it is believed that speaking might alert the fish, a precautionary measure deemed prudent when near the riverbank.

3.5. Honey Bee Harvest practices

The traditional bee harvest practices of the Khiamniungans offer a glimpse into the socio-economic dynamics of the indigenous community. Honey is recognised as a valuable

natural resource, both for its medicinal properties and nutritional content. Various methods exist for harvesting honey and managing bee colonies. Historically, beekeeping focused primarily on stingless bees. However, other bee species were also harvested from diverse habitats, including tree canopies, ground nests, and tree cavities. Among the bee species harvested is the Himalayan Giant Honey Bee, locally known as *Jinlei.* These bees are predominantly found in high-altitude cliffs… (Personal communication: Buhiu, Thang, 21st January, 2020).

The harvesting of the *Jinlei* typically occurs in January. Ownership and harvesting rights of these hives traditionally belong to the landowners overseeing the cliffs where these bee colonies are situated. Historically and contemporarily, the harvest of this honey is regarded as communal property, requiring coordination among clan members for its collection. When a decision is made to harvest the honey, members of the clan, along with friends and those members within a particular khel are notified. Essential equipment for the harvest includes daos (traditional knives), mugs, baskets, and vessels. Upon reaching the base of the cliff, a fire is ignited, and the resulting smoke is directed towards the hives to encourage the bees to vacate their nests. Hives within reach are retrieved using bamboo hooks. To minimise bee stings, honey is applied to exposed areas of the body. To facilitate access to hives located higher up on the cliff, ladders are constructed using ropes and vines sourced from the surrounding forest. These ladders are anchored securely both at the top of the cliff and at the base. In instances where cliffs are particularly steep or tall, a robust climbing structure is erected using bamboo and wood.

A clan member known for their patience and composure is chosen to perform a pre-harvest ritual. Prior to the arrival of other members at the bee hive location, this individual proceeds to conduct the ritual. Accompanied by a bamboo water container, the selected person positions the container beneath the cliff where the beehive is located. Additionally, a

segment of the hive is initially collected and rubbed against an egg. Subsequently, a prayer is offered to invoke blessings for the proliferation of bee hives and to ensure the safety of participants during the harvesting process.Upon harvesting, the honey, beehive, and larvae are collected and subsequently processed. The morung members convene to partake in a communal meal to commemorate the harvest. Participants contribute rice and rice beer from their respective households, which is then shared amongst the group (Personal communication: Thangsoi, Thang, 21st January, 2020).

The traditional bee harvesting practices of the Khiamniungans serve as a multifaceted socio-economic component of their community. The collective ownership and labour to cultural preservation and economic sustainability, these practices reflect the values, beliefs, and traditions that have shaped the Khiamniungan society for generations. The communal nature of honey harvesting fosters social organisation and promotes economic reciprocity within the community. Furthermore, the utilisation of locally sourced materials and traditional craftsmanship supports local artisans and contributes to the local economy.

3.6. Trade

Trade among the Khiamniungan tribes held profound importance beyond mere economic transactions. It functioned as a critical socio-cultural bridge, fostering interaction and mutual dependence among various villages and tribes, which otherwise might have remained isolated due to the prevalent practices of village and tribal warfare. The market at Thang village, serving as a neutral ground, played a pivotal role in this regard by providing a safe venue for exchange. This interaction was not only essential for the distribution of goods and resources, which were unevenly available across the different regions, but it also facilitated the dissemination of cultural practices, technologies, and ideas. Furthermore, trade helped in establishing social networks that transcended individual villages, thus contributing

to a broader sense of identity and community among the Khiamniungan and neighboring tribes.

Moreover, trade served as an important mechanism for the accumulation and display of wealth and status within the Khiamniungan society. Items acquired through trade, such as rare commodities and exotic goods, were often used in ceremonial contexts and as indicators of social prestige. This economic interdependence and the circulation of goods also had a stabilising effect on the region, as it necessitated periods of peace and cooperation among otherwise hostile groups. Therefore, trade was not merely an economic activity but a vital institution that supported the social fabric, cultural cohesion, and political stability of the Khiamniungan and their neighboring tribes (Personal communication: Suthem, Thang, 21st January, 2019).

Before the political re-organisation of states and boundaries, the Khiamniungan areas remained as one with no interference from outside influence. The Khiamniungans carried and practiced economic trade and relations between the different villages of the community. It was not very common owing to the fear and prevalence of war and slavery. Also being agriculturists, they were engaged in their field throughout the year. The ideal time for carrying out trade was during winter when agricultural works became less.

In examining the trade practices of the Khiamniungan community, it is evident that their economic activities were both extensive and culturally significant. Oral accounts describe a well-established system of trade, particularly prominent during the month of November. This period was marked by significant rituals, including the collection and respectful placement of the skull remains of the deceased, and was a time when hostilities between villages were ceased. This cessation of conflict, coupled with a break from agricultural labor, made November an ideal time for trading activities. The trade gatherings at

Thang and Wolam villages, where various goods were bartered, were key events in the community's economic life (Personal communication: Buhiu, Thang, 21st January,. 2019).

The Khiamniungan trade practices extended beyond their own community, engaging with other Naga tribes as well. Jacobs (1990) notes that the Khiamniungans were renowned for their expertise in producing iron tools, a highly valued commodity within the region. Moreover, Jacobs observed that the Kalyo-Kengyu tribe, situated to the east, were producers of distinctive red-and-gold cane hats, which were traded widely among the Aos, Konyaks, Phoms, Changs, and other Naga tribes. Similarly, Hutton (1968) recorded that the red and yellow cane leggings worn by the Semas were sourced from the Kalyo-Kengyu tribe. The Changs of Chingmei and neighboring villages, as well as the Konyaks of the Tobu area, participated in the Khiamniungan trade market, particularly in November. Through these interactions, items such as daos, earthen pots, and elaborately decorated dao handles, among others, were exchanged, facilitating a flow of goods across tribal boundaries (Personal communication: Thengeu, Thang, 21st January,. 2019).

Further supporting this narrative, Jacobs (1990) also highlights the Khiamniungans' role as distributors of weapons, which they acquired through their connections with Burmese relatives. Additionally, they were involved in the large-scale cultivation of cotton, which enabled them to produce and trade the popular *Nechet* cloth, adorned with cowrie shells. This cloth was distributed through networks facilitated by friendly relations with other Naga tribes, such as the Sangtam and Ao, extending as far as Assam.

In synthesising these sources, it becomes clear that the items described by Jacobs (1990) as traded by the Khiamniungans were likely the result of the intricate and well-organised trade system described in local accounts. The Khiamniungans' ability to engage in wide-reaching trade, both within their community and with other tribes, underscores their

significant role in the regional economy and highlights the interconnectedness of their cultural and economic practices. This analysis demonstrates how local practices and external trade relations were mutually reinforcing, contributing to the broader economic landscape of the Naga tribes.

3.6 (1).Commodities and Items of Exchange

The Khiamniungan trade system primarily operated on a barter basis, with no standardised pricing for commodities. Exchanges were conducted based on the mutual convenience of the trading parties, reflecting the flexibility and adaptability of their economic practices. Among the Khiamniungans, salt was a particularly scarce commodity, sourced from neighboring regions such as Hempu and Chiu (present-day Myanmar), where it was transported wrapped in plantain leaves (Jamir, 2010). Other traded items included women's bracelets, long hair, tattooing tools, dried frogs, stones, and hornbill feathers. In return, the Khiamniungans traded locally produced items such as cotton, poultry, and poison extracted from trees for use in arrows. For instance, villagers from Peshu traded daos in exchange for shields.

Significant commodities in the Khiamniungan trade repertoire included beans, soybeans, sesame, chili, raw cotton, dyed goat hair, headgear, necklaces, hornbill feathers, conch shells, spears, daos, armlets, agricultural implements like spades, beads, aprons, baskets, handloom clothes, earthen pots, scabbards with shells, shawls, and various types of baskets. Despite the sporadic nature of trade, often constrained by the threat of inter-village conflicts, the Khiamniungan community maintained active trade relations at specific times. Certain villages, such as Wolam, served as critical trade passages for traders coming from the east, while Thang village emerged as a key trade center where people from different villages convened to exchange goods (Personal communication: L. Chillio, Peshu, 15th February,

2019). Trade among the Khiamniungan villages was characterized by its sporadic nature rather than regular occurrences. Despite the prevailing concerns of inter-village conflict, the community managed to conduct trade during specifically designated times. Certain villages played crucial roles in facilitating communication and serving as trade hubs. Wolam village, for example, functioned as a key passage for traders originating from the east. Similarly, Thang village emerged as a significant center for trade, where individuals from various villages gathered to exchange goods.

The establishment of civil administration introduced modern market structures and the Indian currency, which streamlined commodity transactions and facilitated broader economic interactions. In contemporary times, the International Trade Centre at Dan has emerged as the new epicenter of trade, revitalising economic activity in the region. This center operates annually, with traders from Myanmar bringing their products for sale and Indian goods being transported from Noklak. The historical barter centers of Thang and Wolam have since been rendered obsolete by these developments. The evolution of trade practices among the Khiamniungan reflects a significant transformation from traditional barter systems to contemporary trade mechanisms.

Chapter 4

Material Culture and Belief System

Among the Nagas, every man possesses the potential to be an artist. Largely self-reliant, men traditionally constructed their own homes and employed carving and basketry techniques to create functional household items such as storage and carrying baskets, mats, beds, stools, vats, pounding tables, and wooden dishes. A distinguishing feature of Naga craftsmanship is the reliance on simple tools and locally sourced materials, reflecting the artisans' close relationship with their natural environment. Materials commonly used include wood, bamboo, cane, stones, clay, iron, bones, dust, cotton, nettle and bark fibers, as well as natural dyes and feathers to produce distinctive artifacts (Odyuo, 2008).

The traditions of the Khiamniungan community vividly illustrate the profound interconnectedness between their cultural practices and the natural environment. Through their processes of textile production, basketry, pottery, and log drum crafting, the Khiamniungans exhibit a knowledge of local flora and fauna that sustains and enriches their material culture. Their reliance on specific plants such as cotton, stinging nettle, and Orange Wild Rhea, for textiles, and bamboo for basketry, reflects a sophisticated understanding of seasonal cycles and ecological characteristics unique to their region. The cultural practices are embedded within a system of meanings that link their well-being directly to the health of their natural surroundings. Traditional attire production and the craftsmanship hold significant importance in representing the cultural identity of a community. Incorporating the ideas of Virgina Wolf (1928/1956) in Akdemir 1018:1388) who views cloths not just as a piece of fabric of bodily covering but carries greater meaning and gives identity to the wearer, the study focus on the textile production and the cultural development associated with it.

Resource management strategies, labor divisions, and rituals emphasize a balanced interaction between cultural traditions and environmental stewardship. As Berkes (1999) explains, “traditional ecological knowledge represents a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment"(p. 8). This integration of cultural practices with ecological knowledge not only highlights the resilience of the Khiamniungan people but also display their ability to adapt to environmental constraints and opportunities. The persistence of these traditions, even in the face of changing circumstances, reflects a harmonious coexistence that ensures the sustainability of their way of life. The literary information about the Khiamnuingan Nagas are very scanty, therefore, the data relied mostly on the information gathered during the field work.

4.1. Traditional Textile

Threads made from cotton were the most commonly used. Cotton was sufficiently planted and produced by every family for the production of different clothing materials. Plantation of the cotton took place in one’s own field occupying a portion in the corner or near the field boundary. Women were the basic occupants in this work. The whole process of sowing, weeding, harvesting and spinning was undertaken by the women. Stirn (2008) further substantiates that among the Nagas, the comprehensive fabric-making processes, including the picking of cotton or other fibers, ginning, spinning, dyeing, and weaving using the Indonesian back strap loom, are exclusively undertaken by women. This process is conducted communally, often accompanied by song and prayer. This alignment with Stirn’s observations underscores the integral role of women in the textile production practices of the Khiamniungan community. The Khiamniungan traditional attire consists of varieties of

colours such as white, black, red, blue, grey, indigo, and yellow in some textile crafts. The dyeing of cotton is done with the help of locally available plants called *Emon, Limching* and *Voi.* The colouring plants are boiled according to the need of the colour and cotton put into it. Besides cotton, barks of different plants were also used for textile (Personal Communication: Themsai, Noklak, 5th January, 2022).

A comprehensive analysis was conducted in Choklangan village, a village famous for its stinging nettle plant and orange wild rhea products to get detailed information about the traditional process of fibre production/extraction and weaving bags, shawl, sash, etc.Many significant intangible values are linked to the traditional fibre crafts, which have evolved into the community's cultural heritage and identity. This has been the subject of extensive research.

Fibre Production and Crafts of Choklangan Village:

Choklangan is a Khiamniungan village located 47 kilometers east of Noklak town. The village is well-known for its abundant bamboo varieties, and the men are particularly skilled in basketry and other bamboo crafts. The forests surrounding Choklangan, particularly in the areas of Ahlam Ki and Indoh, which are situated approximately 7 kilometers from the village, have abundant stinging nettle plants. To reach these sites, harvesters must undertake a strenuous journey, walking 2-3 hours through challenging terrain. Located at the base of Khelia Keng (Mt. Khelia), the forests of Choklangan are home to a diverse array of flora and fauna. Notably, the plants *hiam* (stinging nettle, *Urticadioica*) and *ehthso* (orange wild rhea, *Debregeasia longifolia*) thrive in this region.

The women of Choklangan village, renowned for their expertise in fibre craftsmanship, have garnered significant recognition among the Khiamniungan community. Their products witnessed a marked increase in demand, drawing attention from various

Khiamniungan regions. This growing interest led to invitations for these artisans to participate in and showcase their work at various cultural events and programs. The substantial revenue generated from their sales underscored the economic potential of their craft, inspiring the artisans to consider collaboration as a means of enhancing their collective impact and securing a more stable livelihood. This realization culminated in the formation of the group *Ehlon-Niu*(Plate 8) on March 4th, 2010, in Choklangan. *Ehlon-Niu,* comprising 25 members, is dedicated to the traditional weaving of fibres derived from the Orange Wild Rhea and Stinging Nettle plants. The name *Ehlon-Niu* is rooted in the Khiamniungan language, combining the words *Eh* (fibre), *Lon* (thread), and *Niu* (woman), thus signifying a group of women who specialize in transforming fibres into a variety of crafted products (Plate 8).

Harvesting of the bark: Harvesting of orange wild rhea and stinging nettle basically occurs during the months of September, October, and November, just before the onset of winter. During this period, the plants' skins remain soft and pliable, allowing for easier peeling. However, with the arrival of cold weather and snowfall, the plants and their bark become rigid, prone to breaking at the nodes, and difficult to peel during harvesting.

As noted by Longtso (Personal Communication: Choklangan 13th February, 2022,), the fiber harvesting process begins with selecting a specific day and preparing the essential materials. Bamboo scrapes, utilized to remove the outer skin of the plants, are sourced either from individual households or from the village morung. While the men, often husbands, work on crafting the bamboo tools, the women gather these scrapes in preparation for the harvest. Extracting the barks is a labor-intensive task that requires significant effort and dedication. The next stage involves traveling to the forest, often covering a distance of 7 kilometers or more. If the harvesting site is relatively close, women usually venture in pairs or small groups

of two to three. However, for further distant locations, it is common for men to accompany the women, providing support during the demanding journey.

The extraction process for both stinging nettle and orange wild rhea plants involves a series of carefully coordinated steps that require specific tools and techniques. As Heme (2023), explains, "The process of harvesting the plant involves cutting it at the stem's base using a dao. Employing bamboo scrapes, the task of removing leaves and spikes ensues, with a stripping motion from the stem's bottom to top" (p. 13). This method begins with cutting the stinging nettle plant at its base using a dao, a traditional tool designed for such tasks. Following this, bamboo scrapes are used to remove the leaves and spikes from the stem, employing a stripping motion from the bottom of the stem upwards. The stripping process is essential for ensuring the stem is clean and unobstructed, facilitating the subsequent stages of fiber extraction.

Further, as conveyed by Lunen (personal communication, 13th February, 2022, Choklangan), after the plant is thoroughly cleaned, a longitudinal incision is made along the center of the stem. This incision is crucial for separating the bark from the stem, which serves as the primary source of fiber. The bark is then carefully peeled away from the stem in both directions, ensuring complete detachment without damage. Once separated, the bark is draped around the harvester's neck for convenient transportation as more material is gathered. After collecting a sufficient quantity, typically around 25 to 30 barks, they are systematically rolled and stored in a specially designated basket. The volume of fiber harvested in a day is largely influenced by the availability of suitable plants and the skill and experience of the harvester. A highly skilled individual with years of experience can usually gather a full basket of fiber in a single day, whereas an average harvester might only collect half a basket or slightly more. This variation highlights the importance of both ecological factors, such as plant

abundance, and human factors, such as expertise and efficiency, in determining the overall yield of the fiber harvesting process.

Harvesting stinging nettle plant comes with a lot of challenges. The peeling process embarks a tough task as the stings from the spikes of the stems and leaves cause much discomfort. Furthermore, the presence of insects and parasites like leeches, add more difficulties to the physical challenges faced by the harvesters.

The process of extracting fibre from orange wild rhea differs in several respects from that of stinging nettle plant. Orange wild rhea trees are commonly found near rivers or in fields that were cultivated in the past and have since been left to lie fallow. These trees are characterised by multiple branches, each of which provides a potential source of bark for fibre extraction. To harvest the bark, the branches are either cut or pulled down using a hook or dao. The extraction process from this point follows the same general steps as that of the stinging nettle plant, with the bark being carefully peeled away from the branches and stored for later use.

However, there are notable differences in the distribution and accessibility of these plants. While stinging nettle plant tends to grow in concentrated areas, making it easier to gather a large quantity of plants in a relatively short period of time, *ehthso* plants are more wide spread and sparse. This dispersed distribution makes the harvesting more challenging, letting the harvesters to consume more time and energy collecting a comparable amount of fiber. Despite these challenges, the distinct properties of orange wild rhea fibre, combined with its traditional significance, make it a valuable resource, justifying the additional effort required for its harvest.

Treatment of the collected bark: The treatment of the bark begins immediately upon bringing it home, with the initial step being the drying process. The bark is either dried in the

shade or under direct sunlight, depending on the environmental conditions. It is typically hung on a horizontal bamboo or tree pole, and any debris, such as leaves or twigs, is carefully removed from the fibrous strands. The duration of the drying process varies according to the texture of the bark, ranging from several days to weeks. Once adequately dried, the bark strands (Plate 9) are carefully collected and stored to prevent breakage (Personal Communication: Lemloi, Choklangan, 13th February, 2022).

According to Poloi (personal communication, Choklangan, February 13, 2022), the process of preparing fiber for further processing begins with retrieving the necessary strands from storage and placing them into a tray (Plate 10). A specific type of wet clayey soil, sourced from a nearby village, is then applied to cover the bark strands, which are left overnight to soften. As the soil gradually loses moisture, it is replaced with fresh, moist soil to ensure the maintenance of the desired softness. Once the bark has achieved adequate softness, it is divided into a desired strand of cells based on the weaver's preferences for either thin or thick material. Each cell is then twisted at the edges to form a continuous length of fiber, which is subsequently rolled into a ball (Plate 11).

This rolled thread is then wound onto a stone drop spindle, after which it is diagonally wrapped onto an H-shaped winder (Plate 12), forming what is known as a hank (*Ehkhu).* The hank is then removed from the winder and boiled in water for 2 to 3 hours, depending on the texture of the fibre. Ash is added to the boiling water to facilitate the removal of the husk or outer skin. The cooking process is closely monitored to ensure that the husk can be easily removed. If the water level decreases, additional water is fetched and added as necessary. Once the cooking is complete, the fibre is taken to a river for washing. The washing must be done while the strands are still warm, using a wooden tool called *Eh-opkin* to beat the fibre gently (Heme, 2023).

After washing, the fibre is soaked again, this time in water mixed with pounded maize, for approximately 15 to 20 minutes. This step further softens and smoothens the fibre. The hank is then left to dry, a process that can take several hours or days, depending on the moisture content and the ambient conditions. Once dried, the fibre is gently rubbed and prepared for the next stage of processing. When the weaver is ready to begin weaving, the hank of fibre is placed on a skeiner or over the weaver's knees or legs, and rolled into a fibre ball. This ball is then used directly for warp threads, while the weft threads are spun onto a warp beam. The materials woven from these fibres include traditional items such as the eh-lei (loincloth), phachiam (sash), nethso (skirt), neylon (simple shawl), neymok (blanket), as well as bags (Plate 13), mufflers, and waistcoats. Each of these products reflects the intricate and labor-intensive process that begins with the careful treatment of the bark, culminating in the creation of culturally significant woven items (Personal Communication: Koniu, Choklangan, 13th February, 2022).

Folk song related to Threading Fibre:

Development of folk songs in relation to threading fibre could be seen as a significant cultural tradition. Women did the threading in their own homes at the convenience of one's time. Sometimes they gathered at a particular place or at someone's house and thread the fibre at night and sing a folk song as they work. It is sung especially at night when they work in group to avoid sleepiness and to relieve the boredom of a tedious job. This improved the efficiency of the work. The song signifies and tells about the fibres and the hard work employed in working on it. The lyrics of the song provided by Longtso (Personal communication: Choklangan, 13th February, 2022), is produced below-

"*Ahwemkongkongthsonimosai,*

Paosisaolomthsosai-an ie

Ehthso eh ta nungtajonshinou

Hiam eh ta nungtajonshinou

Eh lemlekunoinimosai

Eh lemleohnimosai."

The English translation of the lyrics:

"Midnight squirrel, I haven't slept yet,

All other insects have gone to sleep,

This is called Orange Rhea fibre

This is called Stinging Nettle fibre

I'm threading still awake

I'm threading Oh I haven't slept yet."

The fibre craftsmanship of the Khiamniungan Naga serves as a vital embodiment of the community's cultural heritage and identity. These works are a statement to the distinct artistic expressions and skilled craftsmanship inherent to the people of the region. Traditionally crafted fibre works are meticulously designed and handmade, reflecting the exceptional artistic abilities of the artisans. Utilizing locally sourced and sustainable materials, these techniques have been preserved and passed down through generations. The resulting fibre creations transcend their utilitarian purpose, emerging as valuable artistic artifacts that contribute significantly to the cultural heritage of the Khiamniungan community. The production of these traditional fibres requires specialized knowledge and skills that have been meticulously transmitted from one generation to the next. The preservation of these

practices is essential for safeguarding this invaluable traditional knowledge and expertise, ensuring they are not lost and can be passed on to future generations.

While agriculture remains the primary economic activity in Choklangan village, the sale of finished products derived from traditional fibre works constitutes an important source of income for local artisans (Personal Communicatio: Sudem, Choklangan, 12th February, 2022). Thus, the preservation of these traditional fibre practices is not only critical for maintaining cultural heritage but also for promoting sustainable practices, preserving traditional knowledge, and empowering local communities. The significance of these fibre works extends far beyond their functional use in clothing and textiles; they embody deep cultural, artistic, and economic importance that enriches the lives of the Khiamniungan people.

4.2. Basketry and Pottery

4.2(1).Basketry: As observed by Stirn (2008), Nagas maintain a significant connection to various species of bamboo, which holds an essential place in their material culture. The craft of working with bamboo and cane is traditionally a male domain, with most Naga men skilled in weaving split bamboo mats for structural purposes, such as walls and floors, as well as for drying paddy. Bamboo is also a key material in basketry. The production process involves several stages, including the collection of raw materials from the forest, the preparation of splints, the weaving of the items, and the final finishing. Bamboo is further utilized in the creation of various household items such as plates, saucers, spoons, and combs, as well as in the production of agricultural and fishing tools.

The utilization of various bamboo species is widespread among the local populace, serving diverse purposes from kitchen baskets to structural components in construction

projects such as housing and granaries. Additionally, cane finds extensive use in basketry across the region. Bamboo collection is done during winter months to mitigate the risk of termite infestation in both raw materials and finished products. Notably, the Khiamniungan people are renowned for their intricate craftsmanship in bamboo and cane works (Plate 14 to Plate 17). Jacobs (1990) notes that the Kalyo-Kengyus in the eastern region specialize in producing rudimentary conical red-and-gold cane hats, which are traded with several Naga tribes including the Aos, Konyaks, Phoms, and Changs (Plate 14-17). The Khiamniungan basketry works is delicate and intricate as Odyuo(2008) describes,

> Non-utilitarian plaited objects associated with ceremonial use have a recognised social significance, and the baskets plaited by the Khiamniungan - regarded as the best basket makers among the Nagas-are much more intricate than others, so they are highly valued by everybody and traded all over Nagaland. (p. 160)

4.2(2). Pottery: Manufacturing and use of pottery has been a traditional practice of the Khiamniungans for a long period of time. The earthen pots were used for all the household cooking utensils. The different kinds of pots were sourced from Wui village and Tobu areas of the Konyaks. Among the Khiamniungans, Wui village(Plate 18) practiced the manufacture of earthen pots (Plate 19). In Wui, almost every family had a potter and made pots for personal household use as needed ((Personal communication:Lemloi, Wui, 22nd March, 2020) Plate 20).

The crafting of earthen pot requires precise artistry, with March being the optimal month due to the soil's ideal tightness and firmness. Unseasonal production may result in increased fragility of the pottery. Three distinct types of soil utilized for pottery are *Mange-lala*, whitish, *Asheu-lala*, reddish (Plate 21), and *Yamong-lala* , pale grey (Plate 22), as mentioned in Lam's work (Lam, 2021). Following clay extraction, manufacturing

commences with the pounding of various dried clays mixed in a wooden trough known as *O-cha*. Subsequently, the clay is filtered through a bamboo sieve to extract fine powders. *Lano*, a sticky liquid obtained from the bark of the Lano-shin tree, is applied during the pounding process. The clay is then rolled into a lump on a flat wooden surface, with one end tapered and flattened. A hole is created at the center using the potter's index finger, gradually enlarged by rotating. As explained by Changkiri (2024), the potter shapes the clay into a desired globular form on a bamboo turntable called *Phao-chu* (Plate 23), smoothing and leveling the surface with both hands. After forming the rim and neck, the clay is allowed to harden and dry for two to three days. Once dried, the potter utilizes a wooden paddle wrapped with cord, known as Thaliap, to shape and refine the outer surface, whiles a stone anvil, *Long-dai* supports the interior. The final stage involves warming and firing the pot, placing it horizontally on ash with charcoal inside and surrounded by dried wood. After proper firing and cooling, the pot is ready for use (Lam, 2021).

4.3. Logdrum

One of the most striking specimens of Naga handiwork is the logdrum (Mills, 2003), also referred as xylophones, which can send the messages of any intent for several miles (Elwin, 1997). Among the Khiamniungans, the creation of logdrums(Plate 24) has been an age-old tradition. In some village, each morung owned a logdrum while in some village it was acceptable to have a logdrum only in some morungs (Plate 25). The Khiamniungan logdrum is popularly called *Phian*. The process of making a new one follows a set of rules and rituals. Traditionally, the crafting of log drums takes place during the months of January and February, a period when villagers find rest from their agricultural works. This meticulous process, however, is put on hold during the summer season.

As recounted by Buhiu (Personal Communication: Noklak, 21st January, 2019), diverse types of log drums existed within the Khiamniungan culture. Before the selection of a suitable tree, a casting of lots took place, determining which tree would be deemed favorable for the creation of a log drum. If the log drum was intended for the entire village's use, to be kept in the *Taiudong*, two individuals were appointed as *Paipao* or *Yampao*, signifying the owners of the tree. These individuals were selected based on their forest jurisdiction, the area under which the chosen tree falls.

Clad in traditional attire, the tree owners accompanied the community to the jungle. When the process of cutting the tree was about to commence they stood on the sides of the chosen tree. The father of the *Yampao* would initiate the proceedings with a solemn prayer. The prayer narrated by Buhiu (Personal Communication: Noklak, 21st January, 2019) resonated as follows:

"Painyiu ju nyuk sang-ao ta, ju em sang ao ta, menthso kei hoi luko haiumi san tsad-ao lumeiku, melothso keikoi oh haiumi ko he-e-ao, haingan ko lang-e ao lumeiku, haiumi ko haiungan ko chite ao lumeiko, ashio won ko, u-ak won ku achetsan, melothso keihoi oh alolaiu kiu, menthso keihoi uh alolaiu kiu, pain nyi haiumi khaiu taiu-ao, haiungan khaiu taiu-ao the-e."

The translation of the prayer goes, *"*Tree of trees, I take you to rule over my village and fields. Bless the village, where women flourish with grace to host the guests from east and west. May men grow robust and sturdy, ready to face the battles, triumphing in wrestling against foes, with a diplomatic grace to talk with the people from both east and west. May you prolong the lives of men and women, may people be healthy, wise and strong. Oh, Tree of Trees, under you, shall we keep the heads of the east and the west*."* (Translated by the author).

After this prayer, the initial cut is done by the *paipao.* The cutting of tree takes a day or two. During the duration of cutting, it is carefully observed what kind of birds will come and sit on the tree. If the Black Bulbul comes and sits, it is considered as bad luck because it sounds like a grieving sound. If Malkoha come and sit, it was considered good luck. Once the tree has been cut down, removal of the branches and making it into required length commences. After the right length and size has been observed, the cutting of the inside portion starts. The process of readying the logdrum takes weeks or even a month. Those who are old and not strong enough to help in the cutting process, they go to other parts of the forest and gather robust vines. These vines were used for fastening of the logdrum once the cutting is finished and for dragging it to the village.

The cutting of the inside is done from both ends of the tree. After cutting from both ends, the hole became thinner and those working on the two hole-sides joining together work with more enthusiasm. It was believed that the person who penetrates to the other end of the hole will have a good catch of animals during hunting. After the removal of inner part of the tree is finished, the drum is arranged according to how the smoothening process and fastening of vines can be done. After the drum is ready, the men gathered around and beat it repeatedly for 3 times. Vines are fastened around covering the whole drum. Long vines are extended at the front to facilitate pulling, while those at the rear are utilized to regulate speed during descents. The owner of the tree leaves an egg on the trunk of the tree as a sacrifice (Personal Communication: Buhiu, Noklak, 24th January, 2019).

All the menfolk of the village participate in pulling of the logdrum wearing traditional attire. Young boys who were ineligible to wear loincloth were allowed to start wearing on this day to let them participate in the logdrum pulling. The children were provided a bamboo plaited hat (Plate 25) to be worn during the pulling of the logdrum. Women were restricted in taking part in the pulling work. Specific protocols are observed during the event;

> Along the lengthy journey home, the log drum is periodically left in place overnight. Participants leave their headgear with those overseeing the log drum rather than taking it home. If an accident were to occur, such as a fatal incident where the log drum rolls over or hit someone leading to death, the log drum is abandoned at the site of the accident. (Langshen et al., 2023, p. 40)

It was a belief that logdrum should be brought inside the village before sunset, if not, untoward incidents could happen or the logdrum will not last for long. On reaching the village, it is kept in a designated place and no work is done on the logdrum. The next day is observed as a day of rest for the people and the logdrum. Following the rest day, the ropes are removed from the logdrum. The owner of the tree brought water in a bamboo pole to be poured on the log. This is done with a belief to let the people live in wealth and richness under the watchfulness of the logdrum. Following this ritual, he prays over the logdrum with the following words:

"Akhemko khiam nou tsu-apku ki-e, pai nou tsukhemku ki-e, ni junyuk sang ao, ni jueiu sang ao, ni khemko khiam lihku shioko ki-e, thsam lihku jiuku ki-e." It is translated as; "Under your protection, abundance in water and firewood shall grace our days. I place you in charge of my village and fields. Under your rule, we shall thrive, as pristine as the waters, as impenetrable as the leaves" (Personal Communication: Buhiu, Noklak, 24th January, 2019).

The tree owner strikes the logdrum with a bamboo pole three times before inserting the bamboo into the log drum. The log drum is then subjected to a smoothing process to remove scratches and scrapes accumulated during dragging and transportation. The inner hollow part of the log drum is also cleaned and smoothened to a thinner proportion. Once all cleaning, trimming, and smoothing are complete, the log drum is ready for use. Before the completion of the whole works, the youths of the village searched for the best cock which has

the best saddle feathers. They observed the movement of the cock and in the evening spied in whose house it will sleep. The ritual process is brought to light from a narration given by Suthem (Personal Communication: Noklak, 3rd February, 2019). Then the owner will be asked for the cock to be sacrificed, which he never refused. The cock is killed and the blood is sprinkled on the logdum. Its head is put on a bamboo stick and erected on the front side of the logdrum. For this the youths collected either rice or any other material such as prepared vine or cane and gave it to the owner of the cock. Among the Aos, comparable sacrificial practices are noted. When the drum is singed, a cock is sacrificed as an appeasement, suggesting that the drum holds an almost idolatrous significance within the community. Offerings are also made during periods of drought, and in earlier times, human heads were customarily placed on the drum as part of the ritual (Mills, 2003).After all the process was completed the people sang around the logdrum. The song goes:

> *"Painyiu koikoi jia painyiu, Painyiu munou jia painyiu, Juphian khemko haiumi lengya aya, Juphian khemko haiungan lengya aya, Painyiu along mei, Painyiu along ya, Melo leng nou ohsa hou lunou, Melo leng nou shiap-oh koi lunou.* (Langshen et. al., 2023. p. 47)

Translation: "A tree that funal mushrooms grow, a tree that mushrooms grow, under my logdrum may the heads of the east come, under my logdrum may the heads of the west come, a beautiful tree, a marvelous tree, men's attire are made of boar's teeth, men's attire are made of bear's fur."

Over time, the old logdrum experiences significant wear and tear due to exposure to environmental elements and the stresses of regular use. Prolonged exposure to weather conditions such as rain, sun, and humidity causes the wood to deteriorate, resulting in cracks, warping, or splitting. A compromised drum can lead to diminished sound quality, making it

less effective in fulfilling its intended purpose. In such cases, the drum may no longer produce clear, resonant tones, which are essential for maintaining the cultural and communicative functions it serves. Replacing the old drum with a new one ensures that the village has access to a drum in optimal condition. A new log drum, crafted from fresh, well-maintained wood, provides superior sound quality and reliability. This replacement not only enhances the drum's acoustic performance but also upholds the integrity of traditional practices and ceremonies (Personal Communication: Buhiu, Noklak, 24th January, 2019).

The log drum, situated at the center of the village and traditionally used to display severed enemy heads, is referred to as the *Taiudong Phian*. When a new log drum is crafted and introduced, a comparative assessment is made to determine its size relative to the existing drum. Upon completing this evaluation, the old drum is ceremoniously retired with a ritualistic prayer, "As you depart, may the new drum uphold the village's well-being." The old drum may be either preserved in its entirety or dismantled. The dismantled fragments are then repurposed in the construction of the village gate, with each khel receiving a portion of the old drum's material, thus symbolically integrating its legacy into the village's ongoing infrastructure. This practice not only honors the old drum's historical and cultural significance but also ensures its continued presence in a meaningful and practical form.

4.3(1).Types of Logdrum

(i)*Taiudong Phian:*The logdrum which was kept in the *Taiudong* was the most important one and the most important figure of the village.

(ii) *Sonjet Phian*: Also known as *Sonjet Pai*, this was another important logdrum. The selection of the tree and the ceremonies followed were as the same as the *Taiudong Phian*. The main purpose of the logdrum was the protection of the particular clan or khel. When warriors came back from war, they first go to the *Taiudong*. After the rituals at *Taiudong*, the

warriors proceeded to the residence of the priest, referred to as the *Meya*, where they experience a ritualistic purification ceremony. This involved the ceremonial washing of their hands with water sourced from the Meya's household. Participation in this purification rite was deemed essential, as it was believed that failure to do so could result in severe consequences, such as the onset of leprosy or other afflictions. Upon completion of the ritual, the warriors dispersed to their respective homes. This drum was used just like the *Taiudong Phian* except heads were not kept there. For the *Sonjet phian,* the chicken ritual is held. They went back to their khel but did not directly go to their homes. They came to the morung, beat the *Sonjet Phian* and drank rice-beer brought by their wives. After this only they went home.

(iii) *Eh-hoh Phian*: The log drum, known as *Eh-hoh Phian,* is placed within the respective khels or morungs and is acquired by the members of these groups. Unlike other log drums, the *Ehho Phian* does not involve any accompanying rituals upon its acquisition. When the number of youths within a particular clan or khel increases, they may decide to obtain a log drum. In some instances, during their duties of overseeing the mithuns, the youths might come across a large tree with a natural hollow, which they then select for crafting a log drum. These drums, designated for clan or khel use, are referred to as *Eh-hoh Phian*. This is kept within the morung and is considered an ordinary log drum, intended for regular, non-ceremonial use. It is often beaten during the day as a signal to the villagers that the men are actively guarding the village. The shapes and size of the logdrum differed from village to village (Sardeshpande, 2017).

4.3(2). Use of Logdrum for Different Ocassions:

When enemies were defeated, it was customary for the victors to bring back the heads, hands, and legs of the fallen. These were placed inside the log drum, which was then struck as part of a ritualistic practice. Following this, the participants would return to their

respective khels, where they would sound their own morung drums. This ritual marked the end of the event, and the men then dispersed to their designated areas. The log drum also served a critical function in village defense, with guards sounding it at regular intervals, both day and night, to deter potential attacks and signal vigilance to any adversaries. In the event of an enemy attack, the guards would beat the drum to alert the villagers, facilitating both their escape and the organisation of a defensive response. Additionally, the log drum was employed as a warning system during village fires, signalling the community to take action. Beyond its practical uses in warfare and emergencies, the log drum also played a ceremonial role during village festivals, serving both as a means of announcement and as an integral part of the musical elements of the celebrations (Langshen et. al., 2023).

The occurrence of lunar and solar eclipses was met with a sense of awe and fear. Like any other earliest society, the Khaimniungan Nagas were simple minded and the phenomenon which they could not understand or explain were attributed to the supernatural. The mysterious celestial events led to a belief that either a tiger or a fox was responsible for swallowing the moon or the sun. In response to these eclipses, the male members of the community promptly assembled in their own morungs and beat their logdrum. It was believed that by doing so, it will save the sun and the moon from the jaws of the tiger and the fox. As mentioned by Buhiu (Personal Communication: Noklak, 29th January, 2019) the distinctive rhythmic patterns that evolved during these communal experiences became uniquely identified as Ahlei-he Phian-Chih. The song follows the beating of the logdrum goes-*"Ju ahlein aleshi, ju ahjen aleshi, Ju ahjen lahne-an, Ju ahjen lahne-an, Khaoson chiuson aleshi*." This is translated as: "Set my sun free, set my moon free, don't consume my sun, don't consume my moon, set it free from the jaws of tiger and fox."

Sardeshpande (2017) provides a detailed description of the sound produced by the beating of the log drum:

> Every male member knows how to play important signals. It is a strange but beautifully timed percussion that produces most exquisite rhythm and a mixed feeling of fascination, awe and seriousness, with a pinch of apprehensive graveness, a beauty that seems to pound your chest. The rhythm is transcending and rapturous. The gusto and the muscles visibly rippling to the actions of pounding are intoxicatingly invigorating. Like a magnet the phen draws everyone to it and its "bung-tak-bung" reverberating in the valleys, striking the mountain ridges and piercing the jungle. (p.38)

4.4. Morung

Naga villages are organised into different khels (quarters or wards), with the number of divisions determined by the size and population of the settlement. This organisation is noted by Stirn(2008), "In some villages a khel is inhabited exclusively by members of a particular clan claiming descent from a common ancestor and naming their khel accordingly" (p. 58). At the center of the khel is the morung, a prominent structure that provides both architectural and institutional representation of the solidarity among clan members. The Khiamniungan morung is called *Kamnoi*, which serves as one of the most important infrastructures in the village (Plate 26). The morung exemplify a multifaceted role in the socio-cultural and material landscape of the village. Its presence and functions are intricately tied to the village's social structure. The morung not only served as a prominent architectural feature but also acted as a crucial site for social organisation, conflict resolution, and cultural continuity. In some Naga tribes, morungs functioned as dormitories and sleeping quarters for young unmarried men, as well as guardhouses for warriors (Jacobs, 2012). However, among the Khiamniungan community, a distinct dormitory was designated for unmarried boys, indicating a divergence from the practices observed in other Naga tribes.

The processes surrounding its construction, utilization, and maintenance highlight the communal cooperation and resource management that defined village life. Through its spatial design and ceremonial roles, the morung reinforced social hierarchies, mediated inter-group relations, and facilitated symbolic exchanges, thereby becoming a focal point of collective identity and cohesion. The gendered dynamics within and around the morung further underscore the cultural norms and practices that governed the community, with the prohibition of women's entry reflecting broader social structures. The significance of the morung extends beyond its physical structure, encompassing the broader socio-political and ritualistic functions that were essential to the functioning of the village.

There is a separate morung for each ward. The term *"Kamnoi"* is derived from two words *"Kam"* meaning 'ward' and *"noi"* meaning 'sit'. Thus it is an institution whereby each khel members sit together. It is a towering figure of the khel as well as the village. The number of morungs within a village varies based on its size, population, and the number of khels present. Some villages have as many as 15 to 16 morungs, while some village has 6 to 7 morungs.

The construction of the morung is initiated by its members when they collectively recognize the need for it. Following this decision, the elders of the morung hold discussions to determine the appropriate date and time for the construction to begin. Early in the morning, the elders of the khel proclaim that they will venture in search of the materials (Plate 27). All the heads of the family lead the role, and all able male members of the khel join in the work. They go to the jungle and work there, sometimes spending nights and days until the wood materials, such as lumbers and logs, are finished. Slate is used for the roofing material and is procured only in some specific places. Once the materials are ready, they start the construction of the new morung or tear down the old one to build a new one in the same

place. During the construction, men from other khels also join and assist. Once the discussion is held, the following day at the break of dawn, the esteemed elders formally declare their intent to embark on a search and collection for requisite materials. All the heads of the family assume a leadership role, and all physically capable male members of the khel actively participate in the work. The search and gathering of materials is completed as soon as possible. At times, they spend entire nights and days until the procurement of essential vine and wood materials, including lumbers and logs, is completed. Slates (Plate 28) are used for the roofing material and are selectively sourced from specific locations. Once the materials are collected, the construction phase commences, involving either the replacement of the existing morung or the demolition and subsequent reconstruction in the same place. Throughout this process, men from other khels also assist in the construction efforts (Personal Communication: Longsham, Nokhu, 21st February, 2020).

The front side of the morung always faces the east or the sunrise. This alignment is not merely symbolic but serves a practical and functional purpose. By facing east, the morung benefits from the early morning sunlight, which provides a source of warmth and light that enhances visibility during dawn. This orientation is particularly advantageous as the men of the khel gather at the morung in the morning before heading to their agricultural fields. The exposure to the sunrise facilitates a comfortable environment for conducting morning discussions and decision-making meetings. Additionally, this orientation aligns with the natural rhythms of the community's daily activities, reinforcing the integration of environmental considerations into their traditional practices. The practice reflects a broader ecological awareness and practical adaptation to the local climate, which is integral to the socio-cultural fabric of the Khiamniungan community.

Unlike conventional houses, the structural framework of the morung is built differently. The back side of the morung exhibits a narrowing and decreasing design in width and height. The frontal segment of the morung is either partly covered or left fully open. Flanking the inner walls are elongated, planed trees, designated for seating. The side and back structures are covered with bamboo or timber. In the center of the morung, a fireplace is prepared. The roof is covered in slates (Plate 29). In the center of the front side, a huge post is erected. This post contains several intricate engravings depicting both human figures and animals. Half of the post is cut, and in the center, a full circular section is left, serving as a central node. This node is placed at the height of a normal person's reach. Mugs and cups are placed on it while working on different tasks within the morung and during feasts (Personal Communication: Heme, Nokhu, 21st February, 2022).

The morung functioned as a vital institution, akin to a court, where disputes and conflicts within the same khel were addressed and resolved. The clan elders assumed the role of mediators in deliberations to bring about harmony among the contentious factions. Some morungs had a logdrum kept either inside or outside. Beyond its judicial role, the morung played a crucial part in symbolic transactions during peace treaty between the villages. Following negotiations and settlements, there was a ceremonial exchange of daos between the involved parties. These symbolic weapons were not taken inside the house, but were kept within the morung, Furthermore, during times of war, individuals captured by warriors, known as *Sou*, were designated as slaves. The morung served as their temporary dwelling until their captors claimed ownership and integrated them into the family to serve them. (Personal Communication: Buhiu, Noklak, 24th January, 2019).

Women were prohibited from entering the morung. Among the AoNagas, Mills (2003) notes a similar restriction, "It is both a guard house and a club house, and plays a most

important part in the social life of the village. It is, of course, forbidden for a woman to enter it" (p. 73-74).The imposition of a prohibition on female entry was a cultural norm grounded in customs and practical considerations. However, they were permitted to approach the front side of the morung to pass rice beer to their husbands. Simultaneously, the structure served as a communal space for leisure.

4.5. Youth Dormitory

In the past, young men in the village established and constructed separate dormitory for them, locally referred to as *Bou* or *Tsamsaibou*. These dormitories were distinct from the *morung*, which functioned as a gathering place for village elders. In contrast, the youth dormitories served primarily as spaces for socializing and sleeping, specifically for young men, with each village maintaining several such structures. According to Jacobs (1990) describes the presence of dormitories, being still in use during the 1980s. The dormitories served multiple purposes: they were centers for youth meetings, dissemination of community-related information, and advisory sessions for young people. In the dormitory, boys aged eight and above congregate each evening after supper to engage in discussions, singing, dancing, and listening to stories recounted by elder males. Sardeshpande (2017) notes the activities of the boys as, "They learn how to cut wood, carve it, make basket, wield a dao, play the log-drum and many other mainly arts and crafts" (p. 35). Additionally, the dormitories symbolized the strength of the khel or morung members. During ceremonial events, including singing and dancing, the presence of elders, youths, and children from various khels or villages was noted. The dormitory youths were tasked with responsibilities such as village defense and overall community welfare. In the event of fires or other calamities, the dormitory youths were the primary responders, using drums to alert the village. They also played a role in community activities, such as assisting in the capture of pigs during feasts and festivals.

Girls had a separate dormitory known as *Tsamsaitsam*, where they spend the night and receive instruction in songs, dance, and various domestic skills. Unlike the boys' dormitories, it was not a separate building but rather a space provided by an elderly family or a widow, who hosted the girls within the khel. They acquired skills in singing, dancing, playing of musical instruments, threading, weaving, and other traditional art forms (Ganguli, 1984). The functions of the girls' dormitory in the context of Naga culture, are elucidated by Stirn (2008);

> These girls' dormitories do not enjoy the same sacrosanct status as the morungs. They lack elaborate decoration, occupying secluded rather than prominent geographical sites known only to other village inhabitants. Educationally, they are where girls learn everything to do with household and agricultural affairs, as well as the arts of singing and dancing, while, publicly speaking, they function mainly as meeting places for young couples, married and unmarried (among the Nocte it is customary for newly-weds to stay in the Yampe until one or two children have been born). (p. 61)

Dormitories in the Khiamniungan practice functioned as pivotal institutions in which young boys and girls interacted with peers, developed their character and personality, and acquired skills in various arts and crafts. These settings provided comprehensive social and cultural education and facilitated the systematic initiation into tribal customs that emphasized cooperative living. Through their experiences in the dormitories, individuals learn to accommodate diverse opinions, adjust personal behaviors to fit group norms, and prioritise the collective over the individual. This process helped to address and mitigate issues related to ego, complexes, immorality, selfishness, and shyness, ultimately fostering the development of a more well-rounded, mature, and socially refined individual (Sardeshpande, 2017).

4.6. Significance of Granary

Being an agrarian community, the prosperity of families centered upon the success of harvests and the procurement of food grains and other crops. Granaries (Plate 30) held significant importance in the livelihoods of the people, serving as essential storage facilities. Some rituals were conducted in granaries during various festivals like *Biam* and *Tsokum.* As such, granaries constituted a fundamental component of the infrastructure of the community.The granaries constructed by the Khiamniungans are characterised by their robust design, elevated approximately one meter above the ground on multiple wooden posts. Ganguli (1984) provides a detailed description of the granaries in Nokyan, noting their construction with massive wooden posts and beams, along with walls made of planks, which are covered on the exterior with diagonally arranged bamboo poles, forming a lattice work pattern.

The initiation of the granary use by the family involved ritualistic practice wherein a chicken was sacrificed in the granary. During the sacrificial killing, the father observed the leg movements of the dying chicken to discern auspicious omens for the fortune of the family. The blood of the chicken was applied to the baskets and the feathers were inserted in the outer side of the baskets. Each granary yard was enclosed by a separate fence. Prior to the construction of new granary or the replacement of the existing one, meticulous arrangements were made in advance to ensure the availability of required materials.

As said by Themsai, inside the granary, baskets were arranged in 3 or 4 rows according to the size of the baskets and the granary. After the completion of the construction the family members and relatives put the baskets and grains back inside the new granary. The first basket called '*mamzhang*' which is smaller in size was put first inside and it was attached to the main post. A cover was placed on the '*mamzhang*' and a stone was placed on

top of the cover to secure it in place. The grain from this basket was never taken unless there was nothing left to be taken in the granary. It was easy to understand that one is about to go through famine and poverty and hunger if he said he/she is taking grains from the '*mamzhang*.' Millet baskets were kept at the backside while rice baskets were kept at the front (Personal Communication: Themsai, Noklak, 5th January, 2022).

For the construction of granary a specific place is sought in the nearby place of the village. The size of the granary depended on the wealth of the owner. If the owner had a big field or if he was a person who harvested plentiful every year, his granary was built big. A pictographic representation by Langshen et. al. (2023) describes the granary built at a height of 4 to 5 feet above the ground.

Those people with average field and harvest stand their granary foundation on 3 standing posts in width and 4 posts in length. Those with bigger field and harvest built 5 posts in length and the rich or wealthy people built with 6 or more posts. The number of posts in width remained 3. Once those posts were placed, big square or circular boards around 3 feet each were placed in the posts placed in the middle. Upon these boards 2 wooden beams each are placed keeping the posts in the centre and intersecting all the 3 posts of the width. On top of these beams, multiple beams in length are placed and fastened with the bast called '*aopen*'. On top of it bamboo slabs are placed for the floor.

The wall of the granary starts with the erecting of post each in all the four corners. These were supported with multiple smaller posts in between. Some posts were supported with 2 small sticks are placed on each side encircling the main posts. They provide support for the upper beams and the posts. The beams are provided in all the sides with all the supporting poles and beams. For the interior wall, vertical timbers are positioned upright along the beams of the wall. These timbers are fastened securely to the beams using a bast.

On the other hand, exterior wall is covered with bamboo flats. These bamboo flats are aligned in a horizontal orientation. By utilizing two layers of walls, the structures gained enhanced protection against harsh weather such as rain, wind, etc. It also helped in keeping the pests like rats. The granary held significant importance within the village infrastructure, serving as a key structure for food storage (Personal Communication: Buniom, Noklak, 5th January, 2022.

Granaries are far more than mere storage facilities; they are pivotal to the socio-economic and cultural fabric. Granaries symbolise the wealth and agricultural success, directly linked to food security. The size and construction of a granary reflect the owner's productivity and status, with larger structures indicating greater economic prosperity. Culturally, the granary serves as a sacred space for rituals, such as the chicken sacrifice performed to secure favorable omens. Architecturally, the granary represents sophisticated design and technological adaptation, featuring elevated posts, bamboo latticework, and dual-layered walls to protect stored grains from environmental challenges. They also serve as symbols of historical and cultural continuity, preserving traditional practices and representing heritage.

4.7. Traditional Ironwork

Blacksmithing is a widespread craft throughout the Naga region. In larger villages, it is common to find two to three blacksmiths (Stirn, 2008). The Khiamniungans heavily relied on the Wui villagers for the production of various iron tools essential for their daily lives. These tools included daos, spears, spades, and a diverse range of implements vital for agriculture, construction, and defense. Khiamniungans are considered to be the masters in producing iron materials (Jacobs, 2012).

In a conversation with Khelemong (Personal Communication:Wui, 19th March 2020), it was disclosed that iron ore deposits was discovered a site called Malai-Tailaai (Plate 32), several kilometers from the village. This discovery provided the community with a valuable resource, which they efficiently harnessed for the production of various iron tools and weapons. In their work, Jamir et al. (2019) confirm the presence of iron ore through the application of various analytical methods, further supporting the oral traditions of the community. These findings particularly validate the existence of a natural source of iron ore in the region and strengthen the oral narratives of the people. Items such as daos, spears, and agricultural implements, including spades and cleaners, were crafted through traditional iron smelting by skilled smiths (Plate 32). The belief in the presence of iron ore and the practice of ironworking, as recounted by the local community, has been substantiated by additional studies conducted in the village.

The traditional furnace system employed by the locals followed a consistent design. This system comprised two cylindrical bamboo barrels hollowed to facilitate plugs of feathers to pass up and down like pistons push-pulled by a person sitting on a stool behind (Sardeshpande, 2017). The airflow and gas exchange necessary for efficient combustion were facilitated by a hole in the ground, enhancing the performance of the charcoal hearth. The operation of the furnace begins with the ignition of the fuel at its base, allowing the fire to build gradually. As the flames grew stronger, iron ore is carefully fed into the fire hearth. The shaping of the heated iron is accomplished using local stones, which had been carved with a deep indentation and securely fastened with cane to a handle (Plate 33).

The acquisition of iron tools among the Khiamniungans was rooted in a trade network, with the Wui villagers playing a central role. Known for their craftsmanship, the Wui people became the primary source of high-quality iron tools, such as daos(Plate 34),

spears, and spades, which were widely sought after by the Khiamniungans. The Wui villagers either traveled to neighboring villages to sell their products or welcomed buyers who visited Wui for their purchases. There is a prevailing belief that blacksmithing is a specialized skill, not easily acquired by outsiders. Most blacksmiths in Noklak and other Khiamniungan villages are from Wui, reflecting the long-standing tradition that the craft is primarily inherited by the Wui people, even though some individuals from other villages may practice it.

The study reveals that the relationship between the Khiamniungans and the Wui villagers serves as an example of an artistic ecosystem, characterised by their interdependence on natural resources and their sophisticated traditional ecological knowledge. The discovery and subsequent utilization of an iron ore-producing site near the village underscore the community's connection to their natural environment, with their cultural practices and survival intricately linked to these environmental features.

The traditional iron smelting techniques employed by the Wui villagers, including the design of the furnace and the use of locally sourced materials, reflect a highly developed body of indigenous knowledge that has been transmitted across generations. These practices illustrate the adaptation of traditional ecological knowledge to optimize resource utilization, ensuring both long-term sustainability and efficient use of available resources.

The economic and social structures of the Khiamniungans reveal a complex socio-economic system built around the availability of iron tools. The trade dynamics, with the Wui villagers either traveling to other villages or welcoming buyers from neighboring communities, illustrate a division of labor and economic relationships characteristic of cultural ecology. The craftsmanship of the Wui villagers highlights the dynamic interaction between humans and their environment, where human innovation in transforming natural

resources into valuable tools can be seen. This balance of environmental determinism and human agency, alongside community stories that integrate ecological elements into cultural narratives, draws attention to how environmental features shape cultural beliefs and practices.

The performance and practice of metalwork among the Nagas are governed by various taboos and ritual restrictions. Jacobs (2012) describes these restrictions as follows:

> Craft production is surrounded by ritual restrictions. A common theme seems to be the idea of manufactures as periods of creative force. Like sex and agriculture, these creative forces are capable of good and bad consequences, and must therefore be controlled. Thus we find that craft production is restricted at crucial periods in the agricultural year. (p. 50).

The Khiamniungan community also adhered to similar restrictions. Longsham (Personal Communication: Nokhu, 20th February, 2020) recounted the belief in supernatural forces governing the regulation of iron works in Nokhu village. A distinct cultural belief prohibited the practice of iron smelting, as it was perceived that the villagers did not share the same familial background as the ironsmiths, rendering such activities inappropriate. Consequently, this belief effectively discouraged the practice of iron smelting within the village. Despite this prevailing belief, an individual from a neighboring village attempted to introduce iron smelting, recognizing the potential benefits of a local blacksmith who could spare the villagers from arduous journeys to acquire iron tools. However, during preparations to establish an iron smelting practice, this individual experienced a disconcerting incident. A disembodied voice addressed him by name and threatened harm should he proceed with his plans. Unable to identify the source of the warning and fearing for his safety, he abandoned his efforts in the village and resumed his craft in his home village.

Similarly, another resident of the village aspired to become an ironworker, challenging the entrenched belief. However, he encountered the same mysterious warning as the previous individual. Despite encouragement from fellow villagers to learn and inherit the art of iron smelting, he fell ill, which was interpreted as a direct consequence of his attempt to practice the craft. This incident reinforced the notion that iron smelting was not meant for the village. Adhering to an ancient tradition that permitted the transfer of skills through spiritual intervention, the resident sought an alternative solution. He prayed to the spirit, requesting the ability to bestow the gift of iron smelting upon another individual. In response, another villager approached the spirit, affirming his membership in the ironsmith clan and seeking the gift of iron smelting. Although this villager may not have possessed the inherent skills of a master blacksmith, he endeavored to establish the necessary infrastructure, tools, and materials for ironworking in his home village. Instead of becoming a blacksmith himself, he created a space for skilled artisans to work on their tools and implements as needed (Personal Communication: Longsham, Nokhu, 20th February, 2020).

In contemporary times, the belief persists that the path to becoming a blacksmith is not open to just anyone. Most blacksmiths in the region continue to hail from the neighboring village. While some native villagers occasionally engage in the craft, the inheritance and practice of blacksmithing remain predominantly associated with the neighboring community, reflecting the enduring influence of tradition and cultural beliefs in this region.

4.8. Religious Belief

The study of the Khiamniungan community reveals intricate connections between their spiritual beliefs, rituals, and natural environment. Central to their cosmology is the deity *Goa* to whom offerings and rituals are dedicated, particularly in the context of agriculture. These practices, although devoid of formal worship, shows a profound relationship with the

natural world, aiming to ensure the wellbeing of both humans and animals (Sardeshpande, 2017).

A significant feature of their spiritual landscape is the cave called *Sukekhan*(Plate 35), located 9 kilometers north of Thang Village. This cave holds a sacred status and is considered taboo to visit willfully. Historical accounts recount a series of encounters by hunters, which led to the belief that the cave serves as an abode for the spirits of the deceased. This belief emerged after hunters repeatedly found items associated with the deceased such as a warrior's headgear, weaving tools, and a piece of cloth caught in their traps, coinciding with deaths in the village. Such incidents reinforced the notion that the spirits of the dead made their transition to the other world through this cave, carrying with them the belongings placed alongside their bodies.

Further, the belief system extends to physical landmarks such as the stone (Plate 36) at Lumo Keng, near Pathso Village. Observations of new markings on the stone following a person's death, scratch marks for men and indentations for women, are attributed to the spirits' actions on their journey to the afterlife. The people who are resting in the field overnight used to hear this chanting sound. This kind of stone was also found in Peshu village. All the Khiamniungans, including the present day villagers in Burma believed that once the person dies, the spirit went to Noklak Village. These interpretations align with the broader understanding that the spirits travel specific paths, with notable rituals occurring at places like *Ehthsoshiu,* a pond where spirits cleanse themselves of sins before reaching their final destination. The sacred nature of this water prohibits its use for drinking, signifying a deep respect for the spiritual sanctity of natural elements.

4.9. Funerary Practice

The disposal of the dead in traditional Naga villages, as derived from cultural remains, indicates the distinct type of mortuary practices among the Nagas. The predominant mortuary practice among the Khiamniungan Nagas, as well as other Naga groups including the Phom, Konyak, Ao, Angami, Chang, Yimkhiung, and Sangtam, is identified as 'fractional burial' or 'platform burial.' This method involves placing the corpse on a platform, covered with thatch, to facilitate decomposition. Additionally, these groups also engage in post-fractional burial, wherein the bones and skull of the deceased are interred after the body has fully decomposed (Nshoga, 2009). Elwin (1997), notes that the Khiamniungans once practiced dessication. This practice has been clearly observed by Nshoga (2009):

> Semi-cremation mortuary means the corpse is smoke-dried, in which the cadaver is placed over the catafalque and make a hge fire under the corpse, and this process is continued for months together until the dead body is completely dried, and later the dried bones and skulls are removed from the platform and buried outside the village. And this custom was found among the Sangtams, Yimchungrüs, Aos, Changs, Phoms, Konyaks and Khiamniungans. (p. 167)

This mortuary practice is supported by oral tradition, as noted in a conversation with T. Hangchiu (Personal Communication: Wolam Nokyan, 17th February, 2020), who describes the procedures involved in managing the deceased. In this practice, the deceased was placed in a canoe-like structure curved out of a single tree. This structure was elevated by supports at both ends, and a fire was ignited underneath it. The heat from the fire would gradually cause the tissues and flesh of the body to gradually ebb. This process allowed for the controlled decay of the body, ensuring that the remains were disposed of in a manner that aligned with their cultural and ritualistic practices. However, this practice has since been

discontinued. The only tangible evidence of this mortuary practice is the remaining trunk (Plate 37) of a felled tree, which was used in the burning of the last body at Wolam as part of this ritual. This trunk, along with its cut off branches, is slowly deteriorating and is likely to disappear entirely without efforts to preserve it. The tree, once central to this mortuary ritual, stands as a symbol of a fading cultural practice, and its ongoing decay underscores the vulnerability of physical artifacts associated with traditional customs. Without active preservation, this final vestige of the practice is at risk of being lost, erasing a significant material connection to the community's historical mortuary rites.

Upon the demise of an individual, a communal gathering of relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances was convened to offer condolences and support to the bereaved family. Visitors often brought offerings of rice in small baskets as a symbolic gesture of communal solidarity. During *Shejim*, which refers to the duration the deceased remained in the household, there was a display of ornaments and attire belonging to family members and relatives. These items were arranged on the wall adjacent to where the deceased was placed. For instance, in the case of deceased male, traditional male attire such as mithun horn mugs, headgear, necklaces, scabbards, shawls, and leggings were hung in a specific manner around the deceased (Ganguli, 1984). This arrangement was commonly referred to as *Ehdeng*, and once these items were displayed, they remained in place until the conclusion of the *Shejim.*

Ganguli notes a similar display near the grave of a Yimkhiung man. The Kuthur chief Imdo’s memorial featured bamboo poles adorned with ceremonial shawls, a large black shawl with white cowrie shells, ceremonial hats, a buffalo hide shield, and an European umbrella. Offerings for the afterlife were placed in small bamboo containers and baskets on the lowest pole. A large crescent of plaited bamboo represented a rainbow, and the central

pole displayed symbols of his war trophies, including pumpkins and cane balls (Ganguli, 1984).

It was customary within this Khiamniungan community that members of the opposite sex from the same family or lineage did not attend to the deceased. For instance, in the event of a female's death, her brothers refrained from directly handling or carrying her body. The responsibility of attending to the deceased typically fell upon relatives and nephews. There was a deep-seated respect between brothers and sisters that was reflected in their interactions. Siblings adhered to a strict separation in their activities, avoiding both work and socialization together.This practice, known as *Anouyam*, as narrated by Thengeu (Personal Communication, 24th February, 2019) was rooted in the belief that close contact between siblings could invite misfortune, including accidents or injuries, particularly in the context of warfare. This belief also led to immediate siblings refraining from caring for or attending to the deceased. In preparation for the funeral rites and to accommodate the mourners, some families opted to slaughter pigs or other livestock. Additionally, a simple rice-based meal was prepared, which was shared among the attendees subsequent to the placement of the deceased. This funeral feast was a communal activity, with all present participating in the meal.

At the site where bodies were kept, preparations were undertaken to construct a platform for the deceased, known as *Ehthsotsam.* This structure resembled a small house and was assembled with six posts, each ranging from 5 to 6 feet in height. These posts were arranged in two parallel lines, with pairs of posts facing each other. Three beams were laid atop these posts, supporting an additional four or five roofing beam, upon which palm roofing plates were placed.

The deceased was wrapped in a mat, which was folded from the left and right sides as well as the head and feet. These foldings were secured using cane splints. A food package consisting of cooked rice, chicken liver, and a fish (*Ngoudam*) was wrapped in a banana leaf and fastened with bamboo or cane splints, while rice beer was taken in a separate mug known as *khaotsao*, with a belief to feed the spirit of the dead. One notable aspect of this mortuary practice was the distinctive method of fastening both the mat and the food package. Traditionally, fastening techniques involved a right-handed twist of materials or rope, symbolizing the completion of tasks in everyday life. However, in this context, a left-handed twist was employed, a practice known as *ehthso aoke*, which refers to a tying system specific to honoring the dead. The use of the left-handed twist marked a departure from the norm, signifying a gesture of reverence and differentiation for the deceased. This reversal in technique reflects a symbolic distinction between the rituals of the living and the honour accorded to the dead, underscoring the cultural significance of this mortuary custom. For warriors who passed away, their ornaments and attire, such as headgear and leggings, were also taken alongside the deceased. These food packages and other belongings were placed in a basket and hung adjacent to the *Ehthsotsam.*

The wrapped body was placed on a plank and transported to the site where dead body was kept in the open raised platform to let it decompose where it was positioned on the *Ehthsotsam*. The body was left to decompose naturally until the *Uowan* period. As decomposition progressed, liquids from the body were collected using a plank placed at the leg end. A hole was dug to drain these fluids. The *Ehthsotsam* structure remained unfenced and was left intact. Different clans had distinct sites for their deceased; however, some locations were shared by two or three clans.

Following the interment, individuals did not immediately resume their routine activities but instead spent the subsequent day or days with the grieving family. They brought

rice and dried beef or pork in small baskets. In accordance with their beliefs, the deceased's family abstained from agricultural work for four days to avoid potential misfortunes. On the fifth day, the fireplace was cleaned, ashes removed, and a new fire was ignited. From this day, they resumed their agricultural activities. Condolences from relatives in other villages were typically offered within five days of the death, accompanied by items such as rice, poultry, and agricultural tools like daos, spades, and hoes. These contributions were not taken to the fields.

The food items received were expected to be consumed within the mourning period of five days. A prevalent belief held that if these items remained unconsumed beyond this period, another death in the family would occur. The collected food items were cooked and served to the funeral attendees. A noteworthy practice observed was the reciprocal offering of assistance among relatives. For instance, during the death of a nephew or niece, the uncle would contribute a pig for the funerary feast, and vice versa. This gesture was reciprocated, ensuring that such offerings were never left unreturned (Personal Communication: Thengeu, 24th February, 2019).

4.9.(1) Uowan (Deposition of the Skull): An Orientation of Social Cohesion

During the onset of winter, a specific ritualistic period was designated for the removal and deposition of the deceased's skull. This process commenced with the family members and close relatives preparing rice beer. All the relatives of the deceased assemble in the house of the deceased and really mourn for the dead. Early morning just before the sunrise, all the relatives of the deceased led by the eldest man of the clan who is also the priest of the clan go to the spot, where the dead body was kept before on the scaffold and remove the skull from it (Gogoi, 2021).

The responsibility for extracting and caring for the skull typically fell upon the deceased's uncle or the closest relative. The skull was carefully removed from its wrapping mat. In instances where the body had not fully decomposed and the skull remained intact, it was separated from the other skeletal remains using a bamboo stick. The remaining skeletal fragments were left at the site where the body had been placed, while only the skull was taken. Each clan maintained a designated location on the village outskirts for the storage of their respective skulls. This process was executed with meticulous care, ensuring even the retrieval of any teeth that might have become dislodged. If a tooth was found to be missing, it was meticulously cleaned and reattached to the skull. In cases where a tooth was irretrievable, a wooden replica was crafted and affixed to the skull.

Once the skull was retrieved from the platform, it was transported to the deceased's home. Here, it underwent a cleaning process using traditional soap. Relatives and close associates of the deceased congregated to witness and partake in the skull deposition ritual. A communal meal was prepared and shared amongst the attendees. After the meal, a pre-prepared basket was retrieved, and a piece of cloth was laid inside it. The skull was then carefully placed on the cloth.Subsequently, the skull was taken to a designated location atthe outskirts of the village and deposited within a hollow of a large tree (Personal Communication: Buhiu, Noklak, 21st January, 2019). Gogoi (2001) further elaborates that the skull of the cow or pig slaughtered on that day is also affixed to the basket. The clan priest, carrying the basket containing the deceased's properly wrapped skull, is accompanied by the mourning relatives, including women, who proceed in a procession to the designated spot in the jungle, where the basket is placed alongside the skulls of other deceased relatives (Plate 38). Every clan in the village has a selected spot in the jungle either by the side of a big stone or big tree preserved for centuries together to collect the skull (Ganguli, 1984).

Following the ritual of skull deposition, a communal feast was held, during which relatives from neighboring villages visited the family. This gathering not only served as a means to offer condolences but also strengthened kinship ties with those from other villages. As part of the feast, a portion of the meat was allocated to the priest who had assisted in the skull extraction process. The practice of skull extraction and deposition persisted until the mid-20th century. With the transition to burial practices involving interment in the ground, the custom of skull deposition evolved. Coffins during this transitional period were constructed from either wooden planks or bamboo split into flat planks. These coffins covered the body up to the neck, with a separate cover utilized for the head. This modification aimed to facilitate the subsequent skull extraction during the *uowan* ritual. As the designated period for skull deposition approached, the burial site was excavated to retrieve the skull. The extracted skull was then placed beneath a designated tree, adhering to the established ritualistic process.

The cessation of the practice of exposing the deceased on a raised platform can be attributed to several factors. Over the course of a year-long exposure period, decomposition of the body led to the emergence of decomposition fluids, which began to flow from the platform. The presence of dogs and pigs, which roamed freely in the vicinity of the village, played a significant role in this shift. Dogs were allowed to reside in kitchens and were fed there, while pigs were fed in separate areas known as *Khumonk* before entering the kitchen. These animals consumed various substances, including the decomposition fluid. As a result, the fluids would drip onto the backs and heads of these animals. Upon returning home for feeding, the foul odor emanating from the fluids on their bodies became increasingly difficult for family members to tolerate.

Additionally, the proximity of certain communal buildings and khels, such as *Kaam Kam* in Thang village, which is located above the designated place where dead bodies are

kept, worsened the issue. When men gathered for morning discussions at the morung, the rotting smell from the decomposing bodies hindered their ability to engage in meaningful discourse. Moreover, several main footpaths traversed near the graveyard, which was previously considered a norm by the villagers. The realization of these issues was further accelerated by the advent of education and the formation of student unions, which underscored the importance of hygiene. Consequently, regulations regarding burial practices were formulated to address these concerns.

Initially, there had been resistance from family members to change the traditional practice of exposing the deceased to burial. Student leaders, however, remained steadfast in advocating for burial as a more hygienic alternative. This led to tensions and disagreements between student leaders and family members, with the latter being reluctant to dig graves for burial. To mitigate this resistance, student leaders took the initiative to dig graves for burial for a period spanning 4 to 5 years. Over time, with the increasing influence of Christianity and education, the practice of exposing the deceased on raised platforms was eventually abandoned in favor of burial (Personal Communication: Thengeu, 24th February, 2019).

With the discontinuation of the practice, the trees on which the skulls were traditionally placed have been increasingly felled, largely due to the expansion of residential areas and the development of nearby stone quarries (Plate 39). These activities have resulted in the removal of the trees, leading to the scattering of skulls and other ritual materials formerly associated with these sites. In response to these developments and the resulting deterioration of these cultural artifacts, various agencies, including student unions and public organisations, have undertaken initiatives to relocate the materials to other areas deemed safer for preservation (Plate 39). (Personal Communication: Pusho, Thang, 24th February, 2019).

4.10. Festivals

4. 10.(1)Beiam Festival: Its Significance

Beiam is a traditional festival celebrated by the Khiamniungan community in the month of August, with each family participating in its observance. Historically, the festival involved ritual practices centered around the granary, where the head of the family, typically the father, would slaughter a chicken, placing its feathers on the basket cover as part of the ritual. This act was accompanied by a prayer of gratitude to the divine for a bountiful millet harvest. The mother of the family also engaged in ritual activities within the granary, collecting millet to be used during the festival. At the household level, the father would prepare a conical container from plantain leaves, into which rice beer was poured. Each family member would then dip a finger into the beer, signifying a gesture believed to confer protection from harm.

As narrated by Buniom (Personal Communication: Noklak, 5th January, 2022), some aspects of Beiam have persisted into contemporary practice. For instance, nephews and nieces traditionally visit their uncles during the festival, where they receive gifts such as necklaces, and prayers for their well-being and longevity. Additionally, the festival serves as a time for communal efforts to repair village paths and clear the village surroundings.

The observance of *Beiam* is rooted in a spirit of thanksgiving for the millet harvest, marking the transition from summer to autumn. The festival also signals the announcement of new areas for jhum cultivation and the commencement of material collection for house construction. *Beiam* is further associated with prayers for the health and prosperity of both humans and animals, reflecting its broader significance within the community's agricultural and social cycles.

4. 10 (2). *Tsokum* Festival: Its Significance

Tsokum is the last agricultural festival usually celebrated in the last week of September or the first week of October before harvest. Traditionally, It spread for several days. The actual festival day did not fall on the same day for every village.The observation day differed from village to village, but the significance and ceremonies were observed in a similar manner. This implies the notion of agricultural working days depending on the convenience of each village. Usually, this festival began after the full moon. Generally, this festival was observed to indicate the beginning of harvest in the new jhum. Each and every family brought vegetables or ripened crops from the new jhum and prepared them. These were brought from the jhum field in separate earthen pots and tasted by all family members on the evening of the actual festival day(Personal Communication: Buhiu, Noklak, 29th January, 2019).

Prior to the celebration of the *Tsokum* festival, it was prohibited for any family to bring vegetables or commence harvesting in the new Jhum fields, even if the crops were ripe. This restriction was enforced to ensure that the prayer for harvest blessings, prosperity, and good health, pronounced during *Tsokum*, would be effective. It was believed that bringing in crops or grains before the festival could result in an unproductive harvest or damage to the ripened crops due to adverse weather conditions, as well as birds and animals. Thus, adherence to this practice was considered essential for safeguarding the quality and yield of the harvest. This festival also signified the greeting of autumn and winter seasons. It was a festival specially celebrated by the wealthy families with a grand feast. During this festival, many rich individuals slaughtered big domestic animals like buffalo, mithun, cow, etc. Poor families simply observed to dedicate the beginning of harvesting in the new Jhum.

People who wanted to host a feast start the preparation during the preliminary stage of agriculture. They chose a fertile land to be cultivated as a new jhum which could yield plentiful harvest. They maintained sanctity of work in the fields as well as looking after the mithun. They had to carefully choose which animal to be killed during this festival, but did not spread the information. After the new moon was seen, the information was given to relatives and neighbours about the intention of having a feast. With the commencement of the festival, the relatives and neighbours assisted in different activities.

As narrated by Suthem (Personal Communication: Noklak, 31st January, 2019), the celebration and ceremony were observed in the following manner. The first day was called *'Jimthao' (*preparation of rice-beer). Each and every family prepared rice and rice-beer during this first day, but wealthy individuals did more because during this festival observation day, they had to serve a grand feast with their villagers and relatives. So, before finishing this festival, they needed to have enough rice and rice-beer prepared. Those who were planning to slaughter big domestic animals also made arrangements. Old vines and canes were put in the streams or ponds to be soaked and left for multiple days to soften it. However, the arrangement of soaking did not have a fixed date; some arranged it earlier, and some on the first day. Tethering of any animals on the first day was strictly prohibited. Generally, this first day was fixed for rice-beer preparation.

On the second day, the process of pulling mithun or buffaloes from the jungle began. The mithun designated for the feast was carefully tended by its owner and friends in the days leading up to the event. The team responsible for retrieving the mithun visited its watering spots, setting up a raised platform to rest. If a mithun was missing, its owner was notified by anyone who spotted it. Once located, the mithun was tamed using salt, mud near the eyes, and tree bark on its legs and head to facilitate the final tethering. Mithuns were pulled separately

by each moiety, with members from one moiety refraining from participating in the other's mithun pulling. Young boys, previously ineligible to wear loincloths, were permitted to don simple loincloths and join the effort. While the men worked on the mithun, women gathered firewood, and those with incomplete field work attended to it (Personal Communication: Neio, Peshu, 14th February, 2019).

The third day mirrored the second, focusing on pulling and preparing mithun and buffaloes. These animals were tethered to trees near the village. Firewood for the festival was collected, and preparations began for the *Memei Pai*, a tree to be erected during the ceremony. The tree selection varied by feast type: erythrina for buffaloes and chestnut for mithun. The chosen tree had to be defect-free, with no cut marks or pests.

On the fourth day, known as *Paipiu* (a day of collecting trees), a lot was cast to determine who would fell the tree. Elders cut the tree from a standing platform and placed it by the house for a day before preparation and fencing. Additionally, a business transaction, *Yah Chai Chite* (discussion of the price of a pig), was conducted to discuss the price and exchange of pigs for the feast, with land leasing agreements made for pork shares. The fifth day, called *Sumai* or *Tsokum*, was dedicated to household ceremonies and blessings. Families performing ceremonies for mithun or buffaloes prepared traditional offerings. The feast giver and relatives performed rituals in the fields, wearing traditional attire and using specific blessings. After these ceremonies, they returned to the house where the evening involved cooking and sharing food with neighboring field owners. Food included sticky rice, pork, and rice beer, with additional offerings wrapped in taro leaves and hung on a small tree.

On the sixth day, the *Memei Pai* was erected in the backyard, secured with supporting posts and hazel sticks. The mithun, previously tethered, was brought to the house. The initial killing was performed by an elder, followed by the feast giver's ritual blessings and the

preparation of food offerings. After the mithun was slaughtered, various ceremonial steps involved using the meat and preparing it for the feast. On the seventh day, footpaths to the fields were repaired in preparation for the harvest. Different clans took responsibility for the repairing of the footpaths. Feast givers shared meat with those who helped with the repairs. Once the repairs were complete, workers were met with food and rice beer, and festivities concluded with singing.

The eighth day was observed as a holiday, with no fieldwork. The *'Memei Pai*' was removed early the following morning. On the next day, the feaster and his friends, either three or six people in all went to look after the mithuns as a fresh start to the cattle endeavours ahead. Once they found the mithuns, they were fed salt and given proper care. They shared the rice and the cooked meat and shared before coming back to the village. Meanwhile the people went to their respective fields and observed the *Tungeng* which they had prepared few days back. This was observed to see whether the harvest will be fruitful or not. If there was any damage done by rodents on the *Tungeng* people became more careful for future ritual performances. They started preparation for harvest by clearing the surroundings of the fields (Personal Communication: Buhiu, Noklak, 29th January, 2019)

Within ten days all these works were completed. After the festival, those who wanted to get married were allowed to do so. This festival opened up different activities of merry making and important event of commercial activities. They were free to choose whether they wanted to do their marriage before or after harvest. The singing and dancing on the night of the footpath repairing day inaugurated the season for enjoyment through singing and dancing (Plate 41). Wind chimes made of bamboo known as *Kiangkiang* and the rotating blades made of bamboo sheath known as *Oukap Laplap* were raised.

This festival signifies the respect and cooperation between different moieties and clans in the Khiamniungan community. While pulling the mithun for feast, the men from Lam moiety did not step over the pulling cane of the Shiu moiety and vice versa. This was to show their mutual respect and cordial relationship between them. The sharing of meat with the morung members, in-laws, uncles and aunts renewed their relationship. During the different festivals observed throughout the year, people always respected the dead with their acts of worship. They allotted a small portion of cooked food and kept aside for the dead. Tsokum was the last festival where this ritual was performed. The following month was called *Uowan,* which was designated for keeping and depositing of skulls of the dead in the hollow trunk in the outskirt of the village (Personal Communication: Chillio, Peshu, 15th February, 2019).

In the aftermath of the festival, people got ready for the incoming harvest and winter season. Women repaired clothes of the family members and also weaved new ones for them. The menfolk of different clans and morungs started discussion on the need to take logdrum and building of morung. Tsokum holds social and cultural significance within the Khiamniungan community, marking the transition from the agricultural cycle to the onset of the autumn and winter seasons. The festival represents the importance of agricultural success and the need for spiritual and cultural rituals to ensure prosperity. The preparation and execution of *Tsokum* involve meticulous planning and cooperation among different moieties and clans, which demonstrates different roles and responsibilities. Wealthier families host elaborate feasts, showcasing their status and generosity, while poorer families participate in a more modest observance, highlighting the inclusiveness of the festival. The careful adherence to pre-festival restrictions, such as the prohibition on harvesting before the festival, reflects a deep-seated belief in the efficacy of ritual practices to protect and enhance the harvest.

Additionally, Tsokum serves as a time for communal enjoyment, marked by traditional music and dance, and concludes with preparations for the upcoming harvest and winter.

4.11. Music

Among the Khiamniungans, the tradition of conveying messages through song has been a central aspect of their cultural heritage, preserved and transmitted across generations. This musical tradition encompasses a wide array of themes, including seasonal transitions, daily activities, social roles, animals, and the natural environment. The songs function as a comprehensive repository of cultural knowledge, reflecting the essence of the Khiamniungan way of life.

The repertoire of songs includes praises for one's own village, reverence for nature, admiration for traditional attire, and honors for warriors and elders. Additionally, the songs serve as a medium for invoking blessings and expressing communal values. Historically, the Khiamniungans practiced various forms of song. Young individuals learned folk songs from elders through multiple channels, including during agricultural activities such as working in the fields or traveling to and from these locations.

Musical instruction was typically provided in communal settings like morungs (dormitories), where young men and women were trained by experienced practitioners. The use of musical instruments was an integral to this training, with distinct instruments associated with different types of songs. The integration of instrumental sounds with lyrical content and intonation nuances created a harmonious auditory experience. During festivals and seasonal celebrations, the performance of songs and dances was a prominent feature. Performers, fully adorned in traditional attire and ornaments, participated in coordinated dance movements. They held hands, forming in circle, and engaged in responsive singing and

chanting. This practice not only reinforced cultural continuity but also strengthened communal bonds, emphasizing the role of music as a vital component of social and cultural cohesion.

A diverse range of musical instruments was employed by both men and women. Men typically used instruments such as the *Poi-Poi Dong-Dong*, a bamboo drum with a cane string and a driving stick, and the *Ouh Ko-Khiang*. Women, on the other hand, utilized the Poi-Poi, a bamboo flute, and the *Ko-Khiang*, a stringed instrument. Instruction in songs and the use of these musical instruments was imparted by elders, particularly within the communal dormitories where women gathered for nocturnal activities such as threading and weaving (Personal Communication: Shiem, Noklak, 8th February. 2021).

A distinctive feature of Khiamniungan musical performance is the use of a prelude chant, performed by an expert with a proficient voice. This chant serves as an introduction to the song and is echoed as a postlude at the conclusion of the song. It is notable that only men are responsible for delivering the prelude chant. Following the prelude, the song is characterised by responsive singing and chanting, involving multiple participants within the group. This structured approach to musical performance highlights the integration of vocal and instrumental elements in traditional Khiamniungan cultural practices.

4.12. Folk Songs

The Khiamniungans' musical traditions encompass a diverse range of songs associated with various social and cultural activities. The *Pohoi jih* is a significant song sung during the construction of the boys' dormitory (*Pohoi*), where the roof remains unfinished as singing and dancing occur inside the structure, with participants climbing the walls to observe. *Sonkeng jih***,** performed by women at Jihkeh Thang, involves circle singing under

moonlight or during weaving activities. This song reflects the women's experiences and transitions in life. The *yamke jih* marks peace treaties between warring villages with a celebratory event involving singing and dancing, showcasing the host village's wealth and invoking blessings from guests. Festivals such as *Tsokum, Miu, Beiam,* and *Khaozhaoshie Hok-Ah* feature specific songs and dances related to their meanings and seasons. There are songs dedicated to people, seasons**,** rivers, waters, mountains and flowers that express reverence for nature.

Soi, or the battle of words, is a cultural practice among the Khiamniungans that functions as a form of verbal sparring rather than a traditional song. This practice involves a responsive exchange of witticisms and intellectual duels conducted through carefully crafted statements and indirect commentary. It typically occurs between various participants, including moieties, clans, friends, men, women, and individuals, serving as a means of negotiation and assertion of social positions (Personal Communication: Tsuchoi, Noklak, 5th February, 2022).

The process of *Soi* is characterised by its use of indirect expressions and subtle insinuations that address issues or convey messages that are not explicitly discussed in formal dialogue or straight forward arguments. Participants engage in this verbal contest with the aim of outmaneuvering each other through clever and often nuanced language. Despite the potentially sensitive nature of the content, where personal sentiments might be affected, the tradition is governed by an implicit rule of non-violence. Individuals do not seek revenge or escalate conflicts beyond the verbal exchange; instead, they respond in kind, maintaining the integrity of the practice within its own set of rules.

Aotzun, or work chants, represent a specialized form of folk music among the Khiamniungans, intricately linked with various forms of manual labor. These chants are

employed to facilitate the coordination of group efforts, enhance work efficiency, and mitigate the monotony associated with labor-intensive tasks. The practice of *aotzun* is embedded in the daily agricultural and manual activities of the community, reflecting its significance in maintaining rhythm and morale during work (Alan, 1971). Agriculture, being the primary occupation, incorporates *aotzun* in virtually all related activities. These chants are adaptable to both individual and collective work contexts, encompassing a range of labour-specific genres. Notable varieties include *paiden-aoden aotzun* (used for log and tree pulling), *eiuphong aotzun* (for clearing jungle in preparation for jhum cultivation), *eiukam aotzun* (for initial field cleaning post-burning), *leh aotzun* (for sowing), *tsouphaiuken aotzun* (for first weeding), and *aaiu-ah aotzun* for second weeding (Personal Communication, Tsumang, Noklak, 8th Feb., 2021).

The *eiuphong aotzun*, a chant uttered during cutting and felling of the jungle, involves the collective effort of a peer group engaged in tree felling and jungle clearing. In this context, participants form groups based on the nature of the work, with both men and women contributing. The chanting process involves dividing the group into smaller units. Each unit starts with a leader singing a high note, followed by the rest of the group in unison at a lower pitch. The chant typically includes yodeling after several repetitions of the lyrics. This process continues until the group pauses for rest or completes the designated section of jungle clearing.

Similar patterns are observed in other labour-related chants, though variations exist. For instance, the chant for dragging log drums or trees features a sustained vocalization ('hou') by an individual, which is echoed by the group, with additional short chants interspersed. Chants for initial agricultural tasks such as jungle clearing, field cleaning after burning, and sowing commonly end with the sound "ho." Conversely, chants for subsequent

weeding activities conclude with "haa." Returning from agricultural work involves a distinct chant ending in "*hein,"* highlighting the differentiated functions of *aotzun* across various stages of labour.Certain songs are specifically associated with the extraction of fibre and are integral to the work processes involved. These songs, which describe the nature of the labour, are performed while engaging in fibre extraction activities. Among the Khiamniungans, the songs performed by women during threading and weaving are generally confined to female participants. In contrast, for other agricultural tasks such as sowing, which often involve paired work between men and women, female participants actively engage in the chants alongside their male counterparts (Personal Communication: Buhiu, Noklak, 29th January, 2019).

The Khiamniungan folk music encompasses a variety of chants that are intricately linked to specific tasks and seasons. Each type of chant is associated with particular agricultural activities and seasonal phases, such as the clearing of fields, the slash-and-burn process of jhum cultivation, sowing, and weeding. These chants are distinct in their sound and meaning and are not interchangeable across different tasks or seasons.

The transmission of Khiamniungan folk music and associated practices has traditionally occurred through generations. However, contemporary shifts in cultural practices and increased external influences have posed significant challenges to the preservation of these traditions. The reduction in the use of morungs whereby young people learn using musical instruments and folk songs has disrupted the intergenerational transmission of this art form. Additionally, the decline in the practice of traditional manual fieldwork, coupled with the erosion of communal activities such as basketry and textile work, has further contributed to the diminishing role of folk music. The transition to a modern

lifestyle and the adaptation to contemporary practices have resulted in the neglect and degradation of traditional musical practices.

Chapter 5

Warfare and Slavery: A Socio-Economic Constituent

Dispute resolution among the Nagas varied between internal and inter-village conflicts. Within villages, disputes were typically settled through dialogue, with cases brought before vilage elders or chiefs. Fines, often paid in livestock, were a common form of punishment, discouraging unnecessary litigation. Physical harm to fellow villagers was generally avoided (Jacobs, 2012). In some instances among the Khiamniungans, intermediaries known as *Paiukei* acted as messengers between arguing parties to bring peace and understanding.

Inter-village conflicts, however, were frequently resolved through warfare, with weaker villages sometimes seeking protection by paying tribute to stronger neighbours. Warfare, particularly in the form of raids, was a fundamental aspect of Naga identity, functioning as ritualistic practices rather than mere acts of violence. These raids were closely tied to notions of fertility, social status, and the overall well-being of the community. Led by experienced warriors, the raids followed carefully devised military strategies and were governed by strict social taboos. These practices played a significant role not only in the social organisation of traditional Naga society but also in its spiritual and agricultural life, illustrating the intricate relationship between warfare, religion, and survival (Nshoga, 2009).

Accounts such as Ganguli (1984) and Singh (1972) asserts that head hunting and village wars ceased in Nagaland during the 1960s. The practice is likely rooted in the belief that the human head contains a powerful soul-matter or vital essence. By acquiring a head from another village, it was believed that this vital and creative energy would be transferred to the aggressor's village, thereby enhancing human and animal fertility. This perspective and belief is exemplified by Elwin (1997),

> The reasons for head-hunting are complicated and interesting. The practice is probably based on a belief in a soul-matter or vital essence of great power which resides in the human head. By taking a head from another village, therefore, it was believed that a new injection of vital and creative energy would come to the aggressor's village when he brought the head home. This was valuable for human and animal fertility. It stimulated the crops to grow better, especially when the head was that of a woman with long hair. (p.11)

However, this belief is not uniformly shared among the Khiamniungans. Instead, some villages adhere to a different perspective wherein a similar outcome was sought through the ritual of *Khaiulak Am.* This ritual involved the observance of rigorous rituals over several days, with the belief that it would bring prosperity to the village. Following the ritual, prosperity was expected to manifest in various aspects such as the well-being of people, livestock, and agricultural yields. It is important to note that while war with another village sometimes followed the *Khaiulak Am* ritual, it was not invariably preceded by it. Wars between villages were typically instigated by various factors including boundary disputes, theft of property, failure to repay debts, instances of deceit, or seeking revenge for the murder of a relative or fellow villager.

The rationale for engaging in warfare among the Nagas can be attributed to several factors. The scarcity of land often necessitated conflict, as warfare became a means of asserting dominance over territory (Hutton, 1968). Revenge for the death of a relative played a significant role, as it was culturally imperative to seek retribution for a fallen family member. Demonstrating masculinity through warfare was another key factor. Participation in battle or killing an enemy brought respect and social acceptance, which facilitated securing a marriage partner. As noted by Sardeshpande (2017),

> Over the centuries head takers came to be identified as the brave and the audacious, much qualified young bucks, who could sue for the hand of a pretty damsel or whom damsels themselves eagerly sought. In any case those who had no head (or even a token part of it) to their credit found it hard to win a spouse. (p. 50)

Men seeking to prove their valor often found even trivial matters to be a sufficient cause for conflict, with villages actively awaiting or manufacturing opportunities to provoke hostilities against enemy tribes, leading to warfare (Chowdhury, 2020). Additionally, severing of enemy's head gained prominence as a status symbol within Naga society. Successful warriors held elevated positions, while those who failed to participate were subject to ridicule. This societal pressure fostered the proliferation of war among the younger generation, further embedding the practice in the culture.

Although warfare was widespread among the Naga tribes and driven by various socio-political factors, the terms 'headhunter' and 'headhunting' have become overly simplified descriptors commonly associated with them. Such terminology, however, fails to capture the complexity of their indigenous war practices. The act of severing heads or other limbs was not an expression of bloodlust or irrational violence, but rather a culturally embedded aspect of warfare, deeply connected to beliefs in soul-matter, fertility, and communal protection.

Rather than signifying a desire for senseless killing, severing and taking of enemies' heads was part of a structured system of warriorhood, bound by social codes and rituals. Nagas were primarily warriors, guided by the need to safeguard their villages and assert their identity through acts of courage, not driven by an insatiable thirst for heads. The act symbolised valor and was integrated into broader cultural practices, such as marriage and fertility rites, which helped to sustain the vitality of the community. Understanding these practices through the lens of indigenous beliefs, rather than external labels, reveals a more

nuanced perspective of the Naga people as defenders of their land and way of life, rather than as war-mongers or bloodthirsty headhunters.

The study of warfare in indigenous communities reveals the complex relationship between power, ritual, and social organisation. Among the Khiamniungan people, warfare was a cultural practice that shaped society, with social prestige linked to successful head-taking. Warriors who achieved this were awarded cowrie-embroidered shawls, symbolizing both personal valor and elevated status within the community. However, the economic burden of these rituals, which often necessitated the slaughter of valuable livestock, could have adverse effects on the warriors and their families, especially those with limited resources. It is also important to consider the impact of warfare on trade, particularly the disruption of inter-village commerce due to hostilities, highlighting the complex relationship between conflict and economic exchange in the region.

5.1. The Origins of Head-taking through the Lens of Tradition:

Head-taking as a Trophy: The Origins

According to Naga tradition, the practice of headhunting originated from an observation in nature, where a bird dropped a berry, leading to a fight between a lizard and a red ant. Upon witnessing the ant sever the lizard's head, the concept of head-taking was said to have been introduced to human communities (Elwin, 1997). A folktale among the Khiamniungans narrates the purported origins of severing of head within their culture. According to this tale, an individual observed a bee carrying the head of another bee in its mouth. Intrigued by this behavior, the observer witnessed the bee proceed to consume the head of its counterpart. This event prompted the observer to contemplate the notion of one creature killing and acquiring the head of another of its kind. Subsequently, the observer resolved to emulate this behavior and ventured to another village, where he took the life of a

man and severed his head. Upon obtaining the head, the observer found himself uncertain regarding its disposition. At this juncture, a pig from the vicinity of the village arrived, carrying a bamboo pole in its mouth. Utilizing the bamboo pole, the man erected the severed head, thereby establishing a precedent for the display of enemy heads.

In a conversation with Longsham (Personal Communication: Nokhu, 20th Feb. 2020), the cultural significance of the *Miasangpai* or "tree of the dead" in Nokhu village was recounted, symbolizing the traditional mortuary practices. Historically, the deceased were desiccated either in canoe-like wooden plate, or placed on raised platform. After the decomposition of the flesh, the skulls and bones were interred in caves or designated burial sites. The Nokhu people adhered to the custom of arranging the remains of family members in close proximity, reflecting their approach to burial practices.

However, a significant event occurred that enhanced the symbolic importance of the tree in the historical narrative of Nokhu village. This event involved a family of two brothers, descendants of the village's progenitor. Tragedy struck when one of the brothers was killed by an assailant from the southern region, marking the first encounter with death caused by external forces in the village. Given the unnatural circumstances of his death, the family decided that his remains could not be interred alongside other family members. Instead, his body was placed on the *Miasangpai* tree. His widow, deeply affected by sorrow, regularly visited the tree, mourning her husband’s untimely demise and reflecting on the impact of his absence in their lives.

Following the passing of his mother, the young son found refuge with his uncle, where he grew up in an expanding household. However, as the family grew, they experienced shortages of essential items, including shawls, leaving the boy, now an orphan, with minimal resources. He could afford only a loincloth to cover himself. Upon reaching marriageable

age, his attempts to court a suitable partner were initially unsuccessful. His first approach was rejected due to his impoverished appearance, and his subsequent efforts with a girl from another clan met a similar response. However, the girl's father intervened, facilitating a conversation between the families. Recognising the boy's lineage and family ties, the father encouraged his daughter to reconsider. Eventually, with familial support and her father's encouragement, she agreed to the marriage, pending parental approval. With this backing, the couple found employment in neighboring fields, achieving modest economic stability. They went on to have two sons.

Upon reaching adulthood, the orphaned son reflected on his impoverished upbringing and resolved to avenge his father's death. He traveled to the village where his father's assailants resided, killed an individual, decapitated him, and returned to his village with the severed head. Around the same time, settlers from Shedkhan, introduced the practice of *Khaiulak*, a ceremonial ritual involving the transportation of hunted heads, accompanied by specific duties and responsibilities. The inhabitants of Nokhu adopted this ritual, and the orphaned son participated by offering the head of his victim, noted for its striking features and long hair. It was believed that performing the *Khaiulak* ritual with this particular head would ensure a bountiful harvest in fields. Two generations later, the head was lost in a fire that broke out, destroying several houses. Although the initial blaze was controlled, it spread, and the head, stored with reverence, was consumed in the flames.

Despite the destruction of the head, the tree integral to the narrative that catalyzed the practice of head taking in Nokhu still persists, a witness to the history of the people. The expansion of the population and subsequent increase in households has necessitated the expansion of the village area, encompassing the location of the tree which was once situated on the outskirts of the village. However, this encroachment of human habitation coupled with

developmental endeavors has posed significant threats to the preservation of this towering historical landmark. Furthermore, the gradual passing of individuals who possess knowledge of generational stories and historical accounts presents another challenge. The modern lifestyle, characterised by a disconnect from historical roots and a lack of appreciation for tangible relics of the past, has resulted in a disregard and ignorance regarding the significance of such enduring historical monuments. This situation underscores the importance of efforts to safeguard and preserve cultural heritage amidst the pressures of contemporary societal developments.

5.2. Khaiulak Am

During periods of famine, food scarcity, disease outbreaks, and widespread mortality prevailed among both humans and animals within the village, the Khiamniungans practiced a ritual known as *Khaiulak Am.* This ritual aimed to invoke prosperity in harvests to ensure the well-being of both the populace and the livestock. The *Khaiulak Am* ritual involved the selection of six individuals from the village, referred to as *Khaiulak* to perform various ceremonial activities. The entirety of the ritual process, along with its associated activities, was collectively termed as *Khaiulak Am.* This ritualistic tradition was deeply embedded within Khiamniungan culture, serving as a means to address and mitigate adverse circumstances impacting the community's livelihood and health (Personal Communication: Longsham, Nokhu, 21st February, 2022).

The selection of the *'Khaiulak'* (the individuals assigned with carrying the skull during the *Khaiulak Am* ritual among the Khiamniungans) was a process administered by the village elders. This selection process adhered to specific criteria, including the individual's history of enemy killings, absence of snakebites, parental lineage, proper descent within the community, lack of wounds or scars from enemy encounters, and standing within society.

Notably, discussions regarding the selection of the *Khaiulak* were kept confidential among the elders, with the chosen individual unaware of their designation until the time of rice collection. During the rice collection phase, the elders advised the rice collectors regarding the households from which to procure rice, typically starting with the designated *Khaiulak*'s residence followed by two subsequent houses. The rice collected from the designated households served as an indicator of the chosen *Khaiulak* and their accompanying participants. Subsequently, rice collection continued from other villagers' households, marking the commencement of the ritual proceedings (Personal Communication: Heme, Nokhu, 21st February, 2020).

In some villages, for the selection of the *Khaiulak* members, the elders of the village engaged in a ceremonial process early in the morning before sunrise. This involved the casting of lots using a bladed long grass and the interpretation of omens to designate youths from different clans. It is notable that only members of the Shiu moiety were eligible to become *Khaiulak,* while the Lam moiety did not partake in the ceremony. The *Khaiulak* group consisted of six individuals and one leader, totaling seven participants. The selection procedure included the plaiting and unplaiting of *Yan*(a long bladed grass), a ritualistic act performed three times. Based on the outcome of the lot cast, six individuals were chosen as *Khaiulak*. Following sunrise, designated individuals were tasked with notifying the selected individuals of their designation as *Khaiulak*. Once selected, there was no room for refusal, and no expressions of anger or dissent were voiced towards the elders.

During the winter months, preceding the commencement of the '*Khaiulak Am'* ritual, men engage in the collection of firewood, a practice known as *Hokah Paipi*. Each individual participates in this activity by carrying a piece of firewood. Upon completing the collection, they assemble in the vicinity of the village, chanting collectively while awaiting the return of their companions before entering the village. Among the gathering, two individuals are

designated to carry three pieces of oak tree, positioned at the front and back of the group. Upon entering the village, the gathered firewood is distributed among the various khels, or clan groups, according to a predetermined arrangement, ensuring equitable distribution among the community members (Personal Communication: Tanghiu, Nokhu, 21st February, 2020).

Following the completion of firewood collection, preparations for the *Khaiulak Am* ritual commence, including the production of rice beer and other provisions. Subsequently, an elder, adorned in traditional warrior attire, traverses the village to announce the forthcoming *Khaiulak Am* event, urging villagers to ready themselves and participate. This elder, referred to as the *Lengthong*, returns to the morung, where a tree is erected and a shield and headgear are displayed. The beating of the log drum signals the commencement of the ritual, prompting villagers to assemble at the designated morung. The main activities of the '*Khaiulak Am'* are concentrated in a specific morung, where members initiate singing and dancing. Participants from other morungs also convene at their respective gathering places before joining the main festivities. Upon arrival, individuals chosen to be '*Khaiulak*' are ceremonially ushered into a house. Their customary attire, such as striped shawls, is removed, leaving only a sash, headgear, and scabbard. Following a prayer, a cane woven in a circular form is placed around the neck of the '*Khaiulak*', symbolizing their role in the ritual. Subsequently, the *Khaiu* and *Thingmia*, (close friends of the *Khaiulak*) accompanied by common villagers, join in the singing and dancing, marking the commencement of the *Khaiulak Am* festivities. Specific morungs served as focal points for the main activities of the *Khaiulak Am* ceremony. Members of these designated morungs initiated singing and dancing, prompting participants from other morungs to gather at their respective locations before converging at the main morung (Personal Communication: Heme, Nokhu, 21st February, 2020).

Individuals participating in the *Khaiulak Am* ritual adhered to various dietary taboos. These restrictions encompassed the avoidance of certain food items, including vegetables such as pumpkin, cucumber, potato, and any produce derived from vine, creeper, or climber plants. Additionally, maize, taro, yam, fungal edibles, and fried items were prohibited from consumption. Another dietary taboo involved refraining from eating rice cooked placing ashes on top of the cooking vessel's cover. Consumption of animal innards was also restricted, and individuals were required to leave some rice in the pot without completely depleting its contents. These dietary regulations were observed as part of the *Khaiulak Am* ritual, contributing to its ceremonial and symbolic significance. Historical accounts suggest that mistakes made during the ritual were believed to result in deaths within the village and caused famine.

Mongtei provided a detailed account of the practice of *Khaiulak*, along with a comprehensive description of the individuals involved in its execution. (Personal Communication: Peshu, 15th February, 2019). During the *Khaiulak-Am* period, participants were allocated separate temporary housing, enclosed by a fence, where they resided throughout the duration of the ceremony. Individuals responsible for cooking were designated to provide food during the ritual proceedings. Elders of the village accompanied the participants during their stay in the temporary housing, ensuring oversight and guidance. Throughout their tenure in the temporary housing, participants refrained from wearing shawls, subsisting solely on simple loincloths while retaining their scabbard and dao. They were permitted to venture out into the village only during nighttime, at which time they were allowed to wear shawls. During these night-time outings, participants maintained strict silence, refraining from coughing or making any noise. Upon returning to the temporary housing after their works, participants surrendered their shawls to the overseeing elder.

During the nighttime, participants in the ceremony slept without wearing shawls. An elderly attendant responsible for their care would approach them while they slept and gently drape a thin shawl over them, allowing it to fall as it may without any adjustment permitted. Should the shawl fall off during the night, participants were required to continue sleeping without it, unable to readjust it except by using their elbow to move it. Once the *Khaiulak* ceremony commenced, the *Khaiulaks*, accompanied by other villagers, engaged in singing and dancing throughout the night and into the following day. While other participants were allowed to wear regular attire during the festivities, the *Khaiulaks* were restricted to wearing only a headgear, loincloth, leggings, and bracelet (Personal Communication: Chillio, Peshu 14th February, 2019).

During the *Khaiulak* ceremony, participants adhered to strict protocols regarding their dietary habits, consuming food and beverages only in the presence of designated caretakers and out of view of other individuals. They received their meals before dawn, ensuring that they had eaten before others woke up, and displayed no dissatisfaction with the food or its taste. Additionally, participants refrained from consuming their entire portion of food, leaving some uneaten. Before dawn, participants proceeded to a nearby stream in the village vicinity for bathing.

If a dispute unfolds within a certain family in the village and the *Khaiulak* people overhear it, the family is quietly observed. The *Khaiulak* then obtains a pig's cage from the morung and without uttering a word captures the pig for their comsumption from the squabble family. The aggrieved family refrained from lodging a complaint regarding the incident. Furthermore, the *Khaiulak* engaged in the collection of bamboos required for the erection of enemy heads. They meticulously selected straight and optimal bamboos from the vicinity of the village, disregarding ownership. Each bamboo was shared among two or three individuals and cut precisely during the collection process. Subsequently, the severed heads

of enemies were affixed to the bamboo poles and erected for approximately two hours on smaller bamboo poles. Following this temporary display, the heads were safely concealed before the village awakened. The permanent erection of the heads on larger bamboo poles occurred after a few days, marking the completion of this ceremonial act within the *Khaiulak* ritual (Personal Communication: Mongtei, Peshu, 15th February, 2019).

While the villagers were engaged in their daily activities, the *Khaiulak* undertook the collection of stones, and grass from various trees and plants. These materials were utilized in a ritual conducted near the water storage area, employing a large earthen pot and six smaller vessels filled with water. Observations were made regarding any changes in the volume of the ritual's contents, with a decrease interpreted as a sign of potential misfortune or reduced harvest, while an increase signified prosperity.

In some village, the ritual associated with the *Khaiulak Am* is performed singularly, typically during the initial gathering for singing and dancing. At this time, the skull is washed, secured with cane, and placed on a leaf. Once attired, the *Khaiulak* carries the skull. The skull is carried only on the first day of the ceremony, while singing and dancing continue for four days. Due to the belief in potential calamities, the singing and dancing may be halted prematurely. Throughout the ceremony, rituals are conducted both within the house and near the log drum. A wooden piece known as "*Papun*," crafted from Erythrina tree, is prepared with markings and placed near the log drum. Ritual materials such as fish and chicken lungs are arranged upon it and covered with plantain leaves. Members from other morungs bind a pig with cane and transport it to the main morung, where it is secured to the log drum through a small eye-hole underneath. The pig is then ritually slaughtered during the ceremony (Personal Communication: Tanghiu, Nokhu, 21st February, 2020).

As the *Khaiulak* ceremony concluded, the participants proceeded to the river for a ritual offering and cleansing. Observations of omens were conducted using small bamboo, after which the participants returned home to partake in a celebratory feast. The singing and dancing continue for a duration of four full days, with the entirety of the *Khaiulak Am* ceremony spanning a total of six days. During the singing and dancing of the *Khaiulak*, observers were expected to refrain from laughter, and it was customary for individuals to refrain from covering their heads with shawls or other clothing while witnessing the ceremony. These concluding rituals and feasts marked the culmination of the K*haiulak* ceremony. At the conclusion of the ritual when the skull was to be kept off, each Khaiulak designates a friend as *"Khaiulak Chi Poi He,"* who is permitted to partake of the leftover food. It is expected that these individuals will engage in warfare and kill an enemy during the war after the ceremony and aspire to become *Khaiulaks* themselves during subsequent ceremonies (Personal Communication: Heme, Nokhu, 21st February, 2020)

5.3. Warfare and Rituals

Warfare among indigenous communities is often interwoven with complex rituals and belief systems that guide and shape the conduct of martial activities. In the context of the Khiamniungan people, warfare was not merely a physical contest but a pious and ritualistic endeavor that encompassed divination, strategic preparation, ceremonial practices, and strict adherence to taboos. The intricate relationship between warfare and ritual among the Khiamniungans, highlighting how these practices were essential in not only ensuring success in battle but also in maintaining social order and communal identity can be observed through proper study.

Vital to this analysis is the role of divination in the decision-making process prior to engaging in warfare. Warriors often sought guidance through various prognostic methods,

such as the ritualistic breaking of the grass, to predict the outcomes of their expeditions. Nshoga (2009) describes the practice in the following words, “these raids were meticulously planned and executed under the leadership of seasoned warriors, involving a range of military tactics and strict adherence to social taboos” (p. 162).

The accuracy of these divinatory practices, as perceived by the community, reinforced their importance in determining whether to proceed with or abandon a military campaign. The preparation for warfare involved meticulous arrangements that extended beyond the mere gathering of weapons. Strategic planning was conducted at the communal morung, where intelligence gathered by spies played a crucial role in shaping the approach to the enemy village. The silent, pre-dawn attacks were executed with precision, often accompanied by ritualistic declarations intended to confuse and disorient the enemy (Personal Communication: Tongthan, Wolam Nyukyan, 17th February, 2020).

The aftermath of battle was marked by a series of ritualistic practices. The manner in which the heads were severed, the chants invoked during the warriors' return, and the ceremonial washing of hands at the Meya's house were all integral to the cultural and spiritual fabric of the Khiamniungan people. These rituals not only symbolized victory but also served to purify and protect the warriors from potential harm. The erection of enemy heads on bamboo poles and the associated rituals, further emphasized the deep connection between warfare and religious observance. The role of the Meya, the priest responsible for leading these ceremonies, was pivotal in ensuring the success and sanctity of the warriors' endeavors. A comprehensive analysis of the rituals and ceremonies that accompanied warfare in Khiamniungan society has been done, exploring how these practices reinforced social cohesion, conferred status, and maintained the spiritual well-being of the community. The detailed examination of these rituals contributes to a broader understanding of the cultural

significance of warfare in indigenous society and the ways in which ritual and belief systems are inextricably linked to martial practices.

During periods of warfare, considerable attention was devoted to the development and production of armor, including helmets and shields, as well as weapons such as spears, daos, and panjies. Among the Khiamniungan, Chang, and Yimchunger communities, the use of poisoned arrows and crossbows was also prevalent (Stirn, 2008). Prior to engaging in warfare, warriors often sought divination or prognostication to determine the potential outcome of their military expeditions. One such method involved the utilization of a grass known as *'Yan'*, which was ritually broken into pieces to glean insights into the prospects of success and the likelihood of encountering harm from adversaries. Favourable predictions typically emboldened warriors to proceed with their campaign against another village, while unfavorable outcomes signaled caution, suggesting that the opposing forces may have become aware of the impending attack, thereby prompting the abandonment of the military endeavor. Remarkably, the outcomes foretold through this divinatory practice often aligned with the subsequent events on the battlefield (Personal Communication: T. Hangchiu, Wolam Nyukyan, 17th February, 2020).

Before undertaking raids, warriors meticulously gathered precise information regarding the enemy's position, defense strategies, dispositions, obstacles, and potential escape routes. Furthermore, they engaged in intensive military training, including spear throwing at targets, the use of daos, ambush tactics, and stealth attacks, to ensure preparedness for combat. Additionally, strict adherence to social taboos was mandatory, as any violation could jeopardize their safety and increase the risk of capture by the enemy (Nshoga, 2009). The warriors engaged in meticulous arrangements, assembling weaponry such as dao, spear, leggings, shield, and headgear well in advance. Additionally, they took

charge of provisioning, personally preparing and consuming the food prior to departure. Portioning some food for consumption en route, they left behind some amount of food in the cooking pot. As they departed from their house, there was a notable absence of customary farewells from family members, and the act of leaving doors open symbolized a departure from domestic concerns. Proceeding to communal gathering place of morung, strategic planning followed, guided by intelligence gathered by spies who had previously investigated the enemy village, even removing obstacles like punji spikes. Upon nearing the target, signals were relayed among the warriors to maintain silence, with the transfer of a wooden object signaling proximity to the enemy settlement. Subsequent to the silent infiltration of the village by the initial group, intent and the reason of attack by those outside was declared loudly. This confused and scattered the inhabitants, facilitating the execution of the attack plan by the assaulting party (Personal Communication: Tongthan, Wolam Nyukyan, 17th February, 2020).

Following the successful engagement with the enemy, a customary practice was observed regarding the decapitation of adversaries. It was believed that severing an enemy's head from the front ensured completeness, whereas doing so from the back risked leaving the jaw attached to the neck, which was considered an ill omen. Upon achieving victory, the returning warriors employed defensive measures. Designated smart individuals placed punji spikes along their way to impede potential pursuers. On their journey back to the village, they vocalized chants invoking their ancestral lineage of warriors, affirming their heritage as descendants of heroic descent. Upon nearing the village, a celebratory victory song was uttered, with a leader initiating the call *"Jong-e pong,"* to which the assembled warriors responded *"Oh eh ha"* affirmatively. Once within the village, they convened at the morung, where their wives brought rice beer from their respective homes. Temporarily affixing the severed heads to an erythrina tree was customary, while in some villages, the heads and limbs

of the defeated were kept within the logdrum overnight. Subsequently, the warriors proceeded to the residence of the priest, known as the *'Meya,'* where a ritualistic purification was done, involving the ceremonial washing of hands with water from the Meya's house. Failure to partake in this ritual was believed to invite leprosy or similar afflictions. Following this purification, the warriors dispersed to their respective houses.

Following a successful war raid, a series of rituals and customs were observed. According to Stirn (2003), the initial procedure involved the removal of the brains from the severed heads, followed by the warriors washing themselves in a river located outside the village. Subsequently, the heads were either placed at the village's log drum or hung on a designated head-tree, typically a ficus or a euphorbia species resembling a cactus, until the flesh had completely decayed. In the Khiamniungan practice, the morning following their victory, the warriors convened to attend to the severed heads of their adversaries. These heads were taken to a location near the village where the ears were removed and pierced, pinning them to nearby trees. Subsequently, the heads were assembled at a designated area known as *Taiudong* for further rituals. In the case of female victims, their hair was collected for potential use in warriors' baskets. The heads were then affixed to bamboo poles and erected, often supported to an erythrina tree. A celebratory feast took place, with each individual responsible for claiming a head or slaying an enemy hosting their own victory feast. During celebratory feasts, the customary practice required the slaughter of a pig for consumption. Notably, before partaking in the feast, the priest, or Meya, was accorded the honor of tasting the food first, a custom observed to ensure auspiciousness.

Further taboos and restrictions concerning work were observed by the warriors after their return from battle. These taboos and associated practices are detailed by Stirn (2003) as follows:

> Upon their return from a successful headhunt, the warriors were deemed sacred yet still impure and unpredictably dangerous. In the morungs they again had to observe a certain taboo period, including sexual abstinence, the wearing of white blankets and consumption of special food prepared only by men. A final purificatory ritual involving both headhunters and the captured heads reintegrated them into regular society. The entire village danced around the heads (or head) to the beat of the log drums, ritual songs were sung and a feast held in honour of the warriors. Adolescents were allowed to cut the heads with their daos, thus becoming warriors themselves. Then arrows were shot through the heads to blind them. (p. 128)

In certain villages, concurrent with the erection of the enemy heads, a gathering would occur at the residence of the Meya, where a divinatory practice was conducted. This involved the examination of eggs to ascertain future outcomes. The eggs were cracked open, and the contents were placed in small bamboo poles positioned above a fire. The interpretation of the omens was contingent upon whether the egg boiled out of the bamboo, with this occurrence deemed favorable. Conversely, individuals whose eggs did not puff out were considered to receive an unfavorable omen. Those whose eggs did puff up would subsequently engage in chanting. As the time approached for the erection of the severed heads, all warriors positioned their daos in close proximity to the designated site. The Meya led a prayer ceremony, during which ginger knobs were thrown towards the daos. It was believed that the individual whose dao caught a ginger knob would imminently achieve success in killing an enemy. Following the raising of the heads, the warriors reconvened at the Meya's house. Here, any remaining rice beer within bamboo mugs was ceremoniously poured onto the roof by the Meya. It was believed that spilling the leftover rice beer onto the ground foretold misfortune or unfortunate incidents within the family. (Personal Communication: L. Chillio, Peshu, 15th February, 2019).

The portion of meat was shared to the priest responsible for tending to the heads and another warrior. This portion of pork was was called *Hoshi.* They were hung to the interior walls of houses. On the same day, warriors visited their uncles' residences, bearing portions of pork as gifts, reciprocated with presents from their uncles. Subsequently, once all ceremonies were concluded, the warriors performed a final hand-washing ritual with water from the Meya's house, marking the conclusion of the ceremonial proceedings.

A number of taboos governed the behavior of warriors after they had succeeded in killing and severing the head of an enemy. They were prohibited from handling firewood or attending to the needs of cattle. Additionally, their meals and rice beer were exclusively served by their wives or daughters, with the warriors refraining from self-service. Furthermore, they abstained from consuming certain food items, including soybean, mushrooms, and beans.

5.4. Slavery

The practice of capturing slaves among the Khiamniungans during times of inter-village hostility was relatively rare and not a widespread custom. Haimendorf (2016) provides a detailed account of the Khiamniungan conflict that ultimately led to a punitive expedition by colonial administrators. The events leading up to this significant intervention are outlined as follows:

> Serious news had come from the tribal area, that the Kalyo Kengyus on the western slopes of the Patkoi Range were terrorizing their neighbours, and had developed the hunting of heads into systematic man-hunts. A few months ago they had treacherously raided and burnt two villages lying several days' journey from British territory. Only a few of the inhabitants escaped to tell the tale; the rest had been slaughtered or carried off as slaves. It was believed that the raiders were men of a Kalyo Kengyu village

> known as Pangsha, but Pangsha was not on the map, and the two destroyed villages, Saochu and Kejok, lay near the eastern limit of the land surveyed in 1923 and 1924. The area further to the east was still unmapped, and the country of these Kalyo Kengyus had never been entered by any outsider. (p. 117)

This activity was not a common occurrence, nor was it a standard outcome of every conflict. However, the historical significance of this practice is underscored by the punitive expedition of 1936, led by J.P. Mills. This expedition marked the first major encounter between the Khiamniungans and the British. This encounter was instigated by the capture and subsequent trading of slaves by the Wolam people (Haimendorf, 2016).

Ways of enslavement

1. War: The most common way of enslavement was through capture during a war. The defeated villagers caught in the midst of war became the slaves of the victors. If a person in the midst of the war found a person from the same clan, it became difficult to kill the person from the same lineage. Thus he was taken as slave.
2. Abduction: In order to avenge the death or killing of the village members, some warriors went and set an ambush in the vicinity of the enemy village. When people, be alone or in small group come out of the village for works, they were attacked and killed. In such circumstances, some people were taken as slaves.
3. Purchase: Slaves were sold or taken from one village to another. Those slaves bought by someone remained a slave and served the owner. They were also again sold to another village as and when necessary.

Treatment of Slaves: The owner or the capturer pierced the ears of the slave, indicating that he is a slave from that moment on. Slaves were provided a tight necklace made of cane. Four rounded tight rings were put on the neck of the slave. This was done to keep the face of the

slave straight-up, unable to bend. There was no strict price labeled for the purchase or redemption of slaves: The cost of the slave was usually a field, a conical hat, baskets of rice, a mithun and a pair of armlets of elephant tusk (Personal Communication: Bomo, Kohima, 2nd August, 2018).

5.5. The implications of War:

The first effect of the war was the responsibilities vested on the person of *'Meya'*. Each village had a 'Meya' who is responsible for the conduct of religious activities. But his utmost responsibility was taking care of the enemy heads and washing the hands of the warriors and performing ceremonies. It was a belief that a person who had cut an enemy's head, if he did not wash his hands with the water of the Meya, he become infected with leprosy. In any village, if that Meya did not perform his duty, he was disowned or chased out by the warriors. And in such case, sometimes people vested the responsibility of him to a new person who was bought from another village. He was called as *Atuo Meya* meaning 'a Meya who was bought'. As a result of these conflicts, the role and significance of Meya clan became important.

The second effect of the war was the social involvement of the people building a fence around the village. One of the defense strategies of the village was having a village fence. Building a fence required community involvement. Each khel was assigned a particular stretch of area where they have to put up a fence. So, in everyday cycle of agricultural works, the assignment and responsibility of fence building gave community coherence to the people. During the agricultural season, when the whole village was engaged in field works, warriors from every khel guarded the village and also those people going and working in the field. In return of their duty, there were separate days where the people of

each khel went and worked at the field of the warriors. In this way social responsibilities were shared among the people.

The third effect of the war was the conferring of social status to the head takers. Before the attainment of such feat, a man was allowed only to put a plain white shawl. Once he became a warrior he was allowed to wear a designed shawl and shawl embroidered with cowrie shells. Putting on these kinds of shawls indicated a social status to the person in the society.

Wars also led to negative implications on the people. When a man killed an enemy, there was always a ceremony where people sang and danced and observed for several days. And in doing so, he had to kill either a big or a mithun, in most of the case, a pig. Not all warriors were rich or had enough cattle to be slaughtered for the ceremony. So, a warrior who had no cattle had to sell his dao or spear or even a field in exchange for a pig. Also, a person who killed an enemy used to go to his maternal uncle's place and give one of the legs of the cattle to his uncle. In return his uncle presented him a dao, a spear or other ornaments. If the family had two or three brothers who become warriors, their uncle had to give each of them something and were drained of their ornaments.

Slavery was another effect of the war. Capturing of slaves and selling them was part of the Khiamniungan war. Selling those slaves fetched very high price. And for this very reason, the first expedition of the British and the first contact of the Khiamnuingan to the non Nagas or outsiders took place when and expedition led by J.P Mills came to Wolam (Pangsha) in the year 1936.

Another effect of village war was the disruption of trade. Only those villages that were in good relation were able to conduct trading activities with each other. Because of the fear of the enemy, trade was not frequent for so many villages except during '*Ohwan*'.

‘*Ohwan*’ was a period when skulls were deposited from the raised platform to the hollows of a tree trunk. Every Khiamniungan village observed this skull depositing event at the same time i.e, the month of November. During this time war and head hunting activities were ceased. Villages such as Peshu, Nokhu, Wui, Pathso, Chang villages like Chingmei, Konyak villages like Tobu and Khiamniungan villages of Burma like Hempu, Chiu, etc, came and participated in the trade which was at held *Khumoung Chaikamthang,* present day Thang Village. Except for this time trading activities were disrupted due to war.

Chapter 6

Socio-Economic Changes Post-Christianity

The advent of Christianity in Nagaland, spearheaded by the American Baptist Mission, marks a pivotal moment in the socio-cultural transformation of the region. Introduced by British and American missionaries during the 19th century, Christianity brought significant changes to the Naga society, particularly in its religious beliefs, education, and social structure. The spread of Christianity, however, facilitated a gradual shift from these traditional practices to a new religious identity, which was further amplified by the missionaries' emphasis on education, healthcare, and written language.

This chapter explores the historical trajectory of arrival of Christianity in the Khiamniungan areas, the initial reception of the new religion and the resulting transformation of Khiamniungan society. The analysis aims to understand the long-term implications of this cultural shift. In addition to the introduction of Christianity, the chapter also addresses the establishment of civil administration, which significantly altered the socio-political landscape of the Khiamniungans. The advancement of formal education is also examined as a critical factor that expanded opportunities for social mobility and introduced new perspectives, while simultaneously challenging traditional knowledge systems. Furthermore, the arrival of the Naga National Council (NNC), led by A.Z. Phizo, in the Khiamniungan soil, brought a new dimension to the socio-political consciousness of the people. The chapter also explores the themes of continuity and change, examining how traditional structures and practices persisted alongside these new influences, and how the Khiamniungan community adapted to these transformations while retaining key aspects of their cultural identity. Through this analysis, the chapter is aimed at providing a comprehensive understanding of the forces that shaped the evolution of Khiamniungan society in the 20th century.

6.1. Introduction of Christianity in the Naga Hills

The first missionary in the Naga area was Miles Bronson who worked in Namsang among the Nocte, a sub group of the Konyak Nagas in Present Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh from 1839-1841. The earliest recorded Naga conversions to Christianity took place in the mid-19th century, marking a significant moment in the history of missionary work in the region. The first known Naga convert, Hube, was baptized on September 12, 1847, by Nathan Brown. Another early conversion involved Longjanlepzuk, also known as Lungsang, an Ao Naga from Merangkong, who was baptized by Samuel W. Whiting at Sibsagar in 1851. A permanent foothold of Christianity in Naga Hills was established with the arrival of Edward Winter Clark and his wife Mary Mead. With the help of Godhula, Clark was able to get in touch with the Ao Nagas, and on November 10, 1872 nine men were baptized at Dikhu River. The first church in the Naga Hills was established at Molungkimong in 1872 (Whiso et. al., 2022). With the establishment of an initial foothold by the American Baptist Mission, other missionaries, including S.W. Rivenburg and S.A. Perrine, and so on, subsequently arrived and contributed to the dissemination of Christianity among the Nagas.

6.2. The Introduction of Christianity in the Khiamniungan Region

The spread of Christianity across various Naga tribal regions was facilitated by Naga missionaries and evangelists. Among the Chang, Phom, Sangtam, and Khiamniungan tribes, Christianity was introduced through the efforts of Ao evangelists (Nshoga, 2009). In the Khiamniungan areas, the arrival of Christianity was a gradual process. By the mid 20th century, Christian missionaries began to make inroads into the community. The introduction of Christianity not only brought religious conversion but also altered the socio-political dynamics, as the Khiamniungan people began to integrate into the larger Christian Naga society. A key moment in this religious transformation occurred during the Burma Campaign

of the Second World War, the Allied Forces established a transit camp at Dangkhiam, a location near Noklak Village. This camp served as a strategic point for monitoring and countering the advancement of the Japanese army from Burma. The Allied forces frequently traveled to and from Dangkhiam to Dan to assess and respond to the movements of Japanese troops. Throughout this period, interaction with local communities became a necessity, and some individuals, with the assistance of Chang elders, developed relationships with the Allied soldiers. This interaction led to the provision of food supplies from the village, fostering a deeper acquaintance between the villagers and the military personnel (Langshen, 2023).

During their movements to and from Dan, members of the Allied forces, with the acquaintance of Imtichuba, an Escort Commander from Chingmei village, regularly visited the home of Muzo in Thang village. This facilitated Muzo's introduction to the British army, who subsequently entrusted him with the task of preaching the gospel among the local population. The initial instance of laying the foundation of faith is documented as follows:

> A British officer conveyed the message to Muzo, through translation by Imtichuba, "through you, the church of God shall be established in this tribe." Muzo was subsequently introduced to Christian teachings on heaven, salvation, and hell. This initial exposure caused Muzo to experience a sense of internal conflict, delaying his conversion for a period of time. However, the consistent presence of British soldiers in the village is considered to have facilitated the gradual transition of Muzo and his peers away from their traditional religious practices. (Hangchiu, 1997, p. 1)

After the withdrawal of the Allied forces from Thang following the end of the Second World War, the initial efforts to introduce Christianity appeared to have subsided without immediate results. However, in February 1947, Imtichuba Chang visited Thang and preached the gospel, which convinced Muzo to embrace the new faith. Muzo then shared these

teachings with his relatives, and eventually, seven families decided to convert to Christianity. During that time, the Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang (ABAM) sent Rev. Onenlepden as an evangelist. In response to an invitation from Imtichuba, Rev. Onenlepden came to Thang and baptised the newly converted members at the Liin River on May 18, 1947.

The first baptised members as mentioned by Hangchiu(1997), from the tribe included Muzo, Songmo, Tsumang, Moun, Kushin, Shing, Honglin, Tsukian, Puji, Songmo, Shingnya, Sunga, and Songmao, all from Thang Village. These individuals became the first Baptist Christians among the Khiamniungans. At the time, no one within the community was available to serve as a pastor, leading Muzo to assume the role, becoming the first pastor among the Khiamniungans. He served as pastor from May 18, 1947 to March 24, 1951. In the absence of an established church, the new converts initially gathered for worship at Tsumang's residence, marking the early formation of a Christian congregation in the region.

The second church to be established in the Khiamniungan area occurred in Thangnokyan, a village neighbouring Thang. On March 19, 1948, Rev. Onenlepden and Mr. Imtichuba visited Thangnokyan. However, their initial contact with the villagers had taken place the previous year during the inauguration of Tuensang Town. Representatives from Thangnokyan, led by Thangsoi, who had been appointed as a Dobashi at Tuensang, attended the event. While in Tuensang, Thangsoi was introduced to Christian teachings by Rev. Onenlepden. Though persuaded by the message, Thangsoi sought approval from his family and relatives in Thangnokyan before embracing the new faith.

Upon returning to Thangnokyan, Thangsoi shared the teachings with his father, Sumo, and other family members, who expressed their willingness to accept the gospel. Subsequently, Rev. Onenlepden and Mr. Imtichuba were invited to the village, where they preached at Sumo’s residence. Their message was received positively, resulting in the

conversion of 68 individuals, all of whom were baptized by Rev. Onenlepden at the Laomong River on March 18, 1948. Following the baptism, several of the new converts were assigned roles within the emerging Christian community. Sumo was appointed as *Chaitaiupao* (treasurer), while Sangmong and Thangmeng were designated as *Dikon* (deacons). Thangsoi and Shampai were tasked with duties as *Ataodun* (helpers), and Hempao was given the role of *Lathio,* the one to ring the church bell (Pongu, et al., 1998).

During the Burma Campaign of the Second World War, a transit camp was established by British troops at Dan. Some local inhabitants assisted with various tasks at the camp. While stationed there, the British soldiers shared Christian teachings with the local population; however, these efforts did not lead to any significant interest or acceptance of the new faith at the time. In the course of traveling between Thang and Dan, the soldiers frequently crossed through Wolam. During these interactions, Imtichuba took the opportunity to preach the gospel to the villagers. His efforts resulted in the conversion of thirty individuals. Subsequently, Rev. Onenlepden was invited to the area, and on May 19, 1948, he baptised the new converts at the Laomong River (Pukha, et al., 2023).

The ABAM sent Mr. Jangpongwati as evangelist to work among the Khiamniungans in 1951. But owing to the political turmoil and situation, he was unable to continue the work and left in 1955. After him, Mr. Kajenchiba Ao was sent as an evangelist and Rev. Imtiluen as the Field Director. In the absence of proper church council or association, the evangelists were assisted and hosted by the first converts within their capacity by providing a place of stay and building a house for them. This set up the foundation of the Baptist Christianity in the Khiamniungan land. From there on, with the assistance of the evangelists and the believers of the first churches, the gospel spread to different villages and as far as the Khiamniungan lands in Burma (Myanmar). The spread of Christianity and the growth of

Baptist churches led to the formation of the Khiamniungan Baptist Churches Association (KBCA) in 1964.

6.3. Agents in the Development of Education

The beginning of education among the Khiamniungan tribe began in the latter half of the 20th century. The first known literate individual from the community was Khumo, a resident of Thang village. In 1948, an evangelist named Sungang Ao, brought by Imtichuba to Lengniu village, initiated the first recorded teaching process. Sungang Ao gathered children in the *morung* (a traditional communal house) and provided basic instruction in English, aiming to equip them with fundamental reading and writing skills. This marked the introduction of education within the Khiamniungan context. However, due to the subsequent discontinuation of efforts to establish a church in the village, the educational initiative was also abandoned, halting the progress of literacy development at that time (Putsong, 1997). Despite this setback, the foundation for education had been laid. The establishment of formal education in the region can be traced back to the period of the arrival of Christianity. The first school was established at Lengniu village in 1952 with the appointment of Mr. Imtitoshi as a teacher. Due to the outbreak of a conflict in the region, the school was eventually closed in 1954 (Shiu, 2012).

The second formal education institution bloomed in Noklak in 1952 (Sardeshpande, 2017). This was followed by the establishment of a government Lower Primary School at Noklak in 1953. The introduction of the formal education system was initially met with resistance among the Khiamniungan people. Predominantly an agrarian society, many viewed schooling as a disruption to their traditional way of life, associating it with fostering idleness, as children were required to remain in classrooms rather than participate in agricultural labor. Consequently, a significant number of parents discouraged their children from attending

school, prioritizing work over education. However, a few people recognized the potential benefits of education and, acknowledging its importance, chose to send their children to school despite prevailing societal attitudes. The introduction of these educational institutions played a pivotal role in transforming the social and economic framework of the Khiamniungan community.

6.4. Establishment of Civil Administration

In parallel with these developments, the introduction of a full-fledged civil administration in the Khiamniungan areas played a crucial role in the region's transformation. The Government of India established an administrative headquarters at Noklak during the era of the North-East Frontier Agency (N.E.F.A) in 1952, with the appointment of an Assistant Political Officer (APO). This marked the beginning of formal administrative oversight in the region, which laid the foundation for subsequent developments in local governance.

Noklak Town saw further advancements with its elevation to the status of Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) in 1982, and subsequently to Additional Deputy Commissioner in 1992. This progression reflected the increasing administrative importance of the area and the need for enhanced governance structures. On December 21, 2017, the Government of Nagaland officially upgraded Noklak as the 12th District of Nagaland. The establishment of these civil governance structures included the integration of traditional Khiamniungan leadership into the formal administrative framework.

6.5. Socio-Political Dynamics.

The period also saw the introduction of the Naga National Council (NNC) into the Khiamniungan areas, an event that further influenced the socio-political dynamics of the region. Under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo, the NNC began to engage with the

Khiamniungans in 1955, playing a crucial role in the articulation and recognition of their identity within the Naga movement. The NNC's activities in the Khiamniungan areas not only heightened political consciousness but also linked the community to the wider Naga struggle for autonomy and self-determination. Although the Khiamniungan people called themselves as *Khiamngans*, until the early 1950s, they were commonly referred to as *Kalyo-Kengyu,* a term that emerged from a misspelling of *Khelia Kengniu*, a phrase denoting the snow-clad mountain in their region (Lam, 2021). This appellation, however, did not accurately reflect the identity of the Khiamniungans, but rather served as a synonym derived from an external perception of their geographical environment. Additionally, British colonial administrators, operating within the constraints of their limited ethnographic knowledge, often labeled the Khiamniungans as *Eastern Changs*. This nomenclature was an oversimplification that ignored the distinctiveness of the Khiamniungan cultural and ethnic identity, conflating them with the neighboring Chang tribe. Consequently, in official records, especially in the enlistment of Dobashis—traditional Naga interpreters and legal aides—under British administration, the Khiamniungans were registered under the tribal designation of Eastern Changs, further obscuring their unique identity (Sardeshpande, 2017).

The turning point in the formal recognition of the Khiamniungan identity occurred in 1956, during a significant meeting of the Naga National Council (NNC) held in Lakhuti. It was at this meeting that the name "Khiamngan" was adopted to represent the people. Lam (2021) describes the unfolding of the event as follows:

> It was in 1956 in an NNC meeting that when Khaming, Pokho and Khumo were introduced by the tribe name of Kalyo Kengyu. Khaming reaffirmed to the rest of the Nagas that he is not familiar with such nomenclature and he belonged to a tribe name Khiamngan. Khiamngan (Water Source) is where the Khiamniungan claim to have

> originated and it is located at Noklak. Introducing himself to the gathering, Khaming replicated the traditional act of slaughtering a mithun where the place of origin Khiamngan is pronounced in the ceremonial ritual. Lifting up his dao he chanted *Khiamngan ko pong, janglao lao ku pong* (originated at Khiamngan). Hence, identification of the tribe as Khiamngan advanced. (p. 2-3)

This shift in nomenclature was part of a broader effort within the Naga community to assert and preserve tribal identities amidst growing political and social changes. The term "Khiamngan" reflected a move towards self-identification and a rejection of externally imposed labels. However, the evolution of the tribal name did not end there. In 1983, the name was further refined to "Khiamniungan," which better captured the phonetic and linguistic nuances of the tribe's own language and self-perception.

6.6. Continuity and Change

6.6.(1). Continuity and Change in the Social Structure and Organisation

The social structure of the Khiamniungan community, historically grounded in a familial and clan-based system, has experienced significant shifts while maintaining essential elements of its traditional framework. The family unit, operating within a patriarchal and patrilineal system, has traditionally functioned as the primary social institution. Kinship ties extended beyond the nuclear family through lineage and clan affiliations, fostering a cooperative system of resource sharing and collective responsibilities. Clans not only structured social relations but also regulated the distribution of communal duties, ensuring that each member had a clearly defined role within the broader community. Elders held considerable authority, acting as mediators in disputes and overseeing rituals, thereby reinforcing hierarchical leadership grounded in age and experience.

With the advancement in education and employment, new social dynamics have emerged. While the emphasis on the family remains central, the shift in lifestyle has affected the intimacy of kinship relations. Individuals now frequently relocate to urban areas, seeking education and employment opportunities, which has led to a weakening of everyday interactions and shared responsibilities that once characterised family and clan relations. Despite these changes, the clan system persists, though there has been a shift in leadership and the allocation of duties within clans. In the past, specific clan members held distinct responsibilities, such as overseeing jungle clearing, post-burn jhum preparation, and sowing (*eiuphongya, eiukamya, tsoukiya*). These roles, however, have largely been discontinued, with individual families now assuming responsibility for agricultural tasks. In these cases, the father or eldest male typically manages the jhum-related work.

Marriage customs have also undergone transformation. Traditional marriage practices, once marked by symbolic rituals and gestures, have largely been replaced by Christian ceremonies, reflecting both the influence of Christianity and a growing preference for more simplified, modern forms of union. Rituals such as animal sacrifices and the interpretation of omens have been replaced by church-led ceremonies or intimate family gatherings. The previous system of marriage has been largely abandoned in favor of Christian marriage, wherein a pastor or minister officiates the ceremony within a church setting. In cases where the couple opts out of a formal church ceremony, a small gathering of relatives from both families convenes to solemnize the union at the groom's home. During these gatherings, both families offer mutual encouragement: the bride is advised to manage the household and understand her husband's potential shortcomings, while the groom is counseled to care for his wife as a daughter, assisting and supporting her integration into the family. Regardless of the setting, a marriage feast is customary.

Divorce remains relatively uncommon among the Khiamniungans, though instances do occur. Divorce is typically pursued through mutual consent, and only when circumstances necessitate such action due to serious and genuine reasons. Social norms encourage reconciliation, even after divorce, through mediation efforts by friends, relatives, or family members. In cases where divorce involves church members, their names are typically removed from the church's baptized membership. Reinstatement into the church community occurs after a period, contingent upon approval by the church board.

6.6(2). Transformation of Agricultural Practices and Trade Systems

With the advent of modernization and external influences, including the introduction of Christianity, formal education, and governmental interventions, the traditional agricultural roles have experienced substantial changes. The once clan-dominated agricultural operations are now largely overseen by the *Gaonburas* and village councils, as highlighted by personal communication sources (Aokho, Peshu, 12th February, 2019). This shift has led to the decentralization of agricultural control, with leadership and decision-making regarding cultivation areas now being handled by elected or appointed village leaders rather than hereditary clan leaders. Additionally, the significance of rituals and ceremonial duties associated with agricultural practices has diminished. The emphasis on interpreting omens and performing sacrifices has decreased as modern agricultural techniques and Christian beliefs have permeated the community. The shift away from reliance on ritualistic practices has also led to a reduced role for individuals such as *Eiuphongya* and *Tsoukiya*, whose responsibilities were rooted in these traditions.

Women in the Khiamniungan society traditionally played critical roles in both agricultural and ritualistic activities. They were responsible for preserving worship materials, assisting in ceremonies, and ensuring the proper execution of offerings. However, with the

decline in ritualistic agricultural practices, the involvement of women in these roles has also changed. Modern agricultural practices do not require the same level of ritual observance, and as a result, the specific duties that women once held have transformed into more general roles in agriculture and household management. Nevertheless, women continue to play an essential role in agricultural production, particularly in the cultivation of crops and the preparation of food for communal events. However, the spiritual and ceremonial significance of their involvement has lessened as traditional practices have given way to contemporary farming methods.

The introduction of terrace cultivation by Pushen from Noklak village marked a significant shift in the agricultural practices of the Khiamniungan Naga community. This method, which involves creating plots on the steeped sloped terrain to facilitate farming, gradually gained significant importance and got embedded in the traditional agricultural practices. Shifting cultivation characterized by its cyclical pattern of clearing and cultivating land before moving to a new site, remains a prevalent agricultural practice within the community. However, the introduction of terrace cultivation has introduced a new dimension to agricultural practices, offering an alternative method to land management and crop production. Terrace cultivation involves constructing terraces along hillsides to prevent soil erosion, improve water retention, and optimize the use of sloped land for agricultural purposes. This method allows for more sustainable farming practices and enhances the efficiency of land use. The adoption of terrace cultivation has become a primary economic source of subsistence for a substantial portion of the population. The integrated terrace farming has been a boon in agricultural practices, wherein traditional shifting cultivation has been increasingly complemented both in produce and soil management. The integration of terrace cultivation into the agricultural system has led to changes in land management strategies, crop selection, and overall agricultural productivity.

Trade**:** Historically, trade among the Khiamniungan tribes was vital for both economic and socio-cultural exchange, serving as a bridge between isolated communities and fostering peace and cooperation in times of conflict. Trade extended beyond the community, connecting the Khiamniungans with other Naga tribes and facilitating the exchange of goods like iron tools, weapons, and textiles. Over time, this system, once centered around barter at neutral venues like Thang village, has evolved in response to external influences, leading to the development of modern trade practices that reflect broader regional and global economic trends.

The establishment of civil administration introduced modern market structures and the Indian currency, which streamlined commodity transactions and facilitated broader economic interactions. The historical barter centers of Thang and Wolam have since been rendered obsolete by these developments. In contemporary times, the International Trade Centre at Dan has emerged as the new epicenter of trade, revitalizing economic activity in the region. This center operates annually, with traders from Myanmar bringing their products for sale and Indian goods being transported from Noklak. Sardeshpande (2017) provides the following observation regarding the persistence of the barter system

> Business has increased in regard to barter or sale of cows and buffaloes brought from Assam plains and sold in border villages, particularly around Christmas and other Sansari festivals. Mithun, pigs and even buffaloes from Burma are similarly brought and resold. Konyaks of adjoining Chingnyu, Yangkhao, Pesao and Tankong have regular business contacts in Pangsha, Noklak and Nokyan. Ponyo, Tsawlaw, Tsaplaw and Kimphu in Burma also join. Daos and spears of Ponyo and Kemphu are a great favourite in Pangsha, Noklak and Yangkhao. (P. 81)

This transition from traditional barter systems to contemporary trade practices demonstrates the continuity and change within the Khiamniungan economic landscape. While traditional trade practices laid the foundation for economic and cultural exchanges, modern mechanisms have adapted and expanded these interactions, reflecting broader regional and global influences. This continuity amidst change underscores the resilience and adaptability of the Khiamniungan trade practices within the evolving socio-economic framework.

6.6(3). Change in Political system

The political structure of the Khiamniungan community is fundamentally based on a clan-based system, lacking formal central authority such as a chief or king. The family head, typically the father, represented his family in political matters, reflecting the community's patriarchal and patrilineal organization. Clan elders from different clans were responsible for making decisions and overseeing village activities. This system of governance was characterized by a hierarchical structure, where elders, endowed with considerable authority, served as mediators in disputes and managed important communal rituals. This hierarchical leadership was grounded in age, experience, and traditional authority, with clans and elders effectively structuring political relations and managing communal responsibilities.

The shift from traditional clan-based roles to a system dominated by village councils and government policies represents one of the most profound changes in the Khiamniungan community. Modern governance structures, particularly through village councils and the role of *Gaonburas* (village elders), have replaced the hereditary leadership of clans in many aspects of village life, including agricultural decision-making.

The Gaonburas, as custodians of customary law and local governance, serve as a bridge between traditional roles and the demands of the modern administrative system.

Despite the profound socio-cultural transformations, the customary laws of the Khiamniungan Nagas remain integral to their social fabric. This persistence is evident in the traditional system of dispute resolution, which continues to be upheld by elders or clan leaders. This method of mediation relies on the authority of respected figures well-versed in customary laws, ensuring that resolutions are deeply rooted in established traditions and collective historical understanding.

The traditional mediation system utilizes the authoritative knowledge of elders, offering a culturally resonant approach to conflict resolution that aligns with the values and norms of the people. This system provides an alternative to modern legal mechanisms, which may not fully encapsulate the community's unique cultural and historical context. The importance of historical legitimacy is underscored by the practice of prioritizing claims from original landowners and their descendants, even as contemporary legal frameworks increasingly govern land issues. This practice maintains a crucial link to the historical and cultural heritage. By providing a culturally grounded alternative to modern legal systems, these practices ensure that traditional values and communal consensus continue to shape conflict resolution in the present day.

The cessation of inter-village warfare among the Khiamniungan communities during the 1960s represents a significant shift in the region's socio-political landscape, influenced by the introduction of Christianity and the establishment of formal administrative structures. The transition away from this traditional practice was a gradual and complex process, with the precise timeline of its decline being challenging to determine due to sporadic incidents of conflict that persisted during this period. Christian missionaries, particularly those from other Naga tribes, played a pivotal role in the pacification efforts that contributed to the decline of inter-village warfare. Christian missionaries, particularly those from other Naga tribes, played

a pivotal role in the pacification efforts that contributed to the decline of inter-village warfare. Their influence was instrumental in promoting Christian doctrines that emphasized peace, forgiveness, and the renunciation of violence, which contrasted sharply with the long-standing customs of retribution and conflict resolution through warfare. These missionaries were not acting in isolation; their efforts were bolstered by local converts who had embraced Christianity and who became advocates for peace within their communities. The newly converted Christian leaders and followers worked alongside the missionaries, utilizing their influence and moral authority to mediate conflicts and encourage a departure from the cycle of violence.

The establishment of administrative structures also contributed to the reduction of inter-village warfare. The imposition of formal governance mechanisms introduced a new framework for conflict resolution that relied on legal and administrative procedures rather than traditional forms of violence. The introduction of laws and the presence of administrative officials provided alternative means for addressing grievances, which gradually reduced the reliance on warfare as a method of dispute resolution. However, the transition was neither immediate nor uniform across the Khiamniungan areas. While the broader trend indicates a decline in warfare by the 1960s, localized incidents of revenge and violent retaliation continued to occur sporadically. These incidents suggest that the cultural shift away from traditional practices of warfare was uneven and that remnants of the old customs persisted alongside the new influences of Christianity and formal administration.

6.6(4).Changes in Religious Practices

In traditional Khiamniungan belief, the deity known as 'Goa' was central to agricultural rituals, with offerings and ceremonies dedicated to this god to ensure favorable outcomes in farming. Conversely, 'biya' represented malevolent forces believed to be

responsible for adverse events in the community's life. The Khiamniungans traditionally held that upon death, spirits of the deceased traveled to Thang village, underwent a purification ritual, and subsequently journeyed to Sukekhan cave before entering the spirit realm. However, this belief has undergone significant transformation with the advent of Christianity, which has shifted the understanding of the afterlife to a dichotomy of heaven and hell.

Before the arrival of Christianity, specific clans were designated to initiate agricultural activities and were responsible for communal prayers and rituals. This role has largely been supplanted by Christian practices; pastors and deacons now lead prayers for agricultural endeavors within church settings. Additionally, the traditional practice of animal sacrifice, particularly chickens, to appease 'Goa' and secure a good harvest has been discontinued. Festivals such as Tsokum and Beiam formerly involved communal feasting accompanied by prayers for crop growth and village prosperity. Traditional rites, including the ceremonial use of the logdrum and prayers by landowners, were overseen by designated religious figures, such as the Meya, who was responsible for conducting religious ceremonies, handling ritualistic practices, and maintaining sacred relics.

The role of traditional spiritual leaders, such as the *Khaiutaiu Meya* (who handled the preservation of skulls and fire-related rituals) and *Anouvepao* (responsible for disseminating public information about festivals and genna days) have seen their traditional roles evolve or fade altogether. In the past, these individuals played a crucial role in guiding the community through ritual observances, such as ensuring successful harvests. Today, pastors and church leaders have taken over these responsibilities, emphasizing the Christian faith and its observances. Sunday services have replaced the traditional *genna* or taboo days, reflecting the community's transition from their indigenous beliefs to Christian worship.

Despite these changes, the significance of these transformations cannot be understated. The adoption of Christianity has reshaped the identity, values, and worldview of the people, moving away from an intricate web of beliefs that connected them to their land, ancestors, and spiritual world. Yet, these traditional beliefs and practices, though now largely abandoned, continue to hold historical and cultural significance. They offer insights into the pre-Christian worldviews of the Khiamniungan people, showcasing how their ancestors navigated life, death, and the natural world.

Funerary practices among the Khiamniungan people have historically been deeply rooted in communal traditions, particularly those associated with the "*Oh-wan*" ritual and the exposure of deceased bodies on raised platforms. The transition from the traditional practice of exposing the deceased on raised platforms to burial among the Khiamniungan people represents a profound shift in both the religious and practical dimensions of their funerary customs. This practice, which once held significant cultural and ritualistic value, faced mounting challenges primarily related to hygiene. Over time, the decomposition fluids from exposed bodies began to drip onto animals such as dogs and pigs, causing unpleasant odors that became increasingly intolerable for families. These fluids, combined with the proximity of communal buildings and main footpaths near the exposure sites, disrupted daily life and communal activities, further highlighting the need for change. The burgeoning influence of education and the establishment of student unions, which emphasized modern hygiene standards, played a critical role in this transition. Despite initial resistance from family members who were reluctant to abandon traditional practices, student leaders championed the move to burial as a more hygienic alternative, even taking the initiative to dig graves themselves to facilitate the shift.

The significance of these changes extends beyond mere practicality. The adoption of burial practices addressed urgent health concerns and reflected a broader adaptation to modern standards of cleanliness and public health. This shift also signifies a deeper societal transformation, driven by the increasing influence of Christianity and educational reforms. The transition from animistic rituals, which involved the exposure of the dead and the veneration of natural landmarks, to Christian funeral rites underscores the impact of new religious and social frameworks on traditional customs. Despite the move away from the exposure practice, the community has demonstrated a strong commitment to preserving its cultural heritage. Efforts to relocate skulls and other ritual materials to safer locations exemplify this dedication to maintaining historical and cultural artifacts amidst evolving practices. This transition not only highlights the community's ability to adapt to modernity but also underscores its resilience in balancing the preservation of cultural traditions with the demands of contemporary life.

6.6(5). Transformations in Material Culture and Social Institutions

Impact on Material Culture: The introduction of Christianity to the Khiamniungan communities brought about significant cultural transformations, some of which had far-reaching implications. Among the more controversial aspects of this cultural shift was the directive, propagated by certain religious leaders, to abandon traditional attire, particularly those garments and accessories associated with warfare and the celebration of victories. These items, which held deep cultural and symbolic significance, were often labeled as cursed or spiritually tainted within the framework of the new Christian doctrine. As a result, villagers were encouraged or, in some cases, compelled to discard these traditional items, with many being buried or otherwise destroyed to sever ties with what was perceived as a pagan past (Personal Communication: Shing, Thang, 16th January, 2020).

This process of cultural erasure led to the irrevocable loss of numerous original components of Khiamniungan material culture. The attire in question, often intricately crafted and rich in symbolic meaning, represented not only the martial history of the communities but also their artistic and cultural heritage. The loss of these items has had a great impact on the collective memory and identity of the Khiamniungan people. Many of these traditional garments and accessories, which were integral to the community's rituals and social ceremonies, have become exceedingly rare or entirely unavailable in contemporary times. The destruction of these cultural artifacts has contributed to a significant gap in the material record of the Khiamniungan people, making it difficult for future generations to access and understand the full spectrum of their ancestral heritage.

This disruption is documented by Nshoga (2009), who observes that Christianity significantly penetrated traditional Naga villages, fundamentally altering core village institutions and communal life. The introduction of Christian practices led to the decline of traditional religious customs, morung institutions, and other cultural elements, forcing the Nagas to abandon their established traditions and adopt a new cultural framework. The evangelical efforts of Christian missionaries not only aimed at religious conversion but also acted as agents of socio-cultural transformation, reshaping Naga culture and religious practices from within. This phenomenon reflects a common pattern observed in the interaction between missionary activities and indigenous cultures during the religious conversion period. The push to modernize indigenous communities often involved the suppression or outright rejection of traditional practices and material culture, which were viewed as incompatible with the new religious ideologies. While the missionaries' efforts were often motivated by a desire to bring about spiritual and moral reform, the unintended consequence was a deep disruption of the cultural continuity that had sustained these communities for generations.

The loss of traditional attire among the Khiamniungans is emblematic of the cultural destruction that accompanied the spread of Christianity in the region. While the new faith brought certain benefits, such as education and healthcare, it also facilitated a process of cultural homogenization that has had lasting repercussions. The erosion of material culture, particularly in the form of traditional attire, represents not merely a loss of physical artifacts but also a weakening of the cultural and historical identity that these items embodied.

Impact on Traditonal Social Institutions: The social institutions of the morung and dormitory have experienced significant transformation under the influence of modernity. Historically, the morung served as a crucial social institution, functioning as a communal space where young men were initiated into the customs, traditions, and responsibilities of adult life. It was in these dormitories that the youth learned skills, participated in communal activities, and absorbed the cultural values that would guide them throughout their lives. The morung was not merely a physical structure but a cornerstone of the life of men. The morungs, while still present in many villages, have been reconstructed with modern architectural techniques, leading to alterations in their traditional design and function. Although these structures are being built with greater attention to architectural detail and durability, the essence of their original purpose as centers of communal gathering and cultural transmission has diminished. The traditional role of the morung as a vibrant social hub has been largely eroded, as the activities that once took place within these spaces have either ceased or been significantly reduced. In many villages, morungs are now utilized as storage spaces for housing materials such as timber, palm leaves, and firewood, reflecting a shift in their functional role within the community (Personal Communication: Pukho, Pathso, 7th March, 2021).

The dormitories, in particular, have fallen into disuse, with their original function as communal living spaces for young people no longer relevant in contemporary village life. The decline in the use of dormitories indicates the impact of modern education and lifestyle changes on the Khiamniungan community. With the introduction of formal education systems, children and young adults now attend schools and colleges, where they receive education and socialization in environments far removed from the traditional settings of the morung and dormitory (Personal Communication: Suthem, Thang, 27th February, 2019). This shift has contributed to the fragmentation of communal life, as the younger generation increasingly engages with the world beyond the village, leaving behind the communal practices that once defined their upbringing.

Logdrum: The decline in the use of the logdrum among the Khiamniungan Nagas reflects broader shifts in social, cultural, and technological landscapes. Traditionally, the log drum was not just a tool for communication but a symbol of unity, identity, and power. It played an integral role in signaling key events like village defense, victory in war, ritual ceremonies, and even cosmic occurrences such as solar and lunar eclipses.

The immediate and far-reaching nature of modern tools has replaced the slow, communal process of gathering around the log drum to convey messages or conduct ceremonies. In addition, the introduction of Western-style governance, education, and religion has shifted the focus of community organization away from traditional practices, diminishing the role of both the morung and the log drum in daily life. As society has evolved, the ceremonial functions tied to the log drum have also faded. Rituals like the Feasts of Merit, the purification rites for returning warriors, and the ceremonial beating of the drum during festivals and eclipses have gradually lost relevance.

Despite this decline, the cultural significance of the log drum remains deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of the community. It serves as a symbol of the rich history, their warrior ethos, and the communal bonds that once unified their villages. The sheer size and presence of the log drum, crafted from hollowed-out trees, spoke of the strength and unity, while the intricate rituals associated with it reflected a deep connection to the natural and spiritual world.

In many ways, the decline of the log drum represents the fading of a once-vibrant cultural fabric. Yet, efforts to preserve these drums as cultural heritage artifacts offer a means of maintaining a connection to the past. The log drum's historical role as both a practical instrument and a ceremonial object underscores its importance in understanding the socio-cultural evolution of the Khiamniungan people. While its sounds may have become smaller or reduced, the legacy of the log drum continues to resonate through the symbolic meanings it carries within the community's evolving identity.

Impacts on Traditional Crafts: The resurgence of interest in traditional attire among the Khiamniungan people has spurred a renewed emphasis on the production and use of bamboo and cane materials. Over the past two decades, this revival has significantly increased the demand for traditional basketry and related crafts. The renewed cultural appreciation for traditional clothing has led to a greater emphasis on incorporating these materials into various aspects of daily life, including the creation of traditional baskets and other woven items.Growing popularity of the indigenous items have gained much interest and attention letting to the revaluation of indigenous craftsmanship, where traditional practices are being revitalized in response to contemporary cultural and aesthetic preferences. (Personal Communication: Thangsoi, Thang, 27th December, 2020).

Iron works has seen notable growth. The advent of modern machinery has facilitated advancements in the refinement and production of iron tools, including daos (machetes). This technological development has led to increased efficiency and precision in iron works, contributing to a heightened demand for these tools. The expansion of iron-smithing operations has responded to the growing need for high-quality, durable tools, driven by both traditional and contemporary requirements (Personal Communication: Shingnyu, Wui, 20th March, 2020).

In contrast to the revival observed in basketry and iron works, the practice of pottery among the Khiamniungan people has experienced a marked decline, primarily due to the widespread adoption of modern utensils and cookware. The availability and convenience of contemporary kitchenware have diminished the reliance on traditional pottery, leading to a significant reduction in its practice. Today their usage is largely validated to specific purposes such as souvenirs, collections, or gifts. These pots have now predominantly transitioned into cultural artifacts rather than functional kitchenware. Traditional earthen pots are primarily retained as mementos of visits to culturally significant areas such as Wui village or as part of collections of traditional items (Personal Communication: Lemloi, Wui, 22nd March, 2020).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The socio-economic systems of indigenous tribal communities, particularly those of the Khiamniungan Nagas, vividly illustrate the profound and intricate relationship between human societies and their environmental contexts. This dynamic interplay, wherein economic practices, social structures, religious beliefs, and political frameworks are shaped and continuously adapted to the ecological conditions of their region, offers a rich tapestry of how these systems evolve. Understanding these interconnections is essential for grasping the mechanisms that drive the evolution and functioning of these communities.

In this study, the research problem has been thoroughly addressed by exploring how the socio-economic systems of the Khiamniungan Nagas are intricately shaped by their environmental contexts. This investigation focused on understanding the dynamic interplay between cultural and ecological factors and how these interactions influence the community's economic practices, social organisation, religious beliefs, and political structures. The research has successfully established a significant correlation between environmental factors and the socio-economic formation of the Khiamniungan Nagas, demonstrating how traditional economic systems are adapted to ecological conditions through ritualistic practices and sustainable agricultural methods. Additionally, the study has highlighted the crucial role of trade in fostering social cohesion, cultural exchange, and regional stability, illustrating its impact on wealth accumulation and social status.

Furthermore, the research has provided an in-depth analysis of traditional crafts, such as textile production and basketry, emphasising their connection to local resources and their role in sustainable resource management. It has explored the importance of rituals and

beliefs, including sacred sites and festivals, in shaping socio-economic dynamics and community identity. The findings support the hypotheses that the Khiamniungan socio-economic systems are closely linked to environmental adaptation and that trade interactions with other Naga tribes are evident through material culture. However, the study refutes the initial consideration of megalithic traditions among the Khiamniungan Nagas, finding no substantial evidence of such practices. Instead, the research underscores the community's unique socio-economic practices and traditions, highlighting a resilient and adaptive framework that continues to sustain their cultural integrity and regional stability.

The Khiamniungan Nagas' historical and cultural evolution provides a profound example of how environmental adaptation and societal development intersect. Their migration history, including the strategic relocation of the Hempu and Thang groups to more hospitable areas, underscores their adeptness at responding to environmental challenges and shaping their socio-economic and cultural landscapes. This adaptability is mirrored in their social structure, which is characterised by a dynamic clan-based hierarchy that balances stability with flexibility. Despite its patriarchal framework, the community values the substantial roles of women in domestic life, agriculture, and cultural practices, reflecting a complementary balance essential for communal cohesion and continuity.

Marriage customs within the Khiamniungan community, characterised by strict monogamy and exogamy, play a pivotal role in maintaining social order and genetic diversity. The ceremonial aspects of marriage, including symbolic rituals and the exchange of gifts, reinforce social bonds and communal harmony. Conversely, divorce, though permitted under specific circumstances, is governed by customary penalties that underscore the community's commitment to preserving family integrity and social stability. These practices highlight how deeply embedded marriage and divorce are within the cultural and social fabric

of the community. Naming practices reflect a unique emphasis on cultural identity, with simple names that signify lineage and heritage. The ceremonies associated with naming, including gender-specific rituals and the use of protective symbols, illustrate the community's focus on maintaining cultural continuity. Similarly, funerary practices, once characterised by traditional methods of body exposure and ritualistic customs, have evolved in response to modern influences such as education and Christianity. This transition from traditional to contemporary methods exemplifies the community's ability to adapt while preserving its cultural heritage.

Agricultural practices, particularly jhum cultivation and millet farming, are central to the economic and cultural life. The meticulous planning and execution involved in these practices, including ritualistic elements and the structured sowing calendar for millet, reveal the connection of the people to their environment and their sophisticated understanding of seasonal patterns. The integration of traditional knowledge with environmental management underscores the commitment of the society to sustainable practices and cultural preservation.

The research highlights the intricate and interconnected nature of the agricultural and economic systems of the Khiamniungan Nagas, emphasising how these systems are embedded in cultural traditions and environmental management. Central to their agricultural practices is jhum cultivation, a method reflecting their profound understanding of environmental rhythms and cultural heritage. This method includes phases like jungle clearing, burning, and detailed field preparation, each imbued with ritualistic significance that integrates spiritual beliefs with practical farming needs. Mithun rearing is another cornerstone of their agricultural system, blending economic value with cultural respect. The practices surrounding mithun, such as selective place for keeping and penalties for theft, demonstrate a sophisticated approach to livestock management that aligns with local ecological conditions.

This practice not only serves economic purposes but also reinforces social status and cultural values.

Trade plays a vital role in the Khiamniungan economy, with central marketplaces like those in Thang village acting as hubs for resource distribution, social networking, and cultural exchange. The barter system, which facilitates equitable exchanges based on necessity rather than fixed prices, supports specialised skills and crafts within the community. This system allows for the equitable distribution of resources and strengthens inter-village relationships, even though trade activities are intermittent due to conflicts.

Hunting and wild game collection are also significant, reflecting the adaptability and cultural reverence for their environment. The folktale of Hangmeng underscores the cultural importance and risks associated with hunting, illustrating its role in the economic and cultural life. Honey bee harvesting, particularly the collection of Himalayan Giant Honey Bees (*Jinlei*), further demonstrates the community's emphasis on collective effort and cultural significance. This practice not only addresses practical needs but also reinforces social bonds through traditional rituals.

Cotton cultivation and traditional textile production in Choklangan village highlight the integration of environmental sustainability with cultural preservation. Women in Choklangan are central to this process, overseeing the extraction, treatment and weaving of plant fibre using natural fibre derived from local plants of *hiam* and *ehthso*. This practice connects the community to their cultural heritage while ensuring environmental responsibility.

The research delineates the Khiamniungan Nagas' extensive tradition of craftsmanship, encompassing basketry, pottery, log drum creation, and the construction of

morungs and youth dormitories. These practices are foundational to their cultural identity, with bamboo, cane, and specialised soil types serving critical roles in their execution. Log drums function as significant cultural and communicative instruments, while morungs and youth dormitories are central to social organisation and cultural continuity within the community. Nonetheless, there has been a discernible decline in these traditional practices, attributed to the forces of modernisation and evolving social dynamics.

The reduction in the utilisation of cultural symbols such as morungs and log drums reflects the broader impact of modernisation on the Khiamniungan's cultural heritage. This transition towards modern, work-oriented lifestyles has precipitated a loss of cultural continuity and identity, further compounded by the influence of education and Christianity. The perceived obsolescence of traditional practices, in favor of modern norms, has accelerated this erosion.

The research findings indicate that the warfare practices and the Khaiulak Am ritual among the Khiamniungan Nagas exemplify a complex interaction between cultural beliefs and socio-economic factors. War and taking of head, a practice symbolising prosperity and fertility, also functioned as a tool for social stratification and the preservation of collective memory. The *Khaiulak Am* ritual, addressing adversity through its ceremonial rites, highlights the approach of the tribe to maintaining balance and well-being. The economic implications of these practices are substantial, as evidenced by the financial burden of post-battle feasts and the trade disruptions resulting from conflicts. These disruptions underscore the economic strain and complexity inherent in sustaining these traditions. Additionally, the rituals contribute to cultural continuity and spiritual protection, with associated taboos and purification rites fostering a sense of responsibility and safety within the community.

The significant transformations in the governance, religious practices, material culture, and social institutions of the Khiamniungan tribe are highlighted as a finding of the research. The shift from clan-based leadership to formal village councils reflects modern administrative influence, yet customary laws and dispute resolution methods remain central to the community's heritage. The spread of Christianity has replaced indigenous belief systems, altering rituals and spiritual leadership. Traditional attire and cultural artifacts were lost due to Christian teachings, diminishing the community's material culture and identity. Social institutions such as the *morung* and logdrum have declined, while certain crafts like basketry and iron works have seen a resurgence, showing the community's adaptation to modernity. These findings underscore the Khiamniungans' balance between preserving traditions and embracing modern changes.

Limitations: The limited availability of books and scanty research on the Khiamniungan tribe poses a significant limitation to the study, as it restricts the breadth of secondary sources and scholarly comparisons available to support or challenge the findings. Due to the lack of comprehensive secondary sources, much of the data relied on primary sources, such as personal interviews and observations. While these firsthand accounts provided valuable insights, they are inherently shaped by individual perspectives, memory, and social context, which may have influenced the accuracy and completeness of the information collected.

Moreover, the heavy reliance on fieldwork and interviews introduced the possibility of subjectivity and bias**.** Cultural sensitivities and differing interpretations of local customs may have impacted the understanding of complex cultural practices, such as rituals, belief systems, and social structures. Additionally, given that this research was conducted largely through observation and direct interaction with community members**,** there is the risk that it

reflects a current snapshot of practices rather than capturing their long-term evolution or adaptation to modernisation. These challenges, while unavoidable given the constraints, are acknowledged as limitations that may have influenced the breadth and depth of the findings and interpretations in this study.

Future research could build on the findings of this study by exploring several key areas. One promising direction is a deeper examination of the long-term impact of modernisation on traditional practices, especially the ongoing interaction between Christianity, formal education, and customary laws. While the study touched on modern influences, further investigation into how these forces reshape cultural practices, identity, and social cohesion over generations would provide valuable insights into the adaptive capacities of the Khiamniungan Nagas.

Another area worth exploring is the role of women in socio-economic systems**,** particularly in agriculture, textile production, and rituals. Although this study acknowledges their contributions, future research could delve into how evolving gender dynamics, influenced by modernisation and changing economic needs, are affecting women's roles and their cultural significance within the community. Additionally, the inter-village trade and economic exchange**s** deserve more focused research. The study emphasises the importance of trade but leaves questions about the full extent of these interactions with other Naga tribes and external communities. Investigating the evolving nature of barter systems, market networks, and the role of trade in social hierarchy could shed light on economic diversification and resilience.

The study raised questions about the preservation of intangible cultural heritage**,** particularly as traditional practices such as morung construction and log drum use decline. Research into the mechanisms through which cultural knowledge is passed down to younger

generations, especially in the face of modernisation, could provide strategies for cultural preservation.

The absence of megalithic traditions among the Khiamniungan Nagas, as found in the study, opens the door for a comparative study with neighboring tribes that practice megalithic traditions. Understanding why certain cultural practices emerge in one community but not another could offer valuable insights into the socio-cultural evolution of the Naga tribes. By addressing these areas, future research could fill existing gaps and contribute to a more holistic understanding of the Khiamniungan Nagas' socio-economic systems, cultural resilience, and environmental adaptation.

The research significantly contributes to the field of indigenous studies by providing an in-depth exploration of the socio-economic systems of the Khiamniungan Nagas, highlighting the intricate connections between cultural practices, environmental adaptation, and community identity. By examining traditional economic systems such as jhum cultivation, millet farming, and mithun rearing, the study advances the understanding of how indigenous communities sustainably manage their resources and adapt to ecological conditions. The research also sheds light on the role of rituals, beliefs, and crafts in shaping socio-economic dynamics, offering new insights into the integration of cultural heritage with economic and environmental practices.

Additionally, the study corrects earlier misinterpretations of practices like marriage by capture and divorce, contributing to a more accurate representation of Khiamniungan customs. It also enhances knowledge about the community's trade systems, revealing the importance of barter and social exchange in fostering cohesion and regional stability. The study's analysis of declining traditional practices, such as the use of log drums and morungs,

offers valuable reflections on the impacts of modernisation, prompting discussions on cultural preservation.

The Khiamniungan Nagas, once distinguished by their rich material culture, now face the challenge of preserving their tangible and intangible heritage amidst the encroaching forces of modernity and educational advancements. Historically, the Khiamniungan society was defined by distinctive cultural markers such as traditional attire, morungs, and log drums, which played crucial roles in communal identity and social harmony. However, the decline in the use of these cultural symbols, driven by a broader narrative of modernisation and the perceived need to integrate into a globalised world, has led to a significant erosion of this cultural heritage. The diminishing presence of morungs, once central to communal activities and socialisation, reflects a broader shift towards more modern, work-oriented lifestyles that often sideline traditional practices. Similarly, the decline in the use of log drums, which were once integral to ceremonial and daily life, underscores a loss of cultural continuity and identity. This decline has been further compounded by a prevailing sentiment that traditional practices are antiquated and in need of replacement by modern norms.

However, it is imperative to recognise that the preservation and revival of these cultural elements are not merely acts of nostalgia but essential for maintaining the unique identity and historical continuity of the Khiamniungan people. Efforts to reinvigorate tangible aspects of their culture, such as traditional attire, pottery, and communal spaces like morungs, alongside intangible cultural expressions like folk songs, dances, and chants, are crucial for sustaining the cultural vitality of the community. Such initiatives would not only honor the rich heritage of the Khiamniungans but also provide a framework for integrating traditional practices within the contemporary context. This approach would ensure that the Khiamniungan cultural legacy remains vibrant and relevant, bridging the gap between past

and present and reaffirming the community's cultural identity amidst ongoing social transformations.

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List of Personal Communications

Place/ Village	Name of the Interviewee	Age	Sex	Date & Year
Peshu Village	Pehia	84 Years	Male	12-02-2019
	Aokho	92 Years	Male	12-02-2019
	K. Thangyo	48 Years	Male	13-02-2019
	K. Tamong	47 Years	Male	13-02-2019
	Thangpong	45 Years	Male	13-02-2019
	Neio	79 Years	Male	13-02-2019
	Khumo	77 Years	Male	14-02-2019
	Mongtei	95 Years	Male	15-02-2019
	Phaoum	75 Years	Female	15-02-2019
	L. Chillio	85 Years	Male	15-02-2019
	Cheye	90 Years	Male	15-02-2019
Thang Village	Buhiu	96 Years	Male	21-01-2019
	-do-			24-01-2019
	-do-			29-01-2019
	-do-			26-02-2019
	-do-			21-01- 2020
	Menya	84 Years	Male	30-01-2019
	-do-			04-02-2019
	Suthem	93 Years	Male	31-01-2019
	-do-			26-01-2019
	-do-			03-02-2019
	-do-			26-02-2019
	Thengeu	79 Years	Male	21-01-2019
	-do-			24-02-2019
	Lam	69 Years	Male	24-01-2019
	Thangsoi	83 Years	Male	27-12-2020
	-do-			21-01-2020
	-do-			09-02-2021

Place/ Village	Name of the Interviewee	Age	Sex	Date & Year
Thang Village	Thangsoi	83 Years	Male	10-02-2021
	Shiem	78 Years	Female	08-01-2020
	-do-			08-02-2021
	Tsuchoi	82 Years	Female	08-01-2020
	-do-			02-01-2022
	-do-			05-01-2022
	Themsai	75 Years	Female	08-01-2020
	-do-			02-01-2022
	-do-			05-01-2022
	Pushing	41 Years	Male	16-01-2020
	Lamthaiu	86 Years	Male	12-01-2020
	Chemtong	58 Years	Male	21-01-2020
	Khunyu	37 Years	Male	29-12-2020
	Buniom	83 Years	Male	05-02-2022
	-do-			05-09-2022
	-do-			09-09-2022
	Tsumang	55 Years	Male	05-09-2022
	-do-			28-12-2022
	Lungoi	28 Years	Male	12-09-2022
	Shing	29 Years	Male	12-09-2022
	-do-			26-12-2022
	Mongchon	46	Male	26-12-2022
	Pushong	43	Male	26-12-2022
Noklak Town	Beshim	77 Years	Male	13-02-2020
Wolam Nyukyan Village	T. Hangchiu	78 Years	Male	16-02-2020
	-do-			17-02-2020
	Tongthan	82 Years	Male	17-02-2020
Nokhu Nokeng Village	Longsham	82 Years	Male	20-02-2020
	Tanghiu	80 Years	Male	21-02-2020

Place/ Village	Name of the Interviewee	Age	Sex	Date & Year
Nokhu Nokeng Village	Heme	63 Years	Male	21-02-2020
	Henkong	29 Years	Male	21-02-2020
Wui Village	Khelemong	56 Years	Male	19-03- 2020
	Lemloi	76 Years	Female	22-03-2020
	Shingnyu	30 Years	Male	22-03-2020
Pathso Nokeng Village	Lusha	66 Years	Male	07-03-2021
	Pukho	75 Years	Male	07-03-2021
	Sangtsui	77 Years	Male	07-03-2021
Choklangan Village	Sene	41 Years	Male	13-02- 2022
	Chem	46 Years	Male	13-02- 2022
	Pawon	61 Years	Male	13-02- 2022
	Longtso	53 Years	Female	13-02- 2022
	Lunen	51 Years	Female	13-02- 2022
	Lemloi	72 Years	Female	13-02- 2022
	Poloi	62 Years	Female	13-02- 2022
	Koniu	48 Years	Female	13-02- 2022
	Sudem	78 Years	Male	13-02- 2022
Kohima	Revd. N. Bomo	67 Years	Kohima	02-08-2018

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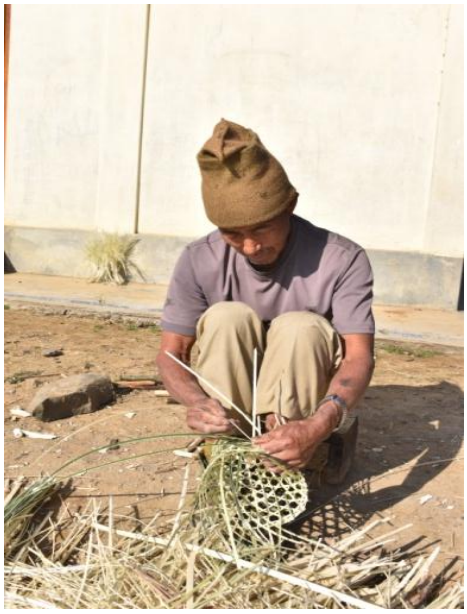

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