

SOCIETY AND CULTURE OF THE ANGAMI NAGAS
A CASE STUDY OF KOHIMA VILLAGE

Thesis Submitted to Nagaland University in Partial Fulfilment for the award
Of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

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DECLARATION

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

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

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the research data presented in this accompanying dissertation titled **Society and Culture of the Angami Nagas: “A Case Study of Kohima Village”** has been carried out by Ms. Medongu-ü Khruomo bearing Regd. No. 802/2018 Dated: 24/03/2017 under my guidance and supervision. The present work is original in its content and has not been submitted in part or whole for any other degree or diploma in any other University/ Institute.

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

Dated:

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Medongu-ü Khruomo

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ABSTRACT

The study of Kohima Village provides an in-depth analysis of the society and culture of the Angami Nagas, with a particular focus on the socio-cultural dynamics and historical context of Kohima (Kewhira). This research addresses the significant loss of historical and cultural artefacts due to events such as the Manipuri expedition of 1853 and three major fires in 1904, 1923, and 1944, which left the village without written records. The paper emphasises the urgency of documenting and preserving the unique traditions and values of Kohima Village amidst the challenges posed by modernisation and cultural dilution.

Kohima Village, recognised as the largest village among the Nagas and the second largest in Asia, faces complex issues related to its origin, migration, and settlement patterns. The study aims to unravel the mysteries of its beginnings, the diverse routes of migration, and the establishment of the village by examining oral traditions and scant historical records. It highlights the need for a comprehensive, consensus-based historical document to maintain the village's identity and cultural heritage.

The research investigates the impact of modernisation and globalisation on the traditional practices and social dynamics of Kohima Village. It examines the village's historical social structure, characterised by kinship ties and communal unity, and the transformations brought about by external influences, such as the British colonial administration and American missionaries. The establishment of the Kohima Village Student Union in 1936 and subsequent social reforms are analysed for their role in promoting unity and peace.

The study utilises both primary and secondary data, gathered through fieldwork, interviews, participation in cultural events, and consultation of archival materials. The findings underscore the importance of preserving Kohima's rich cultural heritage, documenting the histories of its seven clans, and addressing the challenges of maintaining

traditional values in an increasingly complex environment. By doing so, it aims to safeguard the village's legacy for future generations and contribute to the broader understanding of Naga history and culture.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nagaland: An outline

Nagaland was historically recognised as the Naga Hills District, constituting a part of the state of Assam until 1963. The transformation of Nagaland into a state can be traced back to 1960 when the 16-point agreement was reached between the Prime Minister of India and the Naga People Convention. Subsequently, Nagaland achieved statehood through the enactment act of 1962 and was officially inaugurated on December 1st, 1963, becoming the sixteenth state of the Indian Union with Kohima serving as its capital.

Presently, it stands as a vibrant hill state situated in the far North-eastern region of India, bordered by Myanmar to the east, Assam to the west, Arunachal Pradesh and a portion of Assam to the north, and Manipur to the south. Nagaland ranks as the second smallest state in India after Sikkim, encompassing an area of 16,597 sq. km, and its geographical coordinates lie between 25°6' and 27°6' N and between 93° 20' and 95°15' E (Government of India, Ministry of Tourism and Culture Department, 2003). Naga people inhabit two countries, namely India and Myanmar. Collectively the Nagas' inhabited areas encompass an approximate area of 47,000 square miles' (Nuh, 2015).

Nagaland is home to many tribes and sub-tribes. There are sixteen major tribes viz Ao, Angami, Chakhesang, Chang, Sema, Lotha, Rengma, Rongmei, Phom, Sangtam, Konyak, Khiamniungan, Kuki, Puchury, Yimchunger and Zeliang. The state is divided into eleven districts, namely Dimapur, Kohima, Mokokchung, Mon, Longleng, Kiphire, Phek, Wokha, Tuensang, and Zunheboto. As per 2011 census, the total population of the Nagas' in Nagaland is 1,978,502, with 71.14% residing in rural areas (Directorate of Economic and Statistics, 2014).

Geographical Divisions and Settlements of the Angami People in Nagaland

The Angami Nagas form the fifth largest Naga group in the state, with a total population of 1,24, 696 (2001 census). The Angami tribe is made up of different groups. Hutton (1921) identifies four distinct groups among them. They are i) the Khonoma group ii) Kohima group iii) Viswema group iv) Chakhroma group. These groups of people even at present are commonly identified based on their geographical distribution. The Northern Angami are the people living in and around Kohima, the Western Angami are those living in the west, the Southern Angami are toward the south and the Chakhroma Angami live on the slope of the national highway from Kohima to Dimapur.

Kuolie (2006) maintains that the term 'Angami' is a random creation without any inherent significance. It was a coined expression attributed to the early British administrators, likely in the mid-19th century. While this name continues to be employed for administrative purposes and to identify a specific sub-group, namely the Angami tribe, it is no longer utilised as before in Tenyidie literature to represent the entire Tenyimia community. Angami Naga is one of the 16 tribes in Nagaland inhabiting the North East Indian state of Nagaland. They primarily reside in the southern district of Kohima, which borders the states of Manipur and Assam.

Incorporating the concept of macro-micro historical analysis, the research gives a general view of the Tenyimia community while locating the geographical divisions, origin and settlements of the Angami People in Nagaland. A micro-level analysis of the Kohima (Kewhira) village has been made by delving into the genesis of Kohima, migration patterns, social dynamics, their beliefs and customs thus, provide nuanced insights and a comprehensive understanding of the Khiwemia (people of Kohima). Angami Naga society and culture. Analysing the pre and post-colonial socio-cultural history of Kohima, the research area also encompasses selected historic Tenyimia villages. Further, in order to verify

the precision of information and to acquire crucial data the work co-relates with the regions in different districts like Senapati, Peren, Phek and Dimapur situated strategically along the migration routes. Drawing upon traditional history, legends, and myths, the narrative weaves together a comprehensive story of the origin and migration of the Angami Naga and the settlement pattern and village formation of Kohima.

Derivation of the word Kewhimia

As found mentioned in the Kohima Village Council record, the word ‘Kohima’ was derived from ‘Kewhimia,’ but it was mispronounced by the British and has since been officially adopted (Kohima Village Council, 2014). Kohima is situated at the heart of the Angami region, encompassed by eleven villages: Jotsoma, Zhadima, Ciedema, Mima, Merima, Tsiesema, Nerhema, Phekerükrie, Phesama, Chakhabama, and Secüma. The main rivers in the area include Sidzü, Dzüü, Dzükou, Dzüliekie, Dzüdza, along with their tributaries like Dzüvurü, Sanuorü, and Vürie. Notable mountain ranges surrounding Kohima are Japfü and the Patkai range (K. Khrumo, Personal Communication, May 25, 2017).

The history of the origin of Kohima village still lacks proper documentation. More so, the devastating Manipuri expedition to Kohima in 1853, the three great fire devastation in 1904, 1923 and 1944 respectively razed down the village, leaving with no artefact or written document to enlighten the tradition and culture of the village. Though there are a number of *Kewhimia* writers, intellectuals, scholars and politicians, only a few books about Kohima village are available to date. Furthermore, no intensive research is undertaken specifically for the village to be used as an official document. The research studies the conflict of interest in the history of the origin, different routes of migration and settlement of the village. In-depth research has been made by collecting data from the village elders who are adept in traditional stories in the quest to document the unrecorded history of the seven *thinuo* (clan) theories for the construction of a holistic consensus history.

Brief Background of Kohima Village

Kohima village occupies the northeastern part of the Kohima district perched on the high tabular hills overlooking Kohima town. Its average elevation stands at 1,261m (4,137ft) (The Constitution of Kohima Village, 2014). The village is known to have been inhabiting seven natural lakes, namely *Thevo Kemou zie* (upper L Khel), *Khrogebozou* (middle L Khel), *Yatsolie zie* (lower L. Khel), *Sorhie zie* (T. Khel), *Tsiera zie*, *Tsopherükhro* (T. Khel), *Menyithor zie* (D. Khel), and *Pfuchatsu zie* (P. Khel), (Viselie Vizo, personal communication October 10, 2018) along with *Pfusolieke* at the present D. Khel playground (Üsuo Pfucha Kewhi Sede, 1993). These lakes may have been a great water source for the early inhabitants. Until today, *Yatsolie zie* (lower L. Khel) and *Sorhie zie* (T. Khel) produce the best quality water and serve as the community water reservoir. Other lakes are at present converted into open meeting spaces *Tehouba*.

In the study of the foundations of Kewhimia's culture, a detailed exploration has been made to examine the intricacies of Kewhimia's social fabric and the historical social division of *Pfuro* and *Solhi*, village alliances (*Riina kekinyi*), and unique features like *Shadze* and *dahou/tehouba*¹. The analysis offers insight into ideas of unity, inter-clan relations, conflict resolution methods, education, marriage customs, moral and ethical values that give the people a unique identity. The traditional village gate (Kharu) symbolisms have been studied from the community's socio-economic perspective to illuminate people's faith in the belief system and how it instilled a sense of communal feeling and unity. The fourteen traditional gates of Kohima Village that still being testifying the rich material culture.

Religious ideas and beliefs in taboo and dreams had been the guiding force in all folk societies and they were generally socio-economic in nature. The co-relation of the various rites and rituals with agricultural activities of the Kewhimias has been investigated to

¹ *Tehouba*, *dahou* and *thinuo ziekie* may be understood in the same sense. It is the traditional meeting place for decision making and discussing political agendas.

illuminate on their vital role in governing and uniting Kohima village as a cohesive and thriving community. It explores the four key unifying agents—*Tsiakrau* (Crop Fertility Priest), *Liedepfü* (Harvest Priestess), *Phichiüu* (Village Priest), and *Chiümitsie* (Feast of Merit)—the role they have played in, thus contributing to the emergence of a prosperous and harmonious village. It also sheds light on how these factors exerted influence in fostering unity and friendship with other Angami villages. A detailed analysis has been conducted on *Peli* (Age peer group) which gives a clear understanding on the economic activities in the village and gives insight into the traditional gender roles and shared responsibilities.

The late 19th-century infrastructural developments, coming of Christianity and the British is generally taken as the transitional phase. This phase has been studied by examining the changes and developments that has been brought about in the Kohima society and economy. In 1872, American missionaries brought Christianity and education to Kohima. As a result, in 1885, four individuals named Lhousietsü, Lhouselie, and Sieliezhü converted to Christianity (Khed Baptist Kehou, 2010). Presently, over 99% of the population has embraced Christianity, belonging to different denominations such as Baptist, Catholic, Revival, and Baptist Revival. The study examines the impact of Christianity and education and the changes that have been brought about in society-viz: formation of different organisations like Kohima Village Student Union (KVSU), Kohima Village Sports Association (KVSA), Kohima Village Council (KVC), and Kohima Village Gazette Krotho (KVGK) which are the key instruments in fostering peaceful atmosphere and check inter-clan violence by liaising with the different khels.

On December 1st, 1963, Kohima was officially recognised as the capital of Nagaland state. Since its humble beginnings as an administrative headquarters, Kohima has faced numerous trials and challenges over the years. Despite these daunting and often difficult situations, the town has developed into a place of commendable pride and grandeur. Kohima

village is close to the state capital comprising a populace of multi-tribal cultures and nations, so the people are very vulnerable to being influenced and diluted by other cultures. The research made a profound analysis of the nature of change: Westernisation or Modernisation and its impact on the traditional culture and social dynamics of Kohima Village.

An in-depth study has been made about the economic metamorphosis of Kohima, tracing its trajectory from a modest settlement to a thriving urban centre. The experiences of urbanisation and its positive impact as well as threats to cultural and moral values have been assessed. The narrative unfolds the historical foundations, challenges faced, and the town's resilient spirit that shaped its economic character. From primitive barter trade to modern economic dynamics, it reveals Kohima's story as one of adaptation, growth, and the pursuit of economic sustainability. Today, Kohima is home to people from different Naga communities and accommodates people from various regions. It has become a place of conglomeration of people from various backgrounds.

Overview of the Tenyimia Community

Many of the Naga ancestors trace their origins to a legendary village called Khezhakenoma. According to oral historians, *Kezieu*, the ancestor of the *Tenyimia* tribe, resided in *Khesoura*, a village situated in Phek district, and had two sons named *Vadio* and *Pfuvio*. *Vadio* migrated to the present-day village of *Mekhrora* (Makhel) in *Mao*, *Senapati* district, where he settled down and had four sons: *Tenyiu*, *Keyhuo-u*, *Zieu*, and *Meu* (Thejazeü, 2000). The term 'Tenyimia' originates from '*Tenyi-nui-mia*' which translates to 'people who wear a kilt' (Newmai, 1996). A similar view has been given where it is said that Tenyimia is an ethnic group belonging to Naga race. Consequently, they came to be known as the *Tenyi-niu-mai*, which signifies the group's association with wearing kilts (D. Kuolie and T. Koza personal communication, September 10, 2022). Further, the Tenyimia people are believed to have descended from a common ancestor named *Tenyiu*, who inhabited the

extreme south, southeast, and west regions of Nagaland. This ethnic group officially comprises of ten tribes, namely Angami, Annal, Chakhesang, Mao, Maram, Poumia, Pochury, Rengma, Thangal and Zeliangrong. Furthermore, the Tenyimia community includes several other tribes residing in a vast territory spanning both *Nagaland* and *Manipur*. This extensive family is bound by their commitment to preserving their cultural identity in the heartland of *Nagaland* (D. Kuolie, personal communication, December 14, 2023).

Traditional account opines that the forefathers discover Kohima from three distinct mountains *Kabviinhuo* (Khezhakeno), *Cheraphe* (Pudunamai) and *Japfü* (Kohima). Over time, they established their habitation over seven natural lakes, across major ridges and ultimately emerged as a mighty village (T. Dzüvichü, N. Kesiezie & Z. Pienyü, personal communication, August 29, 2018). The village is said to have been established by a group of individuals, including siblings and other kinsmen. To write down the history of the establishment the village and its founder's names is a sensitive issue and a subject of debate. It is hypothesised that a series of successive migrations, some with ancestral connections, settled on the ridges comprising the present site of Kohima known as *Kimhozou*, *Phesakou*, *Phezou*, and other. By corroborating oral tradition with documentary evidence, the research endeavours to give an objective and acceptable authentic historical record from an academic perspective.

The uniqueness of Tenyimia as an ethnic group prompted many scholars and independent writers to study and explore the consanguineous lineage of the Tenyimia community and its beautiful culture. A crucial constituent that cements the community is the language spoken by this group. Different *Tenyimia* tribe has their specific dialects but are united by a common language known as *Tenyidie*. It is the official language as well as the common mode of communication among the *Tenyimia* group. The language is an important factor that instilled in them a sense of belongingness, distinct from other tribes. Although the

majority of the population speaks *Tenyidie*, *Nagamese*, a pidgin language, serves as the lingua franca, understood and spoken by nearly all Nagas, regardless of their education level (State Level Co-ordinating Committee, 2004). The research identifies the cultural homogeneity of the Tenyimia present in their traditional practices and value systems which proved to be the cementing forces that keep the community united and continuing today amid the contemporary challenges. Common cultural traditions peculiar to the Tenyimia such as architectural design (*kikie*), *Kharu* (Village Gate), *Kewhimia pfhese* (shawl suit), *loramhoushü* (prestigious shawl), traditional men shawl (*phfese*), headdresses (*tsüla* and *tsüphi*), *keshüni* (black kilt), *thekhu kech moudi* (traditional cooked beef for feasting), *zutho* (rice beer) *galho* (traditional porridge) known as Tenyimia cultural costumes and cuisine are the identity markers of the people. Terrace cultivation), *tatti* (stringed musical instrument) *kene* (wrestling) are the traditional heritage that have made an impact on people across the world today (R. Miachieo, B. Vizo & N. Kreditsu, personal communication December 10, 2022).

The research made use of ample primary data obtained directly from the field through structured questionnaires, interviews, discussions, personal observations, and active participation in village cultural and ceremonial events. The intensive research study is conducted by collecting primary data from all 38 (Chienuo / pfutsanuo) affiliated to seven *thinuos* to formulate and construct a consensus historical account of the Village.

The selection of Kohima Village as a case study addresses conflicts of interest in the history of origin, migration and settlement of the village. In-depth research has been made to document the unrecorded history of the seven *thinuo* (clan) theories for the construction of a holistic consensus history. Being at the close vicinity of the state capital comprising a populace of multi-tribal cultures and nations, the people are much vulnerable to be influenced and diluted by other cultures. The research made a profound analysis of the impact of

modernisation, globalisation and external influences on the traditional culture and social dynamics of *Kohima* Village. This research hopes to shed light on some of the core traditional history associated with the seven *thinuos* by referring to the oral sources and corroborating with historical documents.

Literatures Review

J.H. Hutton (1921) *The Angami Nagas* – This book gives detail illustrations of village formation, socio-economy and religious life of the *Angamis*. The author has written the book in a general view yet, lacks specific details and corrigendum issues require attention.

Esther Iralu (2000) *Folk Elements in Achebe* – The author undertook a comparative cultural study of Ibo and *Tenymia* culture, emphasise on village layout, social obligations and ethical values. This book can be of great help to the study of *Angami* culture.

K.Nishena Nekha (2015) *The Nagas* – The author deals with traditional culture and the role of institution for promoting it. It is very relevant to *Angami* culture which can help in envisaging a deeper thought upon the community and help in the construction of many unrecorded and neglected clan histories.

A.B. Shah & C.R.M. Rao (ed. 1965) *Tradition and Modernity in India* – This book contemplate and highlights the features of traditional culture and industrial changes and problems which is confronting traditional societies in modern world. This book can be used as a supplementary source. Further, an oral history of Kewhimia transitional period from primitive to the modern concept is recorded and some remedial measures are highlighted in the impacted areas.

N. Venuh (Editor 2004) *Naga Society, Continuity and Change* – This book deals with the sociocultural institution, transformation and its impact on society. This book can be used for comparison among different *Naga* cultures.

Viser Sanyu (2008) *A History of Nagas and Nagaland* – This book dealt with migration and settlement of Kohima Village and the impact of modernisation. The author emphasises partially only village settlement which also requires rectification and a holistic historical approach of the village with proper authentication.

Subhadra Mitra Channa (Editor 1992) *Nagaland, A Contemporary Ethnography* – This book illustrated *Angami* village's social and religious ethos. There is a need for supplementary information for clarity in relating to variation from region to region, village to village co-relationship aspect.

Benjongkumba (ed. 2014) *Naga Society* – It emphasises on traditional values and practices, *Naga* villages and culture heritage. This book is of great help in constructing different values of *Naga* Village, yet requires a descriptive anthropology approach to the present study.

Hokishe Sema (1986) *Emergence of Nagaland* – The author gave detailed emphasis on migration, social life, religious institutions and the statehood of Nagaland. It requires a supplementary source to develop insight and knowledge in co-relation to different events and administrative impact on society.

M. Alemchiba (1970) *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland* – The author dealt with origin and migration and birth of a state.

N. Talitemjen Jamir & A. Lanunungsang (2005) *Naga Society and Culture* – The book emphasize on culture and impact of modernity. It can be used as supportive material for comparing and constructing cultural ideas.

Brij Raj Chauhan (1970) *Towns in the Tribal Setting* – The author dealt with the intermingling of culture and town as the centre of cultural diffusion and distinctive characteristics of rural and urban villages. This book can be a supplementary source.

Bendangangshi (1993) *Glimpses of Naga Society* – The book gave description about origins of Nagas, belief, conquest, development of polity and state formation. This book has been used as a reference for insightful research on the state capital and the role of the Angami Nagas’.

Herbert J. Gans (1965) *The Urban Villagers* – The author gave detailed illustration about the sub-culture of west Enders, describing community traditional life reflecting the social structure. This book can be great help for in-depth study of how Kohima village was ushering into urbanisation along traditional believes and vision.

M.L. Bose (1989) *Social History of Assam* – The author noted social mobility promotes towns and bazaars, farms and industries creating a social ladder along with elevating the economy, yet the rusted tradition is still wedded to ancestral practices. This book can be used for envisaging insight and knowledge.

Neichüriazo (1989) *Tenyimia Kelhou Dze* – The author wrote about the origin of *Tenyimia*, and gave a detail illustration of cultural life and recommendable complementary relation along with dynamic leadership. This book can be used as supplementary material.

Julian Jacobs (1996) *The Nagas* – The author noted the social and cultural life of *Nagas*, featuring distinctive woman gotra, compensating dead wife, adornment, and head shaving. This book brings out a contrasting ideology to the scholar undertaking topic.

Thinuokhrieü (1996) *Thenupfü* – This book emphasises on descriptions of a woman from cradle to grave, great personalities and the modern position of woman. This book can be as supportive material but requires certain details.

Chandrika Singh (2008) *The Naga Society* – The author stated the profile of *Nagas*, socio-economic structure and the role of education in transiting *Naga Society*. It is an informative book which can be used for in-depth study.

Khrieü Sekhose (2002) *Zhozho* – This is a good source covering broad areas of social, economic, religious values and practices warfare though in a brief manner which also need reorganisation with more further details.

V. Nienu (2015) *Naga Cultural Milieu* – This book is about *Naga* people, their culture, fascinating landscape and adaptability to traditional culture, values and practices which will flow to the coming generations. This can be an important supplementary document for the study of *Angami* community.

Kezhagwelie Peseyie (1984) *A Ra Kezevi* – The book is about the fascinating landscape of Kohima – physical features, link with ridges of *Japfü*, different villages and the rich beauty of cultural attires and dances of the *Nagas*. It can be a supportive document to dig into insightful historical cultures to the present study.

Kewepfuzhu Lohe (2011) *Naga Village* – It is a case study of *Chizami Naga* Village. The author has emphasised on origin, migration and settlement, social culture and religious life of the people and the impact of modernisation. It can be a supportive material to the study of *Angami* tradition. However correlative study is required to enhance informative data among *Tenyimia* community.

CHAPTER 2

ORIGIN, MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE VILLAGE

The origin, migration, and settlement of Kohima Village are primarily illuminated through oral history, tradition, folklore, documentation, and megalithic monuments. However, the lack of written records before the introduction of Christianity and the British invasion of the Naga Hills has led to controversies and doubts regarding these matters. Nevertheless, Nagas place their utmost trust in tradition and culture as the most dependable sources of information passed down from their ancestors (K. Sachü, & M. Keretsü, personal communication, September 10, 2017).

Along the same line, Pienyü & Sote also opine that ‘descendants follow the word and sayings of their elders and parent, without seeking written documentation for land, house or any kinds of property. Their spoken words and knowledge are considered reliable, valuable, important, and equal to modern legal documents. Consequently, it is both taboo and nearly impossible to deny or deviate from the words of the ancestors that have been handed down for generations (Personal communication, September 10, 2017).

Furthermore, the descendants wholeheartedly adhere to the history narrated by their elders and even take solemn vows, committing their entire family including several generations to face punishment or curses in case of unrighteousness. The elders of Kohima emphasise that distorting history is taboo, as it could bring severe disgrace to the family, clan, or village. Therefore, strict compliance and preservation of true history are considered of utmost importance (N. Dzüvichü & K. Sachü, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

Generally, Naga origins are autochthonous, mythical and legendary in nature. The origin stories become traditions embellished through storytelling passed down to generations. ‘Likewise, traditional knowledge is the pearls of forefather wisdom and beliefs and practices are transcultural till date. There are suppositions that the early history of the Nagas may have

been recorded in various perishable materials. Stories about inscribing records on leaves, stone slabs, animal skin and bamboo sheaths are being told and re-told (V. Theünuo, personal communication, September 12, 2017). ‘The Tenyimia folklore talks about the lost record of the Angami people which had been written on animal skin and kept hung to sun-dry and how animals like rat or dog may have eaten it. Therefore, the Nagas’ had no written documents until the arrival of the British and American Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century, they had authored numerous books about the Naga Hills (P. Rolnu & K. Khruomo, personal communication, January 25, 2018).

Numerous histories deal with how Mongols started penetrating India through Burma and Tibet. Some of the Mongols entering India via Tibet settled in Garo, Khasi and Jaintia hills of northeastern India. Those coming from China settled in the present Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland (Chib, 1980). Based on the racial similarities between the Nagas and the people of Central Asia, as well as certain regions of Middle Asia, scholars as well as traditional stories suggest a common origin theory in the Mongoloid group. Cultural similarities in belief systems, and agricultural practices, between the Naga people and the people living in Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and China point the Naga origin to the Southeast Asian region. Oral tradition of the Angami claim kinship with Kachin and Karen people amongst others (Yhokha, 2022). It is mentioned that Nagas were prisoners under an authoritarian Chinese government during the construction of the Great Wall. The primary responsible is for building the great wall and the harsh system combine with heavy tax and the demanding role of soldier suppressed them to unbearable conditions. Consequently, they embarked on a series of migrations in search of land suitable for settlement, security, and overall well-being to strengthen their community (K. Khruomo, personal communication, January 7, 2018).

According to Kepelhoucha Khruomo ‘criminals are sentenced to force labour, shaved head and made to wear iron rings.’ A similar traditional haircut style called *dapi* can be traced among the Tenyimia (Kewhimia) believed to be introduced by Chinese rulers to some prisoners during the construction of the Great wall. It was imposed on the prisoners as humiliation in order to pay lower wages to them. This haircut involved a straight cut just above the ear, followed by shaving the lower part down to the neck (D. Kuolie, personal communication, February 18, 2018). The purpose is to differentiate them from Chinese local workers and to subject them to harassment (K. Khruomo & P. Rolnu, personal communication, January 7, 2018).

It could be speculated that for many centuries, the ancestors of the Nagas were scattered across various continents. However, the pursuit of new land, thirst for justice, or related issues compelled them to embark on a continuous migration. This relentless migration persisted until they eventually settled in their respective villages. According to Angamis, when the British established their administrative base at Kohima (Kewhira in Angami) in 1878 Kohima had around one thousand households, The village age could have been 700-800 years old after the first settlers came to Kohima (Changkiri, 1999). However, as recorded in the Tsieramia Council Seweda Houdo (2022), the years of Kewhimia after the first settlement could be approximately 13 to 16 generations. The evidential figure is supported by C14 dating method of Kozabami (Khezakeno) village establishment place in between 1320-1350 AD (Tsieramia council, 2022. P. 5).

Undoubtedly, the ancestors might have faced numerous challenges, enduring difficult existence as they migrated, crossing huge Rocky Mountains and rivers. Hence, they escaped to far-flung areas in search of suitable land for permanent settlement. It is plausible to say that the ancestors may have lived near seas and oceans and have crossed big waters in canoes or boats.

One theory suggests that the predecessor journey involved travelling in a vessel resembling a rectangular wooden structure used for feeding swine, known as a '*thevokhu*.' This vessel, resembling a swine feeding trough, could have been a boat, as both structures bear a close resemblance (N. Mere, personal communication, January 13, 2018). This hypothesis is further supported by the affinity of Kewhimia /Angami people for liking seafood, fishing, and hunting, their appreciation for seashells and beads, and their use of various precious and semi-precious stones for ornaments. Moreover, their consumption of water plants serves as undeniable evidence of their connection to the aquatic environment.

There is another theory which says that Kewhimias' may have migrated to the present land from the harsh geographical conditions like Russia or Siberia. We find this narration in traditional stories which talks about extreme climatic condition like Russia referred to as Rushmia and Siberia referred to as *hedzūmia* in the local dialect. Therefore, it is plausible to say people might have migrated to escape the unbearable climatic conditions (K. Suohu, personal communication, March 6, 2020). This theory is further supplemented by ancestral accounts, '*U nuonuo penhyü pie hiedzumia ki shü tsü, u nuonuo puo kenie ngu kelie sie u zhie rüdu la u si lie re ta ya shie,*' which roughly translates to their daughters marrying Siberians who, after having one or two children, would become unrecognisable due to the deep wrinkles caused by the constant frowning from enduring the severe cold and prolong windy weather. The combination of harsh climate and difficult living conditions likely played a significant role in motivating the Naga forefathers to migrate to the present homeland (K. Khruomo & N. Kesiezie, personal communication, January 7, 2018).

According to ancestral accounts, it is said that all the descendants of Tenyimia originally belonged to a family and resided in Khesoura, one of the oldest villages among the Tenyimia Villages, situated in the Phek District. Over time, they dispersed in different directions. The ancestor of Tenyimia is referred to as '*Keteikezei*' or '*Kezeiu*,' who had two

sons, Vadio and Tsiavio (forefather of the Lotha people). They lived together with their parents in Khesoura for a long period. As a young man, Vadio migrated to Makhel, accompanied by a cow, a cock, and a dog. He journeyed from mountain to mountain, waiting for these animals to provide signs that would predict his settlement in Makhel. Interestingly, in Makhel, the cock crowed, the dog barked, and the cow bellowed. Consequently, the ancestors considered these omens as indications of a favourable settlement, and they established habitation in that area. Subsequently, he settled at Makhel got married and had four sons: Tenyiu, Keyhuo-u, Zieu, and Meu. Among them, Tenyiu the eldest, migrated to the present Tenyimia region, and his descendants are known as the Tenyimia (Khruomo, 2000).

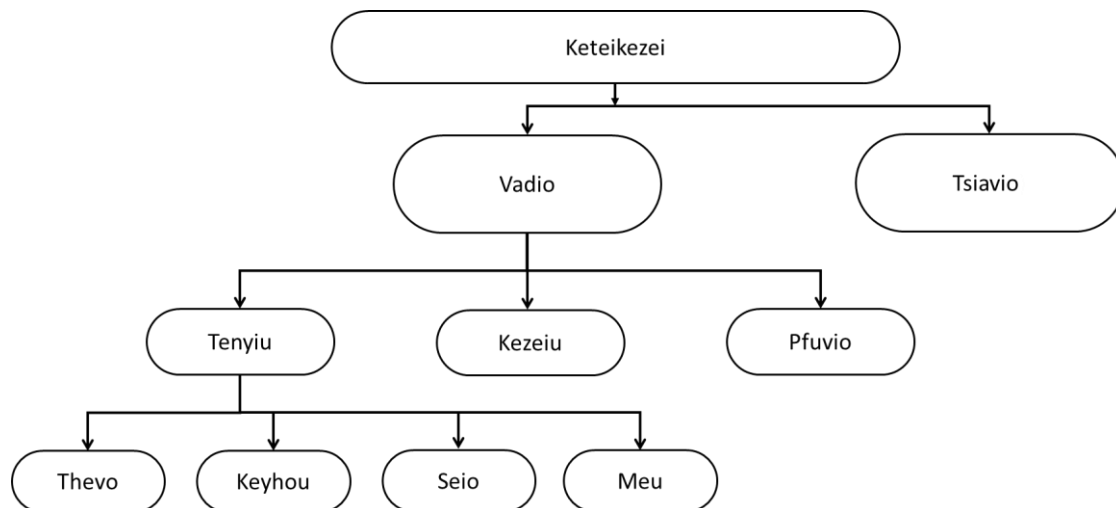


Chart 1: The Family Tree of Tenyimia

Tenyimia is an ethnic group belonging to the Naga race. ‘The word *Tenyi* (loin-cloth) and from the habit, they were therefore called *Tenyi-niu-mai* (Kilted group)’ (Newmai, 1996, p. 4). The word *Tenyimia* is derived from *Tenyi-niu-mai* (people who wear kilt). Tenyimia are assumed to be descended from a common ancestor called *Tenyi*, who lived in the extreme south, southeast and west of Nagaland. This ethnic group officially consisted of “ten tribes - Angami, Chakhesang, Inpui, Mao, Maram, Poumai, Pochury, Rengma, Thangal and Zeliangrong” (Yokha, 2022. P. 58). Besides, Tenyimia community comprises many more tribes who inhabit a vast territory under two states, Nagaland and Manipur. Hence, Tenyimia

lives both in Manipur and Nagaland state. This giant family comes from a parentage family linkage who pledged to protect their cultural identity in the mainland of Nagaland.

Tenyidie is the official language and the common medium of communication. Tenyimia has a pretty refined culture, a distinct characteristic which marked them as a different ethnic group from the rest of many Naga tribes. It is the greatest landmark, model and evidences of civilisation which incorporate peace, harmony, prosperity and beauty. Cultural homogeneity is the main doorway to sharing and shouldering cultural hegemony in the social and economic milieu. This incredible common traditional culture in nature enables them to be one in joy and sorrow and serves as the channel to enlighten neighbouring tribes, states, nations and the world at large. The enormous growing population and territorial expansion require an apex body called Tenyimia Union to reignite the dying family linkage. They play a vibrant role in keeping the entire community together and harmoniously (T. Koza, K. Talie & V. Khezhie, personal communication, January 10, 2017).

Tenyimia territory is located in North east and North West in Nagaland covering 301 recognised villages (V. Kintso, personal communication, January 10, 2018). According to oral tradition, they share a common ancestor known as Tenyiu and are believed to be biological brothers. Initially, they resided in Khezhakeno. However, due to conflicts and issues related to magical stone, land congestion and population growth, Angami ancestor Keyho-u and his descendants migrated to different Angami villages, following various routes, and eventually settled in the villages they occupy today.

The term 'Angami' is said to be derived from the Mao dialect 'Ngami' meaning young man or warrior who addressed them as such. Further suggests that Ngami also means neighbouring people. (A. Adani, personal communication, January 27, 2018). It is widely

believed to have been given by outsiders due to various historical events, whose territory are made up of the present Kohima District and some parts of Dimapur district with one hundred six recognised villages and 144,989 population at hand (Angami Public organisation, 2022).

Eventually, after a prolonged journey in the eastward direction, the three biological brothers- Angami, Sema and Lotha began to move to the Southward region from Kezhakenoma who had dispersed to a different region and presently occupied the present village. Probably, their descendants settled in the oldest Angami Village called Kigwema, located about fourteen kilometres away from the capital, Kohima. Yhokha (2022), asserted that the term 'Kigwema' was coined by the people of Khonoma, in which the word '*ki*' stands for 'House', '*Gwe*' means 'occupy' (to occupy a house). This is based on the narrative that the present Kigwemia occupied the houses vacated by the original settlers- Khonoma, who migrated to their present location. Evidence points to the first settler (Khonoma) who was displaced through plotting by some neighbouring villages.

In 1944 when the Japanese reached Kewhira the elders gave a command, saying, '*Kheriinuomia vor zhie shie, u themia, u seyiemia u neidi uko zelie morosuo,*' which translates to 'The Japanese people are coming, our people, our kin, we should welcome them with joy.' (Z, Shüya & Z. Huozha, personal communication, December 10, 2018). According to Hutton (1921) and Yokha (2022) Angami speak of their lost half, Karen (Karenomia) and the Karen on their part, making reciprocal claims.

According to oral tradition, Meriema is one of the oldest villages of the Angami, estimated to be around six hundred years old or even older. It is located in the northern part of Kewhira District, right next to the present Indira Gandhi Stadium in Kohima. The village has an intriguing history - a young leader and a few companions once embarked on a journey to gather foodstuff and salt but never returned to the village. Their fate remained a mystery

for a long time until it was discovered that they had lost their way and ended up in Japan, where they continued to live (Z. Shüya, personal communication, December 10, 2017).

Sekhamo (2023,) stated that ‘The forefather of Kohima, Meriema and Khonoma village all belong to the Angami tribe migrated from Kezhakeno to their present village. They took different migratory routes and reached their destination at different points of time.

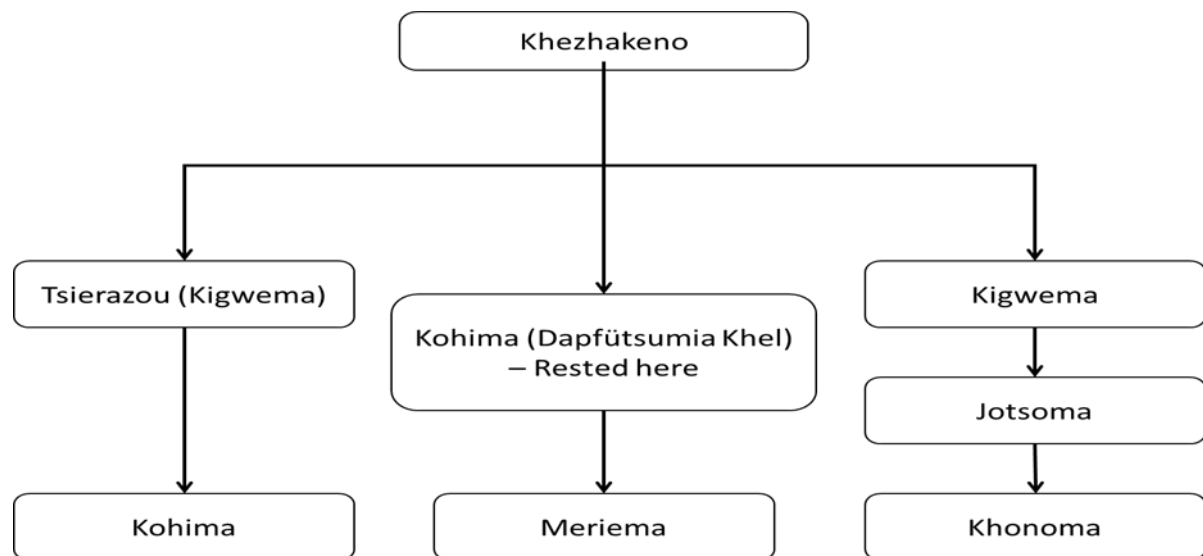


Chart 2: Migration routes undertaken by the forefathers of Kohima, Meriema and Khonoma

Further, Pukoho Rolnu claimed a close connection with the Japanese. He was able to recite the Japanese alphabet during interviews. There are also traces of the presence of Kherünuomia (Japanese) in Kigwera. For example, there is the term ‘*Kherünuoma Pienyü ku*’ (Kherünuo people bathing tub), and it is believed that they migrated to different areas and eventually reached Japan. Interestingly, *Kherünuomia* might also refer to the Karen people, as they share striking cultural similarities. Furthermore, the Japanese and Nagas bore a remarkable resemblance in physical appearance, characteristics, agricultural practices, ethical codes of conduct, strategies for sharing limited food resources, and a willingness to sacrifice for their respective nations (Z. Huozha, personal communication, December 10, 2018).

In general, Kewhimia ancestors share a common history with the Nagas, in their migration from Makhel to Khezhakeno. After the dispersal from Khezhakeno, a group of ancestors, such as Üsou, Rhieo, Dapfhü and Meseiü moved to the present site. Another group opined their forefather might have migrated to Pudunamia directly from Makhel where they lived there for a certain period, and via Jakhama reached Kewhira (V. Pienyü, personal communication, October 4, 2018). Kewhimia migratory routes from Makhel may be broadly divided into three main groups:

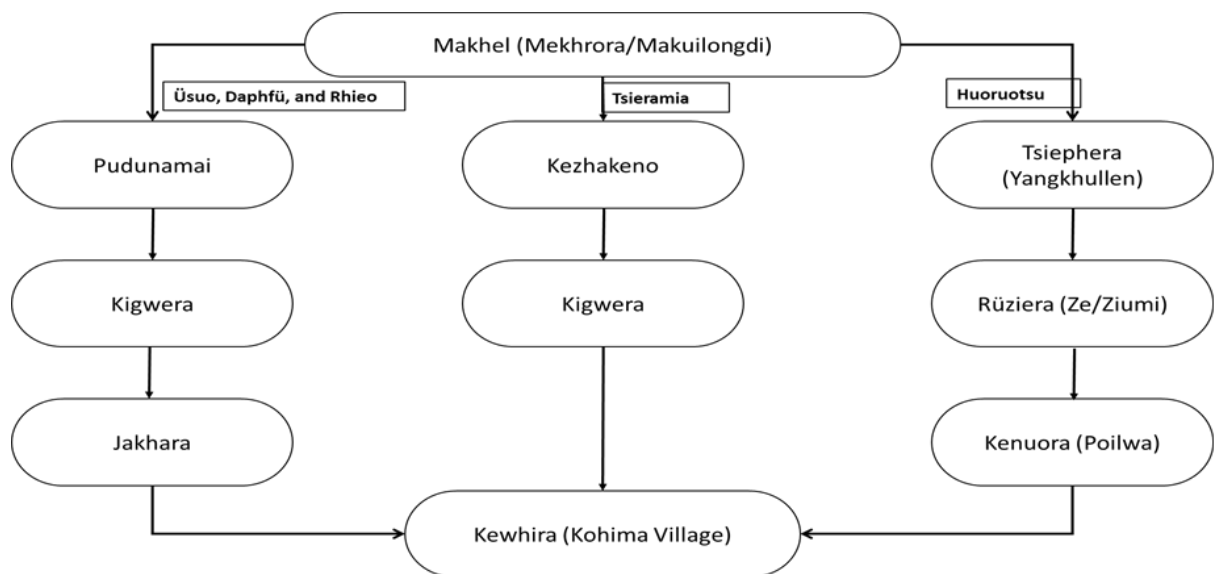


Chart 3: Routes of Migration undertaken by Üsuo, Rhieo and Dapfhü forefather.

Some Kewhimia clan (thinuo) such as Tsiera, Dapfhü, and Tsütuo, also settled in Kigwera, supported by remnants like Pituonuoma Neilho (Tsütuonuoma sun bathing place), Tsiera liezou (Tsiera field area), Dapfhü dzükhau, and *mu phe ba* (water ponds and plot sites), stone hewn, bathing tub, terrace cultivation, plot site, the traditional gate was traceable to this day (N. Mera & S. Yhoshü, personal communication, October 2, 2017).

(Kire, 2001) *Dapfhü mu Tsiera unie rüna kekri ze di Thepfüzou gie lhou ba di, vo taketako ki, ukru mu u kiülieko welieta, di rünau za thopie Kigwema Chülieta. Sidi Dapfhü mu Tsiera unie nupfii u nuoko ze di vor Kigwera lhouta*. The above text is interpreted as ‘after the migration from Khezhakenoma, Dapfhü and Tsiera inhabited to the Thepfüzou along with

some other neighbouring villages. The neighbouring villages plotted and defeated the first occupant and they inherited the abundant fields, houses, and woodland. The other group discovered Kewhira from the mountain of Charaphe at Pudunamia. It may be mentioned that the scholar personally visited the area having the view of Kohima, Pudunamia and Khezakeno which can be seen as described in the traditional story as to how Kewhimia ancestors discovered Kewhira village site from three different mountain peaks.

However, after the ancestors departed from Khezhakenoma, believed to be the native place for the majority of Kewhimia forefathers, they followed different migration routes. This could be one of the reasons leading to controversy about the village's age and settlement history. To shed light on this matter, an extensive study has been conducted, drawing from various sources, including different clans and sub-clans, to gather information about the origins, migration, and settlement of the village.

Probably, following the migration routes Üsuo and Rhieo may belong to the first phase of migration. Dapfü and Tsiera relocation at Kigwera might have formed the second wave of migration to Kewhira. Possibly, some from Pudunamia later migrated to Jakhara and thence to Kewhira. The Jakhara village leaders share the same story. Later, Pfucha from Chümoukedima relocated to Kewhira and Tsütuonuo got re-established to Kewhira may formed another migration group. Eventually, Whinuo and sons later accompanied by some cousins appear to have formed another group of migration. Hence Kewhimia forefather most probably undertook three migration routes as they moved out from Khezakenuo.

Conversely, the Tsieramia and Dapfütsu clans claim that their ancestors migrated from Khezhakenuo via Kigwera, where they lived for some period before finally settling at the site of Kewhira. Lhisemia Krotho Seweda states, '*Tsieramia, khezhakenora nu tsur tsüu mezhü Kewhira vor modi vo Kigwera Tsierazou ba rie di süze par kewhira phe tshete,*' indicating that Tsiera descendants initially settled at Tsierazou (Kigwera) after migrating

from Khezhakeno Village and later moved to Kewhira to establish their house plots.

According to an oral source at Khezhakeno, Tsiera the youngest son of Koza and Kala had discovered Kewhira from a sacred mountain called Kabvünhou, which came to be known as Kewhimia mountain (N. Koza, personal communication, October 2, 2018). Furthermore, Sekhamo (2023), states that Khezhakeno people called Kohima village area as Kabvü (the name derived from the mountain peak Kabvünhou) and its inhabitants as Kabvümi (Kohima village people). The same theory is supplemented by Lucy & Zehol (2009). Furthermore, a narrator opined that from Kabvünhou peak Tsiera had discovered the present site of Kewhira resembling a vast plateau with a big lake flooded with water which conveyed a promising future had lured the ancestor (Tsieramia council, 2022).

Kire presents a perspective that both Dapfü and Tsiera once resided in Thephezou, along with some other villages. This intriguing information may explain why various Khels within the Kewhimia community have recorded different settlement ages, even though they are connected as part of Kewhimia (2001, p,11).

Therefore, based on the available written sources and the oral narratives, it can be assumed that Üsuo and Rhieo could have been among the first to settle in Kohima Village, while Tsiera and Dapfhü established themselves in Kigwera. This supposition is supported by existing evidence, such as terraced fields, woodlands, ponds, and dwelling sites. It is possible to speculate that the forefathers of Kewhimia either began their migration together or left sequentially from the legendary village of Khezhakeno. While they may have initially moved as a group, in the course of their migration, they may have scattered to nearby villages in search of a secure and comfortable place to settle.

Foundation of the Village Kewhimia

The issue of the village founders remains a subject of debate among different *thinuo* (clans). Historical sources suggest sequential group migration waves, making it challenging to definitively identify a single village founder. However, Hutton (1921), a limited secondary source, mentions Ūsuo as the founder of *Kohima* Village, along with his brother Rhieo. It's worth noting that this interpretation is the oldest source at hand. To gain a deeper understanding of the ground reality experienced by different *thinuo*, intensive empirical and analytical studies have been made. The scholar initiated efforts to delve into the subject matter by encouraging every single *thinuo* to collect first-hand information about their own clan's hidden and unrecorded history. The aim is to compile and document the traditional original history of each single *thinuo* to have a consensus history.

According to legend, the three villages of Kewhira, Chedema, and Thekredzuna all came into existence on the same day. In the subsequent events, some soothsayers from Mao predicted the future fate of these three villages. In summary, the prophecy indicated that the village that experienced the most significant population growth would eventually merge into a larger and more prominent village. As it happened, Kewhira saw a remarkable increase in both population and wealth, ultimately making it the second-largest village on the Asian continent. This historical account underscores the realisation of the prophecy.

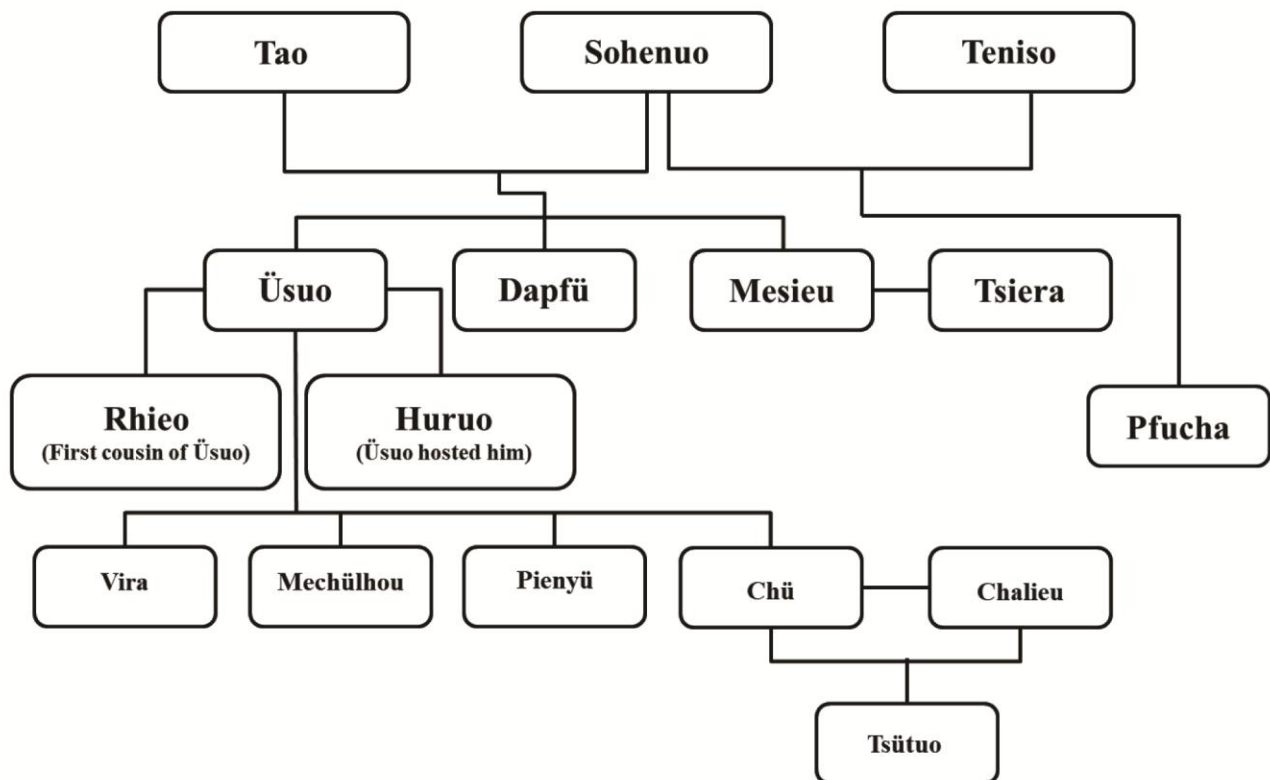


Chart: 4 Progeny of Kewhira

Another noteworthy location is called *Ketseizou*, currently the site of the Watch Tower, which is considered the village's highest vantage point and is also claimed to be the initial settlement site of *Tsiera*. *Tsiera's* descendants opine that he was the village founder as such, occupied the most prime location in the village. Moreover, his widow (*Meseiü*) inaugurates feast of merit for *Kewhimia* and *Tsieramia* clan holds the position of *Phichü* (Village Priest) office (*Tsieramia Council*, 2022) by virtue of being the founder of village.

On the other hand, *Üsuo*, the eldest among four siblings, was acknowledged by his brothers as the foremost figure at *Kewhira* (*Dapfhütsumia Souvenir committee*, 2007, üsuonuomia; *Pfuchatsumia thinuo*, 1993) and *Rhiepfumia* council. This account is further supported by the *Huruotsumia thinuo*, as documented in their *Huruotsu Seweda* publication, which designates *Üsuo* as the initial settler at *Kimhozou*. However, complexity arises when the *Huruotsu thinuo* also claimed that their ancestor, *Whinuo* was the founder of *Kohima* Village who, after the village discovery and ritual performance, returned to his native village,

Tsiepfera and died. Another version states that *Kesiezie*, *Whinuo's* cousin brother, was the first to establish his house at *Phesakou*, which translates to ‘new habitat zone.’ This area is located near *Kimhozou*, where the four biological brothers and their co-brother, *Tsiera* resided (Kire, 2001. P.13).

Huruotsumia Seweda proposed that *Kesiezie* initiated the first plot at *Phesakou*, while *Üsuo* had already settled at *Kimhozou* before *Kesiezie's* arrival. Consequently, *Üsuo* is regarded as the pioneer settler at *Kimhozou*, while *Kesiezie* holds the distinction of being the first settler at *Phesakou*. The Huruotsumia Sewe Dzeda (n.d) states “*Kesiezie parkeciü mñhodzü Üsuo vor Kimhozou lhou tuota. Mu puoe vor kijü lha krietoukeciü puo pie chüketuo la pfhülie. Mu sidi thedze nu pukeciü Kimhozou phepfhü kerie liro Üsuo mu Phesakou liro Kesiezie phepfhü kerieu üdi puya*” (p. 17). An interpretation of this quotation is, “Before *Kesiezie*, *Üsuo* had already settled down at *Kimhozou*. Following this, *Kesiezie* selected a separate high hillock and set up his ritual house plot at *Phesakou*. Thereof, *Kesiezie* is traditionally recognised as the first occupant at *Phesakou* (meaning new sector site). This information is compiled according to available records both primary and secondary sources at hand from all the village *thinuo*.

Another theoretical frame work states that in early times, a group of siblings from the Vadio family, known as *Zeu / Meu* descendants, is believed to have migrated to the western part of the Zeliang region and initially settled in *Poilwa* before eventually moving to *Kohima Village*. *Huruo*, the eldest grandson of *Whinuo*, lived in close proximity to *Tsütuo's* house in *Phesakou* (*Kewhira*). Subsequently, his descendants came to be known as *Huruotsu*, who claim *Whinuo* to be the founder of *Kohima Village*. Accordingly, it is postulated that the name ‘*Kewhimia*’ may have been derived from *Whinuo's* name (*Huruotsumia Thinuo*, n.d & N. Sorhie, personal communication, September 10, 2018)

Settlement and Village Formation

Kezhadilhou (1981-82) pointed out that ‘the earliest settlement of Angami took place during 1400- 1500 A, D’. The villages were situated on the hill summit and are heavily fortified, featuring stockades, deep ditches, and massive stone walls to defend the village from enemies during head hunting period. The sides of the hills were densely covered with sharp-pointed bamboo sticks firmly planted in the ground. Sanyü (1996), basing on tradition writes that, “Early settlers regarded Kohima as a land of seven lakes and seven hills”. Over the years Kewhira grew into a model village adorned with fourteen magnificent gates.

Kewhira, is an ancestral land of Kewhimia belonging to the Angami tribe, popularly known by the name Napfü Nadi, signifying a large and influential village, while the Nagas, in general, referred to it as Bara Bosti. *Ura* is a place of attachment. Kewhira is always *Ura* the wellspring of one’s spiritual and cultural heritage that shaped a person with typical identity (Sanyü, 2008). A very noteworthy event is Kewhimia *Tieisozha* (Kohima village people Day), observed on the 8th day of every Sekrenyi festival (The Constitution of Kohima Village, 2014).

The forefathers of Kewhimia established their ceremonial house plots on different hillocks, including Üsuo Kizou (Khezou), Ketsiezou (Tsiera), and Phesakou zou (Huruotsu). These zones are separated and intersected by deep gorges and jungle known as koure and *tsanu* in tenyidie which served as both natural restrooms and boundaries between the zone / *thinuo*. Gradually, all seven *thinuo*, namely Üsuonuomia, Pfuchatsumia, Dapfhütsumia, Tsieramia, Rhieonuomia, Huruotsumia, and Tsütüonuomia, united to form one large village.

It is told that their ancestor Rhieo had an older brother named Üsuo and a sister named Meseiü. They initially lived together in Tenyiphe, later moved to Makhel, and then shifted to Khezhakeno. It is likely that they lived for a certain period after leaving

Khezhakeno before migrating to Kohima, where they established their plot sites adjacent to each other (Lhiesemia Krotho, 2008).

Due to the absence of written records, the exact history of the ancestors are not entirely clear, as different *Khels* have variations in their accounts of relationship amongst Üsuo, Rhieo, Dapfhü, Meseiü, Tsiera, Tsütuonuo and Huruotsu. However, it is evident that they had both affinal and consanguineous kinship ties. This could be one of the reasons leading to controversy about the village's age and settlement history. To shed light on this matter, an extensive study has been conducted, drawing from various sources, including different clans and sub-clans, to gather information about the origins, migration, and settlement of the village.

Another theory propounded by Kamei (2004) says 'An elder who led the people in the migration and settlement at the new site was made the chief' (p. 33). A similar concept can be drawn even in Kewhira amongst siblings giving due respect and trust to Üsuo. For instance, Üsuo occupied the east edge at Kewhira without any other occupant in front of him because it is taboo to move ahead of elders for fear of repercussion. In the initial stages, the forebears of all seven *Khels* initiated house plots and began their settlements anew, small families on different hillocks. They coexisted as brothers, families, family friends, providing parental care and generously allocating land due to the ample availability of land. They held the utmost respect for the eldest member, who represented a parental figure second only to God under Tenyimia's most cherished virtues and tradition.

In such a way, Kewhimia came to have seven autonomous *Khels* which gradually emerged as one big village and along with many more immigrants, took up permanent residence, resulting in expansion. (T. Solo & V. Kesiezie, Personal communication, February 20, 2018).

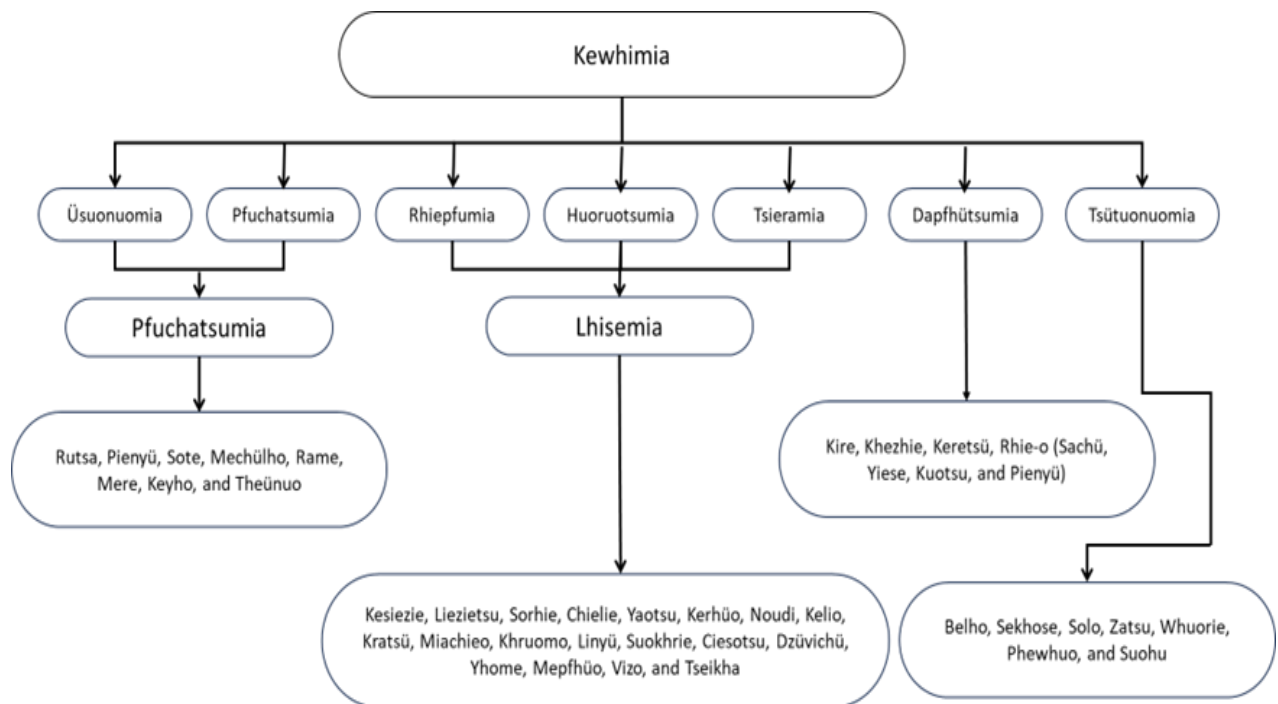


Chart: 5 Branches of the Seven Clans (*Thinuo*)

The Origin Word Kewhira/ Kewhimia

An extensive study has been made to trace the origin word of Kewhira so as to furnish an authentic consensus history of the village. The research has been conducted by referring to the available source materials and through intervention methods by consulting individuals from different levels of the community, including *Pfutsanuo*, and *Chienuo*. To gather information and insights into the village's history and the origin of its name, informants from various villages and representatives of the seven major *khels* and sub-clans, encompassing the entire village, were consulted.

In general, there is a common view about how the name *kewhimia* came about except for *Huruotsumia thinuo* who believed that the terminology of *Kewhimia* is derived from their ancestor by the name *Whinuo*. Significantly, *Tenyimia* ancestors did not name a person, place or animal baselessly. Traditionally, the Angami name unlike some Naga tribe do not use the founders' name in naming the village. Rather, they name it according to its characteristics or nature. Hence, each name bears its own meaningful features. Likewise, a child is also named

to express one's dreams and to make those dreams come true. It is a superstitious belief that those parents desirous of a baby boy often name their predecessor daughter as *'Thepfüsanü* (a wish for a boy) to invoke blessing for a baby boy in the family (K. Khruomo, personal communication, January 6, 2018). Similarly, for instance, *Phesakou* (new site), *Krabvübozou* (mulberry zone), *Khezou* (beginner zone), *Ketei* (black) etc and so forth are chosen to reflect specific characteristics or qualities (T. Solo & K. Khruomo, personal communication, February 10, 2018).

Legends regarding the origins of Kewhira encompass various elements, including stories of caves, hollow trees (seikrü), and gourds (mepfhü). Besides, the village etymology is believed to have derived from a variety of quotations. An intriguing piece of traditional history recounts the discovery of Mepfhüonuo, a healthy baby boy who was said to have originated from a gourd, found by a woman in a field amidst the gourds. Filled with joy, the woman adopted the baby and named him Mepfhüonuo, and his descendants have been known as Mepfhüonuomia to this day (Iralu, 2009). This version is rectified by the concern Pfutsanuo. Accordingly, the word Mepfhüonuo is coined from the wishes and prayer of the forefather who gave the name Mepfhüo to his son by invoking blessing to have many children resembling gourd character. It went on to explain that among the creeper plant, the gourd plant is the only plant to bear much fruit (V. Mepfhüo & N.Mepfhüo, personal communication, January 7, 2018).

Kire (2001) mentions that Dzüvilie Peseyie, a British political agent, and a clerk conducted official duties that involved visiting various villages. During these visits, the British administrator would inquire about the names of the villages. Based on his regional accent, he recorded the village names as Kewhima, Khonoma, Viswema, Jakhama, and others accordingly. This may explain why in the Angami area all the village name are commonly pronounced in the like manner as per official record till date.

Here are some findings from different khels that are believed to be sourced from which the terminology 'Kewhimia' is derived. Virtually, all major clans associate the origin of the word 'Kewhi' epithet with the following statement:

1. *Kepfhü kewhi vor rüna chüketa* (the assemblage of the visitors leading to the formation of the village) (Üsuonuomia Thinuo, 2021).
2. *Kehoupuorei u pfhü u whi kevor pete ze rüna chütuo we* (welcoming and hosting all visitors for peaceful co-existence) (Lhisemia thinuo, 2008).
3. *Whinuo tehruomianuo*: Whinuo, a supernatural being discovered from a hollow tree, was adopted by Huruo ancestors. He grew into a legendary young man with virtuous qualities, which led to jealousy among his peer boys. They tried to end his life by pushing him into the campfire. However, due to his exceptional agility, he leapt over the fire and escaped destruction. Explicitly, he was known as Whinuo (rescuer from fire), and his descendants became known as Huruotsumia. This is believed to be the origin of the term 'Kewhimia' (Huruotsumia Thinuo, n.d.).
4. *"Phichümia pucü kewhimia phepfüre sedi pfhülieshie. Whikho whike di pfhüshie. Sünu nu kewhira parta shie."* According to ancestral accounts, Kohima village was founded through immense hardship and difficulties. They conducted a village survey making multiple visits by trekking through dense forests, encountering ferocious wild animals and spirits. Hence, the name 'Kewhimia' (people who repeatedly made U-turn movements, i.e., Kezhakeno-Kohima village and vice versa) is believed to have originated from this (N. Khezhie, personal communication, November 14, 2017).
5. *Kewhira puoca liro thechü rüna kekrekrei kecü u thetsera lhoutuo di kepfhü kewhi vor di keze rüna puochülie, sürii beizo monyü kenuokenuotsa zorie themia bu u pfhü u whipe krakelieu chütuo we* (Pfuchatsumia thinuo, 1993). A gist interpretation of the above original text is refer to a notion of courtesy visit for a thriving population.

Sanyü (1996) stated “Mia bu u kewhi kepfu-u chütuo” means we shall welcome people or people shall come to us. The name Kewhimia was adopted by the Nagas thereafter.

Although the ancestors hailed from various places and villages, they came together to form the largest village, often referred to as *Nafü Nadi*. They also aspired to welcome more visitors for peaceful coexistence. Thus, the term ‘Kewhira’ is derived from the well-known phrase ‘*kepfhü kewhi*’ which signifies the act of visiting and fostering warm relationships.

In summary, when it comes to the origin of the term ‘Kewhira’ the descendants of *Üsuo*, *Pfücha*, *Rhio*, *Dapfü*, *Tsütuonuo*, and *Tsiera* all share the same quote ‘*kepfhü kewhi*’ which means to meet and assemble for a thriving population. Further, the most widely accepted quotation also published by (KVC, 2023) is “people from different places and directions came in search of a place to settle down and form a homogenous group that necessitated the establishment of the village”. **Fig: 1 & Fig: 2**

Traditional Method of Surveying and Site Identification Process

In the quest for settlement, the people undertook a laborious process, employing a series of traditional techniques to identify the site. According to the traditional narratives and information gathered from village elders from within the four major thinuo groups, a similar account has been given as to how their ancestors stumbled upon the location of Kewhira. They were drawn by the enticing view of a vast and fertile expanse of land, which appeared as if it was a vast water pool, visible from *Kabvünhou* peak in Khezhakeno village. Different techniques were adopted in locating places to settle. One method was locating sites from far off distance where legend recounts that Huruotsu, a descendant of Huruo, asserted that their ancestor, Whinuo, along with his sons and relatives, surveyed the location of Kewhira from Japfü peak in Southern Angami. Similarly, Üsuo and his group discovered Kewhira from Charaphe peak (Pudunamia) through traditional projection tools and identified a large mulberry tree and a big lake flooded with water at *Menyithor zie Kimhouzou*. Another

account says, ancestors (Tsieramia) discovered the site of Kewhira by employing a series of methods from *Kabvünyhou* peak at Khezhakeno. To authenticate the chosen location, they diligently and pain stakingly carried out the following traditional projection methods:

1. ***Nhouchü:*** Symbolically, *nhouchü* represents the concept of claiming and can be likened to an effigy or scarecrow. It is a traditional method used to mark or reserve a place, tree, fruits, stone, or anything that one wishes to possess. Anybody ignoring or overlooking such a symbol was considered taboo or sinful. In the past, ancestors used scarecrow-like methods to assert ownership over items found in woodlands or uninhabited areas. This method involves rolling together a handful of wild green leaves into a firm pack, piercing it with some stick, and placing it on the desired object or area (Üsuonuomia Thinuo, 2021 & Kuolie, personal communication, March 7, 2018).
2. ***Tekhrie Dopie kravübo Gei Guoshü:*** This refers to a knitted bamboo winnowing fan that was hung on a mulberry tree to identify the proposed village site. However, this method proved unsuccessful (K. Khruomo & N. Khezhie, personal communication, January 6, 2018).
3. ***Zomhou Sei Chapie Jieshü:*** (Fig: 3) *Zomhou sei* known as *rhus chinensis* in scientific term and commonly called Chinese gall or nut gall tree, is an open spreading large shrub or small tree that grows to 15-25 feet tall. The chopped nut gall tree is a distinctive bright colour tree, resembling bright coloured paint that lasted for years. Ancestors often used this particular tree to identify distant places to view the proposed site. The predecessor also blazed a nut gall tree to mark the proposed village site (Yhome & Dzüvichü, 1992).
4. ***Seguomishü:*** This is a traditional fire-making method involving a dry stick split into a Y shape. Dry twigs are placed over it, and two or three firm bamboo ropes are

positioned at the back of the split stick. This apparatus is vigorously and continuously rubbed until smoke forms, eventually leading to the combustion of twigs. Ancestors used this method, called *seguomishü*, to create smoke signals that helped them identify surveyed sites. They were finally able to view the present *Kohima* village from the peak of Kabvünou at Khezhakenuoma village (Dapfhütsumia Souvenir committee, 2007).

Pioneers of the Seven Thinuo and Formation of the Seven Khels of Kohima Village

The early history of the formation of the seven khels of Kohima village relies on oral tradition and to document its history, a committee was constituted comprising of elders of the seven thinuo and researchers to gather relevant and authentic information. Discussions regarding the reliability of traditional stories were deliberated on occasions like jubilee celebrations and festivals, ultimately leading to a conclusive understanding that the earliest settlers were comprised of Üsuo, Dapfhü, Rhieo, Tsiera, Meseiü, Tsütüonuo, Whinuo, and Pfucha. Subsequently, there developed seven khels designated as Üsuonuomia, Dapfhütsu, Rhieotsu, Tsieramia, Tsütüonuo, Huruotsu, and Pfuchatsu, respectively.

However, all the thinuo did not settle at the same time but it appears they have come in waves from different directions. The variations in the settlements of the different *Khels* could be attributed to reasons such as temporary relocation, makeshift arrangements, and subsequent re-establishments. Ancestral movement within the village's sectors, as well as migration to other villages and regions, were common occurrences. Initially, *Kewhizou* was divided into two sectors—*Kimhozou* and *Phesakou*. *Kimhozou* was inhabited by Üsuonuomia, Pfuchatsumia, Tsieramia, and Rhienuomia, while *Phesakou* was occupied by Tsütüonuomia and Huoruotsumia *Khel*. As the population grew, the village expanded to include Mouthuzou, Khrabvübozou, Kruoliezou, Krakhrieliezou, (middle L'Khel), and

Phezou, Tsatsu, Chadi, Khrogebozou (lower L. Khel). A study of the khels which is represented by the clans will further shed light on their migration and settlement.

Üsuonuomia Khel

According to tradition, it is mentioned that the ancestor Üsou originated from a village named *Kitsü bo ra* (Wild Pear Tree) a Village in Charanghomia, under the Senapati district in Manipur. He left Makhel and journeyed to Pfüsüra (Pudunamai) in Senapati district via Jakhara, eventually arriving at his destination, Kewhira. It is important to note that Pudunamia is an elevated location from which the ancestor saw, Kewhira characterised by a vast lake and a mulberry tree situated at Menyithor zie (V. Pienyü & V. Rutsa, personal communication, February 4, 2018). Kire (2010) opined that Tao might be from Thai community. He got married to Sohenuo and fathered Üsuo, Rhieo, Dapfhü and Meseiü born in Pfüşhüra (Pudunamia) village.

Over the years due to the increasing issues of cultivable land, he scouted a new settlement site from Cheraphe mountain peak, discovering the present site of Kohima. Interestingly, during his subsequent visit, he put up a traditional scarecrow and observed his *nhouchü* (effigy) area covered with ants, leading him to predict a significant population growth and foretell the prowess of the people in warfare. After a careful observation and assessment of the signs, Üsuo, accompanied by Rhieo performed rituals to mark the plot for building house which is the present-day Neizolie Pienyü's residence. This marked the initiation of the village's foundation. Following this, Tsiera married Meseiü, and they settled in the village. Even Dapfhü and Huruo started their settlements in Kohima village (M. Mechülhou, personal communication, February 4, 2018). After a considerable period, when all the earlier settlers had established their residences, Pfucha returned to Kohima village from Chumoukedima.

Üsuo got married and became the father of three sons namely Vira, Mechülho, and Pienyü. Rhieo believed to be first cousin brother of Üsuo resided with the family.

Consequently, the members of Üsuo and Pfucha now constitute a unified sub-group what is called Usuopfucha. This arrangement has enabled the off spring of both clans to prosper in tandem and coexist harmoniously.

Among the notable artefacts at Üsuo Kizou a significant monolith called *kiputsie* (foundational stone) was acknowledged by village panchayat. In 1968 due to the road construction plying between Razhü point via Kohima village (P' Khel) to New Secretariate Office, the said *kiputsie* was shifted with a ritual. On this renovation event, Kewhimia village council contributed Rs. 500 (five hundred rupees) to conduct a ritual for shifting *kiputsie*. On that specific day, the entire village observed taboo day (customary practice that prohibited villagers from going to the fields) (Üsuonuomia thinuo, 2021).

Another significant feature is a traditional gate located at *Yasa Koure*, which holds historical importance for being the first and oldest gate of Kewhira. This gate, known as 'Kerhei Kharu' or the 'Living Gate,' has maintained its significance over time. Even today, the gate holds the tradition that deceased bodies are not allowed to be carried through it (V. Pienyü & Rutsa, personal communication, January 10, 2017). The oral narrator in claiming Üsuo as the village founder also points to the topographic pattern on the eastern most edge of the village settlement occupied by Üsuo and the further expansion sector located at the back indicate their beliefs, not to move ahead of the elderly in respect for fear of bad omen (M. Mechülhou, personal communication, February 4, 2018).

Pfuchatumia Khel

Pfucha, the youngest brother of Üsuo, settled in Chümoukedima with his mother and step-father Tenyiso who belonged to the Kachari tribe. Pfucha had been a cowherd in his teens. It is said that, one unfortunate day, Pfucha's cattle accidentally destroyed the

neighboring field of Mezhalhou. This incident caused a heated confrontation with Mezhalhou, who threatened Pfucha and his family, even to the extent of exterminating them (Pfuchatsumia Thinuo, 1993). This event marked a turning point for Pfucha as he realised Tenyiso was not his biological father. Consequently, he urged his mother to reveal his true parentage. After mutual agreement, Tenyiso and his wife decided to hand over Pfucha to his biological brothers. Üsou and Dapfhü journeyed to Chümoukedima and brought Pfucha back to Kohima village. As a gesture of goodwill, Pfucha's mother offered gifts, including a male servant named *Kedie*, a hybrid cow named *Phriewi*, and packed meals for their trip. She also advised Üsuo and Dapfhü to care for *Pfucha* and to be affectionate towards him. Both Üsuo and Dapfhü accepted these terms and brought Pfucha to Kewhira (Pfuchatsumia Thinuo, 1993).

Pfucha grew into adulthood, married, and had a son named *Meko-o*, who in turn had three grandsons: Rame, Sote, and Rutsa. This lineage led to the Pfuchatsu *Khel*, which consists of two main components - Üsuonuomia and Pfuchatsumia - forming a significant thinuo known as Pfuchatsumia within Kohima village. This major clan is further subdivided into eight sub-clans: Mechülho, Pienyü, Rame, Sote, Rutsa, Theünuo, Mere, and Keyho. (K. Pienyü, personal communication, January 12, 2017).

Merger of Üsuonuomia and Pfuchatsumia Thinuo

Due to a negative prophecy, Vira relocated to another area. The descendants of *Mechülho* and *Pienyü*, collectively known as *Üsuonuomia*, continued to inherit the legacy of Üsuo's lineage. Over time, the Üsuo clan experienced a decline in population. As a result, Üsuo and *Pfucha* clans united, forming a significant group within Kohima village. In simpler terms, they were referred to as 'Üsuo Pfucha.' However, more recently, for official purpose and with a shared understanding between the two clans, the term '*Pfuchatsu*' has been adopted to denote both clans. (Üsuonuomia Thinuo, 2021).

Consequently, the members of *Ŭsuonuomia* and *Pfuchatsumia* now constitute a unified sub-group called *Pfuchatsumia* to this day and elders of *Kewhimia* act as protectors of both Ŭsuo and Pfucha. This arrangement has enabled the offspring of both clans to prosper in tandem and coexist harmoniously.

Huruotsumia Thinuo

The traditional stories of the Zeliangrong Naga recount that Nrembangbe, who was Zemi's father and is also considered an ancestor of Pfukha (believed to be Whinuo's adoptive father), set out from Makuilongdi (Makhel) to Tsiepfera (Yankhullen) in the Senapati district of Manipur (personal communication, Kitsuwelhuo & Heigiebe, November 16, 2018). They embarked on this journey with their community in pursuit of fertile land. Nkham from Hau clan and his nephew Kenling chose a region named Hebalepoliwa, which is currently recognised as Poilwa Village (Baptist Church Poilwa, Platinum Jubilee committee, 2013).

The Angami progenitors referred to this location as Kenuora. As the population increased, their progeny expanded to nearby regions such as Ziumi, Poilwa, Gaili, Willong, Makhang, at west and Kigwera in the Southern Angami territory, all in search of fertile land. (Namkwa & Kwedigwambe, personal communication, November 16, 2017). Roihebe, the forefather of Rapeiname, had three sons Nking, Herang, and Kending. From these, Heraang's son Nring migrated to the Kigwera area via the Dzükou valley. His descendants settled in *Kigwema* and were discovered by two siblings, Marahlie and Pfukha, who were the sons of Makhung (Rapeiname (Hoina) (Ze Student's Union, 1997).

It is said that before the advent of the British Huruotsu clan was known as Huruo-Lezie consisting of seven Pfutsanuo (sub-clan) - (1) Kesiezie (2) Yaotsu (3) Huruo /Chielie (4) Liezietsu (5) Sorhie (6) Kerhuo (7) Noudi. However, after the appointment of goanbura the British regime eliminated the word Lezie and placed all the seven sub-clans together under a common body called Huruotsu khel. The ancestors of the first five sub-clans belong

to a family while the last two were included by the elders and leaders who deemed it proper and the same was approved Kewhimia Council (Huruotsumia Thinuo, 1997).

As tradition recounts, two villagers discovered an orphaned boy within a hollow tree while working in their fields. They named him Seipfü. Pfukha, farmer, became Seipfü's foster father. Seipfü grew into a strong and active young man, garnering attention from the village's young women. This triggered resentment among his male peers, who often taunted, mistreated, and referred to him as a supernatural being (Theruomianuo). Later, out of jealousy, they conspired to kill him. During campfires at night, they attempted to push him into the flames, but his exceptional agility always thwarted their efforts. Due to this ability, he was dubbed Whinuo, signifying being saved from fire. He was unfortunately seen as a troublemaker (V. Kesiezie, L. Kesiezie & S. Yaotsu, personal communication, November 20, 2018).

Nonetheless, he matured into a man with strong character, married a virtuous woman, and became the father of three sons: Nyiedou, Nyiephi, and Nyiekhro. The prolonged mistreatment he endured from his peers eventually drove Whinuo to seek for a new settlement. Accompanied by his youngest son, Nyiekhro, they journeyed to Japfü Peak, where they discovered the location that would become Kewhira (Huruotsumia Thinuo, 1997).

After a lengthy stringent, stressful and challenging journey through a virgin forest, they made their way through Kijü Kecie. Whinuo established his ritual house plot but eventually returned to Tsiepfüra where he passed away. Subsequently, Nyiekhro married and had two sons Huruo and Lezie, while residing in Rüziera. After a certain period, eventually, they migrated to Poilwa, followed by Jotsoma, and finally settled in Kohima Village (V. Kesiezie, personal communication, November 3, 2018). Upon their arrival, they established a plot ritually to set up their house. Evidentially, Kesiezie, accompanied by his cousins like Sorhie and Tsürülho, returned to Kewhira and occupied their ancestral plot. They named this

settlement area in honour of Whinuo, as Whinuo Zou. As per the beliefs of the Huruotsu clan, the term '*kewhi*' is derived from Whinuo. It is possible that after Kesiezie's re-establishment of their ancestral land in Kohima Village both Huruo and Lezie might have also joined him (N. Kesiezie, personal communication, August 13, 2018).

Among Kewhimia, Kesiezie was the first to settle at Phesakou sector in Kohima Village where he initiated his first site at the present residence of Sieyiekuolie Kesiezie. In addition, it is also asserted that Üsuo preceded him who occupied Kimhozou (N. Kesiezie, personal communication, January 7, 2018). Tradition from Jotsoma, recounts that *Lezie* migrated from Mezhakikhu (Zeliang area) and established residence in Jotsoma within the Thekrunuomia Khel. In this context, *Liezie* and *Seno* from Thekrunuomia inherited a large tract of woodland situated at Kezhüzou, below Pulie *Badze*. Unfortunately, a tragic incident occurred when Seno fell victim to a hunting trap set by Liezie, leading to his demise. According to traditional custom, Liezie was subsequently exiled to Kohima Village (V. Senotsu & N. Senotsu, Personal communication, December 27, 2018).

The traditional gate of Huruotsu clan was established in 1921. Today, the said gate is positioned at the site of kijü kecie marking Whinuo's entry point to Kewhira located at the Khedi Baptist *Kehou's* former structure. To uphold family history with reverence and continue the bloodline connections among the people of Hausum Khel in Poilwa Village and Huruotsu Khel in Kohima Village, a stone monolith was erected on January 23rd, 2013, at Duilum River in Poilwa Village. One of these monoliths was positioned on the joint community land of Saijana /Jalukie, while the other was placed at Kingam Mdau in Poilwa.

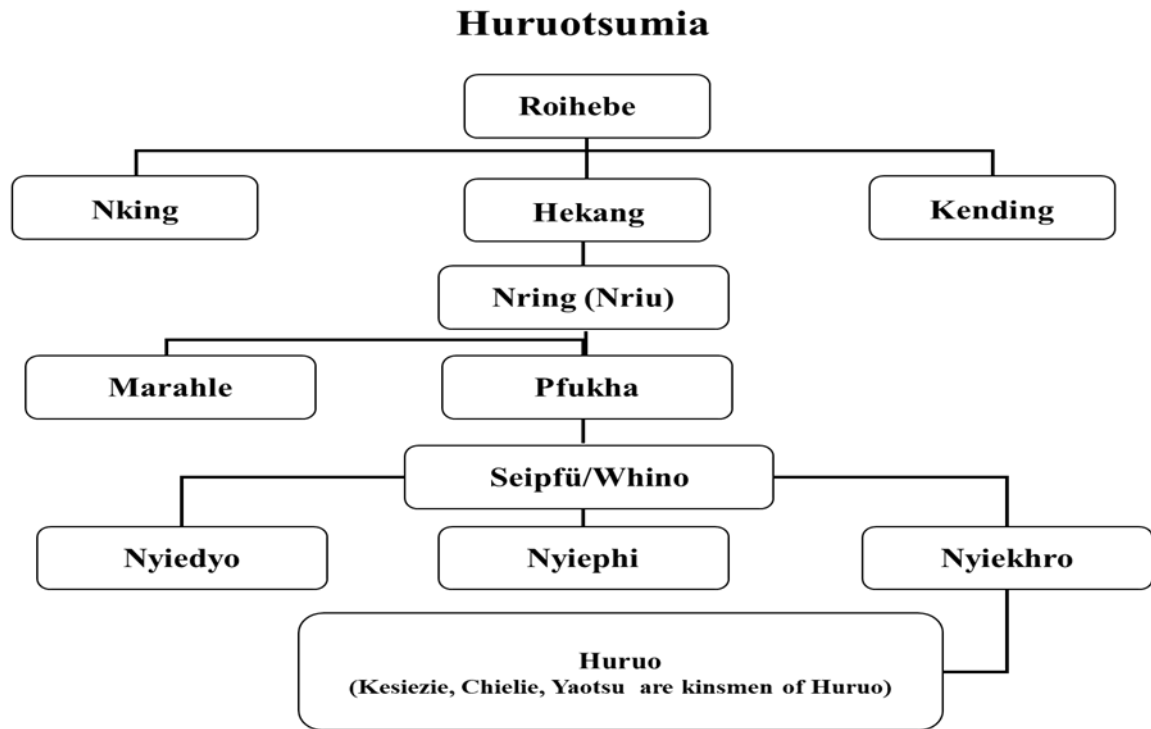


Chart: 6 Progeny of Huruotsumia Khel

As per tradition and historical accounts, Tsütuo's ancestor Ratsa fathered Punyi and Chalieu was the father of Tsütuo belonged to the Semomia clan of Khonoma village. Chalieu had five sons: Vakha, Mor, Ratsa, Thekha, and Tsütuo, and their ancestral connection continues to be upheld to this day (V. Meyase, L. Solo & M. Zinyü, personal communication, November 4, 2018). According to legend, Chalieu was believed to be a prosperous trader, good looking with great athletic built. He was engaged in trading ornaments such as cowrie shells, conch shells, and spices like garlic. His business activities often required him to travel on foot to many neighbouring villages in the Angami region (K.Mor, personal communication, November 10, 2018). During one autumn season, coinciding with the approaching harvest, Chü-u, the daughter of Üsuo from Pfuchatsu Khel in Kewhira ventured into their fields to shoo away crows and prevent crop damage. (L. Solo, personal communication, October 17, 2018). Unexpectedly, a heavy rainstorm began. As fate would have it, Chü-u and Chalieu found themselves seeking shelter in the same resting hut to escape

the harsh and stormy weather. It was during this time that they initiated a relationship, and *Chii-u* became pregnant.

Before parting ways, Chalieu made his identity clear to *Chü-u*. He also suggested that should there be any need for future reference to their relationship, she should inquire about the person wearing a silver wristband among the western Angami. Further, Suohu & Solo (personal communication, September 10, 2018) write about how *Chii-u* gave birth to a baby boy secretly on the pretext of relieving herself at *Menyi se*. (boar bed). Sensing her unusual behaviour, *Chii-u*'s mother followed her and found an infant boy at *Menyi se*. The two discreetly covered the baby and made their way back home. Because the baby was born out of wedlock, and fearing defamation, they kept him hidden from the villagers. The baby was meticulously wrapped and concealed whenever they carried him. If any villager inquired about the package she was carrying, *Chü-u* would casually mention that it was Tsütuo (cucumber). As a result, the baby came to be known as Tsütuo, and his descendants are commonly referred to as Tsütuonuomia, shortened to *T'khel* as it existed to this day. Further, though Chalieu was already married with four sons, yet, he acknowledged the baby as his own flesh and blood. Both Chalieu and his father Punyi embraced the baby boy (Tsütuo) in accordance with tradition. They presented offerings of salt, rice, a roasted cock, an unblemished rod, and bestowed blessings upon the child and wished him abundant procreation (D.Suohu & V. Theünuo, personal communication, December 5, 2018). Notably, Tsütuo's origin was rectified with the Semomia khel of Khonoma village. The descendants of Tsütuo organised familial connections in 1971 and 1974, seeking blessings of well-being from the paternal village (S. Suohu & L.Solo, personal communication, September 10, 2018).

Tsütuo and his mother relocated to Kiruphema village due to ill treatment where they lived until his early adulthood. Tsütuo developed remarkable sports skills and engaged with his peer group. However, step-motherly treatment from the community compelled him to relocate to his birth place, Kewhira and live with his maternal grandparents (Üsou's). (Suohu & Solo, 2018). Tsütuo was provided plot of land to build his house and also a share of woodland (V. Pienyü, personal communication, January 14, 2019). After Tsütuo's reintegration with the Üsuo family in Kohima village, Huruo approached Üsuo to take away Tsütuo. Huruo relocated Tsütuo to *Phesakou* sector where he provided two plots of land to Tsütuo, which are currently passed down to Solo and *Rüshecha-kezevilhou Geisuo's* descendants and *Zakienyü Phewho's* family (Suohu & Solo, 2018). Tsütuo clan presently comprises of seven sub-clans: 1.Solo, 2. Sekhose, 3. Belho, 4. Suohu, 5. Zatsu, 6. Whuorie, 7. Phewhuo. An octogenarian historian Lio Solo, (personal communication, October 17, 2018) asserted that the present descendent of Tsütuo (Tsütuonuomia) generation is twelve and he belonged to the eleven generation. There are seven therhüba (sectors): *Tsakou ba*, *Pheluo ba*, *Zieke ba*, *Kisieu ba*, *Phewhuo / Whuorie ba* and *Rüsiecha ba* (Suohu & Solo, 2018).

Rhieonuomia Thinuo

It is theorised that during the significant migration of the Tenyimia, Rhieo ancestors might have relocated to the legendary village of *Khezhakeno*, where they initially settled before moving to Kewhira. This theory is supported by historians from various villages and sectors, including Kimho, Rhieo, Sakou Rhieo, Merie Rhieo, Chiede Rhieo, Rükhro Rhieo, and Vipho Rhieo. They convened several meetings in 1959, 1977, and 1987 to deliberate on the traditional history of Üsuo, Dapfhü, Rhieo, and Meseiü. Subsequently, a comprehensive shared history was documented for the benefit of future generations to uphold their ancestral identity (Meeting hand out Resolution of Rhieo Thinuo, 20/4/1996).

Coincidentally, Üsuo and his siblings noticed a vast expanse of land covered with flourishing *logi* and *tekhrie* (dwarf bamboo plants), which stood out prominently in a bright off-white hue and possessed sustainable characteristics. Eager to claim this land, they engaged in an exhaustive survey using a series of traditional projecting methods. Through these methods, they identified the present-day location of Kohima village.

It is said that Üsuo the elder brother of Rhieo and Meseiü lived together at Tenyiphe. Primarily due to land issues, they shifted to Makhel, Khezakeno and finally reach Kewhira. Rhieo and Üsuo conducted a ritual and marked their initial plots on the current Thepfulie residence, adjacent to Rüsoma village. They settled in this place for a long time and domesticated animals. Üsuo got married and had a baby boy. Unfortunately, a tragedy struck while Üsuo's wife left the baby on a winnowing mat for a brief moment as she fetched water. Rhieo's hunting dog attacked and consumed the entire body of the baby, leaving only a small portion (Rhieonuomia Thinuo & Meriemia Rhiepfu Khel, 2017).

Consequent upon this tragedy and following the customary practice of banishment Rhieo abandoned his possession at Pfuchatsu *khel* and relocated to Dapfütsu *Khel*, settling in the present site of Kazohie. However, to his astonishment, a wild fern plant sprouted from the centre of his room which was rather strange and usually considered a bad omen. As such, he re-shifted to Khriezotuo Sachü's residence. It was here that Rhieo was blessed with two sons - Chao and Kereo. The **patronymics** *Cha dziükhon* and *Kere dziükhon*, named after these sons, continue to exist in *D'khel* whose descendants maintain a cordial relationship of brotherhood to this day (K. Sachü, T.Miachieo & K. Kratsütsu, Personal communication, January 26, 2017).

Rhiepfunuomia elder council asserted that Rhieo was one of the founders of Kewhira. His descendent is called Rhiepfumia / *Rhieo*. A popular misnomer called Rhiepfümia was widely spread and introduced by Tsütüonuomia to belittle, discredit, and challenge the

Rhiepfumia group (Hutton,1921). This occurred during the heights of inter-clan conflicts when the society was marred by animosity, discord, chaos, retribution, and turmoil. In fact Rhieo a pioneers, despite of being male, the feminine termination "*pfii*" carries a feminine connotation and due to the inter-clan rivalry, it has been misinterpreted as derogatory to defame their reputation (K. Khruomo, personal communication, January 6, 2017). A widespread misconception persists regarding the above-mentioned reason, which lacks a factual basis. Despite, Rhieo council has made it clear that they will use the correct name and not 'Rhiepfümia,' as this term is nothing more than a frivolous and groundless mockery.

As population increases village expansion becomes a necessity. Over the years the families continued to grow, and the demand for land increased. Therefore, the eldest three sons of Chao such as Suokhrie, Khelio, and Linyü, moved and settled in Mouthuzou. Suokhrie plot is at the present residence of Khrieluo-o, Khelie-o at Miaphre plot and Linyü at Perhieo present residence respectively (Lhisemia Thinuo, 1992). Meanwhile, the two younger sons, Yiese and Sachü, chose to remain in D' Khel, inheriting their ancestral land and residing in the area till today.

Among Chao's three elder sons, Suokhrie had three sons: Chüvihu, Nyieluo, and Cahuo-o. Collectively, their descendants are commonly referred to as Suokhrie. Khelio, another of Chao's sons, had five sons: Kelio, Miachieo, Kratsütsu, Khruomo and Ciesotsu. These descendants are known as Khelietsu. Linyü, the third of Chao's sons, had three sons: Kakhrie, Tsütsolie, and Visanyü. Their descendants are recognised as Linyü. Yiese and Sachü, along with Rhieo of L' Khel as previously mentioned, uphold their close familial relationship within the D' Khel community. As time progressed, they established connections and partnerships to formally recognise their ties, emphasizing their common origin and fostering a profound sense of brotherhood.

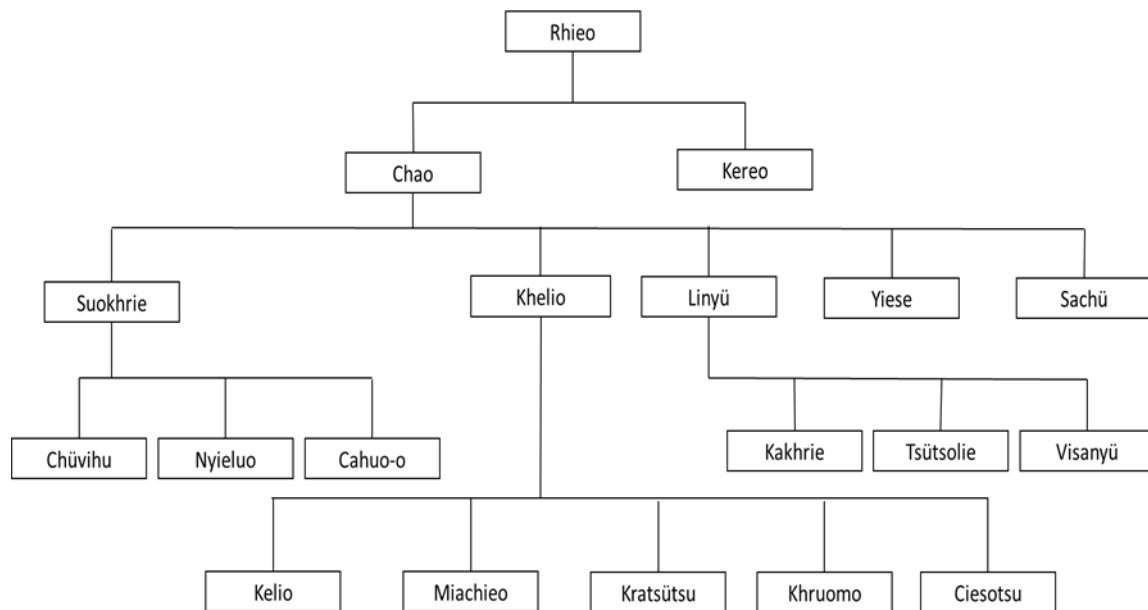


Chart 7: The pedigree of Rhieonuomia at Lhise kizou

To summarise, Rhieotsu is composed of seven sub-clans- a).Suokhrie b). Kelio c). Miachieo d). Kratsütsu e). Khruomo f). Ciesotsu g) Linyü. Together form a federation called Rhiepfu / Rhieotsu / Rhieonuomia. This federation is affiliated to Lhisemia Khel, one of the major sub clans within Kohima village.

Dapfhütsu Khel

According to Neichühu Khezhie Tenyimia's account, their ancestors belonged to the Naga race. These ancestors were once prisoners who originated in Chinese territory. They embarked on a journey that took them through Thailand, Burma, and eventually led them to Makhel in the Senapati district of Manipur. The Chinese referred to them as 'Sapalaoli,' meaning non-indigenous people, and subjected them to inhumane treatment, worse than animals. This harsh treatment prompted their ancestors to undertake a mass migration, during which over 70% of them perished due to starvation in undertaking the arduous journey.

Upon reaching Makhel, their ancestors conducted a survey of the land, assessing its fertility and suitability for human habitation. Consequently, they adopted a nomadic lifestyle

before finally settling in Makhel, which holds historical significance for the Nagas. After an extended period of settlement in Makhel, their ancestors dispersed to various places, including Khezhakeno, Pudunamai (Pfüşhüma), Khesoh and later to several villages in the Southern and Northern regions of the Angami territory.

As time passed, the common ancestors Tao and Zapuno married and established their residence in Pudunamai village, where they had four children: Üsuo, Dapfhii, Rhieo, and Meseiü (K. Sachü & M. Keretsü, personal communication, October 3, 2018). Growing up, they encountered challenges related to limited land for sustenance and aspired to relocate to the present site of Kohima village. To identify the new village location, they, along with other companions, employed traditional projection methods, including symbols and hanging knitted bamboo mats on a large mulberry tree as markers to distinguish the proposed site.

Using these projection techniques, the ancestors determined that the place known as Pfüsoliekie (current D' Khel ground) appeared to be a seemingly dry plain land in disguise. This led them to believe that the area was possessed by spirits (N. Khezhie, personal communication, October 1, 2018).

After surveying the village site, Üsuo, the eldest and one of the village pioneers, performed a ritual and established a plot of land to build his house which is at the current location of Thepfulie residence. Meanwhile, Tsiera joined Dapfhü and Rhieo in their search for land. They moved upward to the Ketseizou watchtower in D' Khel and set up their houses there. The initial house sites of these three ancestors are now the present residences of Pelevilie Khezhie, Kuozelie, and Kazohie, respectively.

Today, the descendants of Tao settled in many villages such as *Khezhakeno*, *Chozuba*, *Kigwera*, Kohima village, *Gariphema*, Chiechama, etc. All his descendent are known as *Kirekha*, *Theiünuo*, *Üsuo*, etc. In Wokha District, *Kikon* and *Tongoe* are the kindred of

Kirekha. The *Dapfhütsu Khel* is composed of *Kirekha*, *Keretsü*, *Sachü*, *Yiese*, *Khezhie* and *Pienyü*.

According to another theory put forth by Khriehulie Kire, described that Tao, the common ancestor, initially migrated from *Makhel* to *Kezhakeno* village. There, he had four sons - Üsou, Rhieo, Dapfhü, and Tsiera. However, due to land-related issues, they harbored a desire to an extensive flat area suitable for habitation. They made a collective move towards Kohima. However, Dapfhü and Tsiera settled in *Kigwera*. Meanwhile, Üsuo and Rhieo continued their journey to Kohima village, where they initiated the establishment of their house sites. This version of events is considered credible due to the existing remnants at *Kigwera*, goes to authenticate this historical account.

Eventually, all the ancestors established their homes. Meseiü got marriage to Tsiera. Üsuo was married to Sohenö from Jotsoma village. Over time, Dapfhü, Rhieo, and Tsiera were all united. In the initial stages, Huruo (Shiecha) and Tsütuo were adopted by Üsuo provided them with all the parental care, until their marriages. All of them assembled from different directions and converged to form a large and robust village. Consequently, neighbouring village referred to this village as “Kewhira” signifying the place where visitors met and eventually settled down together.

Pfucha, the half-brother of Üsuo lived in Chumukedima with his mother, Zapuno, and his foster father, Tenyiso who belonged to the Kachari community. He was restored to Kewhira under the guardianship of his two older brothers Üsuo and Dapfhü. Pfucha married to the youngest sister of Sohenö, and together they had a son named Meko-o. He had three sons Rame, Sote, and Kerutsa.

The descendants of Üsuo formed an independent clan known as Üsuonuomia khel, and they maintained a close relationship with the Dapfhütsu khel due to the intimate connection of their forefathers. Within the Kewhimia community, the Tsütuonuo Khel

(T'Khel) frequently engaged in conflicts with the Dapfhütsu Khel (D'Khel). Probably, between 1600 and 1700 AD, a dispute over land erupted between the Pfuchatsumia and Dapfhütsumia thinuo resulting in violent clashes where they hurled stones at each other. Tragically, during this confrontation, a man from the P'Khel succumbed to injuries, leading to Dapfhü's exile to Rükhroma Village. But after Dapfhü's banishment, a series of unusual occurrences began to unfold in the village leading to despair over the entire village, causing its residents to lose hope and happiness. Consequently, Kewhimia made an earnest plea and restored Dapfhü on the condition that both (Dapfhütsu and Tsütuonuomia) unite to foster good relations and mutually defend each other.

Tsieramia Khel

As tradition narrates, Tsiera's predecessors were cave men whose lives were threatened by ravenous snakes. Among the ancestors, a liberator hailing from Thepa Khel bravely came out of the cave and declared, 'I am a Thepa, the youngest, the best and the strongest; if I live, so be it and even if I die, so be it!' After which he took out his sword and killed all the snakes around the cave vicinity. Thereafter, he led a group of cavemen to the open space and started to live in the eastern region (K. Yhome, personal communication, January 1, 2017).

In groups, they migrated to Makhel and settled there. As they proceeded, he used a staff made of a wild pear tree which grew into a big tree at Charanghomia (Makhel) in Manipur state. Today it stands as a huge tree with a big cavity on its trunk. About half a kilometre there exist another big banyan tree, believed to be thousands of years old known as the 'revelation tree' because it will shake off its branches towards a particular direction to forecast the occurrence of high rate of mortality or even natural calamity in the respective region (C. Loli & L. Adani, personal communication, January 28, 2018).

A supportive theory could be found which according to Sekhamo (2023), ‘group of people came out from a cave in the eastern part of the world by the name Thepau, surviving a snake bite settled in Mekhrora (Makhel). A descendant of Thepau named koza left Makhel along with his followers and formed Kezhakeno village. Koza got married and had three sons name- Kezha, Khezhatseiro and Vora. Further, Vora (Tsiera) climbed up to the sacred mountain top called Kabvünhou and discovered Kewhira.

The settled in Makhel for long until misunderstanding over land issues arose due to the growth of population. Perhaps a major shift took place at this juncture, when an ancestor named Koza along with his companions moved out in search of new land for settlement following the direction of a flock of kite. Furthermore, they saw a toad sitting on the stone with a branch of paddy which was assumed to be a good omen. Therefore, they took all these signs to be the spirit’s wish for them to live in this place. They inhabited the place and named it Khezakeno (Tsieramia council, 2022). Koza and Kala (his wife) while living there was blessed with three sons namely, (1) Khezha (2) Khezhatseiro (3) Vora respectively. The youngest son (Vora) was entrusted for drying paddy in the sun. In the evening the quantity of the paddy multiplied to double the amount. They discovered that the stone possessing a magical power (Tsieramia council, 2022).

With the advancement in age, Koza divided his property among his three sons. He offered all the field and woodland to the two elder siblings and the magical stone to Vora. Consequently, after his death the three sons often picked up quarrels, tussling over the spirited stone. Vora would embrace the stone slab not to allow his elder brothers to spread paddy over it. Hence, they named him Tsiera (One who hugged stone) (Dr. Khriesatalie Yhome, Morung Express 30th December 2010, Clarification on the founder of Kewhira (Kohima village). His other siblings were called Tsietsu offspring. It is said that their mother Kala feared deteriorating relationship among her children and hence placed linseed straw on

the stone slab and set fire. The stone split into fractions and lost its magical power.

Consequently, division also occurred among the three brothers. The elder brother Vora left the village with a portion of the stone slab). Further, they dispersed into different regions such as northern, western and eastern Angami (Chakhesang) areas in search of land (T. Koza, personal communication, October 10, 2018). Tsiera descendants dispersed into numerous waves - some settled down at Kigwera and some moved on to different western region. Some relics of Tsiera descendants' settlement at Kigwema village such as Tsieraliezou at Phesakou Khel (the last khel), Kewhinyü and pond at Mera Khel go to prove their habitation. On the way to Kohima village, Tsiera and his wife happened to meet Merie and the duo initiated their house plot side by side at Ketseizou, presently the site of Pelevilie Kezhie GB residence and Merie at the present site of Ngulienyü Kire house located at Ketseizou Dapfhütsu Khel. Later shifted to Pherazou, Phezou and finally to Tsierazou, the present inhabitation site (K. Yhome & V. Vizo, personal communication, April 1, 2017).

Another version stated that Tsiera could be Kewhi who along with his wife migrated to Kewhira. (V. Mepfhüo, personal communication, April 1, 2017). This is another plausible version because evidence called Kewhi nyhü (Kewhi place), Tsiera liezou (woodland), house plot, ponds etc are available till today at Kigwera (V. Mepfhüo, personal communication, April 4, 2017). Further Tsiera named the village Kewhira through a phrase "*Di themia kehoupourei a pfhü a whi kevormia ze rüna chü zo tie*" (Tsieramia council, 2022, p. 5). It may be interpreted as "to welcome and host visitors, to form a village (K. Yhome, personal communication, April 6, 2027).

Tsiera lost his beloved wife not long after his establishment at Kewhira. In due course, Üsou and Rhieo gave their sister Meseiü in marriage to him. They were blessed with four sons namely – Viyielie, Zushü, Khriemenyü and Ketseizie. Again, Viyielie begot Dzuvichü and Yhome while Ketseizie begot Vizo and Kerechie. Meanwhile, soon people

from different villages and regions moved to Kewhira leading to immense growth and expansion.

According to Tsieramia council (2022), Tsieramia claimed Tsiera as the founder of the village and entitled to occupy the position of *phichüu* office. Moreover, Kewhimia elders blessed Meseiü and her sons to perform ritual in the absence of their father and to host a feast of merit. Therefore, Meseiü and her eldest son Viyielie performed rituals to host the feast such as - sha (twice) and zha and also erected a stone called *kerhei tsie* located at Dzülake near the present Government Medical College, Kohima. The descendants of Tsiera are known as Tsieramia khel consisting of five sub clans – Yhome, Vizo, Dzüvichü, Mepfhuo and Tseikha.

Chüziera (Thizama) Village

Chüziera known as Phezou (Kohima Village Council, 1991) is an extension of Kohima Village. According to Kepelhoucha Khruomo during head hunting days, Kewhimia descendants migrated from Kewhira and occupied the said village. Kewhimia acted as the guardian of Chüziera inhabited by the kinsmen. To ensure safety against any intruders from Mezamia country, Kewhimia voluntarily undertook the challenging task by deputing youth representing from all the seven Khels namely Üsuonuomia, Pfuchatsumia, Dapfhiitsumia, Tsütüonuomia, Hüruotsumia, Tsieramia and Rhiepfumia to be posted at Chüziera (Thizami) village garrison. From every seven khels ten-armed youth, totalling to seventy called *zhü pie hie thenyie* in Tenyidie were stationed at Chüzie garrison to check any intruder's movement (K. Khruomo, personal communication, January 6, 2018). Presently the area is inhabited by the clans like Pienyü, Rutsa, Üsuonuomia belong to Pfuchatsumia khel. Some few Lhisemia and Tsütüonuomia descendants inhabit this ancestral land as well.

According to Kepelhoucha Khruomo the presence of affinal kinship (Kewhimia) is a matter of great concern. There is a traditional history highlighting the due significance of the

original kindred presence in the village (Chüziera) without which, foodstuff run short and population decline in the bygone days (personal communication, October 4, 2018). Viletuo Pienyü acknowledged the offering of Tsiakra and liede khro and agreed upon the clarion call of Kewhimia Phichü pertaining to sowing and harvesting ritual and ceremonies and sekrenyi festival celebration (personal communication, October, 28, 2019).

Till early part of twentieth century, octogenarian carry a cherishing memory of how Kewhimia youth organised fishing and snailing at Chüziera lakes during festivals. The entire village youth collected rich harvests of snail, fish, crab, frog and various larvae, carrying them in big baskets (khorü). (N. Khruomo, personal communication, April 1, 2018).

Viletuo Pienyü narrated a legend that a couple lakes, had a son, this was corresponding with the three different lake sizes called wife, husband and son during field work. The wife from Mao country got married to Chüziera (Kohima) came along with lots of larvae germination families and enriched her husband (personal communication, January 4, 2018). Therefore, the family lake at Chüziera is rich with variety of fresh water food but not very friendly to the people. Annually, the village ritually offered a rooster, hen and chicks to them. The village was steadily growing and Kewhira capital expansion was impacting her immense growth and had high tendency to emerge as a new plan town.

Lhisemia Thinuo

Lhisemia thinuo is an entente of three khels comprising of Huruotsu, Rhiepfu, and Tsiera. Earlier, they were autonomous Khels co-existing side by side. The Huruotsu clan occupied Terhieliezou and Rhüsha sectors, while Mouthuzou and Khrabvübozou were inhabited by mixed clans of Rhiepfu and Tsiera. Additionally, a section of the Tsiera and descendants of Meseiu occupied Pherazou. They were surrounded by a large and aggressive clan that harassed all the three Khels. Inter-clan rivalries and fights were constant creating a

situation of unrest and chaos. (S. Suokhrie & N. Kesiezie, personal communication, April 4, 2018).

A significant turning point in the history of Kohima village occurred amidst great conflicts and chaos. Observing at the unruly nature of severe inter-clan clashes, a wise man named Besü Mao from Senapati district, the adopted son of Tsuvi and renamed Thepfucha, proposed the idea of a federation of the small clans to counter the dominance of the aggressive larger clan. This proposal inspired the elders and leaders of the three clans viz Tsiera, Huruo, and Rhiepfu who decided to reach a consensus and solemnly vowed to form a triple entente called Lhisemia, abbreviated as L. Khel symbolising the alliance of the three clans (Lhisemia Krotho Pesiekeli Tecie Hiepengou nyi 2008). Nelilathie Khruomo gives an approximation of the year of its emergence to around 1860s' A.D (personal communication, May 10, 2021).

As a token of their sacred agreement, they shared the meat of a three-year-old sow. This significant event occurred under the dynamic leadership of Virienyü Mepfhüo, Ngulhou Suokhrie, Zieliennyü Miachieo, Miako Rhiepfu, and Khriesalie Kesiezie (Lhisemia Krotho Pesiekeli Tecie Hiepengou nyi 2008. 14). Following the formation of the triple alliance, the Rhiepfumia and Huruotsu clans invited Tsiera descendants to relocate to the present-day area called Tsiera Kizou, adjacent to the Rhiepfu Khel. Some plots were donated to the Tsiera Khel by Salhou Tseikha, while other residential areas were purchased at a nominal rate (Lhouvizhü Vizo, Vipralhou & Vilhouzhalie: 1992).

In 1928, the three Khels hosted a traditional friendship event with the seven villages of the Mao in the Senapati district. On March 24, 1958, at the Tsiera community hall (Krogeibezou), the first team of office bearers was selected to promote better understanding and cooperation among the people. The first Lhisemia Day feast was held on January 4, 1961

co-sponsored by Lhisemia *thinuo* and Neilasa Khezic at Chielatsiephe near Kohima village panchayat.

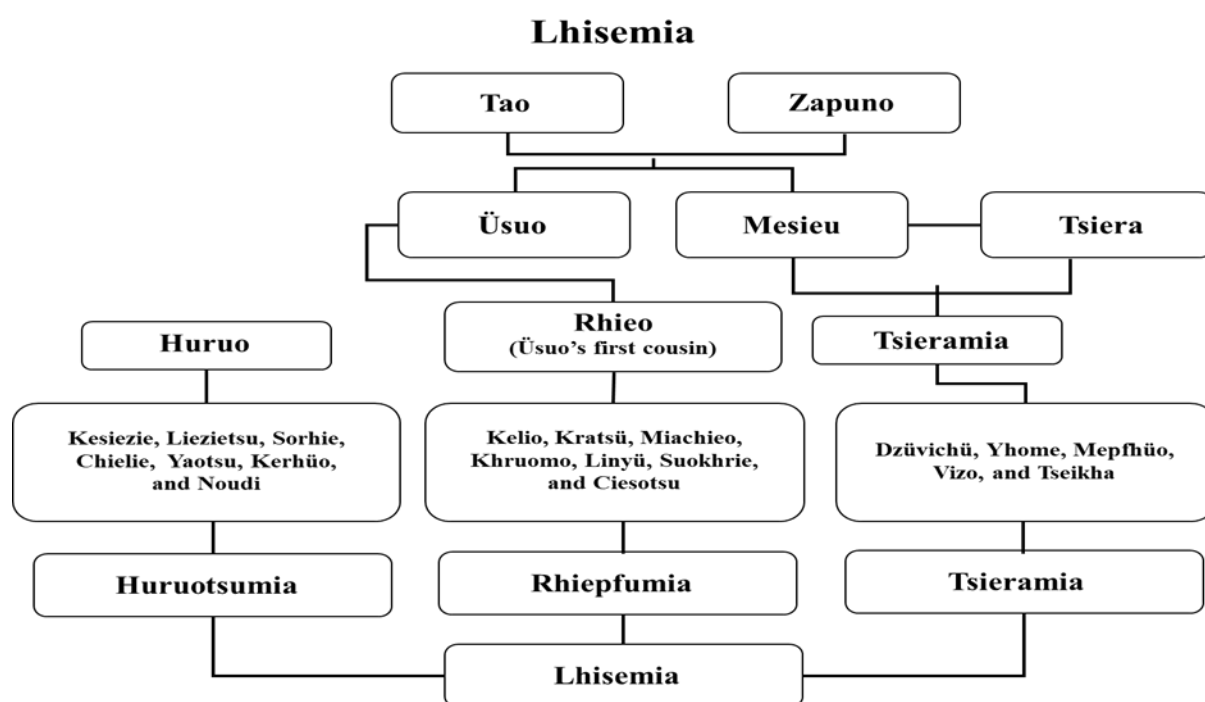


Chart 8: Progeny and the forbear of Lhisemia *thinuo*



Fig 1: A View of Kohima Village (Kewhira) in the colonial period

Source: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/battle_of_Kohima



Fig 2: Present Aerial view of Kohima village

Source: DIPR Kohima



Fig 3: Zomhou tsi (*Rhus Chinensis* in Scientific term and commonly called Chinese Hall or Nut Gall Tree)

Source: bykmobilya.com

CHAPTER 3

BELIEF SYSTEMS AS UNIFYING ELEMENTS OF KEWHIMIA: PRIESTHOOD, TRADITIONAL RITES AND RITUALS.

Agriculture has been the dominant Naga economy since the earliest times. Many rites and rituals associated with agriculture are communal in nature and act as a unifying factor among the people. People's faith in the traditional rites and rituals for population growth, bountiful harvest in agriculture and victory in war was deeply ingrained. A strong belief and opinion prevailed that all activities of the village, beginning from agriculture to war and peace depended on the precision of the ritual conduct. This chapter highlights on how the ceremonial observances reflects the socio-economic milieu of the time. It also delves into the realm of the various beliefs and traditional rituals, illuminating their vital role in agricultural activities and how it united Kewhira village as a cohesive and thriving community. It explores the four principle unifying agents and the rituals associated with it as the key to understanding the socio-economic life of the people. Emphasis has been made on *tsiakrau* (Crop Fertility Priest), *liedepfü* (Harvest Priestess), *phichüu*¹ (Village Priest), and *chümetsie* (Feast of Merit).

Kewhimia had conscientiously selected the most trustable priests from among the six *thinuos*'. Consequently, *Tsieramia* (Dzüvichü, Vizo, Yhome, Mepfhü-o, Tseikha) and *Pfuchatsumia* (*Sote, Rame, Rutsa*) shouldered the responsibility of priesthood (*phichüu*). The office of *Liedepfü* was confined to *Theüinuomia* (*Üsounuomia thinuo*) while *Tsiakrau* was confined to *Kirekhanuo* and *Keretsü* (*Dapfhütsumia thinuo*). This was how the office of *phichüu*, *tsiakrau* and *liedepfü* were specifically originated from the respective *thinuos*'.

¹ Among the Kewhimia, the village priest is called *phichüu*. Other Tenyimia villages used the term *Kemevo/kemevou* to denote the village priest.

The traditional life cycle was mostly governed by the lunar calendar where different seasons of the year were framed accordingly². Interesting to note is how the ancestors have deliberated the art of cultivation by invoking the blessings and protection of the supreme *therhoumia*³ at the same time instilling the collective responsibility to bring prosperity to the village. From sowing till harvest, people followed certain unified doctrines followed by a series of rites and rituals. To initiate and perform the rites and rituals, the most suitable and blessed *tsiakrau* (sower and crop fertility priest also known as sower) and *liedepfü* (harvest priestess) were appointed. The role of the *tsiakrau* and *liedepfü* has been analysed to show how their activities had been a blessing not only to Kewhira but to many neighbouring villages. As a channel of blessings, the selection of the priest and priestess involves certain processes and criteria to be fulfilled. As such, a study has been made on how the six *thinuos*⁴, viz Üsounuomia, Tsieramia, Huruotsumia, Rhieonuomia, Dapfütsumia and Pfuchatsumia of the different khels took turns to bring forth the most suitable and blessed *tsiakrau* and *liedepfü*.

According to Tenyimia tradition, the ordination of village priest is not open to everyone which suggests that there are priestly and non- priestly clans. The village priest *phichüü*⁵ (*zievo and kemevo*) belonged to the descendants of the village founder. It was forbidden for other *thinuo* (clan) to be appointed to the said position, as it was considered as bad omen to the village. Further, it was believed that if the village founder's kins are deprived, it may cause ill reputation and disintegration of the village. As stated by Nienu (2014. 136) ‘the religious system and its practices have created a gap between the priestly and non-priestly clans, the latter forming a large population who are less conversant with the intricacies of traditional religious tenents. However, lack of clear-cut and systematic

² Lunar calendar means a calendar basing on the face of the moon.

³ *Therhuomia* refers to super natural being.

⁴ *Thinuo* means clan. It is also commonly used as khel or chienuo.

understanding of how these systems operate has had little impact on Nagas' commitment to traditional beliefs and practices. The *phichüu* office of Kewhimia is confined to some specific *thinuo* and *pfutsanuo* viz from the Tseira khel - Yhome, Mepfhüo-o, Tseikhanuo, Dzüvichü, and Vizo and from Pfuchatsumia khel - Rame, Sote, and Rutsa only. They function on a rotational basis determined strictly by the capability and eligibility of the person (V.Pienyü & A.Mepfhüo, personal communication, August 5, 2019)

As found mentioned in Yhome, if anyone among the two died, his post will remain vacant for five years because it is forbidden to select a new priest before the stipulated time (2000, 15). Eventually, during that period the surviving priest shall assign dual role. Only after expiry of five years a priest is selected from the deceased clan who shall be ordained by the living priest. Therefore, they took turn to represent and served *Kewhimia* by administrating all community rituals. In fact, only *phichüu* was authorized to yell (*Mekü* which means yelling/shouting in Angami) in relation to observation of *penie*⁶, during festival and all other socio-political and religious activity in the village. They were the authorized priests to organized, facilitate and maintain uniformity and oneness amongst the people (V.Theünuo & T. Solo, personal communication, Febuary 15, 2017). In the Angami area every village has one *kemevo* and one *zievo* who assign different roles. On the contrary, “Kohima Village had two village priests (*phichüu*) who used to assign both of *kemevo* and *zievo* roles” (Hutton, 1921, p. 189). So, it is understood that in the Kohima group, the functions which are performed by the *phichüu* are along the similar lines of the *kemevo* of the Khonoma Zievo. (V.L. Meyase, personal communication, August 14, 2018). Adding, *Phichüu* literally means oldest righteous man in the village or *thinuo*. His role is to grace or invoke blessings in different occasions.

⁶ Taboo is observed to avert destruction/ evil spirit.

There were two *phichüu* in Kewhira who were responsible for the village administration. They were complementary to each other and there is no record of head priest or assistant priest as such. In different times and season the two priests coordinated to decide uniform date, month and yearly routine to administer *penyie* (taboo), a code of conduct related to *kenyü*⁷ (prohibition), organising social work and festivals. They are the authorised heads who preside over all kinds of *penyi*, and make decisions for the entire village. Besides the family source of the last Kewhimia *Phichüu* (Neilalhoulie Tseikhanuo), his grandchildren recalled the ritual called *thekhu sekru*⁸ performed by him (Mepfhüo, 2001) like the Kemevo in Viswema, Khonoma and other Angami villages (September 21, 2021). ‘It is believed that if anyone violates these rituals, the crops of the year would be poorer and famine might occur in the village. It was with this belief that people sternly adhered to it’ (Ruivah, 1993. 69)

However, in the event of sudden death in a family, accidents, high mortality, defeat in war and poor harvest, they should decline from the said office (V.Rutsa, C.Sote, N.Mepfhüo & K.Yhome, personal communication, April 1, 2027). Similarly, “unsuccessful hunting raids were reckless signs for which repercussions fall upon the entire villages” (Horam, 1977. 41). When prosperity and population were thriving all the priests could hold the office to perform the role of village priest and priestess, *tsiakrau* and *liedepfü*. However, it has been found out that during the tenure of Rhieotsu and Huruotsu as priests. the villagers experienced mysterious and unusual happenings such as breaking granaries and destroying grains by sow. Moreover, there were common complaints from the farmers of extreme tiredness, hunger, thirst and failure to accomplish their fieldwork in due seasons. Therefore, due to all these adverse and unfavourable happenings, both the *thinuo* declined to be the

⁷ *Kenyü* is the most fearful word in the olden days. No one goes against it. It is a stern warning. Genna is not a Tenyidie word as used by some writer. There is no equivalent word in English to convey the appropriate meaning of the so called *kenyü*.

⁸ It is a ritual performed by Kewhimia *phichüu* to begin the season of transplanting paddy plant like kemevo in other village.

village priests claiming moral responsibility (N. Kesiezie & K.Khruomo, personal communication, January 4, 2018).

Selection Process and Position of the *Phichüu*

According to Tenyimia tradition, in a village, two persons were chosen for the position of *phichü-u* from *Thevo* and *Thepa* thinuo. *Thepa* refers to the younger male line and is also called as *mekhuma*. (late comer) *Thevo* and *Thepa* are said to be the best match-up for making a fire ritual to begin a new village. Notably, these two descendants exist in all the Tenyimia villages. It is impossible without the presence of any of the two as the ritual of the new settlement cannot be carried out. Should anyone do without either of them, it was believed that there would be no population growth and blessings in the village. There are certain criteria upon which the village priest has to undergo. Usually, the oldest, or elderly from the village founder's genealogical line was ordained to be the village priest. He was subjected to scrutiny for his socio-economic status, holy marital status, righteousness, leadership quality and so forth to confirm his ordination. He should also be irreproachable, honourable, possessing highly recommended social and religious qualities (Z. Rutsa, Z. Pienyü, K. Pienyü & K.Yhome, personal communication, September 5, 2020). The post of the village priest is a lifelong commitment. However, they can resign from their post on health grounds. After the selection process, the priest was consecrated by two elderly people held from the same thinuo. After which he performs a personal ritual called *geizhie*⁹.

The two priests in the village have the same status and are complementary to each other in their duties for the well-being of the entire village. Matters related to the village were done after consulting with *phichüu*. All public ritual ceremonies were at their discretion and were consecrated by them. Furthermore, in all the festivals, feasts of merit or in any gathering top most priority and respect are given to them. They were the first to be served. Their

⁹ Geizie means a ritual sacrificing roster to forecast person luck, depending on the position of the chicken right leg cross over the left leg is called *peza ba* and *pevi ba* respectively.

wisdom, guidance, and decision-making played a vital role in shaping the society (V. Rutsa, Z. Pienyü, M. Dzüvichü, V. Vizo, personal communication, September 20 & 22, 2018).

However, the position of the *phichüu* should not be understood in the sense of absolute power.

Among the Kewhimia, the two traditional *phichüu* from Pfuchatsumia and Tsieramia *thinuo* reserved the right to hold the office and enjoy equal status. There are records of Neilalhoulie Tseikhanuo (Tseira Khel) who served in partnership with Pfuchatsumia *thinuo* like Welhoulie, Riemvü, Tseimo, Lhouthie, and Zeneilie. But unfortunately, all his counterparts died before Neilalhoulie, and he was the last and the longest-serving Kewhimia *phichüu* lasted for twenty-one years. Furthermore, factors affecting the ordination of a new priest depended on the traditional customs privileges and rights of the concerned clans. As per the record at hand, ‘Kelhou Yhome was the first and Neilalhoulie Tseikha was the last priest, respectively from Tsieramia *thinuo*. In total, at hand there were fifteen priests from Tseiramia and twelve priests from Pfuchatsumia *thinuo*. Geizienuo Sote is recorded to be the first and Khrieliezhü was the last known priest’ from Pfuchatsumia *thinuo* (Lhisemia Thinuo sewe, 1992, p. 13).

Further, it has been found that Tsieramia and Pfuchatsumia *thinuo* used different lunar calendars and to this day, it is followed by the few surviving animists in the village. Consequently, in some events or festivals, there occur minor differences in the dates of rituals. However, Kewhimia elders later agreed to adopt a single common Tenyimia calendar for the entire village to promote a sense of oneness. Subsequently, all the major festivals and rituals concerning political, social, economic, and religious activities are governed by the Tenyimia calendar (N. Rame, B. K Sachü & V.Kire, personal communication, September 22, 2020).

Forbiddance Observed by the phichüu

Phichü-u lives a very pious, disciplined, and an exemplary life. He goes to his field early in the morning and returns home early because as per the traditional customs, village priests are forbidden to sleep in the field for fear of bad omens. Hence, the priests always returned home from the field before sunset to avoid misfortune that may befall on the villagers (M. Mepfhüo, personal communication, August 2, 2019).

It is a taboo for the village priest to eat food in a house where death has occurred. Also, he does not eat snail (*laria* in *tenyidie*), and *axone* (fermented soya bean) because of its appetising nature resulting in the intake of more food which would ultimately have negative impact on the villagers and make them gluttons (Mepfhüo, 2002). He is “forbidden to eat or even to touch rat, squirrel and beasts of prey” (Hutton, 2003. 189). These animals were considered unclean and harmful to humans. Along the same lines, the grandchildren of the last village priest, Neilalhoulie Tsiekhanuo narrated about the genna observation which forbids the priest to have an intimate relationship with his wife on certain occasions and not to attend a funeral under any circumstances. He meagrely eats and drinks. He never totally emptied his cup and plate for fear of calling forth scarcity of foodstuff to the villagers. He is forbidden to say the word ‘hungry’ or ‘thirsty’ lest poverty befalls upon the village, for which his wife and children always remain watchful over him. He never left his excrement uncovered for fear of instilling an uncivil sense upon the villagers (S. Tsiekhanuo, personal communication, February 16, 2018).

The village priests are distinguished by the dress code. He wears the *lorü pfhe* (a set of shawls), carries a spear in his right hand, and machete in his left hand as he patrols the village. During which he loudly utters war cry marking his presence and bravery, also as a challenge should there be enemies around. On the day of *penyie*, the two priests will loudly shout to proclaim information to the villagers from an elevated place. They always stood

upon a small piece of wood as a symbol of messenger between men and *terhuomia* (R. Mepfhü-o, personal communication, August 2, 2019).

Duties and Responsibilities of the Village Priests

One major duty of the village priests was to give public announcement of the events. It was done usually early in the morning or before the sunset. Before taking any food or drink, the village priests will make a piercing yell announcing the date of *penyie*, its reason, what should be done and what should be avoided. In December with the approach of *Chiimetsie*, they would announce the hostname, date and the procedure of preparation. They always inform two days ahead of time to get their people ready for necessary activities. During big festivals like *Ngoni*¹⁰, *Terhiinyi*¹¹, *Sekrenyi*¹² and feast of merit, the priest yelled in advance to save their dates, to be part of the said programmes. They are consulted in the observation of every event and his decision stand final. In the event of an earthquake, hailstorm, fire devastation, or any tragic death, *penyie* is promptly observed on the very next day. Further, he invokes blessings, offers sacrifices, and facilitates rites and rituals. His top priority was to perform sacrifice, rituals and ceremonies for the peace and prosperity of the village. One notable ritual carried out for the welfare of the community was that before taking any food and drink, he always spilled two to three drops of rice beer and cooked rice to worship *terhuomia* on behalf of the village pleading for the spirit's blessings. He acts as a mediator bridging the gap between man and god (N. Suohu, personal communication, October 2, 2018).

During ceremonial acts, *Phichiüu* never performed ritual empty-handed. He always carries his "*khopenuo* containing a machete, green banana leave, two pieces of unspilt firewood (*seide*) about two feet approximately, and a weaning chicken" (Neichüriazo, 1989, p. 31). In the most presentable and honourable way, the priests wore designated traditional

¹⁰It is a festival celebrated after completion of paddy transplanning

¹¹ One of the major festivals celebrated to mark the completion of paddy harvesting.

¹² The biggest and most important festivals also called *phusanyi* meaning purification.

shawl called *lorü pfhe*¹³ and carries a spear on his right hand and a sharp edge glittering machete on his left. He also carried a packed lunch and a rice beer bottle. It is *kenyü* (prohibited) to perform rituals in empty-handed. All the blessings pronounced by the priests were believed to be accepted by *terhoumia* (supernatural beings) (N.Suohu, personal communication, April 10, 2018). In all ritual performances, a packed of rice and a sip of rice beer was always offered to appease the *terhuomia*. For all the service rendered to the community, the villagers offered tribute such as a portion of raw meat during feasting, success in hunting, any kind of ritual meat, and even extended physical labour as and when needed (Z. Shüya, Z. Huozha & V. Meyase, personal communication, August 14, 2018).

In case of prolonged illness or house dedication, a ritual is performed called *chüge*. Another ritual called *phichü pehe nanyü*, literally meaning ‘feasting to restore health and life in case of bedridden patient who has lost hope for survival’ is done where the host would arrange rice beer, meat and invite the priest to pray and bless the ailing one (V. Meyase & K. Yhome, personal communication, April 11, 2018). Another very important ceremony is called *terhase / thevü rase*. The ritual is performed to ward off destructive spirits causing pestilence, fire devastations and sickness. At dawn, before anyone goes to the field, the priest will sacrifice an unblemished rooster behind the public rest house, or on the way to the village. As he performs the ritual, he would utter in such a way forbidding any calamities to enter the village (All Angami G.B Association, Angami *kelhouzho mu capi leshüda*, 2014).

¹³ Kewhimia *Lorü pfhe* is a set of shawl designated only to *phichüu*. It is a pair of shawl: 1. White shawl with four black stripes in the middle and 2. Black shawl woven in colourful blend of red and green threads.

Observation of *Penyie* (Taboo)

There were two kinds of *penyie* called *nyire*¹⁴ *mu nyire kemo penyie*¹⁵ which the villagers observed seriously. Several restricted days was observed as *Nyire* taboo to avoid destruction caused by earthquakes, hailstones, fire, wind, and wild animals. The days were marked with total abstention from fieldwork, construction, chopping firewood, weaving basketry, clothes, and so forth. Even after the coming of Christianity these taboos were strictly observed. From dawn till night, people stayed indoors. The whole villagers, including Christians, strictly adhered to this norm. However, during minor taboo days, basic necessities like collecting firewood, vegetables, fishing, hunting, and other nominal activities were permitted (T. Suohu & N. Suohu, personal communication, April 10, 2018).

(Khruomo, 2000) mentioned that the canticles of the priest's prayers contain many in-depth and marvellous words in a poetic style. They are symmetrical in nature and contain thirty-nine lines. They are not supposed to be utter casually or in vain. It goes on to state that children are forbidden to speak all those sacred words because their insightful philosophies are beyond comprehension (p. 64).

Looking at the power exercised by the village priests, Elwin (1969) states that they have no power alone to take cognisance of offences against the person or property of the individual. Apart from religious and political legislation, decision-making on any matter related to statutory offence and democratise idealism depend on the consensus decision of the village elder council, which is final and binding. “Yet, *phichüu* position as the head is never compromised but held with great reverence, and everyone adhered to his direction and order. The villagers placed him on the highest pedestal by showing their loyalty and trust in him”. (N. Pienyü, R. Mepfhüo & K. Yhome, personal communication, January 10, 2018).

¹⁴ It is a severe taboo observance day where people totally abstain from work throughout the day.

¹⁵ A partially suspended day, restriction is lifted for minor activities like collection of firewood, fetching water, fishing, snaiing , vegetation, bathing and so on.

A note-worthy and unforgettable iconic history maker Neilalhoulie Tsiekhanuo Son of Duolhoulie Tsiekhanuo and Suowakhrieü Tsiekhanuo was born in 1903 and died in 1998. He was a staunch animist village priest whose prolonged and continuous commitment to public service for 21 years (1977-1998) was marked as an awesome and blessed period. He was a charismatic man marked with good leadership, dedicated and well versed in religious principles, hardworking and self-striving nature. He was recorded as the longest and the last phichüu (village priest) of Kewhira (Mepfhüo, 2001, p.11).

Seed Sowing Calendar, Agricultural Rites and Rituals

According to *Tenyimia* calendar *kezei* (February), *kera* (March) and *kechü* (April) months are considered the best sowing season for summer crops. Most of the seeds except winter crops were sown in this period. There are two main calendar months of seed sowing in a year. The first is called *chütsia krü* (millet seed sowing month) which falls in February (*kezei*). It is also known as *terhuomia tsiakra* because of the belief that *terhuomia* (supernatural being) had moved prior to tsiakrau in sowing millet seeds when the latter had gone to do the same. After tsiakrau broadcasting the millet seeds on the ground various seeds such as pumpkin, chaff, maize, beans, job tears, chilly, ginger, and so forth were all sown by the villagers in their respective fields Secondly, in the next month called *kera* (March) rice grains were ritually sown and initiated by tsiakrau. This was popularly known as *therhü tsiakra* because it mainly dealt with sowing of rice grains. Following the crop fertility priest throwing of rice grain seeds, the very next day of the ceremony is called *mechü tsiakra*. On this day the entire villagers sow rice grain seeds in their own field (M. Kire, personal communication, December 01, 2019).

Agricultural Rites and Rituals: Role of *Tsiakrau* and *Liedepfü*

The agricultural scene is marked by two eminent personalities, the *Tsiakrau* and the *Liedepfü* without whose rites and rituals agricultural activities cannot be done. Like in any other early societies, religious beliefs and taboos acted as a guiding force among the Angamis. The people believed in the grace of the supreme for a bountiful harvest. Therefore, meticulous rites and ritual ceremonies were conducted to gain the favours of the supreme. Beginning from sowing to harvest, agricultural activities are marked by the observance of rites and ritual ceremonies initiated by the *Tsiakrau* and *Liedepfü*.

***Tsiakrau* (Crop fertility priest)**

This term is associated with the crop fertility priest, also known as a sower who would perform rites and rituals to sow the seed. The day he performs the ritual, it symbolises that the sowing season has begun. “This is a go-ahead signal for the rest of the villagers to sow seeds. No one can sow a single seed before this day and before him” (Horam, 1977. 42). As he proceeded to his field to do the ritual, an elderly man accompanied him carrying seeds of numerous grains and crops such as paddy, millet, job tears, maize, pumpkin, bean, chilly for sowing. This particular day is called *tsiakra penyie* and the whole villagers were prohibited to work in the field. On behalf of the villagers (*Kewhimia*), seeds of different varieties were sown by the *Tsiakrau* to mark the beginning of sowing for the year. He addressed the god of the sky as *Tei Apfu kidzü Apfü* and murmured the prayer points where we find Haimendorf translated it as, “Let there be many blossoms this year and be gracious” (Haimendorf, 2016, p. 82).

The next date is called community seed sowing (*mechü tsiakra*). The villagers will follow suit and sow any kind of seed they prefer to cultivate. The fifth day of *tsiakrau kru* is observed as *prü penyie*. It is a severe total prohibition day of the village, observed to please *therhuomia* to protect them from natural calamities. “On the tenth day, the crop fertility priest

watered the seeds which he had already sowed on the first day. This was called “*tsiakra keze*” (Sachü, 2014, p. 18). Further, it was forbidden to work, wash hair, utensils, talk to a stranger or touch animals and insects on this of *tsiakra keze*. It was believed that anyone who violates this observance will encounter ill luck. (K. Kire, personal communication, May 25, 22017).

As the seed’s sprouts, the priest does the first weeding called *dipu chü* without touching the soil as it was forbidden, perhaps in order not to disturb the sprouts. This was followed by the second weeding called *dima* after which the third weeding *dizhü* is done. It is also a total prohibition day for the villagers to work in the field. Anyone who violates this prohibition shall be liable to meet misfortune like fracture or disorder of bones. It should be noted that the observances mentioned above do not apply to the village in totality as each *khel* follows its timing but follows the common calendar month. “It is a matter of days and when needed intercalary month is added according to the convenience of the village” (Ruivah, 1993. 69). In general, Kewhimia has two *phichüu*, one *tsiakrau* and one *liedepfü*.

However, the season of seeding varies from village to village and from region to region due to differences in temperatures and weather conditions and also the traditional nature of counting the lunar calendar. The villages in the Southern Angami area do sowing and harvesting prior to the Northern Angami region. For Kewhimia the beginning of transplanting of a paddy nursery plant called *thekhu sekru*, generally begins in the month of June while Viswema village observed on 12th May. On 25th May 2019, the scholar visited two animist families in Kohima village viz Tsieramia and Pfuchatsumia *thinuo* and found that there were little variation in observing certain minor rituals and festivals. Tsieramia animist family performed *kizhie*¹⁶ for *kuthonyi*¹⁷ on 19th May while Pfuchatsumia *thinuo* animist family is yet to observe, which might tentatively take place by the first week of June

¹⁶ Kizhie means a ritual symbolize the family in seeking blessing. The mother of the family offer rice water mixed with yeast and pack inside plankton leave to be place on the kitchen wall to *terhuomia*..

¹⁷ Kuthonyi is a festival to begin paddy transplantation. It is also called *kerunyi*.

depending on the lunar calendar. This difference was so because Tsieramia terrace fields are situated on the colder temperate region unlike the terrace field of Pfuchatsumia *thinuo* (V.Yhome & N.Rame personal communication on 25/05/2017).

Seed Sowing Calendar and Rituals

This ritual period is known as *tsiakrau krii* which falls in the month of *kezei* and continue till *Kechü* (April). Starting from *kerä*, Tsiakrau will perform rituals for thirty days. During this period, every fifth day is observed as *tsiakra zha* consecutively for six times which is rounded to thirty days. On the day of *tsiakra zha*, except *tsiakrau*, the villagers can work in the field. However, they were restricted to make fire in the open space and roasting of any edibles. Seed sowing always begins in a fixed month based on the lunar calendar. The season is also marked by observing the character of birds flying downward to the earth to collect materials for preparing their nests. For this reason, people called the month as *kenuo*. This particular season is accompanied with blooming of tree flowers called *hutuo* and *theguo* which indicate the right time of seed sowing. Simultaneously, a wild flower species called *hutu* sprouted out during the chirping of a migratory bird called *hutu* (cuckoo) which brings forth the onset of monsoon season. Therefore, when the bird started chirping it always rains anytime and any villager who went to field without waterproofing were mocked and addressed them as *kemena*¹⁸ a sarcastic remark of being lazy (K. Kire, personal communication, October 2, 2018).

There are two main kinds of seed sowing in a year. The first is called *chütsia krii* (millet seed sowing month) which falls in the month of February (*kezei*). It is also known as *terhuomia tsiakra* because *terhuomia* had moved prior to *tsiakrau* in sowing millet seeds when the later had gone to do the same. After broadcasting the millet seeds on the ground by

¹⁸ *Kemena* refers to a fake character of a person.

tsiakrau, various seeds such as pumpkin, chaff, maize, beans, job tears, chilly, ginger, so forth were all sown by the villagers in their respective field.

Secondly, in the next month called *kera* (March) rice grain seeds were ritually sown and initiated by tsiakrau. This was popularly known as *therhü tsiakra* because it mainly dealt with the sowing of rice grain seeds. The following day, another ceremony is observed called *mechü tsiakra*. On this day the entire villagers sow rice grain seeds in their own field (P. Kire, personal communication, December 01, 2019).

Liedepfü (Harvest Priestess)

A very striking and significant feature in the customary practices of all *Tenyimia* villages shows that the responsibility of conducting harvest rituals and ceremonies falls upon the eldest righteous woman within the community. The designation of *Liediepfü*, or harvest priestess, responsible for the ritual to inaugurate harvesting season was exclusive to the *Theünuomia* clan of *Üsuonuomia* thinuo. This tradition persisted from the era of animism till the later part of the 20th century. Significantly, before her rituals were carried out, no one was allowed to harvest any crop, even if fully ripen. The community anxiously awaited the harvest priestess's ritual, as it was firmly believed that by-passing her could invite the wrath of the spirit (*Therhuomia*), and would cause diminished prosperity, crop failure and famine. Consequently, the people highly valued the blessings bestowed through Kewhimia *liedepfü* ritual and held the harvest priestess in deep respect and reverence. The rituals positively impacted the socio-economic well-being not only the Kewhimia but her influence spreads across numerous neighbouring villages in the Northern and western *Angami* region, including *Chumukedima* (N. Theünuo & V. Theünuo, personal communication, April 15, 2018). As per the available historical documentation, Neizonuo Theünuo stood as one of the early harvest priestesses, notably serving for a recorded 30-year period. Kietuonuo Theünuo and Lhoutsonuo Theünuo were marked as the last two harvest priestesses of Kewhimia.

Eligibility and Selection of Liedepfü (Harvest Priestess)

The procedure in the selection of the *Liedepfü* is awe-inspiring and fascinating. It involves the clan members who would conscientiously deliberate on the qualities of the person's worthiness to be the priestess and with consensual opinion, the most virtuous woman without any blemishes was chosen to be the *Liedepfü*. This selection process is followed by a visit to the chosen one requesting her to formally assume the position. Several eligibility criteria were thoroughly evaluated:

1. The person should be preferably holding a senior status within the *Theünuomia* clan of *Üsuonuomia Thinuo* residing in *Kohima* village.
2. She should exhibit a righteous disposition
3. She should be trustworthy and honest
4. She should not have any bodily blemishes or physically handicapped and should not be an illegitimate person.
5. The ritual known as *Gei zie*, which she performs, should yield positive impacts on the village.
6. She should not possess the attributes of a soothsayer or be influenced by spirits (Sachü, 2014).

The proposal was succeeded by a ceremonial event named *Gei zie*, which was in fact a suitability assessment. This ritual involved a unique procedure where an unblemished hen was sacrificed and the positioning of its legs was observed. If the hen's right leg overlaps the left, it was "*peza ba*," meaning, a positive omen, symbolising blessings for the village. Conversely, if the positioning was reversed, it suggests an unfavourable sign and she would decline the role, where another woman from her clan would be given the opportunity. Following the positive outcome of the ritual, her appointment as *Kewhimia Liedepfü*, the harvest priestess was confirmed. The priestess would hold this esteemed position until her

passing or until she was no longer capable of fulfilling her duties (Khokhrienuo & Viyanuo, personal communication, April 08, 2018).

Once the *Liedepfü* is confirmed, she observes *liede*, a strict genna for over a continuous period of 30 days. She remains sequestered for five days within a temporary chamber referred to as "*Da nu*" and is supposed to build a new hearth and use only new utensils. She prepared her meals, drank rice beer and adhered to a strict vegetarian regime. During this period, practices such as roasting food, borrowing or lending items, and hosting outsiders were not allowed. While attending to nature's call, she is required her to shield herself with a winnowing mat, and she would venture outside only during the night time to avoid encountering other villagers. On the fourth night of the *liede* period, it was imperative to keep the household hearth fire burning until the following morning. Bathing was prohibited, and she refrained from washing her cup or plate, ensuring they were never turned upside down. Notably, her cup and plate were always left with a small amount of rice beer and a few rice grains after consumption signifying that food and drinks do not get over. Communication with others was forbidden and to express her needs, she resorted to speaking to herself, only sharing her requirements when absolutely necessary (N. Mechülhou & D. Theünüo, personal communication, April 07, 2019).

M.Mechülho (2015), mentions the list of *Kewhimia Liedepfü* (priestess) as follows:

Virüzhüü, Visalieü, Dzüvichü, Kruheliü, Neizoü, Kietuonuo and Lhoutsonuo.

Rituals and the Role of *Liedepfü*

There are different kinds of ritual observances for harvesting different kinds of crops. It was believed that a bountiful harvest depended upon the accuracy of the ritual. It required both the priestess as well as the villagers to observe strict gennas.

Therü liede (Paddy harvest)

The annual *Therü liede* generally takes place in the month of *rüyo* (September). The ritual spans over two days where on the first day, *liedepfü* heads to the field equipped with a basket, sickle, winnowing mat, spreading mat, rice beer, and a parcel containing cooked rice wrapped in plantain leaves meant for performing ritual. Upon arriving at the field two drops of rice beer and two pieces of cooked rice are offered beneath the spreading mat. The following prayers are uttered: "May my harvest flourish with bountiful yields and long-lasting sustenance." Additionally, the ritual of *liede khro/ chieshü chü* involves binding together 2-4 paddy plants on the first day of harvesting. To invoke blessings of fertility and prosperity, a blend of earthworm excreta, cooked rice, and a small gourd of rice beer is offered to *therhuomia* at the base of the paddy bunch called *liede khro*. This ritual opens the beginning of paddy harvest where the priestess uproots a pair of paddy plants and replants them behind the village gate.

The following morning, known as *liedepfü liede* or "Reapers' Day," all villagers are instructed to observe genna. On this day, the harvester accompanied by a pious boy cuts 2-3 paddy heads and places them into the *liedepfü's* basket. Subsequently, the boy lifts the basket onto her back, and she carries it home. By doing so, it symbolizes the seeking of blessings for abundant yields and to commence the paddy harvest (N. Rame, T. Suohu & T. Sote, Khokrieü Khruomo, personal communication, April 7, 2019).

Further, V. Mere & Kerüsienuo (personal communication, October 18, 2018) informed that the priestess would uproot 2-3 paddy plants and re-plant them near the village gate, binding the plants together using *chiena* leaves (A herb plant usually used for ritual). The following day, she brings them home, and places them in the granary. This act signifies the commencement of the harvesting season for the village. During this time, she offers

invocations for bountiful harvests and enduring blessings upon all crop grains and vegetables. On the third day, the entire village will start to harvest their field.

On the second day, all villagers, particularly mothers or women from each family, proceed to the field. They uproot 2 paddy plants and replant them behind the village gate. The subsequent day, they gather a few rice grains from the aforementioned paddy plants, symbolizing the inauguration of the harvesting process. An individual whose paddy field is yet to be ripe may also collect a few rice grains from the same plants, with the owner's permission. Following this ritual, the villagers will be ready to proceed with their harvesting endeavours (N. Rame, T. Suohu & T. Sote, personal communication, April 07, 2018).

From here, two to three handfuls of rice grains are gathered and placed over the granary, having been coated with ash to invoke blessings of endurance, abundance, and benevolence. Each day, all the mothers or women engaged in harvesting carry a morsel of cooked rice secured in their waist belts, carrying them throughout the day as they seek blessings. They are prohibited from completely emptying their gourds and tiffins. On the day of harvesting, they refrain from washing their hair, plates, and cups, fearing the onset of famine (Khokrieü Khruomo, personal communication, April 7, 2018). This belief could be interpreted as akin to emptying or cleaning out the harvest to the last grain and thus denote a situation of poor harvest and famine.

This offering is retained until the entire harvesting process is completed. In the evening, two paddy heads from this bundle are taken home, coated with ash, and placed on the granary. Subsequently, a few rice grains (about 4-5 pieces) are husked and placed into the rice or curry pot called *liede khutie*. All family members must partake in *liede khutie*. Traditional customs dictate that sharing *liede khutie* with outsiders is prohibited (N. Theünuo, personal communication, April 7, 2019).

***Tsü liede* (millet harvest)**

During the month of July, when millet is ripe for harvesting, the harvest priestess carefully uproots 2-3 millet plants from her field and re-plants them behind the village gate. Following this, the very next morning, she plucks half of the ripe millet heads, carry them home and place it on the roof or wall of her house. These ritual millet heads are kept throughout the year and are not to be lent to anyone. This event signifies the initiation of millet harvesting, referred to as *tsü liede*. Alternatively, there is another known as *Therhuomia liede*, as they have preceded the harvest priestess in the act of harvesting millet (M. Rame, personal communication, April 7, 2019).

Upon the conclusion of the harvest, after meticulous searching for any spilt paddy heads, the *liede khro* (bunch of paddy used to begin harvesting) along with the *liede sü* (Reaper bottle gourd) are brought home. It is forbidden for outsiders to enter neighbouring fields before the collection of the *liede khro*. Even cows are not allowed to graze freely until the entire village has harvested this specific ritual paddy bundle.

Voluntary Offerings to *Tsiakrau* and *Liedepfü*

Upon concluding the year's activities in the fields, the messengers of the *Liedepfü* and the *Tsiakrau* would traverse the village, gathering offerings known as *tsiakrau* and *liede khro*. As a token of thanks giving, offerings were made both in kind and services. To collect the offering two elderly men, along with a teenage boy to assist them were appointed by the respective clan/ *tsiakrau* himself. They would move from house to house, *thinuo* to *thinuo*, and village to village. On this particular day the collectors do not partake in food except rice beer, ginger and salt, proceed with a *zha rha* (measuring basket) to collect the offering. In reciprocation, the villagers cheerfully and generously offered all kinds of produce, maize, millet, pumpkin, cucumber, gourd, chilly and all kinds of vegetables as wished by them (L. Dzüvichü, personal communication, January 4, 2018). It is mandatory to fill the measuring

basket to the brim. However, overflowing on the ground was prohibited from being picked up again. They were also honoured with meat in occasions like festival, feasting and in successful hunting expedition. The collectors would gather all the offerings within Kohima village and also in some neighbouring villages such as Merie, Tsiese and Chüzie, Chiede, Rüsomia, Diho, Chiecha, Nerhe, and Chumukedima villages (V. Huozha, R. Zhale & V. Pienyü, personal communication, June 2, 2019).

One could discern the community's aspiration for agricultural prosperity and people's faith in the rituals conducted by the priest and priestess. It is said that the last of Kewhimia tsiakrau died and there was no one to replace him. Therefore, Keretsü clan hired an old man from Sumi community to represent them in assigning the role of *tsiakrau* for Kewhimia. He lived in Kohima village sponsored by Keretsü clan. There were many outstanding tsiakrau who rendered best service to Kewhimia. However, only a few names could be traced out such as Kuoshuo Kire, Pulhoulie Kiretsü, Volhouzhü Kire, Chülhoulie Keretsü, Ngulienyü Kire, Merhü Keretsü, Kiere Kire and Khalhou Keretsü (Souvenir, Dapfiitsumia Day Golden Jubilee, 2007. 32).

Feast of Merit (*Chümetsie, Zhathozachii*)

An identity marker of the Naga cultural tradition lies in hosting the Feasts of Merit. Richness was counted by the amount of rice that a family possessed. "Rice was not only an article of consumption. It was also considered the most important possession to gain recognition in society. A person's status in society was determined by the amount of rice he stored." (Sanglir 2023, p.41) The question is how does one become rich so as to feed all the villagers? Some theories may be put forwarded which says, some dedicated and hard-working couple because of their hard labour are blessed with plentiful harvest and thus they become rich. Another theory suggests that to some people, it is revealed in their dreams to give feasts to the community. Such dreams were considered as the will of *terhoumia* and

hence, taken as predestined. Similar ideas have been given by Freidman (1965, p.172), who writes, “Surplus is represented not as the product of surplus labour, but as the work of gods. “The concept of surplus prevalent among the Naga villagers was not for the accumulation of wealth but for distribution to earn prestige, status and recognition in society. This distribution of wealth is represented by giving a community feast which is manifested in holding the Feasts of Merit” (Sanglir, 2023, p.41). Feast of merit is celebrated in the month of *rüde* (December) in between *terhiinyi* and *sekrenyi* festival.

Beginnings of the Feasts of Merit in Kohima Village

Yhome (2010) asserted that as per tradition, the founder of the village was supposed to do rituals of the village feast called *Chüimetsie*. But unfortunately, Tsiera, the village founder died, so Kewhimia had authorised the deceased wife Meseiü and her eldest son Viyielie to do rituals for the village. What is striking here is the opportunity given to the wife to perform the ritual to host the feast, a practice which is not to be found in other villages. Special relaxation to hold the feast was extended to the female members of Tsiera’s descendants and since then, the village feast *Chüimetsie* started in Kewhira. “In the absence of the family father (Tsiera), Meseiü and her children were blessed and officially proclaimed to perform a ritual to host *Chüimetsie*” (LhisemiaThinuo sewe, 1992, p.10). However, except amongst Pfuchatsumia and Tsieramia there was no such record from other *thinuo* about a bachelor or widow who had hosted *Chüimetsie* (N. Sachü & K. Khruomo, personal communication, October 2, 2018).

Eventually, Meseiü along with her eldest son Viyielie performed rituals and introduced *Chüimetsie* to Kewhimia. Evidently to this day, *Meseiü Kerhie tsie* (Stonehenge) is located at Dzühake near the present-day Nagaland Medical College, Kohima. Thereon, from Tsiera khel, there are several families who hosted the feast along with mother, sisters or brothers as given below:

Lhouzeü Dzüvichü along with her son Yachütuo host the feast of merit called *sha*.

Duochalie Dzüvichü with his sister Dzüvinuo hosts the first stage of the feast.

Chüselie Vizo with his sister Duochü-ü

Zetseilie Yhome with his sister Duolhousäü

Lhouhenuo from *Tsiera* khel married to a man from *Mere* clan under *Pfuchatsumia* khel, performed the ritual with her son after her husband's death and hosted *sha* feast.

Zhielie and his mother belonged to P'khel hosted the feast of merit.

Ideas Behind the Feasts of Merit

Looking into the ideas behind the Feasts of Merit, Friedman (1955) projects the involvement of dual functions in which there is the distribution of surplus to accumulate prestige and secondly, to propitiate the higher spirits to increase the wealth and prosperity of the entire group. "For the Nagas, the material riches and surplus were conceived of in connection with the fertility principle and by sharing the fruits of their material production, brings fertility to the community and at the same time, a person gained both prestige and honour" (Sanglir, 2023, 42). There is a strong belief that prosperity blessings flow in through sincere ritual and obedience. *Chüimetsie* feasts are to be meaningfully carried out according to the doctrines, to earn immense blessings upon the host, and the entire village. According to Naga tradition a host who willingly and cheerfully distributed his wealth, reap manifold harvest and his riches multiplied. In another word the more he distributed, the greater blessings flows in and ultimately the feast giver and his family gain status and respect in society; the earned prestige and honour which passes down the generations.

The villagers industriously work in their field fulfilling all the rites and rituals associated with agriculture. However, there are some families who are more blessed than the others. As Friedman (1965) mentioned how surplus was not a result of surplus labour but of the work of gods and giving ground to Friedman's idea, the people's belief in the revelation

to some persons in their dream to give the feast goes to suggest that there are some people more blessed and they are the chosen ones to channelise the blessings of prosperity to the whole village through their action of sharing their wealth.

There are a series of feasts and the more a family hosts, the higher their status rises in society. Only few wealthy couples could reach the most extravaganza feast called *rüzie he*, *kikhrumouza*, *nuolhoumouza nuoha kizhü* respectively. Sometimes through mutual decision, the wealthy couple will decide to sacrifice their tedious laborious wealth to host a series of feasts. Also, kinfolks, elders, friends from other *thinuo* propose the wealthy couples in the village perform the Feasts of Merit. Usually in a year, three to four families from one khel used to give the feasts.

Once confirmed to perform the feasts, the couple packs a few crumbs of yeast as a covenant with the supreme which was kept confidentially. Once this pact is made, it becomes a taboo to cancel it. The host couple performs many rituals and observes abstinence from the day they pack crumbs of yeast. The couple requires observing many gennas as it is believed that prosperity and blessings will flows in through sincere observance of the rituals. The host couple used a new hearth, new clay pot, new spoons, new cup and plate during the ritual and feasting period. They are prohibited from taking baths, having no visit to deceased family or eat meat (*theprie*, ritual meat) brought from a house where death had occurred. All these were done for the intensification of robust health, a new energy to last all foodstuff and drinks, and not to encounter any misfortunes.

Organisation of the Feast: Preparation, Process and Activity

The organisation of the feast of merit dates were traditionally fixed basing on a lunar calendar which falls on the 9th of December is called *nyishie* ¹⁹. On this day the two *phichüu* will make the yelling announcement inviting all the villagers and advice to render help for

¹⁹A day of announcement of preparation for the feast of merit.

feasting. On the 10th of December (*riide*) soaking, pounding and rice brewing were done. There used to be a mass contribution of rice from almost all the household called *Zuhekhruo*. The women folk collect rice from door to door and do all necessary task from sieving rice to fetching water. Collectively, along with the donors' wife, they brewed plenty of rice beer for the long feast. However, a wealthy ancestor of today's Khruomo clan did not wish to burden the villagers in collecting rice (*zuhekhruo*) to brew rice beer for the feast. Hence, in his own capacity, he hosted *Chüimetsie*. Therefore, he was popularly addressed as Khruomo (one who did not collect or beg). Hence, for this remarkable generosity, the good name and the pride passed down to his generation and to this day, his descendants are known as Khruomo. For the feast, the unblemished and the healthiest cows and pigs were selected and slaughtering of the animals, and cooking and distributing raw meat were men's responsibility. In the 15th or 16th *rude*, women's rituals called *kizhie* (sanctification of house to protect member from sickness and natural calamity) and *zu mho va* (drop of rice beer were offered to the supreme) were observed, while men perform the ritual called *chü se pe* (ritual perform to seek cattle prosperity). These rituals were considered as very important because it was done to invoke and appeal the supreme for multiplication and longevity over human lives, grains and livestock. On the day of *kizhie* the host offered *kri ba*²⁰ to the eldest biological sister and sometimes to all biological sisters and elders as an expression of love, generosity and honour (D. Kuolie, personal communication, February 18, 2020).

Feast of Merit has a deeper philosophy. It is a great sacrificial task for the host to give a feast to the community. The main objective of hosting a feast is to seek blessings. It is also an act of acknowledging blessings for bumper harvest, abundant livestock, prosperous marriage and good health. It is a remarkable time for the villagers to relish for days together. It is also a milestone achievement of the feast givers and an opportunity to gather relatives

²⁰ A portion of cow leg cut from the thigh and below along with a piece of liver and intestine.

from the neighbouring villages too. According to Nshoga (2009) “Feast of merit is a culture of prestige with the concept of fertility cult. It is a determination feast to redistribute through feasting”. (p.94)

The rich, poor, young and old take part in this great feast. In return the village community shows loyalty, honor and reverence to the feast giver. This grand feast lasted from five to twelve days. In some Angami villages, it is extended to 14 days. The main feasts are celebrated for five days in series- *rüle he*, *kina he*, *lhakhruo he* (this third feast is most special where the maximum meat is consumed). It is followed by the fourth feast called *ki whi* where only menfolk feasts to shower blessings upon the host. Fifth is the *tsü he*- where the heads of animals like cows and buffalo were skinned to take out the skull and preserved for decoration. This feast is marked by enjoying the meat of the head portion (D.Kuolie, personal communication, April 3, 2018). It should be noted that there is no fixation for the heads of animals required for feasting. It depends on the number of invitees and the capacity of the host. Feast of merit is marked with the intake of plentiful meat and rice beer accompanied by a generous distribution of meat to all different priests and invitees.

The Culture of Return Gifting

A return gift is understood as a ‘thank you’ gift, an expression of gratitude and appreciation. In the present age, return gifts are all the rage in celebrations. Usually, it comes in the form of mementos that the guest can keep to remember the occasion. Amazingly, there is a developed idea of this version in the *muodi*²¹ distribution by the feast givers. Beef *muodi* of 7-8 pieces along with a piece of pork *muodi* are given to all as a sign of gratefulness for partaking in the feast. Another return gift called *lhakhruo mou* numbering 30 (thirty) pieces of beef, 1 to 2 pieces of pork *mouidi* along with cooked rice was packed in plantain leaves and given to all who offered a basket of paddy/ rice in hosting the Feasts of Merit. Later in the

²¹ Basically junks of meat: beef or pork slowcooked in its blood in large pot. It is a special delicacy usually given as a thank you gesture.

20th century, when money began to be circulated, some people offered cash worth rupees 2 to 3 in lieu of rice/ paddy grain. Kewhimia's original *moudi* per piece weighs about 500-600 gm. This traditional *moudi* are considered as the pride of Kewhimia custom and identity and even among the Angamis, Kewhimia *moudi* is highly valued. The idea of return gift practiced by the forefathers' maybe viewed as a very refined culture as in par with today's practice of returning favours on occasions like wedding, dinner party, and so forth.

Generally, the feast of merit procedure and ritual differs from village to village. Significantly, the ordinal feasts of merit were divided into 10 (ten) categories interwoven in the system which proceeded in an ascending order to achieve different rank of social degrees. These processes are rigid in nature and no one can ignore any ranking step to move to the next higher order. Each stages of feast have its own purpose attach to it. The mode of feasting move upward in an ascending order serially by hoisting feast such as for- *kichiikikru*²², *Pfutsanuo*(Sub-clan)*Thinuo* (Clan) *mu riina*(Village) respectively. Initially, the donors hosted for family members and close relatives, followed by sub-clan, clan and the whole village. There were ritual feastings for good crops, bumper harvest, prosperity of human and cattle wealth, thanks giving and finally to please the departed soul.

Process and Stages in the Feasts of Merit

Chiimetsie belongs to the rich people. Probably, many wealthy families hosted series of feast at Kewhira yearly. To begin, a ritual basket called *sianyi pie* containing symbolic prayer points represented by men and women goods such as spear, necklace, bangle, conch shell, machete, shawl (*kiba pfhe*), the articles being considered as precious and the best gift they could offer to the supreme were placed at the corner in the ritual room at night before the commencement of the series of ritual, and feasting. In the series of the feasts, the first stage is called *thesha*.

²² Family members including first cousins

To perform the first stage of the feast, two unblemished, fully black in colour and the pudgiest bulls were required to be sacrificed. From a temporary ritual room called *bo*, ritual cows were killed, followed by all the other cattle's required for the said feast. Two intimate friends of the feast giver would be in-charge of the feast. The friend who would manage all the vats of the rice beer was known as *Na sa*. The other who managed all the cattles and the meat was known as *Na bo*. On this day cooked salted meat called *rüle mou* is offered which is supposed to be eaten only in gathering and is prohibited to be taken away. Besides, a ritual called *chüige* is performed. The significance of this ritual is that a sow is sacrifice to host elders for seeking wellness. It is a pre-requisite procedure of *Chüimetsie*. The same ritual is applicable even during house dedication or unsuccessful married couple or in case of unsuccessful in cattle rearing. During this ritual a sow is killed, cut into 100 pieces²³ (*kri mu za*), distribute 1 (one) piece of uncooked meat called *mou khrie puo* to all village priests and loved ones.

Cultural Traditions Associated with the Feasts of Merit

He then proceeds to the first stage called *thesha/ khriesasha* considered as the smallest feast of all the feasts. The hosts organise ritual feasting twice in *thesha* and then proceed to *zha* category. From *zha* and above the feast giver is entitled to own *ki kia* (a traditional naga house decorated with an elongated rectangular plan and the front façade is decorated with buffalo horns and other traditional motifs showcasing his wealth, valour and prowess. The following categories of feasts were known as *lei shü*, *ketsie shü*, *ketsie petha/* *ketsie pfe*, *rüzie he*, *kikru mou za*, *nuolhou mou za* and *nuoha kizhü* respectively. A gap of one or two years must be maintained before moving to the next higher ladder. From *lei shü* and above, the feast becomes very extravagant where the feast giver should have a flock of cattle and a good number of *chüidi* (**Large paddy storege**) (**Fig: 4**) to host the people. In case of

sha ceremonial the host will not erect stone. However, treat his friends, clan and all his near and dear ones. When all the preparation was at hand, a ritual called *noukru* was observed.

On the first day of the first stage of the feast *thesha/ khriesasha*, early morning the host wife would open the wine vats by offering prayer to seek inexhaustible blessings. The two *Phichiiu* and clan elders would visit the host family and bless them to have a bountiful harvest, never to run short of rice beer and to protect the family from any untoward incident. Following, rice beer will be fetched led by *phichiiu*, elders, family father, mother, children and cousin in descending order. As an act of acknowledgement, a portion of raw meat was given to the priests, elder, butcher, plantain leaves collectors, close friends and dear ones respectively. Thereon, the host invites family friends, clan members, *khel*, villagers and helpers in batches day after day. Along with rice beer, a packed of meat in plantain leaves was offered to all. Porridge of innards was served in the morning and during lunch time while in the evening cooked meat of around 10 pieces was distributed to everyone who attended the feast. The feast continues for 5 days together. Everyday people were enthralled with drinks, meat, dance, games and folk songs.

The third stage is called *lei shü*. In this stage, the Y-shaped post²⁴ known as *sei kie* signifying the symbol of feasts giver will be dragged. Two kinds of *sei kie* representing male and female were dragged throughout the entire village and ended in the host compound.

Young and old dressed in full traditional ceremonial attires and head dress in procession goes around the village. A specified song is sung for this particular feast. From this stage onward the host is entitled to own *kikia*. *Lishü* feast is bigger than *sha* and *zha* feast. This feast is meant for the whole village including dear one's from neighbouring villages.

²⁴ *Migo sei* (oak) is preferably used for making the post. The significance of this tree is that it provide shelter and its leaves are used as fertilizer. It is compared to the feast giver as a provider and as a fertilizing agent.

The following steps placed in the fourth and fifth stages were known as and *ketsie petha* (stone circle), *ketsie pfe* (raised stone platform). “During the first stone dragging two monoliths is erected, another two stones are erected in the second phase and the third stage, the number of stones shot up to eight” (Menguzeii, 2000, p. 14). Furthermore, in the next feast, the number of stone erections keeps increasing to double, such as 16, 32, 64 and so on. For instance, ancestor Putsolie Solo own 38 monolith stones standing at *vürie* field and also on way to village above Tsütuonuomia kharu to this day. In the case of Phesachaduo a famous donor owns 72 monoliths well preserved till date (A. Dukhru, personal communication, September 10, 2022). Remarkably from *ketsei shü* and above were more extravagant, where a huge flock of cattle were sacrificed in big and populated villages. It is also found that in a small village like Mima, the host of *zha* feast sacrificed 8-10 cows and 1-2 pigs, while in a big village triple or more are required for the same stage of feast.

The donors who reached *zha* stage erect stone. ‘The host who cannot go beyond *zha* stage is called *tsiepfheyie* (decendent of stone raised/ stone erection). They raised a stone platform to cherish this event. Again, those who host stages of feast such as *leishü*, *ketsieshü* and above were popularly known as *ketsieyie*’ (Menguzeü, 2000. 4). Accordingly, after prolonged feasting, the host shall both erect stone/ raised stone platform/ stone circle respectively. Notably, from the stage of *zha* feast the host dragged and erect stone. Their kindred and menfolk would collect stones for the purpose. A ritual called *zu mho chü* was performed by the wife to consecrate the stone. Meat porridge was offered to all the participants. The couple are also entitled to own a distinct house roof called *kikia* with thicker walls imprint with buffalo horns, a machete case figure and full moon pictures for beautification.

Besides, there were many good numbers of man-made called *rüzie he* (memorial lakes) remains in and around Kohima village to revere the meritorious achievements of the ancestors. However, due to space constraint, many lakes were inhabited by the descendants. A handful of such are - Pezielie Liezietsu zie located at Pezielietsei (tinpatti), Vira *liezie*, (near Rüsoma village) Touliezie and Chüliezie (below Kohima Arts College and Don Bosco Hr.Sec School).

The seventh category of feast of merit is called *kikru muo za*. The host immensely sacrifices cows and pigs for distribution of raw meat by counting the household in the village. Not a single family big or small is exempted. Besides portion of raw meat was given to all the religious heads and brother-in-laws in the neighbouring villages.

The eight category is called *nuolhoumouza*. Raw meat was distributed by counting each family member ranging from infancy to the oldest covering the entire village. Every member young and old irrespective of gender or age received meat. Both cow and pig were killed lavishly and distributed. Khrieü Sekhose remarked, “One piece of raw pork is given for female and one piece of raw beef for male” (Sekhose, 2024. 61). “Among Kewhimia Vinyü Rutsa, Lhourükhrie Khezhie and Neichülie Phewhuo perform Kewhimia *nuolhuo muo za*” (Sekhose, 2024. 61: Rutsa youth organisation, silver jubilee 1973-1998. 5) a folklore, the duo Vinyü Rutsa and Lhourükhrie Khezhie were in a competition seeking fame and glory. This particular feast was considered to be the most expensive feast among all the series of feasts of merit.

Nyoyha kizhü is recorded to be the last and highest stage of feast of merit. This feast is marked by washing the walls of the host house with red soil mud by his invitees. According to oral historians an ancestor (fail to recall his name) was recorded to have celebrated this feast (V. Theünuo, personal communication, May 4, 2019).

The Kin and Kith of the host family is subjected to organised a ritual feast called kesiameruo in the month of terhünyi (January) after the death of the host, to remember and pleased the departed soul. The same ritual is applicable to avert misfortunes like prolonged sickness, unsuccessful, suffering and depression. Also, in the event of the most beloved child dead, this feast is host. By tradition, the legal inheritance of the host family is obliged to sponsor kesiameruo feast for fear of bad omen. This feast lasted for about three days. Like any other feast of merit ceremonies are performed along with feasting. Well-wisher, friends, villagers and dear ones from far and near come to dine together. Simultaneously, from the first day called “*rule he*” till the third day, they set up a big circle tomb and on it raised round stones in remembrance of his meritorious achievement. During which good number of cattle’s both bull and pig (depending on one’s ability) was killed. Raw and cooked meat along with rice beer were offered to friends, well-wishers, relative, village priests, elders and all other religious heads engaged in different capacity. If the host is childless, his kindred who host kesiameruo shall inherit his property. Tenyimia also celebrates another feast called Phichii pehe nanyü. Literally, it meant feasting to restore health and life in case of bedridden patients who don’t have hope to survive. The host will arrange rice beer, food, meat and invite the priest to bless the very sick people and save lives.

Interestingly, if any host after the completion of the last stage, still long to pursue sponsorship, shall have to undergo a kind of life recycling through a ritual by lying on the bamboo mat or winnowing, covered with a traditional shawl called ‘prapela pfe’ (a shawl worn by 1-4 years of children only). Remarkably Putsolie Solo is one among the many though fail to recall their names. The husband and wife shall wear neikhro and would observe *thesha* ritual and feasting. Only a few couples were able to perform all the full series.

Tenyimia as a whole not only dragged stone but also erect monolith, raised stone platform or arrange stone semi-circle but the Ao and sema erected Y-shaped posts in front of

the feast donor house. The selection of stone is carried out by the elders through careful observation and in response to good dreams. Before moving the stone, the warrior leading the crowd, addressed the stone to bring good fortune to the host. Preferably stone collected from the forest were used. Stone found in the river is not favoured in order to maintain the value of sacred. While dragging stone the donor and his wife, village priests, and some elders headed the procession. The youth in full traditional attires sung, jumped, yelled and dragged the stone from the forest. Monoliths were all erected with a ritual prayer and ceremonial. No stone is erected without ritual because it is forbidden for fear of *terhuomia*. On reaching the site to erect monolith, the husband smeared the stones with animal blood, while rice beer is offered by the wife. A ritual called *zu mho chü*²⁵ was performed by the wife to consecrate the stone. They murmured in the following ways- “May my meat increase, may my crops increase, may my food and drinks not have finished quickly. Spear were tossed in the air, machete whirled” (Haimendorf, 1946. p. 19). Uprooted or transfer of monolith is not allowed for fear of repercussion. Nevertheless, only very few are in exist, inspite of its rigidity and belief due to space constraint. In dire necessity, some elders appease *terhuomia* in seeking blessing to transfer monolith. The most perpetual memory is *kipu tsie* (foundation stone/ *kerhie tsie* (menhire) *ketsie petha* (stone circle) commonly called *nanyü tsie* the monument varies in size such as very big, medium and small. The biggest represents husband, medium wife and the small represents beloved children/ family members.

Notably, Chümetsie monoliths are called *Kerhie tsei* (menhir). The village is enriched with Stonehenge and menhir located in and around the village but mostly unattended. Among the many, some most prominent were *Mesieü khrie tsei* (**fig: 5**), *Pfeliezhü Tseikha*, *Zakahe Vizo*, *Putsolie Solo*, *Yasa Pienyü*, *Vinyü nanyü tsie* (**Fig: 6**) and so forth.

²⁵ *Zu mho chü* means a ritual that involve the offering of rice beer to the supreme in order to seek prosperity and longevity blessing.

There lies 8 (eight) megalithic in the group at krogebozou middle L'khel sector belong to a fabulous man named Pfeliezhü Tseikha (**Fig: 7**). Zakahe Vizo was another very impressive event retold by the elders of the village. This is the most popular and assumed to be the last *lei shü* recorded at hand and mostly recommended by all khels elders who participated and some witnessed in dragging it. Further, he and his beloved wife hosted a feast called *ketsei shü*, their monoliths stand to this day at kelobokha. Another remarkable and profound achievement and prestige issue for Pfuchatsumia khel was their ancestor Vira who host the highest ladder called *rüzie he* (memorial lake). During his life time Vira set up six symbols to cherish his fame, generosity and enhance the fertility cult. They are Vira *tsiepfhe*, Vira *tsie za*, Vira *phezou*, Vira *liezie*, Vira *pfi* and Vira *nyiepow*. Significantly, another fabulous man called Putsolie Solo owned monolith circle called Putsolie tsietha (stonehenge) consisting of 34 in total, stood prominently below Naga Hospital (*vürie*). He also owned 5 more monoliths on the way to Kohima village above Tsütuonuomia traditional gate near the mission compound. Some more existing relics of feast of merit monoliths are as follows;

Lhisemia thinuo – Rhiechalie Sorhie host *zha* feast and his monolith is located near canssea office (L' Khel rest house). Tsütsonyü Kesiezie also own 3 (three) monoliths standing behind Huruotsu traditional gate, Vichazhü khruomo host *zha* feast for which his son Krusietsü performed *kesiameruo* for him. Nyütsükhrie Mepfhuo host *ketsei shü*. He and his beloved wife monolith is situated near Solienyü dzükuo. Helie Tseikha host *sha* feast in 1980, Neisielhöu Vizo and Chüselie Vizo also host feast.

Tsiituonuomia thinuo – Metha suohu host *zha* feast and own *füge ki*. He also has circle tomb and his youngest son Duohelie the legal inheritance sponsored *kesiameruo* feast for him. Mhienyü Suohu, Kelhoutshu Whuorhie and Lhounyü Kuotsu all host *Zha* feast.

Dzovo-o solo and Si-o Suohu host feast called sha and the house remnant is still in existed at his thinuo.

Dapfhütsumia thinuo– khio-o Khezhie and Saneio Kire (Theünuo) host *zha* feast. While Meguosiethie, Neilhou, Thekruvilie were some of the last batches hosting feast of merit.

Pfuchatsumia thinuo – Yasa Pienyü another very prominent donor whose monolith stand within the campus of the Christ king church site. Neisakuo Mechülho own *füge*, Chütsonyü Mechülho, Lhouchalie Mechülho and Vitseilhou own *ki kia*, Welhoulie Rame, Neivilie Rame and Yokuo Rame all performed *sha* feast. Vimedo Rutsa, Mezhülhuo Pienyü and Gelie pienyü were some of the last hosts of sha feast. As mention by Zevinuo Keyho, Lhoutsolie Keyho performed Zha feast and her husband had performed *sha* feast and *kesiameruo* (Fig: 8) These pictures show the inner and the front view of Neikeduo-o Keyho of Pfuchatsumia khel (personal communication, may 1, 2023).

They also relished a lot with merry-making in singing, dancing, playing games, eating and drinking. For entertainment a game called *chükhe kesü* (tussling over the hung meat) is a great fun of the youngster tussle to reach the *chükhe*. The most energetic and sporty man who excelled other in touching the meat won it as his reward. During feasting preparation, the hero hunters called *chüdi* (killer of tiger, bear, or wolf) adorned with hornbill feathers and led the youth in pounding rice for brewing rice-beer. They also led in dancing, stone pulling or in any kind of village gathering. Traditionally, except for hunter warriors, it is *kenyü* for other people to use hornbill feathers. He looks very gorgeous as he jumps and moves in glitters, to motivate his friends. Assumingly, it could be his proudest moment by courting his peer group and glorification.

Generally, Tenyimia house are called *kitho*. The rich man's house was distinct with eight varieties of architectural designs. There are *fümie*, *fübou*, *füge*, *füphrie*, *fürei*, *kikia*. Again, there are two types of *kikia* -*Khriesa kikia* (junior) and *Zarü kikia* (senior). The former is also known as *kilhi* and the latter is known as *kiare*. Lastly, the eight kind is called *samimia ki* (*kibenuo*). *Kikia* were erected at the main entrance facing eastward direction (Kuolie, personal communication, February 4, 2018). Significantly, the design of *ki kia* resembles the head of a cock and bird. The walls were made with thick wooden boards depending on his rank (Z.Khezhie, personal communication, January 21, 2020). The donor of *zha* and above possessed thick wooden board carved with buffalo head for partition. The host of *sha* feast own *füphrie* with thick plain wooden board used for wall partition. While *zha* feast own *füge* / *fürei* and above *Zha* feast the host own *ki kia* (N. Pienyü, personal communication, January 21, 2020). The thick wooden boards carved with buffalo head were used for decorating walls. They adorned themselves with distinguished traditional white shawl, black kilt, accessories and brass bangles. Among the many, some very famous *kikie* remains at Kewhira is the remains of Thepfulie Pienyü (*zhaphruomia*). This is one of the most prominent survive *kikie* with rich design. The partition walls were decorated with wooden carved and painted heads of buffalo horns, full moon, paddy fall, cock, woman breast, spear, machet case. They were the symbols of wealth, fertility, bravery, strength and prowess. He and his wife's mortal remain are buried in a circumference tomb near Pfuchatsumia *zie ke*. Other significant remnants are P. Kuozelie Khezhie *kikie* which resemble cock head which was enclosed with wooden carved buffalo head wall and was endorsed with many fertility blessings. He and his wife Rüülhuo mortal remains were laid down in a circle tomb attached with *kerhie dahou* exist to this day (Z. Khezhie, personal communication, January 21, 2020). Vinyü Pienyü *tseitha* and *füge*, Vira *tsie pfe*, Theluo-o, Tseikha and Zakielie Tseikha are the only two *ki kie* well maintained at Krogebozou middle L'Khel. Kiya-o Kesiezhie host feast and own *füge ki*

at thevokemou zie, upper L'Khel. The slaughtered animal horns, hands, legs and jaw teeth were used for decorating his house to show off the bulk of cattle's sacrifices.

Besides some very few circumference tombs remaining at hand were Pusalie pienyü, Neihu Rame, Zakietsolie and so on. Traditionally and religiously only donors and warriors are permitted to own circle tomb as a distinct symbol of cherish and homage paid off.

In the month of thenyie the host and the ritual boy select the trees to be cut down for feasting. Preferably, oak tree is used. The trees selected should be free from broken heads, creepers, wood pecker mark, bird droppings, and thunder destruction. They consecrated the said trees by touching and while returning home they are forbidden to talk to anyone. On 18th of the month, the host will dedicate the cutting down of fire wood by muttering -My God bless this tree to be used for feasting. Let none of my love ones got hurt. Let me used this tree for earning a good name; to do my part to glorifies thy name (K.Sachü, personal communication, August 2, 2018). After this the host best friend called *nasa*²⁶ shall led in cutting the firewood along with other villagers. The host offer 10 pieces of cooked meat called *sei pie mou* to all who carried firewood. With the concept of loyalty, honour and gaiety to the host family the village rendered help for cutting and transporting firewood, fetching water, pounding grains, brewing rice beer, killing cattle's, cooking, distributions, dragging stones, erecting stone, digging memorial lake, constructing terrace field and so forth. Besides in coordination, there are some mandatory assignments such as *zu zha*, *ki ba zha* and so on. Each family have to send a representative to work on this particular day. Amazingly none of the donors became poor. Instead, along with super natural blessings they exceedingly became richer and richer with more fame and moves ahead from glory to glory (N.Pienyü, M.Kire & K.Khruomo, personal communication, April 4, 2020).

²⁶ Managerial feast

One of the greatest humiliation and vengeance of a man is destruction of his glorification house for personal grudges. There is a record of devastated house adorned with *kikie* to show off physical strength and egoistic nature in challenging the host greatest social assets. It is a tough competition between man to man challenging the host that he is not above but they are at par excellence (K.Whourie, personal communication, December 10, 2020).

Feast of merit is a philosophy in which the spouse is mutually determined to host a series of ritual feasts in sacrificing immense wealth to beseech more blessings and position. It is the greatest contentment in earning social recognition as a man of achiever and influencer to celebrate their meritorious success. Ancestors believed in the positive impact of blessings which flows from generation to generation. The donors and his kindred are looked up with respect and hope. His status and power automatically go up. It is also the kin and kith pride whose ancestors host feasts of merit. It's a kind of prestige fancy. Nevertheless; there is a radical shift in the social phenomenon with the coming of modernisation which put an end to feast of merit. The greatest negative impact is greediness in hoarding wealth. Consequently, self-seeking creates social disparities among the villagers. They deter social relationships which is the greatest hindrance to unity.

‘The finest cloth could be worn only by the head hunter or the donor of the feasts of merit’ (Elwin, 1997). This distinct shawl of the host is called *yothokhwe* for the southern Angami. Mao called it as *zhososa*. Chakhesang called it as *thiipikhu*. The host and his wife also wore special ornaments. On the day of his departure cattle's slaughter called *theprie* meat was distributed to all his clan such as *zangu*, *zaduo* and *zazie* who will observe taboo for five, two and one days respectively. During which fire cannot be put off in the deceased hearth. In addition, an effigy in full traditional attires, adornment and weapon called *siatsa* were displayed over the grave of the host for a year and after a year the remains are burnt down.

Some Angami/ Tenyimia villages were still weighed down with varieties of house designs and megalithic monuments related to the feast of merit. According to some Angami villages ruin of old feast houses can be restored by the legal inheritance after observing rituals for five days. This could also be a good reason of having numerous remains to this day in some Angami villages like Kigwera and Viswera. Accordingly, the living host can prepare his children to host feast to be qualified to live in his kikia house. Khrieü Sekhose asserted *kriüünuo mvü kesa “Füge therhü” ivor shie* (Sekhose, 2002.102). Unlikely, there were many performers among Kewhimia ancestors who possessed high profile such as *zha, li shü, ketsei shü, ketsei petha, rüzie he, kikru muo za, nuolhuo muo za* and *nuoya kizhü*. Yet, there were very few remnants located in different thinuo and many were unattended. According to Kewhimia tradition, the said house *ki kie* once fallen away are forbidden to reconstruct after the death of the host. In compliance, after the triple mega fire accidents only a handful survival hosts could restore their outstanding achievement house design, yet for a short while due to the impact of Christianity doctrine. Except the host, no one is allowed to decorate his house by his own choice/ will power. The most distinct and decorative house- ‘its roof, walls and pillars were monopolized and manifested by the wealthiest man and woman in the village’ (Nshoga, 2009, p. 94).



Fig: 4 Chüdi (Large paddy storage)



Fig: 5 Mesie-ü Ketsutsie (Stonehenge)



Fig: 6 Vinyü Rutsa Nanyü ketsu tsie (Stonehenge) at Dapfhütsu Kizou



Fig: 7 Pfeliezhü Tsiekha Nanyü Tsie (Stonehenge) at Khrogebozou L' Khel



Fig: 8 Thesha and Kesiameruo chü kelie mia ki at Pfuchatsumia khel

Chapter 4

Barter to Bustle: Evolution of Kohima Town and its Socio- Economic Development

Kohima village is the second biggest village in Asia. This legendary village is situated on the southern part of Kohima district and has an average elevation of 1261 meters (4137 feet). It is also the principal village among the Tenyimia community. The village ‘contains more than 10,000 inhabitants since 1960’s’ (Gazetter of India Nagaland Kohima District, Bareh (year 1970). ‘The total area of Kohima district is 7,209 Sq. kms’ (Kent, 1971). Ever since its inception, the predecessors named the village Kewhira, (literally meaning ‘assemble’ to form a village), and were inclined towards welcoming more people. Thereon, Kewhimia (people of kewhira) opened the door to all the Naga tribes as well as people from the mainland and beyond. Subsequently, a township was established at the foot of the village. Taking references from the available literary works and incorporating the oral narratives from village elders, a study traces the journey of Kohima village and its people’s contribution towards the making of Kohima township and how it developed into the state capital. As of 2011 census, Kohima had a population of 99,039. Today, Kohima is a bustling smart city with a current estimated population of approximately 138,000 (Kohima Municipal Committee 2024).

An in-depth study has been made on the economic metamorphosis of Kohima, tracing its trajectory from a modest settlement with barter trade to a thriving urban centre. The establishment of the colonial government, experiences of World War II, and the attainment of statehood in 1963 are identified as landmarks in Kohima’s urbanisation process. The socio-economic impact of these forces in their positive aspects as well as threats to cultural and moral values has been assessed. The narrative unfolds the historical foundations, challenges and the town's resilient spirit that shaped its economic character. From primitive barter trade to modern economic dynamics, it reveals Kohima's story as one of adaptation, growth, and

the pursuit of economic sustainability. Today, Kohima is declared as smart city, a home to people from different Naga communities and also accommodates people from various regions of the world. It has become a place of conglomeration of people from various backgrounds.

The British settlement and their policy in the Angami area give a basis in the study of the development of Kohima. The Naga-British encounter is marked by many military expeditions in Hills. As mentioned in Sanyu (2016), the Angamis encountered the Europeans for the first time in 1832 when Captain Jenkins and Pamberton with their party marched from Manipur as they progressed to Assam Fierce battles were fought by the Angamis in defending their land. To subdue the indomitable Angamis, the British made many punitive expeditions. The British followed the policy of confrontation and of non-interference until in 1866 the colonial rulers were able to subdue the Nagas. As opined by Sanyü (2016), the rise of 1879, termed as the war of liberation was the last effort made by Angami Nagas to drive out the British invaders. The Angami villages such as Khonoma, Viswema, Jakhama, Jotsoma and Tsütuonuomia (Kohima) joined hands over throw British. In 1880 the British annexation of the Naga Hills was completed with the defeat of the Angamis. As a result, the Naga Hills District was formally established in 1881. Thus, the British annexation of the Naga Hills brought all the Nagas into the British administered area. Thereafter, a new district known as the Naga Hills District was declared in 1874 a new district within Assam known as the Naga Hills district was declared a Schedule District under the Schedule District Act 1874.

A very fulfilling and commendable narrative about the farsighted policy of Kewhimia could be found where it is said that land was donated free of cost by the ancestors who advocated the groundwork for the establishment of Kohima township (Kohima village council, 2016) and also served as the facilitator for peace. Many positive aspects and changes could be located as a result of the establishment of the colonial power. The luxuries of modern education, road connectivity and health care were given to the people. Of course, like

in mainland India, it is understood that the intent of promoting modern education was to make it as an effective tool for colonial administration. However, in the process, it has an immense benefit to the community.

A Glimpse on the Pre-Colonial Trade (Barter System)

Though in a very rudimentary stage of development, early trading activities are remarkable among the Angamis and other neighbouring tribes. The earliest colony like Nagabazar which still exist was a market outlet during the pre-colonial days. The most common and highly demanded trade item was salt. Kewhimia ancestors dealt with salt business which they exchanged with some indigenous products. Villagers from Chakhesang, Rengma, Sumi and some Angami villages came to Kohima to exchange salt with indigenous products like yeast, raw cotton, or any agricultural products which cannot be cultivated in Kohima (Saneilie Venyo, Personal communication, October 15, 2019). The concept of buying and selling among the Angamis' could be traced from as early as the 14th -15th century. Tradition lists several items which were procured from various places outside the Angami territory. Items like salt, iron metal, shells, beads, ivory, cowrie, pig, cow, dry fish, thread etc were imported from places like Assam, Golaghat, Cachar, Manipur, Burma and Chin hills. Trade with other Naga tribes is evident where it is said that Angamis exchanged paddy grain with dry chilly, raw cotton, garlic etc., especially with Sumi and Rengma people who were addressed as Mezamia in general (S. Kuotsu & M. Keretsu, Personal communication, October 10, 2020).

It is also learnt that some villagers, probably in group travel to far off places on foot to *Lukhanu* (plain areas) like Assam, Golaghat, Cachar, and Dimapur to purchase salt. Articles such as salt, brass, shells, cowrie, and iron pieces are used to exchange different items in the hills. In addition, before the British invasion of Naga Hills, the Konyak Naga used to make salt cake and carried it to Assam for sale. Many Nagas travelled to the plains of Assam to

procure salt through barter means. Items used to exchange were cotton, cane mat, cow, chicken, betel nut and betel leaves (K. Khruomo, Personal communication, October 12, 2019, Kohima). ‘It is also mentioned that one *vathoucū* (seashell) is also exchanged for a cow/mithun.’ (Lhitho Dze, 2019). From all these narrations, one could get the idea that sea shells were a rarity and the importance attached to salt as an item of exchange. This is also because the salt business was considered as the most profitable and whoever was into the business became wealthy.

The Process of Urbanisation

Urbanisation is the process through which cities grow, and higher and higher percentages of the population come to live in the city¹. During the initial years, Kohima was the only administrative centre with a Deputy Commissioners’ office, British officers and a barrack of regiments; it gradually transformed into a town connecting Manipur and other parts of the Naga Hills, which led to the gradual development of external commerce. Along with British political administration, Christian missionaries also took initiatives in urbanising Naga Hills through education. In the socio-economic analysis, we find the enduring continuity of the traditional practices, side by side a revolutionary change marked by a shift in the economic practices. Theinuo & Deka (2020) write about how along the lines of the Ahom state, the British introduced a new tradition of trade by providing goods, in which the hill tribes commonly traded in the plains in market haat, a symbol of British supremacy. Barpujari (2003) writes, that from the very beginning endeavours had been made to encourage between hills and the plains by establishing weekly markets in the hills, opening of accessible roads and the abolition of tax duties imposed by the Ahom government. Thus, the movement of people increased, and people started to migrate from rural areas attracted by jobs as well as by increased opportunities for education.

¹ [Urbanization \(nationalgeographic.org\)](https://nationalgeographic.org)

In 1872, American missionaries introduced Christianity and education to Kohima. As a result, in 1885, four individuals named Lhousietsü, Lhouselie, and Sieliezhü converted to Christianity (Khedo Baptist Kehou, 2010). Presently, over 99% of the population has embraced Christianity. The study examines the impact of Christianity and education and the changes that have been brought about in society. As the people became educated and enlightened with the Christian spirit, warfare between khels that created tension in society came to an end. In the lines of modernity, there witnessed the formation of different organisations like Kohima Village Students' Union (KVSU), Kohima Village Council (KVC), Kohima Village Sports Association (KVYA) Kohima Village *Zhavipfümia Krotho* (KVZK) which became the key instruments in fostering a peaceful atmosphere and took responsibility to end clan violence. This in turn created a congenial atmosphere for the inhabitants of the village as well as the town.

Rev C.D. King organised Christian work in the Angami area and in 1883 the Kohima Baptist church was organised. In 1884 vernacular school at Kohima had enrolled of 12 (twelve) scholars Barpujari, (2003). With the start of the Kohima mission by Rev. King, school work began in the Angami areas. Some schools were started by missionaries while some voluntarily. For instance, Thinuovicha Memorial Higher Secondary School was established in 1963 located at Mhasizou. Besides primary school New Market (1931), Ruby Primary School Naga Bazar (1961) Government Middle School (1936) Kohima Arts College (1967), Kohima Science College (1961), Neilhuozhü Hogher Secondary School (1948), Rüzühkhrie Higher Secondary School (1941) are some of the earliest top surviving schools and colleges, living sacrificial testimonials of the predecessors immensely serving the nation as a perennial source to the present generation. In 1908 a technical school was opened at Kohima for imparting training on carpentry and blacksmithing. No high school, hence majority of the pupils had to cut short their academic carrier after completion of Middle

English standard. Only a fortunate few who had the means could avail the opportunity of higher education either at Jorhat, Golaghat, Imphal, Guwahati or Shillong (Kuolie, personal communication, October 18, 2018).

‘In 1904 the Naga School at Kohima had enrolled 60 boys very quick at learning and fair fluency’(Davis, 1904, p. 3). Another important factor for the growth of the township was the establishment of primary schools at the new Market colony (1931), a middle school near Khuchiezie local ground in (1936), government high school renamed Rüzhükhrie Higher Secondary School (1941), hence people began to settle down along the road leading to town expansion with numerous births of new colonies around the four corners of the town.

Making of Township (Fig: 9 View of Kohima town in the British era)

Looking into the mechanism behind the emergence and growth of Kohima town other than education, it can be attributed to the rise of markets and migration of people in search of job and business avenues. “Markets and bazaars became important characteristics of Kohima urbanisation, as such traditional economic goods and products were monetised” (Theünüo & Deka, 2020, p.33). With the introduction of currency, we find a shift from barter to monetisation of local products. The idea of using a standardised measurement scale in dealing with grocery goods and dealing in cash was introduced in Kohima town in a colony called Naga Bazaar. This colony is said to be the first colony ever to exist even before the coming of the British and is known to be the oldest colony in Kohima town. As urbanisation process sets in, diverse people involving in different occupation started to come and settle in the district headquarters Kohima. Thus, there were not only Nagas migrating to town from native villages but people from different parts of British India such as Assam, Khasi Hills, Manipur, Bengal, and as far as Punjab, Rajasthan, Nepal starts to come and settle. As money began to circulate, many enterprising people set out for varieties of business ventures. Barpujari (2003)

writes, “formerly they did not know the use of money now many of them were becoming traders desirous of proceeding to Calcutta to purchase carnelian beads and muskets” (p.218)

In course of time, many neighbouring villagers travelled to town on foot to sell their agricultural products. They would again buy things which they do not get in the village. Thus, a clear network of selling and buying developed. Besides, some villagers also came to town to study, seek medical treatment, to earn, to search job opportunity for livelihood. It is implied that as people starts to seek jobs and business for livelihood in town, they usually settle with their families. As the settlement progressed, the family unit functioned more as a group that lived together and paved the way for town expansion. Therefore, new settlements and colonies could be located such as Chotobosti, New Market, TCP gate, Midlane, PWD, Chandmari, Old Minister Hill, Naga Hospital Colony, Officers Hill, High School, Kesiekie, Pezielietsie, Sepfuzou etc.

Oral narrations say that neighbouring villages carrying baskets of agricultural products on their head travelled to Kohima town for selling, who in return bought a bottle of kerosene oil, a kilo of sugar/ salt, a pack of dry fish, soap cake etc. Saneilie Venyo an octogenarian fondly remembers how he eagerly ran down to town from his village to buy fermented fish for a worth of 25 paise. He narrated that a cake of bathing soap, a bottle of kerosene oil, a packet of bee wax, sugar, tea leaves, beef/ pork were the items which attracted people to the market. Interestingly, some villagers sold their produce from door to door. Meanwhile, some sold their agricultural products and handicrafts by the side of the road in the main town. At times, villagers from Chede, Rühro, Merie, Tsiese carry dry firewood to town and sell at Rs.2 to Rs.2.50 paise. Gradually the availability of readymade thread, wool, textile discouraged cotton spinning and many villagers came to town to buy thread for weaving (T. Sorhie, personal communication, October 15, 2019).

Paper currency was circulated on a large scale in Kohima on the verge of the Second World War. The need for road connectivity was most urgent and hence; in order to accelerate the work of road construction, the British government increased the daily wages significantly. What had been only 50 paise per day for a person increased to Rs.5, 10, 50 even to a staggering amount of Rs.100. Consequently, people rushed into Kohima to take the opportunity to earn more money. Perhaps, this situation could be considered as a notable factor for the increase in the town's population (K. Khruomo, Personal communication, December 24, 2023)

Apparently, the people employed in various sectors under the British government were allotted land free of cost by the British Government and were confined mainly at Naga bazaar, later extended to Daklane, 3rd Assam Rifles camp etc. The name of the sectors such as Naga bazaar, Daklane, Dhobi Lane, Dobashi Lane, are clear evidence that shows that the derivation of the name relates to the specific activity popularly addressed by the local people. As the name suggests, Daklane is understood as postman sector. To be a Dak runner was a risky job. As such, it was not an enviable job and many were not willing to do so. This job was taken up by the courageous people from Sumi community and hence, the inhabitants of Daklane are mostly from Sumi community. In this very colony the first Baptist church known as Kohima Baptist Field Church was established in 1923 and is still in existence. This was the only church to cater the spiritual needs of all the people inhabited in the town irrespective of tribes (K. Suohu & T. Sorhie, personal communication, October 10, 2019).

Infrastructural Development under the British Administration

The British government set up various infrastructures such as schools, hospitals, health centres, police stations, various government offices and in the process led to the growth of townships marking a transitional period. Gradually town expanded by setting up various basic departments such as a powerhouse at the present site of the Pentecostal church

at a new market colony. A big diesel transformer was installed to generate power to the selected place “such as hospital, government offices, government schools, British residency, top official quarters etc. The first petrol pump set up by the British was known as the British Oil Corporation which was located near the present old NST in the heart of the town. All these set up lies within half a mile from Naga bazaar to Phoolbari (Oking Hospital site) mainly to serve the British government administration in the Naga Hills. In 1934 Kohima police station (north) was set up which was the only police station.

A notable development was the construction of an indoor patient clinic. As mentioned in Changkiri (1999), during the year 1882-83 Kohima residents contributed Rs 475 towards the construction of an indoor patient clinic. Later, Naga hospital authority Kohima was established in 1905-06 as a 10 bedded dispensary.

The dispensary was upgraded to the Kohima Civil Hospital with 60 beds. The hospital was renamed as “Naga Hospital” reflecting the nature of the gift to the Nagas by His Majesty Government of India headed in Delhi at that time by Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last governor-general of India. At present there is 300 beds catering to a large number from within and outside the state.²

The new civil hospital at Kohima was constructed by G/T at the cost of Rs24,73,00 as a present for the help rendered by the Naga people against the Japanese invasion of India during World War II. An advisory Board was also constituted for its improvement with deputy commissioner Kohima as the president and civil surgeon as the secretary and Rüzühkhrie, Visar Angami, etc. were the members (I.M.S, 1951).

Another milestone development was the Kohima local ground also known as Khuochiezie located in the heart of the town serving as a multi-purpose centre for public activities. As far as the known evidence is concerned, the public ground was initially dug by

² <http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naga-Hospital-Authority>, Retrieve on 02/06/2022

Lhisemia and Tsütuonuomia as a punishment imposed by the British administrator. The punishment was on account of the inter-clan clashes and rivalry which the British government desires to put an end to it. It was a disciplinary action taken by Deputy Commissioner C.R Pawsey. This disciplinary action was an eye opener for the other *thinuo* to embrace each other. Henceforth the two *thinuo*, Pfuchatsiimia and Dapfütsumia render their best help to Lhisemia and Tsütuonuomia *thinuo* respectively for quite some days to complete the work. There is another version from the annals of Changki village history which says that Kohima public ground was dug by Changki villagers as a punishment of 40 days of forced labour³ (2004)

Before the outbreak of the world war, the town of Kohima had hardly any vehicles. The ancestors brought their goods from Dimapur, Assam, Guwahati, Golaghat, Cachar Hill, and Imphal by buses, trucks and wooden carts. However, travelling on foot was the general means of transport in Naga Hills. As mentioned, the earliest business people travelled mostly on foot and carried salt on their heads. Later with the British invasion bridle path was constructed where horse/pony cart rides used to travel. Apart from these, some earliest means of transportation included jeep, dodge, Nissan and Ambassador car. These vehicles were mainly used to carry army personnel and their ration. As narrated by Theünuo, Kuotsu & Solo, some second-hand cars were brought from Manipur and Assam at the rate of Rs 20-30. The bus fare such as Kohima-Dimapur Manipur was Rs 1.50, Rs 2. Night coach from Dimapur-Guwahati was Rs 3/4. From Dimapur Manipur via Kohima it takes whole day. There are records of adventurous parents who travelled on foot to Dimapur, Shillong/ Imphal. (V. Theünuo, S. Kuotsu & L.Solo, Personal communication, September 5, 2018).

³ *Heralding Hope, 125 Kohima*, 2004, p. 106.

Entertainment in Town

Entertainment was few during the early days. Nonetheless, in par with the modern day cinema hall, there existed a talkie famously known as Ruby Cinema Hall. In the evening hundreds of people would gather in the cinema hall to enjoy different films in Hindi, English and Bengali languages. It was running in all its glamour until it was mysteriously bombed in 1973 and ceased to exist. Till today, senior citizens of Kohima nostalgically recollect the fond memories of the lone Ruby Cinema Hall which was located at the present Nagaland state transport complex.

Kekhriengulie Sekhose, personal communication, May 27, 2022) narrated that every night the hall will be packed with both young and old, mostly menfolk to see film from the big screen. Another aspect of the cinema was joining the company for a puff of *bidi* also known as the poor man's cigarette. (Made of low-grade *tobacco*, is popular among rural folk and the urban poor in the South Asian region) (Raham & Fukui, 2000).

Chewing paan and hovering around with some romantic lovers. There were two groups of viewers. Those people who paid money were seated in wooden benches and enjoyed the show while others who cannot afford to pay for the ticket had to stand and watch. Of all the reels, romantic films were the most attractive. The price of the ticket ranges from 50 paise (first row), 75 paise (second row), Re 1 (balcony). Meanwhile, some non-Nagas would organise daily night bazar selling paan, bidi, cigarettes, candy etc. around the cinema hall, keeping the environment warm and lively. Some elders had a say in the cinema's impact, as to how they learnt word for word about Hindi and English languages.

As a developing township, all the houses were made of perishable materials like thatch, mud and wood. The British government imposed Re 3 per house as a house tax. However, on the 4th of April 1944, World War II started at Kohima between the British and the Japanese forces and lasted for 64 days. The war brought complete devastation both in

Kohima town and in the village. Barns brimming with paddy grain, millet, job tear etc the sole treasure of the people, were completely burnt down to ashes. Livestock of various kinds were totally ruined. In addition, many were wounded, killed, kidnapped, raped and tortured. Consequently, people flee to the forest and to nearby villages. However, normalcy was restored when the war was officially ended on June 22nd 1944. The Commonwealth War Cemetery set up by the British Government which is structured in the middle of the town testifies the event as one of the bloodiest and fiercest battles of the Second World War.

Along with the lives lost, almost all houses were gutted down during World War II. The British Government offered war compensation in rebuilding the town. Building materials such as CGI sheet, timber, nails, tarpaulin, ration and other essential commodities were provided freely to all households both in town and village. Subsequently, more durable building materials like nails, rod, bricks, cement, sand etc. were procured mainly from Dimapur, Assam, Guwahati and seldom from Manipur state. Later, RCC structures came up rapidly mostly owned by private individuals. Changkiri (1999) also writes, “after the war electric power projects and piped water supply started on a private basis by the local men” (p,201). All these developments suggest the economic progress among the town dwellers.

Naga Statehood and the Transformation of Kohima

India became independent in 1947 but still the Naga territory remained a part of Assam. At this point in time, there was the emergence of the Naga nationalist movement which demanded outright secession from the Indian union. In August 1957, the leaders of various Naga tribes formed the Naga People’s Convention (NPC). “In its first session held at Kohima on August 21, 1957, under the Presidentship of Late Dr. Imkongliba Ao, the NPC proposed the formation of a separate administrative unit by merging the Tuensang division of NEFA with Naga Hills District”.⁴ The situation had come to pass that the Naga Hill region of

⁴ webtest.nagaland.gov.in/nla/about-us/

Assam and the Tuensang frontier division came under direct administration by the Indian government. Thus, an administrative unit known as Naga Hills and Tuensang Area (NHTA) came into being on 1st December 1957.

In 1960, a delegation of the NPC met the then Prime Minister of India, the late Jawaharlal Nehru and a 16-point agreement was arrived at, provided for the formulation of a separate State for the Nagas within the Indian Union to be known as “Nagaland.” On 21st August 1962, the parliament enacted the State of Nagaland Act legalising the formation of Nagaland as a full-fledged State. The state of Nagaland was inaugurated formally as the 16th state of the Indian Union on 1st December 1963 with Kohima being declared as the state capital. “Forty days after the inauguration of the state on 1st Dec 1963, general elections are held in Nagaland, initially with 46 members in Legislative Assembly.”⁵

Incorporating oral sources and literary references, the study gives an insightful view of the transformation of Kohima Township to a busy state capital. It brings to light the development of the town’s infrastructure beginning from the construction of legislator’s quarters and offices to that of sprawling market centres. Kewhimia accessible policy and their hospitality and accommodative nature to the Naga tribes have an immense impact on the societal, economic, and political system. It also gives an analysis of the economic changes, the standard of living migration problem, the increasing cost of living the visionary nature of the Kohima the role played by the Kohima villagers, the village council and Kohima village sports association for maintaining peace and harmony among the inhabitants of the town.

The emergence and growth of Kohima is marvellously wrapped in legends, folklore and prophecies. There are ample traditional versions which explicitly interpret the birth and enormous growth of the village. The name Kewhira (Kohima) has been derived from ‘*themia kekra u pfhii u whi vor keta*’ meaning many people (Kohima Village Council, 2016). Besides,

⁵ [n.a.], *Statistical Hand-Book of Nagaland 1966*(Kohima: Planning and co-ordination Department, 1967), 2-3.

there is another version of its derivation which says- *Kepfü Kewhi* translated as ‘act of visiting and fostering warm relationship’. Among the numerous sources, the most common and widely accepted origin of the term Kewhira lies in the following phrase, “*Kepfü Kewhi vor rüna chüketa mu kehoupuorei u pfhü u whi kevor pete ze rüna chütuo we*” meaning assemblage of people from various regions and settling together with mutual understanding, thus forming a mighty village. Further, many soothsayers from Mao country and even from some other Tenyimia villages prophesized that Kohima (Kewhira) would grow into a big community and gradually expand into a bustling town filled with people from diverse communities.

Truly, Kohima village gave birth to the capital of Nagaland state. Perhaps, the early settlers could visualise the future of Kohima and wished for a big thriving community existing harmoniously. The expression may have been taken as an encouragement to their kinsfolk to welcome people so that it multiplied into a big community. This shows the considerate nature of the forefathers which is testified by their benevolent spirit. Perhaps, it could be their sincere observance of taboo. Even in the severest of times, like war and famine, it is said that they should not turn away people for it was considered as *Kenyii thor*, meaning strictly forbidden. There are numerous stories of families, even widow and widower, destitute and poor from other villages such as Merie, Tsiese, Chiede, Rükhro, Chiecha, Nerhe, Tuophe, Diho, Kijumetou, Chüzhie, Eastern Angami (Chakhesang) who were given refuge and most likely adopted treating them as part of one’s own family. Gradually, they assimilated into the family and some even took citizenship of Kohima (Kewhira) and their generation embrace Kohima as their ancestral home. These narratives goes to prove as to how Kohima increases her population and become the second largest village in Asia and the custodian of Kohima town.

Growth of Money Economy and Developmental Activities

The attainment of Nagaland statehood has accelerated the circulation of paper currency. There began the inflow of currency to the capital for developmental activities. Construction of government buildings and the setting up of offices and schools in turn resulted in the creation of numerous occupations and job opportunities. There were more new avenues to earn money that lured people to the capital from rural areas. The majority of the people opted for government job for security reasons. It also opened up avenues for traders and merchants and enterprising people to start up business establishments. Hence, there witnessed a wide-ranging migration to the capital.

The Kohima Police Station (North) which was set up in 1934 during the colonial rule, was upgraded from Superintendent of Police to Inspector General of police with a total strength of 1864 employees in 1964. 'In 1966 altogether seven police stations existed in Kohima district.'⁶ construction of legislators' official bungalows was set into motion. Many local contractors such as Lhounyü Kuotsu, Alhou Belho, Neilasa Khezio, Vinyüzo Miachio and Satuo Kuotsu might have benefitted from this developmental work (name if you know some). It is said that in the initial years, the state legislators occupied the PWD area and subsequently shifted to the official quarters in the present Old Minister Hill which still houses the MLAs and Ministers.

(Ruokuoheü Miachio, personal communication, October 2, 2022) remark "In the early phase, Angami people, especially the people of Kohima (Kewhimia) refused to hold government jobs. They considered the government job as "*Thekru Vatho Kra*" meaning "monthly wage earner". For them waiting for monthly wage was insecure and lacked future vision. There are stories of government departments searching for people's appointments till

⁶ [n.a], *Statistical Hand Book of Nagaland, Kohima; 1966*, (Kohima: Statistical Branch, Planning and Coordination Department Government of Nagaland, 1967), 108,111.

mid of 1970's. This could be a good reason that Angami had very little enrolment in the government sector showing a disproportionate ratio compared to other tribes. It is only since the late twentieth century that Naga people realise the value of government job opportunities. Subsequently, this realisation became a push factor in the increasing rate of migration to town.

The role and the policy adopted by the village council has been a dynamic factor in the development of Kohima town. Kewhimia are the custodians of Kohima land. As such, Kewhimia reserved the birth right over the ancestral land. The village council comprising the seven clans (*thinuo*) are the guardians to protect and safeguard their heritage. A very prudent conduct of the Kewhimia is worth mentioning. It has been found out that all the seven clans of the Kohima village agreed upon to adopt an accessible policy toward other Naga tribes and to the people from different parts of mainland India as well as from abroad. In other words, apart from the reservation of ancestral land, permission was given to the people to settle peacefully. The wisdom and the far-sighted nature of the forefathers can be discerned from the fact that land, which they considered as most important was given away for the benefit of the Nagas in general and the Kewhimia in particular. In fact, being the guardian of the town, they played a major role serving as the right hand of the government and rendering support for implementation of government decisions to bring progress, peace and tranquillity in the state capital.

Kohima became one of the most developing districts of the state. Vero (2016) states that "the growth rate of Nagaland was 1.99 % per annum during 1991-2006. Among the district, Dimapur had the highest growth rate with 3.18 % per annum, followed by Zunheboto, Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang and Mon with 2.88 %, 2.58 %, 1.69%, 1.04% and 0.02 % respectively" (p. 282). The state's economic structure is monotonous in nature. However, an increase in female education and health consciousness upgrades the level of

productivity in the district. Then after the attainment of statehood in 1963, Kohima District became the main administrative and education centre thereby causing an impetus in tripling the population of the town within a decade's time.

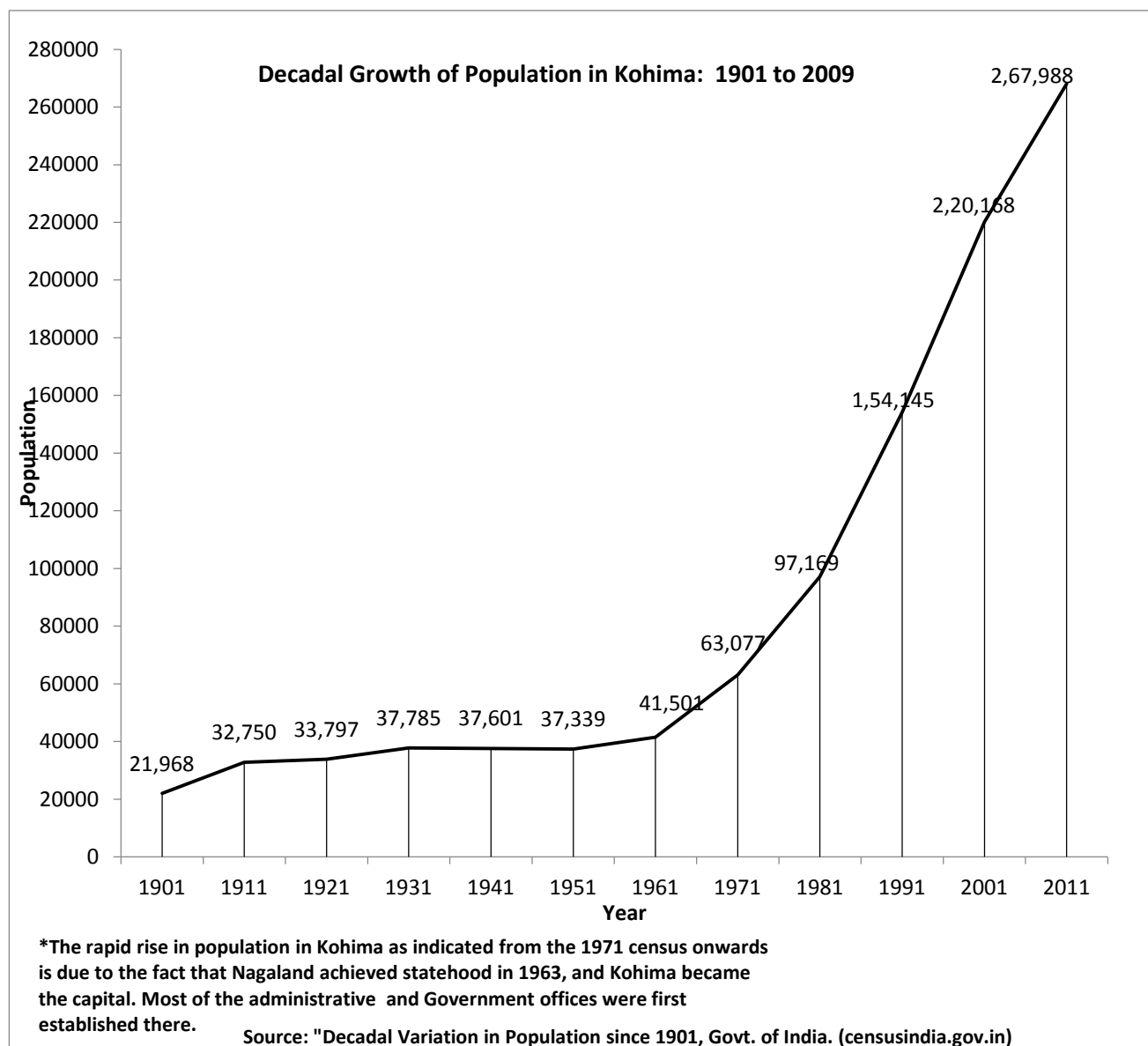


Chart: 9 Decadal growth of population in Kohima 1901 to 2009

From 1901 till 1961, Kohima town grew at a steady rate with a total population of 21,968 (in 1901) and 41,501 (in 1961), but after Nagaland attained statehood and Kohima became the capital in 1963, it saw a rapid growth in the population. The latest census from 2011 shows the population to be 267,988 ("Decadal Variation in Population since 2001. Govt. Of India." censusindia.gov.in)

The population of Kohima is increasing at an alarming rate over the past few decades due to large-scale migration. The principal tribes of the district are Angami, Rengma and Zeliangrong' (Kent, 1984, p. 7). The migration is primarily for employment opportunities and better education facilities. This huge and rapid growth rate has led to very serious problems in Kohima. Kohima town has grown very rapidly with no development plan. Poor road condition is a serious threat to humanity's management and development. The capital town is connected to NH39, NH61 and NH150. Airways and railways are the most effective modes of transportation for the growth of commerce and all-round progress, but this has yet to be implemented.

In conclusion, Kohima Village stands as the principal village in the Tenyimia community, distinguished by its size, strength, and stability. Since the 1960s, it has been home to more than 10,000 inhabitants (Gazetter of India Nagaland Kohima District; H.Bareh, 218). Located near the state capital, Kohima villagers have consistently taken on frontline roles in both war and peace, defending their people and advocating for justice and community development. They frequently represent the Angami/Tenyimia community in critical situations, engaging with the government and other entities to protect rights and tackle developmental issues. Kohima Village is also notable for its dedication to the welfare of the Nagas.

Social discrimination based on race, culture, and religion is virtually non-existent in Kohima. The legacy of peaceful coexistence established by the forefathers continues through the Kohima Village Council and Kohima Students Union, working in harmony with the rule of law. The presence of diverse religious sites, including a Jain temple, mosque, Gurudwara, and churches, underscores the communal harmony of the town. Additionally, the presence of many non-Nagas, primarily for commercial reasons, highlights the inclusive and vibrant nature of Kohima as it exists today. **(Fig: 10) Present Aerial view of Kohima capital**

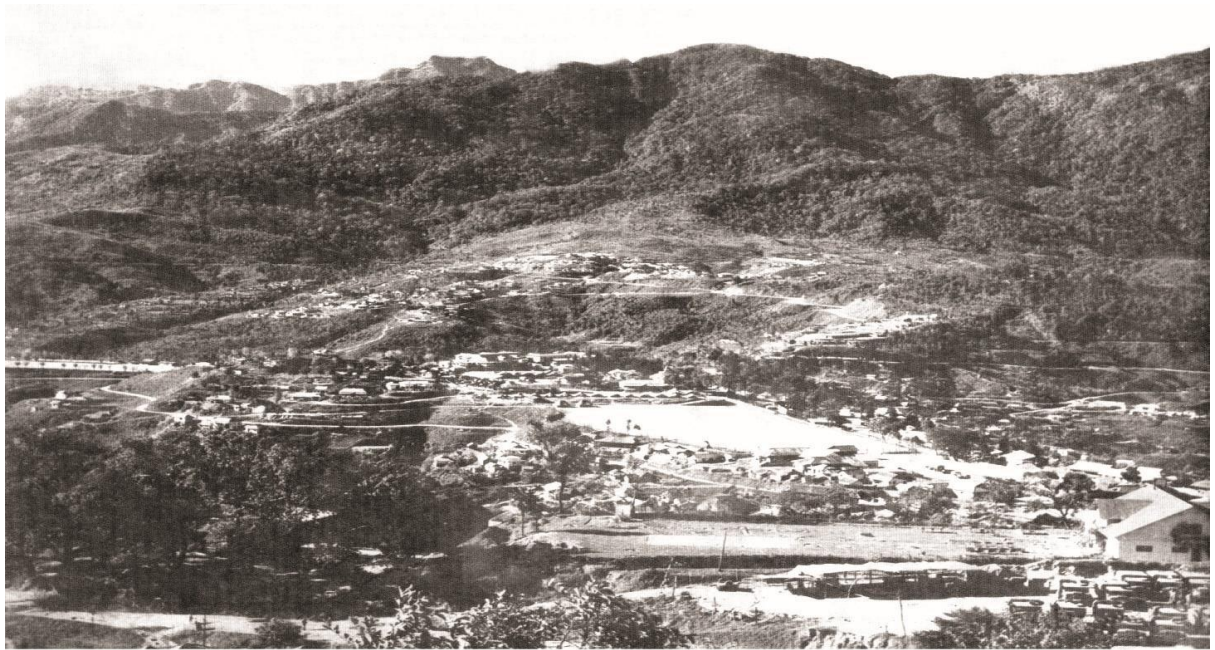


Fig: 9 view of Kohima Town during the British era

Source: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/battle_of_Kohima



Fig: 10 Present Aerial View of Kohima Capital

Source: DIPR Kohima

CHAPTER 5

KOHIMA (KEWHIRA) ANGAMI IDENTITY: THE ENDURING CULTURAL TRADITION

Culture is dynamic and usually intangible. These intangible traditions in time become the heritage of the community. Heritage could be tangible as well as intangible, static in nature and defines the people's identity. This chapter examines the cultural homogeneity of the Tenyimia¹ society in general while focussing on Kohima (Kewhira) in exploring its unique traditions and its evolution over time. The Kewhimia (People of Kewhira) cultural heritage reflects a story of the shared beliefs, values and a common ancestry or common history with the Tenyimia group. For instance, such heritage is represented by the community's meaningful imposing village gates (*kharu*) which served as a strong security to the villagers, as a channel of blessings and give identity to the clan and the tribe in general. "Culture or civilization taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." (Edward B. Tylor, 1871 in Buckland, 2013, p.13). Similarly, culture refers to the ways of life of the members of society, or of groups within a society (Giddens, 2005, in Abumere (2013). Kewhimia's culture and her uniqueness have profoundly influenced the community's identity over the centuries and play an important role in perpetuating the values and norms of a society.

Nagas experienced many waves of change beginning from the colonial experiences and the Christian influence along with education and today, Kohima, the capital of the state of Nagaland is a fast-developing city represented by multi-nationality and multi-culture. Therefore, the cultural traditions of the people in Kohima and those in close proximity to the capital are more vulnerable to be influenced by the prevailing environment. However, amid

¹ This ethnic group officially comprised of ten tribes, namely Angami, Annal, Chakhesang, Mao, Maram, Poumai, Pochury, Rengma, Zelianrong and Thangal. The Angamis, particularly Kewhemias have played a significant role in influencing various cultural aspects in the Tenyimia society.

these complexities, the research gives insight into the enduring continuities of the cultural traditions by critically looking into the intricate social fabric like the inter-clan relations and marriage customs, beliefs and taboos.

A re-look into the interesting aspects of the nature of village alliances (*rūna kekinyi*), unique features like *shadze*, *tehouba* and *peli* (Age peer group) and traditional gender roles has been made to show the unifying factor among the community, how it meets individual and groups' needs and how these features continue to influence society till today. Also, it delves into why disparity occurs in society by referring to the seven clans (*thinuos*) represented by seven khels and brings to light the historical social division of *pfuro* and *solhi*.

Every Tenyimia village comprises of two kinship groups *Thevo* (older/elder) and *Thepa* (younger). *Thepa* is also known as *Mekhu* (late comer). Anthropologically, it can be understood as moieties of two kinship groups based on unilateral descends. These two kinship groups are interdependent and, traditionally, each village was ritually founded by these kinships, which complement to each other. Both groups performed coordinated rituals to establish a new village. Villages formed outside this traditional norm faced repercussions, such as depopulation (Tsieramia Council, 2022). According to legend, *Thevo* and *Thepa* were brothers, and all Tenyimia people are believed to be their descendants (Sanyü, 1996, p. 31).

In Tenyimia culture, families commonly address their father as *Apuo* and their mother as *Apfo*, terms which indicate their kinship as *Thevo* and as *Apfuo-o* and *Apfii/Azuo*, indicating their kinship as *Thepa*.

Khruomo also opines that, literally '*thevo*' means village founder, who is assigned the role of the priesthood, while '*thepe / mekhu*' means the younger or latecomer who, in partnership with *thevo* performs various rituals and ceremonies. Traditionally, they are complimentary in sharing crucial roles in ritual performance for new settlements (personal communication, January 4, 2018). When it comes to privileges and other customs, there is

ample disparity between the *thevo* and *thepa*. According to Tenyimia custom, the *thevo* clan enjoyed more privileges than the *thepa* clan. Violators from the *thevo* clan were exempted from legal punishment and were considered as above the law, whereas members of the *thepa* kinship faced severe penalties in case of transgression. *Thevomia* (people belonging to *thevo*) were influential, vocal, and powerful in village politics (V. Punyü, personal communication, September 27, 2021).

Thevo and Thepa in Kewhimia Society

Unlike other Tenyimia villages, the social classification of Kewhimia did not clearly distinguish between *thevo* and *thepa* kinships. Until the later part of the twentieth century, Kewhimia had seven *thinuos* and the classification within these *thinuo* was not rigidly based on the *thevo* and *thepa* kindred. Instead, Kewhimia followed its own social norms, which differed significantly from other Angami villages. Since the earliest times, the society is composed of seven clans (*thinuo*) where all of them are considered as *pfuomia* with autonomous power. (S. Tsiekhanuo, personal communication, April 10, 2019).

Significantly, the terms which are addressed to parents among other Tenyimia groups do not specifically apply to any particular *thinuo* among the Kewhimia whereas, all the terms are found across various *thinuos*. Therefore, it may be suggested that Kewhimia does not strictly comply to *thevo* and *thepa* norms as rigidly like the other Tenyimia villages. However, in the later years there occurred a division in Kewhimia society. What was considered as *pfuomia* in totality in reference to the seven clans (*thinuos*) in Kewhimia society came to be divided into *pfuro* and *solhi* or *pfuomia* and *Solhimia*.

Tracing the circumstances for the division in Kewhimia society, it is mentioned in (Dzüvichü, 2017), says, this social division presumably began after the tragic death of Kerutsa of *Pfuro* during his return from Assam to Kewhira. Hutton (1921) also made a mention of a man from the Pfuchatsuma clan of Kohima named Kerutsa, who sought

‘Biekehüguo’ or “Sit-and-eat charm” from a king in the plains to get food without work. As said by Rutsa, during a trip to Assam to procure a cow for his mother's death ritual, Kerutsa met with a tragic death, the aftermath of which is believed to have brought in severe famine in Kewhira and Assam for three years. The Kewhimia elder council issued a mandatory call for all *thinuos* to send representatives to retrieve Kerutsa's remains from Assam and declared that non-compliance with the mandate would result in being labelled as *Solhimia* (isolated or excommunicated from the community)

Tsieramia refused to comply and abstained from retrieving Kerutsa's body and as such, they came to be labelled as *Solhimia*. (V. Rutsa, personal communication, 24, January 2019). Here, it clearly indicates that in a close-knit society with a communal spirit, deviation from the general rules led to undesirable outcomes to the extent of ostracising from the community. The six *thinuos*, Üsuo, Dapfhü, Rhieo, Pfucha, Tsütuonuo, and Huoruotsu, were categorised as “*pfuro*,” while Tsieramia was labeled as “*solhi*.” (Dzüvichü (2017) further says, “*Pfuro*” denoted the kinship of the village's first settlers, while “*solhi*” referred to those isolated or excommunicated from the community. Society is prominently divided into *Pfuro* /*pfuromia* and *Solhi* /*solhimia*. This was a conspicuous social dichotomy of the pre-colonial Kewhimia society which is something that has not been changed over the years.

Traditionally, in other Tenyimia villages, the village priests (*phichüu*) are specifically from the *thevo* clan, by virtue of being the village founders. However, in some villages like Khonoma, Viswema, Mima, the priestly role *thekhu sekru* (to begin paddy plant transplantation) is performed by the *kemevo* from the *thepa* clan. (V. Punyü, personal communication, September 27, 2023). A similar state of affair is found among the Kewhimia where Tsieramia *thinuo* (*solhi*) though they do not belong to priestly clan occupied kewhimia *phichüu* office till 1998. It may be conjectured that Tsieramia was a *pfuro* before the clan

come to be regarded as *solhimia* or the division between *thevo* and *thepa* was in a state of fluidity

Kinship and Marriage Custom

Kenyü Observance: Traditional Ethical and Moral Values of the Angami Nagas

Belief and practices do not develop in a vacuum whereas it evolves about the nature of society and thereby reveal the social facts; Social facts can include beliefs, moral codes, and basic norms and values... it is not an individual's consciousness that directs human behaviour, but common beliefs and sentiments that shape their consciousness (Pope, 1975). These are passed from one generation to the next and shared by individuals making up a society and revealing the socio-political and cultural aspects of the people.

Through an in-depth exploration of the *kenyü* observance, the study traces the underlying philosophy of the traditional practices and provides an insight into the traditional value system and how it remained integral to the Angami Naga cultural tradition and continues to guide society in maintaining peace and order in everyday life. Relating to the socio-economic and political implication, the study points to the rational and logical aspects, the effects and influence they have on the lives, thoughts and activities of the people. The *kenyü* observance was so humane that many a times it acted as a mechanism of social control.

Understanding *Kenyü* and its Significance

The concept of *kenyü* in Tenyidie cannot be fully translated into English with a single word that carries the same weight and significance. While "forbidden" is a commonly used translation, it falls short of capturing the profound depth and impact of *kenyü*. When the term *kenyü* is employed, it goes beyond a mere prohibition; it invokes a complex range of

emotions including reverence and fear, extending beyond the realm of punishment alone².

Kenyü is not solely concerned with following rules; it represents an intricate web of social norms and ethical guidelines. It prompts individuals to consider their actions and speech, aiming to ensure they align with the accepted standards of the community. The word resonates with a profound awareness of the potential repercussions that come from violating these norms. It is said that during their migration, these traditional beliefs emerged from the ancestral location known as Makhel and subsequently disseminated throughout various regions inhabited by the Tenyimia community.

An impressive and conspicuous feature of the Angami culture is the people's concern of kenyü observance. "In essence, kenyü entails the prohibition placed on individuals to refrain from actions deemed inappropriate within society" (Kire 2019:87). Therefore, it is also understood as an unspoken set of guidelines that fosters mindfulness in both speech and behaviour, encouraging individuals to align with societal expectations and avoid actions that deviate from established norms.

Philosophy Behind Kenyü

There are several writings on this traditional practice with surface-level descriptions. However, a deeper analysis of the ideas behind this observance shows a broader set of principles that regulated the socio-cultural as well as political life of the community. In the words of Khruomo Kepelhoucha, the philosophy underlying kenyü is akin to the concept of sin in a religious context, but it has a deeper meaning and is associated with the total well-being of society. It functions as a decree with severe consequences, as transgressors are not only personally accountable for their actions but also bring stigma upon their entire family, village, and future generations (Personal communication: 10/09/2017, Kohima). Hutton writes,

² Refer to Souvenir Special Issue: "A study of the Common Origin of the Tenyimia Communities," Tenyimia Union General Secretary's Report, "Extract of Various Minutes/Resolution of Tenyimia Union during the Period of 25/03/1995-22/02//1996." p.29-30., 1996.

‘First of all we have “*Kenna*” (or “*kenyü*”), that is to say, “prohibition”. Now the word “*kenna*” is used without any reference whatever to the sanction on which the “prohibition” rests, and it is for this reason that the word “*tabu*” has been rather avoided, since there is nothing in the Angami word to suggest the reason of the prohibition. So loose is the use of the word “*kenna*” that it may refer not only to the breach of the strict rule of a magico-religious observance or to the breach of a social law, theft for example, but to the most trivial matter of pure utility.’ (Hutton 1921, p. 190)

However, it is understood that Hutton had a superficial idea about *Kenyü* and failed to bring out the underlying social etiquette and the refined moral and ethical aspects of culture. Outsiders failed to grasp the deeper meaning and the logical aspects of the traditional practices. Solo says, ‘What does it mean to say that something is *kenyü*?’ *Kenyü* prevents people from doing wrong. It is also the moral code of conduct they follow to live a good and harmonious life. (N. Suohu, personal information, February 10, 2017, Kohima). It is observed that *kenyü* is a philosophy implemented to control, correct, and provide precautionary measures towards human behaviours. It is also said to have originated and designed mainly to discipline the people and to create a civilised society. With no external force or compulsion, *kenyü* directs and guides people’s conscience to possess good moral values. It has a direct correlation to showing mercy, love, honour, and sacrifices to the poor, needy, and elders in society. Till today, in society many times individuals though in a state of extreme anger, anxiety, or despair have demonstrated self-control, forgiveness, mercy, and love as a result of the influence of *kenyü*.

The Co-relative aspect of *Kenyü* with Ethical Principles and Civic Sense

A very remarkable aspect of the Angami Naga is their honesty and integrity. It is one of the strongest qualities that define the nature of the Angami people. Hutton in his monograph, 'The Angami Nagas' reveals the honest nature of the people. He further mentions that people did exaggerate in narrating incidents or events but 'on the whole, truth is the rule and falsehood the exception' and that they are capable of very great loyalty and fidelity (Hutton, 1921). This uprightness has made the Angami people agreeable and reliable. 'The culture of honesty of Angamis does not only define their cultural identity but also defines their uniqueness from the rest of the Naga communities'. (Kire 2019, pp. 86-87). We find a linkage being established between the *kenyü* observance and the honest nature of the Angami people and it is clearly expressed in the work of Therefore, it is plausible to say that many of the refined cultural practices among the Angami Naga are associated with the *kenyü* observances.

People tend to be conscientious to avoid any potential problem or dangers out of not maintaining *kenyü*. As said by Sachü and Kepelhoucha, 'It has become a norm to be cautious while working, eating, washing, talking, or revilement. The belief in *kenyü* encourages civic sense. To let people see, smell or step upon excrement was a *kenyü* and it is deemed to be *mengathor*(shameful). Hence, ancestors were very careful about it and by abiding by its observance, no curse passes on to future generations (Personal communication, January 4, 2018)

A practice which is very striking, especially in rural areas that reveals how people were imbibed with the moral and ethical principles was a practice of leaving their houses unlocked. Till today, people used to just latch their door with a stick whenever they go out (**Fig: 11**). This practice is rooted in the shared understanding among the Angami community that stealing is not only morally wrong but it is also believed to displease both God and

humanity. In fact, it is considered a severe taboo (*kenyüthor*) even to touch the stick which signifies the absence of the house owner. This taboo is strictly upheld by everyone, as violating it is deemed a grave offence (Personal communication: KhruomoNeisevi-ü on 20/6/2023, Kohima, Nagaland.) Another example provided by Neiseviü Khruomo says that in village, children often find joy in joining their parents halfway while they come from their field laden with the harvests. They take delight in gathering the fruits of their parents' labour such as maize, paddy, guava, and cucumber, to bring home. Some people even leave their heavy loads inside a communal resting shed known as *Cha Pru* in good faith to be collected the next day because it is strictly forbidden and considered as *kenyü* to steal (Personal communication, June 20, 2023).

***Kenyü* as a Regulator of Social Norms/Human Behaviour**

Here are a few examples of what is considered as *kenyü* as information provided by Venyo Saneilie.

1. It is *kenyü* to close community water sources (Rivers, drains, streams, etc.).
According to belief, performing such an action is believed to shorten the life of a person responsible.
2. To refuse to adopt illegitimate child or orphans is considered as *kenyüthor* (strictly forbidden) for the fear of experiencing infertility.
3. Inheriting property of a deceased person illegally bring curse for the whole generation.

Shadze Institution of Kohima Village (Kewhira) (Fig: 12)

Like other Naga tribes, morung institution (bachelors' dormitory) could be found in other Angami villages. One striking feature of the Kohima village was the *shadze*, a storeyed structure usually built high above the ground exclusively for boys. It served along the lines of bachelor dormitories, facilitating as meeting and training place. Adolescent boys, upon

reaching puberty, continued to sleep in *shadze* around a central fireplace till they get married. Typically, each clan boasts four or more *Shadze* and usually affluent individuals, constructed the *shadze* within their residential compounds. Experienced elders and leaders, well-versed in village history, philosophy, folk songs, folklore, and handicrafts, assume the responsibility of educating the younger generation within these spaces.

Rutsa (2023) writes that there is no specific mention of *shadze* for the girls. However, it is said that, five to six or more girls sleep together in a house on a rotational basis and probably the mother of the family took turns to teach them about handiwork, manners, cultivation, home management, cleanliness and so on (Personal communication: R. Suokhrie & N. Mepfhüo, August 13, 2019). Suohu also opines that while no specific sleeping quarters are designated for girls, groups of 4-6 close friends often rotate sleeping arrangements within their homes. During these gatherings, they learn practical skills such as weaving, household management, and values like modesty, often under the guidance of an elder woman or the host family's mother (T. Suohu, personal communication, March 15, 2018).

Dahou/ Thehouba

This is a very prominent structure in Angami village. During the earliest times each khels in Kohima village used to have four to five *dahou* which served as the central place in the village. *Dahou* is constructed by the respective *thinuo* /*pfutsanuo*, even by some descendent of the donor of Feast of Merit, or by esteemed personalities of the village in remembrance of their grandparents. The *dahou* was traditionally a public meeting place where different agendas, decision-making, resolutions, disputes, and other village issues are resolved by the consensus opinion of the elders and *thinuos*. All the village affairs are discussed in this platform. It is an exclusive meeting place for menfolk. Khonoma people called this as *thehouba*. The village not only looks magnificent and great with huge well-built *dahou/thehouba*, but also serves as 'strategic defensive position during wars.

All male members irrespective of age go to the *dahou* almost every day where village elders advise, and enlighten young people in the village. It is said that individual having a close attachment to *dahou* gains wisdom and has better knowledge about the village. Menfolk who seldom visit *dahou* were frowned upon by the villager. There are many *dahou* still in existence such as *Mimhoukizou dahou*, *Luzou dahou*, *Cakou dahou mu Ca dahou*. Tsütuo *dahou* at Kiruphema, Vizonuomia *dahou* (**Fig: 13**). (Huruotsumia thinuo,1997). Amongst the many *dahou* the best is Suokhrie *dahou* (**Fig: 14**), which is the biggest and bear an outstanding workmanship located at L' khel Kohima village (K. Suokhrie & S. Kelio, personal communication date)

The decision made in the *dahou*, which is usually consensual was final and binding. Under no circumstances could the elders' decisions be compromised, which otherwise would led to stern disciplinary actions against the violator. Today, most of the traditional *dahou* are converted to community buildings, yet the same functions and the legacy continues to be maintained.

Traditional Village Gate (*Kharu*)

Gates are the most imposing and significant feature in a village which are both functional and symbolic in nature. Tenyimia people are known for erecting magnificent gates which also become the center of attraction for visitors. 'The gate is of utmost importance to the Naga village, particularly among the Tenyimia group. Normally each *khel* maintained its own gate. For example, Chizami village (Phek district) has six *khels* and eight gates: two main entrance gates and six *khel* gates (Nienu 2015:209). In fact, among the Nagas, Tenyimia people stands out for building splendid and meaningful gates called *kharu*. Historically, gate construction began as a defensive and protective measure. During the early period, tribal rivalries and inter-clan conflicts were constant which resulted in numerous headhunting and wars. Therefore, people fortify the entire village and erect strong gates carved out of thick

log. Construction of the village gate involves various ritualistic procedures to be observed with utmost precision.

Selection of a perfect tree to carve the gate is the first step. Perfect as it should be, the branches should be intact and no blemishes either by humans, animals or naturally should be visible. Speaking of Kohima village gate Seio narrates, ‘the village would construct a village gate by selecting a pristine tree through a ritual process. The entire village or clan would come together, dressed in traditional attire, and celebrate with joyous feasting as they pulled the tree to its designated location. The construction of the village gate served as a powerful declaration that no enemy would be allowed to enter the village. It symbolized unity among the villagers and represented a significant achievement for the community.’ (T. Seio: personal communication 2018). Pulling the tree trunk in procession involving all the villagers is an occasion of joy and celebration for the whole villagers, which culminated in a grand communal feast. Thereafter, the gate is hewn from the tree trunk and erected by the men of the village. The village gate is the only entry and exit in the village.

Types of gate: There are village gates (*Riina kharu*) as well as clan gates (*Khel* or *thinuo kharu*) throughout the villages of the Tenyimia people. Emphasis has been made on the Kohima village since the greatest number of very elaborate and impressive gates could be found here. The village gate is the main gate. Traditionally, the main gate is kept opened in the morning to let the villagers go to their fields and will be closed once all the villagers comes back home. The war warriors and youth acted as watchmen on a rotational basis in guarding the village. The *Kewhimia kharu* is the Kohima village gate situated in the heart of Kohima town (**Fig: 15**). Till 1928 Kohima village had seven clans (*thinuo*) viz: (1) Üsounuomia *thinuo*, (2) Pfuchatsumia *thinuo*, (3) Tsütuonuomia *thinuo*, (4) Dapfhütsunuomia *thinuo*, (5) Tsieramia *thinuo*, (6) Huoruotsumia *thinuo* and (7) Rhieonuomia *thinuo*. Each *thinuo* has their own *kharu* in the village. But with the passage in time and with Christianity

and modernization, a merger of clans to create peaceful atmosphere was established. This merger resulted in doing away with the inter-clan rivalry and violence against one another. Today there exist four *thinuo* viz: Lhisemia *thinuo*, Tsütunuomia *thinuo*, Dapfhütsumia *thinuo* and Pfuchatsumia *thinuo*. Since most of the *kharu* were constructed before the clans unite together, they still exist in its original form. At present, Kohima Village, the largest village amongst the Nagas, has the highest number of *kharu* with fourteen in total. Given are the images of the clan gate or *thinuo kharu*:

Fig: 16 Lhisemia *kharu* at Kohima Village

FIG: 17 Tsütunuomia Kharu at Kohima village

Fig: 18 Tsieramia *kharu* at Kohima village

Fig: 19 Huruotsumia kharu at Kohima village

Fig: 20 Dapfhütsumia Thinuo Kharu at Kohima village

Üsounuomia *kharu* **Fig: 21** or Kerhie *kharu* at Kohima village. “Üsounuomia *kharu* also called the “living gate” located at Pfuchatsumia Khel. A significant aspect of this gate is that dead bodies are forbidden to pass through this *kharu*. This glorious and majestic gate belongs to the Üsounuomia *thinuo*. It is also called *Kerhie kharu* because no dead body to this day has passed through the gate” (Vineipra Pienyü and Vilieo Rutsa: personal communication 2018).

Symbols, Motifs and their meaning

The village gate is an object of veneration, symbolic and many beliefs systems and ritual practices are found to be associated with it. In fact, the concept of their belief is prominently displayed in the carvings of various motifs on the gates. The motifs and symbols represent the villagers’ passion, desire, achievements and expectations, seeking different blessings such as security, prosperity, and longevity of the people in the village. The gates depict meaningful representation of the ancestor’s valour, skills, bravery, craftsmanship and hardworking

nature. On narrating the significance and meanings of different symbols and motifs, Koulie says,

- Human heads signify prayers for the birth of more warriors.
- Bull head stands for livestock prosperity.
- Paddy grains symbolise availability of ample food in the village.
- Images of warriors with spear represent bravery and courage.
- Woman breast stands for population prosperity.
- Images of sun and moon signify its importance in all different seasons and activities of life. (D.Koulie, Personal communication, May 10, 2022).

Another interpretation as found engraved in the *Lhisemia kharu*, it says,

- Human heads symbolise success over enemies.
- Bull heads stand for prayer of cattle prosperity to host the feast of merit.
- War warriors symbolise prayer for power and energy to succeed in wars against their enemies.
- Full moon and sun motif symbolises the prayer for the existence of the village “until the sun and moon vanish”/till the end of time.
- Motif of bull and rooster symbolises prosperity of livestock.
- *Zhiesha* (Machete sheath) symbolises skills in workmanship.
- Paddy plant symbolises a prayer for good crops and bountiful harvests.
- Machete/spears symbolises prowess in warfare, strength, and power.
- Shield symbolises strength against any enemies.

The village gate is very significant, highly honoured and still the beliefs associated with it are regarded. Even today, with ninety percent of the population being Christians, the dead bodies of villagers who met with unnatural deaths like accidents, suicide, murder victims, and women who died during delivery are not permitted to be taken to the village

which is considered a taboo. During festivals or village sports week, women bearing a child out of wedlock are not permitted and send off behind the village gate in order to keep it holy. Harvesting rituals for paddy grains and millets were done behind the village gate to seek blessings for a good harvest and for it to last longer. *Sieshü chü* (meaning - retrieving human life and soul) is done behind the *kharu* (village gate). It is strictly forbidden to excrete urine defecate or litter in any form. Unmarried women dressed up in traditional costumes carrying rice beer and food packages (*zutho and nouva*) goes to the *kharu* as a symbol of marriage to the *kharu*. According to the tradition, unmarried women are supposed to shave their hair and they can grow them only after they are married. 'In the past, a woman, who for some reason had remained unmarried and was desirous of requiring the status of married woman, which would allow her to grow her hair, could perform a symbolic marriage to the *kharu*. (Kunz *et al* 2008:61). Therefore, those who could not get married beyond marriageable age, used to do this ritual of marrying the *kharu* symbolically so that they are able to grow their hair and thus, escape the social stigma. This act is called *thakranhyü* translated as 'forced marriage to *kharu* to grow hair.'

Traditional Costumes, Attire and Adornments

Every Naga tribe has their own distinct costumes and attires with symbols and designs and varied bodily adornments which form the tangible expression of belonging to a community. Clothes are more than a piece of fabric as Virginia Woolf says "Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than merely to keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world's view of us... There is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them" (1928/1956) in Akdemir 1018:1388). The cloth speaks out for itself and by wearing a community's costume and attire, makes the individual a part of the group. Clothing also becomes a communication system in that it gives identity to the wearer. Enunciating the costumes and adornments of the Angami Nagas,

particularly emphasizing on the Kewhimia, the study conveys the idea on how a personal identity becomes a social identity.

Clothing (Dzemenei)

In the development of tradition and possibly of attires of cultural importance, there always lie certain stories behind its origin. Kewhimia's *Loramhoshü* shawl is very significant in that it is regarded as one of the most prestigious and expensive shawls not only among the Angami people but even amongst the other Tenyimia community. According to the oral tradition as narrated by Beituo Vizo, it is said that a man named Thotse, a sole male among multiple siblings was great dynamic leader. Thotse's sisters wove him a very special shawl with unique patterns to honour their brother and to distinguish him from others. It was considered as the best and most caring gift at the time. It required an arduous amount of work, with intricate details which made the shawl very expensive. Thus, the name Thotse *phfe* (Thotse shawl) originated. Thotse was the first man to wear this elaborate and impressive shawl. He belonged to the *Khelietsümia chienuo* of *Lhisemia Thinuo*, Kohima Village. It was later renamed as *Loramhoshü phfe* (**Fig: 22**) (B. Vizo & R. Miachieo, personal communication, December, 20 2022). It is also known as Kewhimia's *Loramhoshü* by virtue of it being originated from Kohima village and regarded as the best shawl amongst the entire northern Angami region. This shawl can be worn by both adult men and women. Southern, Western, and Eastern Tenyimia have slightly different designs and shades. Northern Angami and Mao tribe wear very similar designs and colour.

Loramhoshü has a white background and woven with black and red-striped color threads. The centre portion is called *puo nu khuthu* patterned with *rülhi khu/zhiesa khu* (embroidered machete sheath motifs of warriors and feast givers) and *ganyü khu*, black and white strip design (*Ganyü*-a weed plant and *khu*-black and white striped caterpillar found in *ganyü* plant) (N. Kreditsu, personal communication 2022). The hem portion of the shawl has a

design called *puo phre khu*, which also consist of images as found in the centre portion.

Weaving and the process involved in completion of this shawl is labour intensive and time consuming which makes it very expensive. *Loramhoshü phfe* till the present age is a treasured possession because of its aesthetic beauty and value attached to it. (N. Kreditsu, R. Miachieo, B. Vizo, & K. Khruomo, personal communication, December 20, 2022). During the early period, to procure the necessary thread required to weave the shawl was very difficult. Therefore, women treasured *Loramhoshü* shawl as their most valuable asset, worth more than the value of a cow or pig. Traditionally, it was the best gift that a bride can give to the groom or to one's sibling. There are sayings that women desiring and fulfilling their dream of possessing *Loramhoshü*, a pair of shawls, and traditional wraparound was one of the greatest achievements in life.

Men's Shawls (Pfhese) (Fig: 23)

Lohe and *Loramhoshü* set are called *pfhese*. It is also one of the most expensive and prestigious traditional men's costume which are supposed to be worn in set. Mostly, wealthy men and dignitaries wear this shawl only on weddings and other auspicious occasions. It symbolises pride and prestige for the men of the village. *Pfhese* is worn during ceremonies like festivals, important meetings, marriages and traditional stone/village gate pulling. For Kewhimia, a bride gifting *pfhese* to her groom is the best gift and the highest honour, also an expression of her genuine love for her husband. It is considered a shame or incomplete if she fails to do so and the bride is looked upon as uncouth or uncultured, and untrained by her parents. During festivals or important occasions like marriages, a man's dress without *pfhese* is considered as incomplete and is looked down upon by others.

Keshünei and Neitho (Fig: 24) are the black kilts considered as two significant cultural garments that hold traditional importance among the Tenyimia community. In fact, these are also the integral components of Tenyimia customs and culture. These black kilts are worn in

a wrap around manner fastened with a woven belt. The unique designs and patterns showcase the cultural significance they hold in various ceremonies and social events. These garments not only reflect the age and status of the wearers, but also represent the achievements and deeds, a rich heritage and traditions passed down through generations. *Neitho* is a casual wear with a pleated border design. *Neitho*, the first type of black kilt, is simple and plain wrap-around attire that extends to the knee. It lacks any decorative studded elements but comfortable and light to wear. Normally, elder men prefer *neitho* as their regular attire, which symbolises their age and status within the community (V. Chielie, personal communication 2018).

On the other hand, *keshünei* is a more elaborate black kilt design, featuring three lines of cowries where, *keshü* meaning cowries and *nei* denotes kilt. Hence, it is called *keshünei*, ‘black kilt adorned with cowries’ rather heavy to be worn daily as it is ornamented. Speaking about the significance and importance, it is said that, ‘*keshünei* is accessible to men starting from their young adulthood and remains a customary attire throughout their lives. Throughout history till modern times, *keshünei* has played a significant role in specific ceremonial and social gatherings. This kilt is being worn in auspicious occasions like festival celebrations, feasts of merit, monoliths and village gate pulling events, and other traditional communal events. *Keshünei*, is highly valued and carry symbolic importance in all cultural events, reflecting the heritage and identity of the Tenyimia. *Keshünei* also signifies the social distinction as the pattern is not same for everyone. ‘Cloths can carry many significant signs according to their shape, colour, surface decoration, embroidery techniques etc...Through observation of clothing styles over these items, the assumptions could be made about a person’s identity’ (Akdemir 2018:1389). ‘Notably, war warriors and donors of feasts of merit have the privilege to decorate their kilts with four to five lines of cowries. This addition serves as a mark of distinction, recognition, and respect and display their achievements and

contribution to the community' (T. Dzüvichü, T. Mepfhüo, & N. Mepfhüo: personal communication, April 4, 2018).

Head gear Tsüla and Tsüphi (Fig: 25)

Tenyimia wears two types of headdresses called *tsüla* and *tsüphi* made specifically for the young and old men of the village. *Tsüla* is a skilled bamboo and thread work and traditionally it was made with refined bamboo splits, pure white cotton, colourful threads, and feathers of beautiful bird such as *ziemie* (blue and green in colour), hornbill feathers, etc. Today, synthetic dyes and chicken or duck feathers (white/brown colour) are used because of the non-availability of indigenous raw materials.

Tsüla adorned with hornbill feathers are worn only by *Ramei Kepfümia* (skilled hunters and war warriors), who occupies an elite position in society for their bravery and sacrifice in keeping the village safe. They can be distinguished by the use of hornbill feathers, initially with three feathers tied up on their tied hair knot (*tsükru*) and keep increasing depending on the achievements. According to tradition, people other than *Ramei Kepfümia* were strictly prohibited (*kenyüthor*) to wear hornbill feathers. Further, it is also seen as very shameful (*mengathor*) to decorate one's head without any achievements, since it is an award which needs to be earned to use it. Nowadays, achievements in academic and social services are categorised as *Ramei Kepfümia*. It is worn in a variety of designs and shades depending on the age of the person. There are also slight variations in design from region to region.

Tsüphi is a head crown, made of bear hair, which is to be worn only by old men and leaders. It is a prestigious headdress worn to honour the position of a person who may be an elder, superior, parent, or leader, and who are distinguished from the rest of the people. In addition, according to the social ranking, hornbill feathers or other colourful feathers were also used to adorn the headdress by inserting feathers to the person's *tsükhru* (hair knot). "The Angami man entitled to wear hornbill feathers may not do so in the period between

sowing the millet and harvesting the rice” (Hutton: 203 in Jacobs: 104). It is so because all the major festivals are celebrated only after harvesting paddy grains. These headdresses are worn only during festivals, ceremonies related to village gate and stone pulling, or for other important village, tribe or Tenyimia union historical gathering or feasts.

Traditional one-stringed instrument (*Tati*): (Fig: 26)

Tati is a single stringed indigenous guitar, classical and melodious. The instrument is an integral part of the Tenyimia culture and a significant source of identity. Different types of *tati* depend on the material used to make it. Traditionally *tati* is made of *mephfü/ mesiü/ vahe* (well-seasoned gourd) as sound box or vibrator. The gourd is perforated with around five to seven holes at the bottom to let produce effective sound. However, the holes depend on the size of the gourd. *Küvü, Rüki/ Jülü, Keluo/ gepfü* (bamboo species), wild tiny seasoned bamboo or cane stem approximately four to five feet also depending on the size of the gourd bottle is fitted together. As alternative to the gourd, horns of cow, buffalo, mithun (*bos frontalis*) are also used. Traditionally, sheath of matured bamboo was used to cap the gourd or the horns. Bladder of animals like pig or cow were also used to cover the mouth of the vibrator. A particular rope extracted from a plant *zozhie* (*Urticaceae-Urtica dioica*) (Fig: 27) in Angami dialect also known as stinging nettle, belonging to the nettle family which is locally available having a synthetic or high elasticity property resembling rubber is used to make *tati* string. (R. Rutsa: personal communication, May, 22, 2023). The *Tati* guitar consists of three essential parts: the *odo* (soprano), *ori* (tenor/alto), and *obo* (bass), each contributing to the overall harmonious melodies created by this instrument (P. Kennao and K. Sakhrie: personal communication 2023). This instrument is used mostly by the Angami, Chakhesang and Mao tribes. *Tati* or *Libuh* resembles the Indian *ektara* and is plucked to make a sound which promotes rhythm and determines the pitch.

The word *tati* is literally derived from the sound of the instrument *tin tan* and *tan tin*. Oral tradition of a Chokri version reveals the story behind the invention of *tati* instrument. As narrated by Kevesho Tetseo, (personal communication, May 23, 2018) a poor young lad deeply fall in love with a rich maiden, but because of his family background deterred him to often visit the maiden. After a deliberate thought to overcome his embarrassment and make himself strong and confident, he invented a musical instrument called *tati* and composed love songs to woo the girl he loves. The manner in which he used his *tati* was quite appealing and tuning in love songs revealed his genuine love for her. Finally, he was able to win her heart. Therefore, it is said that *tati* is used as an instrument of vibrato to strengthen, support and instil confidence to do in what seem to be impossible.

There is another plausible theory regarding the origin of the *tati* guitar, as suggested by some oral historians which proposes the idea that this instrument may have been learnt by the forefathers from the Chinese or Japanese. The Tenyimia *tati* bears a striking resemblance to the Japanese instrument known as the *kokyū*. The *tati* guitar has been used by our ancestors and passed down from one generation to another, with notable individuals like Mechülhou Meguo-o and Khezhie Neikuo of Kohima village being instrumental in preserving its legacy (P. Kennao and K. Sakhrie: personal communication 2023). Perhaps, the cultural affinities linked to the theories of the Naga origin and migration from South-East Asia and China may be further explored. *Tati* continues to be a very popular musical instrument and is being promoted through various platforms. It is very encouraging that the young generation are beginning to take pride in their roots and taking keen interest in learning the art of *tati*. In fact, the songs accompanied by this instrument are reaching out to the world as an interesting genre of folk music.

The Age-group Collaboration *Peli Krotho*

The '*pelikrotho*', an age peer group organisation is a prominent tradition which emphasise on the importance of collective efforts. It plays a crucial role in cultivation activities. It is a form agrarian labour exchange system, a collaboration of groups of people working together in each other's fields, on a rotational basis during specific seasons. Apart from the agrarian activities, there are other aspects of this collaboration is the creation of the feeling of helpfulness and oneness among the villagers.

The groups take responsibilities in activities like transplanting rice plants, transporting paddy, collecting firewood, and ploughing. The peer group joint efforts have a great impact not only during cultivation, transportation of the paddy to the village but in house construction and other village activities. While working, they sing folk songs creating memories which imprint a rich legacy of togetherness and the bond they share. Besides, while working in groups, it gives a great opportunity for the young energetic boys to show off their strengths and endurance to impress and court girls whom they fancy. In fact, the *pelikrotho* can be regarded as the most dynamic economic force in the village economy. At present, there are twenty one *pelikrotho* organisations in Kohima village functioning with the same traditional spirit.

The Tenyimia Beliefs and Customs Regarding Death

The mortuary practices of the Angami tribe involve a number of rites and rituals, though there are variations from village to village. The Angami tribe is a patriarchal society where the overall work, connected with the burial ceremonies of an individual is initiated by the male relatives of the deceased (Jamir, 1977). Mourning for the deceased involves wailing, war cries (*Mepfü keruo*), and *Thekrü chü* - a form of loud cries and lamentations praising the deceased's good deeds and expressing concerns for their family. The Tenyimia believed that a person lived seven lives in seven different realms. After their seventh death, their skeletons were hung on a wall, marking the end of their lifespan.

Rites and Rituals for the Death

Among the Angamis, as a person passes away, livestock were sacrificed, and the meat was cut into hand-sized portions and distributed amongst friends and relatives. This ritual, called *theprie*, was essential; it was believed that without it, the deceased would face difficulties in the afterlife (V. Yaotsu, personal communication, January 4, 2023).

In the early period, the corpse of the deceased would be cleaned, usually by family members or, in some cases, by a young man or woman, depending on the gender of the deceased. Then new clothes or the best clothes of the deceased person are put on the body.

Following the rituals, the body was taken out of the village and placed on a tree or wooden platform to let it decay. A ten-day mourning period was observed by the immediate family members during which period, they abstained from doing their daily activities. Once the flesh decays through natural processes, the bones were collected, then wrapped in a bamboo mat (*zoprie*). Along with the bones, items like a *dao* (machete), *meshü* (traditional bottles made from gourd), and seeds for the next life were wrapped and buried together (N. Khruomo, personal communication, December 17, 2023).

After the British established their administrative post in Kohima, body burial replaced the traditional method, and the mourning period was reduced to five days. Locations where bodies were kept include present-day areas between North Police Station and Baptist High, and between “L” Khel Indoor Stadium and Baptist Revival Church in Kohima (N. Khruomo, personal communication, December 17, 2023).

The Tenyimia believe that all deceased souls gather at “*Rünyü Gei*,” a place identified as Mt. Tiyi in present day Wokha District, where the departed spend time with other departed souls. The Lotha people also have similar stories about Mt. Tiyi. A transcendental encounter is narrated here which happened in the recent years aligning to the traditional beliefs. It is said that a man from Kohima while returning from official duties in

Mokokchung, encountered a grandmother from his neighbourhood near Wokha. He was surprised to see her, as she had no known relatives in the area. After talking to her, he continued his journey to Kohima, only to learn upon arrival that she had passed away some days earlier (N. Khruomo & T. Khruomo, personal communication, January 12, 2023).

Friendship Alliance among the Clans (*Kekinyi*)

During the earliest time, political domination and suppression of weaker villages were common issues. Head-hunting and land disputes often developed enmity amongst *thinuos* or villages and tribes. According to Angami culture, *kekinyi* is understood as friendship alliance made between two *thinuos* only, due to the limitation of resources for it involves heavy expenditure in this alliance making feast. Traditionally friendship is kept in order to create stability in the village. The concept of village alliances, known as '*kiekinyi*,' is deeply ingrained in Kewhimia culture since pre-colonial times and till the present time, it is prevailing. These alliances were formed to mend bitter relationships between two *thinuos* which requires both parties to exhibit courage, forgiveness, and willingness to make new friendships (K. Khruomo, personal communication, January 4, 2017).

Thinuo kiekinyi feast lasted for three days and was a time of great celebration for the two groups. People dressed in full traditional attires and carrying their best weapons, such as guns, spears, machetes, and shields will proceed to the host *thinuo* which is done in rotational basis. Women adorned in traditional dress, carry traditional baskets containing rice beer, meat, snacks, and shawls, follow their men halfway to the designated village. Chosal. Rhetso narrates, after '*cha he*' (halfway refreshment), feasting, and festivities, the women would then return to their villae. Women are forbidden to enter the host village for fear of unprincipled and unethical conduct between the the women folks and the men folks in the host village because it was considered as shameful and tarnishes the entire village's reputation. Friendship

alliance was concluded by exchanging livestock, rice beer, and paddy grains, shawls, spear and so forth (personal communication, January 6, 2019).

The alliance ceremonies were marked by grand feasts, dances, sports, and games, with heavy consumption of rice beer and meat. Kewhimia formed friendship alliances with villages such as Khonoma (Merhüma), Rhütso (Viswema), Mezoma, Pfuchama, Kigwema, Jakhama, Söpfüma, Kikruma, Tekhubama, Touphema, and others. (S. Suokhrie, personal communication, January 4, 2017). Significantly, the twentieth (1928-2018) friendship treaty anniversary was celebrated between Lhisemia and seven Mao (Sopfiimia) villages with a grand feast on 28th April.2018 at Chielasiepfhe, L'khel, Kohima village.



Fig: 11 Traditional Naga House symbolic of Kenyü Edict



Fig: 12 Shadze (Social Institution and Sleeping Place)



Fig: 13 Vizonuomia Dahou at Tsieramia kizou



Fig: 14 Suokhrienuomia Dahou at middle L' Khel



Fig: 15 Kohima Village Gate at the heart of Kohima capital



Fig: 16 Lhisemia Kharu on the way to Nagaland Civil Secretariate Kohima



Fig: 17 Tsütuonuomia Kharu called Nousi kharu at Tsütuonuomia khel



Fig:18 Tsieramia Kharu, Established in 1909 at L' Khel



Fig: 19 Huruotsumia Kharu (Kijü Kecie kharu, Establised in 1921) at L' Khel



Fig: 20 Dapfhütsumia Kharu at D' khel



Fig: 21 Usonuomia Kharu (Kerhie Kharu/ Living Gate) at P'Khel



Fig: 22 Loramhoushü



Fig: 23 Pfhese (Traditional mens' shawl suit)



Fig: 24 Keshünei (Black kilt)



Neitho (mens' wrap around)



Fig: 25 Tsüphi (Head dress for elderly men)



Fig: 26 collection of tati (Musical instrument made from gourd and buffalo horn)



Fig: 27 Zozhie (*Urticaceae-Urtica Dioica*)



Fig: 28 Cükhrühu (*Solanum Virginianum* also known as Surattense nightshade)

An ornamental local shrub used for both aesthetic and healing

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In general, Nagas has a shared common history of their migration from Makhel to Khezhakeno. The Angami Naga is one among the big Tenyimia ethnic group. Tradition says that the ancestors of this ethnic group with their two sons once lived in a legendary place called Khesoura believed to be one of the oldest villages among the Tenyimia Villages, situated in the Phek District. Over time, the children dispersed to different directions in search of better settlement. Tradition says that one of the sons by the name Vadio migrated to Makhel. He got married and was blessed with four sons. Tenyiu the eldest, migrated to the present Tenyimia region, thence to Khezhakeno and his descendants came to be known as the Tenyimia. However, due to conflicts and issues related to the magical stone, land congestion and population growth, Keyho-u, believed to be the Angami ancestor and his descendants migrated to different directions. Traversing all odd in their migratory journey, they have settled in various regions of the present Kohima district.

Clan membership becomes imperative for an individual's identity. In fact, the Nagas in general maintained the sanctity of exogamous relationship upholding the clan identity. To write about the history of the origin of Kohima village, the migration patterns and clan formation has been a challenging task. Through an in-depth research, primary data was collected from all 38 (Chienuo / pfutsanuo) affiliated to seven *thinuos* and corroborating with documentary evidence, the research endeavours to give an objective and acceptable authentic historical record from an academic perspective.

The ancestors of Kewhimias (people of Kohima) also migrated in waves. Üsuo and Rhieo may have been the first to migrate followed by Dapfü and Tsiera may have formed the second wave of migration to Kewhira (Kohima). Possibly, some from Pudunamia later migrated to Jakhara and thence to Kewhira and this is corroborated by the narration of the

same story by the Jakhara village elders. Later, Pfucha from Chümoukedima and Tsütüonuo relocated to Kewhira may have formed another migration group. Whinuo and sons later accompanied by some cousins appear to have formed another group of migration. Hence Kewhimia forefather most probably undertook different migration routes at different times as they moved out from Khezakenuo. This could be one plausible reason leading to controversy about the village's age and settlement history.

The belief in descend from a common ancestor holds the clans together and the social organization is built upon the clan system. As such in Kohima village, society is built on the basis of thinuo. All the seven thinuo, namely Üsuonuomia, Pfuchatsumia, Dapfhütsumia, Tsieramia, Rhieonuomia, Huruotsumia, and Tsütüonuomia, united to form one large village and making Kewhira the largest village known as “*nafü nadi*. In today's parlance, Kohima village is called *Bara basti*. Thus, all the forefathers deserve recognition in the village's history,

The socio-economic life of the people is to a great extent guided by belief systems. . Many rites and rituals associated with agriculture are communal in nature and acts as a unifying factor among the people. People's faith in the traditional rites and ritual for population growth, bountiful harvest in agriculture and victory in war was deeply ingrained. Delving into the realm of the various beliefs and traditional rituals, the role of *tsiakrau* (Crop Fertility Priest), *liedepfü* (Harvest Priestess), it reveals a very remarkable role played in the socio-economic life of the villagers as the channel of blessings not only to Kewhira but to many neighboring villages. In fact many Angami villages long for the blessings to be channelized into their village for plentiful harvest. From the role played by the priest and priestess, it can be said that the faith reposed by the people in their performances had been a significant component in bonding relation with other villages.

In the Naga cultural tradition, a prominent identity marker is the conduct of the Feasts of Merit. It is a community feast hosted by rich couple who had enough surpluses. By giving the feast to the community, the family and their lineage earns a prestige, a social status and respect in society but does not carry any political power. Among the Nagas and in all Angami villages as well as among the Tenyimia group, it is mandatory that both the couples should be alive because both husband and wife play a vital role in performing ritual. A variation from the general tradition could be located in Kohima village. The ritual for feast *Chüimetsie* was performed by the widow of the village founder Tsiera along with her son. Henceforth, widow along with their biological sisters/ brother/mother/ son perform rituals and host *Chüimetsie* called *sha/ zha*. What is striking here is the opportunity given to the wife to perform the ritual to host the feast, a practice which is not to be found in other villages nor there are any record from other *thinuo* about bachelor or widow who had hosted *Chüimetsie*.

Until the later part of the ninetieth century, Kewhimia society is composed of seven clans (*thinuo*) where all of them are considered as *pfuromia* with autonomous power. (S. Tsiekhanuo, personal communication, April 10, 2019). The social classification of Kewhimia did not clearly distinguish between *thevo* and *thepa* kinships. Instead, Kewhimia followed its own social norms, which differed significantly from other Angami villages.

Tracing the circumstances for the division of Kewhira society as mention by (Tsieramia *thinuo* 2022) the social division presumably began after the tragic death of Kerutsa, the aftermath of which brought about severe famine in Kewhira and Assam. In order to retrieve his body, the Kewhimia elder council issued a mandantory call to the villagers and that the non compliance with the mandate would result in being labelled as *Solhimia* (isolated). Tsieramia refused to comply with the mandate and hence, came to be labelled as *Solhimia*. Thus society is identified along the lines of *Solhi* and *Pfuro* kinship unlike the *thevo* and *thepa* used in other Angami villages and Tenyimia community in general.

The late 19th-century infrastructural developments, coming of Christianity and the British is generally taken as the transitional phase. American missionaries brought Christianity and education to Kohima. The British annexation of the Naga Hills brought all the Nagas into the British Administered area. Thereafter, a new district known as the Naga Hills District was declared in 1874, with this, we see the formation of a new township at the foot of the Kohima village. Kewhimia's openness to trade and cultural exchanges with various ethnic groups led to a period of transition. The British moved their administrative headquarters to Kohima in 1878, boosting development with new roads and increased money circulation. American missionaries established schools and health centres, contributing to population growth and new settlements in Kewhira. This transition pushed Kewhira towards urbanisation, and becoming the state capital.

One noticeable change in the village polity was that, until 1928, the seven *thinuos* of Kohima Village identified themselves as Üsuo, Rhipfu, Dapfhü, Tsiera, Huruo, Tsütuonuo, and Pfucha were governed by an autonomous council consisting of village elders and leaders, later empowered with the appointment of *goan bura* after the British government's arrival. Subsequent impact could be found in the formation of various associations like Kohima Village Students' Union (KVSU), Kohima Village Council (KVC), Kohima Village Sports Association (KVSA) etc., with different objective but all with a common purpose to fostering peaceful atmosphere and check inter-clan violence by liaising with the different khels.

In 1928, in order to eliminate hatred and violence between various clans, three *thinuos*, Rhieotsu, Huruotsu and Tsieramia, joined together with a consensus to form a big *thinuo*. This entirely changed the political scenario, and promoted social relationship with better understanding amongst them. After World War II, another change occurred in the village when Üsuonuomia and Pfuchatsumia *thinuo* joined together as one clan, known as

Üsuo Pfucha khel, renamed as Pfuchatsu *thinuo*. As a result, the seven *thinuos* were reduced to four.

With the attainment of statehood in 1963, the modest settlement slowly developed into to a thriving urban centre. The experiences of urbanisation and its positive impact as well as threats to cultural and moral values have been assessed. The narrative unfolds the historical foundations, challenges faced, and the town's resilient spirit that shaped its economic character. From primitive barter trade to modern economic dynamics, it reveals Kohima's story as one of adaptation, growth, and the pursuit of economic sustainability. Today, Kohima is a home to people from different Naga communities and accommodates people from various regions. It has become a place of conglomeration of people from various backgrounds.

The distinctive traditional cultural practices of Kewhimia, discussed in various chapters, provide insights into the factors that have shaped the community's identity across generations. One notable tradition was the practice of *shadze*, a communal gathering space for boys within the compound of affluent families, considered a rite of passage and a source of joy and camaraderie. Till date, the community preserve rich cultural heritages, such as *kharu*, *dahou*, megalithic stones, circle tombs, traditional house design called *ki kie*, various clothing, ornaments, handicrafts, cuisine, and beverages, which plays a vital role in shaping the community. Efforts were collectively made to preserve the unity of Kewhimia and uphold their integrity.

The role and the policy adopted by the village council has been a dynamic factor in the development of Kohima town. Kewhimia are the custodians of Kohima land. As such, Kewhimia reserved the birth right over the ancestral land. The village council comprising of the seven clans (*thinuo*) are the guardians to protect and safeguard their heritage. A very prudent conduct of the Kewhimia is worth mentioning. It has been found out that all the

seven clans of the Kohima village agreed upon to adopt an accessible policy toward other Naga tribes and to the people from different parts of mainland India as well as from abroad. In other words, apart from the reservation of ancestral land, permission was given to the people to settle peacefully. The wisdom and the far-sighted nature of the forefathers can be discerned from the fact that land, which they considered as most important was given away for the benefit of the Nagas in general and the Kewhimia in particular. In fact, being the guardian of the town, they played a major role serving as the right hand of the government and render support for implementation of government decisions to bring progress, peace and tranquillity in the state capital.

The emergence and growth of Kohima is marvellously wrapped in legends, folklore and prophecies. There are ample traditional versions which explicitly interpret the birth and enormous growth of the village. The name Kewhira (Kohima) has been derived from ‘*themia kekra u pfhii u whi vor keta*’ meaning many people assemble together for a thriving population (Kohima Village Council, 2016). Besides, there is another version of its derivation which says- *Kepfii Kewhi* translated as ‘act of visiting and fostering warm relationship’. Among the numerous sources, the most common and widely accepted origin of the term Kewhira lies in the following phrase, “*Kepfii Kewhi vor riina chiuketa mu kehoupuorei u pfhii u whi kevor pete ze riina chituo we*” meaning assemblage of people from various regions and settling together with mutual understanding, thus forming a mighty village. Further, many soothsayers from Mao country and even from some other Tenyimia village prophesized that Kohima (Kewhira) would grow into a big community and gradually expand into a bustling town filled with people from diverse communities.

Truly, Kohima village give birth to the capital of Nagaland state. Perhaps, the early settlers could visualise the future of Kohima and wished for a big thriving community existing harmoniously. The expression may have been taken as an encouragement to their

kinsfolk to welcome people so that it multiplied into a big community. This shows the considerate nature of the forefathers which is testified by their benevolent spirit. Kewhimia accessible policy and their hospitality and accommodative nature to the Naga tribes have opened up the expansion of Kohima.

The attainment of Nagaland statehood has accelerated the circulation of paper currency. There began the inflow of currency to the capital for developmental activities. Construction of government buildings and the setting up of offices and schools in turn resulted in the creation of numerous occupations and job opportunities. Quite contrary to the prevalent situation, it is said that, till 1970 Angami people, especially the people of Kohima (Kewhimia) refused to hold government jobs. They considered the government job as “*Thekru Vatho Kra*” meaning “monthly wage earner”. For them waiting for monthly wage was insecure and lacked future vision. This may have been because they relied more on their agricultural production and that other avenues were not given much consideration. However, attainment of statehood has opened up avenues for traders and merchants and enterprising people to start up business establishments. Hence, there witnessed a wide-ranging migration to the capital.

Social discrimination based on race, culture, and religion is virtually nonexistent in Kohima. The legacy of peaceful coexistence established by the forefathers continues through the Kohima Village Council and Kohima Students Union, working in harmony with the rule of law. The presence of diverse religious sites, including a Jain temple, mosque, Gurudwara, and churches, underscores the communal harmony of the town. Additionally, the presence of many non-Nagas, primarily for commercial reasons, highlights the inclusive and vibrant nature of Kohima.

Despite the waves of change, there are many cultural aspects that Kohima people continue to practice their cultural tradition as the main identity. Nagas

experienced many waves of change beginning from the colonial experiences and the Christian influence along with education today, Kohima, the capital of the state of Nagaland is a fast developing city represented by multi-nationality and multi-culture. Therefore, the cultural tradition of the people in Kohima and those in close proximity to the capital are more vulnerable to be influenced by the prevailing environment. However, amid these complexities, the research gives insight into the enduring continuities of the cultural traditions by critically looking into the intricate social fabric like inter-clan relations and marriage customs, beliefs and taboos. Village alliances (*riina kekinyi*), unique features like *shadze*, *tehouba* and *peli* (Age peer group) meets individual and groups' needs and how these features continues to influence society till today.

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ORAL SOURCE

Group Communication conducted with Mr. Herangbe N. Hau 84 years, village official,

Mr. Hanchudaebe chuilo, 81 years, village chairman, Mr. Henkidong Mbung, 44 years, Youth Secretary on 3-10-2018 at Poilwa Village.

Group discussion conducted Mr. Kholi Athikho, 94 years, farmer and Mr. Nupuni Asholi, 82 years, farmer at Pudunamai, on 03/07/2023.

Group discussion conducted with Mr. Kaisü Adani choro, 62 years Rtd. Officer, Mr. A. Daili (50), Government servant, Mr. A. Ashohrü, 57 years, government servant and Mr. S.P. Francis, 68 years, a businessman at Kewhira, on 28 April, 2018.

Group discussion conducted with Mr. Kholi Athikho Chara, 80 years, farmer Mr. Ashuli Dilie, 63 years, farmer, Mr. Nepumi Ashuli, 83, years, farmer, Mr. Pfokrelo Arhiikho, 48 years, farmer, at Pudunamai on 10-5-2-23

Group discussion conducted with Mr. Kitsuvilhou and Mr. Heigeibu Huoruotsu, on 16-11-2019 (place missing)

Group discussion conducted with Mr. Kiyadilhou Kire, 86 years, former D' khel official, Mr. Duolie Theünuo 80 years, farmer, (put date and place)

Group discussion conducted with Mr. Mr. KHETSO Pienyü, 106 years, Former Chairman, Mr. Vilhouselie Pienyü, 92 years, Rtd S.P, Mr. Kelhoulevo Pienyü, 61 years, Village Council Member, Chedema on 6-9-2019

Group discussion conducted with Mr. N. Semomi and Mr. P. Kuotsu on Nov 15-11-2018 (place missing)

Group discussion conducted with Mr. Neilathie, 55 years former president L' khel student' union, Mr. Neisakhotuo Mepfhüo, 60 years, farmer and Mr. Rükuo Suokhrie, 60 years, farmer, at Kewhira, on 2-8-2019

Group discussion conducted with Mr. Neisakuolie Mere, 90 years, Deacon CRC, on 16-11-2018, at Kigwema.

Group discussion conducted with Mr. Vilakhotuo Senotsu, 76 years, Rtd. Officer, Mr. Neinguto Senotsu, 95 years ex-chairman at Jotsoma Village on 3-12-19.

Group discussion conducted with Mrs. Yalhou-ü, 96 years, farmer, and Mr. Noumvüo 98 years, farmer on 2-2-2017. (add place of interview)

Group discussion conducted with Mrs. Zeluochaü Shüya, Mr. & Mrs. Zhavilie Huozha at Meriema on 10-12- 2018, Kohima farmer late 90's

Group discussion Makhel Mr. Athikho (71) farmer, Mr. Asholi (40) farmer (date, year and place?)

Group discussion with Mr. Razou Neihu, 90 years, farmer, Mr. Neisezo Neihu, teacher, Mr. Vilepi Neihu, 87 years, Mr. Khoto Kiso, 90 years, farmer, on 16-11-2018. (place of interview())

Group discussion with Mr. Saneilie Venyo, 74 years, missionary, Mr. Athikho Poumai, 61years, pastor, Mr. Adani Mao, 65 years, chairman at Kapui, Senapati Jakhama- (no date and year)

Personal Communication at Willong with Mr. Pausambe, 55 years, farmer, Mr. Peter, 24 years, student at Willong on 16-11-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Dr. D. Kuolie, 59 years, HOD Department of Tenyidie, 18-2-2021, 29-11-2017, 5-12-19

Personal Communication conducted with Dr. Hiebe, 50 years, Asst. director veterinary department Kohima, on 15-3-2018

Personal Communication conducted with Dr. Kiyasetuo Vizo 65 years, Former Tsieramia Chairman on 13-10-18.

Personal Communication conducted with Dr. Kiyasetuo Vizo, 64 years, on 1-4-2017

Personal Communication conducted with Dr. Latuo Rutsa, 60 years, Additional Director, on 15-4-21

Personal Communication conducted with Dr. Neiphie Kire Chairman KVC, on 28- 9-19.

Personal Communication conducted with Er. Keviletuo Yiese, 54 years, E.E, on 30-11-2018

Personal communication conducted with MR & Mrs. Chosel Rhietso, teacher, on 6-4-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr Daniel Kikhi 92 years, chairman Viswema Village on 01/04/2018.

Personal communication Conducted with Mr Viyalhou Chietsü, 80 years, chairman 11-11-2019.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. & Mrs. Kevecho Tetso,68 years, artist on 20-5-2023.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Atoulie Mepfhüo, 65 years, former L' Khel chairman, on 5-7-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Chadzüo Sote, 98 years, farmer, on 4-1- 2017

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Duolie Kire, 80 years, farmer, on 10-9-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Dziesevituo Suohu, 60 years, Rtd professor, on 13-5-2020.

Personal communication conducted with Mr. Kekuolhouthie Solo, 49 years, former president KVSU, 1-10-2018, at Kewhira.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Kepelhoucha Khruomo, 93 years, former Khruomo GB.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Kesohelie Suokhrie, 50 years, L khel Kohima Village on 22-2-23

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Ketsulhoulie Yhome, 60 years, farmer, on 1-4-2017.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Kezhazerü Whuorie, 42 years, Advisor ASU, on 13-2-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Khokhrieü Khruomo 98 years, farmer, on 2-2-2017.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Khotuo Mor, 70 years, Public Information Secretary on 10-11-2018

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Khriengulie Kratsütsu, 76 years, Rtd. Additional SP on 08-01-20

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Kiyadilhou Kire, 90 years, former chairman D Khel, 10-9-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Ko-o Kreditsu, 70 years, On 23-8- 2018.

Personal communication conducted with Mr. Kruyie Pienyü, 60 years, P' khel chairman, on 10-1-2018, 21-9-2020

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Kruyie Pienyü, 64 years, chairman P Khel, on 4-2-2018

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Leo Solo, 91 years, pioneer businessman, 18-11-18.

Personal communication conducted with Mr. Medo Keretsü, 70 years, on 3- 12- 2017.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Medolhoulie Rame, 55 years, Goanbura on 7-4- 19.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Medoselhou Keretsü, 70 years, chairman KVC 10- 11- 2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Meguo Mechülhou, 90 years, former P'khel chairman, on 15-1- 2017

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Neibao Rame, 60 years, farmer, on 20-9-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Neichalhoulie Dzüvichü, 90 years, chairman
Tsieramia council, 12-2-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Neingusalie Khruomo, 42 years, secretary
LVC, on 5-2-2022.

Personal communication conducted with Mr. Neiseo Penyü, 65 years, Chüziera village
Secretary, on 28-10-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Nguluolie Kesiezie, 85 years, GB Huruotsumia
Khel 2-10-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Prasielie Pienyü, 60 years, former president
KVSU, 7 -10- 2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Puhosul Kenao on May 8-5-2023

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Saneilie Suokhrie, 89 years, HGB, on 4-1-
2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Sanilie Suohu, 85 years, farmer, on 2-11-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Sao Suokhrie, 95 years, L'khel head GB, on 4-
1-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Satuo Kuotsu, 90 years, pioneer businessman,
on 24-3-2019 at Kohima.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Sazoto Nakhro, 70 years, Pastor, on 16-11-
2019

Personal communication conducted with Mr. Sechalie Yhoshü, 54 years, chairman Kigwema,
8-12-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Seo Tseikhanuo, 70 years, farmer, on 16- 2-
2018

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Setuo Kelio, Chairman L Khel, on 6- 4-19.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Seyiekuolie Khezie, 72 years, Former Minister,
on 30-1-2021

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Thepfuzakie Suohu, 60 years, Rtd Asst
director, on 28-9-2020.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Thinuozeokuolie Dzüvichü, 65 years, president
KVSA, on 18-04-19

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Tseivilie Miachio, 65 years, Rhio chairman,
on 9-2-2018,

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vatsü Kire, 96 years, Former chairman of D
Khel, on 4-11-2018

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vatsümvü Kire, 82 years, on 16-2- 2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vezo Chielie on 22-2-2018

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vikholie Theünuo (Zatsu) on 07-04-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vikuolie Theünuo, 76 years, former advisor
TSU, on 7- 10-2018

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Viletuo Penyü, 80 years, Chüziera Village
Chairman, on 28-10-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vilieo Rutsa 70 years, former chairman KVC,
on 4-2- 2017

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vipopal Kisto, 63 years, General Secretary
Tenyimia Union, on 10-1-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vipralhou Kesiezie, 62 years, Retired Director
SCERT, Kohima on 10-10-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Visielie Solo on Oct 10, 2018

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vitsoni Ltu, 63 years, Artist, on 9-5-2023.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vizetuo Solo, 76 years, Rtd S,P, 10-10-2020.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vizolie Mepfhüo, 73 Years, General Secretary
Tsieramia thinuo council, on 22-05-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vizonyü Liezietsu on 13-9-2019.

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vizonyü Theünuo, 80 years, Rtd. Director soil
Conversation, on 4-5-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Vmeipra Pienyü, 62 years, president Head GB
P khel, at kewhira on 10-1- 2017

Personal Communication conducted with Mr. Zeneituo Rutsa, vice president KVC on 10-9-
2018

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Beituo-ü Vizo, 70 years, farmer, on 22-12-
2022

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Bvünuo Mere, 95 years, farmer, On 7-5-2020.

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Neikuonuo, 92 years, farmer, on 8-11-2018

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Neisevi-ü Khruomo, 52 years, Government
servant, on 4-2-2017.

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Neizoleü Kreditsu, 64 years, 2- 12- 2023.

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Ruokueheü Miachieo, 60 years, President
AWO, 20-2-2018.

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Rüvonuo solo, 87 years, former KVSU G.S,
on 24-01-20

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Tounei-ü Suohu, 95 years, farmer, on 5-1-
2020.

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Vünuo Yhome, 60 years, on 15-5-2019

Personal Communication conducted with Mrs. Zieü Dzüvichü, 90 years, housewife, on 8-8-2019.

Personal Communication conducted with Rev. Kevimese Suohu, 60 years, NBBC, ON 6-3-2020.

Personal Communication conducted with Rev. Kiezotuo, 90 years, Senior Pastor BMC, on 20-11-2017

Personal communication Mr. P. Rolnu, 96 years, village elder, on 17-1-2018 at Jakhama.

Personal communication- Mr. Seneilie Suokhrie, 81 years, Head GB, at L Khel Kewhira on 11-11-2019.

Personal communication with Mr. Dihe Mao, 50 years, professor, St. Joseph college, Jakhama on 2- 7-2023

Personal communication with Mr. Seio Tseikha, 74 years, farmer at Kohima Town, on 11-11-2019.