

A STUDY OF MYTHS AND SYMBOLS IN YIMKHIUNG NARRATIVES

(Thesis submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English)

By

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MERIEMA, 2024.

DECLARATION

I, Ruthsan Y, do hereby declare that the thesis entitled *A Study of Myths and Symbols in Yimkhiung Narratives* is a bonafide research done for the award of Ph.D in English under the supervision of Dr.Lemtila Alinger during the period 2016-2024. That the thesis has not been submitted either in full or in part or previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or title on the same title to any other university.

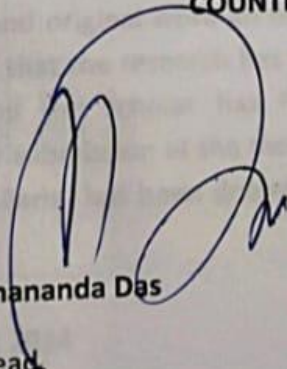
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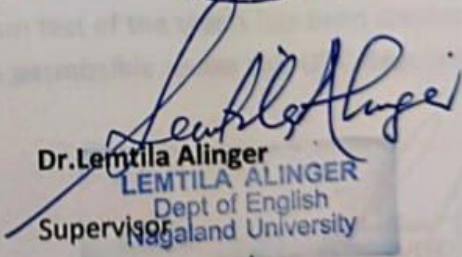
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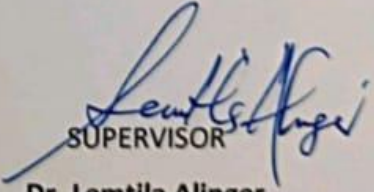
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CERTIFICATE

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PREFACE

Yimkhiung tribe is one of the major tribes of Nagaland. The culture and tradition of a tribe is kept alive by means of oral narration that shows in the expression of ideas, beliefs art that is passed down orally by word of mouth. It is preserved as a collective memory as the representation of a community can be heard from older folks of society each with varied and different memory they can think and connect it of the past. Yimkhiung as a tribe can be identified by its tangible objects and intangible ideas and beliefs that are understood as a form of expression in the folktales, folklores, wisdom words and sayings.

Certain lifestyle is supported by certain beliefs and practices that has passed down over the ages and so is with the materials and objects used since the time of forefathers and is still being used that signify the tribe's identity and culture. Root of a tribe is reflected in the custom, tradition and belief that keep the community intact. There is much enrichment in the interaction with a tribe's system of belief and behaviour and also its use of symbols particularly in material culture. Significantly, traditional values are inculcated and influenced through the hearing of folklores and by re-narrating it to the younger generations which has led to the present stage.

This thesis examines the narratives in the form of folksongs, folktales, myth and use of symbols in narratives and in material culture. Material culture is also an expression of their own ideas and emotions and sees them as reflections of themselves. Through time, tools and attire serve as a medium to determine an individual's relationship with their history and culture as objects claim a historical character because they endure. Since material culture has to do with everyday life, the need for shelter, work, tools, the narratives associated with them help us to experience something of that everyday past.

Chapter I

Introduction

- 1.1. 1. The Yimkhiung Tribe
- 1.1.2. The Five Distinct Dialect Speaking People
- 1.1.3. Places and Resources
- 1.2. Objectives
- 1.3. Methodology
- 1.4. Review of Literature
- 1.5. Social Relevance
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1.1. The Yimkhiung Tribe:

The origin of the Yimkhiung (Yimchunger) like some other Naga tribes can be traced back and matched to that of an era when Naga tribes are believed to have migrated from China and settled down in Chindwin River and ultimately and gradually reached the present day land (Akhum, 6.) Yimkhiungs are known for their bravery, generosity and large hearted nature. According to Majumdar, a tribe is defined as a 'collection of families or group of families which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed well assessed reciprocity and mutuality and obligations' (Majumdar, 355.) The Yimkhiungs have features like that of a Mongolian race and the color of their skin is brown and the body stature is well built and huge. Values that have passed down generations after generations are generosity, respect, courageous, kind and compassion. The field of folk literature is beset with problems. Being oral in origin and transmission and having been relegating to the background for centuries, it is difficult to know the authorship and period of composition. The Yimkhiungs are community oriented people and thus love to help each other in their daily tasks of cultivation, hunting and self defense (Akhum, 6.) Each cultural and ethnic group provides a unique opportunity for social scientists to study, by comparative analysis, patterns of inter

cultural interaction and transformation. One needs to look at a cultural ethnic and linguistic map of any of the plethora of cultures, languages, and ethnic groups that have flourished in the region over the centuries with a minimum of social and cultural change for periods extending beyond recorded history. India is a country that has a varied beauty of having many tribes that has vibrant culture in diversity. The differences of colour, caste, creed and religion add to the beauty of the country. Its richness is measured by the various food habits, cultural practices, traditional costumes and meaningful festivals. Nagaland is one of the smaller states that lie in the North-eastern part of India. Nagaland has rich natural resources; each tribe with its own story, songs and cultural practices.

The people and culture chosen for this study is Yimkhiung tribe, one of the Naga tribes of Nagaland. This tribe is a mountain tribal people who live in the area that falls under Shamator, Kiphire and some pockets of Zunheboto, Niuland and Dimapur districts of Nagaland for many centuries. The Yimkhiung tribe was earlier known as Yimchunger and also known as Yimchungru but is rechristened as Yimkhiung with the approval and order of the Government of Nagaland on 18th August 2021. Hence, the word appearing Yimchunger, Yimchungrü or Yimkhiung maybe read as one. The word 'Yimkhiung' is derived from the word 'Yimkhiungrü' which means 'searched and found.' Yimkhiung tribe has a population of about 74,647 as per Nagaland's 2011 census.

Administrative system prevalent in Yimkhiung villages:

There is a permanent body in the village administration that is headed by the Head Goan Bura they are easily identified because of red shawl issued to them by the government. It is a mark that they safeguard the village. Usually a GB is a direct representative of his khel or clan's men. He is considered to be a man of old age perceived to be wise with age and experience. Some villages practice hereditary headship while some adhere to the seniority basis. New villages were established with certain rules and regulations. The person who can afford to offer cow/mithun was to be the head or chief and followed by an assistant who would offer pig, dog, cock etc. However, it was on the decision of the clansmen as to who to go where basing on the status and merit for the formation or establishment of new village. In the village

administration (*kiulongthsürü*) headed by a Chairman along with some few members are selected for a period of 5 years. The number to be taken in the council depends upon the size and population of the village concern.

Festivals:

Festivals of different tribes in Nagaland are celebrated throughout the year. The tribes celebrate their own festivals with pageantry and color, music and dance. One common feature of every Naga festival is that it revolves around agriculture, the mainstay of Naga economy and livelihood. The festivals carry its own significance and values of that particular tribe which maybe similar to the other tribes. Since Nagaland is an agricultural based state, most festivals revolve around the agricultural activities like festivals invoking God's presence after sowing of seeds, a time to relax and merry making after the hard toil and labour post harvest festivals. Yimkhiung tribe celebrate some festivals bearing its own importance and significance. Although festivals originated out of a need to appease the gods through rite and rituals yet in the present day it is celebrated more of as an extravaganza of culture. Tribesmen come together to celebrate, sing folksongs, partake in community feasting and generally build stronger bonds amongst them. Festival is for merry making and enjoyment and also celebrates the romance and essence of life. Strong community feeling is prevalent in the Naga way of life.

Six important festivals of Eastern Nagaland are:-

Naknyulum:

The Chang tribe celebrate this festival signifying the conquest of darkness by light. The Changs believed that at one point of time the world was in total darkness and people could not do anything and it was only after a man killed a double tailed tiger that the darkness fled. Since then the festival is celebrated to mark the victory over darkness and also to please the heavenly god. Like other festivals indigenous games are played but no dances are performed during this festival. Sharing of food and feasting is a part of the celebrations.

Monyiu:

Phoms celebrate Monyiu after the seed sowing period in the month of April. It is also a New Year festival with a difference because during this festival love, respect and dedication is shown to womenfolk. It is a time for male members to gift them the best rice brew and especially prepared food. Community feasting, singing and dancing is also a part of the festival; the festival ends after the elders exchange meat and drinks with each other.

Tsokum:

Tsokum is a pre-harvest festival of the Khamniungan tribe; it is celebrated to invoke blessings for a bountiful harvest. Chicken, pigs, and mithun are killed as sacrifice to appease the deity for an overflowing harvest. Folk dances are not performed in this festival. Khamniungans celebrate Tsokum in the month of October. It is celebrated with great joy and gaiety. And the harvest starts after the celebration of this festival.

Aoleang:

Konyaks celebrate Aoleang in the month of April. It is a festival to mark the presence of divine spirit Wangwan. This Wangwan is symbolized by erecting a bamboo alongwith its branches in front of the morung, and then Wangwan is invited to join in the celebration to bless the people. Traditionally, it is celebrated for over a period of six days when the community took part in fishing, sporting, singing, dancing and feasting.

Mongmong:

Sangtams celebrate 'Mongmong' which means 'Togetherness'. It is celebrated in the month of September. It is celebrated to gain the will of the Supreme Being called Lijaba for a good harvest and prosperity. It is said that the festival starts after each household observe "*Musyantup*" a ritual of worshipping the three stones which represents Lijaba in the kitchen hearth. Rice and rice brew is offered to those stones. This is followed by feasting and merry making.

Yimkhiung:

Nagaland being an agricultural state, most of the festivals are celebrated as to appease deities. It is observed before or after harvest. Some of the major festivals of Yimkhiung are:-

Metümnyo:

Metümnyo is the premier festival of Yimkhiung Naga. Originally this festival was celebrated from the 1st to 8th August every year. However, in modern times it has been reduced to three days from 6th to 8th August only; with 8th as the main celebration day. The word *Metümnyo* encompasses the three syllables viz, “Me” meaning “spirit or Soul”, “tüm” meaning “wrap” and “nyo” meaning “feast”. Hence, the festival literally means an occasion of a ‘soul wrapping feast.’ The festival has multiple significance and some of them are concisely elaborated below:

1. The children born during the previous year after the festival and the current year before the festival are purified by parents or grandparents by preparing six pieces of meat for the son and five for the girl indicating that the male have six souls and female five.
2. This is the occasion when people cook and enjoy the first ears of millet.
3. Marriage betrothal is made mostly during the occasion when the parents of both the intending lovers fix a date for the wedlock.
4. Friends and relatives would invite one another and treat each other with the finest drinks and meat.
5. This is a time for consolidation of friendship and also for declaration to host the Feast of Merit.
6. This is an occasion for inculcating a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. Hence, it is a customary obligation for the married sisters to offer the gifts of seasoned rice beer and agricultural products to their brothers and the latter will reciprocate them by offering chunks of meat.

7. It is also a day for honoring the souls of the dead. It is strongly believed that during the festival, the dead souls shall visit every household of their living relatives and while going back to their land they would lead a way the souls of the living relatives who are destined to pass away before the advent of the succeeding festival. Therefore, some quantity of meat and rice should be preserved for them over the fireplace as they are expected to arrive home exhausted and starving. It is said that in the event of failing the arrangement, they would arrive home and utterly curse the living relatives.
8. It is ultimately a time of merry making for young and old alike. People invite one other for feast and to display utmost generosity by sharing meat and food provisions. New lovers may exchange gifts among themselves.
9. The festival marks a number of activities within the village and outside such as the clearing of village well by the young boys, cleaning of footpaths leading to the fields and roads between villages as well. In this way inter-village relationship is built and cordial relationship is maintained.
10. The whole meaning of the festival revolves around life, hope, friendship and peace. It also revolves around the spiritual feast and also a religious communion between the living and the dead.

The older man in the family would check out if there is any scar in the portion of the meat that was kept aside and would predict the fate accordingly. The scar on the right portion would mean that something is to befall upon self and a left scar means an omen or indication to happen on others.

Tsüngkamnyo:

Tsüngkamnyo is a post harvest festival. It is also a winter festival held in the month of January. This festival is marked by feasting, singing and dancing, and playing outdoor games like arrow shooting, bamboo stilt climbing etc. Neighbouring tribes and friends are invited to mark the festival so as to usher in peace and prosperity to the community.

1.2. The Five Distinct Dialect Speaking People:

Yimkhiung is one tribe that is unique because its people speak five distinct dialects but are united by one common language called *Langa*. This language is a unifying factor for the tribesmen as the common public forums use this as a medium of communication and for all official purposes. The Yimkhiung is one of the warrior tribes of Nagaland one among the tribes settled in the easternmost part of the state. Earlier there were six sub-tribes viz. Chirr, Langa, Longpfürü, Makury, Phelungrü and Tikhir that constituted the Yimkhiung tribe. However, the Tikhir speaking people became a separate tribe in the year 2022 under the Tribes Recognition Act, Government of Nagaland. This coming together of five dialect speaking people makes the history of the tribe unique and shows a rare bonding amongst the brothers which is the general belief that brothers once scattered have found each other. And hence the name of the tribe is proven true 'Yimkhiung' meaning searched and found or reached.

(i) Brief description of the Langa dialect speaking group:

The main common language for Yimkhiung tribe is *Langa*. Majority of the people communicate through this dialect. It is also used commonly in all the major platforms like churches, meetings and all social gatherings. Y Awünru (also called Y Anner) village is the one of the oldest villages that has a story, which points to the beginning and the basis of Yimkhiung tribe. The name of the village denotes Yimkhiung Awün which means Old Yimkhiung. The earliest migration seems to have taken off from this village. The most popularly celebrated festival is *Metümnyo* a festival celebrated post harvest of millet and also in honour of a soul. It is known as 'soul-wrapping-festival' wherein each new member in a family is honoured with his/her share of meat wrapped in a banana leaf with five pieces of meat for a girl child and six pieces of meat for a boy child. It is believed that a girl child has five souls and boy child has six souls and so the naming day is also observed accordingly after the birth. *Tsüngkamnyo* is post harvest festival; it is celebrated in the month of January purely for merry making and enjoyment post harvest. These are two important festivals celebrated widely across Yimkhiung villages besides some other minor festivals.

(ii) Brief description of Chirr speaking group:

A small group of people speak the Chirr dialect that comprises of the major villages like Salomi, Zaonger, Thanamir, Fakim, Longkhimvong etc. One folktale of *Chirr* is projected in the folktales of Yimkhiung culture. Tsakranning is the local festival of Chirrs celebrated in the month of September.

(iii) Brief description of the Makury speaking people:

Another group of local dialect speaking people is Makury. Some villages that speak Makury dialect are Phuvkiu, Pungro Village, Tikenvong, Vongti, Vongva etc. *Tsewlaknyi* is the major festival celebrated by Makury and Phelungrü speaking people. The word *Tsewlaknyi* has three syllables 'Tsew' means 'shield', 'lak' means 'cleansing/sanctification' and 'nyi' means 'feast'. Hence, *Tsewlaknyi* literally mean 'sanctification of shield'. This festival is originally celebrated in the month of October in accordance with the lunar calendar so as to celebrate during the full moon night. However, for convenience presently it is celebrated from 17th-19th October. *Tsewlaknyi* is a festival for purification and sanctification of life saving tools including the farming tools. It is a festival that marks the end of harvest and signals the venturing into the jungle for hunting or for warfare. During this festival all the men folk attend the festival in community morung for learning the stories of the past, the art of handling the weapons, learn traditional dances and songs etc. All the weapons such as gun, dao, spear, bow etc. are cleansed during this festival. During the head hunting days this festival was observed with much enthusiasm as weapons would decide their fate of winning or losing the war against the neighboring villages and also would determine how well they could hunt for their consumption.

(iv) Brief description of Longpfürü dialect speaking people:

Longpfürüs are a small group of people who inhabit the village of Khongjiri extending upto Hakkomute, the last village in Nagaland, after which lies the boundary of India with Myanmar. It comprises of 8 villages and the oldest village is Mimi which is known as the hotspot of unexplored tourist attraction places in and around the villages. Rare practice of the people of Mimi area is the 'jar burial system' that was once practised

before the advent of Christianity (Department of Art & Culture, 57.) The death body was stored in an earthen pot jar and was kept in the open space for weeks until the body remains rotten and the bone remains are collected in a pot and kept in caves. The dead body was kept above the fireplace wherein the relatives of the deceased would make fire and dry the body, and once dried, the skeletal remains are collected and placed in caves. Another distinct feature is pottery or pot making which is practised as a profession by womenfolk. The art is passed down from mothers to young girls. It is compulsory for all to know how to make the pot because it serves as a source of income and livelihood and people from near and far would come and exchange pots for the goods available to them when there was barter system in the past. It comes in various sizes and shapes and is used for many multiple purposes. Some people use for cooking, some for storing purpose like that of storing water, grain, soyabean etc. One good practise in upholding the tradition of pottery is that a girl child is taught the art of pot making. A distinct practice in regard to pottery culture is that a girl child ought to get a pot for herself wherein millet would be stored for her and is sent as a wedding gift the day she goes to her new home after marriage. It is believed that millet can be stored for more years than rice paddy, it has longer durability and so millet is opted for storage in place of rice grain.

(v) Brief Description of Phelungrü speaking dialect people:

Phelungrü dialect is spoken by a small group of people that inhabits in Moya, Amikiuro, Kiuro and some section of people in Phuvkiu village. Some speciality of the locality is the Salt Water Lake and Likimro Hydro Project.

1.1.3. Places and Resources of the Yimkhiung:

The tribe is blessed with rich mineral resources some of which worth mentioning is Mt.Saramati; the highest peak in Nagaland which stands at a height of 3840m is nature's gift to Yimkhiungs. The other side of Saramati is Burma, Myanmar of the present day. It is home to a myriad of fauna like the elephant, tiger, bear, monkey, wild mithun, deer, stag, etc., and has a rich reserve of flora which has not been fully explored. Another important place is Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary covering 642 hectares of

land which serves as home to many birds and animals. It has a good reserve of animals like Tragopan, Great Hornbill, Jungle Fowl, Hollock Gibbon, Slender, Loris, Panther, Himalayan Bear, Jungle cat, Barking Deer etc. Tourism has great prospect in the future as there are many legendary places which are of historical importance. Some hot spots for tourists are Mt.Saramati, natural stone caves in Mimi and Salomi, Rock bee colonies in Mimi, rich mineral deposits in Pokphur and Mimi and waterfalls in Mimi area. Many cave and stone expeditions can be carried out in the Yimkhiung areas. Mimi and Salomi caves have attracted a number of visitors both domestic and foreign tourists. The caves have cliffy and steep edges and have a kind of deep tunnel entrance which is as big as the size of a room. Local and international tourists visit the places. For guiding tourists, the village students' body or the council in the village provide arrangement locally as there is no proper travel or tourist agency in the region. Thanamir is one of the popular villages in Yimkhiung land for its recognition as the 'Apple Village'; bountiful harvest of apple is received from Thanamir village which is situated on the foothill of Mt Saramati; it is the last village on the way to Mt Saramati. The Government of Nagaland under the initiative of Horticulture department organises "Apple Festival" annually in the month of September. Naturally, the Yimkhiung land is blessed immensely.

Likimro Hydro Project produces 24megawatts of electricity for the state; it is a revenue generating project for the people of Nagaland. One modern song writer M.Shophu of Thsotokur village mentions poetically in one of his songs *Shorih Lo* that 'Likimro Hydrel Project' is an eye or light emitting source for Yimkhiung people. It shines for Yimkhiungs as well as the whole of the state. Electricity or power generating source is compared to 'the eye' an eye that sees like the light of day, a blind man is deprived of such privilege where the beauties of the world cannot be seen. The region of the tribe stretches from Y.Anner the village which is believed to be the origin village for the tribe, it extends upto the present day Hakkomute the last village that borders Myanmar. Mündün is one of the historical places known as a "Heritage Village". *Tsüngkamnyo* the winter festival of Yimkhiung community use to be celebrated at Mundun, a heritage village of Yimkhiung Naga. The activities showcased at Mündün Heritage village celebrating *Tsüngkamnyo* festival revives the art and culture of the tribe. Traditional games and activities are played which revive the old tradition, it also

enlightens the young minds who have less interest and an idea of the past history and culture. Such re-enactments serve as a reminder of where we belong and where we ought to take our younger generation without forgetting the history and culture of the past. Yimkhiungs are agriculturalist by profession; their lives revolve around hunting, warfare and cultivation for livelihood. Strong community feeling is prevalent in Naga way of life and so also in Yimkhiung society.

Values such as respect and honour for one another and especially for elders is practised and upheld in the day to day lives of the people. Older people take it as a responsibility to teach the young ones the values of life and hence community life is strengthened with each festival or each cultural celebration.

The land ownership system is that of individual holdings as well as commonly owned areas. Yimkhiungs practise common land holding system and common ownership of cattle. In Common land lordship the land is predominantly occupied by the community as a whole; it could be some forests, reserves, farms etc. The caretaker of such land is the head or the village elders of the village. They have to come to a common agreement for any decision in regard to shared-land and its uses. Three or four families share one field and they jointly cultivate the area. Many areas have been passed down through different generations practising the joint cultivation system. Not all practise this system but there are few who own the fields singly. Jhum or (slash and burn) method is used mostly. We can hardly see except a few families practising terrace cultivation. Nagas are more serious about their fields than their homes. We can see the fields are cleaner and given more attention to than that of their homes. Time spent in the field is much more than that of the time they spend in the village or home. Their hearts and minds are in the field. Some elders even say that the more they stay at home the more sickly they feel. It is more refreshing and worthwhile for them to be in the field. They never take it as a burden but rather enjoy the work culture.

Landless people are given less importance in the society their opinion is not sought in any decision. A person's wealth or status is determined by the number of fields or mithuns one possesses. In Yimkhiung community there existed 'dependants' as there was inequality in the society. Some for a plate of rice were under the guardianship of

another clanman or some in the pursuit of saving themselves from the hands of enemy, different reasons were there why they sought shelter in a better home. A man could literally become independent only after paying a price or in some cases with the coming of Christianity, forgiveness or freedom could be had and consequently the person would use the name and lineage of his own rather than the adoptive father's name and clan.

Some significant practices of the Yimkhiung people:

i. Feast of Merit (*Anyo jikhî*):

Hosting feast was an important part of Naga life in the past. Many feasts were celebrated to appease the gods or seek their blessings for health, prosperity and protection hence they were religious in nature. However, there is an event which stands apart from all these. It is the feast of merit. It is an event which is more social in its purpose. It is hosted by a person in order to boost his popularity and position in the society. The feast was hosted in the capacity of only a wealthy man. The feast could be for a day or even stretched up to three or four days. Generally, the feast of merit begins with the slaughtering of Mithun along with other animal's meat served in plenty; lavishly huge meats are used in preparation. Local rice beer is brewed in abundance and served. For hosting any feast of merit a special package called *Müngümtüm* is arranged as a sign of invitation, to accept or not to accept would depend upon the other party. *Müngümtüm* is made of *ashihküp*, a kind of palm leave sheath fibre and it contains rice, all meat portions like liver, heart, lungs, etc. Along with it the fermented rice prepared for local beer is also sent through the mediator from a bamboo container called *khiumok*. Different categories of feast of merit practised by Yimkhiungs are given below:-

(a) Cutting of the mithun's tail ceremony (*Chimo kiuachihkhî*):

This ceremony a sign of challenge or showing of strength when there is any altercation among friends or for disputes arising out of land or property. The option is given whether to go for cutting of mithun's tail or buffalo's tail. On being agreed by both the parties, either of the parties will initiate for this event and will be followed by another party. If the tail is not cut at an aimed place then it is considered to be a sign of bad omen. It is observed for three days during *Tsüngkamnyo* festival.

(b) Lim Thsükh:

Lim Thsükh is a feast of friendship it is observed during *Tsüngkamnyo*. This is celebrated for three days by inviting friends from other villages. This feast is marked by sending off the invitees with large pieces of meat and would drop them till the host village's boundary. The later invites the former in the next *Tsüngkamnyo* and pays back the meat with larger than what he had received from his friend. This could also indicate the giving heart of the Yimkhiungs who are always generous in nature.

(c) Ayong jikhi:

This feast is hosted so as to gain dignity and earn higher prestige and privileges amongst the people. There would be no specification on the number of hosting the feast, it can be done many times in one's lifetime as long as one is able to host. With each feast, his status in the society increases thus the more number of feasts, the higher honour he gains. This is specifically hosted for the host's villagers for feasting and drinking.

(d) Kokperü jikhi:

Different tribes have different practices to mark the event. For this ceremony the women folk of a particular clan were invited for this ceremony. Women were invited especially to build special bond between brother and sister. All the women invited would not come empty handed but each comes with whatever they can. Women of a clan would observe genna (mourning period) for three days in case of dead. After the *kokperü jikhi thünyo* they go back home with gifts sent for their husband and children, the gifts basically would be meat along with tools like spade, dao etc. It can be celebrated in any part of the year.

(e) Atsün jikhi:

Yimkhiungs loved to sing and dance and hence this special ceremony was observed by inviting the dancing group either from one's own village or could be even from other villages. This marks his status and position to a higher level, a matter of pride and success because these acts cannot be performed by all. One distinct thing about *Atsün jikhi thünyo* is that it is hosted for a day. They dance from morning till evening, to the extent of getting blisters on their feet because of continuous dance. The songs arranged

for the day ought to be completed on that day itself by any means. Therefore, if the dancing party disperse without finishing the song, they would try to finish singing while going back home and still if it doesn't finish they would complete the song even on their bed. Special gifts are arranged by the host for the leaders of the dance performing group and those leading the song.

After the feast is hosted, some decorate their houses with the horns or the head of the animals killed for the feast. In some tribes, the host of the feast or even his family members get the recognition and can wear a certain dress like that of *Rehü Rongkhim* which the common people cannot wear. It's a sign of attaining success.

ii. First hair cut ceremony (*Kochüh kia*): The first hair cut ceremony is a sacred ceremony practised by Longpfürü. The first hair cut ceremony is a sacred ceremony practised by Longpfürü Yimkhiungs. The first hair cut for a new born is done by the newborn's maternal family. For this ceremony a pig is slaughtered which is mandatory. For a boy it is round shaped cut and for a girl four patches of hair are left uncut. One patch is in the front, one at the back and two patches near each ear. Patches of hair are left uncut so that the growing hair can hold each other better once it starts growing. Some poor families have to wait for more than a year or so to cut the hair because of their inability to arrange a pig for the hair cutting ceremony, a pig need not be very big but somewhere around 50 to 60kgs. A person who cuts the hair is revered and is greatly respected at all times, he is invited for all occasions both big and small events like marriage, festival or any celebrations.

1.2. Objectives:

(i) To study and interpret the myths and symbols in the narratives of Yimkhiung culture, this is the immediate need so as to keep the tribe's tradition and history alive in this fast changing world.

(ii) To preserve the oral traditions, values, and narratives of Yimkhiung that is of great relevance to our age. The orally narrated stories are on the verge of extinction once the older people die out.

(iii) To contribute to the realm of literature the study of Yimkhiung narratives by its natives and also for future references.

1.3. Methodology:

This research will reflect the Yimkhiung and its social and cultural importance covering some beliefs and activities as well. An attempt is made to study the Yimkhiung's textiles, architecture and narratives. Myths and symbols are studied in the light of Yimkhiung narratives keeping in mind the origination, the beliefs, the lifestyle and social set up of Yimkhiung Naga. Some translations of folktales and folk songs are also worked upon. Besides, field work and visits to historically important places and meeting of experts for interviews were carried out. Further, the research consults the primary and secondary sources extensively to make the research comprehensive and up to date. The 9th edition of MLA handbook guidelines is followed as far as documentation is concerned. This research delves deeper into understanding the culture in all its complex forms and analyzing the social and political context in which culture manifests itself.

1.4. Review of Literature

In many of the villages that JP Hutton visited in 1923, there were mixed groups of Sangtham, Chang and Yimchunger Nagas. He also observed villages of different tribes in the same area: 'I was surprised to see a Sema village (Hutami) on the range east of this, and all mixed up with Yimtsung villages (Hutton, 63.) Such observations were common because Fürer-Haimendorf also notes a village of mixed Changs, Kalyo Kengyus and 'Yimtsungrs' (Fürer-Haimendorf, 207.) Earlier, the annual administrative report of Assam for 1921-22 records: 'Mixed up among the trans frontier Sangtam villages, which also extend nearly to the Manipur border, is the tribe known as the 'Yachungr' or in its Sema form Yachumi (Hutton, 90.) The course of intermittent feuding and head hunting forays did not allow the Yimkhiungs to interact frequently with their neighbours. Yimkhiung identity was not consolidated beyond individual villages and clan line. It was during the later establishment of administrative boundaries that issues of identity became important especially in the 1970s.

In colonial records the Yimkhiung were recorded in the few villages that colonial administrators could visit during their annual tours. At least five prominent villages emerge in the writings of Mills (1937) Hutton (1922) and Furer (1938) as Yimchungrü villages. Interestingly, Hutton identifies the original home of the Yimchungrüs as the same place given an account to the people by the elders of the present day. On 19th April on his arrival in Yachungr, Hutton writes that 'Yachungr' is a Sangtham name apparently and the 'Yachumi' themselves call themselves 'Yimtsung', Yimtsung-Awenrr being the original home of the tribe' (Hutton, 62.)

Some books on folktales and books on theological aspects are written by some Yimkhiung writers. *Traditonal Beliefs and Practices* is written by Lakiumong. Another book is written by Khalemew M, Yim. *The Yimchungrü Christianity A Brief History*. Dr.SJ Akhum, the incumbent Executive Secretary of Yimkhiung Baptist Churches Association (YBBA) have written a book *Myths and Symbols in Yimchungrü Christianity*. *Folk-Tales of the Yimchungrü (Naga)* is a book on Folktales by N.Chuba Yimchungrü. *Many More Stories* is a collection of Folktales edited by L.Chuba.

Many Naga writers like Easterine Kire's *Kelhoukevira* (1982), Temsula Ao's *The Ao Naga Oral Tradition*(1999), *On Being a Naga* (2014), a collection of essays which relates to the way of life and culture of the Nagas. Anungla Zoe Longkumer's *The Many That I am* (2019), is a book edited by Anungla Zoe Longkumer presents a remarkable set of stories, poems first person narratives and visuals of the different tribes of Nagaland. *The Legendary Naga Village-A Reader* (2009), by Lucy and Kevekha Zehol is a book that documents and discusses the myth of the origin of the Nagas which has been traced to the legendary Naga village called Khezhakeno.

Folklorists whose works have contributed to the development of folkloristics have added new perceptions into how culture can be viewed and studied. Alan Dundes' important books are *The Study of Folklore* (1965), where he gives an introduction to the history, theory and methodology of folklore, *Interpreting Folklore* (1980), Dundes is concerned with the valuation of materials collected by folklorists so that folklore can be used to increase the understanding of human nature and culture. Another book of

Dundes in *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth* (1984), it defines myth as a sacred narrative that explains how the world and humanity came into the present form. Richard M. Dorson's *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* (1972) is an edited work of eighteen scholars bringing the ideas together. Oring's *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres* (1986) consists of essays that discuss the folklore topics and interpretive techniques. Barre Toelken's essay "Ballads and Folksongs" shows folklore forms as complex, symbolically rich in expressions, *Folkloristics An Introduction* by Robert A. George and Michael Owen Jones. All these writers give an insightful idea on how folklore is studied, how it is transmitted in the form of culture affecting human behaviour as well. William Bascom, Bronislaw Malinowski, James G. Frazer articles are also included in the edited works of Alan Dundes making it an informative and educative book on folk culture.

1.5. Social Relevance:

The tribes of Nagaland have a rich and colourful culture that adds to the qualities of vibrant people of India. And Yimkhiung land has so much to add to the beauty of the nature and also to the people and its state Nagaland. Being a tribe that has less population of educated people the research is a kind of breakthrough to the realm of Yimkhiung literature. The thesis contains transcribed works, original songs, first-hand information on village life and culture. This will benefit the community at large and research scholars in particular. Social cohesion is another reason to studying myths it is specifically intended to explain the world to them. Every culture has its own myth and the truth of myth is wholly subjective. It consists of the body of beliefs, ceremonies religion and arts that define a culture.

The narratives will be a window to the understanding of a people group, their world view, which will add much to the richness and diversity of cultures. Some of the folk items are definitely old, the student of this branch of literature is faced with problems with the lack of documentary evidence to settle a text precisely, the difficulty to ascertain the period and place of origin. Despite all such difficulties and drawbacks folk literature provides a rich source for the study of 'peasant culture' which has gained importance lately (George, 30.)

1.6. Chapterization:

Chapter one presents the introduction on the Yimkhiung Naga tribe, its land and people. Its land and resources are also presented to show the rich culture heritage of the Yimkhiungs.

Chapter two focuses on the concepts and theories of the study of folklore. Some of the theories of folklore discussed in the chapter are- Evolutionism or geographical determinism theory, diffusion or historic-geographic theory, functionalism theory, structuralism theory, performance theory, contextual theory, feminism in folklore etc. The second chapter also presents different types of folklore like the fairy tale, the myths, legends and fables. Few characteristics of folklore and sub varieties of folklore are also highlighted. Sub-varieties include the religious folklore, occupational folklore, children folklore and animal fables. Finally the chapter ends with the four functions as classified by Bascom the famous folklorist and brief description of myth and legend.

Chapter three deals with the study of significant narratives of the Yimkhiung tribe. Detail analysis on some folksong. Generally songs come under two heads the sit and sing and stand and sing head. In sit and sing we have some festival and merry making songs, in stand and sing we have some work songs like rice pounding song, fire making song, some songs of patriotism comes along with dancing. Folktales of different kinds are projected. Legends and sayings or proverbial expressions are analysed.

Chapter four focuses on myths and symbols in the context of Yimkhiung tribe. Five Yimkhiung myths namely; the (myth of creation) *thrüntan yukhian*, the (myth human being) *mihbang yukhian*, the (myth of marriage) *yambuk kamkhi yukhian*, the (myth of flood) *keking yukhian*, the (myth of suffering) *kupkhuk yukhian* are analysed and the importance and how the people narrate and keeps passing on to the younger generation is shown.

Chapter five shows the analysis of material culture of Yimkhiung, traditional way of constructing houses and community places, attire, tools and pot making etc is presented. Morungs, village gates, community places and houses of village head comes with meaning and symbol; all these are interpreted. Attire of both men and women are

projected alongwith pictures. Tools and weapons are also projected with pictures. The last and final chapter sum up the study of the research on how the myths and symbols are important and how it is reflected in the material and non-material like values imbibed dearly by the people.

Finally the sixth chapter concludes with the findings, correlations of folk life through the Narratives of Yimkhiungs. Both tangible and intangible materials in the form architecture, attire, tools are also projected, how it impacted the growth and progress of the society.

Chapter II

Concepts and Theories in Folklore

- 2.1. Concepts of Folklore
- 2.2. Types of Folklore
- 2.3. Characteristics of Folklore
- 2.4. Functions of Folklore
- 2.5. Theories of Folklore
- 2.6. Myth
- 2.7. Legend

2.1. Concepts of Folklore:

It was William J. Thoms who coined the word Folklore in 1864. Now folklore has ever become a study of knowledge and culture of different groups of people. There are many genres of folklore as well. There are music, narratives, beliefs, religion, practices, material culture etc. In the study of folklore as an academic discipline, folklorists focus on the aspects of various cultures in order to comprehend their folklore. Folklore generally refers to cultural expressions, such as narratives, jokes, beliefs, proverbs, legends, myths, music, songs, dances, costumes, food, and festivals, through which individuals and groups shape and disseminate a shared identity. Folklore is made of two words: folk which means regional people, and lore, which means stories. Therefore, folklore reflects stories told by people in a particular region. <https://www.sciencedirect.com<fol...>

The term is clearly a compound made up of “folk”, implying some group of people, who have something called “lore” in his prefatory essay to *The Study of Folklore*, the eminent folklorist Alan Dundes attempts to simplify the issue for the introductory student: “ ‘Folk’ can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor.” The common factor creates sense of collective identity, so that any population with such a sense could be regarded as a “folk”. This sense of identity can be collective identity and can be based upon such salient social factors as ethnicity, occupation,

kinship, religious belief, sex, age, or on an almost limitless number of other factors, such as health (eg; people suffering from heart disease), spatial proximity (e.g. people in the same room), or personal habit (e.g. cigar smokers.) Theoretically, the number and kinds of folk or groups are limited only by the number and kinds of elements which can serve as the basis for group identities. Since Dundes argues that “folk” can refer to any group based on any factor (rather than a specific group formed on the basis of select factors), it would seem that the term “folk” does not contribute significantly to the definition of “folklore” as a whole (other than suggesting that it characterizes human rather than non-human populations.) Consequently, the semantic weight of his definition must rest upon the notion of “lore”. Folklore is the body of expressive culture shared by a particular group of people, culture or subculture. This includes oral traditions such as tales, myths, legends, proverbs, poems, jokes and other oral traditions.

Folklore includes traditional beliefs and stories of a community. This usually encompasses a large variety of components ranging from one’s cultural practices to material culture. Folktales on the other hand refer to the stories that have been passed down from ancestors of a particular group of people to the younger generations. This shows that folktales are part of folklore. They include the stories that belong to a group of people that are passed down orally. This is the main difference between the two words. Folklore includes folktales, myths, legends, beliefs, practices, superstitions etc. This highlights that folklore captures a wide span. People make sense of their surrounding world through the usage of folklore. The various superstitions, stories, beliefs all add up to the creation of this cultural heritage.

2.2. Types of Folklore: Stith Thomson, an American folklorist classifies four types of folklore in

- (i) Fairy tales: We find royalty, queens, kings, even animals, castle or forest, good versus evil, magic.
- (ii) Myths: In myths we find gods and goddesses, it also explains something that happens in nature by using gods and goddesses super power.

- (iii) Legends: In legends we find everyday people, animals are often main characters, how something in nature came to be, and the magic element is present.
- (iv) Fables: In fables animals act like people, the setting is generally outside or somewhere, using trickery. The fable ends with a moral. (<https://wwwstudysmarter.co.uk>)

Folklore can be divided into various sub-varieties:

Religious folklore: Religious folklore is folklore that has to do with religion according to Larry Danielson. He states that a religious folk tradition is found in many American families is the practise of family prayer, often at children's bedtime or before a meal. Here we have a ritual act of verbal expression, often formalised, which is actively encouraged by church leaders and validated by scriptural sources (Danielson, 51.)

Occupational folklore: Occupational folklore narrates the experiences of cowboys,miners are work generated songs,and the themed of which maybe the technique of holding the tools well and mastering skill and making it professional and neat. For any kind of profession joking is extremely important because it makes the work lighter and people feel less stressed. Story telling is also important in occupational folklore because side by side it gives knowledge to the co-workers. It ignites the mind and more and more narration occurs with the same length and style of stories. Promotion and love for one's occupation is built within the folktales based on agriculture, the cleaning of weeds songs, the pounding of the grain etc. Each occupation or job oriented activity has a lesson or a story to tell (McCarl, 71.) Together with the techniques and verbal expressions, and customs of work comprise a wide ranging way of life in the workplace which folklorist has termed 'occupational folklife'. The verbal art in the workplace range from the naming of things and events in the occupation to complex, individual narratives. Between these two extremes lie the more common conversational forms of critique, joking, and narrative exchange that link and extendexperience beyond the 'immediacy of a given moment.' (McCarl, 76.)

If behaviour is anything and everything that happens in a work culture, and conduct is simply behaviour under the influence of cultural norms and rules, then performance suggests that members of the culture assume a responsibility to their audience of fellow workers to act or speak in a certain manner. At the heart of any work culture, these genres of verbal performance vary from 'joking behaviour' to verbal critique' and 'story telling' (McCarl, 77.) Lengthy story telling does not occur in workplace. Yimkhiungs are hardworking people by nature and so most of their time and lives revolve around fieldwork or other work. It is always entertaining to have some who can crack jokes that lighten the environment; it also uplifts the work spirit. Traditional ethics and values of the work dies out if the profession or the work we are in is not enjoyed. One important reason to the skills, stories, and customs which both reflect and participate in work culture is to exchange these vague stereotypes and misconceptions about how others make their living with concrete examples of what people really do and what meaning they derive from work activities. Not all work is 'satisfying or romantic', but we will never truly understand our neighbours or even the members of our own families, until we have begun to appreciate what kind of work they do and how that activity shapes their outlook on the world (McCarl, 87.)

Children's folklore:

In the end of the 19th century folklorists grouped children as the first group of non-peasant to be studied. They tended to see children as embodiments of an early stage in human and societal evolution. Consequently, the study of children had the same rationale as did the study of the representatives of the savage stage in human evolution. Yet since this view was predicated on the notion of childhood as a simple, incomplete, uncivilised state, preparatory to civilised adulthood, scholars have also tended to "trivialise" childhood (Oring, 92.) Although each of us has a unique constellation of folk group affiliations and identities within those groups, the one thing we all share is that we were children once and thus this is an interesting and universal kind of one sub varieties. The category of childrens folklore has attractive and exciting pictures and makes it more fun for kids to learn from it. We all know what it is like to

be a child, there is innocence and joy in little things. At times the adult responds in a very sarcastic manner but we never see that in the response of a child.

Shared folkculture in the form of school, play ground, camps, or 'multi cultural neighborhood' can be seen in children folklore.

One perspective in the study of children's lore focuses upon the tension between *order* and *disorder*. Anyone who spends time around children knows their penchant for orderliness; despite the current condition of anyone child's bedroom. Another perspective is to bring the study of children's folklore focuses upon *hierarchy* and *equality*. Children's folklore is at times hierarchical, at other times egalitarian, and sometimes both (Mechling, 103.) Children's folk groups often employ their folklore to create a feeling of egalitarian community against the structured world adults create for them. For example, some children assume the role of a mother or a father positioning themselves in a superior dramatic role. Children sometimes use their folklore to experiment with power, to try out power roles that might not be available to them in the normal course of the day. The third perspective on children folklore focuses on the question of gender, on distinguishing *male* from *female*. Young children learns the difference between own gender and the other by way of clothing, hairstyles, body ornaments and other elements of style appropriate to their gender. The fourth perspective is that of *dynamism* and *conservatism*. By paying serious attention to children folklore we may learn a lot about ourselves (Mechling, 114.)

Animal fables:

This category of folklore is included because these are amongst the most popular of all the Yimkhiung stories. The fables show the closeness between man and animals and natural world, but they also project human feelings towards animals and reveal attitudes and actions of man which are both praised and blamed too. For instance, an old grandmother who was childless seemed to have raised a monkey as her own child with great love. She gave her all the comforts and luxury of human life and the day the monkey was given the valuables like ornaments, it ran away. It is with much regret she thought of the monkey but it had run away never to return. This gives the lesson that

animals can never take the place of a human being no matter how much the animal seem faithful and true.

2.3. Characteristics of Folklore:

A serious study of forms that today are labelled “folklore” took place in Germany at the turn of the eighteenth century. First, the unlettered peasants, uncorrupted by civilization, were the remnants and spiritual heirs of a native heathen nation. Second, their distinctive tales, songs, speech forms, and customs reflected their past; they were the fragments of the philosophy and way of life of an ancient people. Third, the material and spiritual life of these ancient peoples could be reconstructed through the judicious analysis and comparison of contemporary peasant tale and customs echoed the life and spirit of these ancestral folk (Oring, 5, 6.)

- (i) All Folktales originally began as stories told by word of mouth.
- (ii) All folktales have a moral or a lesson to teach.
- (iii) Many old folktales explain how something came to be.
- (v) Characters in Folktales are usually animals or people.
- (vi) A folktale has a character that faces an impossible test.

Folklore can be used in two senses.

Firstly, as a way of living of the people.

Secondly, as a discipline that studies people’s way of life.

So far as the first concept is concerned folklore is the lore, erudition, knowledge or teachings of a folk, large social unit, kindred group, and tribe, race of nation, primitive or civilized throughout its history. It covers so wide an area that no part of folk life is left out, but still there lies its difference with culture.

2.4. Functions of Folklore:

According to Bascom, an American folklorist, there are four functions of folklore.

- (i) To amuse and entertain communities. Folklore helps to validate culture. Stories are woven around the lifestyle of a particular community. Many legends about place are floating legends or migratory.
- (ii) To validate or reinforce important cultural norms and beliefs. Folklore help to integrate or maintain conformity a story is shared by some particular folk to outsiders to bring the group closer together.To teach or educate lesson to younger generation
- (iii) And maintain conformity through connections to the past by means of oral narration. Folklore serve as compensation a narrator becomes the centre of attention while telling the story. It ignites excitement or gain a feeling of superiority over other groups.
- (iv) And maintain conformity through connections to the past by means of oral narration. Folklore is educational. Etiological legends tell why things are the way they are. For instance-the dog has a cold nose because he came late to the ark and had to ride on a rail. Rudyard Kipling's Adaptation of these legends teaches us lessons to learn. It emphasizes on how leopard got its spots and how elephant got its trunks.

Folklore is an integral part of life and hence documented by narrating it in social gatherings, spontaneous family get-togethers or interviews. The oldest form of folklore documentation is the memory power or 'remembering what one experiences'. It is also documented and recollected by ways of preserving photos or pictures, objects or concrete things like pottery and clothings, buildings, artefacts etc(George and Jones, 15.)

2.5. Theories of Folklore:

(i) Evolutionism or Geographical Determinism:

A theoretical approach influenced by Darwin's evolutionary theories presented in *Descent of Man* and the German concept of kulturkreislehr, or culture clusters that posits, "As civilizations expand, they are likely to affect simpler people to their land and

its subsequent manifestation in politics and, second, the contact of simpler peoples with one another and with great civilisations. The expansion of the great civilisation into primitive areas thus is both natural and progressive” (Bronner 69.) In other words, expansion or imperialism is justified as natural and progressive act under this theory.

(ii) Diffusion or Historic-geographic:

Developed by anthropologists Franz Boas, Diffusion can be interpreted as a form of ‘Cultural relativism’ that ‘Stressed the integrity of individual cultures and, often, the individual within the culture’ (69) Boas referred to the diffusion of myths and tales as the “historic- geographic” approach, which focussed not on the ethnography of a group to determine distribution of culture but on narrative movements chronicled in cultural texts (71.) This theory remained active in Anthropology until 1940.

(iii) Functionalism:

This theory, developed by Bronislaw Malinowski, postulated that all cultural artifacts could be analysed based on their function. His theory divided needs into three categories “primary or biological,” “derived or instrumental,” and “integrative or synthetic” (76.) He claimed that “culture is nothing but the organized behaviour of man” (77.) Critics of Malinowski’s theory argued that it did not account for customs that do not serve any utility. Influenced by Malinowski’s functionalism, A.R Radcliffe-Brown called his related theory structural functionalism, in which he proposed that “the life of an organism is conceived as the functioning of its structure” (80.) In other words, a culture’s activities contribute in a meaningful way to maintaining the integrity of its society.

(iv) Structuralism:

An approach adopted from literary theory that analyses “relationships among expressive forms” and “traditional structures” to determine the core values, assumptions and meanings of a culture (112.) Essentially, a structuralist studies genres, themes, and perspectives for cultural commonalities. This theory also provided a framework for classifying structures.

(v)Performance Theory:

This theory looked at interactive forms of communication, defining its role “as a cultural system” (120.) One of the approach’s primary goals was to identify the ways in which a culture communicates in a variety of contexts. In his book, *Toward New Perspective in Folklore*, (1972) Deil Hymes offered three categorization for communicative behaviour as “aesthetic”, “expressive” and “stylistic” (120.) Each of these categories shapes how communication happens within a community and provides insight into the purpose of communication types within a given culture.

(vi)Contextual Theory:

This theory considers not only textual interpretations to understand folklore events but also the context of their creation, a place, a time, a political regime, etc. Theorists of this persuasion also supported field research as a way to immerse in the culture and experience its context. Doing so, allowed more meaningful interpretation and better understanding of how the folkloric artefact represented the culture and its traditions. Richard Dorson explained the role of experiencing folklore as a performance rather than a static form of delivery: “The shift from library to the field not only adds new supplementary information, but also changes the perspective of the text from linear narration to multidimensional performance.”

(vii)Feminism in Folklore:

Feminist theory in folklore has existed as long as the discipline. Many of the early folklorists were women, some holding the title of President of American Folklore Society. Neither involvement nor awareness however mitigated the patriarchal approach of traditional folklore theory. Generally, these approaches referenced men as representatives of the entire human race, negating the rich, pervasive roles of women played in both folklore narratives and in its scholarships. Nicole kousaleos articulates this in her article “Feminist Theory and Folklore”: “feminist approaches in the field of folklore have been concerned with establishing gender as a fundamental category for the analysis of cultural experience and creative artistic expression” (20.)

Table 1 Three Forms of Prose Narratives.

Form	Belief	Time	Place	Attitude	Principal characters
Myth	Fact	Remote past	Different world, other world or earlier	Sacred	Non-Human
Legend	Fact	Recent past	World of today	Secular or sacred	Human
Folktale	Fiction	Any time	Any place	Secular	Human or non human

2.6. Myth:

A myth is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form. One can test the distinction between folktale and myth easily enough in Western cultures by placing one of the opening folktale formulas, for example “Once upon a time,” before one of the myths of the Old Testament, such as the creation of man, or the flood. According to William Bascom, the first task in the study of myth is to define what is meant by the term, what is myth and how does it differ from other forms of folk narratives such as folktale and legend (Bascom, 5.) By and large, Bascom’s definition of myth, folktale, and legend are shared by most folklorists. Generally speaking, there are not so many myths in the world. True, there are various creations of the world, creation of man (woman), accounts of the origin of death, etc., but in each culture there is a finite number of myths. For every ten myths there are probably several hundred folktales. In contrast, there are many more folktales. Yet however many folktales there may be they do not compare in numbers with the abundance of legends. Bascom propose an appropriate term for the widespread and important category of verbal art which includes myths, legends, and folktales (Bascom, 7.) Finnish

Professor Lauri Honko gives some modern theories of myth. We need to first love the myths and then contemplate them to understand deeper messages.

- (i) Myth as a source of cognitive categories. Myth is seen as an explanation for enigmatic phenomena. The intellect needs to conceptualise certain aspects of the universe, to establish the relationship between different phenomena.
- (ii) Myth as form of symbolic expression. Myth is placed on a par with other creative activities, such as poetry or music. Myth has its own laws, its own reality, its own forms of expression: it may be looked upon as a projection of the human mind, as a symbolic structuring of the world.
- (iii) Myth as charter of behaviour. Myths give support to accepted pattern of behaviour by placing present day situations in a meaningful perspective with regard to the precedents of the past. Myths act as safety valves by making it possible for people to ventilate their emotions without socially disruptive effects.
- (iv) Myth as marker of social relevance. Myths are not regarded as a random collection of stories: In a culture there is a clear correlation between the distribution of mythical themes and what is considered socially relevant in that culture.
- (v) Myth as a result of historical situation. Stress is laid on the reconstruction of those events which were most decisive in the formation of the myths. Myths are appraised in the light of their historical background.
- (vi) Myth as religious genre. Myths are regarded principally as being of a narrative nature: they are seen however in relation to other narrative genres and to non epic genres of the kind which contribute to spread the message of myth. This genre-analytical aspect of myth implies that traditional forms condition the nature of the communication process (Dundes, 43.)

Myths encode the values and way of life celebrated by a culture, and carries them through the changing ravages of time. They ensure that the people of a culture can connect themselves to their ancient roots and find meaning and joy in their way of life. They also educate the people in higher ideals of life. For the most part, an ancient mythology utilized cultural symbols to signify a specifically unique way of acting, thinking and living as a people from its respective territory. For most of the thousands of years humans have existed without books, newspapers, radio, television, until relatively most people could not read or write. Once language evolved the only form of knowledge transfer was through story telling. One very important thing that separates human from animals is the power to reason and imagine. We are able to create fiction in our mind and herein the use of myth proves the human mind can go beyond what is seen and heard.

2.7. Legend:

Legends are tales filled with lot of imagination for the purpose of explaining something or just to tell a tale to inspire awe or fear. Society needs legend to teach moral lesson and to preserve cultural traditions. It conveys important message about morality, values, and ideals that provide guidance and inspiration for generations.

According to Chatelain the Kimbundu distinguish three categories of prose narratives: Folktales and two types of legends. One class of Legends (*Maka*) is that of “true stories or rather stories reputed true; what we call anecdotes.” They are entertaining, but are also intended to be instructive. “The didactic tendency of these stories is in no way technical, but how to act, how to live.” The second class of legends (*ma-lunda or mi-sendu*) are historical narratives. “They are the chronicles of the tribe and the nation, carefully preserved and transmitted by the head men or elders of each political unit, whose origin, constitution, and vicissitudes they relate. The *ma-lunda* are generally considered state secrets, and the plebeians get only a few scraps from the sacred treasure of the ruling class.” In contrast, folktales are (*mi-soso*) include all traditional fictitious stories, or rather, those which strike the native mind as being fictitious, their object is less to instruct than to entertain. They are always introduced and concluded with a specific formula” (Bascom, 21.)

Legends are often considered oral history but they have very little to do with history as we use the word. There is an air of reality around a legend. It is usually regarded by a story teller and sometimes by those who hear the story as being true. In fact, legends are based on real events and real people but the story becomes more fantastic each time it is told. Legendary figures like heroes, warriors, soldiers, saints. Anecdotes are short stories that are told as true about either famous people or local characters.

Characteristics:

The purpose of legend is to expose and describe particular features of a certain culture. These narratives are intended to sow values, warn about attitudes and debate the good and the bad. Legend gives a narrative account of the historical figure or place. It evolves over the time as it is orally passed on. It has distinct setting and includes believable miracles and told like factual human history. Legends help in developing a child's historical and cultural consciousness and thereby helping them celebrate the historical achievements of their society and understand societal contradictions

Characters in a legend are limited to a small cast. They may be inanimate objects gods human with super traits the gods are presented with immortality. Every legend focus on certain event, character or event characters can be fictional or real. In general the characters in the legend existed at a certain time and the particularity of the character got incorporated into popular culture and from there his actions became part of daily dialogues and became a tradition.

Setting-legends typically take place in the past and the setting is somehow relevant to the culture from which it derives. A legend happens in a certain environment, the precision of place related to real. Although the narration of the event takes place in a real space, fantastic and imaginary elements are usually incorporated.

Plot or themes-in a legend we can see a lot of actions, suspense and conflict. The character of a legend are often faced with difficult obstacles to overcome, there is also a struggle for fate or destiny. Legends often explain natural phenomena, religious practices and human nature. They usually present a straightforward moral or a lesson

of life. The action of the character is so unique that they are unrepeatable by anyone else in any other place or time.

Point of view and style-legends are written from the third person point of view. A legend reflects upon a society's culture, values and beliefs and the frail nature or weakness of human beings. Readers of the legend are made to believe that the main character is capable of overcoming any obstacles in his path. The legend lacks a specific author so the narrator is anonymous. The anonymity of the legend is subject to their character of oral tradition, they are transmitted from one generation to another, and their versions vary as new elements are incorporated.

Generations-Legends are usually passed down through generations. Prior to printing, legends were passed only to teach the younger generation a certain set of values. The fact that these stories are told orally means that they will vary in some aspects depending on the place, culture and values where they are transmitted. However with the passing of time the legends acquired a written character with the aim of preserving the thinking and feelings of the people. (<https://www.scribd.com>document>)

Legends help to validate things. Stories are woven around the lifestyle of a particular community. Many legends about place are floating legends or migratory. Some animal fables are included because these are amongst the most popular of all the Yimkhiung stories.

Legend is another form of narrative as stated by folklorist. Legends are considered as a narrative that has single episode that is presented in a miraculous or uncanny way or even embarrassing sometimes. The core of legend is to evaluate the status of truth. The diversity of opinion does not negate the status of truth. In a legend, the question of truth must be entertained even if truth is ultimately rejected. Thus, the legend never asks for the suspension of disbelief. It is concerned with creating a narrative whose truth is at least worthy of deliberation; consequently the art of legendary engage the listeners sense of the possible. The legend is set in historical time we know today. It makes reference to real people and places. Their identity and significance is not usually addressed in the narrative proper however it is assumed to be known to the audience.

In Legends we see the question of truth is raised but the story is aesthetically satisfying and the audience examine their world. The appearance of a legend in normal conversation may not be distinguished significantly from the artistry of the conversation in which it is embedded. Significantly the legend remains a morality tale. Legends are often considered oral history but they have very little to do with history as we use the word. There is an air of reality around a legend. It is usually regarded by the teller and sometimes by those who hear the story as being true. In fact, legends are based on real events and real people but the story becomes more fantastic each time it is told.

Chapter III

Significant Narratives of the Yimkhiung

3.1. Narratives

3.1.1. Folksong

3.1.2. Types of folksong

3.2. Folktales

3.3. Rituals

3.4. Proverbial Expressions and Sayings

3.1. Narratives:

A narrative is another word for story. Narrating is a method by which an experience is transformed into a verbal account. A narrative is conceptualized as a 'whole', not as a 'mere list of clauses or sentences'. A sentence links words together, whereas a narrative links actions and events (Oring, 121.) A narrative is a medium for communicating experience. Its ability to engage the mind and arouse the emotions greatly depends upon the sensitivity. A good narrator may engage his audience totally, directing or redirecting their thoughts, emotions, and perhaps their future behaviour as well.

Folk narratives are generally conceptualized to be those narratives which circulate primarily in oral tradition and are communicated face to face. Since they communicate through oral rather than written such narratives tend to exhibit certain other characteristics.

(1) Folk narratives tend to exist in multiple forms/versions. No single text can claim to be authoritatively correct. Rather, different narrators perform narratives differently in different circumstances.

(2) As there is a process of recreation by the narrator it thus reflects both the past and the present. A folk narration is something of a renovation and thus the past is made to speak in the present.

(3) A Folk narratives reflect both the individual and the community. The narrator shapes the story as per his dispositions and circumstances. Yet his creativity is limited to a certain extent like the level of acceptance by the community (Oring, 123.)

It is often necessary to point out that the folk narration is not characteristics of just primitive or peasant groups, but is characteristics of all known human groups at all stages of civilization-wherein we ourselves are included.

3.1.1. Folksongs:

In Yimkhiung culture, song has been a great art to convey the deeper meanings of life. Songs were used to express desires, feelings and hopes. Songs were sung as per the suitability and relevance of the time and situation. Yimkhiungs have a great collection of folksongs, folk stories in the form of cultural song, dances, games and folk-oriented activities which ignite the interest and curiosity of the mind. Folksong is known as *Jipü khün* in Yimkhiung language. *Jipü* means *foreparents*. *Ji* is the shortened form of *Aji* that stands for grandmother *pü* is the shortened form of *Apü* meaning grandfather. And hence the word means that folksongs are the songs of grandparents and thus denotes that the folksongs are songs of the past and passed down from grandparents' generation to the present day generation.

A song becomes a folksong when it begins to be passed along and rephrased or used by others for whom it also functions as a way of articulating shared attitudes or feelings (Toelken, 147.) Folk culture is the culture of the community with shared rituals and festivals, shared economic social customs, myths, fables and history. It evolved as accompaniment to and offshoot of various life functions, phases of agricultural operation, hunting and trade that village people carried on. Songs, tales and performances expressed their joys, wonder and mystery about their life and the world of nature. Peasants engaged in agricultural activities devise many songs and dances of the cosmic forces, of magic and sorcery (Dorson, 141.)

Singing and dancing is universal which is considered as a form of expression. Whatever cannot be said in words can be expressed through songs. It carries strong messages. Songs can be classified as group songs which can be loved, melodious and rhythmic.

Songs conveyed messages of love, war, happiness, triumph, regrets and even longing to be incarnated into hornbills or eagles or the heavenly objects etc. Song is one form of narration that speaks one's mind through the lyrics of the song. Songs give an insight into the life and various happenings projected in a song. It carries a great deal of stories that are heroic, noble and admirable. In earlier days writing and reading was not there however the minds and wisdom the older and elders were considered to be the book and whatever was narrated was the final and generally accepted truth.

The tribal culture has musical model as a perfect form that organizes itself on the mode of sound. Sound is the primordial substance of the world. Creation began with the Big Bang, say the ancient philosophers and modern scientists. In man's life sound enters at the stage of foetus, stays in the mother's womb, comes out with the first cry of the baby and later gets interiorized and structured as a creative principle for all human actions. The rhythm of life flows with the heartbeat and as the sound of the breath stops the light of life is gone. The vital functions of life-experiencing and expressing are grounded in sound. Sound brings awareness, helps communication and plays a pivotal role in the organisation of social life. Music is the finest fruition. There is something divine about music. It is the essence of life, the fragrance of all cultures. There is no culture without music. Tribal music is basically rendered in group in contrast to the solo singing of the Indian classical music. Tribal music has a strong community basis. This fact can be understood in terms of musical socialization, types of ownership, levels of participation and the nature of role specialization. They are also encouraged to learn songs by participating in group learning and singing. Apart from being a participant, everybody in tribal society is also a performer of music, i.e. everybody is a singer, dancer and drummer. Tribal perception of music is positive. Music is always considered good, never bad. It is judged in terms of varying positive order.

Music in a tribal society is not considered an exclusive property of its individual members, but of the community as a whole (Saraswati, 133.) Music is the art of thinking with sounds. Songs are the best expressions of person's feelings. It carries strong messages. In folksongs we find conveyed messages of love, war, happiness, triumph, regrets and even desires, longing to be incarnated into hornbills or eagles

or the heavenly beings etc. Song is one form of narration that speaks one's mind through the lyrics of the song. Songs give an insight into the life and various happenings in a social context. It carries a great deal of stories that are heroic, noble and admirable. In olden days book reading and writing was not there however, the minds and wisdom of the older generation were considered to be the book and whatever was narrated was generally the final and accepted truth.

3.2. Five Classifications or Types of Folk Songs:

Yimkhiung folksong can be broadly classified into two categories: *Pinkhün* "sit and sing" and *Zhipkhün* "stand and sing".

(i) Rhimo khün (Work song):

Out of many work songs three namely the field weeding song, cotton spinning song and fire making song are translated and analysed here that shows the work-culture and how people's prime concern is agriculture, then textile for covering oneself and fire for cooking and also keeping the environment and home warm and cosy.

Wochak khün:

This song is specifically a field work song, that is sung while cleaning or weeding the field. This song is sung in groups and it is sung non-stop, sung without stopping especially while cleaning the field. The farmers would set a target after which, they will stop after cleaning and so until the demarcated area is reached they will not stop nor rest. Such songs fill the entire region and even the neighboring villages hear the song. With the fast pace of development, an old man the Hd GB of Shamator Throngkiuba, aged 89 musingly says that these days no such songs are heard.

First part:

Hulo..... hulo.....e...hulo.....

hey....a.... ye.....a...haa...

Kenüing lim she i ah

Kejinglim she i ah

aa..kejing limnü kenülimnü....

Hulo..... hulo.....e...hulo.....

hey...a... ye.....a...haa...

Second part: The rhythm in this part is speeder than the first part and is sung non stop.

Ho...holo.....hoi...hoi.....

Ho...holo...ho...hoi...hoi

Third part:

This part is sung after the field work is done, while returning on the way home.

Alo sheshido lopong sheshi lo

Ango sheshilo....lopong sheshilo

Ani....chocho....anichono...no....

Ani...chonocho anichono o....oh

Kiulong lim tsa tsa

Oh tipirü....khamkho thiyam

Thiyam ching lo oh hey.....

(Kuthur Cultural Group)

Translation.

First part:

Hulo..... hulo.....e...hulo.....

Hey...a... ye.....a...haa...

We are from the east,

We are from the west

aa..from the east, from the west....

Hulo..... hulo.....e...hulo.....

hey...a... ye.....a...haa...

Second part: there is only rhythm in this part is speeder than the first part

Ho...holo.....hoi...hoi.....

Third part:

This part is sung after the field work is done, while returning home.

The earth is tilled,
The weeds are cleaned
The birds are chirping the evening song.
The barbet is singing....
The sun is going down, meaning its time for sunset.
Moving way forward to village
Oh peers the work is done,
We are heading home.....hey..

The speciality about the wochak khun is that, it has three parts,.The first part is sung while coming to the field, and the middle part is sung while cleaning the field, and lastly while leaving for home.

Some work songs are sung during grinding or pounding grain, Cotton spinning is a part of textile and it has been practised since humans existed on earth. It is an activity that is carried out by womenfolk of the society. This song speaks of the process of cotton spinning how the seeds are removed how it is rolled and spun. To make a piece of cloth was not easy in the past, it required a lot of effort and time.

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

Isa jihpürü lun ching

Sangpun hade athsam khea....athsam khea....

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

Isa jihpürü lun ching

Sangpun hade ashok khea...ashok khea...

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

Isa jihpürü lun ching

Sangpun hade akhu khea...

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

Isa jihpürü lun ching

Sangpun hade aniu khea...

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

Isa jihpürü lun ching

Sangpun hade arün khea...

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

Isa jihpürü lun ching

Sangpun hade akiak khea...

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

Isa jihpürü lun ching

Sangpun hade atrün khea...

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

Isa jihpürü lun ching

Sangpun hade ahiu khea...

Translation

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

In the times of our ancestors, this is how

Cotton seed was sown, was sown.

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

In the times of our ancestors, this is how

Weeds are removed from the field.

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

In the times of our ancestors, this is how

Cotton is collected in a basket and dried

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

In the times of our ancestors, this is how

Cotton is separated from the seed.

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

In the times of our ancestors, this is how

Cotton is ginned.

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

In the times of our ancestors, this is how

Cotton is spun...

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

In the times of our ancestors, this is how

Thread is spooled...

He...ah....ee.... He...ah...ee....

In the times of our ancestors, this is how

Yarn is starched and dried, and is finally ready for weaving the body cloth.

(Source: Radio Station AIR Kohima)

This song speaks of the whole process of **cotton spinning** and weaving and production. Cotton were firstly collected in a basket and dried and then it would be battered with stick, hard blows so as to separate the cotton from its seeds. After which

it will be soaked overnight wherein friends gather and drink local rice beer overnight. After that they would boil the water in a big pot and put ash and charcoal so as to give that colour. Another colour extracted was from the root of a particular tree that they would soak in and would give the colour accordingly. When a girl attains the age of 6 years she is given a 'Lüngtüngshe' wrap around or mekhela. At around 10 years she is given a shawl 'Tsüngrümkhim' and 'Kejingberü rongthsün' a mekhela of white colour. As a teenager she would go to the field in groups that consists of their peer group which is called as "Yihngüh" by that time all the women cloths used by women folk of different category is arranged for her as she is of marriageable age.

The second work song is about the work of putting an effort to spark the fire. Yimkhiungs have a myth about how fire was first discovered. In the myth of *küpkhuk*, there is a reference about the discovery of the art of making fire. The singer sings with an attitude of pride for achieving this feat and as he shows-off, the fire gets out of control and creates havoc.

The first song is sung by humming only without opening the mouth.

Mo lep pü thsükhi khün (Fire making song)

Ho yi oh..oh..oh...ha...ha...ha...ha..

(Ajikrih khi)...ü...h...ü...h...ü...h...ü...h...ü...

H...o...o...o...ho h...a..h...a..h..a

Mo...thsü ...a...lu...a...He...ji...a...lo,

Mo...thsü...ang...lie...thsü...ang...He...ji...a...So

Thsü lam to, Mo, a-asürü do.

Su-a-lu-so-lu-a-so-oh

He, neah- e-so-lu-a-so-oh

Mo, thsülam do, Asürü cho

Translation

Ho yi oh..oh..oh...ha...ha...ha...ha..

(A leader screams)...ü...h...ü...h...ü...h...ü....

h...o....o...o...ho h...a..h...a..h..a

There's a call for fire making

Let the fire be full of flame

Fire is made and is ready for use.

Ho yi oh..oh..oh...ha...ha...ha...ha..

h...o....o...o...ho h...a..h...a..h..a

Wochak song is another work song that is specifically sung while going to the field, while working or weeding in the field, and return singing to their homes. One of the song goes like this,

(ii) *Lümshe khün* (pleasing or satisfying song): This type of songs can be further divided into romance, parting, courting songs etc. Sad songs of parting with one another especially of lovers are found in good number. Every community in every part of the world have their unique culture and way of life. Love is universal and it is an emotion that relates and binds the human bond stronger and deeper. It is longed for by everyone and the feelings are expressed through songs especially among the young folk or lovers. Music is also often specific to culture. Tribal perception of music is always positive as opined by Saraswati in the book *Tribal Thought and Culture* (Saraswati, 135.) Songs are taught to the young boys and girls in a *kheangyam* which means a dormitory or morung for particular khel. They are encouraged to learn songs through community participation organised on various festive occasions and 'small group gatherings' (George and Jones, 13)

I müyambe, müyambe ..so...oh...nah

I müyambe, müyambe ..so...oh...nah
 I müyambe, sangpun ke yung nah
 I müyampuh, longtong ke yung nah.
 w-a-z-a she wa-za, w-a-z-a she wa-za,
 oh, nü shimbe,nü shimpuh nü jile cho-le,ha-he
 oh, so-oh müyambe,tung tung so tung so -oh.
 oh, so-oh müyampuh,tung tung so tung so -oh.
 So-o shimbe nü, so-o-shimpuh nü
 Isa jira-ah müyangra, jira---ah
 Changing kolo ching re-e to-lo-ching isa jira-a.
 Oh dejang-deku-thsale-E
 Oh de nang deku thsale-E Jipurü lo-oh ching-ju
 Oh-oh nie-sura lo-oh
 Naga yambung, jina-ah
 Langa, yambung-jina-ah
 Ke-ning-ke-ning-kening-sura-lo-oh,
 Oh, tong tong so, tung-tung-so-ye-Eh.

Translation

My beloved, can you hear me?
 My beloved, can you hear me?
 My beloved, a flower- like, did you drink water?
 My beloved longtong, did you drink water?
 Oh my beloved, your darling is calling you.
 Oh whose lover are you? Be a faithful one
 Oh whose beloved are you? Be a faithful one.
 Whoever's lover or beloved you may be.
 We are called to be a faithful one and we are calling out to friends to be one.
 Oh the damsel from the eastern region is beautiful
 Oh the damsel from the western region is beautiful.

In the land of our ancestors there is a sun rising
Naga land is rising for better.
Langa land is rising for better
Oh we can hear the victory sound.

(Kemephu Cultural Club Souvenir 45)

Hey...ho...Soro dzü...a
E,khong,mütokhit li
Nü kam mapü khvü
Nü mamü toh zhu
Hey...ho...kyi Yimchungpfü
Hey kyi tang-i pfü
Hey...kyi mülong pfü
Kyi limsü pfü la
Soro dzü matong nü malak zho
Ho...cheppho na dzü dra
Dzü jang no wü-i pfa
Hey hey lopsyö(Soro dzü)
Lopsyö dzü tongnü wüi-pfa

(H.Trangpen Whourr)

Translation

Hey...ho...Soro stream...a
To climb up this hill
Without sitting beside you
It's impossible to climb
Hey...ho...my Yimchung lady
Hey my darling
Hey...my heart's love
The one who satisfies my soul
Without drinking 'Soro' water cannot cross
Ho...chepphona(river)crossing
Going away to the eastern side

Hey hey lopsyo(another name of Soro dzü)

Lopsyo water is drank and moving ahead.

Another love song of Longpfürü Yimkhiung is about a *Sarho* a firefly whom the singer thinks of it to be the beloved. The song goes like this-

(Anopüpfü) Hey kitangyipfü nya ko yüpfä na...

Hey kitangyipfü kitsepünü vo...o...

Sarho chanü khenta...a... tso...

(Anopfüpfü lafhü) Hey kitang thrangpü nya ko yüpfä na...

Hey kitang thrangpü kitsepünü vo...o...

Sarho chanü khenta...a... tso...

(Khongyamong & Lakiumong)

Translation

(A boy sings) Hey my beloved where are you going.....

Hey my beloved are you leaving me.....

It was a firefly.....

(A girl replies) Hey my beloved where are you going.....

Hey my beloved are you leaving me.....

It was a firefly.....

This song is about the fear of losing a lover, seeing the light moving, the lover thinks of it to be his (her) beloved and runs after it, with an aim to stop but it turns out to be a firefly. When one is in love there is genuine fear of losing that one person, this song speaks about one such love.

(iii) *Anyo Khün* (Drinking song):

These drinking songs mark the occasion of festivals heralding harvest, sowing of seeds and interceding nature's blessing over the fieldwork. Old people would sing first, followed by an act called *Kushim khi* wherein a person is offered a mouthful of rice and a chunk of meat by a dear friend. They commemorate historical and personal events. A

folk song is defined as a piece of music that is composed within the parameters of folk music. These songs are usually about a particular region or people. Folksongs largely live through oral transmission. It ordinarily doesn't exist in a standard form. More likely it is passed down from parents to children and to friends and associates. Thus, it is in a way independently received by community, village or family.

Oh -Sangpen -yung -yung- le -so

Oh -Shadang -yung -yungle -tsa-tsa

Yung -yung -she -yung -yung -le -i -dong -so

Oh kero so kero so

Oh lim mungso, lim e mong so.

Alo yampong I tsa tsa he

Lünshe sangpen she shiah-ang pen

Lünshe shading she shiah-ang dang

o-o yie o-o yie lo-he

Lo-e-me longing khem.

(Kemephu Cultural Club)

Translation

Oh -wine -we drink -and drink- we go ...on...

Oh -meat-we eat and drink-its good-its good...to gather..

Drinking wine -drink -eating meat -drink -

an integral part of celebration. Oh it's tasty very tasty

Oh happy day, spending the day happily.

This world is a happy home, a good home

Good time, good wine-like, satisfying world.

Good time, good wine-like, happy world.

o-o yie o-o yie this world-he

Come be a part of feasting, drinking world.

(Isa yam ching shihjim tüşho phapke yungde asühde among khi mushi cho)

(This above song is about the feasting and merry making, there is rice, there is meat, and drinking of rice beer, lot of happiness is experienced.)

Another song of festivity is about coming together of friends and spending time in full cheerfulness and happiness.

O-le ho-le-E -so Hu-E-le A-so

Ke-E nang Ji-ni- E (he)

Ke-E nang Ji-ni- E (he)

He, ho-wong,ji-ne-E-E-so-la

(Müyamrüpo jimükhongpa asühde amüngkhi müshichoh)

This above folksong is about merry making and drinking which is an integral part of rural life. Feasting and joyful celebrations were usually conducted post harvest. It was a means of relaxing after a year long hard work. During such occasions the host invites a good number of friends and family to gather and enjoy the moment of drinking together.

Ke, neing, neing-Chingkho-yeh-E

Ke, neing, neing-Chingkho-yeh-E

She shimbe nü, she shimpuh nü, Neing -lo. Yung tsa-le-E.

Translation

Pure water, tasty wine, tasty wine, it is served in Chingkho-yeh-E

Pure water, tasty wine, tasty wine, it is served in Chingkho-yeh-E

Who is the woman, who is the man who made this tasty brew-It is such a good thing to drink.

(Phapke ju chingkho ching nü neing a tuhkhi müshichoh)(It's about local beer served with a mug called 'chingkho' that is made of dried gourd that is grown and is locally available.)

(Kemephu Cultural Club Souvenir 45)

All the peer group members are invited for drinking. All the guests sit in a row and sings while the local rice brew is served

(iv)Athrong khün (Patriotic Song): Songs also speak of history in the narration form. The songs have been performed over a long period of time, usually over several generations. One patriotic song of Pungro Cultural Troupe is sung in praise of Pungro town.

Isu-ah-su

Su—ah—

Pongtopong su-ah-

Elen- su -ah-

Nyingkepong su- ah-

Elen-su-ah-

Translation

I am raised –raised -here

Raised-yes-raised

A brave warrior, a courageous male raised

Our generation is flourishing and growing

Wild bison-is raised-

Our generation is flourishing and growing

This song can be interpreted as a praise song for his birth place that is Pungro under Kiphire District. *Elen-su-ah* means 'our generation is flourishing and growing.' The town is progressively growing and prospering both in human resources and development. There is also a praise for wild animals that is found in plenty in the area. '*Nyingkepong*' refers to mithun, a kind of wild bison that is seen in the areas in the foothill belt of Saramati Mountain.

This is one song that sings in praise of Mt Psykhatsü that has lime deposit. It is located in Mimi area. There is a belief that a group of spirits come out to dry their clothes on the rocks of Psykhatsü and is seen from time to time even upto this day.

Hey Psykhatsü khong

Hey ayang jiri khong

Ho Longpfü khong acha

Hey nzürünju...ho linakanü

Nü yangthsayi

Hey Psykha Psykhatsü

Hey longpfü linaka....yang thsa ...o

Hey ho lüm süsa

Hey Longpfürü Longpfürü

Hey Psykhatsü khiaknü

Longpfü linaka yangtsa...o

Hey oh...hüm jing chüh...

(H.Trangpen Whourr)

Translation

Hey Psykhatsü mount

Hey a very good looking mountain

Ho Longpfü high mountain

Hey people...ho earth

All are looking at your height

Hey Psykha Psykhatsü

Hey longpfü world....you are being watched at...o

Hey ho its such a pleasing thing

Hey Longpfürü Longpfürü

Hey Psykhatsü mountain

Longpfü world is viewd from the top...o

Hey oh...it brings mixed emotions...

Another song that sings the praise of the heroic deeds of land and its people is given below.

Denang shuri shuri lo..oh

Dejang Shuri shuri lo...oh.

Ipüh lo ching i pindo.

Iji lo ching i pindo.

Pupu yanglose oh.hoo

Jiji yanglose oh..hoooo

Pu yanlo oh hey

Ji yan lo oh hey

Kejingshe kiuse ho

Kenangru she kiushe ho

Holey ho... Holey ho...(Kiutsu Pungro Village)

Translation

We are here together from the eastern region,

We are here together from the western region,

We are living here in our ancestral land, the proud sons of the soil,

We are living here in our ancestral land, the proud daughters of the soil,

We are living here in a land guarded and defended by the custom of our forefathers,

We are happily living on the legacy of our grandfathers,

We are happily living on the legacy of our grandmothers,

Our forefathers were great warriors braving from the enemies from eastern region,

Our forefathers were great warriors braving from the enemies from western region,

Hurray..Hurray.. We are celebrating in jubilation.

(v)Longri khün(Mourning/sad song):

'Longri khün' means 'Mourning song' or 'sad song'. Life has its ups and downs and so whenever a family member or any member in the society dies there's a sad song to be sung. A dirge is presented by close friends and family bidding farewell to the departed soul. One of the popular songs widely sung by the natives of Longpfürü of Mimi village is a melancholic song.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

kie pü rhisak masihnü

Kie müzhey sühnü yihrü

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

kie pfü rhisak masihnü

Kie müzhey sühnü yihrü

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Pjyangyü khusak no sihrü

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Mülong sükhea papürü.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Kietiy rhisak masihnü

Kie müzhey sühnü yihrü

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

kiemong rhisak masihnü

Kie müzhey sühnü yihrü

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Rüyang khusakno sihnürü.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Mülong sükhea papürü.

Müzheysürükok trapnüyih.

(Lopongwo Khongka Village)

Translation

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Never heard my father's voice.

I have been living an orphan life.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Never heard my mother's voice

I have been living an orphan life.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Great Barbet's (*Megalaima virens*) voice was only heard.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

It's a sad affair, parents.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Never heard my sister's voice

I have been living an orphan life.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Never heard my brother's voice.

I have been living a pathetic life.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

Have heard only the chirping sound of the birds.

Hey hey hoo.....hoo..ooo..ooo

It's a sad affair, parents.

The orphans are crying out.

This song presents a helpless situation as there is no one to extend any helping hand to the natives. An orphan has no place to find comfort, peace and love. Only nature comforts them. The songs of the birds in the wildwood soothes and comforts them.

Nature can heal a wounded spirit; this song presents how a lonely person can find solace and companionship in the lap of nature.

In Yimkhiung culture, songs have been used as an artistic expression to convey the deeper meanings of life. Songs were used to express desires, feelings and hopes. Songs were sung as per the suitability and relevance of the time and situations. A folksong begins its life like any other song: as a musical and poetic expression of some person's feelings or ideas (Toelken, 147.) The song has the ability to trigger a group's feelings which becomes more important than the composer. The song loses its direct connection with the singer yet the one who sings and listen the same song enters a world inhabited by the singer thereby passing down such knowledge from one generation to another. Folksongs also differ not only in subject, singers and performances but they differ greatly in structure and focus.

In conclusion, we can state that folksongs originated very far back in time without knowing the authorship but is passed on and hence carried forward till date.

3.3. Folktales:

Folktales can be complex and involved in plot or simple and direct, it differs from legend it has no basis in historical facts, no illusions about it being true. "Wonder Tales"-fairy kind of tales, beginning with "Once upon a time", ending with "They lived happily ever after" folktale springs from the unconscious, embodying the hopes and fears that the child faces as one is growing up.

Some common characteristics of folktales according to Mullikamas are as follows:

- (i) Folktale is told with ordinary words. It is in prose, not a verse.
- (ii) Folktales have been orally passed down from generations with the development of literacy, folktales may be written down based on the stories previously told verbally
- (iii) There is no indication of the original story teller. It is usually indicated that the story has been told by important persons in the past. This differs from contemporary literature which clearly indicates the author's name.

- (iv) The story must be old and should be in prose style.
- (iv) The story must have been previously told orally.
- (v) The story must present perceptions and beliefs of local folks (Mullikamas,99-100)

The third category which folklorists frequently refer to is tales or folktale. It is a narrative which is received as a fiction or fantasy. Such narratives unlike myths are not sacred, nor do they challenge the world views of the audience in the same manner as the legend. Folktale appears in a variety of forms. They are encountered only in the oral traditions of our society, although many have adapted for childrens' entertainment in scores of illustrated books and films. Folktales place little importance on character development. Human character or animals are generally known by their physical features and actions. No attention is paid to internal conflict or complex motivation. All folk narratives can be said to be governed by plot. The plot of folktales however can be further described as single stranded. The tale tends to follow the actions of a single character from beginning to end. We know where the character is and what he is doing throughout the story.

The action of the folktale is often stereotyped and repetitive. The progress of the story is alternately delayed and stimulated as characters replay some typical scene until it culminates in some transformation of situation. Jokes as a fiction currently enjoys wide oral circulations. A great many jokes are fictional narratives like the folktale. Although a good number may take the form of riddles, proverbs, gestures, or drawings. The resolution of a joke is worlds away from the resolution of a tale. A tales climax is to a certain level predictable if a villain is encountered, the hero is either losing or winning the fight, if pursuing for a girl he is either getting her hand or losing her. The range of tale is thus finale and predictable the joke on the other hand, diverts the flow of the narrative into unpredictable course making the story totally surprising and unexpected.

Some Folktales of Yimkhiung:

Folktales can be broadly classified into four categories-

(i) Folktales of origin

(ii) Moral value based folktales

(iii) Fables

(iv) Legends

Folktales of Origin:

Of all the animals mithun has been regarded as an asset by the Yimkhiung people. A man is considered to be rich by the number of mithuns he possessed. The story of how mithun originated is shown below.

(i) Origin of *chi* (Origin of Mithun)

Once there was a man by the name Yaanluba. One morning he was up early and was preparing meal. He suddenly heard the sound of dogs barking very loudly and so he got up to see what was causing the dogs to bark so loud. As he stepped out he was surprised to see a big animal, he rubbed his eyes to see it closely and he saw that the animal had a large horn and was tied to the *Thiyam Tuhbü*, the single post or a pillar in front of the house. And the mystery was that the animal was tied with a mere spider thread *mütroktrokpe lu*. And as he walked around the animal he found that the animal had two tails. Now, sensing that the animal had been sent to him by the spirit he took good care of the animal and was eagerly waiting to what would befall him having this animal at home. All went well in the house and in time the animal gave birth to a calf, and like its mother, it also had two tails.

Yaanluba had a son, who was soon to get married. After rounds of talk with the family for the marriage of the son they came up with a name of a girl in the village. They set out to visit the girl and asked her hand in marriage. When they approached the girl's family they demanded that the animal with two tails should be given to them if they want their daughter's hand. Since the boy was happy with the girl he was ready to give anything and so decided to give the animal. When the animal was taken to the bride's home the tail turned out to be one instead of two. And the animal gored the bride's

father to death, a man who demanded the animal. And since then they say the *Chi*, the mithun, has always been born with one tail.

(ii) *Tsüngrümkhim* (A story of origination of Yimkhiung woman's shawl)

Hoza's wife *Tsüngrümkhümla* is a fairy creature, she had a beautiful shawl that was taken by Hoza in order to let her stay to be his wife. All the maidens disappeared into the sky. The one whose cloth was with Hoza was hovering in the air asking to give her back her cloth. She said, "I need my shawl. Please give it back to me." Hoza smiled and replied "I will, if you'll come and live with me, be my wife." She pleaded over and over again but Hoza only insisted her to become his wife to which she finally agreed.

Now she has to come down for which she needed a sturdy stick to climb down. He went around and found a sturdy stick and came down. The name of fairy was *Tsüngrümkhümla* and she became his wife living happily ever after. Yimkhiung's belief that the red shawl called *Tsüngrümkhim* drew inspiration from her and hence is named after her. The only thing that *Tsüngrümkhümla* left was the cloth that Hoza had grabbed and everyone liked the patterns on it and they began to make it and wear it to the present day. Thus the shawl is named after *Tsüngrümkhümla* and is so called *Tsüngrümkhim* 'Tsüngrüm' after *Tsüngrümkhümla* (a creature like fairy) and '*khim*' means shawl. The designs and motifs are inspired from *Tsüngrümkhümla*'s shawl.

(iii) *Longpfürü yiak* (A story of *Longpfürü* Tattoo)

Through the story of *Longpfürü Tattoo* we get to know the human relationship between a mother and a child and also how non-human like snakes lived and mingled with human to the extent of multiplying the offsprings that wriggled (snakes) in large number in a barn. In an ancient time a couple was blessed with a baby girl. Both the parents loved her very dearly. But the husband one day took ill and in no time he was dead. The grieving mother promised that she would love the daughter and would raise her very well and so her life revolved around her and she taught her every skill a girl ought to know. She grew up to be a beautiful and skilled lady. One night the grown up daughter told her mother that it's been two nights since a creature comes and sleeps beside her. The mother teased her saying she must be having a boyfriend but the

daughter said that it doesn't seem to be human. The mother was amazed at this and advised the daughter to light up the pine shavings and sticks and flint next to her and light it up when the presence is felt. They both went to sleep after the necessary arrangement with the pine sticks. On feeling the creature come near the daughter quickly lit up the pine sticks that alerted the mother too. They were both very frightened at the sight of seeing a big snake. The snake told the mother to give her daughter's hand in marriage with him or face dire consequences. The mother was helpless and couldn't do anything but agree.

The sad mother had a plan and told her daughter to put husk of paddy in her basket and as she move along it would the rice husk would fall bit by bit and she would follow the husk and find her whereabouts. The mother kept on following it and finally in ended on the edge of a lake, without any hesitation she jumped into the water. In an instant she was in her daughter's house. She hugged the daughter and asked where the husband was, the daughter replied that he was on the roof getting some work done. Then the woman heard the children sound calling out "*Hümpsy!Grandmother!*" The woman asked if those were the voices of her children. The daughter didn't want to show because it would terrify the woman as it has an earthen pot full of little snakes wriggling around inside the pot. The daughter said that her husband is going away to wage war against another village. Then an idea struck the mind of the woman she suggested her daughter to make the husbands favourite chutney with "*Khükhütsang*". It is a large woody climber known as St.Thomas Bean (*entada phaseoloides.*) This vine produces saponin used as detergents in olden days. Although the seed can be eaten, they are poisonous if taken raw. It can be eaten after soaking or roasting for a long time. On stopping by half way to eat the packed food the husband ate the chutney made out of the paste of '*Khükhütsang*' and he went into death throes and thrashed about wildly and eventually died.

The Longpfürüs tattoo is believed to have derived the inspiration from the wriggling of the snake and hence the patterns seem similar to the wriggling movement of the snake on the ground. Even the earthen pots designed by Longpfürüs bear the same pattern as

seen on the chin and forehead of a woman with tattoos. This is how the story of tattoo is linked with the snake and its wriggling design.

(iv)How and Why the Elephant's Eyes became Small:

During the days of creation it was said that the eyes of the elephant was as big as the size of its body. Once the creator commanded the elephant "See the objects of the world-how does it appears before your eyes?" The elephant replied "the objects that appear before my eyes are very small and faint." The creator then told the elephant to have a look at the walking man and how it appeared to him. Then the elephant told his creator that the man too appeared to him like an ant walking on the earth. Then the creator made the eyes of the elephant smaller and again asked him how the size of the man appeared to him. The elephant replied "The man now looks bigger in size than before." The creator still made the eyes of the elephant smaller and smaller till the man appeared bigger and bigger before the eyes of the elephant. At last when his eyes became still smaller, the creator asked the elephant the same question, to which the elephant replied "the man before me looks like a giant-very-tall like a tree standing on my way". Satisfied with the answer the creator stopped re-modeling the eyes of the elephant. Thus, the eyes of the elephant became small, so that he is afraid of men and appeared to him like a giant both in stature and in size.

(v)Invention of Laughter:

Once there was a place called Langa and the people out there did not know how to laugh. Whenever they laugh they use to utter the sound hi,hi,hi. The most tragic thing after an act of laugh is dead. Whoever laugh use to ultimately die, and therefore the people feared to laugh in Langa. These went on for sometime however as the people could not remain mute all the time so the people decided to find out a solution to this problem. They decided to sacrifice a pig by taking it to the jungle .when they reached a deep gorge they let go off the pig and the pig rolled down the valley and crushed the boulders, the pig tried to run but it was not possible.Seeing the pig struggling and the funny position of the pig, one of the villagers laughed very loudly uttering ha..ha...ha...and everyone joined him and the expression of laugh was the same. They all

laughed but nobody died from then on. They believed that Rejaba, god of after-life had accepted their sacrifice and that is how laughter was believed to have come into effect.

Value based folktales:

(i)The Tale of Three Monkeys:

Long ago, so says a Yimkhiung tale, three monkeys were sitting on a tree. At that time, a father and a son who had gone to the jungle saw the monkeys. The first monkey was closing its mouth with its two hands while the second monkey was closing its ear and yet the other was closing its eyes. On seeing the monkeys, the father and son started discussing about the different actions of the monkeys they had seen.

Son : “Father, what are these monkeys doing?”

Father: “My dear son, through these monkeys we can learn many lessons. So let me tell you what they are doing.”

Son : “Father why is the first monkey closing its mouth with both the hands?”

Father: “Well, the first monkey is closing its mouth with both hands because through our mouth we utter harmful words which hurt other people’s feelings. So, the first monkey says that he will never say bad words about others.”

Son : “Father, whenever any bad feeling comes to my mind, I will remember these monkeys and will not speak any ill about others. But then father, what is the second monkey doing by closing its ears with its fingers?”

Father: “Very good my dear son, the monkey shows that action because he does not like to hear bad words which hurt him as well as others.”

Son : “Well, I will do the same as the monkey does but then what is the third one doing by closing its eye with the hands?”

Father: “I will tell you son, by seeing with the eyes people are tempted to commit many evil things and so the monkey shows us to avoid these things.”

Son : “Very well father, I have learned many good lessons through these three monkeys.”

This story has a moral to teach to the community, the value of respecting one another irrespective of the position and status is imparted to the youngsters through the conversation of the three monkeys. This story also presents that one could be affected by hearing the wrong things and could be affected by speaking the wrong word and also get influenced by seeing the wrong things. This story gives an insight to be mindful of our eyes, ears, and mouth as these parts of body which are created for our good could also lead to misunderstandings or miscommunication.

(ii) *The Story of Needle and Feather*

The Story of Needle and Feather presents the story of marriage and how the evil works in some relationship. In such situation human beings are never alone a friend’s help can always be sought. This is one story of Longpfürü speaking people ‘*Story of Needle and Feather*’. Needle and Feather lived happily and loved each other passionately. After many years of their togetherness Needle set out on a journey. He on his departure told his beloved Feather that he would return soon.

Feather was a beautiful girl who possessed noble character which made many people admires her. Knowing that Feather stayed alone the ghost (*sürapfü*) came and kidnapped Feather and ran away.

Needle after his errand was planning to come back and was thinking of his wife. He thought that his wife would be cooking delicious food for him. However, on his arrival she was not at home. He asked his neighbours whether they had seen his wife or not. But nobody knew about her whereabouts. At last one man informed him that his wife was taken away by *Surapfü*. On hearing this, he felt very bad and planned for seeking revenge.

He sought the help of his friends. His friends were *Thrimüna* (soyabean), *mesükhi* (cowdung), *Psyzey* (wood used as lock).

They planned and each took their own positions to attack. Sürapfü came and he rested on the bed which was pricked by Needle and he went to blow the fire in the fire place wherein the soya bean burst out like cracker in a fireplace. He couldn't see anything so he ran out in search of some light and slipped in a batch of cowdung and got hit by a wood used as lock that was kept at the entrance for closing the door.

(iii) A Girl who Carried a Sharpening Stone as a Doll

Once there was a young girl who lived with her stepmother and her daughter. Her stepmother used to give tasty and delicious food to her daughter but to the young girl she gave mushrooms while they had meat. However, she was healthy and grew up very well. Once she replied "Your voice is so sweet but your meat is sour". Because at one point of time her stepmother gave her mushrooms which tasted sour telling her that it is bird meat. And so she recollected that when she heard the bird sings.

This story presents the ill treatment meted out by the step mother to a young girl, the girl was fed mushroom on the pretext of feeding the girl with bird's meat. The wrong doings of the step mother cannot be hidden for long, and thus is overt in the case of the girl in the story. The girl on seeing the bird in the sky says that the bird seems to be singing sweetly however the meat is sour, the father comes to know of that she was never given the bird's meat as it is never sour. Besides, the deprivation of the meat, the girl was also made to carry heavy object, a stone, that was for sharpening of daos and knives instead of dolls.

All these ill treatments couldn't stop her growth but rather she remained healthy and so to make her weak, the stepmother used to make her carry sharpening stone as a doll.

Fables:

(i) The Wild-Cat and the Cock:

In olden days, the wild-cat was quite afraid of the cock specially on seeing its huge feathers. The wild-cat mistakenly thought the feathers was its mouth through which the cock crowed loudly. The wild cat was the enemy of the other friendly animals. One day the wildcat approached the cock and said, "Come, let's be friends from today."

“Sure, you are welcome,” pat came the reply from the cock. Then the two of them



proposed to have a meal together, sharing and putting food into each others' mouth. The wild-cat stretched out towards the cock's feathers to exchange food thinking that it was its mouth. But the cock told the wild-cat, “Well, my friend those are my feathers, my mouth is here”. Only then did the wild-cat realized its mistake and now it understood that the cock's head and mouth were very small compared to its structure. Thus, the wildcat became courageous and killed the cock. Since then domestic animals like fowls, cocks and birds are eaten by the wild-cats.

This story presents the wrong notion of the wild cats, assuming the cocks or bird's family to be bigger and stronger than them, however, the truth is discovered and the wild cats became fearless and started attacking the fowls from then on. There's a belief that a hen which a wild cat attempts to catch is often eaten by wild cat only. The wild cat use to know its prey and the sense of indication seems to be high in wild cats.

(ii)The Man and the Wolf:

In the olden times, the wolf lived with its owner in the house. Like the dogs, the wolf lived according to its own sweet will. However, it listened and obeyed its owner dutifully whenever the latter gave orders. But as time went on, one day the wolf killed a child in the village. It ate the flesh of the child and then brought the finger of the dead child to the house. At that time, the owner was also returning from the field. When he saw the finger of the child in the house he got so angry, that he began to search for the culprit. Lastly, the man saw the wolf with the swollen stomach sleeping in a corner of the house. As the man came nearer, he saw that the wolf was much bigger than its usual size; thereby he came to understand that the wolf was the one who had killed and eaten the flesh of the child. Thus, when the master was suspecting the wolf, news came to him from his neighbours saying, “One of the children has been eaten by the wolf today.” Hearing that, the man in anger tried to kill the wolf but it ran away from the house. The wolf then informed its other friends in the village about the unfortunate

incident. The villagers then started discussing about the threat posed to them by the wolf and have decided to do away with the wolves. But before it was done all the wolves ran away to the jungle.

In the meantime, on hearing the sound of men as they chased the wolves, some of the younger wolves mistakenly heard as if the men told them to keep some pieces of meat aside for them on the road. The men actually called the wolves to come back from the jungle but the wolves did not listen to them and never went back to live with men. However, as a token of gratitude to their previous masters, the wolves made it a point to leave some pieces of meat whenever they kill other animals which is seen till this day.

This story can be interpreted as a story that could lead to straying away from one's home or place if one violates the law of peaceful living. The wolf had been living with human but once it killed a child, the owner had to chase it away to the jungle since it became a threat to the villagers. The wolf could have been living with human till date like dogs as domestic pets had it not eaten the child. Another interpretation of the story could also be shown wherein a wolf kept a piece of meat for the owner that very day while running away and that has been the trait that is in wolf, to leave a piece of meat whenever a prey is killed. This is somehow an instinct or a sign of gratitude that even animals have for the masters.

(iii)The squirrels:

Long time ago, all the squirrels convened a meeting to discuss about a secret thing that they wanted to overcome. The fact was that man recklessly killed thousands of animal everyday but the squirrels were not noticed nor killed by man. Since they were very small in size, people were not able to see them. Even if man saw them they were



not shot at with guns or bows whereas the other animals were killed with the same. This action of man greatly offended the squirrels and they felt

insignificant. In protest, the squirrels decided to kill themselves by jumping into the river. As decided in the meeting, they all went and as they reached the river about to commit suicide, the squirrels were surprised to see the frogs playing in the river. The leader of the squirrels being the wise one advised the fellow squirrels not to jump into the river, as they should find out why the frogs were playing in the river. While observing they noticed that the frogs were even smaller than themselves and yet they could see right before their eyes frogs enjoying themselves with the fishes in the river. Eventually the squirrels realized that they too must enjoy living with other animals on earth, though small.

Thus, all the squirrels went to their own places feeling happier and wiser till today they all live along with other animals on earth. Every living animal, big and small enjoy co-existing being endowed by nature with their own intrinsic characteristics.

The story of *The Squirrels* teaches us to be satisfied with what we have rather than envying others, we ought to learn to be contented no matter how insignificant it may seem. The squirrels in the story wanted to get the attention of the hunters however, they did not realise that it could cause them harm.

(iv)The Wild Boar and the Tiger:

In ancient times, the wild boar and the tiger were friends. One day, the wild boar challenged the tiger to a fight just to determine as to who was mightier than the other. The tiger accepted the challenge. They decided that the fight would be after six days. They also mutually agreed that as a measure towards protection, the tiger would wind canes around his body while the wild boar would smear clay on its body. Thus, during those six days of preparation the tiger was busy winding canes around his body while the wild boar kept on smearing clay on its body and letting it dry in the sun.

The fight began fiercely on the scheduled day. On every bite at the wild boar, the tiger had a mouthful of clay only, so also the wild boar a piece of cane. But they went on fighting savagely; each intending to take the other's life. The wild boar at last killed the tiger and thus proved physically stronger. Overwhelmed with victory, the wild boar then proudly walked home. On the way, he saw a small bamboo laughing at him. He got

very angry by its insolent behaviour and began to chew it. As a result, his tongue was completely cut off and consequently he died. Mean-while another tiger which happened to pass by the way saw the dead wild boar lying and ate it up. Ever since then tigers began to eat wild boars.

The story presents the idea of strength, power and its fragility. Even a small bamboo could bring about the downfall of powerful entities.

(v)The Goat and the Fox:

Once a goat was eating grass in the meadows. At that time a very hungry fox was also wandering in search of food. When the fox saw the goat he said to him “the goat is very healthy; I shall have her for food tonight.” But on seeing the fox, the goat ran away sensing danger.

Next morning they met again on the way and the fox politely asked, “Oh goat, what are you doing here?” The goat answered, “I am feeling hungry so I am eating grass, are you not feeling hungry?” The fox replied, “Well, I am feeling hungry so I came to eat you.” Then the goat calmly said, “Of course, you can eat me but before that you must sing a song for me as I know that you are a good singer. After I listen to your song you may eat me.” Hearing that, the fox got excited and began to bark very loudly. Incidentally at that time there were two hunting dogs nearby and when they heard the sound of the fox, they chased after it and killed the fox. Now the goat was saved and in joy she exclaimed ‘It is a good song you have sung for me!’

The core message conveyed through this story is that it is always good to have presence or mind because one’s foolishness can lead to one’s death.

Yimkhiung Legends:

(i)Ropfü Ropüh:

Yimkhiung village Mimi has a place legend which is another category of legends. e.g a Lover’s Paradise where lover’s took the leap to never come back again. *Ropfü Ropüh siküm* is a lover’s suicidal place in Mimi village. Ropfü Ropüh can also be translated as ‘secret woman’ and ‘secret man.’ Usually lovers keep their affair as a secret and so the

name Ropfü Ropüh. Two lovers by the name Shishiong and Hatang were secretly having an affair against the will of their parents. As the parents were unwilling to get them married, they decided to go to a hill top through a wooden ladder called *lak* and they threw away the ladder so that they would have no option to come down again even if they change their mind of not committing suicide. They were in the steep cave where they starved to death after a couple of days. This story is about true love and commitment. Despite the opposition faced they decide to love till the end. The place holds a special place in the hearts of the native as it has a story to tell for generations to come. Yimkhiung village Mimi has a place legend which is another category of legends. This story gives the moral that love can overtake any hurdles and objections of life. Love is the base of all mankind and thus the people strongly believe that love is essential for all irrespective of age, caste and creed. One very important value adhered to by Yimkhiung people is love and commitment. Especially men believe that it is a shame to take back one's word as a man (H. Trangpen Whourr)

(ii)Lüchuki Longke.

In the jungle of Salomi village stands a stone called Lüchuki Longke. It is named after Lüchuki, a man who was obsessed with a girl called Rithsuhe, and watched her every move. One day, he saw Ritsuhe on her way to collect pinewood for fire, so he followed her into the forest and hid behind a stone and watched her. After a while, he stepped up to her and asked to give him the axe so that he can cut it for her. She was adamant and said she will manage by herself and that she had already collected so much by herself. Suddenly, in a fit of anger, the boy took the axe and hit her fatally and ran away. When Ritsuhe did not return home the people went in search of her. The people found her hacked to death by her own axe. Everyone was filled with anger and was in great doubt as to who could have done this. Her body was taken to the village and the family members killed mithun and pig and everyone in the village was invited to part take, but the person who did not eat was suspected to be the killer and the killer would be punished in the most terrible way; the person's teeth would fall off, he would become blind, and bad luck would befall him and eventually die. So with this practice people come to know who is not eating, and it was Lüchuki who fled away from the village

never to be seen again. Till now that stone stands and people call the stone as Lüchuki Longke as Lüchuki hid behind this stone waiting to murder Rithsuhe.

(Folktales of Eastern Nagaland)

This story gives us a negative picture of how an obsession can be dangerous to the extent of killing someone. It presents the picture of the extent to which a weak evil minded person can act, affirming that a murderer has no place in the society. The story also supports the moral fortitude and independence of the woman who would not give in to such an ardent admirer.

(iii) *Leuküpüh* (A stone story of Makury Yimkhiung)

This story is one of the stone stories of Yimkhiung Naga.

Many children started to go missing from Phuvkiu village. People had absolutely no idea where the children were going. They had no clue whether they were taken by animals, snakes, eagles or a tiger. One day a strong man was kept as a guard and watchman for the children. He let them play their usual way to see what will happen next. And then as he watched he saw a couple of stones that were mounted above the village came down rolling and before anything could be done, with cries of "*Ayah !Ayah*" All the children disappeared. The watchman of the day went running to the field and raised alarm among the villagers saying "Come! Come quick! It is not an enemy! It is not an animal! There's a devil here! There are stones eating up our children!" The people all ran to where the stones stood and when they raised them up from the ground, they saw only the remains that of hair and nails of the children. So all the men sat down and said "Yes! It's true; these are the devil stones, what can be done about it?"

After discussion the villagers came up with different ideas as to how the stones can be damaged. They applied the first trick of burning the stones. They gathered all the sticks and straws, covered the stones and set them on fire. When all the wood had burned down to ashes the stone was not heated at all but lay as if it was taken out of water. This amazed the villagers. They applied another trick to heat the stone by pouring boiling hot water over the stones. But though the people were sweating profusely with the heat and steam of the hot water the stones remained cold as if people were pouring

cold water on it. They applied the third trick by rolling down the stones to the river called *'Tipi' Zungki*. The people were relieved feeling that the stone is no more near them. But close to midnight they were disturbed by the sound of many people working as if they were dragging something very heavy uphill. When they got up and lighted the fire to see they were surprised to see the stones in their usual place on the mount. The villagers did not give up but again dragged the stones down to the river only to hear the same noise at night and the following day the stones paced on the mount.

The people cried "If we continue to stay here then all our children will die and what will become of us?" Saying this, all the people packed up their things and started to move away from the village and settle at a distance. However, after a gap of many years still the people wanted to go back to their old location and hence came back. When they came back and lived the stones no longer ate up the children and it was believed that the stones were one male and one female. Whenever the people chanted "*Oh jingterre jingterre ho-a ho*" to the stones which means "make it rain..." the rain would come. So whenever there was drought, people began to invoke rains and it did rain. This way people started honouring and respecting the stones. One was a single long stone while the female was 'y' shaped. The female stone had a horn type protrusion, people say that lightning struck one day and knocked the horn off. After the advent of Christianity many old ways and practises were abandoned, including giving reverence to stones and other natural elements. The stones are no longer in their original shapes but people can still see what is left of them, at an uphill few metres above the present village Phuvkiu.

(Folktales from Eastern Nagaland)

(iv) A Leg of a Bison that turned into Rock.

Once there lived a family who had only a daughter, the only child. The mother fell ill and the daughter had to go to the field alone because the father had to look after the ailing mother. The daughter by the name Mönongchi, was reportedly to be having an affair and was seen by neighbours with a man in the field. On learning about it, the father went in search of the girl to the field and he saw his daughter with a gentleman.

The father did not want her daughter to get married with that man and so she was asked to stay away. However, the man never left her side and he insisted on marrying her. The girl told her parents about the marriage proposal to which they rejected. The daughter thereafter never came home. The worried father went in search of the daughter but could not find her.

That very night the daughter appeared in her dream and told the father that the supposed husband has tied a bison to a tree as a sign of dowry for the girl, the man also kept bow and arrow to kill the bison and to be distributed amongst the girl's family and relatives. When they went the next day the father was surprised to see exactly what was told in his dream. A bison was fastened and so they killed it and all the relatives took their own share and went away. They left a thigh to be carried the next day but when they went to that location the next day it was frozen and the meat had turned into a rock.

The Yimkhiungs still narrates this story and the location where this story happened is believed to be in Kemephu in Shamator. The traditional practice of giving an animal bison or mithun or could even be a pig to a girl's family as dowry with the purpose of distributing to all the bride's relatives as a sign of letting the relatives know that the daughter of the clan or family is getting married. Thus, the story shows the practice of bride price system in Yimkhiung culture. It is called *aliberü tün* as is the case in Sumi tribe known as *Ame*. The relatives would in return give her gifts as a send off gifts for her new family. This very practice can also be taken in a positive way by interpreting it that a daughter is greatly valued in Yimkhiung society. In fact daughters and mothers form a strong foundation for the group of that particular tribe. A society that values women's rights and voices grow in peace and unity.

3.3. Ritual:

Ritual is an act that leads into direct contact with the experiential reality (Saraswati, 16.) The text of a myth multiplies in course of time through a natural process of reinterpretation and reformation, leaving the core tradition unaffected. This has been possible because the tribes do not manipulate their myths as an intellectual game. For them all descriptions, explanations and interpretations have only secondary value;

what is central in the myth is the fulfilment of the original 'intention'. Hence, as SC Daniel suggests, tribal lore can be understood best by the intention theory of meaning (Saraswati, 17.)

Rituals are closely related to the objective side of human life. It is obviously uncertainty which inspires us to follow certain rituals. The purpose is to satisfy nature and supernatural power which is beyond our control and also to achieve the desired result. A farmer maybe hard working and sincere so far as the cultivation is concerned. Still he cannot be sure that he will have the desired amount of corn out of his labour. There are some rituals and practices in some cultures that is carried out in order to please the sun or rain god so that everything is blessed in time for plentiful harvest. The oldest scripture of the world is Rig Veda. This was composed some thousands of years back and we can easily trace the roots of various beliefs and superstitions in it. Till today some these beliefs and superstitions persist in our daily life. As for example the hooting sound of an owl is considered to be ominous. The sound of the bird seems to bring danger to an individual or to a family in general. If one hears this sound one should silently pray in order to be free from danger.

It is a common belief that ignorant, illiterate, uncivilized and backward class people are superstitious, but this is not the fact. Well educated and highly sophisticated people are also found superstitious because they seem to have high ambitions.

Animal sacrifice is a very old ritual which is being followed from the remote past, but the animal chosen for the sacrifice must have selective complexion. In the Veda it has been told that if a white colored animal is sacrificed then it brings favour from heaven very rapidly because gods in heaven are fond of white colored animals (Krishna Yaju)

Ritual of burial among the Yimkhiungs:

(i) In the past, the dead bodies especially of the Mimi dialect speaking were never buried but were collected in an earthen pot and were placed in a fireplace wherein it was kept till the fats and flesh of the body gets drained and the remains were only bones.

(ii) Coffins were decorated with colourful butterfly like flowers and a bottle of tea for the dead to be drunk on the way. Only the women folk would make the butterfly shaped flowers with wool called *kyapi*. This shows the belief in life after and also the important role of women.

(iii) The dead person is made to hold egg in each hand and some even give dried meat as a farewell gift to the departed. There is a belief that they go hungry and hence to fill themselves before they reach the world of the dead, this practice is carried out by Longfürü Yimkhiungs. The belief is that the dead would for few days find it hard to adjust to the meal of the afterlife.

Some similarities can be seen in Vedic custom wherein a dog is sent as a guard. A dog is believed to be a faithful friend of man and hence till the death or even after death a dog is the one that accompanies. Whereas, in the Vedic custom hearts of two separate animals are placed on both the palms of the dead body. After this, the funeral pyre is set on fire as usual. It is believed that when the deceased person reach the god of death(Yama), two dogs having great noses and four eyes each which are posted to act as sentry there, will come forward to bite the deceased man. The man would then offer the hearts to the dogs. While the dogs get busy with the hearts he would reach the god of death smoothly. (Rik Samhita)

(iv) After a day or two, another ritual is performed by the family members. They would take all the belongings of the dead person and would go to an outskirt area and throw away with a belief that in the after world he would be requiring all those.

(v) Last meal is prepared and wrapped in a leaf and is placed in the resting shed of the field. The relatives would make fire and also place a bottle of water for the dead.

Traditionally, rites and rituals were performed to a supreme god during significant incidents. Rituals and some practices were the custom of the Yimkhiung Naga. Different kinds of rituals are interpreted below-

(i) Invoking blessings ritual while venturing out for sowing in the field. One particular chief of farming *Khiungpu* will be the first person to sow the seed after offering prayer to the Arimpuh so that the harvest would be plenty.

(ii) Ritual for the sick. All doors are shut and all family members have to be indoors because there was a belief that when a door is opened some sick or evil spirit might attack the sick person thus aggravating the health condition to a worse level. There has always been a sense of fear of the bad spirit. In Yimkhiung ritual, animal sacrifice is a very old ritual which is being followed from the remote past, but the animal chosen for the sacrifice must be a selective one. In a ritual to appease gods, a very big cock is taken to the jungle to release in pursuit of bringing health to the sick person.

(iii) Ritual for the demon possessed. A sorcerer would release the spirit that is believed to be under the bondage of the angry or bad spirit. As per Hindu pantheon different deities like a benevolent god, angry god, nature gods like that of wind god, sun god, plant god etc. Yimkhiungs believed in spirit world and gods, and so god's favour and blessings were sought for, intervention for healing, for plentiful harvest. A spirit in the field is called *Kheayahrü* in Longpürü dialect. If some happen to touch their trees or land while cultivating they get sick and is better only after a cock is released in the jungle by the local shaman called *Thümürü*.

(iv) The elders make sure that none carries sour fruits that could spoil the plentiful harvest. Another belief is that the farmers should not sing any song rather than the harvest song during that time. Agriculture is considered to be sacred process linked with human growth and sustainability. Altering or violating these rituals can lead to famine or may lead to starvation.

(v) Post harvest ritual: The eldest in the family would first part take in offering prayer or dedicatory ceremony of the fresh harvest. They make sure that all the family members are present for the particular thanksgiving practice. The high priest "*Amükeamrü*" was given the privilege to perform a ritual and bestow the blessings on the family or persons.

Yimkhiung Proverbial Expressions:

Proverbs can be seen as a sort of "shorthand" method of communication (though to speak of them thus is also to use an analogy.) A readymade statement, a proverb

conveys a culturally agreed upon idea which can be used to make a point that may only be made less succinctly and perhaps less clearly and effectively in a speaker's own words (de Caro, 185.) When we use the proverb, we say, "It is not I who tells you this; it is wisdom of the ages telling you this". As with all forms of folklore, we ultimately must ask of the proverb what it tells us about culture and society. Proverbs reveal about a society's morals, values, and attitudes. We think of proverbs something to do with morality (de Caro, 189.)

Taboo centric proverbs:

1. *Sangkhulongkhu* is known as 'unnatural death' in Yimkhiung dialect. *Atsünü müshekhi mi ah, kiulong ching mühanyokchoh*. "A dead body of unnatural death are restricted to enter village." To die an unnatural death by drowning in the river even on retrieving the body, it is buried on the riverside. Another kind of death which is restricted to the entry of the village are those attacked or killed by wild animals and thunderstrikes. They are buried outside of the village gate, because people fear that such incidences will happen again if allowed inside the village gate. Even the house and granaries of the deceased is abandoned, and a new house is built for other family members.

2. Another belief of Yimkhiung is that it is a taboo to lie and encroach upon somebody else's land or field. *Mührü yo alo mükam jang-ah chihcho, alonü ah mitsürü müyiuchoh*. "Never encroach other's plot of land or field, a land swallows human". The truth is tested by eating the soil of the particular field or area to prove legal ownership in case of dispute in the presence of village elders or third party witnesses. The oldest in the family lineage would eat the soil to prove that it belongs to them, but if it is not true then within a year or so the person is believed to die if false oath was taken.

3. This is a famous proverb, *Isa akhurü ah khiaknukhi thunukhi isa akhu thrümtrakdo*, *I am the first one to stamp on the pigs and hens waste*. It means to say that the elder's decision and wisdom based on experience should be respected. It

also means to convey that it is always swise to listen or take heed to the sayings of elders as they have encountered the ways of the world first.

4. Social dignity is highly looked up by the Yimkhiung people. The elders in the society encourages and convinces the young by saying *Mitsürü asühsho Thrünpuhshe asühcho, if man is happy then god is happy*, this implies that doing good to humanity would be good for himself because the measure you give the measure you get back is the logic behind this saying.

5. Yimkhiungs discourage snobbish behaviour of a boastful person and is exemplified by the saying, *Asihkhih yeaknu ah mümütangcho* "A praised pig has less fats" because Yimkhiung belief that it is not proper for one to self praise or keep talking of one's belongings. It's like blowing one's own trumpet. It is a shame to be a proud and loud man.

6. Value laden statements like *Shoo, lakhitnü mitsürü kükhiang shicho*, Money and wealth makes a man proud, can never be used to express the power of wealth, to neutrally state what is perceived as a social fact or to express bitter disapproval at what is seen as corruption. A proud person is often despised in the society, it is important for a person to be watchful of ones words and deeds even if one is wealthy. It is difficult and perhaps impossible to conclude what a cultures whole system of morality is reflected in its proverbs. Nevertheless, proverbs do have meaningful content and it may still be possible to draw conclusions about values and attitudes by analyzing that content.

7. It is the responsibility of the elders to reprimand or correct a child's behaviour in time. *Pienu hüm khiak ke pakhirok ah* a child is compared to "water on the leaf of a taro" where the water spills without staying on the leaf.

8. Even after several corrections if the child remains the same, a child is also spoken of as *Nükhün khülimnü sopa khülimnü tsoshi khi* "to be having a hole straight from one ear to another," parents talk of those kids as hearing from one ear and letting go from another ear.

9. *Nüsanü kütükhü kip tuhkhi* is a kind of interrogation because someone “whose kitchen smoke does not reach the roof” means that they have fed very less people hence less smoke. Such people were looked down in the society.

10. *Tümü müjih yangpanü julang mükhulopa*, *What you sow you shall harvest that*. As the saying goes for good parents have good children and also that a tree is known by its fruit.

Yimkhiung words of wisdom called *Lumlong yiu* is a short and wisdom filled words that makes a person understand the situation better when one is well equipped with the wisdom words and the experienced words of the elders. Elders take the responsibility to enlighten the youngsters with such words so that they get clearer message of what has been narrated over the ages.

Some words of wisdom called *Lumlong yiu* that are frequently and commonly used are translated below-

Values and Ethics in Yimkhiung Proverbs:

(i) *Akhümchoki mihtsürü yakli khide tsüde mükheachoh.*

When a man is hungry his true self is known.

(ii) *Thüyam alonglim mongtsü mülasho küyimkishe wungto mongtsü müla.*

When there is no peace at home there cannot be peace outside.

(iii) *Alarübonü küyimkishe zhochirübo kheaknü ahihbe kingaün müjih choh.*

A rich man's giving can never be more than a poor man's giving.

(iv) *Alomi ching mihtsürü mükji halang khide asükbe atobeah, tümünüshe mümi choh.*

In this world, a man's eye is the deepest and largest, it cannot be filled by anything. Similar quotes are, human wants are unlimited and greed can never be satisfied.

(v) *Yamlarü khülangnü thiyam putungrü rokachihkhi müyankhikok.*

A servant cannot pacify the quarrel between two masters.

(vi) *Thsümüthsü shoro apan anikhitbe aso ngüchoh.*

With every problem that comes our way we get a lesson to learn.

(vii) *Jingsüp kutsüp ashanglapü mitsürünü Thrünpuh ki kheangcho, tüşe ashinberü ashinbuhrüa mükamnichoh.*

Everyone prays for a long life to God yet nobody wants to become old.

(viii) *Isa rhimo atsüju ashekhinüshe nando ah müpakuk.*

Our good deeds cannot be erased even by death.

General Yimkhiung Proverbs:

(i) *Aberü ahikhü lakhi ching rhimo anikhü lang thsükokchoh.*

Little work is done where there are many leaders.

(ii) *Ahührü khulang rampü thsongkheak nü ahührü khulang yüshiang.*

Send a thief to catch a thief.

(iii) *Yiukhunü aramyiu alala akhiuk shih choh.*

An alcohol reveals all secrets or a drunkard can never keep a secret.

(iv) *Keochih khulang ching müyürünü ah küyimki she akok müngüchoh.*

A man who never ventures out for war is never a winning man.

(v) *Kuhi atsü le kuhi amütsü hane phünirü ah, Jumönü müthriachide isa yam ching she arüpu tsütsü.*

Good luck and bad luck are neighbours. Therefore, they will definitely be coming in every home.

(vi) *Thürithsü keochihkhi kim ching shenüshe nihbe nuk, thsüh, mührü kilim müjihkok.*

In times of war, nobody will give one's dao, spear to others.

This proverb implies that one should be wise and diligent.

Proverbs inculcating social etiquettes or social norms:

Japanese proverb seems to depict speech in a negative light. Some Japanese sayings go so far as counsel against saying anything at all, such as “one should keep both jars and mouth tightly shut” and “mouths are to eat with, not to speak with” Speaking too much is seen as a sign of vulgarity(“Many words, little refinement”)Talking produces empty dreams. “In words even Osaka Castle can be built” (de Caro, 191.)

- (i) *Harü mahsamju kim ahang müyimah müzokok Ani, Khinu, tüsho Thiyuro*
These three things cannot be hidden for long-the Sun, the Moon and the Truth.
- (ii) *Hehuh thsükhilasho, thrünthrongkhi akhih khüh lang kamchoh.*
Where there’s ok, the discussion is short.
- (iii) *Düsheak achangkhünnü akhiukde mungshi jihang.Tüshe düsheak animnü thürüh ang.*
Raise a voice high to praise, but lower a voice to scold.
- (iv) *Atuhrü khülang nüshe apilang lümlong larü ah de lümchoh.*
Even a fool thinks he is wise. This implies of self respect in any social set up.
- (v) *Isa mulo ha nokshang nok nangde lah, tüshe thiyih makhiukshihde laksah choh.*
Our tongue is like a big dao, it kills without spilling blood.

Proverbs that speak of nature and animals:

- (i) *Apung lakhinü wuhnubo phinde yüchoki thsümütsü choh.Tüshe apung mülasho phinde müyükkuk.*
Bird face trouble because of the wind, however birds cannot fly without wind.
- (ii) *Sangdungnü sangaso küyimkishe lakmiah aso püpü masochoh.*
A tree will never mistankenly bear different fruit than its kind.
- (iii) *Sang mütaksho mo müt ah pahchoh.*

If firewood is not burnt than the fire dies off. This also conveys the meaning that a quarrel flares up if arguments persist.

(iv) *Shahwün atsütakbe ching she ayang rung khürüah lachoh.*

(vii) Even in a beautiful garden there would be bushes of thorns.

(viii) *Isanü shuhyi rama khimtoa azopü kuk lah, tüşhe api mulong keang a mütümlim lang alabah.*

We may catch a monkey and keep in a cage but his mind would be in the forest only.

Some sayings in Yimkhiung Narratives:

(i) There is a saying that if a girl goes for an errand and stands in the doorway then there is a belief that she would get marry early. It is a part of manners to go inside the house and give the things or to get inside and talk instead of blocking the way for others and keep standing on the door.

(ii) While tying hair if a strand gets left out then a girl is supposedly to be married to an old man. A general way of saying so that a small girl is taught how to be neat and tidy.

(iii) A door is always kept close whenever there is a sick person in the family with the belief that the spirit is not taken away to the death world. There has always been a sense of fear in times of ill or weak health because theres a belief that the weak gets trapped or the weak ones get their spirit held by bad spirit as they are more vulnerable.

(iv) After giving something to others if we eat that particular thing then one is believed to have black nose as per the belief of Longpfürü.

(v) The elders make sure that none carries sour fruits that could spoil the plentiful harvest. Another belief is that the farmers should not sing any song rather than the harvest song during that time.

(vi) Social status is read by marriages in Yimkhiung culture. It is very important to choose one's life partner after thorough thinking. Bloodline is important and so marriages were strictly to be within a set clan or family. Bad blood or good blood could pass on and affect the whole bloodline and hence to marry someone from a good family becomes very important.

(vii) Hard work is propagated and shown through example by elders in the Yimkhiung society. A lazy person has no place in the society as he would be a liability instead of being an asset. Elderly women would usually teach the value of hard work by saying that men look out for women who can work in the field and who can brew tasty local wine.

(viii) In the olden days, a daughter was considered 'to be a leaf' as one is bound to fly away to unknown place by way of getting married.

(ix) Elders use to advice children not to waste food by saying that whenever a grain or piece of rice is dropped, it use to cry and is also believed that one would be poor yielding only less harvest. It is also used to inculcate the value of food and to be careful not to waste.

(x) A person who speaks a lot without any meaning is compared to a cicada called *kokji* in Yimkhiung dialect considered to be the loudest insect on earth but is considered to be empty. Similarly, we often hear the famous saying empty vessel make much noise.

The sayings and proverbs are used to prove the point and it makes understanding easier and contextual because the folk speech can be functional only when the speaker and the listener understand the expressed words. Proverbs are frequently used in everyday speech. It is mainly to advice, to counsel, or a kind of warning to be more careful in speech and in conduct.

Chapter IV

Myths and Symbols in Yimkhiung Narratives

4.1. Definition of myth

4.2. Yimkhiung myths

4.2.1. Myth of Creation(Thrüntan Yukhian)

4.2.2. Myth of Human(Mihbang Yukhian)

4.2.3. Myth of Flood(Keking Yukhian)

4.2.4. Myth of Marriage(Yamkhün kamkhi Yukhian)

4.2.5. Myth of Suffering(Küpkhuk Yukhian)

4.3. Symbols in Yimkhiung narratives

4.1. Definition of myth:

Myths are a traditional or legendary story, usually concerning some being or hero or event with or without determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation especially one that is concerned with deities or demigods and explains some practice, rite or phenomenon of nature. The term *mythos* means word or story. It is only the modern usage of the word myth as error that has led to the notion of myth as something negative although it is true that Plato opposed myths because he felt they led men astray(Dundes, 1.)

Myth is the imaginative fiction of the minds of the ancient natives of a country who believed that there were some kind of nature gods who were involved in creation, maintenance and destruction of the world, and in some way they also influenced the way of life. Mythology is not popularly a part of folklore but it shows many similarities. Myths of the characters, events, plots, and ideas that appear in myths also appear in legends and folktales. Some motifs that can be seen in both folktales and myths are- a crafty person, a wicked stepmother, animals that talk, animals like winged-horse, talking ant, tiger with a spirit etc.

Myths and symbols help man understand their world better. To know the past is a must to move forward with a sense of belongingness.

Carl Jung the psychoanalyst gives two theories, though it is difficult to establish the origin of myths, legends and folktales. The first theory is Polygenesis which means many births. Myths or stories that invented at different places at different times. Second theory is the diffusion theory. This theory belief that it was invented by one person and then spread to other areas and the other people, who, in turn, spread the story even further. Myths has the following divisions-Creation Myth, wherein mans first parents and the description of God and man is seen. One of the most interesting myths is the myth of origin. All the religions seem to have developed origin myths to explain how human came to existence. Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden with the talking snake is an example of an origin myth still believed to this day. End myth, life after death, after life, heaven and hell and myth of universal judgement

Myths also tell about supernatural beings, gods and ancestors. In Yimkhiung culture we find 'Arimpuh' who is known as the supreme being who was revered and was taken as god. For any kind of rituals and practices it was belived that Arimpuh is the one who bestows the blessing. The great heroes of the past provided models for human behaviour later. But they show an end as well as beginning. For although the supreme being and other spirits created and lived on earth, they also left it later on or disappeared with the onset of Christianity.

Man also begins and ends his life on earth. There existed the wind god, the stone and the plant gods. There is a belief that gods control the universe. The rains were formed by the God Tishtrya as per Persian myth. They were blown together by the wind to form the cosmic ocean, Vourukasha or boundless ocean which lies beyond the peak of Mount Alburz. This ocean is so wide that it contains a thousand lakes, the springs of the Goddess Anahita. Within the ocean stand two trees, the tree of many seeds, from which all other trees derive and the Gaokerena tree or White Hom from which all men will receive the elixir of immortality at the renovation of the universe. When the rain came the earth split into seven pieces as per Persian mythology. The bull is another remarkable creature in the ancient picture of the universe. Worship was offered not in

churches or temples but in the open air on the mountain top. Vayu the wind is the bringer of life in the rain cloud and of death in the storm (Hinnels, 133.) Gods of the cult Atar, Fire is revered under the name of Agni in India. It is at once both divine and earth two worlds are brought together.

There are no African books as compared to other written documents of other countries. There are innumerable stories, for like all races of man love telling tales. But these were not written down until modern times and collections are still very incomplete. The simple reason for this state of affairs is that the art of writing was quite unknown to Africans in the tropical forests and the South. Educated people also have now started to record the myths of their own people, before it is too late and they disappear or change (Parridar, 57.)

There are eight main characteristics of myth

- (i) True explanation of the natural world, how it came to be.
- (ii) Characters are often non human, supernatural beings or mystical or first people'
- (ii) Setting is typically ancient, set in a very similar to our own but with supernatural areas or monsters.
- (i) The plot of a myth may take place between supernatural world and our present day world. Myths do this to highlight basic human behaviours that are essential in any setting.
- (ii) Myths possess events that break or bend natural laws. This is done to magnify super naturalness of the mythical world.
- (iii) Promotes social action. Myths try to tell people how to act and live. Core values like individualism, family, community.
- (iv) Mythical heroes are often sophisticated story tellers.

- (v) Myths are often metaphoric, attempting to analyze and answer the purpose of living, who are we?

(<https://quizlet.com...Literature>)

According to Joseph Campbell a leading scholar in the fields of mythology and comparative religion explains that **myth has four functions-**

1. Mystical function
2. Sociological Function
3. Cosmological Function
4. Pedagogical Function

Some myths dominate and show the character of religious outlook, while others are less central, repetitive and fanciful. All kinds of myths need to be taken into account, for altogether they show the values which the society holds dear. Most myths tell how something came into existence; man, the world, certain animals, social affairs. The myths are a sacred history of the people. But naturally the creation of the world comes first and this myth influences others that follow. There could be no stories of creation of men and animals if there was not already a world created for them to enjoy. So the central myth telling the beginning of the world shows that history had a beginning. Legendary events that came later show how the world was changed, and in particular the adventures of man, his discovery of sex, the obligation to work the coming of death.

Myths are stories, the product of fertile imagination, sometimes simple, often containing profound truth. They are not meant to be taken too literally. They sometimes appear childish and silly yet sometimes serious needing a thought revealing the deepest hopes and fears of mankind, not to be despised as stories, but studied carefully for the revelation of the depths of human nature. The mythology analysed in this chapter are taken from different Yimchungrü places. The materials have been studied as widely as possible, and selections have been made from all over the places in order to give a picture of some of the major themes in the light of Yimkhiungs.

There are vital stories that make us look for the truth within ourselves through the guidance of the past who have gone through similar trials and tribulations. Even trickster myths hold deep wisdom for how to live a life that is sensible and meaningful upholding the legacy of the past. At the end of the day the most powerful function of the myth is the self created kind. When we absorb the teachings of mythologies that came before us, and then have the courage and audacity to add in our own imaginative mind then the universe is compelled into revealing itself even further. Myth of marriage is understood better with the story of Sangkongthong who married Tsüngrümkhümla. Their connection in a form of marriage builds a bridge between Heaven and human/earth. This myth not only gives us the notion of marriage but also the after-life. Myth of creation in Yimkhiung shows the significance of freedom and democracy in the society. Myth of human creations says that Mihbang is conceived as two bodies and this shows equality of gender as per the myth. We can see equality of opportunity irrespective of gender in Yimkhiung society.

Myth of creation gives the notion that earth and its formation occurs when there is tranquility and relation between human and the world. One's identity is known when the other is seen or known. Creation myth also justifies that everybody needs one or the other for help, for understanding no man can live by its own. Myth is the imaginative fiction of the minds of the ancient natives of a country who believed that there were some kind of nature gods who were involved in creation, maintenance and destruction of the world, and in some way they also influenced the way of life. Mythology is not popularly a part of folklore but it shows many similarities. Myths of the characters, events, plots, and ideas that appear in myths also appear in legends and folktales. Some motifs that can be seen in both folktales and myths are- A crafty person, a wicked stepmother, animals that talk, animals like winged-horse, talking ant, tiger with a spirit etc.

Generally myths have the following divisions-

- (i) Myth of creation wherein man's first parents and the description of God and man is seen.

(ii) Myth of the End. Life after Death, After Life, Heaven and Hell.

(iii) Universal Judgement. The period of Iron, the first Saviour. The second saviour the third and final saviour. The sources and the nature of the myth differ from place to place and from a group of people to another group of people.

Myth has certain purposes as to why and how important it is to study myth in the growth and development of human culture and history.

- (i) To explain why things are the way they are in nature. Why do we do things a certain way or where did we originate or come from.
- (ii) To teach lesson or values as to what happens when we do something something bad or good.
- (iii) To unify and define group identity. Who are we? What is our culture? Or how unique are we?
- (iv) To establish social and religious rituals how do we conduct ourselves as an individual, family, community or tribe. How do we honor our gods, how are we governed are some things we get to know from the myths of the past.
- (v) To entertain readers and listeners. It also presents as to how the story could get attention and what makes it interesting or memorable.

[\(https://prezi.com/rnjdmemxqqpl/\)](https://prezi.com/rnjdmemxqqpl/)

Some myths dominate and show the character of religious outlook, while others are less central, repetitive and fanciful. All kinds of myths need to be into account, for altogether they show the values which the society holds dear. Most myths tell how something came into existence; man, the world, certain animals, social affairs. The myths are a sacred history of the people. But naturally the creation of the world comes first and this myth influences others that follow. There could be no stories of creation of men and animals if there was not already a world created for them to enjoy. So the central myth telling the beginning of the world shows that history had a beginning.

Legendary events that came later show how the world was changed, and in particular the adventures of man, his discovery of sex, the obligation to work the coming of death.

The five myths analysed in this chapter are myths that Yimkhiungs belief. Myth of creation gives the notion that earth and its formation occurs where there is tranquillity, and the relationship between human and the world. Creation myth also justifies that everybody needs one or the other for help, for understanding no man can live by its own. Marriage myth also justifies the love and bond that exist in the family and society.

Myths are for teaching purpose, how life works or how to deal with a problem. Social cohesion is another reason to studying myth; it is specifically intended to explain the world to them. Every culture has its own myth and the truth of myth is wholly subjective. It consists of the body of beliefs, ceremonies religion and arts that define a culture. Myths are a traditional or legendary stories, usually concerning some being or hero or event with or without determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation especially one that is concerned with deities or demigods and explains some practice, rite or phenomenon of nature.

A myth almost always features gods and goddesses. About every culture has some ruling god or a group of goddesses. In Greek mythology, gods like Zeus, King of gods; Aphrodite, the goddess of love; or Ares, the god of war. Myths tell about heroes similar to gods but somewhat lower in status. Heroes may be sons or daughters of gods or sometimes fully mortal with supernatural power. Origin myth, legends, novella, magic tale, animal tale, personal experience story, joke, catch tale just to name a few. Three major prose narrative categories are myth, legend and tale. These terms do not refer to the forms of narrative so much as to the attitude of the community towards them.

Thus, myth is a term used for a narrative generally regarded by the community in which is told as both sacred and true. Consequently, myths tend to be core narratives in larger ideological systems. Myth is concerned with ultimate realities and is thus often set outside of historical time and concerns the action of divine or semi divine characters. The story of Adam and Eve could serve a purpose in giving an example of

appropriate myth which is both sacred and true. Myths are frequently performed in a ritual or ceremonial context. There are few folk narratives which could be easily categorized as myths according to our definition. Those narratives that deal with ultimate truths are generally safeguarded through a written, indeed printed, tradition. Consequently, they are read as recreated anew with each performance. Changes in the text of these written myths may occur but major changes come about primarily through retranslation and reinterpretation rather than through the oral recreation of the text itself (Orions, 125.)

4.2.Yimkhiung Myths:

Generally Yimkhiung Myths have the following divisions. Like many other Naga tribes Yimkhiungs does not possess a written history. They inherit a rich oral tradition through which the knowledge of the past is transmitted to the present. The original, dispersal and distribution of Yimkhiungs are embedded in the folklore, myths and songs that constitute their social history. Five Yimkhiung myths are brought into study.

4.2.1. Myth of Creation(Thrüntan Yukhian)

4.2.2. Myth of Human(Mihbang Yukhian)

4.2.3. Myth of Flood(Keking Yukhian)

4.2.4. Myth of Marriage(Yambok kamkhi Yukhian)

4.2.5. Myth of Suffering(Kupkok Yukhian)

4.2.1. Myth of Creation(*Thrüntan Yukhian*)

One of the important functions of myth is to explain the world around us as a narrative rather than in a scientific way. One most enduring question of humanity is “How did we get here?” Creation myth answers this question in a variety of engaging ways. Myth is not a weird mass of confused incoherent ideas but it is highly significant and has meanings. Myths are also expressions of reality. Myths explain how things came into reality and serves as a mode of understanding evincing clearer view of the contextual situation. The primary function of myths is not merely to explain or recount the past

for the future. The value of myths is great as it serves to translate reality and revealing the world view and philosophy of the people.

The myths are a sacred history of the people. But naturally the creation of the world comes first and this myth influences others that follow. There could be no stories of creation of men and animals if there was not already a world created for them to enjoy. So the central myth telling the beginning of the world shows that history had a beginning.

In the beginning, there was a snake called *Ngümdo*(Python) who depended on *Wuhmük*(bird)and *Lakengkeng*(insect) for his daily survival, he waited for them to feed him and as well worship him. One morning *Wuhmük* happened to come late for worship and the case started between *lakengkeng* and *wuhmük*. They decided to settle the matter by fixing and bringing together all the birds that have beak and feathers and also the other party of all the insects. On the day of the meeting both *wuhmük* and *lakengkeng* were ready to face the case. Before their *Arimpuh* they decided to settle the case. The insects were so proud who could not wait patiently and they looked up to the birds and said 'You will be consumed and end up with our mouth.' Immediately *Arimpuh* asked the birds to pick their king *Ngümdo* high above and throw him down. Out of his body is the earth formed, his blood turned to water, his bones turned to stone, his eyes turned to sun, his skin turned into sky, his mind turned to wind, his thoughts turned into cloud. While on the other hand, *Lakengkeng* out of anger turned into the earthly or angry spirit and *wuhmük* turned into the spirit of heavenly or loving spirit (Akhum, 56.) The purposes in some myth are dominant and show the character of religious outlook, while others are less central, repetitive and fanciful.

Through the myth of creation the Yimkhiungs belief in a greater agency (*Arimpuh*) a wiser consciousness that regulates all creation, including other dieties like the python(*ngümdo*),bird (*wuhmük*) and insects(*lakengkeng*). This myth of creation shows the hierarchy seen among the gods in Yimkhiung pantheon. In this myth there is the wisdom of *Arimpuh* overpowering the insects and birds.

4.2.2. Yimkhiung Myth of Human Being (*Mihbang Yukhian*)

Arimpuh, in his first order of creation of both heaven and earth, created all the creatures of the earth and heaven except human beings. They had no one to worship nor acknowledge as their creator. He thought therefore to create *mihbang* (human) to represent before His creation. He then created *mihbang* out of stone, but he was not satisfied as their bodies never grew, nor moved, neither procreated. *Arimpuh* again thought for a second creation, and he reshaped with the agent of tree, however they still remained the same, as there was no sign of improvement, nor speech neither have their eyes. *Arimpuh* in his third creation plan, took the help of stones for their bones, with the help of sun for their eyes, with the help of waters for their blood with the help of trees for their growth, completed the creation of *Mihbang* (Lakiumong 24, 25.)

The myth of *mihbang* presents a beautiful way of uniting the natural world as part of the human being. It depicts the use stone, trees, sun, water all make the human being, giving a frame to the body, engendering biological growth bringing light to his existence and vitality to replenish his being. This myth also connects the Yimkhiung world view to current ideas about the deep relationship between the human world and the natural world.

4.2.3. Yimkhiung Myth of Flood (*Keking Yukhian*)

Once upon a time, *Arimpuh* worked with humans through the agent of a stone. A stone cave was provided as a shelter, in the absence of home, a stone to defend them in war as a weapon, and also to mark boundaries and demarcations. A stone became a covenantal sign between *Arimpuh* and his people (Akhum 59.) The population remained stagnant even after so many years and so they decided to keep a watch over the villagers and one day it so happened that a child was missing while playing with other children. They looked around as to who could have taken the child but all they could see was only stone and nothing else. Out of anger they decided to burn the stone and broke into pieces after getting it heated *Arimpuh* made the people foolish and made them fight with fire, trees, water (Akhum, 59.) *Arimpuh's* anger did not end there but he again sent down heavy rain which led to flood. Many human beings died in the

flood however few people could escape and reached *Yahkothungwung* a hilltop which is situated in Yakor, Shamator. The heavy rain continued and flood kept on rising and so to appease god a beautiful woman by the name Momola was sacrificed by throwing her into the water saying 'Deliver us/Rescue us' and thus the rain stopped immediately.

This is how the story of flood and stone evolved and is believed till date. The stone symbolises the stability, the trust, and reliability in any dispute or conflicts because it doesn't move, neither does it increase or decrease in size. The cause of flood is anger which is an emotion of a god like that of a human, gods were like human in myths. They lived, talked and felt like humans and therefore it was important to offer sacrifices and please them. And for which Momola was made an offering to appease god.

Another version of the myth of Momola is that she was a daughter of Rethrongkiu. She grew up under a good care of her parents. As a teenager she was made to go to dormitory called *kheangyam* in Yimkhiung dialect. She was often visited by a handsome young man at night. They fell in love and proposed for marriage. On telling her father about the proposal the father asked Momola to ask the man as to where his house is. The man said that he cannot tell her now but she would know after they are married. But Momola replied 'we will never be together because I do not know where you stay'. The young man insisted that their time has come and they should prepare for marriage. Before Momola could give her final reply it started to rain very heavily without stopping which led to flood. The father had no choice but to give his daughter in marriage to save mankind from flood. Thus, the sacrifice of Momola saved some people and could reach *Yahkowitzung* (Akhum, 60.) near Yakor village in Shamator district.

The danger of flooding, flash flood have great power and must have been real to the Yimkhiung and perhaps there had been lost of lives and attributed such happenings to deities during such cataclysmic moments. This myth seeks to connect the supernatural with the reasons for occurrences in the natural world, which shows the Yimkhiung's philosophy of life deeply connected to the spiritual realm. So for the Yimkhiung, life

was much more than what was visible, he navigated between many forces known and unknown to him, and spun narratives that would give meaning to its existence.

A culture that believes in a supernatural world and the intrinsic relationship between it and the natural world. Stones have been used as mnemonic signifiers amongst several of the Naga tribe. In this story the stone is an agent of Arimpuh, it provides shelter, or could be used as a weapon. It marks territories or serves as a message.

The human action of desecrating and heating it and breaking it is sacrilegious action against Arimpuh. The blame of infertility (stagnancy in population) and tragedy (of losing a child) needs a cause for humans. In the story the blame is transpassed to the agent of Arimpuh, which is the stone.

The fight against nature (fire, trees, water) and its elements is considered 'foolishness' an unflinching madness which is the result of the curse of Arimpuh. Even the great flood is due to the rage of Arimpuh, only appeased through a costly human sacrifice. It also shows Yimkhiung's deference to stone and stone markers and monuments.

4.2.4. Yimkhiung Myth of Marriage (*Yambok kamkhi Yukhian*)

Hoza worked in the field, among the chilly plants and other vegetables, the *Moyangsangpen* and *Yenchensangpen* seeds found their way in and sprouted and grew. When Hoza saw the flowers blooming with their soft textured warm-as-a-blanket look it brought gladness to his heart and elevated his mood. He tended and cared for these plants happily. That season when the flowers were blooming he noticed one morning that the red flowers were plucked, he again noticed in the next few mornings the flowers were plucked. He, one night decided to sleep in the field and see as to who was plucking the flowers from the field. In the pale moonlight, suddenly at midnight he saw maidens descent from the sky and landed on the patch where the red flowers grew. They plucked the flowers and started dancing, in amazement he watched them. He was enchanted by their beauty particularly one fairy who was very charming and attractive to him. He decided to catch hold of the most beautiful one, he jumped and grabbed but she escaped and he could grab only the cloth she was wearing. All the maidens disappeared into the sky. The one whose cloth was with Hoza was hovering in

the air asking to give her back her cloth. She said, "I need my shawl. Please give it back to me." Hoza smiled and replied "I will, if you'll come and live with me, be my wife." She pleaded over and over again but Hoza only insisted her to become his wife to which she finally agreed. Now she has to come down for which she needed a sturdy stick to climb down. He went around and found a sturdy stick and came down.

Tsüngrümkhümla, a charming fairy became his wife living happily ever after. As a farmer, time soon came for cutting of fresh jungle for the year's fieldwork but Tsüngrümkhümla said the field need to be bigger so he went the next day to cut another field but still Tsüngrümkhümla said that will not do and have slash more. Again in this myth of marriage, there is a projection of the connection in the form of a marriage that builds a bridge between heaven and human and earth.

In myths, we see the supernatural powers and so we can see that in the story of Tsüngrümkhümla too. Hoza and Tsüngrümkhümla did not toil hard like other villagers yet they got all they wanted through their supernatural power.

Tsüngrümkhümla lifted a big gourd and said "*This is for muthsu*" meaning *this is for rice* and smashed the gourd in an instant the mat was filled with rice grains. Then she took up a large pumpkin and said "*this is for manji*" meaning *this is for corn/maize* and smashed it on the mat and the mat was filled with corn kernels. And next, she took another gourd and said "*This one's for bhapkhiongpi*" meaning *this is for job's tears* and the mat got filled with job's tears and then she blew *phoooooo* over the mats and in that instant all the grains and corn lifted up in the air and disappeared. Then she took more gourds and pumpkin and in the same way, they harvested every grain, pulses and vegetables that is eaten by mankind. Hoza was more amazed when he saw the basket filled to the brim with all types of rice grains, corn, millets and job's tears.

Tsüngrümkhümla wanted to visit her family to which Hoza reluctantly agreed. They were there for few days and on their departure the in laws packed food for Hoza and was instructed not to open until he crosses the village gate. Being very curious he opens to find strange things in it, there were stone, sand, and shells instead of food packed in banana leaves. Hoza also found strange food item, a piece of toe that resembled to

that of his neighbour who was cripple. On reaching home he came to know that the neighbour with crippled leg had died and Hoza was of the view that his fairy wife and family had killed the neighbour. Hoza now realised that he had not married a human and at the same time Tsüngrümkhümla knew what was going on in Hoza's mind. So she said that she's pregnant and so would bring the baby after birth and she disappeared. Soon, one day Hoza woke up one morning to find a baby boy placed beside him. He grew into a strong and handsome man called Sangkongthong.

This myth not only gives us the idea of marriage that happened between fairy and a man in the past. Here the impossible thing is achieved by Hoza by marrying a fairy, a desire for a supernatural being

This story is about a human being attraction and desire for a supernatural being. The power of supernatural of Tsüngrümkhümla is seen in the story wherein with the rest of the villagers they have bountiful harvest without working much. The importance of agriculture and its produced is understood as they needed all the crops for hosting a party for the supernatural beings. However, Yimkhiungs believe that unnatural relationship between human and super natural could never co exist till the end and hence Tsüngrümkhümla and Hoza gets separated after she bore a son.

Myth of marriage of Yimkhiungs can also be supported by the story of *Longpfürü Tatoo* that delves deeper into the ideas and the design of marriage that could happen between human and snake or animals. The offsprings seen in the story of Longpfürü tattoos are a pot full of snakes wriggling and uttering *Humphsy! Humphsy!* which means 'our grandmother' 'our grandmother.' The daughter told the mother that husband will be going away for waging a war, taking advantage of this situation the grandmother suggests her daughter to make the husbands favourite chutney with "*Khükhütsang*". It is a large woody climber known as St.Thomas Bean (*entada phaseoloides.*) This vine produces saponin used as detergents in olden days. It is poisonous if eaten raw. On stopping by half way to eat the packed food the husband ate the chutney made out of the paste of '*Khükhütsang*' and he went into death throes and thrashed about wildly and eventually died because of eating the chutney made of *khükhütsang*.

Yimkhiungs belief that to be achieving an odd thing is not a matter to be proud of, yet it is treated as a taboo. So also is with the girl who married snake, she could not live long with snake and even her offsprings were scary to be shown to their grandmother. Normal human are meant to marry normal beings and not creatures from other world. Anything that is done beyond the natural realm leads to abrupt ending as is seen in the story of marriage of *Longpfürü Tatoo*.

4.2.5. Yimkhiung Myth of Suffering (*Küpkhuk Yukhian*)

After the creation of *mihbang* (human) everything was beautiful and lovely. Things were peaceful and survival was easy. Human needed no sweat, no pain, no work to eat. Fire was not required as they ate whatever they got as it is. One day as they went hunting, a deer from the cliff of a rock let loose a stone which fell and hit another stone that ignited a spark, like that of a fire flame. On seeing that they threw more stones one over the other and the fire could be seen by striking the stone together. On discovering the fire they felt proud and superior over other creatures. They invited all the other creatures to come and see the new invention and thus on showing it to produce fire; the fire went out of control which destroyed the whole earth. Some went to mountain to save themselves, some hid under the caves, some went under water and some hid under the ground, except *mihbang* (human) did not run anywhere (Akhum, 61.) This was the reason how man began to till the land and sweat for sowing and harvesting to yield the produce. The land is called 'alo' in Yimkhiung which means 'return' or 'reproduce' since the seeds sown bear fruit and multiply it is called so. As man began to work everyday new discoveries were also found, the dry land immediately saw fresh grasses, trees, water and gradually animals (Akhum, 61.) This myth also teaches us that we have to suffer in order to have a good life this also denotes that a lazy people can go hungry, a man will starve and struggle to live if they don't work or toil for life.

Arimpuh is a supreme being and sacrifices in the form of animal offering, human offering were made to honour 'Arimpuh', with a belief that it would please god. Through this myth of *Küpkhuk* we get the notion that everything is connected to everything. And so we need to learn to co exist. When pride and superiority comes in, it

is accompanied by downfall and suffering. The immense pride of discovering fire is seen in the myth and later fire becoming the cause of all destruction.

This myth is about the discovery of fire and man's superiority in overcoming it over the entire creature. The discovery of fire is both a boon and a bane. The traditional way of making fire is indicated. It is also referred here as a danger of such a find. It could make the finder proved by the power fire, wields over creatures. without control fire can devour the whole earth too.

The story suggests that the taming of fire gives rise to an agricultural lifestyle. In Naga agricultural practice, fire is an integral part of jhum cultivation, or the slash and burn farming, and also for day to day cooking purposes.

Symbols: A symbol is anything that hints at something else, usually something abstract, such as an idea or belief. A literary symbol is an object, a person, a situation, or an action that has a literal meaning in a story but suggests or represents other meanings. ([https://www.delmar.edu swc.](https://www.delmar.edu/swc/)) The term 'symbol' first came into circulation in 1886 when the poet Jean Moreas published his '*Symbolist Manifesto*' in the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro*. Charles Baudelaire was later known as the Father of Symbolism. Many of his poems contain symbolist characteristics. The importance of symbolism can be seen in the earliest recorded forms of human storytelling-cave paintings and hieroglyphics-which are quite literally symbols representing more complex narratives or beliefs. Symbolism allows writers to express complex ideas while giving the reader a visual, sensory experience. ([https://www.theartstory.org sym](https://www.theartstory.org/sym))

Symbols are closely connected with every aspect of human. In material culture symbols are signs used to indicate necessary characters that are required to be imprinted in a community's memory. Symbols are creative forms that perform similar function as the other narratives in a community's folklore.

There are different patterns and motifs in the dresses houses and architectural structures of the community. The patterns that existed are that of geometrical, human

figures and the head and breast of human body is frequently used. Celestial motifs like star, moon and sun are also used.

Symbolism is of great importance in the study of tribal culture because they are a powerful gate to the deeper and less conscious levels of human experience. Symbols evoke profoundness, emotions and memories at a very primal level of our being often without making rational or conscious connections. Symbols also fuel up our imaginations. Symbolism can be connected to the culture world of the tribe as the materials used were all indigenous and almost everything they used was locally available at that point of time. The tribesman men knew less about the outside world and were also less anxious about the fast development.

Some important characteristics of symbols used by Yimkhiungs are-

(i) *Shih ku*(head of an animal): Yimkhiungs use the following as very significant symbols that represent and signify different meanings. Head of the slaughtered animal is given to a person who is older or high in status, it is a sign of great respect and honour. Slaughtered or hunted animal head *Shih ku* is presented to the village head symbolic of respect and honour. Another symbol is when a man hosts the feast of merit; it is a tradition to give the head of the slaughtered animal to him. The house is decorated with many animal heads which we will see in material culture. A person who is able to give community feast is a sign that he is a man who is rich and has influence over his people. Use of certain shawls or mekhela signifies the status of the wearer.

(ii) *Long* (stone): Yimkhiungs use stone (*long*) to symbolise permanency or stability. Therefore stone was used to erect a boundary in the field or to demarcate one's land. Some Yimkhiung villages still have slate roofs called *Long yam* that can stand the test of time, it has great durability.

(iii) *Rong*(colours): Different colours symbolises different meanings- black symbolises death or evil, white stands for goodness and purity, red symbolises blood, power, passion, green for growth and progress etc.

(iv) *Rikiangkhi* (hornbill's feather): The feather of a hornbill bird is a symbol of pride and success. To have a feather on the head gear is a matter of fame and popularity amongst the people.

(v) *Rehüh* (sea shells/cowrie/and ivory): These cannot be used at one's whims and fancies. Only a person who is rich and popular can use the shawls decorated with beads *Rehüh*. A person who has hosted a feast of merit or achieved some significant thing can wear the shawl with the cowrie shell design. A person who has taken an enemy's head can also use the shawl in those head hunting days.

(vi) *Shihnyak hü* (tusk of wild boars): To wear a *shihnyak hü* one should be a great warrior and hunter. It is handled with utmost care because it is believed that it gets cracked if a wearer uses ginger and garlic while wearing it. Wearing *shihnyak hü* is a symbol of wealth and authority.

(vii) *Ango* (Great barbet): This bird is taken as a symbol of sweetness, peaceful and comfort. Many parents opt for this bird's meat to be given to a baby for the first meal so that a child will be sweet-voiced, a good orator and grow up with peaceful personality.

Chapter V

Interpreting Yimkhiung Material Culture

Material Culture

5.1.1. Yimkhiung Architecture

5.1.2. Traditional Attire and Accessories

5.1.3. Tools and Weaponry

5.1.4. Pottery

Material Culture:

Material culture is the aspect of social reality grounded in the objects and architecture that surround people. It includes usage, consumption, creation and trade of objects as well as the behaviours, norms, and rituals that the objects create or take part in. Some scholars also include other intangible phenomena that include sound, smell, and events, while some even consider language and media as part of it. The term is most commonly used in archaeological and anthropological studies to define material or artifacts as they are understood in relation to specific cultural and historic contexts, communities and belief systems. Material culture can be described as any object that human use to survive, define social relationships, and represent facets of identity or benefit people's state of mind, social, or economic standing. Material culture is contrasting to symbolic culture which includes non material symbols, beliefs, and social constructs. (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki>)

By studying material culture we can learn about human behaviour, creativity, and the impact of economic environmental and technological forces on the common man. Material culture is a tangible way for people to express themselves. The material things we own express our emotions, how they make us feel or how they look on us. The clothing style and colour that one chooses to wear could reflect the feeling of an individual and also project ones tribe and identity. This chapter aims to discuss the richness of Yimkhiung culture in the form of materials used by the Yimkhiungs which is a conglomeration of five sub-dialect speaking people. They are together called Yimkhiung.

Folk objects give added dimensions to cultural study. In today's world, older folk objects endure on the landscape to comment on history and change, while new folk objects arise in modern cultural settings. Folk objects provide the tangible evidence of everyday past, they supply visible proof of the changing beliefs and customs people hold today. (219) Traditional style of textile was the use of natural dye, made of tree roots and leaves for colouring yarn. Culture embodies language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, and works of art and so on.

Material culture is a trademark of a particular tribe or a group of people. Since time immemorial, with the existence of human beings the basic materials used are building for shelter, clothes and food. Culture and heritage are the essential factors that make each people distinct and it gives a sense of unity and belongingness. Culture unites people of a single society together through shared beliefs, traditions and expectations. The two basic types of culture are- Material Culture and non material culture. Material culture is the physical things produced by a society and non material culture is the intangible things produced by the society. Five examples of culture are customs, laws, dress, architectural style, social standards, and religious beliefs and traditions are all examples of cultural elements. Culture is considered the *Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development by UNESCO*. Characteristics of Culture are-

(i) Culture is learned. It is not biological we do not inherit it.

(ii) Culture is shared amongst a section or group of people.

(iii) Culture is based on symbols.

(iv) Culture is integrated.

(v) Culture is dynamic.

(<https://www.agenda21culture.net>>)

The two broad classifications of culture are material culture and non material culture. Material culture is a term developed in the late 19th and 20th centuries that refers to the relationship between artefacts and social relations. Example of metro passes and bus tokens are part of material culture, as are automobiles, stores, and the physical

structures where people worship. Non material culture in contrast consists of ideas, beliefs, values or norms that shape the society. Studying the physical object of a culture gives us a better understanding and appreciation for the complex lives of the people who interacted with those objects. Material culture thus provides us insight into non-material culture, including the ideas, beliefs, habits and values of a people.

Material study of Yimkhiung:

It is an aspect of social reality grounded in objects and architecture. Examples of material culture include cars, buildings, clothing and tools. Some material culture of a society is woven or generally handmade. Some society or community imparts the art of quilt making to the young girls of the community. Handiwork like weaving shawls and learning pot making is connected to girlhood, a common thing in girlhood days. It was also made and gifted during marriage, or when a neighbour lost his house by fire, for a newborn child in the neighbourhood or just for keepsake too. Friendship hand woven bag has the name of a friend inscribed on it.

The architecture:

Objects may stand apart however their relations with their human creators and owners are still recognizable. Human characteristics are attributed to objects and so the chairs have legs, lighting lamps as having neck, and clocks as having face and hand (Bronner, 204.)

The houses with many heads or skulls of animals show the power and prestige of the owner of the house. It would also show the social status and values of its builder. Its display can also mean that he have given a number of feasts and celebrations to the people in or around his village. Some houses have tin-roofed structure or thatch-roofed houses, houses with bamboo walls were owned by poor or downtrodden or orphans. Important places in a village would be a village gate, forts or memorial stones of different occasions. Usually the Yimkhiung villages were established from the defence point of view. Many warriors built their fences around villages so that enemies find it hard to attack. The houses in the village were built with thatch, bamboo pole or wooden pillars, rope made of creepers for tying and binding. Mostly houses in the past

had no partition in the one-roomed house. At the entrance we find a small veranda wherein the grain was grinded there and some domestic animals lived there. On entering we find a small fireplace and also a bed which was usually carved out of a single wood piece. The houses were decorated with the skulls of the animals head. It signifies the status and the position of the owner of the house.

Morung or dormitory:

Beliefs can be communicated through objects. It is a hostel kind of house with big unattached rooms. The young boys and girls would gather there to learn the values, art of life and life skill. It also served as an institution for educational purposes. Songs, dances and folktales were learnt from dormitory. Yimkhiungs call it *kheangyam* literally meaning it 'khel house'. Folktales and stories with moral values were narrated to inculcate in them the good things of life. During festivals young people get together to sing, dance and listen to folkstories. Many objects especially larger objects like houses tend to have direct relationship to the place where they are found. They become a "built landscape". The construction and materials of the built landscape show the character of the human relationship to the environment (209.)

Store house or granary:

Some villages store their grains and other agricultural products in an outskirts area of the village by building a granary. The structure of the granary is usually up-built. It required a ladder to climb up the granary. It has four posts lifted high and on it is the room. It is the practise of the ancestors to prevent from the attacks of rats and moths or pests etc. Some store their food grains in a barn made of cane and bamboo and some villages particularly Mimi areas would store in huge earthen pots. Forefathers treasured millet because it is the first crop to harvest and it saves the people from going hungry especially on some years when the harvest is bad. Millets has greater durability than rice, it also does not get infested with pest easily.

Council hall or Community hall:

Most villages have a place to settle petty and small cases within the village administration. The court serves as a place to serve justice and peace. The village heads

would summon both the parties and hear their grievances and settle the issue. Meetings are also held in community halls and small events like get together and certain folk activities like singing and storytelling sessions are held there. (Lakiumong Gaon Bura interviewed on 17/1/2020).

Traditional attire of men and women:

According to Bronner, folk objects materialize tradition. Folk object show the 'interconnections' common to all forms of folklore (Bronner,199.) To stress these interconnections, the term "material culture" is often used to point to the weave of objects in the everyday lives of individuals and communities.

Things so woven gives us text to read.Indeed, "text" is a term so characteristic of narrative and other verbal forms,that we forget that it comes from the Latin for "woven thing"(199) Weaving was there before looming came into existence. People worked manually to weave their own clothing. In the past, there was no marketing system with exceptions to barter system. Thus, whatever raw materials were available were used to get the final product. Cotton was extracted from cotton plants. Some roots, grasses, strings and thread were collected. Threads and strings of different sizes were knotted together to make it strong and long lasting. The weavers still practice the hand weaving method up to date. Some instruments used in weaving are two medium sized bamboos to hold the thread or yarn at the bottom and topmost part. The weavers' hands are gifted as they design different motifs and patterns on the shawls and mekheles.

The study of objects tends to emphasize aspects of form. An object is visible and the word "form" is taken from the Greek for "visible shape". An object is primarily described by its stable visible features-its contour, size, and structure(200.) Objects may help us to re-experience something of that everyday past.

The present tribes in Nagaland have all specific traditional attires which mark the tribe's authenticity and speciality. Yimkhiungs mostly use black and red in most of the traditional shawl used by men and womenfolk. To extract colour of the shawl a dye of a tree bark was used. It was cooked in a big pot and would dry it to make the thread smooth and strong easy to weave. Girls of marriageable age were taught to weave so

that in the long run they don't have to buy from others; it serves as a way to skill development and also a way out to self reliance and sustainability. Body cloths of various types are used by Yimkhiung women folk but with the passage of time traditional attires comes in modified forms and named accordingly and used in different occasions.

The production of cloth started with the growing of the cotton plant and spinning the fibre and wool into thread. This was followed by weaving into looms that were sometimes homebuilt for the purpose. Spinning and weaving have undergone something of a revival today, and many people work on the spinning wheels and looms of their grandparents. Often weavers are taught orally by an older member of the family, this might be an area where traditional craftsmanship is still being practised.

Yimkhiung men's traditional attire

(i)Langtam jipü rhih (loin cloth): Traditionally, men used langtam before any clothes were there to cover the body. Traditional finery is a sight to behold as it carries a story behind its designs and motifs of a race that is bold, majestic and fierce. All the different tribes of Nagaland have distinct costume or dresses although there are some similarities on closer look.

(ii)Rongkhim: Rongkhim is one of the most popular men's shawl used by Yimkhiung tribe Rongkhim is used since time immemorial. This shawl is the most popular shawl worn by men folk of the tribe. It is also called '*Athrongrü khim*' which means '*A Shawl of the Brave*'. The shawl is basically red in colour. The red and black is widely used in the shawl. It has a red band of 7X11. The number 7 denotes the number of days to observe as a genna for the war hero who has taken the head of an enemy as a war trophy. The number 11 denotes the days to resume the war after the genna period. At the bottom of the shawl there is a pattern called "*Thsamthrungyak*" a design drawn from the inspiration of the tattoo mark. The bottom design is woven as per the choice of one's preferences. Some weavers prefer to leave it plain and simple. (YTC 18)

(iii)Kejingrü Rongkhim: It is a shawl woven in three pieces. The last two edges have black and white stripes and the middle portion has red rectangle boxes that numbers

to 63 boxes. It comes in seven rows. This is a warrior shawl worn in order of merit indicating honour in the society. Traditionally, this shawl is gifted as a gift by the groom's family during marriage to the bride's father. This shawl is called Romongyo in Chirr dialect and Reuyu in Makury dialect. This shawl is used during festivals, important social gatherings, pulling of log drum, morung repairing and other community related occasions. The same shawl depicted in picture 2 come with the sea shell stitched upon. It adds to the grandeur and also the value of the shawl. The second picture shows some fallen (cowrie/sea shell) since the shawl is very old and worn out. In the past it could be used by somebody who has taken the head of an enemy.

(iv)Denroksüt: This is the shawl commonly worn by Longpfürü Yimkhiung of Mimi area. This shawl is known as a complete shawl. 'Denrok' means 'complete' in Longpfürü dialect. 'Süt' means 'shawl'. The shawl has the pattern of objects used by men. The middle portion comprises of bow and arrow, shield, machete or dao and spear. These symbolises the tools used in war in ancient times. These weapons have protected and have brought the humanity thus far. This shawl is a warrior's shawl because a person who wears this shawl ventures out fully equipped and with confidence for the war. The color red symbolises bloodshed and black stands for darkness era and the color white symbolise peace unity and integrity. The bottom pattern has the picture of quiver which was used to store arrows and carry as extra ammunition for the war. The shawl is woven in three pieces and is later stitched together and used.

(v)Throthriyo: This shawl is worn by the Chirr speaking group of Yimkhiung tribe. It is worn by rich and wealthy man in the society who has hosted the feast of merit called 'Ningtsuleh'. It is also worn by warriors since time immemorial. Common people are not allowed to use this shawl. It is designed in black and white stripes on the opposites and in between comes the rectangular shaped boxes.

Yimkhiung women attire:

(i)Tsüngrümkhim: The most popular shawl used by Yimkhiung women is Tsüngrüm khim. It drew the inspiration from a metaphysical being by the name Tsüngrümkhumla

Hoza's wife. It is worn by a lady who host feast of merit, or can be worn by a rich man's daughter or wife. The shawl contains 128 rectangular boxes with the two bottom borders called '*Huriyak*' and '*Thsamthrongyak*'. However, some weavers love to leave the shawl without bottom pattern as per one's likings. As and when a girl gets married the gifts for her husband would depend on the status of the family. If a marriage is to be in a rich family, she has to take the shawl that is called *Aram khim* that stands for power, rich and authority. She would be taking along with her an armband of five pieces on each arm and all the mekhelas like *Alongzah*, *Kejingberü*, *Peiyie* etc. Women wear mekhela and a shawl. The mekhela has a significant tales attached to its invention or creation.

(ii)Jongayu/Yohyo: This shawl is designed in black, white and blue strips with black background. It is worn by a wealthy woman or a rich man's daughter or wife and by someone who host the feast of merit. This shawl is used by Yimkhiung Naga women. It is called *Yohyo* in Chirr dialect and *Jongayu* in Makury dialect. In the same pattern and style there is also mekhela called *Yohyo Rüntsun* and *Jonga Mürureng*. Since it doesn't have any motifs it can be woven in two pieces and stitched together to make it a proper shawl and mekhela.

(iii)Lozeysüt: This shawl is woven in red colour with six black labels at certain intervals. The middle four black labels has the motif of cricket-bat-shaped, a tool used in making pottery. A red oval or dot seen is the stone used in pot making. This shawl is used by Longpfürü speaking people and hence their shawl bears the significance of pot making practised since time immemorial. The shawl *Lozeysüt* means the "A shawl of a skilled weaver or a shawl of a hard working woman." The bottom pattern is that of seeds used generally in agricultural practices. Since women were more focused in work culture rather than education system the shawl gives the significance of its daily usages.

(iv)Alongza or yakto rongthsün: The most important mekhela of the Yimkhiung women is *Alongzah*. This mekhela was worn by rich and dignified woman during any social gatherings or festivals. However, in the present each Yimkhiung owns it as it is the main mekhela of the community. '*Alongzah*' means a mekhela with a core design in

the middle, it is also interpreted that a heart is a core organ which outpours love, peace and unity. A woman who wears it can be an ambassador of peace, love and unity. It has a fairy tale in line with the invention of mekhela. A woman is gifted with this sarong on the day of her marriage wherein she is expected to be a channel of blessing to her new home and family. The inspiration is drawn from the fairy's wife. The mekhela looks plain and simple with design in the middle portion of the mekhela. The tiny designs in the middle portion depict the tattoos that were carried on women's chin and forehead. It has a diamond shaped pattern that symbolises grain, seeds of pumpkin and cucumbers and pounding mortar or grinder. *Alongzah* is a must keep for every Yimkhiung women, there is not a single lady without owning that mekhela. It serves as an identity. Every woman would receive it as a send off gift from the family. That is how the tradition stands alive and gets on to pass down from mothers to daughters. (YTC 44)

With the change of time many weavers weave a good number of modern mekheldas but traditionally our grandmothers used Tsüngrümkhim and Alongzah. It is a combination of two primary colours red and black. The designs are tribe specific and that makes the identification easy in large crowds and gatherings. Mekheldas and shawl were accompanied by earrings, necklaces armlets and bangles, hair ornaments or hair bands were also used. Hair decorations were made of beads, red goat hair or feathers attached on the hair ornaments.

(v)Kejingberü rongthsün: Another important mekhela of Yimkhiung women that is handed down from ancestors' generations after generations is Kejingberü rongthsun which is white in colour. Women from geographically lower area of the community used it in olden days. It was first woven by a lady from lower region called kejinglim in Yimkhiung dialect and was married to a man from upper region and thus the was named in honour of her which literally means a woman from lower region. This mekhela is all white with a few single strands of black and purple threads. It has a design of *www* at the bottom portion of the mekhela. Some weavers would put some strands of threads to give more decorative look.

(vi)Rümchensu: Rümchensu means 'Red Mekhela'. This mekhela is commonly used by Longpfürü speaking people of Yimkhiung tribe. The Mekhela is mostly red in color and

woven in three pieces and stitched together. It has a middle portion design woven with the motifs of seeds of rice grain used by the people that sustained lives. The design is the replica of the tattoos over the forehead, chin, arms and legs on a woman's body. The wool type used for making the mekhela is two ply, thailand, polyster and doly.

(vii)Chibalu Rüntsan: This mekhela is used by Chirr speaking people of the Yimkhiung tribe. The motif of the mekhela is that of pumpkin seeds and tattoos embossed on the chin of a woman.

(viii)Pieyie Rongthsün: Pieyie means "Colocasia Farm". The design of the mekhela drew an inspiration from a field where she found strange and unique patterns over the leaves of colocasia. She discovered the pattern and wove the mekhela in red, black and blue coloured yarn. It is worn by the womenfolk since time immemorial.

Youths' attires

(i)Thülün Khim: Thülün Khim is one particular shawl used by young people. Thulun means people of the same age group or peer group .On the shawl is the picture of the tiger, dao, spear and the hornbill. Young people dress themselves with modern waist coat and mufflers. Some boys use 'Rongkim' designed into waist coat or muffler. It is also decorated with ivory or white beads making it look more beautiful and grand.

(ii)Waistcoat: Young people also wear a waistcoat called '*Mongtsü*' waist coat which means 'Peace' waistcoat. The symbol on the waistcoat is the picture of a dove in the front view and at the back is the sunrise picture with the word *Mongtsü* which means peace written on it.

Yimkhiung accessories and ornaments:

Head gears varied slightly from region to region or from one village to another village. Head gear used by menfolk is *Kurungkuthran* or Kurungkuri, *Müknam kuthran* is another kind of headgear with the tiger's or wild boar's teeth, *rikiangkhi*(feather of a hornbill), biling, *nuku mükhippe*(ear-ring)used by man, dao box, leg guard called '*jingtüm*'. A loin cloth or a kilt, leggings, armllets, wristlets, earrings and a good number of necklaces made of beads, shells and bones.

(i) Kurung Kuthran: The traditional attire of a particular tribe brings out the separate identity of each tribe. Like any other Naga tribe Yimkhiung men have the full traditional costume that includes Kurung Kuthran, the head gear also called “Atsün kuthran” as it is used during traditional dancing. The head gear is red in colour that represents blood and bravery. Materials used for the headgear is a fine thinly sliced bamboo or cane made into the shape of cone. It is decorated with the goat’s hair that is dyed red to symbolise the power and strength. The head gear of men also has a wild boar’s tusk (YTC 30). Kurung kuthran comes in red colour with the feather of a Hornbill bird that signifies pride and fame in the society.

(ii) Müknam Kuthran: Müknam Kuthran comes in black colour. It is another type of head gear that is used for dancing and other festive activities. The head gear of men also has a wild boar’s tusk (YTC 30). Unlike Kurung Kuthran the hair on the head gear is black in colour with hornbill feather on it.

(iii) Khüzü hü: *Khüzü hü* means tiger’s tooth or tusk. It is most valued and priced possession of a man. It carries the value of plot of land or field. Some people would exchange land or field for the *Khüzü hü* lak. This necklace has to be handled with care. Substances like oil, garlic, should be avoided while handling this. A person is believed to become crippled or handicapped if he wears this necklace without performing a ritual.

(iv) Thsotorü: “Thsotorü” meaning “armlets made of elephant’s tusk” or made of brass as available in the market, it is round in shape worn across arms which is white in colour and if it is of the metal the colour varies as per its property. Similarly wristlets were made of metal wire. The process of making armlet is carried out with much difficulty. In the past, elephants were there in Naga forests but with the rampant destruction of forest elephants are very rare except in some areas. Many types of armlets are made out of ivory tusk. An armlet is also made of cane, wood, metal but the original and costliest one is that made of ivory.

(v) Nuku Mükhippe: It is made of sea shells. This earring is worn by men folk of the tribe it has a pattern printed on it depicting the male chest that stands for courage,

might and strength of a man. In olden days the rich warriors wore it as a regular ornament while the others used cotton earrings as alternative as they could not afford to buy one. It has a thread at the back to hold the earlobe.

(vi)Laktam: *Laktam* is a necklace that is large and covers the bosom; it is made of red beads with the bells on the edge.

(vii)Khinu lak: '*Khinu lak*' which literally means '*Moon Necklace*' it has three white oval or moon-shaped ivory. Young girls participate in cultural activities like playing indigenous games and also taking part in singing and dancing. Young girls decorate themselves beautifully adorned with hair clips and head band made out of cane or bamboo and over it is tangled with colourful threads matching it with the mekhela or the shawl.

(viii)Tsünkhiuk nüpü: '*Tsünkhiuk nüpü*' is a female crystal rock earring that is circle in shape with the opening in the middle to insert the earlobe in it.

(ix)Khu (Armlet): This ornament is used by women in the arms. It is made of brass, silver or aluminium. Only the older people in the community could make this particular ornament and thus restricted young people from making it. Anybody who outlaws this, remains in poverty and that certain grief or misery would befall them.

(x)Muffler or Sash: There is also sash worn across the torso, it serves as a comfortable and convenient way of carrying the traditional identity instead of using big shawls.

Ethnic food:

Elliott Oring in his book *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres* states that traditional foodways are also beginning to receive the attention they deserve from folklorists and other social scientists. Eating is one of the earliest interactive behaviour of a newborn, persisting as a situation for intimate human interaction throughout life. Eating affects us 'biologically' and 'physiologically' as well as 'socially' and 'ideologically' (Oring,34.) Agriculture is the main occupation of the Yimkhiungs. Besides many food crops *kholar* (Rajma) is one very popularly produced amongst the Yimkhiung Nagas. Millets were used as staple food and also used in brewing local wine. Maize, millet, jobs tears, rice,

kholar beans, soyabeans, perilla, wild and domestic green vegetables, fruits, pumpkins etc. Yimkhiung popularly use kholar (rajma /kidney beans) as the most favorite curry all throughout the year. Kholar is cooked in every Yimkhiung kitchen and for any important event menu without Kholar is incomplete. It is sown once in the month of February and for the second time in the month of August and harvested in May and December or January. Kholar cultivation is done in big areas covering few acres of land and thus harvesting is done in bulk that can be supplied throughout the state. Most of the farmers cultivate kholar as main crop since it is of great demand by all sections of people. Varieties of Kholar are available in Yimkhiung land. Kholar can be stored for longer period which is of great help to the farmers especially when they have no fresh veggies.

Often, ethnic food traditions are based upon systems of symbols and behaviour that involve complex patterns of preparation, display and consumption. Foods identified by members of an ethnic group maybe thought of as more aesthetic, more wholesome or more foodlike than unethnically identified foods. Even the mention of the food can evoke feelings of pleasant interaction, security and a sense of family and community. (Oring, 35.)Yimkhiung people relish having *kholar* with pork which maybe lined with bones cooked in earthen pot *Litsapfü*. *Kholar* is relished for its taste as well as its nostalgic associations to Yimkhiung life and culture. The dish may mark the ethnicity as they interact with members of other ethnic groups used as one symbol of their identity for others. In other words, ethnic food ways and even ethnic folklore may not only serve symbolic purpose for those within the group, they maybe deliberately manipulated as symbols of ethnic identity for those outside the group. It maybe at the core of ethnic identity or it may serve as a symbol of that identity. Thus, this kind of study deepen the sense of folklore contribution to ethnic identification and action, as well as what folklore can mean and how it can function in a larger universe of relationships and groups(Oring,42.)

Logdrum:

Another unique practice of Naga tribe is the usage of log drum. It was carved out of a single huge tree. It was with much reverence that the log drum was pulled and brought

to the village. All the male members of the village would go and assist in pulling the log drum. There is an instance wherein a particular village member joked about the tree and the tree refused to respond to the pulling of the tree. After much appeasement by an elder man the tree moved and thus reached the village Morung without much difficulty. (Musumong Hd GB interviewed on 11/1/2021) The sound of the logdrum serves as an alarm to any emergency that arises in the village. In case of accident, outbreak of fire, attack by the enemies etc., the sound of the logdrum serve as a signal and people respond to it accordingly.

Stone Megaliths :

Erected or deeds to greet the visitors in silence and great gesture of humility and gratitude. It is also erected to represent own forefathers legacy and also marks the great deeds of one's own predecessors or ancestors.

Tools and weaponry:

Dao, spade, spear, bow and arrows are some tools and weapons used. Daos and spade were smitten by a particular clan "Khüvazülü" who could do the blacksmithy work. It is believed that other clans were not into that profession because it brings bad luck and the harvest becomes very less which affected the whole community with famine kind of situation. Bow and arrow locally called "*Yhayiekhangkhang*" were popularly used by the Mimi areas people. It can be used for hunting as well as for defence purpose from enemies. Bow and arrow is made with a cane and bamboo. A quiver poisoned with a plant fluid would kill the enemy in one go. Ancestors were very skilled in using bow and arrow because the quiver was hardly wasted, hardly any arrow got missed.

The Art of Pot making:

Pot making is an art practised by women like that of weaving. Patterns discovered in the objects and technical processe of everyday life can help to reveal the hidden attitudes underlying our world and belief and perhaps predict the direction of our society in the future. The study of material culture paints a broad and vivid picture of human endeavour. Yimkhiung's origin is proven to by the findings of earthen pot pieces in three four locations before settling down in present day Mimi village. It is

being practiced as a fine art making which has different designs and patterns on the pot. It is an important profession that is passed on or taught by elder women to the younger ones. The pot making is mainly done by the women folk hailing from Mimi dialect speaking villages under Pungro block of Kiphire district. Pot making is an important skill that is passed on or taught by elder women to the younger ones. It takes a lot of effort to make a pot. Pots were used for multi reasons. It was used for cooking, storing water, used for storing grains in the granary, used for tobacco pipes etc. The process and materials required for pot making is to collect the clay (fine powdered clay), straw are two basic materials used. It is being practiced as a fine art making which has different designs and patterns on the pot. Pots were used as a means of exchange when there was barter system. Neighbouring villages would come and exchange their goods for pots. It comes in different shapes and sizes.

Another interesting practice linked to pot making is that each girl child gets a share of big earthen pot filled with millet in it. She can take the pot containing millet on the day of her wedding to her new home. Pot preservation and making has thus, always been a sign of attachment to the root and parents especially for a girl child. (Yasangwu interviewed on 22/3/2020)

The tattoos:

Tattoo system was prevalent since time immemorial; other Naga tribes like Konyaks, Changs and Aos have the tattoo imprinted on the forehead, chest, arms, legs and chin. We see people with the tattoo marks even upto the present day. Some group of experts would tattoo the girls on attaining the marriageable age.

Another interpretation of tattoo is that, it was a way to disguise the beauty of a damsel so that the girl appears less attractive with all the tattoos on her chin and forehead. Different designs are printed as per clan, villages or khel. The pattern of tattoos resemble a pumpkin seed, grain shaped or that of *thsamthrungyak* which is an integral design, it signifies support system or unity. This design is used even in almost all the Yimkhiung mekheldas and shawls.

Tattoo designs differ from region to region. It also showed that a girl with tattoo is of marriageable age or with certain design the boy would easily identify that she is from her own clan and so would avoid proposing her hand in marriage. The tattoos were done with a needle type thorn that is used to prick and make a mark on the face, chin arm or legs. This plant is called *latoying(langtzü ying)* in Longpfürü dialect. Three thorns are bind(Yasangwu Mimi Village interviewed on 13/1/2021.) The design tattooed on the body bears the influence of the wriggling of the snake as seen in the story of *Longpfürü Tadoo*. And so the Longpfürüs say that they were the first to see the snake while writhing on the ground as it was dying and so the tattoos are fine lines. The tattoos on young girls are fine lines that have the inspiration from seeing the markings on the snake's skin. A young girl who has a tattoo mark signify that she is already engaged and that she is betrothed and should not pursue her.

We can conclude by saying that the tribal identity is known by the objects seen and used visible and the dresses that is worn and used every day. The above mentioned materials of Yimkhiung tribe are used on all occasions and are widely known by all. It is mandatory for each household to preserve traditional attire be it for usage or for keep-sake that creates awareness and sense of belongingness amongst the younger generations. The present day youngsters are more inclined towards western style and fashion. They think that the traditional attire is for the older people and thus it is becoming a threat to losing the rich material culture of the tribe. With the passing away of old people the story, the culture and the practices are slowly dwindling away. The scholarly analysis of material culture, which can include both human made and natural or altered objects, is called material culture studies. It is an interdisciplinary field and methodology that tells of the relationships between people and their things: the making, history, preservation, and interpretation of objects. It draws on both theory and practice from the social sciences and humanities such as art history, archaeology, anthropology, history, historic preservation, folklore, archival science literary criticism and museum studies among others. Material culture provides an insight into non material culture which includes the ideas, beliefs, habits and values of a people. While an object starts off as simply a physical item, over time it comes to represent non material and symbolic aspects of a culture. Thus, the main focus of this chapter is to

highlight the material culture that is used by the Yimkhiung tribe in the past and to the present. Material culture are-tools, weapons, machines, ornaments, monument, written records religious images, clothing and any other ponder able objects produced or used by humans.

Material culture reveal the identity of a tribe, it's traditional way of weaving is distinct. Machines are not used but the back strao loom is used for weaving. The Yimkhiung use woven shawls and carry bags for fields and school purposes. Yimkhiung turn yarn into weaving by involving three stages spinning the cotton, dyeing the cotton into different color and weaving.

The different motifs and patterns also make the shawl distinct and make it easy to recognise as to whose tribe that particular shawl belongs to. Yimkhiungs mostly use the color red and black in both man and womens shawls and mekhelas.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Yimkhiung tribe has a rich cultural heritage. This research thesis has navigated the intricacies of sustainable folk culture shedding light on the pivotal role of the community engagement and re-telling and re-singing of the tales and songs. This thesis has explored and analysed various aspects of the folk life of the people. Through rigorous data collection, field visit, interviewing elders, and careful analysis and critical interpretation of the topic is made.

Material culture also in a way exhibits the human behaviour because it projects the likings and interest of the particular community. It also shows its mastery skill of handling a specific tools or weapons. Attire and weapons also reflect the traits of a group of people. It may mean courage, bravery or bloodshed that were prevalent in the past.

The delimitation of the study of myth to the mere examination texts has been fatal to a proper understanding of its nature. The forms of myth which comes to us from classical antiquity and from the ancient sacred books of the East and other similar sources have come down to us without the context of living faith, without the possibility of obtaining comments from true believers, without the concomitant knowledge of their social organization, their practised morals, and their popular custom, at least without the full information which the modern fieldworker can easily obtain.

The ideas expressed through the Yimkhiung folksongs gives the picture of patriotism, love for ones people and land. This feeling has always boosted the people and the sense of pride and belongingness has been inculcated since time immemorial.

The folktale as we know is a seasonal performance and an act of sociability. The legend, provoked by contact with unusual reality, opens up past historical vistas. The myth comes into play when rite, ceremony or a social or moral rule demands justification, warrant of antiquity, reality, and sanctity. Festivals revolve around seasonal sowing of seeds or harvest. Nature and seasons were taken as time indicator by the forefathers.

Particular bird's song indicated a particular time. A *folkway* is also called customs. It is essentially transmitted verbally and enforced by acceptance by the folk group involved. Folkways like folk beliefs are closely associated with the cycle of life.

The realisation to keep the folksongs and folktales in written form made me make an attempt to delve deeper into studying about the people, its history, way of life and what we ought to preserve. There seems to be no better way than allowing ourselves to experience our culture, clothing traditional values and practices etc. Experiencing and appreciating the culture can broaden our outlook, expel our prejudices and help us focus on the oneness we share with each other leading to keeping ultimate vision, to have a strong sense of identity and a factor to unify in building a society into a culturally unique and interesting.

Culture enhances our quality of life and increases overall being for both individuals and communities. Some components of culture are-purpose, values, behaviours, recognition, rituals and cues.

The relevance and continuity of the study of Yimkhiung myth and symbols and generally that of folklore can be researched upon further. This research is not exhaustive. This is only a small contribution on the part of the scholar for preservation and for keeping the tradition alive by collecting the articles related to the people. The stories are re-told, re-narrated, re-written as per the findings for the academic as well as for social cause.

Tribal studies have been and still remain the main domain of anthropological theory, which has been extended to tribal studies, has in recent times not only raised questions about the relevance of anthropological theory itself but also its futility in the realm of tribal studies. The point is rather than treating the tribal and non tribal problem as an economic problem and a problem of sharing resources and technology, it has been, because of the borrowed colonial paradigm, treated as an ethnic and racial problem by scholars (George, 15.) The realisation that we need to study about our people, our history, our way of life and what we are. There seems to be no better way than allowing ourselves to experience our culture, clothing traditional values and practices

etc. Experiencing and appreciating the culture can broaden our outlook, expel our prejudices and help us focus on the oneness we share with each other. Thus ultimate vision is to have a strong sense of identity and a factor to unify in building a society into a culturally unique and interesting. Nagaland's biggest asset lies in her natural and unexplored stories and areas. In addition to the intrinsic value culture provides important social and economic benefits. With improved learning and health, increased tolerance and opportunities to come together with others.

Chapter One provides an introduction to the research topic and lays down the focus towards the thesis. It talks about the tribe Yimkhiung, the people how it migrated and also the people that constitute the tribe. It is one distinct tribe because people of the tribe speak different language however there is one language called *Langa* that connects all the people and serves as a medium of communication.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the theories and concepts of the folklore. Folklorists from around the world contributing to the factors making it an important discipline to study for human and for history. In this chapter in-depth study is done by analysing the characteristics and functions of folklore. Folklore is indispensable to know a group of people and attitude of life. Anonymity is one of the criteria of folklore and the debate over whether a particular craft grew up at different places at different times or was founded by one person and then diffused throughout the country is as important for crafts as it is for oral folklore.

Chapter Three delves into Narratives that are considered significant by the Yimkhiung people. Oral narration brought the culture forward by word of mouth. Memory and re-narration served as the source of information. It varied from person to person however remembering the experiences helped to reach the present stage somehow. This chapter shows the importance of folksong, how the forefathers cherished and narrate with great enthusiasm, taking them back to the past old days. Attitudes and values of folks are reflected in verbal expression of sayings and proverbs as the speech is composed of beliefs, morals, and tradition.

Chapter Four discusses myths and symbols used in Yimkhiung society. Yimkhiung myths of five types are analysed. Symbols carry and signify different meanings are also shown.

Chapter Five presents material culture that enhances our attachment quality of life and increases overall being for both individuals and communities. Folk crafts are either passed down from generation to generation within the same family or learned from a master craftsman, which in turn had learned her craft from someone else. No one knows the origin of a certain craft or of a particular design within that craft anymore than we know the origin of a folksong or a legend. Crafts were more important for the people before the coming of industry. Carpentry has been a traditional occupation. Modern day carpenters use electric machinery and published plans, and while modern woodmakers make most money by refinishing furniture, there are some people who are building cabinets, chairs, and furniture using traditional methods. Basketry is still made by hand, and there still are a number of significant basket makers who learned their craft traditionally.

The relevance and continuity of the study of Yimkhiung myths and generally that of folklores and the culture in general can be researched upon further. This cannot be termed as the ultimate truth or fixed reading. This is only a small contribution on the part of the scholar for preservation and for keeping the tradition alive by collecting the articles related to the people. The stories are re-told, re-narrated, re-written as per the findings for the academic as well as for social cause.

Every folk museum has a practising blacksmith since such a person was very important in early village life. He supplied the farmer with many implements including nails, made out of iron. While blacksmiths survive into the present day they are more properly called farriers, because their primary function is shoeing of horses, particularly racehorses.

Some crafts people combined beauty with utility. Tinsmiths who worked with tin created toleware, beautifully painted designs on trays, dishes, and cups. Some makers of pewter pots and mugs created beautiful variations of traditional designs. Potters

also experimented with variations of designs but nothing like modern potters who are more interested in the beauty or design of their objects than their utility. The old craftsmen were suppliers of necessity first, and artists second. Among other practical craftspeople were the broommaker, the thatcher, the tanner and the shoemaker.

Yimkhiung women's social stature:

Women constitute half of the population and hence the study of women cannot be ignored be it in material or non- material aspects of life. Women in the past had very less privilege, they had no say in the society, woman had no power to raise voices or make any decisions. One of the song writers rightly points that it was a 'dark age' wherein women were considered as low being and was considered unfortunate to have a girl child. Their main occupation was to engage themselves in the household chores and agricultural activities and child bearing and raising kids.

However, with the passage of time and with the coming of Christianity and education there came a ray of hope for the women folk. Gradually things began to change and now we can see big shots and some women holding very high positions in the government level and almost all the families have educated daughters if not mothers. The economic status of the womenfolk were very low or no income at all. Needless to speak of gender or colour discrimination, the women of poor family or women with no money also faced discrimination. An economically sound person can be freer in taking any decisions on their own. Lack of marketing linkages has been one of the key disincentives of the farmers that could lead to dependency upon husband or fathers.

By examining the intricate relationships between the folklore and folk objects in the form of material culture key patterns, trends, values and co-relations have been uncovered making the study and interesting one and offer a deeper understanding of "A Study of Myth and Symbols in Yimkhiung Narratives." Narratives and its interpretation of Yimkhiung tribe and also the material and non-material culture is analysed. The purpose of this research is to study the Yimkhiung culture with special reference to myths and symbols in Yimkhiung narratives. This topic covers the whole system of a particular people and time and literature as well. It is not confined to a

section or group of people but this research aims to serve as a guiding and helping ready reference book. The story of the tribe can be kept alive through this research work; however the whole areas and stories couldn't be covered. There is still a space for researching by upcoming writers and scholars.

Overall, this thesis contributes to the current knowledge base by providing a comprehensive analysis of "A Study of Myth and Symbols in Yimkhiung Narratives" and its implications. It offers valuable insights that can guide future studies and inspire further exploration in this area. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Despite the efforts to ensure the reliability and validity of our findings, certain constraints such as unavailability of the written books on Yimkhiung tribe may have influenced. These limitations provide potential opportunities for future research to build upon the work and address the remaining gaps.

PICTURE GALLERY
ARCHITECTURE



HOUSES WITH SLATE ROOF (Long Yam)



House of a person who host the feast of merit



Morung (Kheangyam)



Log drum (Sangkong)

SOME POPULAR SHAWLS OF YIMKHIUNG MEN



Rongkhim



Kejingrū Rongkhim



Denroksüt



Throthriyo

SOME POPULAR SHAWLS OF YIMKHIUNG WOMEN



Tsüngrümkhim

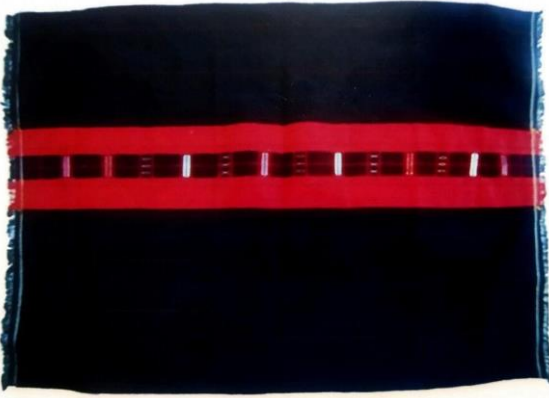


Lozeysüt



Jongayu

SOME POPULAR MEKHELA OF YIMKHIUNG WOMEN



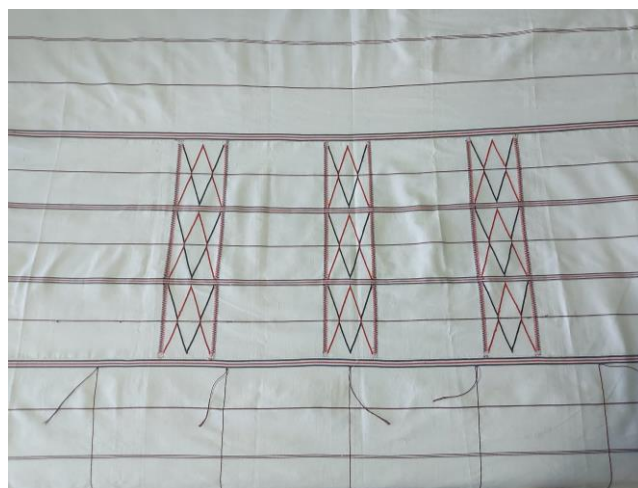
Alongzah/Yakto Rongthsün



Chibalu Rüntsen



Rumchensu



Kejingberü Rongthsün

SOME POPULAR ORNAMENTS OF YIMKHIUNG MEN



Kurung Kuthran



Müknam Kuthran



Thsotorü



Nuku Mükhippe



Khüzü Hüh



Jipü Rih

SOME POPULAR ORNAMENTS OF YIMKHIUNG WOMEN



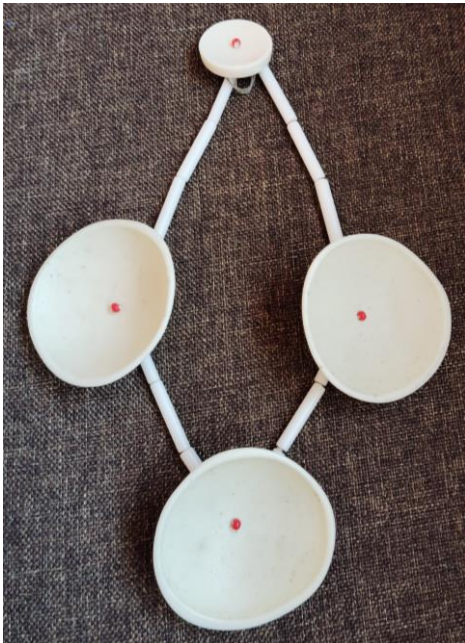
Kutsümpe



Khu



Tsünkhiuk

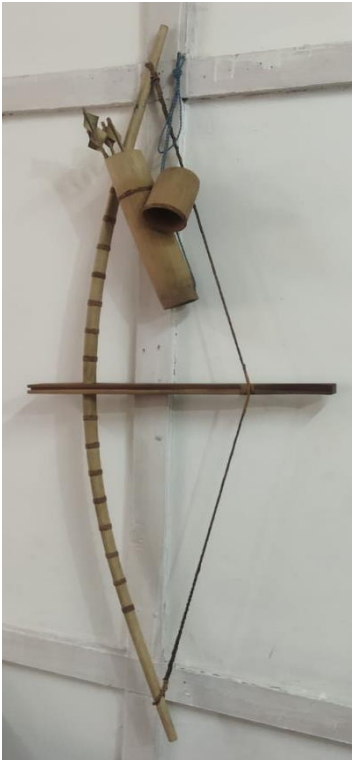


Khinulak



Laktam

BASKETRY AND WEAPONRY



Sanglüh



Nyim, Hah, Khi, Mülok, Hühpong, Tru, Sangtsap

POTTERY



Alophüh /Litsapfü

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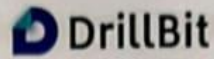
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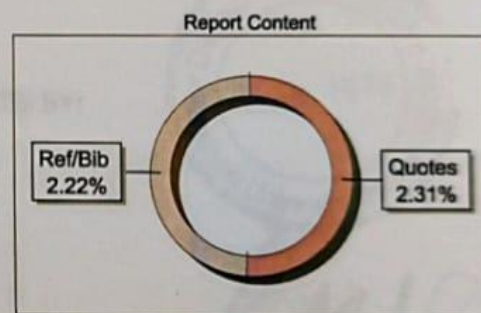
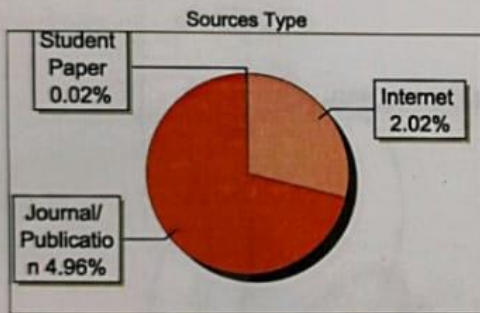
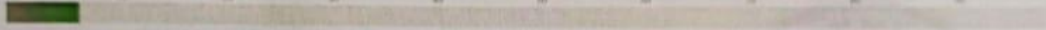
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