

## **APPENDIX-V**

### **FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION (REGULATION) ACT, 1976**

During the Emergency Regime in the mid-1970s, voluntary organizations played a significant role in Jayaprakash Narayan's (JP) movement against Mrs. Indira Gandhi. With the intervention of voluntary organizations, JP movement received funds from external sources. The government became suspicious of the NGOs as mentioned in the previous chapter and thus appointed a few prominent people in establishing the Kudal Commission to investigate the ways in which JP movement functioned. Interestingly, the findings of the investigating team prompted the passage of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act during the Emergency Period.

The government prepared a Bill and put it up for approval in 1973 to regulate or control the use of foreign aid which arrived in India in the form of donations or charity but it did not pass as an Act in the same year due to certain reasons undisclosed. However, in 1976, Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act was introduced to basically monitor the inflow of funds from foreign countries by philanthropists, individuals, groups, society or organization. Basically, this Act was enacted with a view to ensure that Parliamentary, political or academic institutions, voluntary organizations and individuals who are working in significant areas of national life may function in a direction consistent with the values of a sovereign democratic republic. Any organizations that seek foreign funds have to register with the Ministry of Home Affairs, FCRA, and New Delhi. This Act is applicable to every state in India including organizations, societies, companies or corporations in the country. NGOs can apply through the FC-8 Form for a permanent number. However, their application form will be scrutinized and verified by the Intelligence Bureau (IB).

Any deserved NGO can apply for the FCRA to get the registration and it may take 4 or 6 months or more depending on the conditions of the application. There is also a chance for rejecting an application by the FCRA officials if discrepancies are found. It is a fact, that several NGOs received FCRA by bribing the concerned officials. This Act has 32 sections, 9 rules and 8 forms. From 1979 to 1984, some critics alleged that NGOs were utilizing their foreign funds for political purpose in mobilizing the rural poor to cast their vote to certain candidates or party and they argued that it was also used for religious conversions as well as for the separatist movements. They demanded the government to liberalize the FCRA and also Societies Registration Act and IT Act to match the global changing scenario.

They strongly appealed to the government to make some changes in the Act by arguing that the FCRA in its present form does not serve its original purposes, and it has become a nuisance to the democratic activities of the civil organizations. Finally, the central government made modifications of FCRA in 1984. Interestingly, in 1990, some people demanded a complete ban on Foreign Contributions Regulations Act. They felt that the inflow of foreign funds would jeopardize the security and sovereignty of the Nation. Hence, the government makes a few amendments to the original FCRA since 27th December 1996, which is more stringent and rigorous. It is essential to mention that the Finance Ministry opposed the idea of banning FCRA because the foreign funds which have arrived in India without any major obligations although NGOs are obliged to send reports of their activities to the funding agencies and to the Home Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Besides, out of the total foreign funds received, a minimum of 35% usually caters to employment generation.

In 2005, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by the Congress Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had initiated a debate in the Parliament on the issue of FCRA. In July 2005, the Union Cabinet approved a draft Bill seeking replacement of the FCRA of 1976. The Government proposed to amend FCRA in order to ensure that it is effectively implemented rather than making it more

stringent. The Ministry of Home Affairs has recorded 30,000 NGOs that were registered under the FCRA in the country. And, they have claimed that around Rs 5,000 crores (Rs 50 Billion) were remitted to these NGOs from abroad under the FCRA. As per the record of 2003, it is reported that the major recipient states include Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The Ministry of Home affairs has recorded that the biggest recipient of foreign funds is the Andhra Pradesh based NGO called Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust which received Rs 95 crore (Rs 950 million) during the year 2003-04.

The Government is prompted to propose a new law in place of the FCRA due to the allegations that thousands of NGOs are diverting funds for profit making enterprises. Besides, the Government is interested to facilitate the inflow of foreign contributions for humanitarian works without compromising concerns over national security. The major feature in the proposed new rules of the FCRA is the centralization of the administrative structure. There would be more than four regional offices instead of the existing Central office located in New Delhi. The new proposed rule requires the NGOs to receive foreign funds from the designated banks in the country although they are allowed to open multiple bank accounts to disburse the funds. NGOs with FCRA will be required to submit their report to the Ministry of Home Affairs on regular basis. And, the government has the legitimate power to cancel the FCRA of the particular NGOs if they found any discrepancies in their activities. Under the new proposed rule, NGOs will renew the FCRA after every few years, wherein the government evaluates their performances and audited statement of accounts. The Government of India has given autonomous power to the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) to provide funds to the NGOs for implementation of various programmes. And, the CAPART has its prerogative to blacklist the NGOs when not executed the CAPART assisted programmes.

## APPENDIX-VI

### FUNDING AGENCIES (DONORS) OF THE NGOs

Funding is an absolutely vital element of any voluntary oriented service programmes. As long as funds flow-in from the donor agencies, the programmes usually survive. The moment the funding agencies cease to provide financial aid, the project would totally collapse. Hence, there is no hope for the survival of the projects if the NGOs do not focus on viability and sustainability of the developmental projects. It is essential to mention that several NGOs also lack total commitment and dedication while implementing the projects. And, they often fail to look at the sustainability of the projects as they expect to survive on external funds on a permanent basis.

Lovell (1992) holds that NGOs have extraordinary challenges and opportunities. He pointed out that resources to finance NGO work are available if their leaders understand how to ask. Unfortunately, all NGOs are not equally effective, and donors must learn through experience which ones have its merit to enjoy the continued support. He affirms that the combination of extensive landlessness and lack of off-farm jobs has become a key variable in all decision making by rural development NGOs, causing most of them to include income-generating activities as part of any program.

Changes in the funding agencies are taking place as it is becoming institutionalized. They often dispatch their staff to conduct monitoring and evaluating tasks in the field on grassroots levels. According to Roger & Mark (1995), funding mechanisms fall into four categories;

- The first is where the donor operates exclusively through an

intermediary agency in India that is responsible for identifying suitable projects, liaising with partners, and monitoring and evaluating their activities. German and Dutch agencies such as EZE, Misereor, and CEBEMO generally work through established intermediary organizations or umbrella groupings.

- ▶ The second type is the consortia model favoured by the churches, where donor agencies pool their funds, usually in the form of block grants, which are then distributed by an intermediary agency. Caritas India performs this role for the Catholic agencies and CASA (Churches' Auxiliary for Social Action) for the World Council of Churches.
  
- ▶ The third approach is that favoured by Oxfam, Save the Children Fund, and NOVIB, all of which have in-country offices, staffed mainly by Indian nationals, forming part of the parent organization and performing a role similar to that of an intermediary agency. Oxfam tends to favour small agencies, viewing its project support as catalytic and aimed at encouraging innovative approaches. In each region it establishes priority sectors or identifies specific social groups for special consideration. In Karnataka, for example, women and nomadic tribals receive particular attention, with social forestry as a key sector. There is also provision for non-project initiatives, such as training, networking, and inter-project visits, with the purpose of encouraging cross-fertilization of ideas between individual NGOs and promoting institutional development.
  
- ▶ The fourth model does not involve an intermediary agency, and relations between donor and recipient operate on a one-to-one basis. Projects are submitted directly to the funding agency, which processes the applications in its head office. The main form of contact with project partners is through periodic tours undertaken by desk officers of the agency concerned. Christian Aid, for example, channels most of its

funds to Indian NGOs bilaterally.

Roger and Mark (ibid) further opine that the liberal foreign funding has undoubtedly encouraged a proliferation of small agencies and enabled others to expand quickly. There are cases where rapid growth has diluted the effectiveness of the implementing agency, which in turn raises the prospect of the funding being terminated. A related problem is that the availability of funding encourages unscrupulous organizations to apply for support without adequate vetting. Individuals offer their services as consultants to NGOs, giving advice on appropriate sources of funding, and assistance in drawing up proposals and writing reports. A few donors adopt a strategic approach in their programmes, and in many cases funding decisions tend to be ad-hoc and reactive.

In India, there are three major donor agencies established by the government. They are:

- ▶ The Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural technology (CAPART) formed on 18th September, 1986, as an autonomous body under the Rural Development Ministry.
- ▶ The second funding agency is the Central Social welfare Board (CSWB) and,
- ▶ The Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC). Apart from these donor agencies, there are several other Ministries & Departments under the government of India which facilitate funds for NGOs operating in any part of India.

However, it is not easy to avail funds from the funding agencies. It is indeed a tedious, difficult and problematic task, which requires considerable efforts as well as influences in the higher level. Bebbington and Thiele Graham (1993) asserts that,

donors, faced with the crises and inefficiencies of their traditional governmental counterparts, now want to work with NGOs in programmes of poverty alleviation, good government and sustainable development. They argued that some social scientists, faced with the crises of their former models of social development, have latched on to the work of NGOs for theoretical inspiration and political hope. They observe that in the last few years NGOs have been denominated vehicles of development, democracy and empowerment at the grassroots.

Robin Lall (*ibid*) holds that a critical issue for all NGOs is ensuring that funding is available to accomplish their primary objectives. Some NGOs specialize in the raising of funds for disbursement to other NGOs, and may have minimal involvement in the provision of direct services. Some international NGOs, using both their own resources from individual donations and those provided by their own national governments under joint funding schemes, effectively act as providers of resources to 'partner' NGOs in developing countries.

It is interesting to note how various funding agencies or donor organizations differ in their scope and areas of funding. Some only fund action projects while others concentrate on funding research studies. The funds of some may be confined only to a special target group, viz., rural women, poor women, and unskilled women while others have a broader approach. Some may fund only the projects managed by NGOs while others give grants for individuals. Funding from various agencies is available for different types of activities, e.g., training schemes, income-generating activities, child care facilities, seminars and conferences, for sponsoring an individual to attend a specific academic course, conducting field surveys, research projects and so on. Usually, the donor agencies have certain formats available for applying for grants and spell out how the project should be submitted. These should be consulted prior to submitting the proposals in order to avoid

unnecessary wastage of time, effort and resources (Vyas & Singh Sunita 1993:184-185).

Rana Kranti (ibid: 275) asserts that now, when the air is thick with charges against the foreign funding of many Indian NGOs, it is no wonder that a large number of social activists are clamoring for drastic changes in the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act. In an article in the Times of India (29th November, 1996) entitled: 'Committed and Crooked-NGOs Need a Code of Conduct', Vimla Ramchandran criticizes the way NGOs utilize the funds as she wrote

Given the worrisome situation, there is a need to classify and differentiate between varied kinds of NGOs and provide appropriate registration and monitoring mechanism for each category. Many organizations have the authority to receive foreign funds directly. Permission to receive foreign funds is regulated by the Home Ministry through FCRA. This system monitors inflow of resources, but there is no mechanism to monitor whether these have been spent properly.

As suggested by Ramchandran (ibid), the amount of foreign funds received by Indian NGOs in order to implement various programmes in the country is a serious matter which needs to be investigated thoroughly. Sometimes, NGOs are also blamed for using the funds in an improper manner and there arise skepticism about the utilization of funds by the critics who condemn obtaining of foreign funds. Besides, the practice of bribery, red-tapism, discrimination and nepotism are also rampant in the funding agencies. While the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, is only listening to suggested amendments in FCRA, certain international donors have already instituted external audit procedures after a few bitter experiences where some organizations were found to have submitted bogus accounts and reports and some having got grants from multiple sources for the same set of activities.



## APPENDIX-VII

### THE LIANGMAI (ZELIANGRONG) NAGAS IN TAMEI SUB-DIVISION

The Liangmai Nagas, a sub-tribe of Zeliangrong Nagas are scattered in the states of Manipur, Nagaland and Assam. As explained earlier, the Zeliangrong is the combined name of the Zeme, Liangmai and Rongmei including Puimei. The British know the Zeme and Liangmai as Kacha Naga whereas the Rongmei and Puimei are popularly known as the Kabui, name given by the Meiteis of Imphal valley (Kamei 1996:16). On the other hand, the word “Kabui” is also believed to be derived from a place called “Impui” a village in the southern part of Liangmai inhabited area. From the name of Impui village, the Liangmai Nagas called them “Maraungmai”.

In Manipur, the Liangmai Nagas are mostly concentrated in Tamei sub-division of Tamenglong district and Senapati district. It is an intricate task to trace the origin of Liangmai (Kacha) Nagas since they do not have any written documentation. Besides, there is a lack of authentic historical evidence. Nevertheless, their historical background is being studied by using the roots of folklore, archaeology and oral tradition. The Liangmai Nagas belonged to the Indo-Burma Tibeto Mongoloid race. Most of them have a feature of medium height, slender body structure, fair complexion and long head. It is essential to clarify the fallacy of the Liangmai and Zeme Nagas as “Kacha Naga”. The traditional legend reveals that the term “Kacha Naga” is derived from an Angami Naga word “Ketsa” or “Ketsu” which means thick forest without human habitation. It also means a jungle beyond the Khonoma hill in Nagaland. In other words, it implies a forest wherein no human beings live beyond the hills.

Based on my personal investigation with the Liangmai Naga elders, it is found that when the British came to Khonoma village near Kohima in Nagaland,

they asked the Angami Naga people, pointing towards the western district of Kohima, whether any tribe live in those hills. It is believed that the Angami people responded in their local dialect “Ketsa or Ketsu” which means a thick forest area. Eventually, the British moved and entered inside the thick forest and discovered the Liangmai and Zeme Nagas inhabiting the area. Since then, they called the tribe beyond the thick forest as “Ketsa Naga” which was later altered derogatorily as “Kacha Naga”. Thus, the British coined the term “Kacha Naga” with reference to the Liangmai and Zeme (also known as Nzieme) tribes.

Das (1986:110) emphasizes that the word Zeme has been derived from the root word Zemina, meaning man. G.Grierson (1903) allocates the origin of Kacha Nagas linguistically to the second wave of immigration among that of the Tibeto-Burma, from the traditional cradle of the Indo-Chinese race in north western China between upper areas of the Yang-Tse-kiang and the Ho-Ang-ho Rivers. Gangmumei Kamei (2004:13) argues as:

“It is now clearly established that the name Kutcha or Kacha Naga applied by the British anthropologists like Dr. J.H. Hutton is wrong. Kacha is an Angami word derived from Ketsa or Ketsu meaning deep forests or dwellers of the forest and was originally applied to the Zemes of Naga Hills but as early as 1850, Lt. Vincent discovered that Zeme known as Majemah was separate from the Angami. It is not known how the Zeme of North Cachar Hills was called Aroong Naga (1855) and Kachcha Nagas (1885). The prestige of John Butler Jr. and Sir James Johnstone who were great admirers of the Angamis for unknown reasons popularized this term “Kutcha Naga”. It persisted in the early twentieth century. Dr. J.H. Hutton wrote that Kutcha Naga covered Zemei, Liangmai, Maruangmei (Rongmei) and Kabui. Even Ursula Graham Bower who worked and lived among the Zemes of North Cachar Hills and toured the Tameglong hills adopted the wrong classification of J.H. Hutton”.

Captivatingly, Kamei (ibid) pointed out that the word Kacha Naga or Kutcha Naga were never used in the official records of Manipur. He mentioned that Liangmai tribe was used in the list of the villages appended to Manipur State Hill

People's Regulation 1947. Kamei states that it was J.H. Hutton who wrote several monographs on Angami and other tribes and also enquired into the causes of the kuki rebellion in 1920 and had popularized the term "Kacha Naga" particularly in Assam. Kamei asserts that the writings of J.H. Hutton had influenced some of the Anglo-Indian officers like Higgins, Gimson, William Shaw and Duncan who started using the term "Kach Naga" not "Kutch" or "Kachcha Naga".

Another scholar Verrier Elwin (1969:421) asserts that the fact of the Kacha Nagas not being a wandering race, like the Kacharis and Kukis, and rarely, except for some pressing reason, changing the site of the village, and even on these occasions, never moving more than a mile or so from the old location, would lead one to conjecture that they are descended from the earliest inhabitants of the parts they now occupy. Gait E.A. (1984) traces the historical background of the Kacha Nagas and highlights that they were also enlisted in the armies of the Ahom Kings who had relationship with the Kings of Manipur. Further, he opines that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Manipuris raided the Angami area including Kohima and massacred hundreds of people. Even the Kacha Nagas suffered under the Manipuris as a result to their closed proximity with the Angami Nagas.

Following the Independence of India, the Government recognized the Liangmai and Zeme Naga tribes as "Kacha Naga" and they are enlisted in the Scheduled Tribe lists although a huge majority of them like to disown the name as they think that it distorts their identity. Fortunately, the distorted name "Kacha Naga" was rectified in Nagaland by replacing it with the term "Zeliang" which includes Zeme and Liangmai Nagas. This term was initially not known to these sub-tribes until they came in contact with the outsiders. Initially, the Liangmai Nagas were known as 'Hamai'. The meaning of "Hamai" is vague but it is affiliated to the word "Hao" (untouchable), a misnomer provided by the Meiteis, who are more advanced than the hill tribes. Considering the lack of literature on all Naga tribes, Prakash Singh (1972:9) affirms that the Nagas have no recorded history and even sketchy details during the pre-British period is not available.

### **Migratory Myths:**

It is essential to deal with the migration pattern of Liangmai (Kacha) Nagas. According to J.H. Hutton (1921:352,356), the ancestors of Kacha Nagas came from the direction of Japro Mountain in Nagaland and spread towards the south. He also asserts that they have been connected with the head hunters of the Malay and the races of the Southern sea on the one hand and traced back to China on the other. It is presumed that the Liangmai Nagas, along with other Naga tribes might have come to North East India region from Central Asia during the last century B.C. or 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. through Thailand and Upper Burma (Myanmar). This theory is facilitated by the fact that some Naga tribes are still living in Upper Myanmar.

Similar to the migration theory of other Naga tribes, Liangmai Nagas are also believed to have migrated particularly from Mongolia and China by passing through the mountain ranges of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan. On the other hand, a few believed that Liangmai Nagas prior to their migration to the present habitat have lived in the islands near the sea which probably indicates Indonesia and Phillipines. They correspondingly practice terrace and jhum cultivation as they are practiced in China. This theory of migration is substantiated by their use of seashells as their principal ornamental jewellerys in the form of bracelets, bangles and necklaces which reveal that they had resided in someplace close to the sea-shore. Besides, they make permanent settlements in hill-locked villages. It is absolutely difficult to portray the facts of the modus operandi of the Liangmai Nagas. Undoubtedly, one is forced to depend on the oral tradition.

There are myths that deal with the origin and migration of Liangmai Nagas. However, it's extremely difficult to justify any theories as the absolute truth. It is essential to point out that, none of the western scholars or Anthropologists have studied the Liangmai Nagas in depth although they have written ornately about other Naga tribes. In addition to the above theories of origin, some of the Liangmai elders, narrate their origin and migration by using traditional myths and legends. A few Liangmai Naga elders who have vast knowledge about their tribe's origin hold

the oral tradition and it is concluded that the tradition passes down the mythical stories from one generation to another generation until recently a handful of scholars recorded it. Basically, the oral tradition reconstructs the history of Liangmai Nagas and gives them a sense of identity.

Often, the elders recalled the popular legend of the tribe, 'Chabangcham' (meaning genesis) in which they affirmed that the Nagas as a whole migrated from the extreme north and finally settled down in Makhiang or Makhel village, located in Mao-Maram Naga area of Senapati district, Manipur for an extensive epoch. And, over a period of time, this specific village became overpopulated. Thus, different clans departed from their original village and migrated to other areas. It is essential to mention that before their departure, they have erected a gigantic stone which is widely known as 'Tadmaratu' (in Liangmai dialect, 'tad' means go; 'mara' means diffuse and 'tu' means stone).

The Liangmai Nagas like most of the other Naga tribes believed in the tradition of Makhel as their original homeland. However, Kamei (1996) expressed his doubt about the Makhel tradition of migration and raised an important question as to from where did they come to Makhel. He opines that unless Makhel is proved to be a birth place of human beings, this tradition cannot be accepted. He argues that the Zeliangrong (Liangmai) folk songs refer to their contact with the Dimasa-Kachari before they came to Makhel. Further, he suggests that some more intensive study based on archaeological, ethnographic and linguistic evidence will be necessary to find out the route of migration of the Nagas. In his view, Nagas are Tibeto Burman and they must have lived with other groups of the same family in south west China before 1000 B.C. and migrated to eastern Tibet, Upper Burma, then moved into the Irrawady valley, Malay and Indonesia, and then returned northward and finally entered North East India through Manipur river, and some tracts of Indo-Burman border to present Naga habitat.

Some of the Liangmai Nagas believed that their ancestors came out of a mythical cave known as Taobhei, which cannot be empirically evaluated in an genuine way while a few others have observed that their origin can be traced back to the oldest village of the tribe called 'Makuilungdih' in Senapati district of Manipur. It is a popular and strong belief that their forefathers had emerged from a specific location called Ramting Kabin (in Liangmai Naga dialect 'Ram' means land, 'ting' stands for the sky, and 'Kabin' refers to the slender passage). Ramting Kabin is a narrow passage between the earth and sky that eventually leads to the cave. The cave is situated just below the Agungphungning village in the Mao-Maram area of the Senapati district of Manipur. From this cave, they moved and settled in and around Oklong (Chawang-Phungning) which later came to be known as Inguang. It is located in the western part of the Senapati district. Sujata Miri (1991) asserts that, a man named Munhu-Nguiba, along with his followers of Zeliangrong Nagas, came down from Makhiang to the place called Ramting-Kabin (a cave from which the stars can be seen even in day light). The name of their village was called Makuilungdih which consisted of 7777 (seven thousand seven hundred and seventy seven) households.

In 1997, the total population of the Liangmai Nagas was around twenty thousand (20,000) people in Nagaland. Their major villages in the Kohima district of Nagaland consist of Jhaluke, Paren, and Medzephima blocks, upper Barak Valley (26<sup>th</sup> March, 2008, Source: <http://h.ebharat.in/naga-liangmai>). Whereas in Manipur, their total population according to 1991 census population was twenty one thousand, one hundred and twenty six (21,126) people only. There are approximately sixty (60) Liangmai Naga villages located in the two hill districts of Tamenglong and Senapati in Manipur.

#### **LANGUAGE:**

They speak their own Liangmai Naga dialect at home and in churches. But, they often speak in Manipuri and English languages at the educational institutions, neighbourhoods, market vicinities and other places. Hindi is rarely used in their

society. The Liangmai Nagas do not have their own script. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a few of them were imparted with the English education through the efforts of Christian missionaries. These few individuals make use of the Roman alphabets to write. During this period, some of the literate people wrote the Baptist Gospel hymnals by using the Roman scripts. In 1990s, Mr. Lungkim Niumai wrote the Liangmai dictionary. The Liangmai Nagas in Nagaland used the German alphabet “ü” umlaut (vowel mutation) in writing the Gospel Hymnals, booklets and translational works.

The variation of tones in their dialect varies from village to village and region to region. The way one speaks at Tamei sub-division and its neighbouring villages such as Tamah, Langmai, Langpram, Pallong, Lamlab, Konphung, Takou, Lenglong, Kadi, Kuilong, Lemta and Nallong differs from each other. At the time, variation of tunes exists among those people who were settled in Tamenglong sub-division such Tharon, Sonpram, Taipram and Dailong. Simultaneously, tones differs from those who lived in Thonglang (Bena) village, Senapati district, Manipur with those people who resides in the villages of N-tuma, Zaluke, Peren and Tening of Kohima district, Nagaland.

In general, Liangmai Nagas in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam speak the same dialect but it has regional accent and variations in tone, tune and the way certain terminologies are used. For instance, people in Tamei sub-division used the term “Chapiu” for medicine whereas the people in Tamenglong sub-division called it “Kapu”. Similarly, within Tamei sub-division, the word for elder sister is “Achi” in Konphung village but “Achiau” in Langmai village. The variation of tunes, accent and tones manifests their geographical disparity.

#### **TYPE OF FAMILY AND CLAN:**

Family is the basic foundation of society. It is an inevitable part of any society and the most important social institution. George Peter Murdock (1949) opines that the family is universal. In other words, the family lives under one roof, share a common kitchen, work and draw resources together and produces children.

There are two types of families viz; patriarchal and matriarchal. The Liangmai Nagas uphold the patriarchal family. Undoubtedly, there have been loud claims that joint families are on the decline and nuclear families are preferable in our contemporary society. Regarding family, Patricia Uberoi (2003) opines “the single question that has dominated sociological discussion of the Indian family as well as the public discourse in India is the question of the future of the ‘traditional joint family, or whether or not the joint family has been breaking down as a result of the process of modernisation.” Uberoi asserts that the joint family has often been thought of as part of Indian culture and tradition, and it was an important ingredient of ‘national self imaging’ but now is often thought to be facing the onslaught of ‘western culture.’

Traditionally, the joint family is a common feature among the Liangmai Nagas. For them, the joint family implies common property, residence and kitchen, similar to the Indian joint family as defined by Irawati Karve. Karve (1953) defines it as “a group of people who generally live under the same roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth...hold property in common and...participate in common family worship and [who] are related to each other as a particular type of kin.” There are complaints about the breakdown of the traditional family. The joint family is declining tremendously among the Liangmai Nagas and the nuclear family is conceptualized by the younger generation as the best type of family. With the rise of nuclear family, the importance of lineage system is reduced to a certain extent among the Liangmai Nagas. In my sample, 64% of the Liangmai Nagas in Tamei sub-division have adopted nuclear family. The nuclear family is defined in terms of a family consisting of a man and his wife with their unmarried children.

With reference to Dravidian Kinship Organization, Irawati Karve (1993) says, “the custom of marrying close kin results in girls being given in marriage to families living not too far from their houses and there is much visiting between the two houses, and the girls goes often and on long visits to her parents and almost always for her confinements”. In the same way, cross-cousin marriage is also



prevalent in some families among the Liangmai Nagas. The clan and lineage play a significant role in the everyday life of the Liangmai Nagas. The name of clans among the Liangmai Nagas is similar to the other Zeliangrong tribes viz, Rongmei or Kabui, Zeme and Puimei.

In the context of Zeliangrong Nagas, Kamei (2000) emphasized that the clans like Moeteis, Pamei and Niumai were split into lineages and sub-lineages. According to him, the Pamei lineage was divided into seven sub-lineages or families viz, Pamei, Kamei, Phaomei, Singongmei, Kamson, Malangmei, Daimei and their totem is green wild pigeon (ahiun) except Malangmei who has paang (black monkey) as the totem. Niumai came to be more stable but between the Zeme and Rongmei, it was split into several lineages like Gonmei, Rongmei, Gonhangmei, Niumai and their totem is Loingao (a local bird). He asserts that among the Rongmei, a family known as Gangmei has tiger as their totem.

In Horam's view (1990), a Naga clan is composed of families that are a group of agnatic kin. He holds that it occupies a definite portion of the village and is strictly exogamous. Moreover, he opines that the members of a clan are believed to have descended from a common ancestor by whose name it is called. Basically, the clan name serves as a surname in most cases. He mentions that the relationship of the wider kinship groups is the extensions of consanguineous families. And, the child learns from his early life that he belongs to this family and clan and the fact that the village community into which he is born is a part of this larger clan group. It is obvious that the Liangmai Nagas belongs to patriarchal family wherein each clan enjoys equal status. Clan exogamy is strictly observed in every family.

### **CULTURE:**

At present, almost 90 % of the total population in Tamei sub-division is Liangmai Nagas. The Liangmai Nagas have a rich culture and tradition which revolves around the village community, village council, youth clubs and other social systems and institutions. They are indeed conscious of taking pride in

maintaining their cultural heritage. They preserve a homogeneous character which is prevalent in any other tribal societies. And, they often exhibit their hospitality and simplicity especially to the outsiders who visit their villages. They are also acknowledged for their loving nature, loyalty and respect towards their parents including elders. Every Liangmai Naga believes in equality and justice irrespective of the clan, gender and village. People were given an equal opportunity to climb the ladder of recognition and prestige that adheres to it.

In their society, any person may gain honour through the mechanism of honesty, humility, hard-work and truthfulness. The Liangmai Nagas have high esteem for their traditions that were passed down through the ages. The negative characteristics of Liangmai Naga society is that, they secretly practiced infanticide in the pre-Christian era. One of the reasons for some people to indulge in secret infanticide was attributed to poverty. At times, secret infanticide was carried out when both married and unmarried women conceived a child as a result of illicit affairs. However, such heinous infanticides has completely ceased in the contemporary society mostly due to an impact of the Christian doctrine.

An extraordinary feature of the Liangmai Naga society akin to the other Naga tribes is that, they don't have beggars in their community. Often, a poor person or an orphan would be looked after by the close kith and kin, clan or the whole community. The Liangmai Nagas observed etiquette and courtesy in their everyday lives. For instance, a young person would lend a hand to another older person who is overloaded with heavy baskets of vegetables, paddy or firewood. Young people imbibe the culture of helping those needy brethren in the society.

#### **CUSTOMARY LAWS:**

The Liangmai Nagas seized unwritten customary laws for their community as well as individuals, which were handed down from one generation to another generation by their elders. The customary laws are endowed with an opportunity to facilitate everyone with right to live, maintain dignity and freedom. If a custom is

wrecked by any person, a serious punishment including penalty would be imposed on him. Actually, the customary laws reflect their way of life, maturity, wisdom and dynamism. The customary laws were obviously related to people and societal behaviour. For instance, Liangmai Nagas uphold the process of socialization and construct their mindset to live within the community. Nobody can think of surviving like Robinson Crusoe in an isolated island. Wherever they live, there would be the customary laws to guide their path.

In other words, individuals exist within the community wherein the entire social life was bound by the community spirit. And, the customary laws create a space for them to think, survive and behave. A man is a subsidiary to the welfare of the village authority and subjected to the conformist laws. For example, if the village council launches a war wherein every male member should participate in it, nobody could oppose it as he belongs to the community as a whole and was bound by its spirit. The Liangmai Naga men enjoy the rights to property and land. In contrary, the customary laws emphasizes strongly that Liangmai women are not entitled to any kinds of property rights except those movable material goods given at the time of marriage. In contrast, they declared gender equality in the society.

If a man has no sons to inherit his property, it will go to his nearest kith and kin. His nearest relatives who inherited his property often take the responsibility to care for his wife and daughters (both married and unmarried) when he dies. If the man dies unexpectedly and without leaving his will, close relatives would take care of his wife and children. His wife should continue to live within his family if she wants to be cared by his relatives. The moment she moves out of his family and gets re-married or prefers to stay in her maternal home, she would be disowned by her deceased husband's family although such cases are not commonly found in the Liangmai Naga society.

## **TRADITIONAL RITUALS AND SACRIFICES:**

The Liangmai Nagas did not have any officially authorized ordained priests but every village had a priest who perform rituals and offer sacrifices. Often, the village would recognize him as a performer of rituals and sacrifices for individuals, family and community as a whole. However, his role as a priest was not hereditary. The village priest maybe identified as “phai-miu” (Maiba or Maibi in Meitei dialect). The priest does not enjoy power like the village chief (khullakpa or Gonbura) although he has an influence over people in the village. His role was to interpret dreams and omens of an individual apart from performing sacrifices, rites and rituals connected with the village community.

In the pre-Christian era, the Liangmai Nagas maintained a traditional belief that whenever a child is born, one of the elder in the family must claim it as “mine” before the god of death claims it. During the childbirth, it is customary for them to set a thorny bush plant called “muibang” in front of the house. They believed that this plant ward off the evil spirit apart from indicating the house as taboo or prohibited (Nabangki or Muisiatbou which means prohibited house) to voyagers and outsiders. In other words, this plant shows that the house is polluted as a result of childbirth. They assumed that evil spirit may harm the child through the intrusion of outsiders. Hence, the parents perform the norms of prohibition cautiously as they aspire to make their child to be a great future warrior.

The prohibition usually last for around five to ten days though it differs from village to village. Subsequently, they uphold a traditional hair cutting ceremony known as “Thamraguatbou” that accompanies by the naming of the child. They considered the child’s hair as impure because it comes from the mother’s womb. The impure hair of the child has to be sanctified by performing a hair cutting ritual ceremony. The family patriarch or kinsman would perform the ritual. The child’s hair cutting ceremony implies the end period of taboo or prohibition (Nabangki/Muisiatbou), wherein the thorny bush plant (Muibang) would be

removed. Thereafter, all the people in the village including elders, kinsmen and friends have the liberty to visit the house and see the child.

Sometimes, the parents or kinsmen chose a name for the child prior to the delivery. And, they uphold the tradition of choosing a name of their ancestors for the child. However, the relatives, elders and friends may even suggest appropriate names for the child. After they select the specific name, the priest will perform a ritual, with offerings invoking the God to bless the child, which follows by drinking local rice-beer (Jou) and feasting. The members present in the house also have the liberty to bless the child. However, if the child does not enjoy a sound sleep during the night time and groans without any reason, the parents would accept it as a sign that the chosen name is not apt. They think that the child refuse to accept his/her name as it is inappropriate. Hence, they would change the name of the child in the subsequent day with the same ritual *modus operandi*.

After the naming ceremony, they hold a child's feeding ceremony wherein the child will be fed with a special menu comprising of fresh meat. Such traditional practices are performed by an elder to appease the god, seeking blessings upon the child for good health and prosperity. Once a child reaches three years, the parents would organize an ear piercing ceremony. Either an aged man or woman, preferably who have grandchildren would pierce the child's ear. Interestingly, a black cotton loop would be tied to the pierced ear-hole until the wounds get healed for the normal earrings to be worn. The person who pierces the child's ear is always showered with gifts, and in return he or she would bless the child. Simultaneously, songs (Chalui-thiubou) will be sung in praise of the child and parents.

When the child grows up, the parent will perform a special ceremony of initiation to adulthood, known as Malanbou. It is an elaborate ceremony that lasts for six months to a year, with the aim of appeasing the gods to bless the youth with good health, prosperity and strength. Often, affluent families who aspires their son to be great future warrior perform such kind of intricate ceremony. During this six

to twelve month's ceremony of Malanbou, the youth would be trained rigorously on arts and crafts. Usually, the boy has to live in other's house within the village during this ceremony. His parents would identify the best household in which he would stay temporarily to receive training and education. He has to live on rotation basis in a few households. They make a final decision about the number of days and specify the month for their son to stay in a particular house.

Initially, this long ceremony (Malanbou) will be performed by a priest (Phai-miu), appealing the god for protection against adversity and danger for the youth and the chosen family with whom he would live temporarily. Then, they would bless the boy and offer advices, followed by a feast. The Liangmai Nagas hold a feast that always includes local rice-beer (Jou). Thereafter, the boy would be accompanied by his parents to the selected household, where he is expected to live and work as his own family. During his stay, he has to learn new skills, techniques, and knowledge on several issues. As soon as he completes the number of days or months of stay in a particular household, he would move on to the other new identified household. The host household has to provide him with the best diet comprising of meat, wine or rice-beer and other delicacies. One important aspect during his rotating life is to acquire and learn new knowledge.

At the village level, in the beginning of each year, the chief performs a community offering to the spirit of the corns asking for abundant harvest. Such day is taboo for the villagers to cross outside the village and the chief also is abstained from intimate relationship with his wife. Rituals and sacrifices were more prominent at the time of planting paddy seeds, harvest, natural calamities, sickness, festivals, epidemics, wedding ceremony, death and celebration of a child's birth. Traditionally, performing rituals and sacrifices does not take place inside one's house or beyond the village gate. Sacrifices were also performed as remedial measures for sickness in the village as a whole. Sacrifices were offered by either shedding blood of domestic animals or by setting it free in the jungle to propitiate the sickness. Cows, buffaloes and other domestic animals like chickens were

sacrificed at the demised of a wealthy man in the village. When an ordinary person dies, the living family members would offer sacrifices at his/her tomb containing cooked rice, rice-beer ('Jou'), vegetarian or non-vegetarian foods.

The Liangmai Nagas offer sacrifices of animals to the Almighty God (Tingwang) to seek blessings for their lives, family members, crops, fields and domestic animals. Basically, the people would appeal to the Almighty God to be sympathetic towards them especially at the time of difficulties. Some people would even go to the forest and offer cooked rice including non-vegetarian foods and rice beer ('Jou') wrapped in plantains or banana leaves called "Chagumnui" near any big trees or stones. The offerings were sacrificed for the gods, goddesses and spirits. Sometimes, a chicken would be set free by the priest, followed by an invocation to the deities. Sometimes, the sacrificial offerings made to the deities were prohibited to consume and its taboo to be brought back to the village. With the advent of Christianity, the traditional rituals, lifestyles, norms and customs are neglected.

#### **DANCES, SONGS AND FESTIVALS OF THE LIANGMAI NAGAS:**

Dance and music are important components of any festivals in the Liangmai Naga society. Dancing displays vitality and is analogous to any other Naga tribes. The dancing costumes were generally colourful and they used seashell ornaments with hornbill feathers. One of the peculiar traits of Liangmai Nagas is that women join their men folk in dancing. They always perform dance in groups and does not have any individual dance sequence. Traditional dance is always accompanied with beating of drums. Dances have different steps and forms. Sometimes, a traditional violin called "Nrah" would accompany the drum beating while a few people sing folk songs and some of them dance in groups. In the context of folk songs, there are specific themes which narrate about an act of heroism, significant events of the past or a love story. Hence, a simple folk song may be full of historical evidences. Unquestionably, they are enthusiasts of dance and music.

Thus, the Liangmai Naga traditional dances (“Cha-len”) are always performed with the accompaniment of songs (Cha-lui), drums and music. Usually, youth and aged people alike composed songs based on romance, war, legends, duet or songs about individuals. A few of them engages in singing whereas others performs dances at festivals or on certain special occasions. In such events, the drums and cymbals are beaten at regular intervals. Generally, the singers array themselves on one side or form a specific circle in allowing a space for the dancers in the centre. Often, songs are classified into various categories. The dancing songs are usually romantic in nature, war songs deals with the pride of their bygone days or in memory of the victory or defeat in war, legendry songs are composed by aged men to commemorate any significant event of the olden days or that of a person who had done something notable during his life time, songs about individuals are composed by aged men of their eventful career while they were young and strong and finally, a duet which is sung by youth.

In the pre-Christian era, they have different types of festivals which were also known as “Cha-Ngi” (it means festival in local dialect). The festivals were affiliated to agricultural operations and enormously connected to religiosity for successful harvests. Besides, the entire people in the village celebrate when huge games or precious articles are brought in the village. During the practice of head-hunting, the head of an enemy is accorded with highest celebration for a maximum of five days. Apart from it, the second highest honour is the killing of python. Bear, tiger, wild pigs and the like are the third rank of gallantry among the Liangmai Nagas. Traditionally, the carnival of these special occasions restricts their men folks from going out of their respective villages.

People always wear their traditional attires during the celebration of various festivals. The three major cultural festivals of the Liangmai Nagas consists of Rongdi Ngi, which is observed in the month of September with an attitude of thanks-giving to God for good harvest; Chaga Ngi is observed annually in the month of October and this festivity lasts for five days and the purpose for



performing this festival is to purify the male population. The third is Chakek Ngi, generally celebrated at the end of the year in December. And, it would last for five days. In fact, this festival was performed to bid farewell to those dear ones who have died and buried in the graves in the previous year.

#### **TRADITIONAL COSTUMES AND ORNAMENTS:**

The prominent Liangmai Naga traditional dresses are the shawls (known as Chaphai in Liangmai dialect) for males as well as females and 'sarong' or 'mekela' (it's called 'Tanina' in Liangmai dialect) exclusively for females. The principal colours of 'mekela' (known as 'Nithuina') include maroon, black and white but its hem contains intricate designs consisting of different colours. Besides, there are sub-varieties of 'mekela' since the younger generation have introduced new pattern of designs with assorted array of distinctive colours. Today, some of them used the traditional 'mekela' to stitch designer skirts, salwar kameez, frocks and blouses.

With globalization and consumerist culture, some of them have borrowed designs from various straits and unconventional designs have been re-created. However, they retained the main original common designs even as they launched new intricate patterns. Interestingly, they gave specific names to each of the re-created patterns of 'mekela.' The traditional shawl (known as 'Ngumthuakphai') has its own distinctive pattern, which is a mixture of colours consisting mainly of white and black with a little display of brown, yellow and green. Another type of shawl displays mainly black and red colours with a little mixture of light orange, green, black, brown and dark yellow. These two types of shawls are used by both men and women and it does not have any gender distinctive differences.

With regard to the dancing costumes, females wear a small (perhaps 40/60 cms) plain black piece of cloth wrapped on top of 'mekela' (Nithuina) with a colourful strap to tighten it. A woman also wears an earring made of bright yellow and red colours, beautiful head-gear, golden brass bangles and sea-shell beaded necklaces. They hardly used make-up on their faces but they look beautiful. The

Liangmai Naga women don't tattoo their faces or legs unlike women from other Naga tribes such as Sangtams, Aos (Ao woman becomes a full-fledged member of the community after being tattooed from face downward to the legs), Konyaks, Changs and Phoms (who tattoo only on the legs).

For men, a black colour kilt which has 50 to 90 cms length embroidered with cowries is used. Singh (1972) also opines that the cowries are often rubbed on stone before being embroidered so that they may stick well. The decoration of cowries is quite popular among all the Naga tribes and it imparts to the kilt the character of valor, signifying his success in love and war. The ornaments are simple yet pretty. A necklace of beads is generally worn around the neck. The beads may be made of some kind of stone or shells. The ears are decorated with a tuft of cotton wool or red paper or anything else depending upon the individual's fancy. They tattooed on the legs usually with white colour in different patterns.

#### **RELIGION:**

The Liangmai Nagas believe in the Supreme God who is known as "Tingwang" or "Charawang". He is perceived to be omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. In simple words, they have a belief in the supernatural being. They also have explicit ideas about gods, goddesses and spiritual beings and they perceived them to be beneath the supreme God. They believed that these deities control their lives. To a certain extent, they practiced animism. In other words, they followed their own tribal religion in the form of worshipping the natural objects such as tree, sun, moon, stone, and the like. The Liangmai Nagas also have totems and beliefs but they do not built worship houses in the village. They believed in the existence of malevolent (Chara-kasabou) and benevolent (Chara-kawibou) spirits who manifest themselves in the hills, forests, rocks, rivers, sky and the like. These malevolent and benevolent spirits are to be revered and propitiated. The Liangmai Nagas believed that one of the malevolent spirits (Chara-Singmeng) manifests itself among the big trees by howling and screaming even at noon.

The benevolent spirits are perceived to help people in different situations such as hunting, prevent accident during journeys and the like. It's generally perceived that benevolent spirits are gracious to a few individuals. These spirits have the power to heal the sick, showers good harvest and bestow prosperity to people. Natural phenomenon like hailstorm, landslide, thunder, lightning, earthquake, hurricane, and occurrence of shooting stars were assumed to be the actions of malevolent spirits. These natural incidents were often propitiated by sacrificing animals and paddy to the spirits by the village priest. They believed that offering animals and paddy to the spirits through sacrificial rituals would obliterate the evil spirits.

They also uphold their indigenous religion called Heraka even nowadays. The term Heraka means "pure" in Zeme Naga dialect. The Heraka cult is the reformed traditional religion of the Zeliangrong people and believes in one Supreme God ('Tingkao Ragwang Chapriak'). It emphasizes on the significance of monotheism like the Christians. Heraka cult does not believe in the worship of gods, goddesses and spirits. Sacrifices to the gods, goddesses and spirits were not encouraged in the Heraka cult. Haipou Jadonang, a religious leader, protagonist and social reformer modified the traditional religion. Heraka cult worships the Supreme God ('Tingwang') through prayers, singing of hymns and songs on every full moon day, either by groups or individuals. Jadonang composed hymns and songs known as 'Jadoang Lui'. He mentored Rani Gaidinliu to strengthen this cult religion among the Zeliangrong Nagas.

Kamei (ibid) says that Jadonang introduced the Heraka cult with a synthesis of Christian monotheism and Hindu idolatry and temple culture. He states that it was a revitalized and simplified form of worship of God. Apparently, Jadonang discovered the ancient holy cave of Lord Vishnu in the Bhuban hills and worshipped him and Tingkao Ragwang. Vishnu is believed to be the eldest of the seven brothers of Charawang (Supreme God) but denied kingship due to the machination of his mother. The Bhuban hills cave legacy was revived by Haipou Jadonang. He abolished several taboos and gennas in the Zeliangrong society. He

spearheaded the construction of temples known as “Kao Kai” (Rongmei dialect) or Kalumki (Liangmai dialect) with a shrine, pulpit and aisles of bamboo. They had an association of Heraka villages and used an earring as a symbol of Heraka believer. This cult has become well organized in the Zeme and Liangmai areas of North Cachar Hills and Nagaland including Tousem Sub-division of Tamenglong District.

Kamei affirms that the first temple was constructed at kekru. Later, more temples were built at Kambiron, Nungkao and Binnakandi in Assam. He also introduced idols, based on the Hindu idolatry that he saw in the Hindu temples of Bhuban Hills and Cachar although he never worships Hindu deities per se. On his last pilgrimage to the cave of lord Vishnu in Bhuban hills in January 1931, Tingkao Ragwang, through Lord Bishnu revealed a new cult which was revived by his disciple Rani gaidinliu as Heraka. Many followers ceased to practice his religion after his arrest and execution. However, Rani Gaidinliu who continued the revolt of the Zeliangrong Movement against the British followed the religious reform introduced by Jadonang. Even after being imprisoned, her followers continued to worship her. Today, this religious cult is associated with RSS, VHP and BJP. Rani Gaidinliu was the patron of this cult and she had organized the Zeliangrong Heraka Association under the Presidentship of late N.C.Zeliang, a former MLA of the Nagaland Assembly and former President of the BJP Nagaland.

#### **CONVERSION INTO CHRISTIANITY:**

Nagas are considered as great hill warriors by the colonial administrators and anthropologists. The practice of head hunting was deep-seated to Naga culture and it's an institutionalized violence which acts as a hindrance to the process of socialization between different tribes and villages. They have limited social network and interacts only with people in his village, kinsmen and clansmen. They often established their villages on top of the hills, surrounded by the massive mountain ranges. And, they build up their own tribal religious practices which could be classified as animism and naturism. They also have specific totems affiliated to their clans. The Christian missionaries point out that any non-Christian societies were under darkness and they have to be empowered to come into the light of the

world through Jesus Christ. From this perspective, the Nagas in general and the Liangmai Nagas in particular were under the darkness. They were considered as people who have been possessed by the evil spirits. The Liangmai Nagas converted into Christianity rather late as compared to other Naga tribes.

W. Robinson (1841:395) asserts that Nagas appear to acknowledge a Divine Power to be the Maker of the world, and the disposer of all events: Him they denominate the Great Spirit. Their ideas of him, however are, are faint and confused; and of his attributes, they are entirely ignorant. He argues that they have some faint notions of the immortality of the soul. Further, he states that the human mind, even when least improved and invigorated by culture, shrinks from the thought of annihilation, and looks forward with hope and expectation to a state of future existence. From this perspective, one can argue that the Liangmai Nagas were able to absorb Christianity as it promises them a hope and future. Besides, their faint notions of God and soul become comprehensible with the concept of salvation through the acceptance of the Son (Jesus Christ) of God (Father) and presence of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel was presented to them by taking their own traditional perspective of God into consideration.

The American Baptist Missionaries have a vision to spread the Gospel in China and Burma (Myanmar) through India. Therefore, they started their mission work in North East India. They evangelized among the Assamese for more than two decades but could not bear fruit as the local people were deeply embedded in Hinduism. Thus, they focus their attention towards the hill tribes. John Butler (1847) states that on the station being deserted by the troops for Saikwah, in 1839, the missionaries turned their attention more particularly towards the Nagas; they took up their residence on the Boree Dehing river, at Jeypore, established a school, and were indefatigable in endeavouring to gain some correct knowledge of the savage tribes in their vicinity. Their new strategy proved to be one of their greatest successful plans of action. The colonial western scholars wrote about the Nagas as

savage, naked, uncivilized and wild tribes. But, the present generation of Nagas considers those labels as derogatory and unacceptable to them.

Among the hill tribes, the conversion of Nagas into Christianity became the largest in South Asia. Mackenzie (1884) mentioned that Rev. Miles Bronson, an American, resided among the Nagas, teaching them Christianity and the art of cultivating tea. Rev. Miles Bronson worked in the hills from 1842 to about 1852. On 13th March, 1840, he had established a Mission school at Namsang in the Konyak area bordering Assam and Tirap Frontier Division of Arunachal Pradesh. The Naga children were admitted to his school but it was not a successful experience as he had to leave the village due to ill-health. Mackenzie verified that Rev. Miles Bronson knew the Nagas better than any European before or since, was all in favour of Bordie's plans of direct and active control.

Besides, Mary Mead Clark (1907) emphasized that Rev. Miles Bronson prepared a spelling book for each of these people, also a catechism in the Naga language. He went into the hills with his family, but was obliged, after a few months, to leave on account of illness, lack of suitable food, and accommodations. Thus, his vision to convert the Nagas failed. However, there were other missionaries who effectively evangelized among the Nagas and managed to create logic of the saving virtues of Christianity. For the first time, in the history of Naga society, Mr. Hube Konyak took Baptism at Sibsagar in September 1847 but died within a month on October 10, 1847. Later, a man from Merangkong, a village in the Ao Naga tribe was baptized by Rev. S.M. Whiting in 1851, while he was living in Sibsagar. This man while on a visit to his native village was killed in a hostile attack. This is all that was done toward giving the Gospel to the Nagas previous to the undertaking of Mr. Clark.

Mary Mead Clark (*ibid*) mentioned that in 1869, Rev. Edward P. Scott approached the Naga village by playing violin and singing Gospel songs. Such a talented display of songs with a musical instrument augmented a bond between the

Nagas and western missionaries who were culturally strangers to each other. Unfortunately, he died in the same year. In 1872, another American Baptist missionary E.W. Clark and his wife reached the Naga Hills. Dr. Clark and his wife sailed from Boston in October 20, 1868 and reached Sibsagar (Assam) in March 1869. They were designated to evangelize among the Assamese. Dr. Clark's contact with the Nagas began when they came down to the plains of Assam to engage in the barter system. He slowly associates with them as he got fascinated by their frank and pleasant nature despite their adamant attitude for warfare.

Singh (1972) cites that the actual missionary work especially among the Ao Nagas started in 1871 with the arrival of Mr. Godhula, an Assamese Christian at Dekhahaimung Ao village. He encountered an unfriendly attitude from the local people as they were suspicious of him to be an agent of the British Tea Company at Amguri. But, he persevered and wins their confidence by his devotion to the missionary cause. He attracted the Ao Nagas by singing Christian hymns in Assamese. Under his leadership, nine Ao Nagas accepted the new faith, and they were brought to Sibsagar for baptism. He worked with Dr. E.W. Clark who also went to Dekhahaimung in 1876. However, the Nagas find Dr. Clark's intention to be equally suspicious as he challenged their age-old customs in his teachings.

Mackenzie (ibid) affirms that Dr. Clark and wife settled in the village of Molongkong, south of Amguri and worked among the Nagas from the early sixties until 1898. He says that they gained a wide knowledge of the Ao language and both wrote the Ao Naga dictionary, their grammar, gospel hymns and translated the gospels of Mathew and John. In 1893, they established a mission centre at Impur, twelve miles from Mokokchung. It was hereby, from this mission centre that the Gospel began to gradually spread to several Naga villages. Mackenzie also mentioned that Dr. Clark's efforts are apparently bearing fruit in leading to the settlement of blood feuds, and a desire on the part of those villages which have come under his influence to live at peace with their neighbours. Interestingly, in 2007, after several decades later, a group of western tourists' visited Mr.

Temjenyanger, one of the last converts of Ungma village, Mokokchung. Mr. Temjenyanger lives at Aolijen, near Clark Theological College, Mokokchung in Nagaland. Clark Theological College was named after Dr. E.W. Clark.

In Manipur, the first man to evangelize among the hill tribes was Mr. William Pettigrew, a political agent from England. He was sent to India by the Arthington Aborigines Mission based at Leeds and named after an English millionaire, Robert Arthington. He was keen to evangelize among the Meitei people and arrived at Imphal on 6th February 1894 after spending three years in Cachar (Assam) learning the Meitei dialect. He had also learnt Bengali while in Bengal. Unfortunately, the Meitei Vaisnavite Hindus strongly opposed his teaching of the Gospel. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Maharaja of Manipur, Garibaniwas adopted Vaishnavism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the state religion. Therefore, Meitei people were deeply embedded by it. The political agent Major Maxwell understood the critical situation and suggested him to work among the Tangkul Nagas.

Gangmumei Kamei (2004) affirms that in 1896, the Arthington Mission Society withdrew the sponsorship of William Pettigrew as he had completed three years. The Society does not sponsor individuals for more than three years. Hence, he applied to the American Baptist Mission of Assam at Sibsagar for sponsorship, which was approved by their authorities at Boston in 1896. Many scholars revealed that he worked in Ukhrul for twenty five years, and established a pioneering school, performed evangelical mission work, learnt the Tangkhul language, wrote their grammar, studied their customs and religious beliefs. Kamei states that Rev. Pettigrew was associated with the administrative work of the Government of Manipur, like the inspection of schools, participation in the census operation of 1911, involvement in the recruitment of the Tangkhuls in the Labour Corps to work in France during the First World War, writing of books in Meitei (Manipuri) and many other advisory works.

Rev. Pettigrew's effort in establishing a mission school at Ukhrul was



significant as many students became evangelists. It attracted students from Naga and Kuki tribes. Manipur rulers were opposed to the evangelical activities of these local based missionaries who tried to preach the Gospel among the Meitei Hindu community and establish churches in the Imphal valley. As a result of opposition, missionaries could not work effectively with the Meiteis. However, they were able to convert tribal people in the hills. The western missionaries did not evangelize among the Liangmai Nagas directly. Perhaps, the habitation areas of the Liangmai Nagas were inaccessible to them. However, the Tangkhul and Kuki Christians spread the Gospel among the Liangmai Nagas and converted them into Christianity.

There are several reasons for the Liangmai Nagas to be converted into Christianity. They have knowledge of rites and ritualistic practices handed down to them from one generation to another. But, they have no traditional structure of worship and they do not construct a place in honour of their deities. Therefore, they could easily absorb Christianity because missionaries teach them to develop a personal relationship with God (Jesus Christ). They were also taught that Christianity is a way of life. They have a powerful idea about the Supreme God ('Tingwang'). This notion about the supremacy of God hinders them to counter the attack on local based Christian missionaries who used the name of Christian God as "Tingwang" or "Arapiu". These evangelists presented the Gospel by using the traditional metaphor of God. The basic doctrines of Christianity remain attractive to them as they have an indigenous perception of the Supreme God ('Tingwang').

Andre Beteille acknowledges the relationship between tribes and civilizations. He says that the matrix of relationship between tribes and civilization have to be traced through evolutionary and historical approaches. Taking his view into consideration, the Liangmai Nagas can be understood through historical approach by tracing their encounters with other civilizations. Anthropologists such as Hutton, Haimendorf and Verrier Elwin have mentioned that the Liangmai Nagas (Kacha Nagas) lived in the hills and have not come into contact with any

civilizations or religions like Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism although they have been contagious to Assam (Ahoms) and Manipur (Meiteis).

Majority of the valley people in Assam and Manipur were practicing Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. The statues of Buddha are found carved on rocks and temples in Assam and Manipur. However, the Liangmai Nagas had never been influence by other religions and they do not have any experience of hierarchy, urbanization, cash economy or any other features of the neighboring civilizations. They astonishingly remained homogeneous, non-hierarchical and isolated from the other cultures. Thus, the Liangmai Nagas were never assimilated with the Hindu cultures of the Meiteis and the Assamese. A.W. Davis (1891:250) rightly affirms this fact by saying that the Nagas as a whole do not show any tendency towards being converted to Hinduism. He argues that such a conversion would mean to most of them such an entire change of habits that it is difficult to see how it could possibly come to pass.

Conversions into Christianity came about at the expense of village solidarity and synchronization among the members of different clans. Prior to Christianity, the Nagas would go to the fields and perform manual physical work throughout the week. But, the missionaries preached that people should not go to the fields nor perform any manual work on Sabbath (Sunday) day. They were given a strict mandate to refrain from any kinds of traditional customs and practices. Similar teachings were rendered to the Ao Nagas by Rev. E.W. Clark, who insisted his fifteen converts to observe Sabbath (Sunday) as a day of rest, thereby interrupting with the pace and schedule of the village life. The native missionaries continuously follow the basic teachings of Christ among the ethnic communities.

When evangelism was widespread in the Liangmai Naga villages, they could not compromise in many aspects. Like other Naga tribes, the Liangmai Nagas find it difficult to cease from refraining work on Sabbath day and drinking of rice beer ('jou'). Before taking baptism, individuals in the Baptists denomination

should learn the Biblical doctrine. And, they should prevent themselves from drinking of rice beer ('jou'), smoking and the like. Practices of any traditional sacrifices to their deities are prohibited. They are expected to observe the "Ten Commandments" and make a firm decision in accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Messiah. The native missionaries taught them that salvation is God's deliverance of the believer through Jesus Christ from all the effects of sin. It is God's work in the human heart, and it is accompanied by all the benefits He bestows on those who believe now and forever.

They also emphasized that Nagas need to know beyond a shadow of a doubt where they are going to spend eternity. And, that certainty is available to every one but they have to be confident of an eternal salvation, and make a decision to receive Jesus Christ in their hearts. For the Roman Catholics, it's not very stringent because they continue to brew and drink rice beer ('jou') in the contemporary society. Unlike the Protestant Baptist, the Roman Catholics were encouraged to christen their ethnic names into Biblical names prior to the day of their baptism in church. However, individuals were given the freedom to choose their own names to be christened in church. The Christian God is also identified as 'Jehovah' or 'Yahweh' who is acknowledge with awe and reverence.

It is a fact that conversion of Nagas into Christianity was not homogeneous. Spreading of the Gospel varies from one tribe to another tribe or from one area to the other. Verrier Elwin (ibid: 501) mentioned that in 1891, there were only 211 Naga converts and 579 in 1901. And, in the 1960s, the Naga Baptist Christian Convention maintains 632 churches with a total membership of 73,500. Gradually, the number of Naga people influenced by Christianity multiplied over the decades. Today, almost all the Nagas has adopted Christianity and they have been raising slogans like "Nagaland for Christ". And, many educated and theologically trained Nagas are scattered in several parts of India and abroad as Christian missionaries. In the hills of Manipur, tribes like Tangkhuls and Kukis (Lushais) under the mentorship of Rev. Pettigrew

began to spread the Gospel among the other unreached tribes including the Liangmai Nagas. Hence, the Liangmai Nagas embraced Christianity rather late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it has brought about transformation in their society.

Tracing the history of Christianity among the Liangmai Nagas, it is found that Mr. Mateibou Pamei from Longdi Pabram village of Tamenglong district in Manipur became the first convert in 1920. He was converted by Mr. Pakho Sitlhou, a Kuki-Thadou evangelist from Taloulong Kuki village, who was trained at the Ukhrul Mission School of Rev. Pettigrew. Kamei (ibid) opines that Mr. Pakho Sitlhou was the first well-trained evangelist, who worked in Tamenglong district. He was born on 20 April 1903 at Taloulong Kuki village near Tamei. At the age of twenty (20), he began to preach the Gospel in Sempang where the first Rongmei church was established by Mr. Jinlakhpu. Mr. Pakho was the Superintending Pastor for fifteen years (1923-1939). Apparently, he married a Rongmei Naga girl from Sempang village and could speak the Rongmei dialect fluently. He settled down at Sempang in August 1923 and was made the secretary of the Church at Sempang. In 1937, he compiled and translated a hymnal ('Ragwang Lu') in Rongmei dialect. Even when there was communal tension between the Nagas and Kukis, he always tried to bring about peace and harmony. In 1947, he returned to his native village of Taloulong and finally passed away on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1962.

Mr. Pakho Sitlhou was instrumental even among the Liangmai Nagas. Under his leadership, several people embraced Christianity. The Liangmai Nagas built their first Liangmai Christian Church in Longdi Pabram village, Tamenglong district of Manipur. Overall, the conversion of Liangmai Nagas into Christianity began to proliferate in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, there were a few Christian denominations among the Nagas such Baptist and Roman Catholic. Hence, majority of the Liangmai Nagas were converted to the Protestant Baptist denomination and a minority became Roman Catholics. Other denominations like the Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, Assembly of God and the like came much later in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY:**

The advent of American and British Christian missionaries to the Naga Hills including Manipur in the late 19th century has an impact on the Liangmai Nagas. Firstly, Christianity brought about education which facilitates the tribes to widen their worldview and outlook. It enhances their life chances with modernity, westernization, and economic development facilitated by the State. They were provided with basic requirements such as water supply, electricity, schools, health centers, roads, transportation and communication. The native missionaries work effectively among the Liangmai Nagas. To a certain extent, Christianity has loosened their grip over the tradition and culture. The impact of Christianity plunges on the institutionalized warfare of the village.

The Naga traditional warfare requires a rigid discipline and training wherein young men were trained in the morung (dormitory). The morung facilitates young men to acquire skills and demonstrate their military power in the village. Morung used to be an important social institution wherein young people of both sexes would live together in each respective morungs and carry out social activities for the communities. The system is completely redundant as a result of converting to Christianity. The American and the British Christian missionaries urged the local people to abandon the practice of young people living together as it appear to be against the Biblical doctrine. In principle, Christianity prohibits them to offer sacrifices to the deities, drink rice-beer, sleep in the morung and work on Sabbath (Sundays). These prescriptions were the very anti-thesis of their traditional life.

They convinced the people to cease from practicing head-hunting. They emphasized that it's against Biblical principle to take heads of enemies. They were taught to love their enemies and refrain from killing each other. It is important to point out that the trophy of being converted into Christianity was the gradual erosion of traditional village authority and the martial values. The village chiefs started losing their power and authority over the youth. To codify the customary law, local guides

were required in the development works of the British. Hence, the British employ literate Naga interpreters who were being educated under the guidance of missionaries and these youth were eager and prompt to embrace the new religion. Since there were a few foreign missionaries, these young people who were educated from the mission schools eventually became native evangelists. The most significant impact of Christianity among the Nagas was literature. The Tangkhuls and Kukis in Manipur hills and Aos, Angamis, Rengmas, Semas and a few others in Naga Hills were supplied with Christian literatures, mostly Gospel translation works, written in their respective tribal languages in Roman scripts. In 1958, the first Liangmai Christian Literature Society was established. The Liangmai Nagas have written the Christian hymnals ('Christian Madui-lui') and Evangelical songs ('Hiuna-khaumbou-lui'). But, they do not have Holy Bible in their language until 1980s. Therefore, they used the Kuki-Thadou (Lushai) Bible and a few educated people used the English Bible (The New Kings James version, New International version and the like).

The Other Naga tribes including the Kukis and Mizos have already translated the Bible into their respective languages much earlier than the Liangmai Nagas. In 1950, some of the Gospel books were translated as Bible tracts into Liangmai Naga language by Mr. Hotliangbou Abonmai, who had worked as a Section Officer (SO) in the Public Works Department (PWD), Government of Manipur. In 1975, K. Poachunbou Niumai who had worked as Education Secretary in the Liangmai Naga Baptist Association (LNBA) wrote a pamphlet of the Bible entitled "Nang Nagu Bible Sima" (Do you know your Bible?) in Liangmai language using Roman script. Finally, in 1980, Rev. N.K. Sying from Makui village in Manipur translated the Holy Bible into Liangmai Naga language for the first time. It was a breakthrough for them to read the Bible in their own language. Traditionally, the Liangmai Nagas' had a vague perception about sin, salvation, heaven and rapture or Day of Judgment which is similar to the Christian deep-seated beliefs. The missionaries began to use the traditional metaphor of sin ('naun-tenbou'), hell ('Chami-kuangki' or 'satan-ki'), heaven ('Tinggen-di'), salvation ('Hiupui-na ringbou'), and Day of Judgment ('Latjan-thiubounai') while presenting the Gospel among the people. They strongly

emphasized that the malevolent spirits ('Chara-kasabou') could be overpowered by invoking prayers in the Name of the Christian God. Thus, the Christian doctrine overwhelmed them as it deals with being victorious especially in the spiritual realms.

In other words, they were instilling with deep inspirations that they would live in paradise even if they encounter sufferings and pain on earth. Many people strongly began to believe in these ideas of living peacefully in paradise, just as Max Weber argued in his Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism. Initially, the approach of missionaries was opposed by the people but in due course of time, they began to convert in large numbers. They differentiate the Christians ('Chara-malummai') from the non-Christians ('Jou-kasakmai' which also means rice-beer drinkers) distinctively. However, a huge majority of Liangmai Nagas got converted during the Christian revival movement (Charismatic) in the 1980s. Although majority of the Liangmai Nagas have converted to Christianity, a small section of people still uphold the traditional religion by affiliating with a cult group "Heraka." Historical evidence reveals that Christianity is approximately eighty-seven (87) years old among them. Today, every village has a church and it is related to the social organization of the local community. In spite of their conversion to Christianity, they have been preserving their traditional tribal customs, norms and laws that govern the people with changed mode of Christian principles and values.

The traditional dances and music were at risk after being converted into Christianity. People sing Christian hymns and contemporary Gospel songs in the churches. The folk songs were not encouraged to sing except during the festivals and cultural celebrations. However, they have assimilated the Christian way of life but retained some of their traditions to a certain extent. In other words, they do not strongly restrict their traditional festivals although they have become Christians. For instance, the people celebrate traditional harvest festival and Blessing Ceremony (Chaga Ngi) before the fall of winter. Besides, they also celebrate festivals such as Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and New Year. Hence, they portray a perfect picture

of tradition and modernity. After the conversion of Liangmai Nagas into Christianity, there have been many changes in their society which cannot be altered.

Interestingly, these converts claim to symbolize the other civilization of worldwide Christian brotherhood, westernization, modernity and globalization. They employed the strategies and methods of education, training of skills, publication of literature in the ethnic dialects, provide medical services and generate employment in their institutions. They inculcate the culture and civilization of the western world successfully. The basic Biblical teachings on peace, love and forgiveness have a tremendous impact on the Liangmai Naga society. The Christian missionaries strongly raised issues of moral ethics and behaviour. And, they encourage the local churches to create a space for people to gather and have fellowships with one another. The church facilitates the establishment of youth fellowship and women's association within the church to encourage young people and women to actively involve. Thus, the church plays a vital role in bringing about changes in the behavioral and attitudinal traits of the people today.