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Raisunriang

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CONTENTS

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>TITLE</i>	<i>Page</i>
1.	Editorial	
2.	From the Secretary's Desk	
3.	Lamkang Naga Customary Laws on Marriage	
4.	Traditional Marriage Customs of the Mao Naga	
5.	A Brief Account on the Kharam Customary Marriage	
6.	Pukreila	
7.	Customary Laws of Marriage: Past and Present in Respect of Poumai Tribe	
8.	Mother and Child Health care	
9.	Marriage in Zeliangrong Society	
10.	SOME NOTED NAGA WOMEN: Dr. Pamleiphi Shaiza (1913-2000) Ms. Rani Gaidinliu (1915-1993) Ms. S. Ningmasai (1916-1997) Ms. Hangmila Shaiza (1920-1997) Ms. R. Onia Piku (1939-1995)	
11.	Customary Marriage of Anal Nagas	
12.	An Event never to be forgotten	

*“Plenty of people miss their share of happiness
Not because they never found it,
but because they didn't stop to enjoy it”.*

- William Feather

Editorial

The fifth issue of this newslink 'RAISUNRIANG' is being published after a gap of two years on account of unavoidable circumstances. The failure is regretted.

The Naga Women's Union, Manipur is now seven years. From its inception it has been advocating for peace based on social justice. To the Naga women, peace means respecting and upholding each other's rights and dignity on equal terms as human beings, strengthening and empowering everyone irrespective of gender. To them, it is the foundation of, and is the need of the hour for all round development – spiritual, mental, physical, material etc. of individuals and the community – the nation.

Peace and harmony prevailed in the Naga traditional society. People lived in tune with nature and performed all their activities with meticulous spiritual and religious fervour. Everything was done in time according to their requirements and there was a symbiotic relationship between man and nature.

The symbiotic relationship between man and nature could be maintained, as there was orderliness and discipline in the value based society. This man – nature relationship was extended to the human society i. e the community living. Every individual understood his/her position in the society in relationship to the natural surroundings. And hence, there was harmony amongst men and nature and between man and man and between man and woman. A harmonious and peaceful society begins from a family founded on the norms and practices or the customary laws set by the people according to their wisdom in relation to their every natural surroundings. To this day, Nagas maintain their tradition and cultural identity in spite of the contact with the outside world.

All the 15 Naga tribes in Manipur with a population ranging from six hundred to over one lakh have democratic system of administration with representatives from all clans in the village. Society being patriarchal, no woman ever represented her clan. Socially each tribe is divided into a number of exogamous clans and sub-clans. Intra-clan marriage is forbidden and strictly adhered to and the breach of the law leads to social ostracisation. Each has its own norms and practices for matrimonial alliances and ceremonies as are evident in the essays of the various tribes in this issue. It is the wish of the Union that our communities continue to uphold and promote the values which still continue to be creative forces for our society for its strengthening continuum. When we can relate ourselves to the cultural background and values in the face of chaotic confusions in today's world, we still can steer clear to a peaceful future.

The Editorial Board extends appreciation to the article contributors and look forward to their further co-operation.

- The Editor

Gratitudes...

We are extremely grateful to the International Work Group for Indigenous affairs (IWGIA) for sponsoring the Peace Project which enabled us to grow both physically and mentally.

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to the various Organisations/Institutions and also to individuals who have supported us in many ways. may the good Lord continue to Shower his copious blessings upon them all.

Naga Women's union, Manipur

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK:

Progress Report of the Naga Women's Union, Manipur

(For the period of October 1999 – August 2001)

It is a fact that conflict or differences is a natural and unavoidable part of life but which, instead of taking otherwise, can be used as an opportunity for growth and learning. We do not always create the conflicts that come our way but we can always choose our response to those conflicts.

Our focus in conflict situation should be to learn how to creatively deal with conflict rather than to avoid it or to allow it to destroy us.

The Naga women's Union, Manipur (NWUM) has been struggling hard for the last two years in its efforts to help develop skills which will help people transform conflict into opportunity and to repair or improve relationships damaged by conflict.

It has attempted mostly in conscientization and intervention of conflicts situations. The union has made intervening efforts 8 times in 1999 and 10 times in 2000 AD mostly on election issues which created tension among the public, between national workers and the public, between villages and groups among the Nagas. The leaders of the Naga bodies including the union had to run from pillar to post to defuse the tension that were created in the

wake of the Lok Sabha Election in October 1999 and Assembly Election in 2000. Because of these enormous efforts given, tensions subsided and violence prevented though at some stage at different places and time tensions were in high degree to the point of near eruption and causing great damage that would have been difficult to restore them later.

In some cases the conflict was between different Naga factions with the public resulting in factional killings while in some other cases it was between different communities of the public concerning different underground actions which were against human rights or which concern their identities.

To establish more interaction among people, groups or communities and to provide knowledge/skills, the union has organised and conducted awareness programmes through workshops, seminars, meetings – one in 1999, nine in 2000 and thirteen in 2001 at different district headquarters, villages and in Imphal city. It is encouraging to know that the participants gained a lot from their expressions like these by attending the workshops, "My attitude has changed, my behaviour had changed and now I'm a

new person”. Some participants described the workshops as “an eye opener”, some others said, “we need more of this kind of workshops”. Many of the participants said, “It is very interesting” or “I have learned many things”. It is very amazing to work with people from the grassroots’ level. A couple of programmes such as workshop on ‘**Conflict Transformation**’ for the Naga Leaders have to be postponed on account of the problems arising due to the extension of cease fire “without territorial limits” between the Government of India (GOI) and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) and then revoking it by the former unilaterally.

Several organisation co-sponsored the workshops namely – Henry Martyn Institute (HMI), Hyderabad; North East Network (NEN); World Vision, Manipur; United NGO Mission, Manipur (UNM-M), Imphal and Development of Human Potentials (DPH), Imphal. The Union expresses its deep appreciations and gratitude to them for the gesture and extending their co-operation and co-sponsorship in its effort of peacemaking.

The union itself had also facilitated some workshops at different level and at different places. Papers on different issues and topics were presented at some workshops.

The union along with leaders of other Naga bodies met senior Naga and Indian

citizens individually and in groups for consulting on different issues like cease-fire implementation, election, land dispute, factional killings etc.

In 2000 AD the union, had conducted more than four spot investigations of victims of human rights violation and visited several of them in hospitals and places where they were treated. It also joined a family trip for collecting the dead body of a victim of factional killing.

It issued press release appealing for cease-fire implementation, stopping factional killings and human rights violations. It submitted memoranda appealing for cease-fire implementation between the Government of India and NSCN (IM) and for effective process of Indo-Naga dialogue, against construction of the proposed Tipaimukh High Dam of 162.80 metres on Ahu (Barak) river, for immediate intervention concerning massive army operations in Senapati and Ukhrul districts. It made four trips in 2000 and two in 2001 to different areas- visiting areas of ambush, disputed land, meeting civil public leaders and heard their stories, problems and shared their views on the issues. Some of the visiting trips were combined with other organisations including the visiting teams from Indian mainland. Several members of the union participated in different workshops/seminars/conferences/meetings

– four in 1999, sixteen in 2000 and eleven in 2001 which were organized by NGO's, Human Rights Organisation, Women Organisations etc. at the local, state, regional, national and international level on issues of Gender Equity, Environment Awareness, Peace Capacity Building, Natural Resource Management, Women Empowerment, etc.

Several members of the Union also were trained in different aspects of women's Rights and women Empowerment, Mediation skills, watershed Management etc. The Union expresses its deep gratitude to the Institutes that have given the trainings namely Development of Human Potentials (DPH), Imphal; Indian Social Institute (ISI), New Delhi and Henry Martyn Institute (HMI), Hyderabad for fully sponsoring two members in the mediation skills and their Inter-Group Peace building in Darjeeling for 3 weeks in May 2000.

The Union held its Peace conference cum First Biennial Meet in October 4-7, 2000 with the co-sponsorship of the North East Network (NEN) and one facilitator in the person of Ms. Monisha Behal, Chairperson, NEN who facilitated on two topics: Inter-Division As a Reality Groups in Conflict” and “Strategies for Reducing Internal Division within societies”. It was attended by 250 participants representing 14 tribes- Anal, Chiru, Kharam, Lamkang,

Maram, Mao, Maring, Monsang, Moyon, Poumai, Tangkhul, Tarao, Thangal and Zeliangrong. The Union expresses its deep gratitude to her and NEN for the education she has given and the co-sponsoring of the Peace Conference respectively.

The union also organized a Women Study Team of 8 members comprising of women leaders of different communities of Manipur under the able leadership of Ms. Homera Ansari, coordinator, Women's Interfaith Journey, HMI, Hyderabad and Ms.Razia Lulla outside Manipur in November 6-27, 2000 A.D with full sponsorship of Henry Martyn Institute Hyderabad. It was a 22 days tour to other parts of India visiting and studying the tribal situations especially of women – Jamshedpur in Bihar, Raipur, Bhopal, Udaipur in Rajasthan and New Delhi.

The Union is deeply grateful to the HMI, Hyderabad for this special effort and generosity and fully sponsoring the team. The team members described that the tour was very educative. The members got opportunities for interactions with tribal women of the other parts of India. After exchanging views, a sense of oneness was felt by them in spite of the apparent differences in dress, eating and style of life. Initiative were taken to work together with women of different communities – Kukis, Meiteis and Zomis by conducting consultative meetings, seminars, and

undertaking this joint *Women Study Tour* outside Manipur.

Through all these activities and participations in various meeting and consultations under Naga Hoho, United Naga Council (UNC) and Naga People Movement For Human Rights (NPMHR) on Naga issues the union has become an indispensable part in the Naga Society. The Union also continues to extend its co-operation and solidarity with other Naga Organisations – students’ bodies, Naga Mothers’ Association (NMA), Kohima etc. on Common Interests and issues. The union publishes an annual magazine called “RAISUNRIANG” and this is the fifth issue.

The Union also felt the need to have its own office building for which the leadership has started planning it out.

The Union could carry out this much activity in the last two years because of the support and sponsorship of the International Work Group for Indigenous affairs (IWGIA), Denmark to the peace building project of the Union. The Naga Women’s Union, Manipur expresses its deep appreciations and gratitude to IWGIA and its programme coordinator for Asia Mr. Christian Erni.

*Before you speak, listen.
Before you write, think.
Before you spend, earn.
Before you invest, investigate.
Before you criticize, wait.
Before you pray, forgive.
Before you quit, try.
Before you retire, save.
Before you die, give.*

-Padmesh R.C & Hosur, J. N.

Lamkang Naga Customary Laws on Marriage

Ms. J. Marygrace, President, LamkangSnulop (LS)

In Lamkang Naga tradition a boy or a girl must marry to bring forth children. Otherwise they are believed to be Karen meaning 'unproductive'. They are cursed or looked down by the society.

From time immemorial, the parents arrange the marriage of a boy or a girl. This is done so in order to avoid divorce. After consulting, the parents suggest the life-partner of a boy. However, there are times when this tradition is not followed and simply ignored.

PRELIMINARY ENGAGEMENT:

The parents of the boy would make pre-appointment with the parents of the girls. They (the girl's parents) would make pre-consultation with the girl herself and would ask her consent or choice. If she agrees, the appointment would be fixed. Both the parents would make serious discussion about two and on agreement they would share a meal. For this, the prescribed food items are local made rice-beer, chicken etc. After this the boy is asked to stay at the girl's house for three years. There are eight popular ways of acquiring mates such as through probation,

capture, trial, purchase, service, exchange, intrusion and elopement. The Lamkangs follow mostly that of marriage by service.

ENGAGEMENT:

This is the time when the boy has to stay with the girl, helping them in their domestic work. He would share whatever he earned during this period. The period is three years and he would also offer common meal every year to both the parents. The prescribed food items are one fat pig (100-150 kg.), local made rice-beer. Once these three years are over the boy would take the girl to his house. Nowadays, there is a provision where the boy can request the girl's parents and take the girl away without staying at her house or before the completion of three years. Usually the parents in most cases agree to it. Once the permission is granted he has to produce the customary property called YAMLUWNG and three years of daily wages to the girl's parents.

CLANS AND INTER MARRIAGES:

Lamkang Naga Community has four major clans which are again divided into sub-

** YAMLUWNG is a kind of musical instrument. It is flat and round in shape measuring about one and half feet in diameter. Shape is like a kitchen steel plate and its middle bulges out like a cymbal. The middle bulging out is struck to produce a melodious sound. It is believed that some precious metal is present in it. The price varies in sizes. This instrument is also considered to be one of the main wealth in Lamkang community.

clans as shown below:

Group A:

1. Leivon
2. Surte
3. Khol- Kangten

Group B:

1. Tholung
2. Jangvei
3. Shilshi

Group C:

1. Dilbung
2. Khullar

Group D:

1. Shongnem
2. Sankhil

Marriage is arranged within the four major clans while marriages within the same group and sub-clans are strictly prohibited. If inter-marriage within the prohibited clans takes place a heavy fine is imposed upon the couples.

There is a possibility of expelling or excommunicating them from the village. Thus, the boy is usually advised to marry only the clan of his mother.

MARRIAGE:

In Lamkang Naga tradition there is no bride price. Whatever the boy has to bring

is a gift of gratitude and the girl's parents never demand how much he has to pay. In return the girl's parents would share some of their properties on her wedding day as they (the boy and the girl) are going to establish a new family.

As prescribed by the old tradition, the bride and the bridegroom are supposed to put on their traditional costumes or attire. Some appreciate and follow while others are still influenced by the Western style.

CONCLUSION:

Marriage is very much a part of life in Lamkang Naga community. It would take place in a most solemn way. Friends, relatives and dear ones are invited on the day. The invitees bring their presentations and gifts to the couples. They would also partake the feast happily and wish the newly married couple a happy married life. The community or congregation from then on acknowledges them as husband and wife.

Thank You Mother

Without you I would not have been born

Without you I would not have seen the beauty of life.

Without you I would not have been what I am today.

Thank you O Mother for bringing me into this world.

Without your love I would remain very small.

Without your care I would remain very helpless.

Without your appreciation I would remain very immature.

Thank you O Mother for your motherly concern.

With you mother I know I can grow.

With your presence I feel strong.

With your support I can soar up in the skies.

Thank you O Mother for being my very strength

With you mother I can overcome the adversities of life.

With you mother I can climb the ladder to success.

With you mother I can face the world boldly.

Thank you O Mother for what you are to me.

Recipe for a Happy Life

The following recipe is an expert, witty guide to professional skills and success in life:

Take a large quantity of cheerfulness and let it simmer without stopping.

Put with it a brimming basinful of kindness: then add a full measure of thoughtfulness for other people.

Mixed into these a heaping tablespoon of sympathy.

Flavour with the essence of charity.

Stir well together, and then carefully strain off any particles of selfishness.

Let the whole be served with love sauce.

- **Courtesy from better Yourself Books**

TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE MAO NAGA

L.M. Maheo, Research Scholar & D. Adaha, Ex- Secretary, Mao Naga Women Welfare Association (MNWWA)

INTRODUCTION:

Marriage locally termed as kolokoso or nothuokanghi is an established institute for starting a family. Marriage as defined in “Notes and Queries” is the union between male and female and children born by the female are taken as the legitimate offspring of the partner. Likewise in the Mao society marriage is a simple bond between a male and female.

One of the main aim of marriage is that of procreation so as to maintain an unbroken line of the family. In every society marriage is the usual norm and every individual is expected to fulfil its societal norms. The status of an individual with regard to marriage is a fundamental aspect of a population. The never married individuals were considered as having been cursed and hence the Mao society disfavours such practice. At the death of such persons, the meat of the animal sacrificed on their behalf i.e. opraso is accepted only by the elders of the society and is not consumed by the general mass unlike those of other deaths.

The Maos are traditionally monogamous. However, polygyny has been reported in rare cases while the system of polyandry is

non-existent in this community. Endogamous marriage i.e. marriage within the same tribe/community was the norm and that too within the same village was preferred. However marriage to far of places/villages was also prevalent. These women in the past then were considered as ambassadors in some cases while in others they were branded as traitors/conspirators. On the whole, clan exogamy and incest taboo were strictly adhered to. Breach of such customary laws could amount to expulsion from the village too. Customary laws on intra-clan marriage become less stringent when it crosses seven generations and has spread out into different villages. Intra-clan conception occurring within the village is considered incestuous and severely dealt with. In the past such illegitimate conception out of incestuous relations were termed as chakhrana. Infanticide was generally carried out in such cases. Singh (1997) also mentions that incestuous unions are strictly prohibited. Similarly if conception occurs outside wedlock the couple is allowed to live together after severe chastisement, particularly from those close relatives of the girl. Remarriage of widows and

widowers are permitted by the society. It is rather encouraged and sometimes coerced by the widower's parents or relatives to remarry again. Equal encouragements are not meted out to widows. Levirate i.e the custom whereby a man is obliged to marry his brother's widow is practiced. Bane (1995) also mentions that such practices are prevalent in the Mao society although very rare. Similar customs are also prevalent in other Naga communities as well as other parts of the world, e.g. ancient Hebrews, Greeks etc. Among the Chukchees of Siberian the practice of Levirate is common. For them too, it is the next oldest brother who becomes the successor husband. He unites his reindeer herd with that of his deceased reindeer's herd and carries the responsibility of being the father. (Ember & Ember, 1994). Likewise in the Mao society, it is the younger brother who marries the deceased brother's wife and shoulders the responsibility of looking after the family. In the Mao society, there is no specific age bar for marriage. However, it is to be noted that there was not a single instance of child marriage. Studies conducted during the period 1995-96 in three Mao villages viz. Makhel, Chowainu and Punanamei revealed that the minimum age at marriage for a female was 14 years and male was 16 years while maximum age at marriage for female and male was 39 and 43 years

respectively. The average age at marriage of the Mao woman and men were found to be 22.7 and 25.6 years respectively which is about 4 years above the legally sanctioned age at marriage for Indian women and men (Maheo & Kalla, 2000).

Marriage is considered to be very sacred by the Maos and hence all information beginning from negotiation until marriage is kept secret lest some evil eyes is cast and ruin the whole process. In the past marriage by elopement was unknown. The parents of both the parties formally arrange the marriage. These formal arranged marriages involve a long process of negotiation. In most cases mutual agreement finalizes the engagement.

PROCEDURE OF ENGAGE MARRIAGE AMONG THE MAOS:

The parents of both groups through the near relatives do the process of negotiation very secretly. Proposal is generally initiated from the boy's family. Normally the boy's relative or sometimes a neighbour is employed as the go-between or feeler. She approaches the girl's parents and put forward the proposal. Immediate approval is not obtained at the first instance. The girl's parents see to the omen of their dreams. If the dreams are found favourable then they intimate it to the boy's parents to proceed with the negotiation and engagement. If the parents of the girl do not want to give their

daughter in marriage with the particular boy, they will excuse themselves by saying that the dream was not good and refuse without revealing the reasons for their disliking (Banee, 1995). Banee further writes that a girl has little freedom in choice to marry with the boy she loves while the boy can frankly tell to his parents and could insist on marrying the girl he loves. Genealogy and property are the two main considerations at the time of negotiation. Here property would include paddy (Ocha), paddy field (Lophri), cattle (Otu), forest land (Chiikhupfole) from the boy's side. Depending on the family status, agreement from both sides is reached. After the completion of negotiation both parties are to abide by it. Violation of such agreement may lead to disharmony between the parties. If one elopes with another person the defaulter's property agreed upon at the time of negotiation can be forfeited.

In the past, shaving of girl's hair was in vogue. It was taken to be a sign of virginity. Only after engagement she no longer shaves her head. Negotiation generally starts after the Saleni Festival (July/August) while marriages are generally held in the month of January (Chiithuni). Sani (1993) also opines that traditionally the Mao marriages are held in the month of January and that Khrokha 6

(date 6th of the Lunar calendar) is always considered as a good day for marriage.

PROCEDURE OF PERFORMING MARRIAGE CEREMONIAL RITES:

On the wedding day, the bride in her simple but clean traditional costume is being fetched early in the morning by either an old woman or by two minor girls. Normally the matrimonial rites are performed in the morning. If the bride happens to come from a distant place or another village, the old woman or the two girls spent the previous night at their relative's house. The girl is bade farewell by her dormitory mates till the village gate. On arriving at the groom's place, the groom stands at the main entrance with a spear in hand and usher her into the house. Before stepping inside the house, an unblemished metal (sickle or axe or any iron piece) is kept at the door whereby the bride has to step-over or crossover the metal as she enters. Here the iron piece signifies something that remains cool and lasting so it is likewise wished that the new couple might have a long happy marital life as cool and lasting as that of the iron piece. The material used as such is kept unused by some for it is believed that the hairs of the bride would fall abnormally if used. On her wedding day she carries her carrying basket (Oshuro) in which two gourds filled with rice beer (Haiyiohakahei) and a traditional shawl

“Khrilosa”. As per the custom, this khrilosa is a prerequisite that one has to carry. If one does not possess it also she has to borrow and return it after the marriage ceremonial rites is over but which seldom occurs. The reason being every Mao Naga woman is supposed to learn the art of weaving to avoid disgrace of using other’s Khrilosa on her wedding. She also carries a staff (Oshukosii) in her hand. Nepuni (1993) mentions that for the bride to whom cattle is not given as part of her bridal gifts, she is not entitled to carry this staff on her wedding day. The carrying basket would be unloaded by the mother of the groom and thereafter she provides the couple with the right side of the plantain leaf to make rice beer cup locally called Ole. They (couple) then exchange the ole as a mark of respect with one another in good faith. He further writes that during the exchange of cups God binds them together. It is said that although the two persons may not know each other before yet with this ceremony they begin to love each other. The groom’s mother then pours rice beer into their cups. A few drops of wine is spilled out from the cup (Kongeikocho) as a token of offering to God and seeking his blessings. It is refilled and thereafter the cups are placed on the wall of the entrance. The practice of placing the cups on either side of the wall i.e right side by the groom and left side by

the bride is done by some villagers while others placed it on the same right side of the entrance. The exchange of cups (Ole buii kali kocho) is done to signify their exchange of mutual love with God making them inseparable from one another. Consummation of nuptial bliss takes place after all the rites and rituals are completed i.e. after the 5th day. Till such time the bride continue to sleep with a small girl. To this girl the bride gifts her the earrings (LideiKobuiio) or small beads of necklace (ototonghii) as a souvenir.

The marriage ceremony does not end here. This is folloed by a number of rites and rituals that lasted for 5 days. The second day of the marriage ceremonial rites is called ‘pithekoshu’ meaning establishment of a new hearth/oven. On this day, the couple will go to a separate spring for ritual cleansing. The bride would wash her hair with a type of creepers/climbers, which produces lather (hrelomodzii). This used material is to be disposed of lest someone uses it, which might bring disharmony to the new family. The bride will fetch three good stones kept ready by the groom and make the new hearth. The groom will make new wooden spoons from a type of wood (maprimanisii/maprisii and bring them home in the evening. Till the arrival of the new spoons they (couple) are tabooed from seeing each other since that morning. In

the newly established hearth the bride will prepare their supper using the new spoons and have it together for the first time. While preparing the food, care has to be taken that the fire does not die out and the firewood used (siichusii) have to be properly identified with the base part first burnt. The wood is said to last longer if the base part is first inserted into the fire. The oven so planted has to be firmly placed and should not face in the southwest direction as it is believed to be the abode of evil spirit "Chakha" located in the Maram area. Uprooting or breaking of any stones is taken as a bad omen.

The third day is called Ongho Koso Chiithu meaning day of first entry to the field. The couple need not actually go to the paddy field. However as per the ritual they go a little beyond the village gate or their ancestor's or thrice and return home.

The fourth day is called "Azhiidukoso". On the day the bride will visit her parents and return the same evening with a basketful of paddy (Thofu). Her friends carrying about 3-5 jars of rice beer, together with some cooked meat and rice, will also accompany her. This is shared among the groom's relatives and clan elders and they in return shower their blessing on the couple. The 5th day is called "Onghonghopa". On this day the couple will go to the paddy field gifted by the groom's parents (Lophrii) and till the

soil as an opening ceremony of their starting cultivation. The wife usually carries the special water "Kaizhi" or "Ozhizhinghi" on her way back home. With this the whole marriage ceremony comes to an end. Here it is to be noted that the day of performing the rites may differ from village to village. During these five days period all the rites and rituals are properly observed lest the marriage becomes a failure.

A form of trial marriage is prevalent in the Mao society. Unlike marriage by trial practised by the Bhil tribes in which the young man requires to prove his prowess or personal courage before he can claim the hand of any girl in marriage, trial marriage of the Maos is based on the omens which depended upon favourable and unfavourable emergence of portent observation during the five days where marriage ceremonial rites are performed. They are as follows:

1. No ember of ceremonial fire is allowed to die out throughout the five days. Extinction of fire in the new hearth is taken as a bad omen.
2. Nothing sort of blemish materials like cow dung be allowed to be pelted or to touch upon the bride to prevent the belief of inducing her with a sense of intense hatred against her husband.

3. If any unfortunate death occurs among the close kins on either side then it is taken to be a bad omen for their future life. Even the death of domestic animals in the house is believed to be an indication of their future bad luck.
4. On the marriage day if the bride happens to drop any utensils or slips down on the floor or break any tumbler or earthenware, it is accounted as bad luck for the couple.
5. Damage of the oven i.e. if any of the stones get uprooted/fallen or broken then it is treated to be a bad sign.

If one of the above cited omens occur then divorce takes place after five days. Hence extreme care is taken to observe all the traditional beliefs and practices. Singh (1997) pointed out that as the course is rather tough divorce becomes a normal occurrence in Mao Society. Therefore, it is sometimes tolerated by the society without keeping any stigma. In some cases after temporary divorce owing to the bad omen people get re-united after a month on an auspicious day by seeking blessings from elderly persons for which they are treated with rice beer brought by the bride. For those couples that could observe the above mentioned rigorous rituals successfully the bride would lavishly treat the close kin,

friends and elders of her husband on the 3rd day of the Chiithuni festival locally known as "Oshukope". About 30-39 jars of rice beer and meat is brought from the bride's parents and shared amongst them. Among the Maos there is a custom whereby the rice beer jars should not exceed 39 jars (ritechiinoe). The reason for keeping a limit probably would mean not to create disparity between the haves and have-nots. The partakers of the rice beer and meat would donate some amount of money in gratitude for the treat given. The money so collected is given to the bride's parents. On this day, the husband's family would gift 2 small spades (fosi) to the wife. At the death of the wife, it can be given to her relatives or to someone close to her as a souvenir.

In the year of such wedding both the bride and the groom will have an old man perform one ceremonial rites on their behalf which is called "Orameishiihra" in the month of May (Khranakhro) on (Piriimani) genna day. In this ceremony, the beak of the chicken (Oho raso) is split open and the bride or groom will spit into the chicken's mouth/beak praying that they might be sanctified by this sacrifice. The sacrificed cock is then hung onto a spike of bamboo (chiti) beyond the vicinity of the village gate.

The bridal gifts from her parents includes cattle, 1 barn of paddy, a hen with brood

and a spade. The Maos have specific period for receiving or bringing these gifts too. A hen along with her brood and a spade is given away to the couple before paddy is brought from the wife's parents. Carrying paddy is done in the month of May (Khrana) and the whole paddy together with the barn is to be carried on the same day by arranging a number of healthy people. Cattle (Onghitukoho) to be given as her gift are also given in this month itself.

From the above discussion it is seen that the Maos have an elaborate and meticulous marriage customs. Are such rigorous practices still in vogue? The reply to this is "Yes" but by just a handful of people i.e. by those who follow the traditional religion. The traditional marriage customs are in a way replaced by the acceptance of the new faith i.e. Christianity. The waves of change have come about and made a deep impact on the traditional culture. Today marriage also do take place by elopement, which was very rare in the past.

Out of the 540 women surveyed from three villages (Makhel, Chowainu and Punanamei) about 29.3% were found to be marriage by elopement. Further, decadal age cohort wise distribution of type marriage revealed that elopement rate was a high as 78.8% among the youngest age cohorts (15-24) years i.e. out of the 33

married women in this age cohort only 7 marriage were arranged while 26 marriages were that of elopement (Maheo, 1999). The sanctity and sacredness of marriage has further diminished to a great extent. This is a cause of concern. Are we encountering the decadence of our society in our move towards modernity? It is time we give a harsh thinking to revive and inculcate the invaluable cultural values of our society from standpoints of critical traditionalism that can stand us in good stead in the face of dominating modern culture.

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Heights of Politeness:

A man felt deeply in love with a young Lotha girl. His urge for her grew day by day. At last the pickup courage and decided to propose to her.

“I have a human problem” said the eligible bachelor.

The young girl was rather astonished and stared at him in astonishment as to what the human problem would be.

She said, Tell me what is it?

*The eligible young man replied shyly “**I want to ask for your holy hand**”.*

(This happen in the year 1977 at JNU campus, New Delhi.)

A BRIEF ACCOUNT ON THE KHARAM CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE

Ms. R. Khalothem, President, Kharam Women Society (KWS)

The Kharam tribe with a population of about 1000, is one of the oldest tribes. The tribe has a rich and distinctive cultural heritage. Like any other Naga society the Kharam too is a patrilineal society.

Clan exogamy is strictly adhered to and fine is imposed in case of breach of such customary laws. To the Kharam as pointed by Shangkham (1994) *“Marriage is a customary duty and is a sacred one too”*. She further points out that one is not compelled to marry and that freedom is given to the individual.

As found in the Kharam tradition from time immemorial, there are two types of marriage ceremony namely:

- i. Roipui Roi (Grand marriage)
- ii. Patkher Roi (Simple marriage)

As the name implies the former type of marriage is done with great luxury hence only few could afford to do it. Only those wealthy people who hold some important posts in the Village Council are entitled to have such elaborate or so called grand wedding. Today such type of marriage is no longer in vogue. The second type of marriage ‘Patkher Roi’ is the most common form of marriage and is still prevalent in the Kharam community.

MARRIAGE PROPOSAL:

Generally the marriage proposal is initiated from the boy’s side. According to the Kharam’s custom the proposal so initiated has to be repeated thrice which may run into a period of three years. There are two ways of finalizing the marriage proposal or acquiring of mates.

- i. In the past it was customary for the boy to stay in the house of the girl and serve the family for a period of three years. This is called in Kharam “Numei Kalou” literally meaning “earning girl”. This is otherwise known as “Marriage by Service”.
- ii. Another form of marriage i.e. finalizing the marriage proposal is through repeated approach. According to this custom, the boy’s parents will approach the girl’s parents with locally brewed rice beer for three consecutive years at the end of which a date is fixed for the appointment ceremony. Preferential marriage is prevalent among the Kharams i.e. generally the daughter of mother’s brother is preferred.

However, it is to be noted that one is not forced upon.

MARRIAGE CEREMONY:

Marriage ceremonial rituals are performed at the groom's residence. One very conspicuous ritual followed or performed by the Kharams is the observation of the hen's legs. On the day of marriage the village Council would gather at the boy's residence to observe this omen. For this, both the parties should bring one hen each along with an earthen jar locally called *yukhakupka* filled with rice beer. The Village Chief or at the order of the village chief, one of the councillors would kill the hen to observe the hen's legs so as to predict the future of the would be couple. Before strangling the hen, he says "today, two people are to be united for life. Let your right leg cross over the left and let all the toes remain straight detaching from each other and not stoop down" Shangkhram (1994) p. 110. If the hen dies as per the direction mentioned above, it is taken to be a good omen. He then offers the rice beer to the deities by spilling some few drops on the ground seeking a long and happy marital life for the groom. Similar act is performed for the bride. With the exchange of the drink by the bride and groom the marriage ceremonial rites come to an end. A grand feast in which drinks are served to the public follows this.

FAREWELL TO THE GIRL:

The girl is bid farewell before the marriage ceremony begins. In this, the village Chief with his council members attend the occasion. As per the Kharam custom the girl to be married (bride) would serve the rice beer three times to them. Then the village Head together with her friends bid farewell to the girl with their blessings and good wishes.

BRIDE PRICE (MANGKHAT):

Before the girl leave her house the parents of the boy must give the bride price. The price as modified by the tribe organisation may be in terms of kind or cash. The articles are called in Kharam dialect "Darkhong" i.e. metal gong. They are of two different sizes. The bigger Darkhong is of eight kap (a unit of measurement of length). The smaller one measures about seven kap.

At present one can give the said gongs in cash (Rs. 500) as these darkhongs are not easily available. One female traditional shawl is also included in the price. This shawl is known as 'Ponruiman' in Kharam.

The following relatives of the girl will have a share of the price:

	Kharam	English	Price
1.	Purang	Mother's brother of the girl	Rs, 30.00

2.	Inralparang	Father's brother	Rs. 30.00
3.	Nirang	Aunt (Father's sister)	Rs. 10.00
4.	Urang	Elder sister of the girl	Rs. 10.00
5.	Nurang	Eldest/Youngest mother of the girl	Rs. 10.00

Usually the bride would leave her house in the evening with a torch locally known as *Maisser*. When she is about to step out of the house her right leg should step out first. Likewise on reaching the groom's house her right leg should step in first. By observing such practices it is believed to be a good omen.

The bride will leave her house along with one pig and a dog for the house of the groom. When the bride reaches the boy's house the parents of the groom will come out and receives her warmly. Then they will be served with the locally brewed rice beer three times. This is followed by dinner known as *Moibukheng*, meaning feast of the bride. After these there will be night gathering with singing and dancing which goes late into the night.

The above tradition and custom relating to marriage is still being practised by the Kharams without any exception.

REMARRIAGE:

Widows remarriage is accepted by the Kharam society. A form of both sororate and levirate is prevalent among the Kharam i.e. if the wife dies with or without any issue, the husband can marry one of the sisters of the deceased. But he must pay a sum of Rs.3/- (in the past) Rs. 50/- presently to the village Council as *Acharam*. He is also required to pay the bride price to the girl's family. Similarly, on the death of her husband, the surviving wife can remarry any of the brothers of the deceased but in any case she cannot initiate divorce from her husband.

Although the Kharam permits marriage by elopement it is never encouraged. If elopement does occur *Acharam* is given to the village Council and the bride price negotiated. On the appointed day, the bride price so negotiated is given to the girl's parents, and the marriage is then legalised after fulfilling the customary practice of getting her consent three times and taken to her husband's house. Such tradition still prevails in the Kharam community.

Heights of Honesty:

A renowned preacher once preached about honesty in one of the Churches in Kohima Town. It touched the hearts of many and a pregnant woman was among them. So the next day on her way to the market she boarded the bus and paid for two tickets: one for herself and the other for the child in her womb.

PUKREILA

Ms. Valley Rose Hungyo
Advisor to NWUM,
Editor, Aja Daily

The word “*Pukreila*” in Tangkhul means a woman married to a man belonging to a clan other than her own or a different village and/or also a different tribe for that matter.

In the traditional Tangkhul society, the *Pukreila* had a very important and significant role to play over and above the important roles, which are normally shouldered by all married women in general. The role of the *Pukreila* became necessary and significant at the time of war and/or making peace. And this will become evident if we have a glimpse of the traditional Tangkhul society

Individual villages, which were secluded, democratic, and fully republic characterized the traditional Tangkhul society like any Naga tribes. In Tangkhul society, the clans being exogamous, intra-clan marriage is regarded as a taboo. But again, marrying outside the village was very rare. As such, there was very little contact with the outside world. Very often, people suffered a lot as there used to be inter-clan, inter-village or inter-tribal conflicts for reasons of land encroachment, trespassing of animals or as a revenge for

some crimes committed by the other groups.

In most of the situations there use to be a lot of violence and bloodshed as both the sides strived for victory over the other. When the situation became uncontrollable as neither side was willing to arrive at a compromise and the sight became terrible to the women onlookers especially to the *Pukreila* (if there were any), then, it was at such a time that she stepped in.

The *Pukreila* would then, stand in between the two fighting groups, stretch out her arms and shout, “STOP! STOP FIGHTING! It is enough, too much blood has been shed, and too many lives has been lost. You, on my brother’s side and you on my husband’s side. Stop fighting and let peace prevail from now on for my sake. For I am a sister for some of you and a wife for some of you. If I suffer for the loss of my brothers, my husband will also be unhappy and if I become a widow, my brothers will equally be unhappy for my sake. So let there be no more war between my brothers’ side and my husband’s side but peace and friendship reign from now on”.

After the intervention of the *Pukreila*, neither side would have the courage to raise the weapon against the other. If any one of the warriors disobeyed the command of the *Pukreila* and raised his weapon (dao or spear), even if he did not

harm anybody, he was considered as an outcast, a disobedient black sheep, a social evil and he received the wrath of all the members of both the warring groups who attacked him. Even if he was killed in this attack, nobody was to be blamed but him.

Thus, when there was no daring soul, it was the *Pukreila* who with all the power and authority in her own right, would bring the ugly situation to an end and usher in peace among the warring groups. She was the one who would bridge the gap between the two groups-clans/villages/tribes for it was only she who had a say on the members of both the sides.

Even in contemporary society, every

married woman is a *Pukreila*. Though there may not be wars of the sort found in olden days, her role is still important. Because human nature is such that there is war of every kind among the people belonging to the girl's family and her husband's family. If she is a person of integrity and working for peace she has the right, the power and the opportunity to have a say on, or control over the members of both the sides in particular and the whole society in general.

May all the Naga Women possess the good qualities of a *Pukreila* in order to maintain peace and harmony in our today's trouble torn society.

CUSTOMARY LAWS OF MARRIAGE: PAST AND PRESENT IN RESPECT OF POUMAI TRIBE

Ms. K. T. Soune, General Secretary, Poumai Naotumai Me (PNM)

INTRODUCTION: Marriage is a very old and well-established institution of mankind. Marriage in Poumai Society is considered to be physical, social and spiritual bond between the husband and the wife. The institution of marriage existed even during pre-historic society, therefore, it is deep-rooted but occupies a pivotal position the kinship organisation. Poumais consider, marriage as a sacrament and a religious bond that will last till date. It is a divine institution involving a lifelong union for better or for worse of one man with one woman to the exclusion at all others on either side. Marriage is the only accepted system of begetting legitimate children. The basic principle of Poumai women have more freedom of movement, social participation and personal liberty than that of the past but there is not much change of the social ethos. Economically, married women are longer solely depended on their husbands, as they can equally earn as their husbands. They are now employed at offices and engage in business ventures. They no longer remain within four corners of the wall. As time passes, the marriage laws of the Poumai Nagas are also changing.

MARRIAGE TRAIT: Marriage between boys and girls within the same clan is strictly forbidden and if any such incident takes place they would be separated by force. In the Poumai society, any person who takes wife from his clan or marries with his nearest kin, is considered to have defiled the family's sanctity and brought shame to the family. Any person eloping or committing fornication with a woman of the same blood brings an eye sore to his family. The act of the perversion will stain the family's glory and create a flaw in the family strength. Such action of defaulting the moral conduct of the family or clan will incur the curse of the heavens and when he goes out with villagers for tiger hunting, the animal shall catch him unaware, when he enters the jungle, the dead branches shall fall on him and he shall die a wild death, while the wholesome ones shall slept soundly in the wood, the accursed one shall be removed by the man-eater, from among the group. Such were the stern warnings to the people who goes against the sanctity of the unwritten marriage laws of the community. According to our tradition, the convicts are debarred from holding the front rein of the

sacrificial buffalo of the feast of merit, lest the animal will gore him to death, also they are restrained from holding the front rope in pulling stone of the feast of merit lest they shall be run over even by the inanimate stone. The Poumai either in primeval religion or Christian who-so ever it is, the belief of curse on violation of marriage customary law still prevails.

SELECTION OF BRIDE: The boy's parents in all cases make marriage proposals. However, before putting across their proposal to the girl's parents, they would see the omen first by observing the dreams. Proposals were moved only if the omen is positive. The girl's parents have also to see the omen by interpreting dreams. If the omen is found positive then the engagement is proceeded. The boy's parents and relatives shall come to the girl's parents for engagement and also decide the parental gifts for both the bride and the groom. The parental gifts for the first born son is usually better than the rest of other children because he shall inherit the ancestral paddy fields, which was given, in father's marriage. Thus the ancestral paddy field is handed down to the first male line of the family. In case, the family has no male issues the nearest family of the father shall take the paddy field. Under any circumstances the paddy field of the father, handed down from the ancestors, shall not be given to the

daughters. The first daughter shall take the immoveable properties if any which were brought by the mother at her marriage. The house of the father is given to the last son. The gifts for the middle children are given the properties (movable and immoveable) acquired by the parents in their life together. The elders will get bigger share of properties in a descending order. The gifts for the girls are given mostly moveable properties, but in no circumstances the ancestral paddy field is taken by the girls, because the range of the land is reserved in clan-wise manner intact in most Poumai villages. Each clan has its own village gateway and land thereby the landed properties are not given to the girls. Therefore, usually the first son gets a wife with good gifts. This tendency is still quite prevalent.

BETROTHAL: As soon as the marriage engagement is made and the parental gifts are decided, an old woman shall be asked to declare the engagement and warn both sides that whoever breaks the engagement shall bear the penalty of forfeiture of the agreed gifts to the other family. The same principle is contextualised in today's church in Poumai Society. That as soon the engagement is done, the church pastor, deacons are asked to pray and declare and in case of breaking engagement, the church discipline awarded to the defaulter.

MARRIAGE SEASON: The most common time for betrothal was in July to September and the marriage generally takes place in the Lunar months of Rupfe and Chadu (October to November) in some of the villages while in other villages it is in the month of Thounii (December to January).

MARRIAGE ADMINISTRATION: Marriage ceremony was performed before sunset. An old lady administers the marriage ceremony. It is always done in secret while the bride is on the way to the bridegroom's house, she should neither be talked to nor touched by anybody before the marriage processions takes place. The boy goes to bride's house to present a shawl called Kosah to the bride's father as a token of respect for releasing his daughter. Then the father stands up and blesses his daughter saying, "*Anapaipanohrainanannawo, vananawo*". "*Tahtahotavatalo, siidaohosiivadaolou*". "*Khaoriichiriiriivachilou-wo*", "*Veipareitei the Kuwa*" means "May my daughter procreate as the spider and the crab. As she tills, may she till magic field, as she cuts woods, may she cut magic woods. As she rear animals may she rear magic animals. May her being be as the luminous night sky!" Thus, the father blesses her to be fruitful in procreation, prosperous and be outstanding and delightful as the luminous night sky.

Then the old lady leads her off from her parents' house. As she reaches and enters the groom's house, an axe is laid across the threshold that she is to cross, which symbolizes peace and calmness. Then special brewed wine would serve to them. Then the cups in the hands of the couple shall be exchanged with each other. This signifies sharing of love. This act is very similar with the exchange of ring and cake cutting and feeding each other's in the present days marriage. The couple shall not sleep together until all the ceremonial rites are completed which last for a period of 5 (five) days. A minor boy and a girl will accompany them for five days. On the very next day of their marriage, the couple shall leave the boy and the girl before dawn to take bath together at public bathplace. They will also together hold on to a single spade and plough together. They will return home and stay in seclusion again till the 5th day. When the 5th day is completed, the boy and the girl shall quietly leave for home each with gift presented by the couple. This practice is missed out in the present day.

DIVORCE: Both husband and wife strictly observed fidelity. In case of infidelity divorce can take place. If the husband has committed adultery with other woman, the wife shall take away all moveable properties, utensils including the paddy seeds. Likewise if the wife has committed

adultery, she shall be turned out from the house empty-handed. She should not claim the properties brought by her gifts. There were certain cases that if the parents wanted to divorce them for bad omen or other reasons all the moveable properties except the land and the house of the husband shall be divided. The gifts

Youth of Today

Bloom! O youth wherever you are planted.

Tis' your world: make the best use of it,

Sow it now that you may not regret later,

Sow it today you will reap a hundredfold.

Bloom! O youth wherever you are planted.

Tis' your chance to change the world,

Tis' your world let destiny claims not,

Tis' time the seed of responsibility is sown.

Bloom! O youth wherever you are planted.

Wait not for old age to set in,

Leave no stone unturned what you can do today,

Give it your best and God will do the rest

Tomorrow might not come: it may not be yours.

Today and only today is at your disposal.

O youth! Tis' time you give your best,

Begin now for destiny lies in your hands.

**“Forgive is not a paid-up life insurance policy.
It needs continual investment for a marriage renewal policy”.**

- **Norman Wright**

MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH CARE (MCH)

Dr. Bijayanti Saphrii, M.O. Incharge 2nd Battalion, Manipur Rifles, Imphal

In any community, mothers and children constitute a priority group. In sheer numbers they comprise approximately 70% of the population of the developing countries. In India, women of the childbearing age (15-44 years) constitute 22% and children less than 15 years of age constitute about 40% of the total population. Together they constitute nearly 62% of the total population. By virtue of their numbers, mothers and children are the major consumers of their health services of whatever form.

Mothers and children not only constitute a large group, but they are also a “vulnerable” or “special risk” group. The risk is connected with childbearing in the case of women and growth, development and survival in the case of infant and children.

1. During the antenatal period, the foetus is part of the mother. The period of development of foetus in mother is about 280 days. During this period, the foetus obtains all the building materials and oxygen from the mother's blood.
2. Child health is closely related to maternal health. A healthy mother brings forth a healthy baby and

there is less chance for a premature birth, still birth or abortion.

3. Certain diseases and conditions of the mother during pregnancy (e.g. Syphilis, German measles and rug intake) are likely to have effects upon the foetus.
4. After birth the child is dependent upon the mother. At least up to the age of 6-9 months, the child is completely dependent on the mother for feeding. The mental and social development of the child is also dependent upon the mother. If the mother dies, the child's growth and development are greatly affected (maternal deprivation syndrome).
5. In the care cycle of women, there are few occasions when service to the child is simultaneously called for.
6. The mother is also the first teacher of the child. It is for all these reasons that mother and child are treated as one unit.

OBSTETRICS:

One of the aims of obstetrics is to ensure that throughout pregnancy and puerperium i.e. 6 weeks after childbirth the mother will

have good health and that every pregnancy may culminate in a healthy mother and healthy baby. The social and environmental factors that influence human reproduction are numerous e.g.:

Age at marriage

Child bearing

Child spacing

Family size

Fertility patterns

Level of education

Economic status

Customs and belief

Role of women in the society

PAEDIATRICS:

Paediatrics deals with the care of children from conception to adolescence in health and diseases. One of its aims is prevention of diseases and promotion of physical, mental and social well-being of the children so that each child may achieve the genetic potential with which he/she is born.

To achieve the above aim one has to monitor:

1. Growth
2. Oral rehydration
3. Nutritional surveillance
4. Promotion of breast-feeding
5. Immunization
6. Community feeling
7. Regular health check-up etc.

MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH PROBLEMS:

Primary concerns in developing countries are:

1. Decrease of maternal and child mortality and morbidity.
2. Spacing of pregnancy (approximately 3 years).
3. Improvement of nutrition and promoting acceptance of health practices.

In developing countries like India the main problem revolve around the thread of:

- a) Malnutrition.
- b) Infection.
- c) Consequence of unregulated fertility.

Associated with the above are:

- i) Scarcity of health services.
- ii) Poor socio-economic condition.

MALNUTRITION:

Pregnant women, nursing mothers and children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of malnutrition. Maternal malnutrition leads to maternal depletion, low birth weight, anaemia, toxemias of pregnancy i.e. high B.P, body swelling especially of legs, increase protein in the urine etc. Which have serious effect during the formative years of life. The important periods are: 1) Intrauterine period of life and 2) Weaning

Promotion of nutrition can be Direct or Indirect.

Direct:

- a) Supplementary feeding programme
- b) Distribution of iron and folic acid
- c) Fortification and enrichment of foods
- d) Nutrition education etc.

Indirect:

- a) Control of communicable disease
- b) Improvement of sanitation
- c) Provision of clean drinking water
- d) Family planning
- e) Food hygiene
- f) Education
- g) Nutritional surveillance etc.

INFECTION:

Maternal infection leads to foetal growth retardation, low birth weight, abortion and

puerperal sepsis i.e. fever due to infection of genital tract after delivery.

For baby – infection may begin with labour and delivery and increases, as the child grows older. The child may be ill with debilitating diarrhoea, respiratory and skin infections.

PREVENTION:

Immunized against the 6 infectious diseases i.e. T.B., Diphtheria, Whooping cough, Tetanus, Measles and Polio.

Adoption of Family Planning either Natural or Artificial method.

Family life education in schools.

Acceptance of the role of traditional midwives and community health world.

Jokes

In the world of their own

Two drunks met and one said to the other, “Is that the sun or the moon up there?”

“I don’t know,” replied the other. “I don’t live around here”. - De Sousa Conclaves

Demonstration on the effect of alcohol:

A doctor in one of his campaign against the evils of alcohol thought of a good plan. After lecturing for about an hour to the men folk he wanted to show the amount of harm it causes to the body. So he held up two glasses – one filled with clean water and the other filled with strong alcohol. Into the glass filled with water he dropped an earthworm. The worm began to wriggle around happily. He made the audience watched the scene intently. After sometime he removed the worm wriggled from some few seconds and then dies. As he turned to the crowd to pose a question – one from the crowd shouted – **Yes!**

Drinking alcohol is not bad. It can kill the worm that is present in the stomach.

MARRIAGE IN ZELIANGRONG SOCIETY

Rev. Mp. Namthiu & **Ms. Ajailiu Niumai

The Zeliangrong society which comprises of four dialect groups – the Zemes, the Liangmais, the Rongmeis and the Puimeis – is divided into two Patrilineal moieties, namely, the Pamai and the Newmai which are subdivided into many exogamous clans and sub-clans like, Kamei, Phaomei, Sigongmei, Kamson, malangmei and Pamei and the Newmai into Gonmei, Gangmei, Panmei, Riamei, Rongmei, Daime, Abonmai, Dangmei, Thaime, Gonthangmei, etc. These clans and sub-clans are again sub-divided into many lineage groups. For example, among the Pameis in Inrianglong village, there are four lineage groups viz. *Huriyang*, *Akeou*, *Amangand Ringdi*. A Zeliangrong person's identity is therefore based on kinship.

Zeliangrong people believe that when one attains a marriageable age he or she must get married because without marriage one has not attained the status of dignity. A girl who is not married is considered as a burden for her family.

THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE:

For the Zeliangrongs, marriage is something God has destined for everyone. By getting married one serves as a link in the chain of generations and fulfils the

responsibility towards the world and mankind. Therefore, marriage is something more than personal. It is a status.

Marriage in Zeliangrong society is exogamous, i.e. a boy of Pamai clan marry a girl of Newmai clan only or vice versa but cannot marry a girl or a boy of the same clan. Marriage between cognates who are cross cousins is permitted in the sense that one can marry the daughter of one's father's sister. After marriage the husband retains the name of his clan whereas the wife relinquishes her family's surname and becomes a member of her husband's clan though she continues to be called daughter of her father's clan.

Among the Zeliangrong people, Polygamy is very rare. The society as such does not allow polygamy but in some cases, polygamy is practised and condoned. For instance, if a woman is barren she cannot stop her husband from marrying another woman, hence polygyny. Polyandry, however, is unknown. A woman marrying more than one man at a time is unheard of in the Zeliangrong society. When a woman becomes a widow she can continue to live with her children in the house of her husband or go back to her parental home if she so desires. In the case of her marrying

again, all her children are to be separated from her and left in her deceased husband's family. She can no longer claim the children as her own.

However, if there is a younger bachelor brother of her deceased husband, and if the two are willing, the widowed woman can remarry her dead husband's brother. In such case, the woman has a claim over her children because by getting married to the dead husband's brother, the lineage of the children remains intact. But in no case, a widow is allowed to get married to her deceased husband's elder brother, though he may be a bachelor.

There are different types of marriages practiced by the Zeliangrong people. The terms used in this paper are mostly of Rongmeis. The marriage procedures may differ from village to village or area to a area.

1) **Khamthan** (Arranged/holy marriage): This is a kind of marriage where the contract is made by arrangement of negotiation between the parents of the boy and the girl themselves. It is the expectation or wish of every Zeliangrong parents that their children go for Khamthan.

2) **Noumangmei** (Bride as wage for

one's service): In Noumangmei, the boy lives in the house of the girl's parents and render his services selflessly to them for a period of time, which could be months or years, as agreed upon. When the period of contract is over, the boy gets the girl and return to his parents' house as husband and wife.

3) **Samtuanmei** (Elopement): This is a kind of marriage where the boy and the girl, by their own consent, taking less consideration of the parents' will, elope or run away taking shelter somewhere in some other village. In most cases, the parents later give their consent to such marriages whether they like it or not.

4) **Maduangzaimai** (Marriage by abduction): This is the most indecent, disgraceful and ignoble kind of marriage practised in the Zeliangrong society. Here the boy kidnaps the girl without her consent nor her parent's consent. The decision whether the girl should be given in marriage to the boy will be taken after two days of the kidnap. This kind of marriage

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though taking place very rarely, is not specially approved.

- 5) **Ngnruammei** (Marriage between close relatives): Nruammei is marriage between close relatives of the same clan, (tanpui-tanpu, Khuangnchammei). Since the clans in the Zeliangrong society are exogamous groups, marriage of a boy and a girl of the same clan is considered incestuous and a taboo. When such marriage between very close relatives takes place, the couple is outlawed in the eyes of the society. In such un-sanctioned marriage, the two ends of the two cloths-one of the boy and the other of the girl are tied together and burnt outside the gate of the village to ward off any bad consequences which may follow from committing such a taboo. The lovers are excommunicated, ostracized and turned out of the village. The village then observes genna known as "Charin-nei" (genna of wonder with contempt). After sometimes (may be some days, months or years) they can be received back to the village if they request and if the village Pei (council) comply. In order to be received back the couple has to

give anything demanded by the Pei so as to enable the Pei to perform the sacrifice for purification of the couple. The couple, in spite of their reception back to the village, are seldom allowed in the important rituals of the village. When the villagers go for hunting or for war such persons are sent back from the village gate for it is believed that they will not only get wounded in such campaigns but also that their presence in such important work is degrading and contemptuous.

- 6) **Marianmi** (A girl who is a slave to the family gets married before her redemption by her parents): In the Zeliangrong society a slave is one who has been sold to somebody by the parents due to famine or scarcity of food. Such purchased person lives as a member of the purchaser's family. She is not treated as a slave in the same way as is treated in other parts of the world. Her or her parents redeem her it called Marianmi. In such instances, her parents will not invite her to the family functions.

MARRIAGE PROCEDURES:

Engagement: Marriage proposal is made by the parents of the boy through a negotiator (Nouthanpou) who must be a respectable elder of the village or clan. It is

said that settling the case of killing between two fighting groups is difficult but it is much more so to be a negotiator for marriage. If the proposal is accepted, engagement is done by handing over of a hoe without blemish to the parents of the girl by the boy's party. This is called "Intanrou Loumei" or "Sinkhaloumei". Once this is done, no other party should break this engagement. If some other man spoils the girl after engagement, it is taken as a big crime and the culprit is punished as to those who commit adultery.

Season of marriage: After the engagement, the time of marriage is fixed for the first week of the new moon in January or February. The odd number dates from 3rd up to 13th day of the lunar month before full moon is usually chosen. Full moon day is usually not fixed for marriage because on full moon days eclipse may occur and eclipse is not a good sign for marriage.

Marriage Ceremony: On the day of marriage, the girl is to go to the groom's house. While leaving her parental house it is taken care that she steps out with her right leg. Even as the bride hesitantly steps out there use to ensure a mock scuffle between the groom's side and the bride's side. The relatives of the groom who have come to take her would drag her by the hands while the relatives of the bride drag her back by the same. In so doing, when

the bride crosses the doorstep, the resistance from the bride's party stops and the bride is escorted to the house of the groom.

When the bride reaches the groom's house a piece of iron (a symbol of peace as the iron piece is cold) is placed on a fresh plantain leave at the right side of the doorstep of the groom's house. The bride puts her right leg on the piece of iron as she steps in signifying that love and peace should prevail in the family, in between the couple and that all the evils be warded off by iron piece as the bride enters the house to begin a new home. She has to step into the house lifting her right leg first. A male selected from her clan would perform a ritual called "mailploumei" wishing and blessing her to be an able person who knows how to handle things wisely and carefully by learning the ethics and wishes of the husband's family in building their new home. This is usually followed by rituals performed by the Amuh (Priest who is an elderly respectable person) who invokes blessing upon the couple.

On the day of marriage, the bride would invariably bring the following items to the groom's house: two heisupai (Mekhala) with different designs, one for mother-in-law and one for her eldest sister-in-law, one "inthiamphei" for father-in-law, one "nai" (Kilt) for her husband, one pheikhup

(warm cloth) for father-in-law's brother and one "Pheingau" for her husband. Besides these, she may bring as much items as she had prepared for her marriage day. Other items like hoe, dao, axe, basket (nkah-kalung and rangtangka) etc. are also brought by the bride to the grooms' house. Paddy field/fields which is/are inherited by her mother from her grandmother can also be given to her by her mother for use though immovable ancestral properties are not allowed to be given to her. There is feasting on the day of the marriage when the bride stops wearing the full dress of dancing ornaments or necklace, earing, bangles, armllets, etc. and puts on new dress of a woman.

Bride Price (Man): The parents or relatives of the bride usually fix bride price. However, there is a normal range of bride price prevalent among the Zeliangrong people, which range from 80 to 200 measures (buan) of paddy. Within that range, the bride price is fixed depending upon the status of the bride, that is, whether she is virgin or widow or divorcee. Bride price can be paid in instalments if the bride's party agree to it, the first instalment being paid at the time of engagement and the remaining being paid later. When the bride price is fully paid, the parents of the bride would arrange a customary function known as "KaPuats Suloumei" (Packing up for the

bride). The parents of the bride would kill a boar of the size of 5 (five) span the entire meat of which is cooked and packed in a basket and sent to the house of the groom along with sufficient quantity of fermented sticky rice-beer as a token of feast. The groom's parents then invite relatives. Each invitee is served three pieces of pork in plantain leaves and rice-beer. The "Nouthanpou" (the man who negotiated for the marriage) is given a considerable quantity of meat. But the lion's share, however, goes to the sisters-in-law. The uncooked head of the boar is to share of the groom's parents for various customary requirements. The most essential items to be bought by the bride at the occasion to her husband's house are "Inkouphei" (a black striped cloth) for her husband. The other items to be brought are "Ntaantadiu" (armllets), "guangkam" (neck band), Khamtang and Pheimiu etc. Bride price is, however, no more practiced among the Christians.

Bride price/aid after her death (Mandu): If the wife dies at her husband's house before the clearance of her bride price, the sons of her brother have the right to collect the same. The bride price so paid after the death of the wife is known as "Mandu". The matters relating to delay or non-payment of such bride price are normally brought to the village Pei (council) for adjudication.

Widow's price (Maiguang man): If the husband dies and the husband's family wants her to live with them, a price known as "maiguang man" (widow's price) is paid to her parental family. If it is not settled, the widow can go back to her parent's house and the husband's family cannot stop her from doing so.

Bone price (Rouman): This bone price is paid after the death of the wife by one who inherits the properties of her husband. There is no fixed price (rate) as such but it depends upon the settling parties. In the system of giving price this is the last payment for the bride.

The bride price is a burden for the poor families. However, the system of paying bride price has got some advantages. The woman is made to be faithful to her husband and the husband is made to love his wife. Further, in the Zeliangrong society, if a man cannot pay the bride price he is taken to be an unworthy man. So, in one way, this system spurs menfolk to strive hard and be successful. The bride price system keeps the marriage bond alive throughout the lifetime of the couple and even after their death. The kinship system is strengthened and the society is kept cohesive by this system.

Divorce (Noutanmei): Divorce is not common among the Zeliangrong people. In case of a quarrel or conflict between the husband and the wife, the latter use to flee

to her parental house and stay there for some time. When the quarrel/conflict is settled the wife is brought back to her husband's house. In rare cases, when the problem becomes unsolvable, divorce takes place. If the husband is not at fault, the bride's family imposes a fine of one Mithun upon him. But if the divorce is due to the fault of the wife, the bride price has to be forfeited to the husband. In divorce, the wife cannot claim any child of her. Reason for divorce may be barrenness of the wife, impotence of the husband and unfaithfulness of the husband or wife. Any of the party can initiate divorce proposal. Such matters are settled between the two parties and the Pei (village council) takes no cognizance of such matters.

Remarriage: Remarriage of a divorcee, a widow or a widower if they so desire is allowed in Zeliangrong society. But as mentioned, a widow can marry her deceased husband's younger bachelor brother and not an elder one or if she wants to get married to a man from outside of her husband's family, then she has first return to her parental house otherwise, whether it is by her own will or not, the act of having relationship with the another man is considered as adultery so the adulterer is to be incriminated and is considered to be "nausoumei".

Adultery: Adultery is a serious crime in the Zeliangrong society. Punishment for

the crime is more severe if it is committed at the house of the woman's husband than when it is committed at some other place. When the crime is detected, the relatives of the husband can assault the adulterer and beat him up. The offender can take refuge in the house of any villager who can protect him from the assault. Whatever may be his crime, the host will protect him and take care of him till the matter is settled. Such cases are heard in the village Pei (Council) without the offender. Whatever fine and punishment fixed by the village Pei should be imposed on the offender and the offender has no court of appeal against this. He has to pay the fine and should abide by the decision of the Pei. The usual fine is forfeiture of cultivable land or spring pond (Duikhan) etc. of the offender to the husband of the woman and a boar of 5 spans to the village Pei as a token for settlement of the matter. In some instances, the offenders are banished from the village and a boar of 5 spans to the village Pei as a token for settlement of the matter. In some instances, the offenders are banished from the village. In order to know who we are we need to know what our customs are and marriage custom is one which reveals the identity of the people. However, even in our customs, there are items both good and bad. We

have to discard the absurd ones and retain those, which are of value.

Nowadays marriage is becoming very expensive in giving big feast, using expensive wedding dresses, elaborate decoration of wedding and the residence of the bridegroom which are beyond the means of their families. Some marriages are performed on borrowed money and such a marriage has become a credit marriage which is a burden for the poor people. In view of this, the Liangmai Naga Baptist Association (LNBA) had officially adopted a resolution to solemnise the Christian marriage which will followed by a light refreshment.

WOMAN – THE CHOSEN ONE

Woman, one of the choicest beings,
Possessing in her the best of all;
The Virtue of love and understanding,
The gift of endurance is greatest in her.

Woman, the fairest of the fairs,
Of all living creatures in this world;
Patience, kindness flow in abundance from her,
The caring nature is greatest in her.

Woman, the mother of all inventions,
Sha has the fantastic imaginations,
In building a better generation,
With her strong determination she withstands all discriminations.

Woman, the mother of all generations,
Generations after generations life flows on;
Endowed with gifts of joy and suffering,
She continues to cradle the world with love.

- L. M. Maheo

“Much of the vitality in a friendship lies in the honouring of differences, not simply in the enjoyment of similarities”

- James L. Fredericks

SOME NOTED NAGA WOMAN

DR. PAMLEIPHI SHAIZA

(1913-2000)

Ms.Silla J.Konghay

President, Tangkhul Shanao Long (TSL)

Dr. Pamleiphi Shaiza was born into the family of Mr. KanreiShaiza, one of the first converts to Christianity among the Tangkhuls. She was born on the 1st November 1913. Ms. Pamleiphi Shaiza started attending school at the age of 7. Mrs. Alice Pettigrew started a kindergarten girl's school at Mission Compound, Ukhrul in 1915. There, Pamleiphi studied from class A-V. When the kindergarten school was shifted to Kangpokpi she along with the rest of the students also went there on foot. There she passed class VI. After passing her class VI she was sent to Nowgong by Rev. W. Pettigrew to undergo Teacher's Training. She went therein the company of Late Ms. Ningmasai Rungsung and Late Ms.Zingkangla (wife of Lt.R. Suisa, Ex. M.P). Late Khathing Raleng, Ambassador escorted them up to Nowgong. Ms. Hay and Ms. Christianson were the Principal and Headmistress respectively of the A.B Mission Training Centre. Ms. Hay was responsible for the school while Ms.

Christianson was in-charge of the hostel too.

During the training they were asked to write an essay on "Cultivation" in which Ms. Pamleiphi secured 99/100 marks and her essay was taken by the teachers to be sent to America.

The teachers who were missionaries in the training school found Pamleiphi too young to be a teacher. So, she was sent to Golghat to study in class VII. From there, she completed her Matriculate Examination under Calcutta University. She is one of the first Naga Women in Manipur to pass Matric Examination.

Ms.Pamleiphi after Matriculation went to PMSD Decca (West Bengal) from where she passed the Licentiate Medical Faculty (LMF) in the year 1944.

After passing LMF, she served humanity as a Govt. servant, posted at Ukhrul, Tamenglong and Imphal. She served in the hospital for a long time and in the years she went to study MBBS in Bihar University and became a fully fledged MBBS in the year1958 and once again became the first Lady MBBS in the state of Manipur.

On the 28th January 1960, she received the Diploma in Maternity and Child Welfare (MCW) from Calcutta University. On her return to Manipur, she opened a department of MCW and she served there as the Head of the Department.

In the year 1962, she underwent another training in the Family Planning Training and Research Centre in Bombay (Mumbai).

In 1974, she was promoted to the rank of Deputy Director in the Medical Department of Manipur and was working at the Medical Directorate Office, Lamphelpat, Imphal and retired in the year 1976 from Govt. Service. While serving in the Medical Department, she encouraged many young girls and helped them to undergo nurse and Dais training. She also helped them in getting placed in the public sector (Govt.) without any corruption. She also encouraged and helped many young people to undergo MBBS Training. She gave away all her medical books free of cost to the needy students. She breathed her last on the 18th July 2000 at 11.25 A.M at her home, Ukhrul.

RANI GAIDINLIU

(1915-1993)

Ms. Aram Pamei

General Secretary NWUM, Co-convenor

NPMHR,

Secy. Baptist Women's Fellowship of NE

India

The world never knew that this unnoticed Luangkau village, which is in the Trans-Barak-Basin of Taosem sub-division, Tamenglong District, Manipur, would produce a lass who rose to a significant figure in the world of today. Born to Lothuanang Pamei and Kachuatlianliu, on January 26, 1915, Gaidinliu was of a rare type of personality. Being independent but determined and strong-willed she did many extra-ordinary things and had become a legend in her lifetime.

From her childhood, her way of doing things dismayed her village folks. At the young age of 13(thirteen) she felt that she had a special call from her deity to be of service to her people. At this juncture she came to know about Jadonang who was emerging as the leader of Zeliangrong people. After meeting him sometime in 1927, and having been immediately impressed and influenced by the teachings and doings of Jadonang for the Nagas, she decided to fight for the freedom and welfare of the her people at the young age

of 16 by becoming comrade-in-arms with her cousin, Jadonang who initiated a movement which had social, religious and political implications.

Jadonang and Gaidinliu were aware of the oppressive rule being meted out to the people of Tamenglong in particular and to the hill people of Manipur as a whole by the British. The people were made to pay heavy house tax, which was equal to a year's wages of a family member, and forced to carry porter (puat-thang) without payment and had to subscribe money to feed the touring officials of the state when they went on tour in the hills. Even Gaidinliu once carried the luggage of a touring S.D.O. In Manipur valley such system had been abolished after a protest and agitation against it by the people. However, the people of Tamenglong were unhappy over the British policy of divide and rule. The British divided the hill people from the plain people and even among the hill people, the Nagas from the Kukis, thereby ruling over the divided people and greatly straining the inter-tribal relations which the Nagas resented.

Jadonang and his trusted followers including Gaidinliu made a secret plan of preparation for a revolt against the British. They started collecting funds in cash or

kind from the loyal villagers, training youth for warriors and purchasing arms and weapons. Jadonang's statement that his people would become a kings was appealing for the already suffering people that they supported his movement wholeheartedly. He used to say, "The Meiteis have their Kings, The White man have a king, the Indians (Tajuangmei) also have kings of their own, why should we not have our own king? The white men and we are all human beings, why should we be afraid of them? All human beings are equal. We are blessed people. Our days have come. Our powerful weapons are kept hidden by God at Makuai Zeilat (lake). We shall pray and worship God. Only by His grace we can become kings."

Jadonang gave training to the youth-boys and girls-most of whom were of his own age group. Training for the girls were given under the supervision of Gaidinliu. The girls learned to sing and dance Jadonang's songs and dances that had political themes and secret messages – to count people in secrecy, to call names in code, etc.

The idea of an independent movement that dawned with Jadonang and Gaidinliu is a striking thing. It is said that it was almost next to impossible to oppose anything against the British. However, this was just what was done by Jadonang and Gaidinliu who were illiterate.

When the politicians of Manipur valley had not thought of starting such movement, when the leaders of the Naga Hills were satisfied with the demand for the exclusion from the constitutional reforms being investigated by the Simon Commission to whom they told, when they came to Kohima in January 1929 that "You were the only people who have ever conquered us, and when you go, we should be as we were", the freedom movement was already dawning with Jadonang and Gaidinliu. Even the Indian National Congress declared that its Political objective was complete independence only in 1929 at the Lahore Session of the Congress. Jadonang had been hearing about the leader of the Indian movement, Mahatma Gandhi before that though.

In March, 1930 a very unfortunate incident happened. Four Meitei betel traders went to Puiluan on a day of genna (Taboo) and violated the forbidden rule for outsiders to enter the village and lit fire by cooking their dinner on fire. This act of disregard for them and their religion vexed the villagers so much so that a mob led by Lurungpou of Mukti fell on the traders and killed them. Jadonang learned about the incident when he returned to Puiluan from Luangkau, and he severely reprimanded the persons involved in the incident. The matter was then hushed up and in course of time forgotten. After sometime however,

in a contention at a village function of Puiluan, the murder of the four traders had been made public. The Police on getting the information arrested Lurungpou of Mukti and subjected him to great torture that he confessed the truth.

The Manipur Government was alerted and it decided to take action to suppress Jadonang's movement. So on the 19th February 1931, while Jadonang and Gaidinliu along with their big contingent of pilgrims were returning from Bubuan Cave, Jadonang was arrested from a house at Cachar under section 108 of Indian Penal Code. Then Jadonang tied in ropes, was taken to Luangkau, Puiluan and then to Tamenglong HQ. as a demonstration to the people that their leader had been captured by the British.

On his arrival at Imphal Jadonang with hands and feet in chain, was taken along the main road of Imphal. He was then kept at Imphal jail while prosecution against him and a number of his followers was being started at the court of the political agent. It was clear to Mr. J.C. Higgins, the Political Agent to Manipur that Jadonang was not involved in the murder as he was not present at the time and place of occurrence.

But the British Government, which was already contemplating to suppress his movement for disseminating the Idea of a Naga Self-Rule, was determined to Punish

Jadonang by one way or the other. With the objective to suppress the movement, the British Government had already been taking repressive measures against the villages which supported the movement of Jadonang by collecting funds amounting to Rs. 2920/-and withdrawing 29 guns.

The trail of Jadonang was in no case justified for he was wrongly connected with the murder case. And on 13th June 1931, Mr. J.C. Higgins, the Political Agent who combined in himself the role of policemen, the prosecution lawyer and the judge, sentenced him to death. The sentence was carried out on Saturday, the 29th August 1931 at 06.00 a.m. on the bank of Nambul river behind the jail of Imphal. Thus ended the life of Jadonang, a young man of 26 who dared to challenge the might British Empire.

Though the dream of Jadonang could not be fulfilled and his movement had been nipped in the bud, the freedom loving people in this part of the country rose up again under the leadership of Gaidinliu which alarmed the British greatly.

The British rule in Manipur Hills was arbitrary and oppressive. Gaidinliu told her followers, "We are a free people, the white men should not rule over us, we will not pay house tax to the Government, we will not obey their unjust laws like forced labour and compulsory porter subscription. The officials of the government were very

high-handed. "Gaidinliu concentrated her rebellion in the Trans-Barak-Basin, i.e. the present Manipur's Tamenglong district, Southern Nagaland and the North Cachar Hills of Assam. She also established a cult called "Heraka" (not impure) which is modified form of the Zeliangrong traditional religion.

The British Government was greatly alarmed at this unprecedented uprising under the leadership of a girl of seventeen. It was not a mob action of every "crook and gangster" as Ursula Graham Bower (Naga Path; pg. 46) thought, nor of "ruffians" as Stephen Fuchs (Rebellious Prophet; pg. 151) writes, nor was Gaidinliu **"the hub of a money-spinning God racket"** (Naga Path). It was a well-organised and popular political rebellion. The people gave money for the cause and a large number of fighting men volunteered for the fight against the British authorities of Manipur and Naga Hills. Gaidinliu was the only hope for their freedom.

The British Government decided to suppress the rebellion and capture Gaidinliu, the hunt for whom was, in words of Bower "Something almost comparable to the hunt of Prince Charles". Apprehending the grave danger of this rebellion, the Governor of Assam order that operations against Gaidinliu were to be centralized under the direct control of Mr. J. P. Mills, the Deputy Commissioner

of the Naga Hills, using personnel of 3rd and 4th Assam Rifles, and assisted by the S.D.O. of North Cachar Hills and an officer of Manipur state. Searches for Gaidinliu were instituted and her photos widely distributed throughout the three districts. Girls having similar name as Gaidinliu were interrogated as a result of which they had to change their names to void interrogation. Even Gaidinliu had to adopt the name of Dilinliu. The President of Manipur state Darbar offered a reward of Rs. 200/- for the arrest of Gaidinliu, which was subsequently raised to Rs. 500/- , and the village giving information about her was promised a remission of taxes for ten years. Gaidinliu went into hiding in North Cachar Hills while her supporters were given serious punishment; several villages were burnt down. The jawans of the Assam Rifles had an encounter with the rebels in the North Cachar Hills on 16th February 1932. Long and difficult operations followed in the attempts to arrest this young rebel leader.

In March 1932, one day in broad daylight, a large force of the Nagas under the leadership of Gaidinliu, attacked the Assam Rifles' outpost at Hangrum. Unfortunately, their weapons consisted only of daos and spears that were no match at all for the rifles of the defenders. The riflemen open fired at the Naga warriors and caused some casualties to them that

they ultimately retreated. In retaliation to this attack, however, the Assam rifles burnt down Bopungwemi village in the Naga Hills. Gaidinliu then moved eastward and reached the edge of the Angami Naga villages. Her influence also reached the Maram Naga of Mao area in the Northern Manipur.

Even in Kohima, the headquarters of the Naga Hills her sympathizers were many. "The Gaidinliu water" was sold at high prices to many Angami villages. Many spies of Gaidinliu were stationed at Kohima itself to check the movement of the Assam Rifles. Seeing her popularity, Mr. J.P. Mills, the Deputy Commissioner reported that prompt action should be undertaken to prevent any alliance between Gaidinliu and the powerful Naga village of Khonoma which staged a great uprising in 1879.

In October 1932, Gaidinliu moved into Polumi village in Nagaland and started the construction of an amazing wooden fortress, which could accommodate more than four thousand warriors on completion after the pattern of the Assam Rifles Camp at Hangrum. Gaidinliu told her followers that the next two months would be crucial period; that either she or the British would win. She was preparing to make the last trial of strength between the Assam Rifles and her army.

In the meantime, Mr. Mills, on getting an intelligence report about the activities of Gaidinliu, dispatched strong forces of Assam Rifles under the command of Captain Macdonald and on 17th October 1932 at dawn, they made a surprise attack on the incomplete fortress with unprepared Naga Forces in it.

The Naga Forces who could not offer any effective resistance surrendered and Gaidinliu was arrested from a house. She was taken to Kohima and then to Imphal for trial.

Mr. Higgins, the Political Agent sentenced her to life imprisonment. She spent fourteen long, arduous and lonely years in the dark cells of the British jails – one year at Guwahati, six years at Shillong, three years at Aizawl, Mizo Hills and four years at Tura, Garo Hills. All of her followers were also arrested and imprisoned. Yet other followers continued the movement in the subsequent years.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru learnt about Gaidinliu and her movement when he visited Assam in 1937. He was impressed by her activities and at the same time shocked that such a tender girl at the age of 20 should suffer so much. He called her the "Rani of the Nagas"; since then the title of Rani has been popularly appended to Gaidinliu. Here is a paraphrase of her statement to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, "As a woman you can

imagine that a girl of 16 years of age has her own proud youthful dreams – wild perhaps, I had my own cheerful dream of raising a happy family, but the choice left to me was either to live a normal peaceful life like any other girl, or to sacrifice everything in the world by taking up the leadership for the liberation of my people from the atrocities of the alien rulers. I chose the latter for the betterment and salvation of my people”. What a sacrifice!

In 1937, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru requested Lady Nancy Astor, the famous lady member of the British Parliament to take up the case of Gaidinliu. But the British Government refused to release her saying that her movement had not yet died down and would break out if she were released. Pandit Nehru well publicized the case of Gaidinliu and commented: “Perhaps, she thought rather prematurely that the British Empire still functioned effectively and aggressively, it took vengeance on her and her people. Many villages were burnt and destroyed and this heroic girl was captured and sentenced to deportation for life. And now she lives in some prison in Assam wasting her bright young womanhood in dark cells and solitude. Six years she had been there. What torment and suppression of spirit they have brought to her, who in the prime of her youth dared to challenge an empire”?

She was ultimately released from Tura jail when India became independent in 1947. But even after her release she was not allowed to live a normal peaceful life, as the Government of free and independent India did not allow her to go back to her native place but forced her to live at a remote unknown village of Vimono, Mokokchung district of Nagaland for fear that she might revive her movement. Thus, she was denied the basic democratic right of living wherever she wanted but also the joy of living together and fellowshiping with her beloved Zeliangrong people and least of all, the comforts of modern life.

Only after her coming over ground in 1966 after her second stint of going underground to fight for justice, was she allowed to stay at Kohima with a semblance of attention and facilities from the Government of Nagaland state in spite of her desire to go back to her native place at Luangkau village in Tamenglong district and settling down there.

Only when Gaidinliu became old and weak due to failing health was she allowed to go back to her own native village in 1991, that is, after 60 long years, at the fag end of her life. Thus she returned and stayed there, unknown and unsung, as there were no facilities of any sort – no electricity, no telephone, no T.V., no supply of drinking water, no medical care, not to speak of any other comfort of modern life. In fact, she

did not have even a home of her own, her village is also not linked with motor able road that when she returned, she was lifted and carried home in a palanquin by her village folks. It is hard to imagine how a freedom fighter, an illiterate Naga woman from a remote hill village who spent the prime of her life in jail for 14 years, lingered unknown and unsung in a place totally cut off from the rest of the country for whose freedom she had sacrificed her all.

On the night of 17th February 1993, this legendary “Rani Gaidinliu” having lived a very eventful life of hardship and arduous struggle, breathed her last at her native village Luangkau in Tamenglong District at the age of 78.

The Government of India awarded Rani Gaidinliu with Tamrapatra in 1972 for her contribution to the upliftment of the backward people and Padma Bhusan in 1983 in recognition of her long and illustrious public life spanning 65 years. She was again posthumously given the first Birsa Munda Award on 2nd February 1996 in Calcutta by the Anthropological Survey of India, Government of India in recognition of her significant contribution to the understanding of the problems of her fellowmen and also for her dedication to bring her people together against the oppression of the colonial rulers.

Rani Gaidinliu was a woman of undaunted spirit who led a sacrificial life even unto death. Her life is a model for us to follow and a challenge to take up.

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MISS NINGMASAI

(1916-1997)

Ms. M. Arem, Ex-Women Secretary,
Western Tangkhul Naga Baptist
Association (WTNBA)

Miss Ningmasai Shaonganva, was born in 1916 at Tuinem village, braved many odds and became one of the first ladies to receive primary education among the western Tangkhul women. When education especially from outside the village, was the prerogative of boys only, she would walk for three to four days covering miles on small foot for one to two months to study at Kangpokpi Mission M.E. School. During the journey, she often had faced a lot of troubles and dangers from wild animals, people etc. Yet, Ms. Ningmasai was so determined to study and be educated.

The same year in which she left home to study at Kangpokpi Mission M.E. school, that is in 1930, Rev. William Pettigrew Baptized her. While studying in the said school, she was also trained in the art of weaving by Mrs. Pettigrew. When she completed her M.E. school studies she had to go back home in 1936 at the behest of mother who promised to accept the faith in Christ if she would come back home and live with her family. She accordingly went home and lived there for one year. The next year, she taught in the L.P. School at

Sirarakhong, a neighbouring village. At this time, Mrs. Duncan, wife of Mr.Duncan, S.D.O. Ukhrul invited her to teach in a weaving school at Ukhrul. She went and taught there for two years (1939-40). She is well befitted to get the credit for introducing handicraft technique to many Tangkhul girls those days.

She went back to Tuinem village in 1941 and started a night school for women while running a weaving school side by side. She then turned the night school into morning school after two years and continued for another two years without any monetary gain for herself but with a strong conviction to give education to women when the school was taken over by the two male teachers with Government salary in 1945.

She served there as an honorary Treasurer for Tangkhul Naga Baptist Convention (TNBC) women society for thirteen years (1946-59) during which, that is, in 1947, she attended the worker's conference for the whole Tangkhul Association at Ngaimu village and ther she spoke on the importance of women education. She also served as women promoter of the Eastern Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association from 1963-64. She then became adviser to the Women Society in the Tangkhul Naga Baptist Convention.

She had such love and concern for the spiritual life of others that she even brought a non-Christian girl to Christ by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ thereby leading an exemplary life.

Unto the last, she continued the weaving school at her village and trained and supported orphaned girls there. She worked not only for Tangkhul women but also was actively involved in the Manipur Baptist Convention women's work as well. She took a leading part in the founding of the MBC Women's Union in 1955 and attended MBC meetings as her own task.

Ms. S. Ningmasai expired on December 4 1997.

Women cannot but give thanks for her untiring effort for the upliftment of the women society. Today it may not be

wrong to say that it is because of her keen interest in education and weaving that we have many educated girls and experts in weaving and embroidery. Without her, the Tangkhul Women today would have been in a different status.

Our hearts are always courage, determination and sacrifice she rendered tirelessly towards Christian women and for God's work.

*“Friendships multiply joys
and divide griefs”*

- *H. G. Bohn*

MS. HANGMILA SHAIZA

(1920-1997)

Ms. Valley Rose Hungyo

Advisor to NWUM, Editor, Aja Daily

Hangmila was born to Mr. & Mrs. M.K. Shimray of Hunphun (Ukhrul) on the 19th September 1920. Her father was a pastor.

She studied at the Kangpokpi Mission M.E School and Golaghat Christian Girl's High School. She passed the Matriculation Examination from the Calcutta University.

After matriculation, she served as a teacher at Somdal M.E School. While teaching there, she initiated to form the "Tangkhul Christian Women's Organisation" and she was made its first President.

In 1949, she was married to Mr. Yangmaso Shaiza. After her marriage her service was expanded to all the tribal women. As her husband was serving as a BDO/SDO, Mrs, Hangmila went with him wherever he was posted and gave all her support to him. Wherever they went, she made friends with the women of the area; as a result, they got maximum co-operation and love from the people in all their work. Mrs. Hangmila Shaiza served as the Chairperson of the Manipur State Social Welfare Advisory Board (MSSWAB) for a long time.

In the year 1972, she represented Manipur Christian Association to the Asian Women Baptist Conference held in Hongkong. She

went to Thailand and Singapore for the similar missions.

She encouraged strongly for proper education. She took initiative to established schools in Imphal, she founded the Aton English School at Nagaram and the Little Angels' English School, Ukhrul. In 1975, Mrs. Hangmila initiated and formed the "Manipur Women Football Association" which was recognized and affiliated to All India Women Football Association (AIWFA).

The Manipur Women Football team participated in several tournaments in different places of Indian and won many prizes. From 1980 till her death, she was the President of the "All India Manipur Football Association". She also led the Indian women football team to different countries like Thailand, Hongkong etc.

In 1977, the Jagoi Marup Cultural Group was formed under her leadership and the troupe performed Manipuri and Tribal dances in many Indian cities. They also demonstrated indigenous martial arts (Thang-Ta). They also performed in many foreign Embassies in India like British, Kuwait, Japan, Indonesia, Ireland etc. and tried to internationalize the cultural heritage of Manipur. This Jagoi Marup remains as one of the famous cultural group not only in India but also abroad.

She also encouraged to form **“Women Professional and Business Organisation”** where both the plain and the tribal women work together.

In 1980, on the invitation of Japanese Govt. Mrs Hangmila Shaiza led a team and visited many important cities of Japanese women set up small scale Industries, cottage industries and large scale industries. Hangmila’s husband, Mr. Yangmaso Shaiza was the first Tribal Chief Minister of Manipur. Being the wife of a man in such a high position, she contributed maximum support. When Mr, Yangmaso Shaiza was suddenly assassinated on the 30th of January 1984, she was serving as the President of Tangkhul Shanao Long (TSL). After the Assassination, she vacated the TSL post and took up the works left undone by her husband.

In 1990, following the assassination of her brother-in-law, Lungshim Shaiza, she contested in the by-election of the 5th Manipur Legislative Assembly from the 44/Ukhrul A/C and won the election defeating all the male candidates and opened the record as the First woman to enter into the Manipur Assembly. She is the first elected woman MLA in the political history of Manipur and opened the door for the women in general and the Tangkhul women in particular to step into the social life more courageously. As an

MLA, she tried her best to serve the people well.

Though widowed, she lived happily with her five sons, one daughter, five daughters-in-law and many grand-children.

The Almighty God called here to her heavenly home on the 3rd August 1997. She had done whatever she could. We praise the Lord for her life.

MS. R. ONIA

(1939-1995)

Mrs. S. Lidziisa Chachei

Assistant Teacher

R. Onia who was born on February 1, 1939 in a simple peasant's family at Chowainu village, Senapati District, Manipur became an ideal woman in her community.

She started schooling in her village L.P School and studied up to class II there after which, in 1950, she got admitted in class III in Mao M.E School at Mao gate. She faced a lot of obstacles in her bid to get education. Firstly, during that time, inter – village roads were not well developed. She had to walk for miles on small footpaths through thick jungles. Secondly girl education was not encouraged in Mao community during that time. So, she was often mocked and spit upon by village folks. Since she had no other girl friend to accompany her to school she used to go along with her village boy schoolmates who pulled her legs many times by scaring her in the thick jungles. Thirdly, her parents being poor could not afford the expenses for her education. She was therefore compelled to earn a few coins by carrying on her back the village vegetable products such as potatoes, tomatoes, cabbages etc. of businessmen from her

village to Mao gate, the shopping centre of the areas and thereby met the expenses of her studies. Thus the obstacles were many, but her strong determination, tireless and fearless efforts overcame them all.

She passed Hindi PARIMBHIK in 1995, PRABESH in 1956, Matriculation Examination in 1959, B.A. in 1964 from D.M. College, Imphal and B.T. in 1986 from Post Graduate Training College, Imphal and became the first lady graduate in Mao community. She was also the monitress of the first Girl's Hostel of D. M. College.

She got married to Mr. K. Adaho of Shajouba (Rtd. Jt. Director of Industries, Nagaland) in January 1968 and they were blessed with 1 (one) daughter and 3 (three) sons.

Mrs. R. Onia was a born teacher who dedicated her life for the cause. She served in Sadar Patel High School, Mao-Gate; Paomata High School, Paomata Centre and Mao Maram Higher Secondary School, Tadubi in different capacities. She used to visit from house to house preaching the value of women's education in this modern society and requesting parents to send their daughters to school. While she was in Paomata High School, she organized the first of its Annual Sports, observed Parents' day and established a botanical

garden of rhododendrons in the school campus.

After she joined the Mao Maram Higher Secondary School in 1987, she did a lot to lift the school from its deteriorating condition. She initiated and solved the problem of land encroachment of the school by the land donors by filing a case in the court of S.D.O's office.

Again, the school was nearing defunct as a result of undersized enrolment of students. She, therefore, went on an education campaign visiting surrounding villages and requesting parents to send their children to schools, which saw a positive result as the enrolment of students in the school was increased in triple. During her period, a science centre sponsored by the Department of Science Technology and Environment was installed in the school a computer unit with five-computers sets were also installed in 1991. And a nice botanical garden especially of orchids and other variety of flowers was maintained (she was one of the members of orchid society of India).

She was an advisor to the Mao students Union, Mao Naga Women Welfare Association, Wine Prohibition Council and many other organisations. She also became associated with Literature and she published a bilingual translation book, Mao to English in 1987. She was one of the textbook writers in the Primary

sections and was a member of the Mao Academy and served there as its sitting Secretary till her death.

She called for a strong and efficient administration of Mao Maram Higher Secondary School, being an HSLC Examination Centre so as to produce better students. She had such great affection for her students that she taught them enthusiastically, took special care for their health growth by instructing them to be neat and clean and even on holidays led them in cleaning the school, social services in and around the villages, repairing inter-village roads and footpaths leading to paddy fields. Very often she advised them to help their parents in household chores. She also initiated in establishing local clubs, adult education centres, village community centres etc. in Ma area.

Mrs. Onia was an educationist and a social reformer. Her whole life was dedicated to the welfare and upliftment of the Mao Community.

Her tireless and unceasing effort as a teacher was recognized by the Education Department, Government of Manipur and was given one of the State Awards in 1993.

Mrs. R. Onia left for her heavenly abode on 28th July 1995 at RIMS when she was on her official duty.

“If you refuse criticism you will end in poverty and disgrace; if you accept criticism you are on the road to fame.”

- Proverbs13: 18

ANAL CUSTOMARY LAWS ON MARRIAGE

Dr. Rd. Samery Anal, General Secretary, Anal SinnuRuwl (ASR)

Traditionally the Anal tribe is composed of *Moshun* and *Mulchal* clans. The *Moshum* clans are the descendants of *Hanshu* and the *Mulchal* the offshoots of *Hantha*, the legendary Heroes who led the Anals While coming out of the *Khol* (cave).

Among the Anals moiety system is prevalent i.e marriage is permitted only between *Moshum* and *Mulchal* clan. The law of the exogamy forbids marriage within the same clan. Those who committed incest were therefore boycotted and sent to exile where they had to spend their whole life. Marriage between the same two families which is called "Jolthing" i.e exchange of sisters. Anal custom has it that the order of seniority basis is to be respected by the daughters in marriage. The younger sister on superseding her elder sister has to pay a fine to the elder. This custom is silent in the case of brothers. Monogamy is an aged old tradition of the Anals. Stray cases of polygamy are also recorded but no longer in vogue among the believers of the New Testament Bible.

TYPES OF MARRIAGE:

There are two types of marriage. They are:

1) *Nupa Piisu* (arranged by parents). 2) *Narepe-isun* (love marriage). In the past, means of livelihood was simple, easy and abundant. Early marriage at teenage was considered good and encouraged in order to multiply the population of the family. The initiative for engagement should come from the boy's side. Normally, the boy's father along with some elders of his clan goes usually at night to the girl's house where some of the elders of the bride's clan have already gathered together to receive the in-laws.

STAGES OF CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE:

Whatever be the types of marriage, Anal custom envisages certain stages and procedures to be followed and finalized the marriage settlement. To start with the types of *Nupa-piisu*, on attaining marriageable age, the boys are expected to choose their partners. Having found the suitable girl the parents of the boy ought to approach the parents of the girl. Generally the time of approaching the girl's parents is the early morning at about 3 a.m before anybody gets up. Initially the parents of

the boy would approach the parents of the proposed girl in top-secret manner suitably. They carry Kuh-thuwl (a meaningful set of articles) to be presented to the girl. If the response is favourable and the Kuh-thuwl is accepted, a convenient date is fixed for engagement ceremony called Zuha which is called Chadu-piiso in the modern term. On the day of performing the Zuha, the day for Zupum meaning wedding ceremony, is fixed. From the day of Zupum the groom stays in the bride's house for three years as per the Anal marriage customary law. During this period of Nahla-ihlo (servitude) the groom has to assist wholeheartedly in the entire household works of father-in-law. From the day of Zupum onwards, the marriage becomes formal. All the wages and income earned by the groom is paid to the parents'-in-law as the price of the bride. After a year of Nahla-ihlo the boy's parents pay a historic visit called Chahla. In this Chala ceremony, the groom's family has to offer Zu (rice beer) and a pair of Zu and Sha (wine and meat) is compulsory whereas the sweet smelling sticky rice is extra though not compulsory. The villagers, elders, relatives of the bride are invited in this function. If the boy fails to stay at his father-in-law's house for three years, he is required to give Min (price) in cash or in kind (rice) of the three years of servitude.

Min is payable to the father-in-law in cash or kind worth one thousand rupees and a jar of rice-beer. It is also said that a person who prolongs to stay for four years in his father-in-law's house may be exempted from paying HMARSA. A customary and compulsory feast has to be thrown by the groom in honour and fulfilment of bride's price in favour of parents'-in-law.

HMARSA (Customary feast):

Hmarsaas said is a very expensive feast to be performed in the house of the bride by the groom's parents after the completion of three years of Nahla-ihlo. This is the last duty of the groom's father towards the parents of the bride. Many items are required. If the groom is rich enough and wishes he may host the Hmarsa Feast for the second time. The price of an Anal bride varies from 3-3 khons (one khons equal to Rs. 1000/-). The groom's parents are to pay this Min (price) on the occasion of Hmarsa. In addition to the cash, they offer Thorhring like Pajandal (gong) and Kangthe (big dao).

Amithun or a pig or a cow or wild animals is used for the Hmarsa feast. The quantity of rice and other things are to be judged by the village elders who are well experienced to do so. During the ceremony, Zutuwnng and Satuwnng are served to near relatives of both the families. In return of the service and offerings, parents of the bride provide some essential household materials to the

couple. Thus, the Anal marriage is a long process which provides stability and cohesion not only between the two families. The current bride's price is about Rs.3000/-

In Anal society where there is free mixing of boys and girls, courting is a necessity.

Under some circumstances, parents' arrangement for marriage was in vogue but

this practice gradually died down long before and in general love marriage has become prevalent as it is today.

Padmashree Awardees:

The following 'Tender Hearts' are the Padmashree Award Winners in Family Planning:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Ms. Aram Panmei | 9. Dr. Ng. Romi |
| 2. Dr. Gina Shangkham | 10. Ms. SW. Yangmila |
| 3. Ms. L.K. Mariam | 11. Ms. L.K. Anot |
| 4. Ms. K. Matia | 12. Ms. CR. Danney |
| 5. Ms. Azanliu Pamei | 13. Ms. Y. Salle |
| 6. Ms. Achung Gangmei | 14. Ms. Rt. Hringlhum |
| 7. Ms. R. Mamie | 15. Ms. Ng. Chanbini |
| 8. Ms. R. Marshing | 16. Mr. P.A. Thekho – Woman honorary |

Courtesy by Ms. Chanbini

AN EVENT NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN

**Ms. Athia Mary Moroo, President,
Senapati District Women Association (SDWA)**

Manipur the land of jewels as was once upon a time described by the late Jawaharlal Nehru is altogether a different story now. Today the land is known more for its insurgent problem. The frequent hide and seek game played between the Govt. of India with the insurgent groups and sometimes among the insurgent groups themselves have played havoc to the sentiments of the locals. Although many people take pride that the so-called Manipur state has a recorded history of two millenniums, but one should not forget that the so called Manipur state was and is filled with stories of hatred and ethnic clashes promulgated by certain sections or groups or by other external forces. All the draconian laws e.g. Armed Forces (Special) Power Act of 1958 and other black laws still exist and prevail in this 21st century. In the background of such black laws imposed, the people at large continue to live in constant fear. The worst impact is on the women and children. Although the women folk continue to bear the brunt of all the atrocities meted out to them yet they are not disheartened. There have been many instances where women, the so-called weaker sex have equally played

important role and in many cases have demonstrated their valour. Women in many cases have come out freely and voluntarily to render support when the need arises. Women in many instances have intervened to bring about an amicable solution. The following is one such instance wherein Ms. Athia Mary Moroo braved herself and also escaped the jaws of death.

It was on the 8th of June 1998 when a bandh which was called by the SDSA (Senapati District Students' Association) under the aegis of UNC and ANSAM on National Highway 39 against the creation of new district was disrupted resulting in the brutal killing of an innocent elderly man Mr. Sani, shooting of Ms. Truneon her right hand and beating of many by the Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) Forces. The Kukis demanded a separate Sadar Hills District which is to be carved out from the Senapati district to which the Nagas opposed. The fateful incident took place at Senapati District Head Quarters near the bridge in the evening around 6.00 P.M.

The sound of gunfire was heard. On hearing the shouts and cries of the people

on the NH-39 around the bazaar area I sensed that something must be wrong so I immediately gathered the womenfolk in my neighbourhood and led them to the spot where some of the crowd had already assembled. I was told that the whole commotion came about when some of the bandh volunteers pelted stone at the escorted vehicles that violated the bandh. The army in retaliation to this, blank fired in the air so as to frighten the volunteers. Shortly, they caught hold of a man named Mr. Y. Dai – 65 yrs. Who was returning from the bazaar then and beat him up severely and left him unconsciousness rumour soon spread that the army i.e IRB (Indian Reserve Battalion) had killed him. The people got enraged and began moving to the escort Party. Some of them began to block the way by using boulders while others started to burn the tyres. By the time a large crowd coming from different directions had gathered and the situation seemed to worsen. The IRB responded by firing more round of shots in the air. Seeing that the situation was worsening, some of the women felt that they should immediately intervene and do what is possible. Quickly I started leading the women groups to the forefront. Firing in the air continued while the women folk kept marching ahead towards the bridge where all the trucks and oil tankers were lined up i.e. to the spot where the old man

was beaten, kicked and rolled down. As we marched ahead we kept shouting slogans “We want justice and truth”. In the process of the march, many women e.g. Ms. Kh. Matia, Ms. H. Besa and others were kicked by boots and also hit by the gun butts. While the army was concentrating on the marchers, some of the youngsters took the opportunity to loosen the oil tankers’ nuts and also broke the vehicle screen. As the women continue to march forward forcefully the IRB men fire around 50-60 rounds of blank fire in the air. The crowd began to shout all the more. Another round of firing was made and this time it hit on the right temple of the bystander Mr. Ng. Sani 68 years a handicapped who was appealing for peace. Within seconds he fell down. I could not believe nor digest whether it was just a hallucination or real.