

A CRITIQUE

TO

THE MYTHOLOGY OF LAMKANG TRIBE

MANIPUR

BY

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Acknowledgement

As the older generation is slowly dying out, the Lamkang history (Myths, rites, rituals, customs, folklore, etc) has been dying out as well. My worries and confusion have brought me to this tumult which could be controversial to certain issues and for certain people. However, one of my greatest and most cherished goals is to bring out *Lamkang History*. I had started working on it since 1992 and completed it in 2000. There was no single written write-up on the Lamkang tribe. I had gone around and gathered the materials from old people of different villages who were/are well versed in Lamkang oral historical accounts. As such the book lacks much scientific accounts.

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Avince Anthony Dilbung

General introduction:

The Lamkang tribe is one of the smallest tribes of Manipur, North-East India, belonging to Mongoloid race. The tribe is found in Chandel district of Manipur. They claimed to have migrated from China via Myanmar. They are fair and yellow in complexion. What distinct them from the rest of the tribes is their distinct language and their shawl.

Today's Lamkang scholars say that 'Lamkang' is not the original name of the tribe. They were called 'Ksenpa' (Red Man). He was called 'Re Man' because he used red shawl mixed with black strips.

Lamkang is a complex and rich language. The spoken Lamkang of today is not pure as it has nearly 40% of Manipuri/meiteilon. Each village has its own tonality. One can localize the speaker from his tone.

I want to critique the Lamkang historical accounts as expounded by the Lamkang Oral historians to make it more scientific and to make it more relevant to the present century. There are many loop holes which when described as it is, would be insipid to the modern mind.

For instance, the scientists believed that millions of years ago the universe was formed. It is called '**The Big Bang Theory**'. Within seconds this fireball expanded and cooled down from fantastic temperatures into the universe we know. Millions of particles cooled from the super-hot gas created by the explosion swirled towards one another by the universal force of gravity. These particles formed stars and planets. The earth is one such planet. This is the only habitable planet. Life began some 4600 million years ago on this planet. There are also some scientific postulated accounts that life also was found in the planet Mars some billions of years ago. Due to gradual change of temperature life completely extinguished from the planet Mars. Scientists are still hunting for a planet which could be habitable by man (Gillian Denton). Where is the Lamkang history when compared to this scientific world account?

Again science states that the first simple life forms like bacteria and algae appeared around 3500 million years ago. During the last 570 million years more complex creatures evolved. This time span is divided into three Eras: The Paleozoic Era (old life), Mesozoic Era (middle life) and the Cenozoic Era (recent life) which are themselves split into shorter periods. The Lamkang history has no such account and no such eras and no dates. Hence, it would be inappropriate to call this book as 'The History of the Lamkang Tribe'. It is only a myth and therefore I would rather name this book as '**A Critique to the Mythology of Lamkang Tribe**'. Critiquing will enhance and make richer the accounts as expounded by the Lamkang Oral Historians. It is done not to devalue the rich heritage of the Lamkangs but to make it more acceptable to the mind of the present and future generation.

Division of the work:

The first chapter describes **The Origin** of the tribe. It has two views: *The Western View* and *The Eastern View*. The second chapter describes **The Economic Life** of the people. The third chapter is about **The Political Life** of the people. It reasons out why the population of the tribe is low. The fourth chapter is the description about **The Social Life** of the people. It was and is a patriarchal society. However, women were given respectable place in the society. They had a say. The fifth chapter is about their **Belief System**. It also has proverbs, sacrifices, rites, rituals and the invasion of Christianity. Chapter six presents the beautiful **Folklores** of the tribe. It has about thirty folk tales meant for the children to derive moral lessons from them. It has also some folk songs. It is very thrilling to go through this enthralling myth that has been passed down the generation.

Though a small tribe, Lamkang history (If it could be called a history at all), has rich and vast historical accounts which I could not deal with each of them exhaustively. It has a rich culture, custom and tradition.

Many of the historical accounts as enumerated by the Oral Historians (I would rather call them Mythical Narrators) have many similar accounts with other tribes like Kuki, Zou, Anal, Angami, and even Babylonian myth. It could be borrowed one. Many Lamkangs would not agree to this. To this disagreement lies the uniqueness of the Lamkang history.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGIN OF KSEN LAMKANGPA

1. The Theory of Creation.

Every believer irrespective of caste, creed and religion believed that God is the uncaused Cause, the Unmoved Mover. He is the reason of every existence of every species. He created this universe in all its splendors and marvels from nothing. Every species speaks for itself. Only faith can tell this fact. Theologically and philosophically speaking this postulation through faith is accepted but not with scientific mind. The scientists would not accept from the stance of evolution.

When science and faith become irreconcilable myth acts as catalyst by bridging the two to a common point. Myth can not always go together with science. The theory of creation according to Babylonian mythical account says that from one single man and woman multiplication took place. Science cannot accept this because close blood relation can only breed unhealthy off springs. There will be degeneration instead of generation. This can happen only among the animals, birds, fish and plants. Can we postulate that in the beginning man was healthy and therefore marriage within close blood bred healthy off springs? The Bible says so but not science (Gen. 19:30-38-the two daughters of Lot made their father drunk and had sex with him and both became pregnant. The two sons were named Moab and Ammon). Hence, there is a possibility of many Adams and many Eves.

The Lamkang theory of creation is neither Biblical nor scientific in true sense of the term. It is a myth. According to this account of creation the first Adam came out from the Great Den (Khuwrpi) and made his settlement on the surface of the earth. His name was Benglam. Benglam was a Caveman. This is very controversial. It is controversial because (1) Cave cannot be the origin of man (as stated by the Lamkang history). Cave was a later habitat of man. Man lived in open space in the beginning. Later man lived in the cave to protect himself from cold, rain, thunder, lightning and wild animals.

(2) Was the Lamkang Adam created from the dust of the earth? Did God create his wife too? The Lamkang historians said that he came out from the great hole. If it was so was he in full human form? Or did he become man through the process of evolution? Thus, this 'Great Hole' needs to be defined. We can only postulate that he was a caveman. Where was he before living in the cave? The Lamkang history has no account of the first Adam before the cave life. If he was not caveman, then it is difficult to think of man able to survive and live as man apart from water and oxygen. If it was possible then he cannot be he/human. It is not a living being. Non-living thing cannot become a living being without the instrumentality of God.

(3) The Lamkang Adam had bow and arrow when he came out from Khuwrpi (Great Hole). The day of his arrival out from 'Khuwrpi' on the surface of the earth cannot be the

day of his creation. If it was so, then it is too magical as he had known the use of bow and arrow. Hence, we can presume that he was a caveman.

Two conflicting theories:

The Eastern Oral Historians and the Western Oral Historians agree to the fact that the first man came out from 'Khuwrpi' (huge/Great den/hole). But they differ with regard to the places of migration and the formation of clans. These two views are irreconcilable and therefore, they are here dealt with separately.

a) The Eastern Theory:

The Lamkang Adam/Benglam/Ksenpa came out from the great den not knowing that there was a man eater {thought to be a lion (Humpi)} crouching and pouncing at the mouth of the great den. His eldest son Alrang was sent first. He was attacked and eaten by the man eater. Benglam could not save his son. He mourned deeply for his son.

Benglam studied and reflected hard on how to trick the man eater and come out safely. A bright idea suddenly struck his mind. He called to him a group of migratory birds called 'Preet' in Lamkang. These are a group of small birds that hover over the ripen paddy before the harvest. He made a treaty with them. As per the treaty the birds flew and scratched the face and the eyes of the man eater. The man eater caught a few of them but the caught ones always escaped as it tried to catch a few more. While it was busy catching and releasing birds, Benglam, his children and wife came out safely. In return the birds were aloud to eat the man's ripened paddy before the harvest.

When Benglam was to encounter the man-eater he had no other weapon other than his bow and a single arrow. He pretended to have fitted his arrow into his bow of and on as though he had many poisonous arrows. The man-eater fled in fear. His wife and children too came out safe. He was followed by every living creature. All of them lived happily there after. *We can presume that the great den is not mere den. It could be another inhabited planet (far from it). If it was mere den how could every species lived with him in that great den? If we say that the great den is a planet how could he travel from one planet to another? Does it mean to say that he and other living beings were a sort of ions thrown from heaven on the surface of the earth? (Greek Philosophy). It is very difficult to establish the base of the proponents.*

According to this theory the first man Benglam came out from 'Khuwrpi' along with his wife, children and dog. For further reflection I would like to ask the same question again. What sort of den was this? If he had originated from the great den then what sort of sustenance and who created him? Asking the same question again 'was he in the full human form?' How was he living with his wife and children? Were there other human beings beside them? It is therefore unimaginable and unacceptable to the scientific and reasoning mind.

The Oral Historians (both East and West) were of the opinion that Benglam had children. But there are no reports showing the existence of other children beside the son by name Alrang.

Like any other myth the Lamkang myth also says that man had one common language with the birds and animals. They could commune with one another in the same language. They ate and drank together and lived happily without injuring each other. All of them seemed to be vegetarians. If all were vegetarians then why did the man eater ate the eldest son of Benglam? Since they talked the same language, could he not plead the man eater? Thus, there is a lack of scientific foundation.

The myth also says that man also became non-vegetarian later. A line of separation was drawn thereafter. Birds and animals no longer lived with him in the same household, except the dog. He gave left over of the meat to his dog and his dog too became non-vegetarian. The animals also ate one another. Enmity was also set among birds themselves. Thus began universal warfare among all creatures of the sea, air and land. There was no longer mutual trust and confidence.

(i) Clothing:

Man in the beginning was hairy and naked. Science states that the physical structure and shape of modern man is the product of evolution. He resembled chimpanzee. He used stones and clubs in the Stone Age, bronze in the Bronze Age and iron in the Iron Age. For his clothing he used leaves, barks, skins, and woven cloths later.

Lamkang history has no such accounts. We do not know whether Benglam, the first Adam, was hairy or naked. We do not know what sort of tools or clothing he was using or wearing.

(ii) Shelter:

Man lived under the trees and later into the caves. He learnt the art of making fire, made fire near the cave to scare away carnivorous animals and lit the cave with torches by burning animal fat on the wooden sticks. He began to cultivate crops. With cultivation he gave up cave life and made huts to live in. He began to rear animals and birds. He changed his habitat and occupation. Thus began a village life. Then the historical account is silence for sometime until we find the Lamkangs in great number living and leading a village life.

(iii) Migration:

According to the Eastern Oral Historians the great den was situated in China. This opinion is only a mere postulation. The scientists were of the opinion that Africa was the cradle of early man. The fossils supported this archeological view. As per the archeological discoveries, China is not mention as the abode of early man. Bushman seemed to be making Africa as his homeland. Where were the early Lamkangs before coming to China? If China was the origin of the Lamkangs then the Lamkang history has no base, as China is not the historical foundation of early man's origin.

The process of migration does not explain the tenure of stay, the life and activities of the people in each village. It only lists out the places of migration in this way. The first Lamkang Adam (Benglam) made his first settlement at *Khuwrpi-Kokpi*. From *Khuwrpi-Kokpi* he moved on to *Senlung Daamyol* a fertile land filled with fruits and vegetables. The population gradually grew in size. From *Senlung Daamyol* the group migrated to *Chimlei-Oktong*. From *Chimlei-Oktong* they migrated to *Kawar-Sonrang* from *Kawar-Sonrang* they migrated to *Pamtlu-Aarly*. The society was then divided into clan system. From *Pamtlu-Aarly* they migrated to *Chibu-Chiyai*. From *Chibu-Chiyai* they migrated to *Hichang-Yangnam*. This was in China. From *Hichang-Yangnam* they migrated to *Muru-Sangsang*. It was situated near the sea. It was from here that the Lamkangs collected and inducted sea shells and ivory, bracelets and bangles into their cultural dance costumes. They had frequent war with other tribes. Thus he came across other Adams and Eves. Therefore *Benglam* certainly was not the first Adam of whole human race. Each tribe and each race seemed to be having its own Adam and Eve. To escape from such warfare the Lamkangs made for a new settlement called *Kuphun-Kiyaar* where life was temporarily peaceful. The constant warfare made them scattered. This resulted into various villages in due course of time. Like the lost tribe of Israel, the Lamkangs also scattered never to be unified again.

Incorporation of Lamkangs into the main land of India:

Suddenly we find the Lamkangs incorporated into the main land of India. Nobody exactly knew how and when were the Lamkangs Incorporated into India? After migrating into Burma they moved into India through warfare. The Burmese king had war with the King of Manipur. The Manipur Maharaja was given a big territory of Burma. Later Manipur was annexed by the East India Company (England). This was how the Lamkangs were incorporated into the main land of India probably.

Rituals and Rites:

(i) Faith:

The Lamkangs had no idea about God. They had seen natural calamities such as storms, cyclones, hurricanes, earthquake, thunder, lightning, flood, gales, etc. The conclusion was that there were spirits that caused them to happen and therefore they should be appeased that they may not inflict such pain, suffering and death upon them. Hence, Animism came to be practiced. Some spirits are wild and ferocious while some are small and mild. There is no report of the Lamkangs worshipping great trees, stones, mountains, or animals. They only made sacrifices to appease such spirits. The sacrifices were performed by the priests. They had rites and rituals accordingly. He believed that there was life after death. The deaths have separate world of their own.

(ii) The sacrifices:

It is a well established fact that 80% of man's sickness is emotional and psychological. Man invites or invents diseases. The remaining 20% is caused by viruses and bacteria. But for the Lamkangs any sickness was caused by a spirit. Small spirits caused minor sicknesses and diseases and the bigger spirits caused major and fatal sicknesses and diseases. Accordingly the sacrifices made to appease the spirits differed.

Sacrificial Items:

Cocks, pigs, and dogs were the main items of sacrifices offered to the spirits either in exchange for life or removal of punitive hand(s). Pigs and dogs were also used for inaugural of new houses and for beginning of cultivation.

A spotless hen or chick was set free into the jungle. It was given to the spirit in exchange of life of the sick: “Eat this and set the soul of the sick free” was the usual prayer uttered by the priest. Beside hen cereal, fruits, coins and flowers were also offered. They were laid in the forest where the spirit lived (belief). The type of forest and the direction of the spirits’ abode were also determined by the priests.

(b) The Western Theory of Creation:

The Western Theory does not differ much with that of the Eastern Theory. The following description is analytical critique. The Lamkang Western Oral Historians also accept that the first Lamkang Adam came out from the great den. But with regard to the way the Lamkang Adam frightened the man eater is different.

Lamkang hunters used poison smeared on their arrows when hunting. If the arrow causes even a scratch the animal eventually dies. The hunters followed the footprints of the animal and kill it. This poison was made by the priest from certain herbs which nobody knew (except the priest). The following description will tell us how the historians link this to the first Adam (Benglam) using poisonous arrow. The present fact is used to justify the skill and shrewdness of the Lamkang Adam.

When the man eater saw Benglam coming out it left its concentration on the birds that were scratching its eyes and face. It decided to pounce on the man. Benglam took out his only single arrow smeared with the poison. He pretended as though he had a dozen of arrows by fitting and refitting the arrow to his bow. The smell of the arrow was so strong that the man eater vomited out the eldest son of Benglam which it had eaten. Hence, to this day the saying is ‘*Humpi ngoo kru klut dao*’ (poison is fatalistic to a lion—man eater).

(i) Promulgation of Laws:

Benglam lived together with the jungle animals and birds. The atmosphere was very harmonious and cordial. They talked the same language. Birds, animals and man were rational. But man had dominion over other living creatures.

One day *Benglam* called to himself all the creatures living on the earth. They were to make laws and regulations to govern themselves. He presided over the meeting. Mr. Toad was given the first chance to pour forth its wisdom but its opinion was rejected by the delegates of the meeting. They cursed and pinched the Toad. The toad bled and the sores covered all its body. It had a rough skin from then on. As a protectionery measure it produced a milky poisonous substance to ward off the enemy.

This seems to be a mere justification of why the toad has a rough skin and why it discharges white milky substance in time of danger. Only myth can state that there was

only one language. Lamkang myth has no theory to support the origin and existence of numerous languages spoken today. The Babylonian myth says that it was God who confused the tongues of men who were busy building the Tower of Babel. They want to reach God. They could not communicate with one another as the hand of God twisted their tongues (Gen. 11:1-9).

(Coming back to the story) The second person to make his speech was a bird called 'Ushen'. It is a small bird. It has a beautiful smooth and colorful body. He was a male bird and therefore, 'Ushenpa' ('Pa' is suffix to show that it is a male gender and to denote feminine gender 'Nu' is suffixed). He stood up and said, "Khujing lapsso, khuwar lapsso, rupi armik kirme chichai, ruwa armik kirme chichai, modi lamdi porsing seng" (Let there be a day and a night. Let land mass be separated from water mass. Let every form of life breed and steam in super abundance unto the separation of bamboos). And it was so.

*This resembles the pronouncement of God at the time of creation (Cf. Gen. 1 & 2). The Holy **Koran** also records this fact of creation.*

Every delegate accepted and praised the little bird for its sound wisdom. They patted its back. To this day this bird has smooth and beautiful feathers. It can imitate the sound of other birds in the forest.

To mark the occasion all the delegates decided to celebrate it with great pomp and show. Mrs. Rat ('Junu' in Lamkang) was requested to bring out her best wine. Mr. *Dolrotpa* (bird) distributed the best sweet wine. He helped himself much in course of serving. He was overdosed. In his drunkenness he overlooked *Shumbupa* (also a bird). *Shumbupa* felt so humiliated. He got angry at *Dolrotpa* and charged at him. The situation was brought under temporary control. But it was ignited again when Mr. *Jukharpa* (Rat) complained of the smoky room. The room was smoky because Mrs. Rat was busy brewing rice beer and wine as there was a shortage of drinks. At the complaint made by Mr. *Jukharpa*, Mr. *Dolrotpa*, who was sitting in anger in one corner of the room, retorted back. *Jukharpa* and *Dolrotpa* fought. In course of fight the house of gathering was shattered into pieces. After the fight the gathering promulgated that from thenceforth no wine should be brewed inside the house. It should be away from the house. The brewing house should have four walls but no roof.

This again is a justification for brewing wine outside the house in modern times.

In spite of quarrels and fights the meeting lasted the whole night. At the break of the day the gathering requested Mr. Chameleon (*Kaikingpa*) to dance. The celebration ended with the rhythmic dance and song of Mr. *Kaikingpa*. The meeting was adjourned. Every one returned home in drunken stage but satisfied that they had enacted eternal laws upon themselves.

(ii) Process of Migration:

According to the Western Lamkang Oral historians the first Adam, after his coming out from the great den made his first settlement at *Kokpii*. They left *Kokpii* and made their new settlement at *Arhong*. According to the Western Oral historians it was at *Arhong* that man began to eat meat. This resulted into enmity with other living beings. Whenever man passed in the forest the birds and animals warned each other and fled the presence of man. To remain healthy and to combat the freezing cold birds, reptiles, insects and animals began to feed on one another. This resulted into universal enmity.

The population grew steadily at *Arhong*. They left *Arhong* for *Chimlei*. It was there they began cultivation. The soil was fertile and yielded abundant fruits and food-grains. From *Chimlei* they moved on to *Muru-Sangsang*. It must have been there that man began to wear cloth of twigs and leaves of plants and trees. They later used furs and skins of animals to keep themselves warm in winter. These are again mere postulations. There are no written accounts or drawings on caves or canvas to support these views.

From *Muru-Sangsang* they settled at *Phansa*. They buried their deaths. They began to cut their hair and named each other. They discovered existence of other tribes such as Kuki tribe and Anal tribe. Therefore, Benglam was certainly not the Adam of all the tribes and races. He was the Adam of the Lamkangs. The following account will show the existence of other tribes.

There was a brave hunter by name Mr. Rangte. He was a skillful and a brave warrior. One day he killed an elephant (the Lamkangs use the tusk of an elephant (Ivory) as their dancing ornaments). He invited all his village people to come and cut the meat for themselves. All the people came, including one certain man belonging to the tribe of Kuki. The Kuki man was greedy. He wanted the best part for himself. He cut open the stomach of the hunt to cut the liver, lungs and the heart for himself. The Lamkangs were displeased and furious at him. One of the Lamkang men standing there got wild and cut off the scrotum of the greedy Kuki while he was busy cutting the meat for himself. He died in few hours time due to excessive lost of blood.

The village of the slain victim came to *Phansa* village to make enquiry behind the dead of one of their villagers. The enquiry was in vain. They took the death body to their village and buried him. From this we know that Kukis were the first tribe the Lamkangs came into contact with. It was followed by their contact with the Anal Tribe.

(iii) The Annals

Through the following beautiful narratives we can draw many developments inherently present. The reader had to read in between the lines. The hearers also should pay close attention.

Ranglem had a sister by name Shumphai. They were orphans from childhood. They worked hard and grew up without depending on others. Ranglem eventually got betrothed to a virgin named Shangkakok. Shangkakok was beautiful but dullard and numskull. She had no quality that befits her beauty. Ranglem used to send her along with his sister to the field for work. While Shumphai worked tirelessly, Shangkakok would sleep whole day

using a log as her pillow. Shumphai never complained nor grumbled against her to her brother. After the field work Shumphai always loved to take bath in the brook flowing by the side of her field. As she walked home she would spin her yarns for shawl and blanket.

From this we can draw a conclusion that the Lamkangs had by then led a settled life. They cultivated lands and weaved cloths.

The lazy Shangkakok never took bath but on reaching home she would act as though she was completely exhausted. She would complain to her husband that Shumphai always rested and never soiled her hands. She would swim whole day in the nearby brook. She always told her husband that they should sell away Shumphai. She nagged her husband so much with this idea. And one day Rangleme gave in to her wish.

Rangleme approached his sister and disclosed the news. Shumphai broke in tears. No reason was given to her. Shumphai followed her brother humbly. The sibling had to spend the night in the forest before reaching the market. In the middle of the night Shumphai got up with a strange dream. She dreamt her parents. She narrated this to her brother. She urged her brother that he should take her back home. She expressed that she was not in favor of leaving her ancestral home. But Rangleme turned deaf ear to her repeated pleas. She only got his shouting and threats. He threatened her saying that he would cut off her neck and throw it into the flowing river down below.

Shumphai knew that her brother would not relent. She then requested her brother that she should be sold to Sonrang village and not to any other village. This shows that there were many other Lamkang villages (provided Sonrang was a Lamkang village). This means that the population had grown large enough to divide and lead separate and independent village life.

They entered Sonrang village. Having noticed an affluent family Shumphai requested her brother to sell her to that family. On seeing them the mistress of the house came out and sang,

*“Why thou cry ‘O beautiful maiden?
Come in and have no tears.
Fear not O little maiden”*

The house lady paid the money as ransom and Rangleme made off with his booty for his village. Shangkakok was happy but her happiness was not to last long. The truth was to be uncovered soon and that would be her dooms-day.

Rangleme had a bumper crop that year by dint of his sister’s hard work. He summoned a cock and a Chameleon to go and invite his sister Shumphai.

He said,

“Go and tell my sister that I am dead.

*She must hurry for my burial.
Do not tell her the truth”.*

This was a harvest feast. It was also called ‘*Totlang Kakam*’ in Lamkang. Harvest feast continues to this day.

There is a problem here. In the beginning the myth says that man and animals became estrange to one another when man started eating flesh. Now we see Ranglems summoning and sending a cock and a chameleon as his emissaries. Well, this problem remains unresolved.

When Shumphai heard of the sad news she wept bitterly. She got ready with her clothing and carried rice-beer (as per the custom) and followed them hurriedly. On approaching the village she heard the sound of drums, gongs and cymbals. They were sounds of celebration and not of the dead. She knew she was duped. She said,

*“What do I hear now....
The music is not of the dead....
But of the living, of celebration and of rejoicing.
Do tell me, O’ do tell me the truth”*

Shumphai knew for sure that she was cheated. The Chameleon tried to convince her that her brother was really dead. She refused to believe. She poured away the rice-beer (*rice-beer was considered to be healthy drink. It was always placed at the head of the departed soul with a belief that the soul should not thirst as it marches towards the world of the dead*). Shumphai sang a song of misfortune as she returned back to Sonrang. Her mistress on hearing her replied her with the same sad and mourning song.

This shows that the Lamkangs had beautiful and meaningful folk songs, songs for all occasions.

That celebration was the last harvest feast for Ranglems. He discovered the truth but it was too late. He repented for having sold away his own industrious sister for the lazy unkempt slothful wife.

The Lamkangs then left *Phansa* for *Kuphun*. It was there that they came across many more ethnic groups.

There is no much meaning of migration here. It is because the previous treaties said that the tribe had dispersed out. Sonrang was left far behind. It may not appear again. However, the myth continues.

The myth continues to say that it was there at *Kuphun* that the Lamkangs came to know the use of the fire. The world early man’s history said that it was during the *Cave Age* that the early man began to use fire and tasted the taste of cooked food. ‘Fire was made use by *Homo erectus*’ says the scientists. The Lamkang’s myth goes to say that Lamkangs came to use fire. This is too far from the *Cave Age*. The Lamkang’s myth

further throws us to confusion by stating that lion was the first person/animal to use fire by rubbing two stones against each other. These stones were called ‘*Lekphai*’ in Lamkang. The lion existed before Benglam came out from the great den. There is no proper synchronization of events but a jumble of events getting mixed up in Lamkang mythical history as narrated by the Oral historians.

The following narration will demonstrate the fact of the use of fire. *Humpipa* (lion/man eater) and *Pirthlip* (blood sucker-a sort of fly/flea) were great friends. *Pirthlip* frequently visited *Humpipa* in order to discover the truth about fire. The secret was always kept hidden by *Humpipa*. One day as *Humpipa* was about to start the fire, *Pirthlip* was ordered to close its eyes. It did but saw everything as its wings were all transparent. It saw *Humpipa* taking out two shining stones from the roof (Ptip), striking them made fire and hid the stones back to secure place.

One day while the lion was out for hunting, the flea broke into the house and stole the two stones (Lekphai) and gave it to the Lamkangs. Since then the Lamkangs had been able to eat cooked food.

(iv) Trade

Having come into contact with other ethnic groups the Lamkangs traded with them. It was a barter system. This barter system, in spite of coins and currency introduced by the Britishers, continued even up to 1970s. The myth does not enumerate the items of trade and commerce. Food grains, live stocks, and vegetable could be the items of exchange in those days.

Trading further flourished when they came to settle at *Kiyaar*. According to the World history of Early Man, towns and cities existed by 3000 B.C. One could be wrong to presume that the Lamkangs also had towns and cities by early or late 3000 B.C. However, this could be a possibility. It is because the tribe had by then come into various ethnic groups and traded with them. This issue remains open ended both for probability and improbability.

(v) The Break Away

‘*Kiyaar* was the last place where the Lamkangs stayed together’, says the myth. This again contradicts the previous statement that there could be possibility of the tribe dispersed out. This we know from the existence of Sonrang village where Shumphai was sold off by her brother Rangle. If this was true we can call this treaty as ‘***The Final Break Away***’.

The Lamkangs broke away into unequal numbers and dispersed out into different directions in search of better scope of life. They broke up into about eighteen sub groups as per the postulation of (late) Mr. L.V. Rengthoo Towarpa of Leingangching village. They formed different sizes of villages as per the number of members at the time of division before separation.

Bigger villages:

The following are the names of bigger villages: *Haika, Ralwen, Aibul, Chukum, Dipu, Kudung, Seyol, Khongmul and Tompong.*

Smaller villages:

The names of smaller villages are *Yangma, Menten, Charpa, Chalung, Haidam, Bungshim, Chibubei, Kean and Kubong.*

Each village had more or less permanent settlement. Each village had permanently marked territory. This probably resulted in cultivation of food grains on bigger farms and rearing of animals and birds for meat. This goes very well in line with World history.

(vi) The Lost village

The salvation history talks of the lost tribe of Israel. The Jews believe till today that the tribe was dispersed out to various parts of the world through deportation and migration. They pray that one day all the lost tribes of Israel may one day unite into one single territory.

This is the same wish of the Lamkangs when they think of one of the groups lost among the people of the valley. The original location is the present *Pangantabi*. It is a village now that exists on the highway to Sugnu under Thoubal district. According to the Lamkang historians one group went and settled at Pangantabi and it got lost eventually with the coming of Meiteis and Pangans/Muslims. After Lamkangs it was the Pangans who came and stayed with them. The original Lamkang village name was eluded by the word Pangantabi which means the coming of Pangans/Muslims. It could be through invasion. Later the Meiteis also came to stay with them. The area is now under the control of the Meiteis. The original Lamkangs eventually forgot their language and converse in Manipuri. They became either Hindus or Muslims from animism. The older generations still come to visit their relatives in the hills. The Lamkangs who occupied the hills continued to maintain their originality.

(vii) Common Land Ownership

All the Lamkang villages had a specified and definite village territory. Invasion of this boundary often resulted into war and blood shed. The village land was the common property of that particular village. Each village had its own laws and regulation. There were also common laws that regulated all the Lamkangs in general. The village authorities were elected to govern. The governing bodies were elected for permanency unless the elected members died or resigned. Each village was independent. But for common feasts all the villages came together for celebration.

(viii) The Birth of Clan system

In the beginning *Leivon* was the only clan. Benglam belonged to this clan. With dispersion and existence of marriage laws ordained for better and healthier breeding various clans came into existence prohibiting marriages within the same clan. It is very interesting to note the birth of the clans in the Lamkang myth.

The birth of Sankhil clan

The myth says that a certain woman while doing her needs/shit under a tree spotted a shining egg on the bamboo top. It was called 'Kni Pirdi' (Sun's egg). She brought down the egg and took it home and placed it in the poultry along with other eggs. Along with other eggs *Kni Pirdi* also was hatched out. It was a tiny/puny human being.

One day the husband of the said woman while feeding his pigs and chicks spotted a puny tiny human amongst the animals and birds helping himself with the same food. The man took out his sword and slew the tiny man and showed it to his wife. "I thought of rearing up this baby as our son" said the wife. Having said that she put the divided parts and the baby came back to life. The couple reared him up and he became their son.

On attaining the age of maturity he married a woman of Leivon clan, the clan of his foster mother. They eventually begot another son. This new family formed Dilbung clan. This way all the other ten clans of the tribe were born.

(ix) The Lamkang heroes

The two Lamkang heroes about whom the following narration is focused hailed from *Haika* village by their names **Thamson** and **Thamnok** respectively. Both of them were feared and revered for their strength, valor, skills, astuteness and shrewdness at archery and sword fight.

The Lamkangs had flourished and were numerous. They guarded their village boundary securely. The nomadic tribe of Kuki had smaller share of land. They looked forward to wage war against Lamkangs and grab either a portion or full territory of Lamkangs for themselves. But as long as the two brothers were there the Kukis could not carry out their plans. They were on the look out to kill the two warriors separately and then wage war on the whole village.

One day the two brothers went into the forest to fell trees. They had only knife in their hands. The two brothers were surrounded by well armed Kukis. They captured Thamson and cut him into pieces while Thamnok escaped. His escape was not for long. They rushed after him and showered him with arrays of arrows. Thamnok succumbed to his injury before reaching the village.

The Haika villagers were surprised and ignorant why their heroes were killed. The Kukis captured Shennoy, the son of Thamnok. Explanation was demanded by the Lamkangs. They were enraged and wanted to wage war against the intruding kukis. The Lamkangs asked the Kuki chief to return the boy unharmed. To this the chief of the Kuki replied them that they will train Shennoy as their warrior. The Kukis apologized the Lamkangs for having killed their two heroes. The Kukis brought cow. They slaughtered the animal and had meal together as a sign of their reconciliation and as a fine imposed upon the murderers. The Kukis were very diplomatic in this sense. It is easy to think of the Lamkangs forgiving the murderers of their heroes. The people were simple.

The Kukis trained Shennoy in the art of fighting sword and archery. Shennoy mastered it and became excellent warrior like his father and uncle. As promised the Kuki chief permitted Shennoy to return back to his village Haika.

Final Ceremony Given to Shennoy:

The Kuki chief called all his people. They killed one bull, cut open the stomach and the neck of the animal. Cutting stomach and the neck of the animal are symbolic. They put the horn of the bull on the head of Shennoy. They made Shennoy enter the stomach of the bull and made him come out through the cut open neck of the slain animal. Shennoy was then smeared with the blood of the bull all over. The king blessed him and said, "*Go back my son and get married and when you beget a son name him Jamhon*". The word Jamhon is a combination of one Kuki word and Lamkang word. 'Jam' is the beginning of naming a Kuki male. 'Hon' is the last syllable of naming a Lamkang male. This only shows the supremacy and dominancy of Kukis over the Lamkangs. It is very diplomatic in its nature. The king made Shennoy wore a lungi as a sign that Shennoy was one of them. Hence, Shennoy forgave them and did not avenge the murder of his father and uncle.

Kukis had succeeded in establishing their supremacy and authority over one family but never succeeded in doing so over the Lamkangs. One of the chapters on describing the war with the Kukis will show that the Lamkangs opposed them equally in arms. There were almost equal lost of lives and properties.

On reaching back his village, his own people welcomed him back. Shennoy became their defender and protector. He became their legendry hero. There was peace after that and as a sign the Lamkangs regularly celebrated their annual feast called '*Totlang Kakam*'. They always went for hunting before the feast. Keeping Shennoy as their army Commander-in-Chief, Tlukthot and Kothot became the political and diplomatic leaders of Haika village.

Superstitious belief of Ralwen villagers

Ralwen was another Lamkang village. The village had equally flourished economically and politically but they could never celebrate '*Totlang Kakam*' because they had no good hunters amongst them. This particular feast was to be celebrated only with hunted meat.

The people of Haika always fooled them as vegetarians and unskilled hunters. The people of Ralwen also equally fooled them. All this mutual fooling was done in songs. Thus, during this period there were a lot of folk songs composed and sung. They communicated to each other in songs. They invented many string and pipe musical instruments.

To cover up their shame and to solve their problem they plotted a diplomatic game. They decided to kidnap either Tlukthot or Kothot. They kidnapped Kothot, brought him to their village and fed him well and asked for his blessings upon them. Kothot blessed them and departed. The myth says that ever after the blessings of Kothot the people of Ralwen were able to hunt animals and had celebration that befit this particular feast.

(x) The goddess of money

The myth says that the people of Haika village had a benevolent spirit at the foot-hill of their village. Whenever they needed money they went to this spirit and interceded for the amount of money they required. The person in need of money was to clean that particular spot and polished it with mud. He would return the following day. The amount mentioned would be placed by the spirit on the polished floor. It was like a loan with no interest. The borrower must determine the date of returning the money. He should not fail lest the spirit would stop its benevolence. The spirit always gave them what they wanted. And the people had enough of everything they needed in life.

From this fact we can draw a conclusion that money was the medium of exchange or trade. Currency had replaced barter system.

One day one Chinese man visited Haika village and learnt about it. He did the same act for a sum of Rs.20.00 only. He got the money the following day but never returned back the money. That was the end of the benevolence of that generous spirit.

CHAPTER TWO

The Village Economy

Introduction

Mohandas Karam Chand Mahatma Gandhi the Father of the Nation once said, '*The nature has enough for everybody. Scarcity is caused by few individual selfish hoarding*'. If man stops abusing and accumulation every one will have his or her share. Justice demands that every one should have his/her needs met sufficiently.

Agriculture

World history states that Early Man began cultivating crops as early as 10,000 B.C. (Cf. Gellian Denton, 'The History of the World' P. 12). The Oral historians of Lamkangs cannot definitely ascertain the exact date of introduction of agriculture amongst the Lamkang tribe.

Cultivation began by harrowing the land immediate to their houses. Burning the trees and grass was dangerous to their houses. Gradually they shifted the place of cultivation from immediate surrounding to a little distance away from the village. Each family had its own separate cultivable land. The size of the family determined the size of the field (plausible)

Type of crops

The usual cultivated crops included both cereals and food grains such as till, maize, barley, millets, pumpkin, ash guards, ginger, jam, cucumbers, sweet potatoes, saffron, bananas, beans and paddy.

Cash crop

Cotton and jute were the only cash crops grown amongst the then Lamkangs. There are no reports of other cash crops being cultivated beside the cotton. Cotton was used for weaving blankets and loin cloths (Modern Period). They also used tree cottons. This was not grown in the fields but found growing among the trees in the forest. They used cotton to make mattresses and pillows. They used the jute for making mats.

Type of Tools

The Early man used clubs, stones, bones, bronze and iron with the stages of development. The Lamkang myth has no account of such tools been used by the early man of the tribe. They might have had certainly used some instruments as they were also cultivators. They must have had used the same type of tools for cultivation. Without this the Lamkangs of those periods would not be able to cultivate their fields.

The Nature of Cultivation work

The head of the family was to spot out the crescent land for cultivation. He was to mark the boundary by slicing the skin of the surrounding trees. Back home he was to examine

his dream. The goodness or badness of the dream determined the goodness or the badness of the land. If the dream was good, the interpretation was that the spirit of the marked land had permitted and will blessed him with bumper crops eventually. If the dream was bad, he was to leave that demarcated land for a new one.

When the dream was positive he was to fix a day for cutting of that area. Everything was cut and laid to dry. When that was done it was set on fire. Digging the mud then began followed by sowing, weeding, harvesting and thrashing. In between the weeding and harvesting he guarded his field from wild animals and birds by laying traps and by making scare crows. During thrashing he was to serve rice-beer to all his helpers who mainly consisted of his immediate family members and friends.

Type of work during lean period

During the non-cultivation season the Lamkang men were busy mending their houses, weaving bamboo and cane baskets, nets and mats. The women busy themselves spinning threads for weaving. They weaved (Modern) beautiful cotton blankets, shawls and lungis. The type of bamboo included phaipek, borthroo, lup, lubu, khumyul, dap, tuhu, krang, shangphai, ningnei, leilun, phak, tongbor, bor, ngabor, lwung, troo, shep, etc. these are baskets for various purposes.

Wooden crafts included tirtlim (weaving stick), phane (cotton yarn for taking out cotton seeds), tareng (spinner) , payai, shum (for pounding paddy), shurel (pounding stick), phan (low wooden chair), chouki (wooden chair), etc.

Canes were used for making baskets and ropes meant to carry loads and to tie animals by night. Lamkang woman must know the trade of women. She who did not know the trade was considered unskilled and lazy person. Women demonstrated their skill in weaving. Men married women who were skillful and industrious.

Animal husbandry:

According to the world historians, Early man started taming wild animals as early as 9000 B.C. The Lamkang Oral historians only stated that man came out from the great den along with the birds and his dogs. This means that it was during his Cave Age that he began to rear animals and birds at home for meat and eggs. Cock, cow, bison, and dog are mentioned by the myth. Later story will mention cats and pigs also. Dog was his companion. This was why when a man died the dog also would be killed. The dog was believed to be the guard and companion of the man even in the world of the dead. The cock was always used for any ritualistic sacrifice. Pigs were used for sacrifices and for marriage feasts. Bison were used for high jump (sport) and for marriage feast. The skin of slain animals were spread to dry and later used as mats. Buffaloes were used for pulling carts and logs.

CHAPTER THREE

The Political Life:

The term 'Politics' is derived from the Greek word 'Polis'. It means city. It implies some kind of democracy and it emerges only when the ruler was willing to consult the people. It became the science and the art of directing affairs of public interest, considered chiefly from a temporal view point. It thus includes all aspects of civil life in its various sectors. In short politics is concerned with the biggest human problems of man. Hence, politics can be defined as a struggle among the actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues and it exists only when the ends and the means are controversial.

The Governing Authority:

Every family head was a member of governing body. They elected their heads. The king was a permanent post. The one who started the village was the king. Kingship from this stand was permanent. All the other elected members were for fixed number of years during which they had to individually hoist a celebration of their portfolios. The following were the portfolios. They are hierarchical in nature. The king was the supreme head. The rest were

1. Khulakpa (the Chief)
2. Lublakpa (Asst. Chief)
3. Senapati (Chief Secretary)
4. Mantri (the Judge)
5. Chinsanglakpa (minister of resources)
6. Khunchalpa (foreign minister)
7. Jupalpa (Excise Minister)
8. Pakhanglakpa (minister of male youth)
9. Lanchingpa (External minister/ Commander-in-Chief)
10. Meitei Lampu (Minister of State Affairs)
11. Naharakpa (Minister of youth welfare)
12. Ningonlakpa (Minister of married women)
13. Shelungpa (Income Tax minister)
14. Thougalkpa (Messenger/ personal attendant)
15. Changloi (block development officer)

There were altogether fifteen seats in the local legislative Assembly. Those family heads that did not have these portfolios formed opposition party/opposite bench. They can be impeached. Hence, the governing system was very democratic. Any person of the governing body or any person in the village could initiate a bill. The council discussed the bill and passed the bill with the assent of the village chief and not of the king. The king was a titular head. Political powers were not vested upon him. However, he had a political say and that was binding on all posthumously.

Lamkang society was a patriarchal society and so women had no place in politics. They could voice their views. They could even sit and hear the political discussions.

Their opinions were also accepted. The Lamkangs considered their women equal in many aspects. Their views were given no regards when it was a question of war.

No governing minister could work independently. They always worked united as their activities revolved round the public common interest. Each village was independent in governance when it came to local public interest. But when it came to general interest of all the Lamkangs, all the governing heads of all the villages sat together to solve their common problems. They settled their differences in general public political meetings.

Qualification to be in Village Governing Body:

1. He must be a resident of the village.
2. He must be a person of good reputation.
3. He must be trust worthy and obedient
4. He must be patriotic, brave and dutiful
5. He must be an industrious person
6. He must be a Lamkang by birth
7. He must be a married person for at least five years
8. He must have good information of governance or knowledge of village administration.

However, no one was appointed against his wish. Appointment was done by voice vote. The supporters should be at least two-third majority.

Term of Office:

Except the village king all the other ex-officio members were elected on temporary basis, at least for a minimum of five years. It was not hereditary. One could be impeached on ground of bad reputation brought by him to the village and on ground of inefficiency.

Vacancy:

There were ways the post could be vacant. The vacant post was filled in through election. Post could be vacant through

1. Resignation,
2. Prolonged illness,
3. Death,
4. Change of village resident,
5. Insane,
6. Indifferentism and passiveness towards village administration,
7. Bad Reputation.

Long leave or absence did not terminate the person. However, absence was not to exceed a year.

Power and Function:

The political power as vested on each head/minister is discussed as below:

1. Khulakpa (Village Chief)

Next to the village king, khulakpa was the highest in authority. He is like the Prime Minister. Around him all the ministers rotate. He was like the moon surrounded by the stars on the moon lit night. Though so much power was vested on him no chief was ever permitted to have his veto power. The assembly decided the ends and the means and therefore the solutions.

He received all complains, corrected the wrong doers, welcomed any stranger to his home as his guest.

The village chief had to celebrate his position twice before he retired or resigned. This was obligatory. Both the celebrations consisted of rites and rituals. Both the feasts were marked by eating and drinking, singing of folk songs and folk dances. The two feasts were called 'Phamtak' and 'Chakchou'.

Phamtak:

This was the first coronation ceremony which was celebrated immediately after the election or later on depending on the financial condition of the candidate. The family members and relations were requested to help the candidate for the ceremony. The preparation for the feast included brewing of 20-30 pots of rice-beer, purchasing of animals, cutting and drying fire-woods, pounding rice, etc. These were the remote preparations done.

During the immediate preparation, a group of youth was sent into the forest to collect leaves to use as plates and for distribution of meat and chatni. Another group of youth was sent to cut bamboos to serve rice-beers. Women carried fire-wood which was dried and kept and they carry water. Women cooked rice. Men busy themselves slaughtering animals and preparing and cooking meat for consumption.

Actual Celebration:

All the invitees arrived on the appointed day towards dusk bringing gifts either in cash or in kind. Drinks, meat and meals were served to the invitees and to all the members of the host village.

The coronation ceremony usually began after the meal. All the ministers were seated with turbans on their heads. In the middle of the gathering the person to be crowned as the village chief was made to sit along with his wife. Folk songs were sung, pipes, flutes, drums, gongs and trumpets were sounded simultaneously as soon as turban that marked his chieftainship was placed on his head. The gathering blessed the crowned chief and his wife. This was followed by gifts given to the newly crowned village chief by all the delegates. Giving gifts was not obligatory. The chief and his wife were made to dance at the rhythm of the folk music. After this dance all the other political dignitaries were also made to dance in turn along with their respective wives.

The other opposition parties were also made to dance along with their wives. This was however, not obligatory. But it was made obligatory for the newly crowned person to dance with his wife as a sign of happiness.

When the couple dance was over it was the turn of village youth to dance. They sing and dance whole night. The couples sang folk songs as they drink, eat and celebrate inside the house while the youth sing 'Lengkhom' songs and dance separately in the Hall constructed for the coronation ceremony.

The following day the newly crowned chief and his wife were made to dance again by going round their house. They were followed by singers and instrumentalists. The celebration of eating and drinking went for about three full days. The second and the third day was not much of fun and frolics. It was meant for the married couples only. Food was served only to the guests coming from other villages. After three days of celebration the village looked like a deserted place as everybody was resting in peaceful slumber from the effect of three full days of eating and drinking. This feast was very costly.

Chakchou:

'Chakchou' was the bigger celebration of eating and drinking as compared to 'Phamtak'. It was said that the Romans loved eating and drinking. When the stomach was full they would put their fingers into their throat and vomit it out. They would again go and resume their eating and drinking. The Lamkangs did not go to the extent but they eat and drink to the maximum. The style and the mode of celebration remained the same as 'Phamtak'. The only difference one could notice is the slaughter of more animals for the celebration. After this celebration the chief was free to either continue or resign from the post.

The demerit of this sort of celebration was too expensive. The poor and the middle class family could not take the post of Chieftainship.

2. Lublakpa:

Lublakpa was the second next person in command to the chief of the village. He could be called Assistant Chief. He functioned as the chief in the absence of the village chief. He too had the same two obligatory celebrations like the Chief of the village. The same manner of preparation and celebration also was done for him.

3. Senapati:

Senapati was the third person in the hierarchical rank. He was the chief secretary to the village chief and the Lublakpa. He supported and obeyed them. He too had the obligation to celebrate both Phamtak and Chakchou.

4. Mantri:

Mantra was also called the 'Bicharpati' which means the Judge. He presided over the cases and passed verdicts. He was also the chief secretary to Senapati and the chief. He too had the two obligatory celebrations.

5. Chinsanglakpa:

Chinsanglakpa was the minister of resources, of information and correspondence. He sent messages to all the villages and received the same from other villages. He communicated the received information to his village authorities and village members. He could be called information and broadcasting minister. He too had the obligation to celebrate the two important celebrations in recognition of his portfolio.

6. Khunchal:

Khunchal was the peace maker within and without his village. He was to reconcile the two conflicting parties. He had the obligation to celebrate only the Phamtak.

7. Jupal:

Jupal was the controller of wine production. The defendant was always to produce wine and rice beer when a case was filed against him or her. It was the duty of Jupal to bring out the pots of drinks from the defendant. He was vested with the power to determine the quantity of drink the defendant was to bring out. Nobody could oppose him. He required no prior information. He too had the obligation to celebrate only the Phamtak.

8. Pakhanglakpa:

Pakhanglakpa was the minister of youth and sports. It was he who taught the skills to youth. He guided and corrected them. He attended to every need and complaint of youth of the village. He could even punish the wrong doer. He was to celebrate only the Phamtak.

9. Lanchingpa:

Lanchingpa was the Commander-in-Chief of the army. When the village was at war it was he who led the soldiers. He was also like the present day foreign and external minister. He looked after the needs and requirements of every soldier in the war front. He maintained the weapons and artilleries. He too was to celebrate only the Phamtak.

10. Meitei Lampu:

Meitei Lampu was the minister of census. He protected the territory of the village land. He was the defender of village property also. No part of land could be given to non-member of the village without his approval. He kept the account of village income and expenditure. He imposed fine and penalty against any intruder. He was to celebrate only the Phamtak.

11. Naharakpa:

Naharakpa was the youth affair minister (of both genders). It was he who taught and guided the youth of the village. They were to obey and respect him. He was their guru in terms of moral teachings. With regard to any problem arising from any child in the village he was questioned. When boys attained their adulthood, he would hand over them to Pakhanglakpa and the girls to Ningollakpa. Like other he had to celebrate only Phamtak.

12. Ningollakpa:

Ningollakpa was the minister of all married women in the village and his village girls getting married outside the village. He attended the complaints of the married women. He listened to each and every one of them individually and collectively, especially to the woes of the widows. He made sure that their rights and duties were protected and promoted. Any case filed against any woman was done with his prior knowledge. He too had the obligation to celebrate only Phamtak.

13. Shelungpa:

Shelungpa was the income and tax department minister. He worked along side with Meiteilampu in keeping the account of village's income and expenditure. He was the sole treasurer of the village fund. He too was to celebrate only the Phamtak.

14. Thougalsa:

Thougalsa was like the personal attendant of the village authority. When the village authorities decided to have a meeting, Thougalsa was informed. He then went to every family telling the venue and purpose of the meeting. When penalty was imposed upon the wrong doer, Thougalsa was empowered to go and choose any animal and kill it for the celebration. No one could raise voice against his decision with regard to choosing the type of animal. He too had the obligation to celebrate only the Phamtak.

15. Changloi:

Changloi was the Welfare and Development Minister. Whenever any developmental program was launched he was consulted. He made sure that every family drew benefit from the common project. He made sure that every family got equal share of any common benefits. He maintained justice and decorum in the village. He too had the obligation to celebrate only the Phamtak.

In the ancient period all these fifteen ministers had executive and legislative powers. They had the judiciary power also.

If we examine all the titles given to the village authorities we can notice that half of the word comes from meiteilon. From this we can draw a conclusion that the way of governance was of modern period in nature and in origin. If the Lamkangs were to have such type of governing themselves the Lamkang villages could be termed as cradles of Democratic form of Government. But the fact of obligatory celebration is true. The modern Lamkangs eventually tended to give up as the expenditure is too high. However, the system of governance was systematic and well structured. It was also complex but simple enough for every person to follow.

Formalities Observed during Coronation Ceremony:

Some of the formalities observed during the coronation ceremonies are as follows:

1. All the women of the clan of the celebrant did cooking of rice and rice-beer. They did all the servings.

2. All the clan women were given 'Maksha'(special meat cut from the hind legs of animal that was cut for the ceremony meant for clan-women)
3. A piece of meat was also given to all the village authorities. Bigger share was made for the village chief, Lublakpa, Senapati and Mantri.
4. All the village authorities must dance with their respective wives after coronation ceremony with the blasting of trumpets, cymbals and other sweet sounding musical instruments. The following day the celebrant and his wife had to dance round their house along with music and the crowd escorting the dancer with songs and music.
5. The clan women applied black color (Belshnang) on each other and on the people they chose. It was called 'Samton krtei' in Lamkang.

War Annals:

The Lamkangs in general were peace loving people. They were simple, honest and hardworking. But when provoked they could not resist but fought. They did not have war with any other tribes but only with Kukis. The Kukis were leading nomadic life when all the other tribes were settled with agricultural activities. The Kukis even now have the tendency to migrate. Lamkangs had two successive wars against the Kukis. The Lamkangs forgave them when their two best warriors were murdered out of jealousy and for diplomatic reason. But when the Kukis became too intolerable they fought back twice.

The above opinion is also to be questioned. It is because war cannot be just initiated by one single party without the fault of the other. The Lamkangs must have had caused it as well. War is unjustifiable. Hence, the Lamkang Oral historians are also wrong in justifying their forefathers and blame the Kukis.

The First Kuki War:

Kukis and Lamkangs were in good terms but not later. The first Kuki war took place with individual murder case again. This was caused by one insane Lamkang. He watched a prawn killing a small fish called 'Nilane' in Lamkang. He chopped off the head of his best Kuki friend and companion. After chopping off the head of the man the insane Lamkang went about rejoicing and celebrating. In Lamkang this way of rejoicing is called 'Sha Ka ai'. It is celebration of a good hunt.

On hearing the news of the dead of one of their men, the Kukis got enraged, armed themselves and went straight to the Lamkang villages and killed many. The individual issue became the National issue. The Lamkangs were caught unprepared. The Kukis did not forgive as the Lamkangs did when their two heroes were murdered by the Kukis.

The insanity of one person caused the lives of many innocent Lamkangs that day. It would have been better if the Kukis were to kill only that insane Lamkang rather than waging war against the whole Lamkangs. Relationship became very estranged from then on.

The Second Kuki War:

The Second Kuki war was called 'Kamhou War'. It was caused by a conspiracy laid by one Anal man by name Thlurkem, who married one Lamkang girl of Haika village. His marriage was solemnized at Haika village. He went back to his village without the bride to return back after many months. Thamson, who was the brave soldier and defender of the Lamkangs, questioned this man for his act. Thamson and his brother imposed fine against Thlurkem for breaching Lamkang marital law. Thlurkem refused to comply. He was not allowed to take his wedded wife.

In rage Thlurkem went and shot dead a Kuki woman sitting on the tomb of her grand father. As he ran Thlurkem shouted, "Tak chpa, Haika chpa" which means 'victory to Haika village'. The Kukis drew the conclusion that one Lamkang from Haika village had done this.

The dying woman asked her husband to avenge her death. The Kuki king called all the other Kuki villages to come and fight for him against the Haika village to avenge the cold murder of his subject.

The Kukis went in thousands well armed. The Haika village was again caught unprepared. Thamnok, the Commander-in-Chief of Haika village was absent from the village. His younger brother Thamson fought back with his men. But they were outnumbered by the Kukis and therefore they fled for their lives. The Kukis looted their village and made off with large booty. Many able Lamkang men lost their lives that day.

The two wars were won by the Kukis but it was not meritorious at all. The first was caused by an insane and the second one was caused by a cruel plot of an Anal Thlurkem. The Lamkangs called these two wars as 'savaged wars'.

The Impact of Two Wars:

1. The Lamkang population was reduced much. The modern Lamkangs are few today because of these two wars.
2. Their properties and life stocks were carried away in both the wars by the Kukis.
3. Many prominent Lamkang heroes lost their lives.
4. Two great Lamkang warriors: Thamnok and Thamson were later murdered by Kukis. That was also cold blooded murder.
5. In development the Lamkangs trailed behind other tribes because they were deprived of able leaders.

(To add the latest fateful event: The Lamkangs were further reduced in number through five successive Kuki-Naga ethnical fight from 1992-1997).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Social Aspect

Introduction:

A society is a way of life, a system whereby people live together in organized communities. Man cannot in anyway live long away from the society because he is a social rational being. He has got to share and contribute much to his well-being and well-being of others. He therefore, is to be sociable in every way so that he can accommodate and be accommodated.

A society is not simply the sum of discrete interaction. Rather its members are organized in such a way that an emergent whole is maintained and developed, remained static or disintegrated. Every human society has a history and future. A society is in pursuit of common existential ends. And therefore, it has a set of laws, rules, regulations, administrative bodies, institutions, etc.

A society tries to preclude antisocial impulses in human nature from interfering with the rights of others and with the social order. The most efficient means is the law, which has the power of coercion behind it. It is the responsibility of all the members of the society to promote peace and order and to work together for common good. Here the principle of subsidiary is very important. It means the obligation and competence of the society to subsidize and to aid the minor group or poorer section of the society and every individual member of the society. It binds every member of the society, especially those in authority.

Lamkang society is one such society. The society of the ancient Lamkang was complex but simple enough for simple people to follow and live in coherence. The societal conflicts were simple in nature. They solved their own problems locally. Each Lamkang village was an independent kingdom.

I. The Ancient Society Norms:

1. The Patriarchal System:

The ancient Lamkang society was a patriarchal society. Male gender gained prominence over the female gender. However, females enjoyed almost equal respect, right and love as their counter parts as daughter in the family and as wife and mother in the family. The birth of any child in the family was an auspicious event.

2. Right to Ancestral Properties:

The ancestral property was passed down the generation through male descendants. This was with regard to immovable properties like land and house. The males shared the immovable propertied amongst themselves. The one who was to look after the aged parents was given bigger share of the property. Usually the youngest male was given this chance. However, there was no rule that only the youngest one had to look after the ageing parents. The brothers can determine amongst themselves. Whoever was to look

after the ageing parents was given a lion share of the property. This again did not mean that other sons completely abandoned their parents. They all looked after their parents as it was an obligatory for all the children to look after their parents with love and respect. The ageing parents merely lived with the son who agreed to look after the parents. If the inherited ancestral and newly acquired family properties were big enough, the parents and the brothers gave a share to their sisters.

With regard to movable properties the females were also given equal share. The females had equal rights. They were given by their parents on the day of their marriage. If the parents were dead the brothers made sure that their sisters had equal share of their movable properties. If the brothers were found unjust, the law and the society were there to see that justice was done to the female descendants also.

The females enjoyed the full right when there were no male descendants. The daughters shared the ancestral and acquired properties amongst themselves at the time of their marriages. The same right of one of them looking after their ageing parents falls on the daughters. The one who was to do this was given a bigger share.

But suppose a family had a son and a daughter, how was the property shared? The law demanded that the brother had a full right but not at the cost of his sister. His sister was given a good amount. That amount was determined by the parents and the two children. If the son refused to give his sister the immovable properties, he should see that his sister got adequate share of movable properties lest the law would be clamed down upon him.

No one was permitted to sell off the ancestral and acquired properties without the knowledge and consent of other siblings. Modern Lamkang society also adhere this. Art. 60 of Lamkang Law prohibit one from doing this. We have the same context amongst the Jews (Cf. 1Kings 21:1-5). The land is given to the Lord (Ex. 6:8), and so no land should be sold (Lev. 25:23). For the Lamkangs also land was considered vital and had paramount importance for one's existence and for one to be recognized as the citizen of the village.

II. Status of Lamkang Women:

A female descendant was (and is) considered the flower and the queen of the family and the society. She enjoyed full right and full dignity as daughter, as wife and as mother. A barren woman or a widow was not a curse. They were given the full respect, full right and love.

There was no dowry system in terms of modern Hindu practice of Dowry system. Good amount of property was given to her on the day of her marriage. We can call it a gift and not a dowry. There was no practice of women buying men. It was her right and she received her right. No husband demanded more property. Whatever she brought he gladly accepted. He married her. He did not marry the property or married the woman for the sake of her property.

But certain restrictions were placed on her movements. She was not allowed to stay out late in the night. After sunset she was to be found in the house. Mothers themselves were made to see that their daughters were secured after darkness. It does not mean that the ancient Lamkang society was morally weak. Men appreciated and looked for good natured woman. That conditioned every woman not to move out the house at night. Even the married women were prohibited. They could do so with their husband but not alone. Moreover she was to be looking after the house hold affairs at such wee hours.

1. Arranged Marriage:

The arranged marriage was the usual practice. The parents meet the parents of the other party and disclosed their contract, at times, without the knowledge of the boy and the girl. This secret engagement was made as early as the early teenage life of the boy and the girl. But no child marriage was heard of. They were to disclose to the-would be partners only when the-would be partners attained their marriageable ages.

2. Love Marriage:

There was no hard and fast rule that only parents were to arrange the marriage of their children. For most of the time it was either the boy or the girl who made proposal. Secret dating was a usual practice. It was almost always the boy who disclosed his love for the girl to his parents. The boy's party, if agreed upon after discussion, would be the first to make proposal to the parents of the girl. However, a girl also could disclose her intention even before the parents of the boy disclose the intention.

3. Crime against Women:

Ignorant parents were at times abusive to their children. When her sibling brothers got up and was busy playing, the girl child was made to help her mother at the tender age. She helped her mother cleaning utensils, carrying water, carrying baby, sweeping the floor, etc. She had no much time to play with her friends. She would be scolded. This atmosphere continued till her marriage day.

After her marriage she became the sole home maker of her family. She had to brew rice beer, weave cloth and work in the Jhumming field. She had to feed her baby and never had a sound sleep or a peaceful meal.

However, in comparison to other tribes, Lamkang men also equally helped their wives when they were at home. Yet, she bore the bigger burden of house hold responsibilities on her shoulders.

No married man could raise his hand against unmarried woman. Unmarried man also could not raise his hands against unmarried woman. Unmarried man never raised his hands against the married woman. Only the married man could raise his hands against his wife and not against other married women. The law would pounce on the one who raised his hands against women of the said category.

No woman was to have unwanted pregnancy before marriage. If this happen the girl was forced to confess. If she refused two wooden beams called 'Surel' in Lamkang would be

brought and her stomach would be pressed. When she disclosed the man, the responsible man was heavily fined.

III. Marital Norms:

Marriage within the same clan was strongly resented. Myth was created to cause fright among the young ones to get married. The myth said that the children from such a union would be eaten by wild animals. Their animals and birds reared at home would also be preyed down by wild animals. They would be rendered poor all through their marital lives. To avoid this they decreed the following marital norms:

1. All the males whose name started with 'Reng' and 'Tling' must take a wife from the clan of 'Sankhil' and 'Songnem'.
2. Those whose names started with 'Shet' must take a girl from the clan of 'Leivon'.
3. One whose name start with 'Rang' must take a wife from 'Khol-Kangten' clan.
4. One whose name starts with 'Wang' must take a girl from 'Surte' clan.
5. One whose name stars with 'Dar' must take a wife from the clans of 'Jangvei' and 'Tholung'.
6. One whose name starts with 'Khum' must take a girl from the clan of 'Shilsi'.
7. One shoe name starts with 'Shel' and 'Khal' must take a girl from the 'Khular' clan.
8. One whose name starts 'Bung' and 'Shong' must take the girl from 'Dilbung' clan.

All these norms were decreed upon themselves in order to have better and healthier off springs. They had no knowledge of science but their experiences had taught them.

1. Penalty:

Violation of marital norms was considered a great offence. The offenders brought shame upon their families, clans, villages and upon themselves. Such offender was heavily punished by way of fine, and physical and mental torture. The offenders were given two kinds of punishment from two sources viz. their own clans and their village.

2. Physical punishment:

Physical punishment consisted of beating with stick and few blows.

3. Imposition of fine:

- (a) a gong (jamlung or Shumpi Khon khat),
- (b) a pig,
- (c) a pot of rice-beer
- (d) he can never eat certain part of meat called 'sha kdang' in Lamkang.

4. Psychic Torment:

The person who violated had indelible mark engraved on his forehead. He was denial of burial in the common cemetery, and was excommunicated from the clan and the village until he purified the clan and the village with fine consisting of rice-beer and meat for all.

IV. Divorce:

Divorce was not common among the Lamkangs in the past. There were instances but very rare. However, there were laws decreed in order to prevent such occurrence and if it occurred there were separate laws to see that the injured party gets justice done.

Divorce could result from infidelity and frequent fights. When the man moved the village bench for a divorce he was penalized with

- (a) two gongs of 2700 cm each in circumference,
- (b) two gongs of 2400 cm each in circumference,
- (c) one pig weighing about 60 kilogram,
- (d) a pot of rice-beer

The property was divided between the husband and the wife. The one who was to look after the children was given a greater share of property. If the children were also divided equally, the property was divided equally. If the husband wanted to give greater share to his wife despite equal division of the number of children, it could be done. If the wife was asked to look after all the children, the husband paid 36 tins of paddy per year as long as he lived.

The wife also could move the village bench for a divorce. The penalty imposed upon the wife was heavier than the penalty imposed upon the man when he initiated the move for a divorce. We could see an element of gender biasness here. She was fined with

- (a) four gongs of 2700 cm in circumference each,
- (b) two gongs of 2400 cm each in circumference,
- (c) a pig weighing about 60-70 kilos.,
- (d) one pot of rice-beer,
- (e) she forfeited all the properties she brought to her husband's house at the time of marriage,
- (f) if she had any credit or debt, she was to pay by herself. The husband would not pay anything.

It is hard to fine out the reason why the law had to be harsh towards married women. No woman could simply move the court for a divorce without a reason. The husband had a contribution. Why should he go Scot free? The Oral Historians were of the opinion that a woman is a weaker sex. She should not initiate the move. This reason is absolutely absurd and obnoxious.

1. Manner of Divorce:

When all the procedures for the divorce was over the two parties invoked curse against each other by killing an animal and sprinkling at the entrance of his or her house saying that they would not step into each other's house. The one who violated this should meet the fate of the slain animal. This was the concluding rite of the legal divorce.

This is certainly barbaric. They had no fear of God. They feared only the spirits. They were animist. Cursing was one of the weapons used by the ancient Lamkangs against each other when they wronged one another. There were instances where the couple reunited. The mutual curse had no (visible) effect.

Those who could not reunite either contracted second marriage or remained single all their lives. Contracting second marriage was permitted.

2. Temporary Separation:

There was no written or unwritten law stating about a temporary separation. Temporary separation took place in the past due to family fute. The husband must have had beaten his wife. The wife usually went home. After a week or so the husband was to fetch her back to the family after due apology to the wife and the girl's parents. When this was not done the wife was empowered to move the village court against the husband. It was presumed that the man was asking for a divorce. The husband was penalized then.

There were women who went back to their parental homes on fictitious and silly grounds. If she failed to return back to her husband the law presumed that she was seeking for a divorce. The husband could appeal to the court. The court penalized her after establishing the truth.

3. Separation after Engagement:

The engaged couple had to necessarily see a village priest to consult their future. After consulting the priest they go home to see what was to happen to them within few days. If either of the couple was stricken with a sickness, the couple were to separate. It was considered as a bad omen. The girl was to paid little compensation and the relationship was terminated. If luck was favorable the boy had to render three years of service to the girl party after the engagement. During this tenure divorce could take place also. If separation was initiated by the boy, he had to go back home empty handed. If the girl initiated the separation move, the boy was given one loin cloth as compensation for the freely rendered service.

If the girl died during that tenure of three years of service, the parents of the girl were to bless the boy and sent him back to his parental home with due blessings. He was given a shawl by the parents of the girl. He could contract second marriage. The Jews also had this practice.

This was a superstitious belief. Any party, when not happy to be with the other party, especially when forced upon in case of arranged marriage, could do something to get sick. It was also possible that the priest could do something on either party. This was not practiced. However, the possibility could not be ruled out.

If one party wantonly decided to divorce or leave the other willing party, he or she was penalized with (a) a pig, (b) a pot of rice-beer.

4. Abduction:

Abduction of a girl for marriage was strongly resented by the Lamkangs. The boy was heavily penalized for violating the chastity of the virgin by way of imposing fine in the form of

- (a) one pig,
- (b) one pot of rice-beer. After all that the boy was forced to marry her. No boy could abscond or resent.

Abduction of an already engaged woman was abhorrence to the Lamkangs. However, there were instances of such occurrences. The person who violated such norms were looked down upon by the society and were also penalized by the law. There were also instances when the engaged man forgave his engaged woman for erring. In such cases the engaged woman was permitted to marry her abductor.

5. Rape:

Raping a girl or a woman was unheard of in the ancient Lamkang society. Rape causes deep scar. Her honor and dignity is deprived of. For such an offence the rapist was heavily penalized in kinds and even in cash after the introduction of currency in trade and commerce. The rapist was also penalized by way of

- (a) physical torture,
- (b) one pig weighing more than 70 kilos,
- (c) a pot of rice-beer,

6. Fornication:

If an unmarried boy and a girl were caught indulging in sexual orgy, the law will punish both of them. The sort of punishment was determined by the village court. When pregnancy occurred from such illegal union, the boy was usually forced to marry the girl. Refusal to marry her would mean inviting penalty upon himself.

7. Adultery:

Adultery is an illegal sexual act between a married partner with an unmarried partner. Both the partners err before the law. The ancient Lamkangs punished both the erring partners with equal degree of punishment. They were penalized with

- (a) one gong of 2700 centimeters each,
- (b) one pig each. Each pig should weigh not less than 50 kilos approximately,
- (c) one pot of rice-beer each,
- (d) cash (after introduction of currency).

8. Fraud Marriage:

Fraud marriage could exist when one wantonly contracts marriage for selfish interest. This is a cheat. Such marriage was not in existence in the ancient Lamkang society. However, there was a law decreed against such fraud so that such occurrence could be averted. If the boy was caught erring, he was fined with

- (a) one pig,
- (b) one pot of rice-beer.

When the girl was caught to make such a mistake the fine imposed on her was greater. She was fined with

- (a) two gongs of 2700 centimeters each,
- (b) one gong of 2400 centimeter,
- (c) one pig,
- (d) one pot of rice-beer.

We see here the disparity of sex here too. It is quite monotonous to see the same sort of fine for all sorts of offences. A pig, a gong, and a pot of rice-beer are mentioned in all the cases. There may be symbolical meanings. Those items were the only assets the ancient Lamkangs had. There were no choices left.

9. Widow re-marriage:

Widows could always re-marry but with prior approval of her in-laws and children. Her in-laws had to be consulted because of the issue of inherited properties. She could be deprived of any property after contracting second marriage. Her second husband had enough properties to look after her. If a widow was found contracting second marriage without consulting and approval of her-in-laws she was fined with

- (a) one gong,
- (b) one pig,
- (c) one pot of rice-beer.

But on the other hand the widower was permitted to contract second marriage. He need not ask the approval of his mother-in-law or his parents. He could only give information. Here also there was a lot of disparity.

10. Forceful separation:

There were instances where a boy and a girl eloped and eventually settled down as husband and wife against the wishes of the parents. If any parents take away their ward forcefully, the law punished such parents by imposing fine consisting of one pig and one pot of rice-beer. The law allowed the couple to continue their lives as husband and wife. The parents were not to interfere anymore.

V. Sense of Common Brotherhood:

A sense of common brotherhood was very strong among the ancient Lamkangs. The economically weaker families were helped by the able families. Whenever a hunter killed a jungle animal there was great jubilation and celebration. They would share the meat with others.

VI. Customs and Etiquettes:

The ancient Lamkangs had very rich customs and etiquettes which they necessarily observed for common well-being and society development. Every child was made to learn. It was made mandatory for all. The parents took special interest in imparting to their children by word of mouth. It was passed down from one generation to the next. Any person who failed to observe such customs and etiquettes were branded as barbarians. The parents were blamed for such lapses.

1. Etiquettes within the Family:

Naming of a child took place as soon as a baby was born. From the name one could know to which clan a person belonged to (the same with naming of a person in a caste ridden Indian society). The Lamkang parents also called their children by pet names. Children were addressed by their names also.

But no child was permitted to address the parents by their respective proper names or pet names. Among the siblings, the elder ones could address the younger one either by their proper names or pet names. They addressed the younger siblings as 'Temeng' or 'Te', or 'Tete', 'Tomeng' or 'To' or 'Toto', 'Peimeng' or 'Pei' or 'Peipei', 'Shangmeng' or 'Shang' or 'Shangshang'. They addressed their younger brothers as 'Ko' or 'Koko' or 'Komeng', 'momo' or 'mo', 'Thamtham' or 'Thampu' or 'Tham', 'Angang', or 'Ang', or 'Angmeng', etc. But no younger sibling could address the elder ones by their proper names or pet names. They addressed their elder brothers as 'Ako', 'Atham', 'Abe' and 'Amo' and they addressed the elder sisters as 'Ashang', 'Atham', 'Apei', and 'Ato'.

When girls were born they were to be called, 'Tenu', 'Shangnu', 'Peinu', 'Tonu' and 'Thamnu'. The suffix 'Nu' denotes feminine gender. Males were called, 'Angpu', 'Kopu', 'Thampu', and 'Mopu'. Here again the suffix 'Pu' denotes masculine gender. When the elders addressed the younger generations, they used only the first syllable such as 'Te', 'Shang', 'Tham', 'Ang', 'Pei', 'Ko', etc. Between the siblings the younger ones were addressed as 'Mengnu' (for Female), 'Mengpu' (for male), or 'Chekpu' and 'Cheknu', or 'Chekchek'. Closer affinity was shown when an elder one addressed the younger sibling as 'Mengchek' (putting 'meng' and 'chek' together).

When the younger ones addressed the elder ones the alphabet 'A' had to be prefixed before the given word. E.g. 'Ato', 'Ate', 'Apei', 'Ashang', 'Atham', 'Ako', 'Aang', and 'Amo'. This was the supreme form of showing respect to the elders. The honor and respect contained in those simple words were far superior to secular titles and social positions or status. When 'K' was used as prefix to any word it showed the possessive case. E.g. 'Ktham'(My elder brother), 'Kshil'(my cow), etc.

Any visitor was a welcome guest. The visitor was ushered seat immediately and was made comfortable. The hospitality and the generosity of the ancient Lamkangs is commendable.

2. Etiquette outside the Family:

Children of the same peer group called each other 'Cham'(among boys) and 'Klo'(among girls). Both the words meant friend. Outside the peer group one should prefix 'A'. The younger ones could called the elder ones by name but they had to prefix 'A' before the given name. e.g. Darngam is older than Rangthoo. Darngam is Mopu. Rangthoo could address Darngam as 'Amo Darngam' or just 'Amo'. Supposed Darngam is a married man. His eldest child is 'Tenu' and her proper name is Phalnok. Rengthoo could then address Darngam as 'Amo Darngam Phalnokpa' or 'Amo Phalnokpa'. Here 'pa" means 'father of'. If Darngam and Rengthoo were of the same clan and there was a difference of atleast five of age between them, then Rengthoo had to address Darngam as 'Apa Darngam' or if married, 'Apa Darngam Phalnokpa'. If they were of different clans then Rengthoo had to address Darngam as 'Apu Darngam' or 'Apu Darngam Phalnokpa' or 'Apu Phalnokpa'.

3. Wishing:

No one could bypass the other without wishing, especially the elders. One could at least smile. Usually smile and wishing was followed by exchange of few words such as Where are you going? Have you taken your meal? Or how is life? No handshake or kiss existed amongst the ancient Lamkangs. The younger one should greet first.

4. Visiting Relations:

Visiting each other, especially when family members lived in different villages through marriages, was a common practice. The visitor always had something to give to the visited and the visited never made the visitor go empty handed. The quantity and quality were not measured and valued much. Love behind the gift was much considered as greatest gift.

5. Ritual Blessings:

When grand children visited the grand parents, the grand parents often killed a white cock or any chicken or hen for the grand children. They blessed their grand children by sticking white cock's tender tail on the (back) head of the grand children. While doing so they uttered similar words like. "May you live long happily and prosperously. May you beget many more healthy children and may your children bless you. May you have a good harvest.....". Like wise the Aunts and Uncles may do so uttering the same words of blessing. The formula was learnt by heart by everyone.

A plate of rice and a big junk of meat were laid before the grand children. They had to finish the given meat. They were not allowed to share with others. If the children could not finish the meat, it was preserved for them so that the children could take whenever they felt hungry during the day. This form of blessing could be done by the parents on their children annually for good health of mind and body.

VII. Origin of Folk songs, Folk dance and Costumes:

This was how the costumes and cultural folk dances and folk songs of the Lamkangs originated. It took place in one of the great festivals of the Lamkangs. While customary celebration was on a snake appeared in front of the gathering and made the most glanderous dance. The best wine was served that day. Taking hold of one of the musical instruments, the snake sang a beautiful song of war victory called 'Rel roo la' in Lamkang. It recited also a beautiful ballad. The song and the music were so sweet and pleasing to all. The snake then asked the musicians to play a drum made of special wood called 'Purwang' in Lamkang (this tree becomes black when dipped into the water and kept long. It is then dried to become strong and lasting). They should not play the drum made of pine-wood. It sang series of five beautiful songs and told many beautiful stories. The dance costumes the snake wore were so glittering and attractive. No eye had seen such a beautiful ornament before. The people marveled at the magnificent ornaments that suited the dance and the sweet songs so well. The young virgins admired and applauded the snake so much. The young men envied the snake. They immediately played the drum make of pine-wood which the snake had told them not to play. At once the snake disappeared. It was because of envy that the young men missed to learn the beautiful and rhythmic dance of the snake and the costume of the ornaments the snake had worn.

The Lamkangs wanted to imitate the dance and costumes of the snake from whatever they could recollect in their mind. The dance and the costumes of the Lamkangs of today are the duplication of that of the snake.

The snake lived among men and spoke the same language. He was powerful and rich. He reigned over mankind. They called him 'Suwang' (rich. It is the name of a serpent—Python).

It is hard to accept all that are described above. What sort of dance, costumes and songs were copied from the Python/snake? Where had it disappeared when a drum made of pine was played? The myth does not explain all these reasons.

1. Costumes for women:

The dance costumes for women folk consisted of

1. Black thread to be tied on the ankle,
2. another decorated thread called 'shaisang' in Lamkang.
3. a bangle on the wrists,
4. ivory on her arms,
5. variety of necklace on her neck,
6. sea shells called 'worjari' and 'Kep' in Lamkang,
7. a designed lungi called 'diphwn' in Lamkang,
8. a special tie on her elbow called 'chwei' in Lamkang,
9. a plated hair divided into two equal parts and tied with a ribbon. On it was stuck a feather of porcupine decorated with wings of a flying insect called 'Thlumthler' in Lamkang,
10. a white blouse.

These costumes are not easily available now. They are costly today and are slowly disappearing away.

2. Costumes for Men:

The dance costumes worn by men consisted of the following items:

1. white socks,
2. 'shaisang' on the white socks,
3. decorated loin cloth,
4. necklaces (short),
5. longer necklaces called 'Arlow' in Lamkang,
6. pig's teeth on his left arm, (*meaning unknown*)
7. sea shell (wori) on his right arm with a tail of an animal, (*unknown meaning*)
8. a white turban,
9. bird's feather called 'Pwlrang' in Lamkang,
10. a knife in its cupboard.

When observed closely the items of costumes both for men and women are ten each in number. Were these costumes the type of costumes worn by the dancing snake? Did the snake design a put one type of ornament for men and another type of ornaments for

women on its body while dancing? This remained a mystery. It seems to be a myth created round the costumes worn by the snake to justify the present costumes separately designed for men and women.

VIII. Festivals:

The Lamkangs had a good variety of festivals both small and great. Some of them were ritualistic, some were cultic and some of them were for socialization. However, all the festivals consisted of eating and drinking. They celebrated away their lives: joys and sorrows. Out of many festivals only three are described here.

1. Totlang Kakam:

It was a feast of eating and drinking for three consecutive days. Every family had to make pots and pots of rice-beer and alcohol. Men folk did go for hunting on the previous day of the feast. All men and women dressed themselves in their festive garments. Series of folk songs were sung. They related their woes and worries, their experiences, their successes and their failures. They performed folk dances. The songs were very poetical. They played musical instruments like pipes, cymbals, percussion, lutes, trumpets, flutes, and drums.

2. Harvest Feast:

It was a feast of great jubilation for the year's bumper crop. People killed animals, cooked the new grains and celebrated it with drinks, music and dance. This was done after giving a share to the spirit who blessed them.

3. Ngor Kshim:

This was a celebration held in honor of parents by the children. The grown up children expressed their love and gratitude towards their ageing parents by hosting this banquet. It was made obligatory. Invitation was thrown to the surrounding villages that came with gifts. Sumptuous meal was laid for all. It was followed by a short ceremony in which the children presented gifts and fed their ageing parents to their hearts content. The parents then blessed their children. This was followed by singing and dancing by the youth. The elders sang folk songs and shared folk tales while helping themselves with rice-beer and alcohol. The whole night was spent in merry making.

IX. The Lamkang Calendar:

People had no watches in ancient times. They looked at the sun and calculated their day's activities. They named the months and days.

1. Week Days:

The seven days of the week were ascribed to the origin of different life forms as shown below:

1. Kunthwn na nit (Monday, the beginning of creation),
2. Mi trouna nit (Tuesday, the day on which man came in to being),
3. Pam trouna nit (Wednesday, the day on which land mass was formed),
4. Sha yamna nit (Thursday, the day on which animals came into existence),
5. Mi Karshel na nit (Friday, the day of Planning),
6. Mi Kalrai na nit (Saturday, the day of disagreement over an issue),

7. Kangpan na nit (Sunday, a day of rest).

From the meaning of the given words they could identify on which day they were in.

2. The Months:

The months were also connoted by the meanings. They gave symbolical meaning to the months for easy remembrance

1. Karam (dry season),
2. Kujou (windy days),
3. Pampho (Jhumming season),
4. Kupool (time of digging Jhumming field, a time for sowing),
5. Purdun (summer),
6. Pat̄ao (time of plantation),
7. Yiingpi (cloudy and rainy days),
8. Yiingkha (busy working days),
9. Phorwa (peak summer season),
10. Morsong (Spring season, flowering season),
11. Pirteng (time of Harvesting the fruits from the field),
12. Kile (work is done, a time to sit and relax).

CHAPTER FIVE

The People and their Religion:

It is hard to say whether the ancient Lamkangs believed in god or not. The only thing accounted by the Oral Historians is that the ancient Lamkangs had some sort of belief in spirits. There were benevolent spirits who blessed them with a good harvest. They offered him some cereals and grains at the beginning of harvest feast.

The ancient Lamkangs had a way of finding good or bad spirit through their dreams before cutting a new land for cultivation. If the dream was found good, the interpretation was that the spirit who reigned over that land was good and would bless him abundantly and vice-versa.

The other proof is that the ancient people had a village priest who was considered as the interpreter of spirit's mind. He had an eye that could see the spirit, especially at night. He was consulted for any sickness. He was like a medical doctor curing all sorts of illness. He had self made medicine. The medicine was made from herbs and nobody knew what sorts of herbs were used to make the medicine. The ingredients of medicine seemed to have been from the same source/herbs/plant. The spirits made him know the sort of herbs and leaves in the woods. He was not allowed to tell it out to others saying that the spirit would be displeased. The healing power of medicine would disappear. He examined the sickness. He consulted the spirit. The spirit took him to the woods to identify the sort of herb that would be used to cure that particular sickness or disease. There was no sickness that could not be cured by the spirit through the priest. This was a good and benevolent spirit. The sicknesses which could not be cured and which were fatal in nature, sacrifices of birds and animals were sacrificed. Such sicknesses had no medicine to cure. It was believed to be caused by an evil spirit. The spirit held the life of the person in hand ready to eat. The evil spirit had to be appeased. Sacrifice of blood had to be offered in exchange to life of the sick person. At times the evil spirit demanded sacrifice of dog or pig or cow. Sacrifice of chicken or cock or setting one chick into the wood would not help. When the sick person recovered the belief was that the evil spirit had accepted the sacrifice in exchange.

Animism:

The ancient Lamkangs, as described above, felt and knew the existence of some spirits through the natural phenomena and their experiences. The natural catastrophe like earthquake, cyclone, thunder, lightning, landslides, hurricanes, flood, plague, etc. made them believed that there were spirits.

At times the calamities that occurred were mild and at times very disastrous. The interpretation was that the spirit was displeased. It had to be appeased through ritualistic sacrifices. The spirits looked moody at times. The priest had to read the mood of the spirits and interpret to the people. Sacrifices were determined accordingly.

Animism and its Rites and Rituals:

It is very interesting to note that every family had family god or goddess (spirits). What is this spirit? It is hard to define the 'spirit' described her. It is not Satan. It is not God. It is

only the spiritual force, the unseen force or power imminently present in nature. We can have little glimpse of the type of spirit they appeared in the following description. They did not worship spirit but only appeased them.

‘Shulbur’ was a clandestine spirit. ‘Shulbur’ meant burrow or the cage where the spirit was kept. Every clan had their own clandestine spirit. Every family kept the spirit at the back of their houses. The spirit had to be fed every now and then lest it would strike the family with sickness.

The village priest performed occasional rites and rituals for the family. The priest invoked blessings upon the family. He blessed them. The blessing had to be done by sprinkling water over the family members with utterance of undecipherable words. Sprinkling of water was done with leaves, leaves from six types of trees called sko, thruve, dingpirsi, arji, thlingam and rupi (different trees). The water was made for mixed solution of bones of goat, dog, chicken, bison, pig and aluminium powder. The meaning behind the usage of six different types of leaves, and six ingredients dissolved in water is unknown. It is a mystery. It must have had been the type of mixture the spirit made demand through the priest. The priest sprinkled the solution to the people saying,
“Kuroo kurroo ku khu ngo,
kidi ngo khorpi ngo, kokpi ngo,
kiyoli ngo, ngayoli ngo, chipi ngo,
chibang ngi ngo, ri ngi ngo,
arlung ngi ngo, dulphei yi ngo,
pamyolli ngo.....

There is no meaning as such. They were the names of all those villages where they had been living once upon a time. The priest called the spirits of all those villages of their migration to come and bless them. Then he concluded the invocation by uttering
‘Atiyo reseting resetingler
sangting klong ethasa,
atiyo ravati revatile seting klong thasa’.

Then he commanded the bundle of leaves to untie itself:
“Aya pnanng pakanpa nang karkhek karkhek,
aya pnanng pur phukpa kurphuk kurphuk” (“you the rope, untie, untie and loosen yourself”). The meaning was known only to the priest. The bundle of leaves was then hung on the burrow/cage of the spirit. He then fed the spirit by pouring some wine on the spirit.

Sicknesses and their Cure:

1. Sacrifices for a Good Health:

Whenever a person was sick the priest was called to pray and cure the sick. He would asked the person where he or she was during the day. If the sick person was found working in the field during the day, the priest would tell that the spirit of the field had taken his/her spirit. If the sick person was found in the jungle, the interpretation would be

that the spirit of the forest had undertaken into possession the soul of the sick person. Accordingly dog was killed and offered to the spirit in exchange for the life. The head of the dog had to be chopped off. All the inner parts like liver, intestines, lungs, heart, stomach, etc. were cut and mixed with saffron powder. The mixture was offered to the spirit with utterance of the following words:

*“Tomorrow onwards the young and old,
the sons and daughters would be coming to work here.
Do not disturb them so that they may have a bumper crop”*

Then he would pour liquor on the sacrifice. The same sacrifice was done if the sickness was believed to be caused by the spirit of the forest but with few differences of uttered words. He would then take meal with the family members. As his wage he was given the fore and the hind legs of the sacrificed dog.

When the sick person failed to regain back the health another sacrifice would be done with an addition of setting a chicken free into the forest or field in exchange for life. He would go with one member of the family. They would carry a white shawl called ‘tikarboo’ in Lamkang. It was to be folded. Before reaching the field the priest would act as though he was catching something from the air and would put it into the folded shawl to be opened only when they reached home. If mud piece or a pebble was found it would mean the sick person would die soon. Nothing could be done. If a leaf of a tree or vegetable was found it and the grasshopper was found flying into the spread shawl it meant that the life of the person was released and sick person would regain back good health.

This is magical. It looks like a black magic. It did happen and people had experienced it. It is mysterious which goes beyond human reasoning power.

2. Highway spirits:

Sicknesses such as headache, muscle catch, vomiting, etc., were believed to be caused by spirit of the road/pathways/highways/lane. For that too a chicken had to be set free in exchange of life and animal sacrifice had to be done.

When a person died they would examine the body. If they find black marks which looked like that of stick mark, the interpretation was that the spirit had eaten the life of the person. S/he was beaten to death.

For every sickness an animal was to be killed. The priest made heavy booty of the sacrifice. He made his easy living by offering only sacrifices. Every family had to have a good amount of chickens, dogs, goats, cows, and pigs.

3. Sickness caused by Witch:

3.1. Treating Stomachache: There were people who can cause pain by their mere look. When a person had acute stomach ache round the naval, the interpretation was that a witch must have had watched the person while eating something. The priest had to chew

a root called 'Hingkha' in Lamkang and spit led over the abdomen of the sick person. Then a white hen would be cut into two equal halves. The blood of the hen was applied on the legs, hands and the stomach of the patient. The cut meat was placed on the banana leaves and taken outside for the witch.

3.2. Treating Sickly and Bonny Persons: This was how the ancient Lamkangs interpreted and treated bonny and sickly persons. According to them the person with such disease will never regain back his health and will not grow fat or be healthy unless the attachment had on him by the souls of his death relatives was severed off once and for all. For this a dog with red fur had to be cut and sacrificed.

The significance of red furred dog is unknown. It seemed that things worked out. But scientifically interpreting and diagnosing the disease would render different cause and solution. That was the way the ancient Lamkangs looked for their own solutions to their problems that affected them.

3.3. Treating Rheumatism:

Rheumatism was treated by sucking out blood from the leg. All the toes were tied and punctured. A small hollow horn of an animal was placed on the punctured area and the blood was sucked out. It was said that along with de-oxygenated pebbles and pieces of bones were also sucked out. This was followed by a sacrifice of a dog.

Going through all these sacrifices offered either to appease the spirits or to cure various sicknesses, we could notice a dog as the most common sacrificial animal. Why did the spirits demand only the dogs? Dog was in demand because the meat was delicious to the priest and not to the spirits or it may be that dog was considered to be the life companion of the man in life here on earth and in heaven. Hence, a companion was sacrificed for the man.

Notion of Life after Death:

To the ancient Lamkangs the end of life here on earth was the end of everything. The idea of heaven was not there. But the issue of souls disturbing the living showed that they had a notion of the world of the death. They called it 'Kdi Khu' (the world of the death). They had a mythical story webbed round this belief. The story is described as follows:

There was a couple who loved each other so much. They thought that nothing could ever separate them. They lived happily until a day when his wife was struck with a sudden blow of fatal sickness. Death was imminent and her husband could not imagine that his wife was to die leaving him all by himself. The thought of it made him so sad and dejected. He wanted to die by her side so that they could be together in the world of the dead also. He decided to kill himself soon after the death of his wife.

But the wife cautioned him. The wife said, "Soon we will be on the road marching towards the world of death. There will be two diverged roads. At that junction there will be Mrs. Cat with a veil on her head busy pounding paddy. Do not laugh at her lest you will not enter the world of the dead". Saying that the wife died and her husband killed

himself by asking his people to bury him alive along with his wife. True to the saying of his wife, he found himself marching with his wife on the road towards the world of the death. At the diverged road he noticed Mrs. Cat pounding paddy with a veil on her head. Seeing her, the man could not control his laughter. As a result he could not enter the world of death with his wife. He marched towards the world of perdition or damnation. In Lamkang the world of the death was called 'Dipur' and the world of damnation was called 'Disar'.

Rituals after Death:

There were so many activities before burial, during burial and after burial, centered round the dead corpse. They are described as follows:

1. Before Burial:

- a) Sending messenger to all the Lamkang villages to announce the news of the dead. They were to shout "Wahleh" and then communicate the message clearly,
- b) Digging the grave. Every clan had a specified area of burial ground. The bones of the previous dead were collected along the imperishable wealth given to the previous deceased. No one could take them for fear of being struck with dead. The grave diggers were permitted to drink the liquor buried along with the previous deceased member of the clan. Those who encroached the clan's burial boundary were fined with one pot of rice-beer. No repair of the old grave was done until the fresh arrival.
- c) Construction of Coffin box,
- d) Bathing the corpse and dressing it and putting garland made of animal teeth. After bathing, the corpse was placed on the floor at the entrance of the house with the head pointing towards the east. A tender branch of a plant called 'Kulring' was dipped of and on in water and run over the body of the corpse from head to the left and right legs alternately. The lower jaw was tied with a threat against the heat meaning to separate the world of the dead and the world of the living.
- e) Arrival of relatives with gifts and mourning over the departed soul. The gifts were later presented to the relatives of the departed on his or her behalf by the relations. The rest of the gifts were carried by the departed soul in the coffin. The relatives should see that every item belonging to the soul was kept into the coffin. They should see that the soul had everything provided for his survival in the world of the death.
- f) Singing funeral folk songs and beating of gongs amidst mourning,
- g) Killing of a dog or a pig. Seven pieces of meat were cut from the heart, the kidney, the lung, chest, fore-leg, hind-leg and the ribs. They were tied in string and boiled. Each piece was cut into two to make fourteen pieces. Rice was cooked below the house for the departed soul (All cooking was done below the house. The Lamkangs constructed their houses raised three to four feet away from the ground). The fourteen pieces of meat were kept on the banana leaves in two separate places. Placing rice on each plate, the priest would tie them with left hand into fourteen small bundles to be carried to the grave.

2. At Burial:

At the cemetery the priest was to take out the two bundles composed of seven pieces of meat each. He would take out the first bundle with his left hand and was to say, "This

bundle is for your relatives who would wait for you with expectation of receiving gifts from you”. He would then take out another bundle with his right hand and was to say, “This bundle is for you”. He was to place the two bundles into the grave. The corpse was then let down and buried.

3. After Burial:

- a) All those who went for the burial should beat themselves with branches, spited the leaves and throw away as a sign that the living and the dead had no more commonality.
- b) On reaching the house every one had to wash their hands and feet to wash away the dust of the world of the death.
- c) The village people divided themselves into a pair each and each pair in turn would go to the field of the decease to harvest the cereals and grains and hung them at the gate of the village for the deceased. This was repeated till all the pairs finish their turn. This was called ‘Shung Kom’ in Lamkang,
- d) The priest was called to purify the house of the deceased. This was called ‘Shulpi Kurthoi’ in Lamkang. The clandestine spirit (Shulpi) was taken out and placed on seven varieties of leaves laid on the winnowing. A pig was slaughtered. Six pieces of sticks from a tree called Arji were tied together. The sixth one had to longer than the other five. It was sharpened like an arrow. On it was stuck the heart of the slain pig. The bundle of stick with the pig’s heart was taken and planted at the back courtyard of the house by the priest.

The priest then would sit with the family members round the winnowing. He would sprinkle the family members with leaves dipped into liquor and uttered the following words:

“Edam in edam in tun khim makhei yi, (good health to all of you)
nan tun ni adi kong na am ma so, (may no sickness strike you)
Kidiyou wi kidi you lamtha wa si so, (let the dead go to the place of death)
Kring nan tunni poi abin manso, (let the dead not cling on you)
Nan rwk wa bin man, (you also do not think of him)
Nannu mdotta tuniki houda inthung ngi kdung ksan, (let no one in this house get sick again)
kdi kring am ma so” (may no one die again)

They then would sit to eat the rest of the meat after keeping due share for the death and the spirit enthroned in the house. There was a part of meat which the women were not allowed to eat. The rest would be shared among themselves.

It is amazing to see how this meat was cooked. The meat was cooked on three stones erected upright representing the three deities of the family. The meat meant for the men was cooked first then the meat meant for the women. Men and women were not to share meat. Man ate what was meant for them and vice-versa. With this the ceremony over the dead was over and the family had no more obligations to fulfill for the death. Later on in the modern period erection of memorial stone for the dead was added.

CHAPTER SIX

The Superstitious Beliefs:

The ancient Lamkangs had enumerable superstitious beliefs. Hence, there were many 'don'ts' and 'dos'. There were many taboos that had greatly influenced their way of life in all spheres. Their social, political, economic, and cultural activities were much conditioned by superstitious beliefs. Non fulfillment of such conditions frightened them so much. Some of the superstitious beliefs are described as follows:

Make belief Stories:

1. One day all the creatures on the surface of the earth had a meeting and decided that they should go and cut road that would link them to their fields. All the creatures agreed upon and went for cutting the road. Only Mr. Mouse failed to turned up for the work. After the work all the creatures cursed the mouse saying that it would die whenever he tries to cross the road or walk on the road. And it was so. All the mice died when they tried to cross or walk on the road.
2. On another day all the creatures of the earth had a meeting and decided they should dig a pond for water storage. All the creatures went for the work except one particular bird called 'Nongkoubi' (in Manipuri and Lamkang). It means 'rain caller'. All the creatures cursed that Mr. Nongkoubi should die whenever he tries to quench his thirst from any water source on the earth's surface. And it was so.

For People in General:

3. No crippled or handicapped person and all those who had died an unnatural death were buried in the common village cemetery. Those who went for such burial purified themselves from contamination for fear of meeting the same fate. Ritual Cleansing was done with leaves and washing oneself with water.
4. No child bearing mother was allowed to eat twin plantain for fear of conceiving twin baby.
5. No one was to be beaten with a soft broom. A man beaten with a broom would become poor hunter and a woman beaten with a broom would become poor weaver.
6. No witch (People with powerful eyes) was permitted to approach any person or family while eating any edible or food. When that was done a piece of the food or edible was thrown in order to avoid stomach ache. A piece of saffron or a twig of 'Khuntrwk' was also put in a dish when cooking any food in order to avoid contamination from the witches and any cow that entered the house was killed and eaten to prevent any member of the family from falling into any sickness. And No wild animal was to enter the village. That animal was hunted down in order to prevent misfortune falling on the village. No dog was to climb the roof of any house. It was killed and eaten as it was considered to be bad omen.
7. The people believed that every sickness was caused by devil. Sacrifice of animal or bird in exchange for life was the only means to save life. When that was done into the woods, no one was permitted to go out of the village for three days for

- fear of being stricken with the same sickness. It was called ‘Ghenna’ in Naga and ‘Kdang nit’ in Lamkang. No one was permitted to touch or consume the sacrificial meat or fruits for fear of meeting the same fate.
8. The whirl wind was believed to be caused by a devil. One should spit against it.
 9. When finishing digging a plot/field one must end with a straight line or all must have same finishing touch lest the devil would come by night and complete their left over task.
 10. When a child was born a small twig of a plant called ‘Khuntrwk’ was tied on the neck and wrist of the child with a thread in order to scare away the witches from eating away the child.
 11. A marriage within the same clan was prohibited for fear of wild animals and birds coming and attacking their village.
 12. No father of two months old child was permitted to lay a trap or dig a grave or plant any tree. Anyone who did that had his child with a stunted growth or the child had difficulty in breathing. When those happened a mixture of soil with water was administered to the child for cure.
 13. No one was allowed to stamp over the left over meals for fear of having crack heels. And a plate of rice was always kept for the deceased at least for a week by the family members. It was also believed that the departed soul could express his or her wishes through the village priest through divination.

For the Children:

14. No child was permitted to use a pillow or exceed the head of the parent sleeping beside the child. It was believed that such child was carried by devil (Shumbeng) and put in one corner of the house.
15. No child was allowed to whistle after the sunset for fear of the devil (Lamhui) coming and twisting his/her lips. All those who had twisted lips were the result of violation of such rules.
16. No child or teenage or youth was permitted to eat the brain of any animal or bird for fear of having untimely grey hair growth.
17. When a tooth was plucked one should throw necessarily on the house top and say, “Chameleon, take my bad teeth and give me new and fresh one”.
18. Headache was believed to be caused by the wind blowing away one’s hair because of careless disposal of his/her hair after cutting or combing.
19. After pounding paddy all must keep pounding wood (Shuum in Lamkang) turned upside down lest the devil come by night and pound paddy.
20. When catching lice from someone’s head one should complete one glance lest the devil would come and complete the round by night.
21. Children were taught that when sleeping the head must always point towards the east.

Riddles for Children:

The Lamkangs had many riddles for children. Children told each other while playing. Few of them are quoted here below:

1. There in the field of a man stands a lady with her babe adorned with beauty. Who is it? Ans: Maize.
2. One full plate of such is eaten and yet one full plate of such remained. What is it? Ans: Snail.
3. It always keeps the house neat and tidy before the house owner returns. What is it? Ans: Soft broom.
4. The owner of the house always finds surprising sound in the dark. What is it? Ans. Match stick.
5. Two friend catch hold of two foes before throwing out the foes. What are two friends and the two foes? Ans: Two little fingers and two little streams of mucus from two little holes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Folk Tales:

The Lamkangs had many folk tales through which they imparted moral values to their children. The children thronged around old people to hear the stories. Parents loved to tell stories in place of lullaby as their children went to bed. A few of such stories are recounted here below:

1. Koshe and the Unlucky Leopard:

Once there was a hungry leopard wanting to learn the skill of hunting down human beings from a lion. The lion taught that it should hide itself in a bush and pounce on the passerby at once. The leopard waited patiently. Koshe happened to pass by that way on that day on his way back from his field. The leopard made sudden leaps and pounce on Koshe. Instead of landing on Koshe, it landed straight into the basket of Koshe who caught hold of the animal and killed it.

On reaching home he got himself ready to cut and prepare the meat. His wife was so pleased that she wanted to make best impression on Koshe. She wanted to get the biggest portion for herself. As she was busy weaving she said repeatedly that she was weaving for Koshe, her husband. Koshe got fed up of repeated words and angrily retorted, “Aha! You saw the meat and that made you weave with your mouth”. She got so offended and left her work in rage. She went and sat at her corridor brooding over her failure.

Koshe wanted to fool her in return. He sent his son to fetch his mother’s plate. Hearing that she shouted, “My plate is kept over the oven”. But her husband said, “You greedy woman, do you think that we are going to keep your share?” Having said that the father and the son finished the whole meat without leaving any bite for the wife.

Thus one should be sincere and virtuous in thought and deed. Those who accomplish the task with their mouths shall not have their reward/wage.

On another day, Koshe took his son for hunting. In the heart of the forest they met a wild elephant. The father ordered his son Koshi to run and climb up a tree. The son did so. After climbing some height the son asked, “Father, should I climb a little higher?” “Yes” was the reply. After a while the son repeated the same question and got the same reply without looking up to what height of a tree he was on. The branch broke and Koshi fell like a mighty led on the ground. Not knowing the son was falling from branch to branch the father shouted repeatedly, “Koshi catch hold of the bigger trunk”. Thinking that the father was ordering his son to catch hold of its trunk, the elephant fled. Instead of holding the trunk Koshi fell and broke his bones. The father instead of binding the groaning and bleeding son praised him for having chased away the elephant.

Lesson: One should know one’s priority. Not knowing this would make the person fall from one misery to another. Even there if one fails to stop and reflect he would certainly fall into devil’s den.

2. The Avenging Cock:

Once there was a hen whose eggs were daily stolen by a fox. She managed to save her last egg and hatched it out into a cock. When the cock grew up the mother narrated her sad episode. The cock was so infuriated and decided to avenge the death of its brothers and sisters. It crowed loud inviting anyone who could come and fight for him against the fox.

The chicken dung was the first to offer its selfless service. It said, “Look at me. Do I smell good? I produce very bad odour. I shall lie on the path of that greedy fox. The fox will run to the water source to wash its legs after trampling over me”. The cock said, “Very well, you can join me”.

The cock crowed again. This time an egg came to offer its help. The cock asked, “What can you do for me?” The egg replied, “I shall burst out right on the face of the greedy fox”. The cock accepted the egg into his troop.

The cock crowed for the third time. The knife came and offered its service. When the same question was asked to the knife, it replied, “I shall cut the hand of that glutton fox”. The knife was also recruited into the military troop.

The cock crowed for the fourth time. The hammer came forward offering its help. To the same question the hammer replied that it would hit the fox on the head to death. The hammer also was recruited into the army.

Having enough of manpower, the cock led the army towards the forest to hunt for that glutton fox. On reaching the hole where the fox was resting, the cock crowed aloud stating that he had come to avenge the death of his brothers and sisters. At this the fox replied, “You little silly cock. Who do you claim yourself to be? You are only worth for one nice sumptuous meal. What can you do little crook?”

The greedy fox came forward to attack the cock. It trampled over the chicken dung. It turned back wanting to go and wash its feet in the pool. At this the rotten egg burst forth right on the face of the fox. The fox wiped its face and swiped its paws on the wall. The knife cuts its hand. The fox ran out groaning in great pain. The hammer continuously hit the fox on its head. The fox bled to death. Thus the cock had avenged the death of his brothers and sisters.

Lesson: Small is beautiful. Every small thing put together can do wonder. Hence, treat the big and the small equally.

3. Tungkhel and the Cannibal:

Once upon a time there was a cannibal lady feeding herself with new born babies. She always counted her hunt before consuming them. By this she measured the daily quantity of her meal.

Mr. Tungkhel wanted to eliminate the lady forever. He thrashed forth his hand of and on to distract the cannibal from counting. True to his game, the cannibal lady was no longer engrossed in counting her hunt. Mr. Tungkhel came out from his hiding place, caught hold of the cannibal lady and thrashed her to death with his brass bangle. From then on the Lamkang people had no more incidents of missing their babies.

Lesson: One should be brave, strong, cunning, and courageous like Tungkhel in curbing out evil elements and designs from oneself and from the society. Evil should be shun and subdued and not relented to as it would further aggravate the misery.

4. Why can't Dogs Talk?

Once there was a good fisher woman. She was also a cannibal. She had three kids. She took her kids one day for fishing. She placed her kids on the bank and she dived into the water for a catch. At each dive she would make a good catch. She would throw each catch to her children who shouted with great acclamation.

Mr. Tungkhel, the great cannibal hunter, happened to come that way with his three ferocious dogs. As the lady dived into the water he twisted the necks of the three kids. The lady as usual threw the catch for the children. After a while she realized that her kids were no more rejoicing but were looking one side. She wondered to herself what was wrong with her kids. She came out ashore and examined the kids and found them all dead. She was so infuriated. She screamed in anger and frustration. She looked every where but found not one around. She peeped into the water and saw the image of a man. She hopped into the water to kill the man but the man was not there. She looked up and saw Mr. Tungkhel on top of a tree. Mr. Tungkhel set his dogs against the cannibal lady. As she was busy fighting the three dogs, Tungkhel made off for his life. He waited for a while for his dogs. He asked each dog what had happened to the lady. But no dog could reply in utter fatigue ness. In anger Mr. Tungkhel twisted the tongues of the three dogs. This was the reason why dogs can not talk like man.

Lesson: Evil should be curbed out by any means.

5. The Faithful Wife:

Once upon a time there was a widow who was skillful at weaving. She made her living through weaving. She had four beautiful daughters. One day as she was weaving a crow flew towards her and dropped upon her weaving. The fruit is called 'Theikarhal' in Lamkang. The crow repeated the act for a few consecutive days.

She looked the direction from which the crow was flying. She managed to trace the fruit tree. As she was about to climb up the tree a huge black snake came and entangled her from her foot to her neck. She pleaded that she should be released. She would give one of her daughters. The snake gradually released her.

On reaching home she narrated the incident to her daughters and asked one of them to follow and marry the snake. None of them obliged.

At dusk the widow came to fetch some firewood for cooking. The widow again renewed her promise. The snake released her for the second time. She went inside her house and asked her daughters, beginning from the eldest to the youngest, to marry the black snake. They all refused to marry the snake. At this the widow took her basket and said that she would follow the snake and marry him.

Seeing this, the youngest daughter rushed and stopped her mother. She offered herself to become the wife of the black snake. The girl followed the snake to his house. On their way, they had to cross a river. The husband said that they should take bath. The snake instructed the wife to take bath there while he goes little further and take bath. She should not pick up any glittering garment carried by the flowing river.

True to his words, the woman saw many glittering cloths being carried by the flowing river. She was tempted but restrained herself. And lo! She found a handsome young man approaching him. He was the snake turned into a man. The spell on him was removed. The couple led a very happy marital life reigning over a vast empire.

Whenever the mother visited them she would enjoy herself from golden plates and cups. Her greed heightened and she was tempted to seek another black snake to marry her second daughter.

She indeed found another black snake. She took it home and ordered his second eldest daughter to sleep beside the black snake. At night the snake began to swallow the girl. The girl shouted, "Mom, it is reaching my ankle" The mother replied, "It is the way to be happy and gay". When it reaches her waist the daughter again shouted but got the same reply. The same was done when it reached her neck and finally it was all over. The mother gave the same reply.

Next morning the widow found to her dismay her daughter swallowed by that black snake. The widow called men of her village and requested them to kill the snake but everyone refused. At last! Her son-in-law came forward to do the act. His wife pleaded him not to do but the husband could not retract his yes. He tied himself all around except a small hole through which he could see the snake. To his bad luck the blood of that black snake splashed on his face and entered his eyes. At once, the man turned into snake again. He advised his pregnant wife to remain back and look after the children and the palace but she refused. She would follow him to the hills and valleys, to the ocean and the rivers and even to great cliffs. Having found no solution the snake entered a small creak. The wife tried to follow there too. But she could not proceed as she was pregnant and died there to the sorrow of everyone.

Lesson: A greedy wife brings ruins but the faithful wife is better than any gold or diamond. She is the treasure and jewel of the family.

6. The Unfortunate Hare:

It is very hard to imagine a hare to crack a vulnut. Once upon a time there was a Hare who was so much fond of vulnut. It cracked so much of vulnuts. The dropping was so much that many wild chickens came to feed themselves on the left over. The wild chickens toppled down many leaves. In so doing they destroyed the house of black ants called 'Phaiwang' in Lamkang.

The furious ants injected their venom on the scrotum of a pig. The pig in great pain and helplessness shook off one palm plant on which was a bat. The bat flew in fright straight into the ear of an elephant. The elephant became mad. In rage it toppled down the house of a widow.

The following day, the widow filed a case against the elephant to the village court. The court was adjourned. The elephant was summoned and questioned. The elephant confessed that it was innocent. He committed the crime out of pain because the bat had entered her ear. The bat was questioned. The pig was blamed. The pig blamed the black ants. The ants blamed the wild chickens and the wild chickens blamed the Hare. The Hare had not one to blame. It was heavily penalized by the village court.

Lesson: This is how evil spread. It has a root. The one who causes it should be punished in time to curb out the evil from infecting others.

7. The Disobedient Brother:

Once upon a time there lived two orphan brothers. They grew up at the mercy of the others. When they grew up they became traders. They went as far as China via Burma for selling and buying goods. They had to walk days and days. They carried no provisions. They depended upon the generosity of the villages situated in and around the road.

On one of the journeys, they happened to spend the night in the house of the cannibals. The cannibal couple planned to kill the two brothers by mid-night. The two brothers were served meal. The menu was a human flesh.

The elder brother instructed the younger one not to eat the meat. He should pretend as though he was eating and throw the meat in the hole of the plank floor. The elder brother did but the instructed younger brother had no gut and so he ate the meat. The elder brother knew that his brother was soon to become a cannibal. He also knew that there would be attempt on their lives. He kept vigil whole night while the younger one slept peacefully. It was because of this that the cannibal could not carry out their plot to kill the brothers for their meal.

The elder one decided that they should return home. The following day they made off for their village. On the way the younger one complained that his tail bone was itchy. The tail bone was found growing steadily. The danger was well nigh. An idea struck the elder brother. He said that they should have a race. He showed the longer and winding road to his younger brother and he took the short cut. He reached home much ahead of

his younger brother. He divided the property into two equal halves and left outside what was meant for his younger brother. He locked himself inside the house.

The younger one reached home panting for breath. He knocked at the door but his elder one told him to leave with the property left aside for him outside. But he would not leave the house. He persistently asked for the door to be opened. He knew that he had become cannibal and yet his heart yearned for his elder brother. He regretted for having disobeyed his elder brother. His greed and his timidity had made him into a cannibal. He felt hungry, thirsty and tired. He saw his share of pig in his pig sty. He killed it and ate it raw. He began to thirst for human blood and blood of animals.

On the third day he began to kill the animals and birds of the villagers. The villagers knew what had become of the younger brother. They decided to kill him. When he knew the plan of the villagers, he made for the wood adjacent to the village.

All the men of the village got ready to hunt down the younger brother. The younger brother knew that the danger to his life was lurking. He hid himself but could not hide any longer because of the hunting dogs. The only way he could save himself was to hide and rush towards his elder brother for protection. He did this several times. The elder brother was commanded to kill. But he would not because of the love he had for his own brother. One of the men hid himself from behind the elder one and struck the younger one dead with his poisonous arrow. The younger brother writhed in pain and gave up his spirit in front of his elder brother. The elder one embraced him and wept bitterly. He wept for several days.

Lesson: Disobedience always makes one fall. To obey one needs to be heroic in all aspect of life.

8. Chuvi and Khava:

Once upon a time there lived a couple. The husband was a good hunter and the wife was good at fishing. They lived happily for few months. The wife got pregnant. She was in her eight month when the couple decided that they should go out for a hunt.

They reached a river. The wife was told to fish in that river. The husband went into the jungle for hunting. After an hour she saw some intestines being carried by the water. She was happy because she thought that her husband had killed an animal. She picked up the intestines. After a while she spotted out the head of her own husband being carried by the water. She screamed in fear and distress. She threw her bag and ran as fast as she could for her village. The way was long enough and tiring for the pregnant woman.

She gave birth not to one child but twin boys. As she lay a frog and a crow came her way. The twin boys were named Chuvi and Khawa. The mother was about to die. The frog and the crow decided to adopt one child each. The crow took Chuvi, the elder twin and the frog took the younger twin.

The crow fed the baby with meat and fish while the frog fed the other baby with air and water. However, the two brothers grew up in wisdom, strength and valor. The crow knew what had become of the younger brother. It decided that it should steal the younger brother. It flew and greeted the frog, "Hallo my friend! How are you? And how is your child? What feed do you give him"?"

The frog returned the greeting and said that it fed the boy with water and air. It was true; the boy grew up like a frog with big belly. The crow wanted to learn the economical way of feeding the boy. The frog went inside to fetch a pitcher of water to demonstrate how it fed the boy. The crow held the boy by its powerful claws and sour high up in the air. The boy was fed with fish and meat like the elder brother. The two brothers were re-united. The crow brought smile and joy to the two brothers. The two boys were sent to the village to learn the art of fighting. Their own grand-father decided to train the boys in sword fight and archery. Eventually they became skillful warriors. But they were naughty too.

They always fooled the young girls in the field by eating away their Tiffin. They decided that they should catch the culprits. They tied fine dust into the packages and hung them as though food was inside. They then hid themselves in the surrounding bush. As usual the two brothers came and opened the packages. They were blinded by the fine dust. The girls came and caught them. After that the brothers never repeated the act.

One day both of them decided that they should avenge the death of their father. They armed themselves and made off for the woods. They met the wife of the same cannibal that ate up their father. The husband was not there. He had gone for hunting. When he came back with another human flesh, he saw two more easy meals awaiting him. He welcomed them and served them heartily.

At night the husband tried to club the two boys to death. But each time he made an attempt there were flying insects disturbing him. The flying creatures were released from time to time by the brothers. The cannibal retorted, "What are all these creatures doing? They are disturbing my guest from their sleep". With the breaking of the dawn the husband made for the wood to wait for the boys to return so that he could kill them on their way back.

The two brothers requested take for them rice soup for their way. They requested the wife to exhibit the heads of her husband's hunt. They recognized the head of their father. They grabbed it, shot dead the pig of the cannibal and ran out. The wife screamed aloud. Hearing her, the husband came out from his hiding place but it was too late. The boys left by the other way. He chased them and found them up on the tree. The boys had peeled off the skin of the tree that they were climbing and poured rice soup on it making it slippery and difficult to climb.

“How did you climb?” asked the cannibal. The boys said that it was possible if he could climb with his legs and head at the bottom. The man did and the boys shot him on his buttock and he died.

The boys alighted down and reached home rejoicing late night. They knocked at the door of their mother but she was a bit late in opening. They boys said, “Mom look for Dad’s skull in the poultry in the morning”. The two boys then ascended the heaven playing cymbals and drums. They had achieved their mission.

Lesson: Love and respect shown to parents is the best gift the children could give to their parents in return for what the parent are to the children. Justice should be done to them.

9. The Miraculous Lady:

Once upon a time there lived an old man growing beautiful orchard. It had a variety of fruit trees. In the middle of the garden was a life giving tree. A certain young man passed by that way and noticed fruit bearing trees. His desire to have at least one of them burned from within. He went and asked the old man for a fruit. The old man permitted to pluck only one fruit from the life giving tree. The young man plucked two fro which he was scolded. The old man put back one in its place and gave only one to the young man.

The young man hurried down the road and sat under a banyan tree. He cut open the fruit. As soon as it was cut open a beautiful lady came out from the fruit. He was so charmed by the beauty of the lady. At once they fell in love. He kissed and embraced her fondly and told the girl to remain on top of the banyan tree while he goes to his village to pick up a pulling cart to carry the lady.

When he returned back he noticed another lady in place of the first lady. The lady insisted that she was the same lady. In doubt and hesitation he and his friends whom he requested and brought for the job carried her into his village and she became his wife.

After a month the same man passed by that banyan tree. He saw a beautiful white lily growing in the exact place where he asked his first loved lady to stay. He plucked it and carried it home. His wife took it and destroyed it into pieces and threw it through the wooden floor. The Lamkangs had houses with floors raised two to three feet above the ground.

In a weeks time a grove of mastered leaves sprang from the spot where the lily was thrown. The husband plucked it and made a nice curry out of it innocently. His wife identified it and threw the curry outside the corridor and the man wondered to himself what was wrong with the curry.

From the spot grew up a healthy guava tree and after a year it gave sweet fruits in abundance. The house wife invited all the villagers to come and pluck the fruit for themselves. An old barren couple plucked the last fruit. They kept the fruit for evening meal. At dawn they went to their field. When they returned home they saw their delicious food prepared and the house kept neat and tidy. They wondered to themselves who could

be doing that kind act for them. It went on for many days. The neighbors also had spotted out a beautiful maiden busy with the upkeep of the house. They too wondered who the lady was. The couple was told and they became more curious and wanted to find out the person who did that favor for them each day.

One day the couple pretended as if they were going to their field. They hid themselves and came back in the afternoon. They peeped through the window. They saw a beautiful maiden coming out from the guava fruit. She busied herself with her usual chores. The couple caught her by surprise and asked her all about herself. She confided the whole episode of her life to the aged couple. She requested the couple not to let her identity known. She agreed not to go back into the fruit shell. She became their daughter.

With the passage of the time, her beauty becomes the topic of the villagers. They came to see and admired her beauty and industriousness. It came to the hearing of the woman who was responsible for the misfortune that befell that beautiful maiden. She recognized her as the same lady whom she had eaten under that banyan tree a few years back. She was so worried that her identity would be soon discovered by her husband. She was a cannibal. She therefore, hatched out a plot to eliminate that beautiful maiden again. She pretended to be sick. She told her husband that she would be alright if the maiden in the old barren couple house was eliminated.

To make her happy the husband hired four goons to go and kill the maiden. The four men went and were lost in the beauty and the charm of the maiden and came back with unfulfilled task. The husband hired another four men. They too could not accomplish the task assigned to them. The maiden meanwhile got suspicious over men coming and starring at her. She asked the last four men for the reason why they were there. The plot was disclosed to them. The maiden told the men to tell their master that he should come and kill her by himself.

Hearing this the man sharpened his knife and made his way towards the old barren couple's house. When he approached the house he noticed from afar the same lady, his first loved lady. The maiden disclosed the sad episode. The two decided to eliminate the false wife.

The man killed the rat and smeared the blood on the blade of his knife and told his false wife that he had killed the beautiful maiden. She was so happy and jumped out of her bed. Her husband charged at her and cut her into pieces. The original lovers were reunited. They begot many children and lived happily for ever.

Lesson: Evil has no leg to stand upon. Evil cannot triumph over the good.

10. Predestination.

Once a certain man, on his way back from business, was too late to reach home and he decided to spend the night on the tree. He climbed up the tree and rested for a while. He was woken by the sound that he heard. He heard some people talking in the middle of the night. They were calling to each other. He came to know that they were the trees talking to each other from the reply of the tree on which he rested. They called each other saying that a baby was born of a woman and that they should go and predestine the child or determine the life span of the child. The tree on which the man rested excused itself saying that it had a guest and it would be impolite on its part to leave the guest and go with them. The rest of the trees went to the village.

After a few hours all the trees of the woods came back. The tree on which the man rested asked, "What gender is the baby and how many years is the baby destined to live?" The trees replied that it was a baby boy and that he should live only for six or seven years.

The man guessed that it could be his wife who was in her ninth month. At the dawn he got down from the tree and hurried home. He saw from afar his wife holding a baby. It was a male and there was no other baby born on that day in his village. He was so sad. He narrated the experience to his wife and both of them wept.

The couple took utmost care that nothing should happen to their son. In his seventh year it so happened that the father hunted down a wild boar. He brought it home. The father got ready to cut the meat. The son, seeing wild boar for the first time, came with full admiration and ran his hands all over the body of the animal including its shiny teeth. One of the sharp teeth cut the finger of the child. The poison spread all over his body and died in few hours time. The parents mourned for him for several days. He was already predestined by the spirits of the trees seven years ago.

Lesson: Whatever befell man, it is written on his forehead even before he was born. What is done cannot be undone.

11. The Faithful Horse and the Tree of death:

The king and his nobles went for hunting into the woods far away from the palace. Their provision got over. They were tired and hungry. They hunted for water at least to quench their thirst. The king was offered first chance. His horse was wise and intelligent. Through its instinct it knew that the water was poisonous and so it prevented the king from drinking the water. The king made several attempt but futile. He could not understand the action of the horse. He got furious and in his furiousness he ordered his body guard to slaughter his horse. Sensing the danger, the horse drank the water and died in no time. The king regretted and wept for his faithful horse.

As the troop was returning they caught a parrot/parakeet. The king put one man in charge of the Parakeet to teach language. The bird managed in no time. It was an amusement for all the children of the nobles to see a talking bird. It was also used to carry letters from one place to another. In one of its expeditions a wise man gave the life giving fruit to the

parakeet. The old man wanted his Majesty and the parakeet to live young forever. The old man instructed the parakeet that the fruit was to be shared between it and the King.

On its way back it had to spend the night on the tree. It kept the fruit on the branch before going to bed. At midnight a snake came and sucked away the essence of the fruit that was to generate life eternal and injected its venom into the fruit (this is similar to a Babylonian myth).

The next day the bird picked up the fruit into its beak and made off for the palace and gave the fruit to the king with the message it was told to give. The king did not trust the message. The fruit was administered to a crow. The crow died on the spot. The king thought that the parakeet also was part of the evil plot. The king ordered the soldier to kill the bird. After killing it was buried and from the spot grew a healthy fruit bearing tree. Within two years the tree bore bumper crop. The king issued a decree that no body may eat the fruit of the tree. It was called the 'Tree of Death'.

Away from the palace there lived an old couple. They were tired of their lives. They wanted to end their lives but did not know how to end their lives. One day a group of cowherds came their way. The old couple told them that they want to die. They requested the cowherds to kill them. But the men refused to kill the aged couple. Instead of killing they told the couple about the 'Tree of Death'. They request the men to pluck the fruit and bring it for them the following day.

The following day, the cowmen brought the fruits and gave them to the couple. The couple dressed themselves, ate their meal, embraced each other and ate the fruits. They were prepared to die. They went to bed. The next day they found themselves alive. They became young and energetic.

The cowmen came to see what had become of the couple. They saw a young man and a young beautiful lady sitting at the corridor of the raged house. They could not believe their eyes. The couple told them about the magical fruit they ate. In joy the cowmen came and spread the news to everyone. It came to the hearing of the king himself. He felt so sorry about his parakeet.

Lesson: power cannot destroy truth because truth is power itself and one should not be hasty when taking decision. A truly loyal person can not turn disloyal at once for no reason. Hence, take time and plan well.

12. The Suspicious Father and the Son:

Once upon a time there lived a widower in a village. He had an only son. The father and the son sold fire-wood to the market daily and made their living. It so happened one day that there was a heavy rain. The father and the son were forced to take shelter in the next village. A widow welcomed them into her house. She had an only daughter.

The widow and the widower had the same fate and so were their children. They decided that their children should marry each other. The boy and the girl were told of the plan. They too liked each other. They eventually fell in love.

In the following winter they were married. This young girl had a gift. She could communicate with animals and birds. Her gift was to be activated only after marriage and so it was.

One mid-night she woke up with the sound of howling Jackal. The Jackal told her that there was a dead woman adorned with her jewels being carried by the water current. She was told to go and take the jewel for herself. She got up and did the work for herself. But she did not tell of her riches to her husband.

The following night she heard the croaking frog. The frog told her that there was a pot of golden coins in a hole. It was guarded by a snake. She should kill the snake and take the pot of golden coins for herself. She did that and in no time the family became rich. The husband grew suspicious. How could they become rich suddenly? The son told his father about all this sudden fortune. Both the father and the son thought that she must have been prostituting herself by night. The father told his son to take back the girl to her mother.

The following day the son escorted his wife to her mother. On their way, the wife told him about her gifts and the way she got those riches. The husband was so happy. He begged pardon and both of them made their way back home.

On the way the husband felt the urge of going for his second call. He told his wife to go ahead. He would catch her soon. The wife reached home earlier to the son. The father thought that the daughter-in-law had killed her son. He took knife cut her to pieces without asking her the reason. When the son reached home he saw the pieces of his wife. The son told the father about the gifted woman. The father and the son repented. They became all the poorer. They went back to their old same trade, slogging themselves day and night for a morsel of bread.

Lesson: suspicion is disastrous. It is the result of mistrust and lack of confidence in each other. It ruins the marital love between husband and wife. Therefore, transparency, mutual trust in each other, loyalty and fidelity ward of suspicion.

13. The Cunning Dog and the Foolish Fox:

Once upon a time there live a cunning dog and the foolish fox. They grew fond of each other by night. One day the fox asked the dog the secret of its fatness and the mystery of the leather color belt. The dog replied that its master always gave it only meat and fish. It had abundance of milk to drink in place of water. The master kept him chain by day and released him by night. The greedy fox wanted to become like the dog in stature.

The fox requested the dog that they should exchange their habitat just for a day. The dog was longing for liberation. Now that the chance had come it immediately consented to the request of the fox.

The fox was tied but never got fish or meat. The dog never returned back to be chained. The fox was not freed. It became all the thinner day by day.

Lesson: Greed puts one on the death trap. One needs to tame one's greed.

14. The Parrot and the Jackal:

Once upon a time there lived a cunning jackal. It loved to decorate itself with shells of snails. It used to make garland with shells of snail and go about asking others whether the garland suited him or not.

One day he asked the same question to a parrot. He noticed that the parrot was laying her eggs. Everyday he would frequent her nest with an evil design but the mother parrot never left her nest.

With the passage of time the mother parrot hatched out her young ones. She would feed them well and taught them how to hunt food for themselves and how to fly up in the air. Meanwhile she would plead the cunning fox that he can eat her chicks when they grow fat and strong. That day never came. The mother and her young ones flew away to their safety place leaving their sickly little sister.

When the fox came he found only the bonny and sickly little parrot. It was about to put the little bird into its mouth when he heard the sound of cry. The little parrot pleaded that she was freezing cold and was sickly. She requested the fox to put her into his palm so that with the sun's heat she may become strong. He could eat her then.

The fox consented to the pack and put the little bird on his palm to get warmth of the sun. The little bird indeed grew stronger and without a warning she flew away into the air leaving its dung on the palm of the cunning but stupid fox. He licked the dung and said that the dung was so tasty. He wondered to himself what would be the taste of the flesh of that little but wise parrot.

Lesson: It is wisdom that makes one prosperous and not physical appearance

General Conclusion:

The Lamkang tribe has thus a rich folklore but yet to develop more. Much of the myth needs to be made more scientific. There is more room therefore for younger generation to ponder and propound so that it is enrich more and more that would finally make the Lamkang mythical history into real history.

This treaty is only bait thrown to all Lamkang young minds of the present and future generation. This should be a launching pad on which richer thoughts would finally culminate into a richer history.

Many thinking minds may not agree to all that is critiqued here. That is what I wanted to bring out. Let there be no refutation for the sake of refutation but a refutation with a solid reasoning founded on scientific reasoning.

I am grateful to all intellectual giants who play much role towards the birth of this booklet. I saw seed today for tomorrow fruit.