

Gazetteer of India

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

EAST KAMENG WEST KAMENG
AND TAWANG DISTRICTS



GAZETTEER OF INDIA

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ARUNACHAL PRADESH DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

EAST KAMENG WEST KAMENG AND TAWANG DISTRICTS

**Edited by
S. Dutta Choudhury
Former Editor**

GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

1996

GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Price:

Compiled by Ramendra Narayan Bagchi,
Compiler (Gazetteers), Arunachal Pradesh

Published by the State Editor (Gazetteers), Gazetteers Department, Government of
Arunachal Pradesh, Shillong.

Cover-design and art-work by : The Statesman Commercial Printing Press
4, Chowringhee Square, Calcutta - 700 001

Printed by : The Statesman Commercial Printing Press, Calcutta - 700 001

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GAZETTEERS DEPARTMENT

Government of Arunachal Pradesh



राज भवन
इटानगर-७५११११
RAJ BHAVAN
ITANAGAR - 791111

January 12, 1995

FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to present the East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang Districts Gazetteer, last in the series of District Gazetteers, to the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

As a repository of information on all important aspects relating to a particular district and its people, giving details of their history, culture, growth of administration and developmental activities etc, in a single volume, the value of District Gazetteer is immense. Since independence, Arunachal Pradesh has undergone tremendous change in socio, economic, cultural and political spheres. These changes are aptly reflected in the Gazetteers.

I hope the present volume will also maintain its status and importance as a valuable document concerning the district to which it relates, and serve as a reference book for the inquisitive readers, research-scholars, social scientists and administrators.

(Mata Prasad)



GUIDE TO SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION OF SOME PLACES RIVER AND OTHER NAMES

(Based on Survey of India List of Names)

<u>For</u>	<u>Read</u>
Pakke - Kessang	Pākke Kessāng
Lada	Lāda
Chyangtajo	Chyāng Tājo
Bameng	Bāmeng
Para river	Pāra River
Pachi river	PĀCHI R
Pacha river	Pācha R
Papu river	Pāpu R
Pake river	Pākke R
Bargang river	Bargāng R
Ghiladhari river	Giladhāri N
Dirang	Dirāng
Kalaktang	Kalaktāng
Bhalukpong	Bhālukpong
Sangti Chu	Sangti Ri
Buragaon	Burāgaon
Zemithang	Zimithāng

PREFACE

The present volume is the fifth and the last in the series of Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers. With the promulgation of Arunachal Pradesh (Reorganisation of Districts) Act, 1980 (Act No.3 of 1980) from June 1, 1980, the Kameng District has been divided into two new districts — East Kameng District and West Kameng District. Again under the provisions of the Arunachal Pradesh (Reorganisation of Districts) Second Amendment Act, 1984 (Act No.7 of 1984) coming into force from October 6, 1984, the Tawang Sub-division of the West Kameng District was constituted as a separate unit for administration known as the Tawang District. This volume covers all the three districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang. The draft Gazetteer was seen by the Members of the Advisory Board for Arunachal Pradesh Gazetteers and sent to the different concerned Ministries of the Government of India and Survey of India in October, 1986 for their scrutiny, observations and clearance for publication.

Most of the concerned Ministries and Survey of India conveyed their clearance for publication earlier. The Ministry of Home Affairs, however, conveyed their final clearance for publication of the Gazetteer in December, 1992. The draft was modified in conformity with the observations and suggestions of the concerned Ministries of the Government of India and Survey of India.

The Gazetteer of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang Districts is the first of its kind. There is no earlier Gazetteer of these districts which could be revised. The old volumes of the Assam District Gazetteer, namely B.C. Allen's Lakhimpur District Gazetteer published in 1905 and the Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Track Gazetteers brought out in 1928 are, however, our important sources.

The present volume comprises statistical data up to the year 1983-84, and a good deal of important information ranging from early times to the recent past has been incorporated in it. However, some additional statistical and census figures concerning developmental activities of the Development Departments have also been appended upto the year 1990-91.

I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my deep gratitude to Shri Mata Prasad, Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, who has kindly written the foreword of this Gazetteer.

My heartfelt gratitude is due to Shri Gegong Apang, Chief Minister, Shri Dera Natung, formerly Minister of Information and Public Relation and Tourism, Arunachal Pradesh and to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and Chairman of the Advisory Board and to the Secretary (Gazetteers) Government of Arunachal Pradesh, for kind and continuous interest they took in the Gazetteers work.

I am grateful to the Members of the Advisory Board for Arunachal Pradesh Gazetteer for their valuable suggestions and comments. My sincerest thanks are due to all the connected organisations including Government departments and private institutions and to many officers of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh for their help and active cooperation.

For the valuable and important reports on Geology, flora, fauna and Climatology, I am thankful respectively to the then Officers-in-charge, Geological Survey of India, Arunachal Pradesh Circle, Botanical Survey of India, Eastern Circle, Eastern Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India and to the India Meteorological Department.

My sincere thanks are due to Shri A. K. Paul, Deputy Director and to Shri K. J. Pandit, Senior Artist of the Directorate of Census operations, Arunachal Pradesh, Shillong for the personal care taken by them to prepare the maps for Gazetteers.

The original draft volume of the Gazetteer was compiled by Shri Ramendra Narayan Bagchi, Compiler, and Edited by my predecessor Shri S. Dutta Chaudhury. I made some unavoidable additions and alterations wherever necessary in the final stage.

I would express my hearty thanks to all of my colleagues, the officers and staff members of Gazetteers Department particularly to Shri C. K. Shyam and Shri K. Ghosh, Compilers for their assistance in checking and rechecking the draft volume in different stages.

Shillong.
The 20th March, 1996.

R. N. Bagchi
State Editor (Gazetteers)
Arunachal Pradesh

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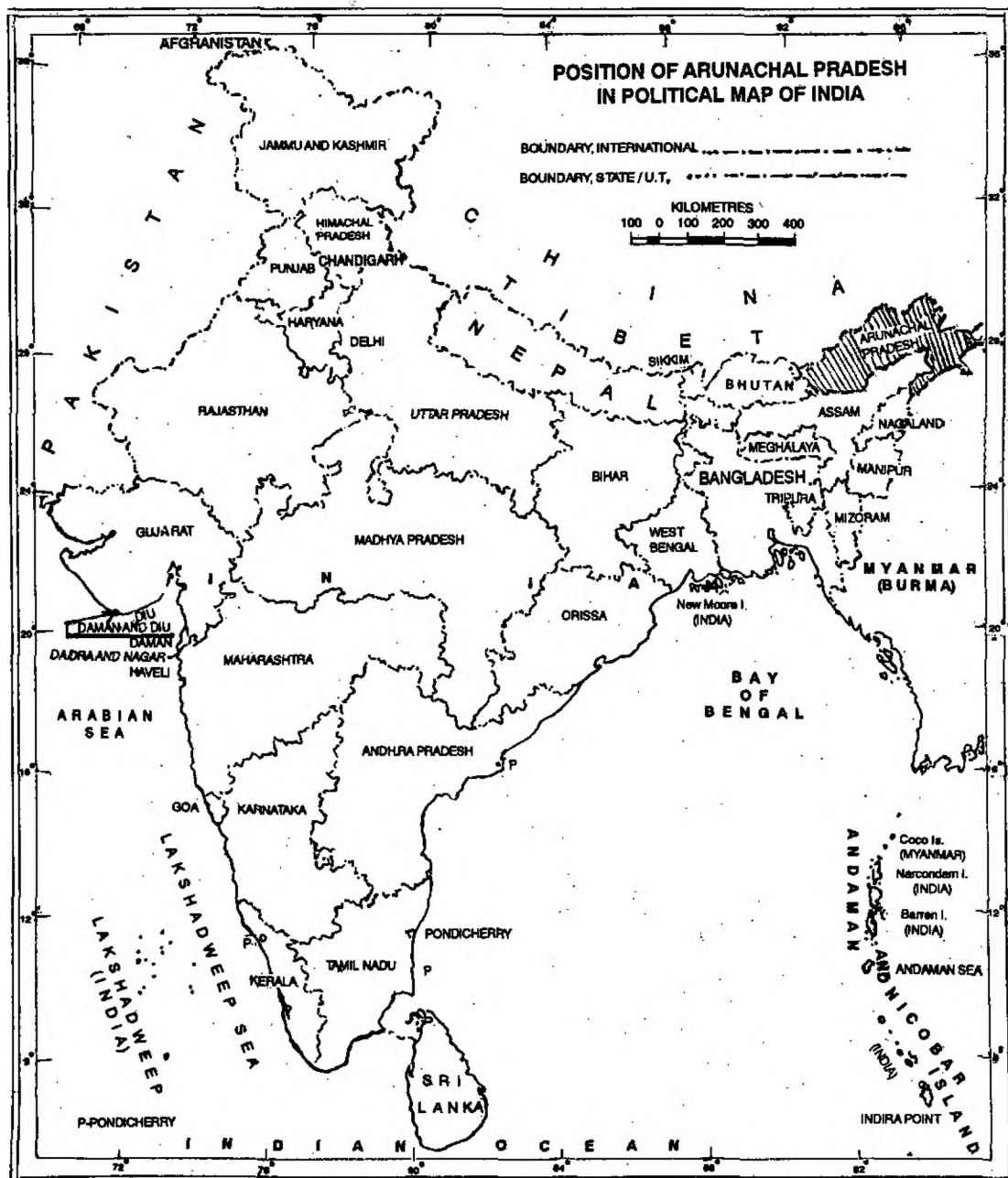
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Based upon Survey of India map with the permission of the Surveyor General of India
The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles
measured from the appropriate base line.
The boundary of Meghalaya shown on this map is as interpreted from the North-eastern
Areas (Reorganisation) Act, but has yet to be verified.
The administrative headquarters of Chandigarh, Haryana and Punjab are at Chandigarh.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Origin of the Names of the Districts and their Formation as Administrative Units

The East Kameng and West Kameng districts of Arunachal Pradesh (formerly North-East Frontier Agency or NEFA in short) have commonly derived their names from the Kameng, the principal river of this region. The Kameng, also known in its lower course as Bhareli, rises in the remote northern part of East Kameng district. Flowing almost due south it takes a sharp westerly and then southerly turn to delineate the boundary between the two districts of East Kameng and West Kameng in the lower region and merge with the Brahmaputra in the plains of Assam.

The Tawang District was formed in October 1984 by carving out certain areas from the West Kameng District. The district derives its name from its principal river the Tawang chu.

In 1914, the areas now known as East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts formed a part of the administrative unit called Western Sector, North-East Frontier Tract under the charge of a Political Officer with headquarters at Charduar. In 1919, this unit was renamed as the Balipara Frontier Tract, which was divided in 1946 for administrative convenience into the Se-La Sub-Agency and the Subansiri Area. According to the North-East Frontier Areas (Administration) Regulation, 1954, the Balipara Frontier Tract was bifurcated into two separate units of administration known as the Kameng Frontier Division and the Subansiri Frontier Division. In 1965, the former was renamed as the Kameng District and the Political Officer of the erstwhile division was redesignated as Deputy Commissioner. Finally, under the provisions of the Arunachal Pradesh (Reorganisation of Districts) Act, 1980 (Act No. 3 of 1980) taking effect from June 1, 1980, the Kameng District was divided into two new administrative units, namely the East Kameng District and the West Kameng District each under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner. Then again another new administrative unit named Tawang District under a Deputy Commissioner was created with certain areas taken from the West Kameng District, as already mentioned, under the provisions of the Arunachal Pradesh (Reorganisation of Districts) Second Amendment Act, (Act No. 7 of 1984) coming into force from October 6, 1984.¹

Location, General Boundaries, Area and Population

The traditional and customary boundary of India in the Eastern Sector obtained added sanction under the Indo-Tibetan Agreement of 24-25 March, 1914.

East Kameng

The East Kameng District with its headquarters at Seppa is bounded on the north by the Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh and a small portion of the international

1. See Chapter II for a detailed account of the history of administrative policy and developments.

boundary adjoining Tibet (China), on the east by the Lower Subansiri District, on the south by the Sonitpur District of Assam and on the west by the West Kameng District.

The district occupies an area of 4,134 sq.km¹ lived by 50,238 persons of whom 25,553 are males and 24,685 females according to the Census of 1991. The density of population per sq.km is 12 persons. The decennial growth rate of population from 1971 to 1981 is about 21.64 per cent and from 1981 to 1991 is about 17.55 per cent.

West Kameng

The West Kameng District with its headquarters at Bomdila is the westernmost part of Arunachal Pradesh.

The district is bounded by Tibet (China) and the Tawang District on the north, by the East Kameng District on the east, by the Darrang District of Assam on the south and by Bhutan on the west.

The district covers an area of 7,422 sq. km inhabited by 56,402 souls of whom 30,942 are males and 25,460 females according to the 1991 Census. The population density per sq. km. is about 7 persons. The decennial growth rate of population including that of Tawang from 1971 to 1981 is about 23.75 per cent. The decennial growth rate of population of West Kameng from 1981 to 1991 is about 35.69 per cent.

Tawang

The Tawang District with its headquarters at Tawang lies in the extreme western corner of Arunachal Pradesh.

The district is bounded by Tibet (China) on the north, by the West Kameng District on the east, by Bhutan and the West Kameng District on the south and by Bhutan on the west.

The district covers an area of 2,172 sq. km. with a population of 27,574 persons of whom 15,292 are males and 12,282 females according to the Census of 1991. The density of population per sq. km. is about 13 persons. The decennial growth rate of population from 1981 to 1991 is about 26.86 per cent.

Sub-divisions and Circles

East Kameng District

For administrative purposes, the East Kameng District is divided into two sub-divisions, namely Seppa (*Sadar*) and Chayangtajo, which are further divided into a total of eight administrative circles. The sub-divisions are each in charge of an Extra Assistant Commissioner and the circles are each under a Circle Officer.

Seppa

The Seppa (*Sadar*) Sub-division with Seppa as the district as well as sub-divisional headquarters occupies the central and southern parts of the district. It is divided into five circles—Seppa, Pakke-Kessang, Pipu, Lada and Seijosa.

The population of 26,938 persons of the sub-division is almost wholly constituted by the Bangnis.

1. The area figures of the districts shown in this chapter are provisional.

Chayangtajo

The Chayangtajo Sub-division with Chayangtajo as its headquarters lies in the northern part of the district. It has three cricles — Chayangtajo, Bameng and Khenewa.

The Bangnis form the bulk of the sub-divisional population of 15,798 persons. The area is also inhabited by the Sulungs and Bangros.

West Kameng District

The West Kameng District is for administrative purposes consists of two sub-divisions, namely Bomdila (*Sadar*) and Nafra-Buragaon, which are again divided into a total of six administrative circles. The sub-divisions are each in charge of an Extra Assistant Commissioner and the circles are each under a Circle Officer.

Bomdila

The Bomdila (*Sadar*) Sub-division with Bomdila as the headquarters of both the district and the sub-division spreads over the northern, southern and western parts of the district. The sub-division is divided into four circles — Bomdila, Kalaktang, Dirang and Bhalukpong.

The Monpas, Sherdukpens and Khowas form the mass of the sub-divisional population of 33,538 persons.

Nafra-Buragaon

The Nafra-Buragaon Sub-division with Thrizino as its headquarters extends over the entire eastern and north-eastern parts of the district. It has two circles — Nafra and Thrizino.

The population of 8,029 persons of the sub-division is constituted mainly by the Akas and Mijis. The Monpas also form a segment of the population.

Tawang District

The Tawang District comprises two sub-divisions, namely Tawang and Lumla for administrative convenience. The sub-divisions are divided into a total of five administrative circles, the former being each under the charge of an Extra Assistant Commissioner, while the latter each under a Circle Officer.

Tawang

The sub-division of Tawang with Tawang as the district as well as sub-divisional headquarters occupies the eastern part of the district. Its constituent three circles are Tawang, Mukto and Thingbu.

The Monpas form almost the whole of the sub-divisional population of 14,563.

Lumla

The Lumla Sub-division with Lumla as its headquarters lies in the western part of the district. It consists of two circles, Lumla and Zemithang.

The sub-division is inhabited by the Monpas, and the population is 7,172.

Topography

Mountains are the most imposing feature of topography of Kameng comprising the three districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang. The total area of 13,728 sq. km. covered by these districts is entirely a tangle of hills and mountains save some strips of comparatively level ground along the foothills belt and patches of plain land in the river valleys.

The Kameng region is the east-north-eastward extension of the Bhutan Himalaya. The 10 to 20 km width of Sub-Himalayan tract is made up of east-west to east-north-east: west-south-west Tertiary (siwalik) ranges rising to altitudes from about 1,500 metres to 2,000 metres. There are longitudinal but ill defined 'Dun' type of valleys particularly to the east of Kameng (Bhareli) river. The lesser Himalayan ranges of Arunachal Pradesh to the north of the Sub-Himalayan belt lie broadly east-north-east: west-south-west adjacent to Bhutan, almost east-west in the middle part of the region, swinging to a east-northeasterly direction further eastward. The Kameng river cutting across this terrain receives the eastward flowing waters of the Bichom and Tenga rivers and the westward flowing Papu, Pacha and other rivers. To the north of this lower Himalayan terrain, the country is rugged and through numerous north-south ridges joins the east-north-east: west-south-west Great Himalayan range known for towering peaks, such as the Gorichen (6,538 m or 21,445 ft) and Kangto (7,090 m or 23,255 ft). The Kangto is the highest peak in Arunachal Pradesh. In the north-western corner of this region beyond the Se La pass (4,267 m or about 14,000 ft) is the Tawang valley, the drainage of which flows into Bhutan.

RIVER SYSTEM

Most of the rivers of Kameng take rise in the northern and eastern highlands of this region. According to the fall of hill-slope, the rivers descend down from north to south, but those originating from the eastern heights of the East Kameng District take a east-west course and the others from the western elevation of the West Kameng District flow in a west-east course. Almost all these rivers merge with the Kameng river (called Bhareli in its lower course), which form the main drainage. The Kameng with its many tributaries finally loses itself in the great river the Brahmaputra. The rivers of this region are not all large, but most of them are torrential and turbulent. They are usually not navigable, because of their deep rocky gorges and innumerable rapids. During the rainy season, they rise in spate and sometimes overflow their banks, when the rushing water sweeps through the roads, wash away temporary bridges and disrupt the lines of communications.

Kameng (Bhareli): The artery of the river system is the Kameng. The head-water of the river rising from the remote northern mountain ranges of the East Kameng District is fed by a number of affluents. Near Bameng it widens and flows due south up to Seppa. Then in a winding west-south-west-south course it descends into the plains of Assam, where it meets the Brahmaputra about eleven kilometres east of Tezpur. "The gorge through which the river makes its way is of great natural beauty. The hills covered with forest rise steeply from the water's edge, and the noble river hurries on over its rocky bed,

now dashing down a rapid and foaming and boiling round a sunken rock, and anon lingering in still deep pools where the mahseer love to lie".¹

In its course through the East Kameng District, the Kameng river receives many tributaries, of which the Bichom is a major river. The other notable tributaries are Pake, Pachock, Para, Pachi, Pacha and Papu.

Bichom: the Bichom river, called Humschu by the Akas, rises from the Himalayan watershed in the extreme north-east corner of the West Kameng District. Flowing tortuously due south and passing through the Miji and Aka hills it takes an eastward course. The Bichom is fed by its two major tributaries — the Tamapu chu and the Tenga rivers, before it joins the Kameng. This river is fordable for the greater part of the year.

Tamapu chu: The river Tamapu chu takes rise from the Orka La range and runs along many important Monpa villages of the Dirang and Bomdila circles. Near Dirang the river is fed by Sangti chu, a stream that descends from the north, and thence flows eastward until it meets the Bichom river in the Aka hills. The confluence of these two rivers is known as the Digien river.

Tenga (Tenga chu): The river Tenga originates in the south-western region of the West Kameng District. It flows eastward, and drains mainly the Kalaktang circle.

Tawang chu: The Tawang chu is the principal river of the north-western region of the West Kameng District. The river takes rise from the mountain range of the north beyond Se La and flows westwardly through the Tawang and Lumla sub-divisions into Bhutan. Many important villages of these two sub-divisions stand on the bank of this river and its tributaries.

Besides these rivers, a number of other rivers notably the Burai, Bargang, Ghiladhari, Gabharu and Belsiri originating from the hills of Kameng flow down to the plains of Assam.²

Lakes and Springs

There are some famous lakes in the Thangabe region of the Tawang District. Near Hathongla lies the basin of Thangabe at a very high altitude which is ringed on three sides by towering cliffs of black granite. Among the lakes of this basin, the Guisang lake is considered to be the most sacred. Another placid natural lake is situated amidst lofty mountains on the way to Tawang. There are two natural lakes on the Se La pass.

The Tawang region has also some hot springs.

GEOLOGY

On the basis of the geological work carried out till 1984 in the East and West Kameng and Tawang districts the litho-tectonic succession (from north to south) established for the erstwhile Kameng District is indicated in the following table. It is more or less same in the three districts.

1. B.C. Allen, Assam District Gazetteers, Vol.V, Darrang (1905), p.6.

2. See N.C.Dutta (ed), Assam District Gazetteers, Darrang District, (Gauhati, 1978), pp. 20-23.

NORTH

Unit Se La Group		Lithology	Age
		High grade schist and gneisses, migmatites granite, pegmatite, etc.,	Archaean
		Thrust	
Bomdila Group	Dirang Formation	Quartzite, phyllite, schist, crystalline, limestone and graphitic schist with conglomerate & amphibolite.	Pre-cambrian
	Bomdila : Gneiss	Augen and streaky gneisses, biotite gneiss with amphibolite and pegmatite	
		Thrust	
Tenga Group	Buxa Formation :	Dolomite-quartzite - phyllite schist sequence	
		Fault	Lower
	Tenga Formation :	Quartzite, phyllite and low grade schist.	Palaeozoic
		Thrust	
Miri Formation		Pink and purple quartzite (ripple marked) with green to grey phyllite with volcanics and conglomerate.	Devonian
		Thrust	
Bichom Group	Bichom/ Salari Formation :	Quartzite, dark grey phyllite, slates, conglomerate with	Permo-Carboniferous

GENERAL

7

		fossil bryozoa, lamelli branches and brachiopods. Volcanics, Volcanoclastics and tuff.	
	Takachin Formation :		
		Thrust	
Gondwana Group	Khelong Formation :	Sandstone, carbonaceous shales and slates with occasional coal bands. Plant fossils like <i>Clossopteris</i> , <i>Vertebraria</i> , etc.	Permian
	Bhareli Formation	Feldspathic grey sandstone, carbonaceous shales with coaly matter.	
		Fault	
Kimi Formation :	Quartzite and lateritised trap, sandstone, shale and siltstone.	Pre-Tertiary ? Triassic ?	
		Thrust	
Siwalik Group	Kimin Formation :	Conglomerate, sandstone, clay and siltstone.	
	Subansiri Formation :	Coarse to medium grained micaceous sandstone, concretionary nodules, siltstone.	Lower Miocene to Pleistocene
	Dafla Formation	Massive, medium to fine grained sandstone, siltstone, clay and shale with coal fragments.	

Older to newer alluvium

Recent

SOUTH

Rocks of the East and West Kameng districts including Tawang have north-east: south-west (NE-SW) and east-north-east: west-south-west (ENE-WSW) strike in general on the west of Karangania, whereas on the east it changes to nearly north-west, south-east (NW-SE) and west-north-west: east-south-east (WNW-ESE). These rocks are complexly folded, faulted and thrust. The Precambrian rocks are structurally more complex in comparison to the Siwaliks and Gondwanas.

The Precambrian rocks cover more than 60% of the total area of the region comprising the three districts. Rocks of the Se La Group are exposed from little west of Dirang upto Se La and further north-west constituting the major part of the Tawang valley. Bomdilla Group of rocks form the major part of the lower Himalaya and show extensive distribution in the Digien valley, Bomdila ridge and far north around Bulu and Pankar.

Bomdila gneiss and the overlying Dirang formation are well exposed in Tenga area and from west of Kalaktang to Dirang and further north-east respectively. Tenga Group of rocks occur in both East and West Kameng districts. Buxa formation of Tenga Group is well exposed in Rupa-Shergaon area whereas the Tenga formation occurs in the south-west of Tenga and extends in the north-east direction through Dedza up to west of Pankar, from where it extends in south-east direction up to north of Takachin.

Miri formation is restricted to the north and west of Bana Rocks of the Bichom Group show best development in the lower reaches of the Bichom valley and extend as a narrow strip from Bhutan border in the west to the south of Bana in the Kameng river section through Buragaon and Karangania. These are also exposed as a thin zone near Takachin and near Salari in the Digien valley. Gondwana rocks occur as a narrow linear belt along the Himalayan foothills from Bhutan border in the west to the east of Takachin through Khuppi. The Siwalik Group of rocks from the Himalayan foothills trends nearly east west all along the southern part of the districts from Bhutan border in the west to the Lower Subansiri district in the east.

MINERAL OCCURRENCES

West Kameng including Tawang

Dolomite: Significant occurrences of dolomite are reported from the Rupa and Dedza areas. In the Dedza area, the dolomite is exposed on the left bank of Tenga river. It extends for a strike length of 1.5 km with average thickness of about 250 metres. Cao and Mgo contents are 30% and 20% respectively with very low insolubles (2%) and R_2O_3 (1%). The inferred reserves of dolomites in this area are 58 metric tonnes for a workable depth of 100 metres.

In the Rupa area, dolomite occurs in a vast area of about 36 sq.km Dolomite is of SMS and BF grades with Cao 29-30%, Mgo 20-21% and insolubles and R_2O_3 both less than 2%. A total of 185 metric tonnes of reserve has been estimated for an area of about 0.66 sq. km.

Coal: Both the Gondwanas and the Tertiaries, it is reported contain coal. Tertiary coals are generally in the form of lenticular to irregular streaks or pockets of shining black coal and carbonised to semi-carbonised lignite to peat. Two samples analysed show 16.02 - 18.10% moisture, 6.0 to 7.09% ash, 46.39 to 50.18% volatile matter and 30.06 to 31.02% fixed carbon.

Inconsistent coal seams intercalated with sandstone and shale occur in Gondwanas near Amatulla, in the Bhairabkund and Belsiri river sections and in Pinjoli nala. Their thickness varies from a few centimetres to 3 metres or more.

Sulphide Mineralisation: Specks and disseminations of pyrite, pyrrhotite and chalcopyrite occur along foliation and minor shear planes in the black carbonaceous phyllite of the Bichom Group on the Bomdila-Bhalukpong road section near Sessa.

Specks and stringers of pyrite, chalcopyrite, etc. are noted in the sheared schist about 2 km west of Dirang in the road section.

Marble: In Dirang, a thin zone of marble is located on the left bank of Digien river and in the road section which continues further southward. Chemical analysis of sample gave CaO —54.59%, insoluble — 1.42% and R_2O_3 —0.74%.

Quartzite: White quartzite occurs in association with hard and compact quartzite band in the Rupa area. White quartzite physically appears to be pure and may be used in glass industry.

Galena: Specks of lead mineralisation in association with phyllite are found near Gacham village in the Rupa area. Thick coating of magnetite and galena associated with marble is also located at about 2 km upstream of Rinkhe nala east of Gacham.

Asbestos: Three metre wide vein of chrysotile variety of asbestos has been found in association with dyke of ultrabasic rock near Gamra La.

East Kameng

Iron ore: Two bands of Iron ore have been located near the Bana and Pichang areas of East Kameng District.

The ore found near Bana ($27^{\circ}17'00''$: $92^{\circ}52'45''$ —33 A/15) is approximately 200 metres in width and 2 km in length and occurs within slate and slaty phyllite unit of Bichom formation of the Bichom Group. Its analysis showed Fe_2O_3 : 63.53% and SiO_2 : 31.26%.

Iron ore band near Pichang ($27^{\circ}19'15''$: $92^{\circ}49'30''$ -83A/15) is 10 metres wide and 1.5 km long. Ore zone occurs within schistose quartzite unit of Tenga formation of the Tenga Group. The Ore has shown Fe_2O_3 : 72.79% and SiO_2 : 22.81%.

Limestone: Near 53 km stone on Nechuphu-Seppa road a compact limestone band of a thickness of about 25 metres is well exposed. Chemical analysis of a few samples shows CaO —25.77 to 52.94%, MgO —0.10 to 17.22% insolubles —4.90 to 37.94% and R_2O_3 —14.0 to 5.14%.

Sulphide Mineralisation: Conspicuous coating of azurite and malachite in sheared schistose gneiss has been observed near 88 km stone from Nechuphu on Nechuphu-Seppa road.

A few boulders containing base metal mineralisation were seen near Pachi camp north of Seppa.

FLORA

With the establishment of the Eastern Circle of the Botanical Survey of India with headquarters at Shillong in the year 1956, botanical operations in various parts of Arunachal Pradesh have been intensified. Till the middle of 1981 the western half of Kameng was better explored than other parts of this territory. But there are areas in western Kameng which are still *terra incognita* botanically.

The southern parts of the Kameng region receive a heavy rainfall of more than 400 cm per annum both from South-West and North-East monsoons. the average relative humidity varies from 75 to 95 per cent. The average maximum and minimum temperatures vary considerably with altitude. The terrain is of high hills and deep valleys, all of which are covered by a thick forest of tall trees and impenetrable evergreen shrubs and herbs intertwined by various twiners. Many such forests have been cleared off for jhuming (shifting cultivation).

It is difficult to split up the area into well defined phytogeographic regions, and fix clear-cut demarcation of vegetation owing to the richness of the components of the flora. There is much of overlapping and commingling of floristic elements under the influence of elevations, general topography and rainfall. Nevertheless, in general, the following types of vegetation can be observed in Kameng.

The tropical evergreen forests along the foothills of Bhairabkund and Bhalukpong is quite dense. The forests are characterised by dense vegetation, chiefly comprising tall evergreen tree species like *Dipterocarpus*, *Artocarpus*, *Tetrameles*, *Altingia*, *Bombax*, *Chukrasia*, *Meusa*, *Phoebe*, *Daubanga*, *Eugenia*, *Dillenia* mixed with bamboos, *Pandanus*, climbing canes and tree-ferns like *Cyathea gigantia*, forming impenetrable thickets with an altitudinal range upto 900 metre.

The sub-tropical evergreen forest or mixed forest forms an intermediate stage combining both tropical and temperate species and covering an altitudinal range of 900 to 1800 metres. These forests are dominated by species of *Ficus*, *Castanopsis*, *Callicarpa* in the lower ridges and *Sisni* and *Schima*, *Castanopsis*, *Engelhardtia* in the higher ridges as in the Kalaktang area. Most of the trees are very old and usually they attain a height of 30 to 35 metres. *Pinus wallichiana* mixed with *Rhododendron arboreum*, *Lyonia*, *Berberis*, *Quercus* and members of *Rosaceae* along the Rupa valley is predominant.

The temperate forests are confined to elevation ranging from 1800 to 3500 metres. They are found chiefly in Piri La, Bomdi La, Senge Jang, Tawang valley and Dirang valley. Species of *Rhododendron* and *Magnolia campbellii* mixed with *Quercus* spp. and conifers like *Taxus baccata*, *Tsuga dumosa* are common. The valleys of Kalaktang, Rupa, Tenga, Rehung and Dirang are mostly identical in floristic composition, where *Pinus wallichiana* mixed with *Rhododendron arboreum*, *Quercus griffithii*, *Populus ciliata*, *Lyonia ovalifolia*, *Alnus nepalensis* and also another conifer *Cupressus tortoss* is the most dominant species. These valleys are natural abodes of Orchids. Along the upper slopes of Bomdi La and Bum La the vegetation is mixed with bamboos like *Chimnobambusa callosa*, *Cephalostachyum capitatum*.

The sub-alpine vegetation gradually emerges from the temperate type and covers lower Sela area, hill slopes above Tawang valley, Mago area and Jang valley at an altitude of 3500 to 4500 metres. *Abies densa* is the dominant conifer mixed with other conifers like *Tsuga dumosa*. *Taxus baocata*, *Larix griffithiana* and a good variety of small trees and shrubby species of *Rhododendron*, *Berberis*, *Rosa*, *Cotoneaster gualtheria* etc. This range

of altitude favours the growth of herbaceous species of *Anemone*, *Aconitum*, *Cassiope*, *Primula*, *Potentilla*, *Pedicularis*, *Macanopsis*, *Coridalis* etc., as small, sometimes stunted, clumps. Towards Sela, about an altitude of 4200 metres, trees gradually disappear, and the rocky slopes are covered with low stunted bushes of *Juniperus Wallichiana* mixed with *Rhododendron anthopogon*, *R. lepidatum* and species of *Cassiope*, *Berberis*, *Sedum*, *Rheum* etc. on the moss and lichen covered boulders.

With the rise of altitude from 4500 to 5500 metres, the vegetation changes from sub-alpine to alpine. Hill-slopes around Bumla, Pangchen, Chuna and Tawang are marked by typical alpine type of vegetation consisting of few herbaceous species of *Rheum*, *Arenaria*, *Saussurea*, *Festuca* mixed with bushes of *Rhododendron anthopogon* and *R. nivale*.

This part of Arunachal Pradesh contains a great wealth of plants of horticultural, medicinal and economic value. The intensive survey work carried out by the Botanical Survey of India have brought to light many species such as *Oberonia sulcata*, *Petasites kamengicus*, *Rhynchoglossum lazulinum*, *Aneilema glanduliferus*, *Robus ghanakantus* and varieties like *Smilax, griffithii* var. *borii*, *Bulbophyllum brachypodium* var. *geei* which were not previously known to the botanical world. There are, however, records of elements, namely *Anemone rupestris* (previously from Nepal and Sikkim), *Caltha palustris* (Kashmir-Sikkim), *Ranunculus brotherusi* var. *dasycarpus* (Sikkim), *Cardamine scoriaram* (Yunnan Burma), *Primula euosma* (Burma), *Abies delavagi* (Szechuan), *Picea brachytyla* (Yunn-W. Suechnan) and *Zeylanidium olivaceum* (Deccan Peninsula), which were previously reported from distant regions.

Like other parts of Arunachal Pradesh the Kameng region is prolific in many epiphytic and terrestrial orchids of surpassing horticultural value. Of the 1300 species of orchids reported from India, about 600 species belong to the north-eastern region. Here one can easily bag more than 100 spp. belonging to many genera. Genera, such as *Dendrobium*, *Bulbophyllum*, *Coelogyne*, *Calanthe*, *Eria*, *Liparis*, *Cymbidium*, *Cirrhopetalum* with more than five spp. *Galeola falconeri*, a tall leafless saprophyte, attaining a height of 5 metres are found in abundance. *Paphiopedilum farianum*, the interesting lady's slipper orchid, is available in the valleys around Rupa. Many more orchids of horticultural and commercial value are likely to be discovered in course of intensive and planned explorations.

The valleys of Kalaktang, Rupa, Tenga, Dirang are the abodes of beautiful flowering trees and plants of horticultural value. More than 15 species of rhododendron with innumerable colour pattern associated with species of *Magnolia*, *Michelia*, *Hydrangia*, *Gualtheria*, *Buddelia* and Herbaceous species like *Primula*, *Saxifraga*, *Meconopsis*, *Corydalis*, *Hypericum*, *Begonia* etc. were found by the Botanical Survey of India in course of their preliminary survey.

The cultivated crops of this region grown on the cleared slopes of the hills are *Oryza sativa*, *Coix lacrymajobi*, *Eleusine coracana*, *Cajanus cajan*, *Ipomea batata*, *Dioscorea* spp. *Colocasia antiquorum* etc.

Over 76 spp. belonging to 65 genera of known medicinal virtues were collected. But they (from both lower and higher altitudes) need to be investigated further to find their percentage of active principles. *Fritillaria cernuosa*, known as *Yathu* to the local tribes, is recorded as a common plant growing in the Sela and Jhang valleys. The starchy corms are considered to be of high medicinal value by the local people who apply the crushed paste of the corms to relieve acute muscular pain. Some spp. of *Aconitum*, namely *A. luridum* (Bahongnamarpo) and *A. Palmatum* (Bahongnakarpo) used as poison, are abundant

in Langchen, Bumla, Mago areas. *Podophyllum emodi*, the well-known Indian medicinal plant was collected from Sela valley. It is hoped that an intensive search would give a lot of valuable information about the medicinal herbs and plants.

The forests also abound in a good number of dye and tan yielding species, such as *berberis aristata*, *Coriaria nepalensis*, *Symplocos theaefolia*, *Geranium nepalensis*, *Rubia cordifolia*, *Englhardtia spicata*, *Taxus baccata*, *Gallium mullugo*, *G. triflorum* etc. The roots of *Valeriana hardwickii* and *V. wallichii* yield perfumes.

The oil yielding plants grow wild in this region, among which *Camelia drupifera* seeds are very rich in non-drying oil of super quality and which is also used medicinally in Cochin-China. The species of *Cornus*, namely *C. macrophylla*, *C. sanguinea* *C. mascula* yield valuable commercial oil. Likewise the tiny seeds of *Cincus arvensis* yield large quantities of oil.

The timber wealth of Kameng is also immense. Plants like *Michelia excelsa*, *Pinus wallichiana*, *Quercus lamellosa*, *Q. griffithii*, *Taxus baccata*, *Acer campbellii* yield valuable timber for construction work, cabinet making, furniture etc. Over and above plants, such as *Dipterocarpus alatus*, *D. macro-carpus*, *Hopea shinkeng*, *Shorea assamica*, *Ailanthus grandis*, *Canarium bengalense*, *Agalia khasiana*, *Amoora wallichii*, *Aphanamixis polytachya*, *Toona ciliata* etc. are abundant.

Further botanical explorations in an intensive manner are absolutely necessary for determining the correct status of the climax vegetations of different altitudes and the predominant species of different stands.

FAUNA

Covered by the tropical and semi-tropical dense forests, the East Kameng and West Kameng districts provide an excellent habitat for a wide variety of wild life. The rich and varied fauna includes some rare species of animals. The following is an account of the recorded fauna of Kameng.

Mammalia

Among the carnivores, the leopard (*Panthera pardus* Linnaeus) is frequently met with. It is nocturnal in activity and hunts its prey at night. The jungle cat (*Felis chaus* Guldenstaedt) and the leopard cat (*Felis bengalensis* Kerr) are found in the forests. The large Indian civet (*Viverra zibetha* Linnaeus), the spotted linsang (*Prionodon pardicolor* Hodgson) and the common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* Pallas) are numerous. The jackal (*Canis aureus* Linnaeus) is often met with in low lands.

The Indian elephant (*Elephas maximus* Linnaeus) is common in areas covered with bamboo and sal trees.

The sambar (*Cervus unicolor* Kerr.) and the barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak* Zimmermann) are also found. The Indian bison (*Bos gaurus* Smith) is frequently met with. The Indian wild boar (*Sus Scrofa* Linnaeus) lives in the grassy and bushy jungles. Musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus* Linnaeus) and snow leopard (*Panthera uncia* Schreber) are found in the high altitudes. The State forest department had a proposal for setting up a National Park at a height of 3200 metres in an area of Kameng bordering Tibet for protection of the musk deer and snow leopard as well as other animals found in this region.

Among the primates, the Assamese macaque (*Macaca assamensis*) and the capped langur (*Presbytis pileatus* Blyth) are found in small or large troupes. They cause heavy damage to the crops.

The insectivores and rodents are quite common. Rats are not only a menace to crops, but they also spread various diseases. Among the rats, the long-tailed tree mouse (*Vandeleuris oleracea* Bennet), the long-toothed rat (*Dacnomys millardi* Thomas), the house rat (*Rattus rattus* Linnaeus), the Himalayan rat (*Rattus nitidus* Hodgson) and the white bellied rat (*Rattus niviventer* Hodgson) are the most common varieties. Different types of squirrels, namely the Pallas's squirrel (*Callosciurus erythraeus* Pallas), the Irrawaddy squirrel (*Callosciurus pygerythrus* Geoffroy), the giant flying squirrel (*Petaurista petaurista* Pallas) and the Malayan giant squirrel (*Ratufa bicolor* Sparrmann) are found.

The common three shrew (*Tupaia glis* Diard), the eastern mole (*Talpa Micrura* Hodgson), the house shrew (*Suncus murinus* Linnaeus) and the Burrowing Shrew (*Anourosorex squamipes* Milne-Edwards) are of common occurrence.

Various kinds of bats are also seen. The fruit bat (*Cynopterus sphinx* Vahl.), the Himalayan horse-shoe bat (*Rhinolophus perniger* [Hodgson]), the Indian pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus coromandra* Gray), the Indian pigmy pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus minimus* Wroughton) and the mustachioed bat (*Myotis muricola* Hodgson) are common. another variety occasionally seen is the Indian false vampire (*Megaderma lyra* Geoffroy), which is a blood sucking bat feeding on the small mammals.

Birds

In the lowland alluvial grassy and marshy areas several species of babblers, warblers and chats, such as the spotted babbler (*Pellorneum palustre*), the Assam babbler (*Pallorneum albigulare*), the red capped babbler (*Timalia pileata*), the marsh babbler (*Megalurus palustris*), the bush chat (*Saxicola torquata*) are found. In the perennial water reserve pockets, a variety of birds, namely coots, jacanas, teals, geese, sandpipers etc. are seen. The lowland and midmontane jungles having a dense mixed flora attract babblers, bulbuls, warblers, fly-catchers and so on. Some game birds, such as the jungle fowl (*Gallus gallus*), the black breasted kaleegee (*Lophura leucomelana*), the peacock pheasant (*Polyplectron bicalcaratum*), the hornbills (*Anthracoceros malabariensis*, *Berenicornis comatus*), the green pigeons (*Treron* Sp.) and the imperial pigeons (*Ducula enea*, *D. badia*) are commonly observed on fruiting groves. The much sought rare white winged-wood duck (*Cairina scutulata*) are sometimes accidentally met with in lagoons and stagnant streams in deep undisturbed forests. Reported to be a common duck as seen some 50 years ago, it is a rare bird today. In the montane jungles are found some typical high altitudinal birds, such as the Himalayan trogon (*Harpactes wardi*), sclarers monal pheasant (*Lophophorus sclateri*), neofous throated hill partridge (*Arbophila rufogularis*), the Himalayan barbet (*Megalaima virens*), the babblers (*Alcippe cinerea*, *Siva* sp., *Yujina* sp.), the chestnut-headed wren (*Tesia Castaneocoronata* the white tailed and beautiful nut-hatches (*Sitta himalayensis* and *S. formosa*) etc.

Amphibia

The amphibians of this region can be ecologically divided into three heads: (a) aquatic or semi-aquatic, (b) arboreal and (c) terrestrial.

The smooth-skinned aquatic forms are found in or near the hill streams. Their toes are completely webbed (an adaptation for swimming) and the tips of fingers and toes are developed into adhesive discs (an adaptation which help the frogs to stick to the rocky walls of torrential streams). The examples for this group recorded from Kameng are the Himalayan stream frog, (*Staurois afghana*) and the Himalayan frog (*Staurois himalayana*).

The arboreal forms are generally found on trees and bushes. They are smooth-skinned. They live in or near water sources during the breeding season and for laying eggs. Their tips of fingers and toes are developed into discs which help them to stick to the leaves and branches of trees. They perfectly mimic their surroundings and can be seen only when they move. The common Indian tree frog (*Rhacophorus maculatus*) recorded from Kameng is an example of this type of arboreal amphibia.

The terrestrial forms consist of toads having rough glandular skin to absorb moisture, which is an adaptation helping the animal to live away from water sources. On the upper surface of the toad there are two kidney-shaped flat parotid gland which secrete a semi-white sticky substance. They are nocturnal in habit. The most familiar species coming under this category is the common Indian Toad (*Bufo melanostictus*). Another species *Bufo himalayanus*, known as the Himalayan toad is of common occurrence in this region.

On the evolutionary scale the amphibia form a link between the fishes and all higher vertebrates, such as reptiles, birds and mammals since they were the first group of vertebrate animals to emerge from an aquatic environment and live upon land for most of their adult lives. None of them has a poisonous bite, they do not rob fields of grain and fruits and have not inflicted any major disease upon humans. Most of them prey on insects and their larvae.

Reptilia

A wide variety of lizards, snakes and tortoises constitute the reptilian fauna. Reptiles are the first true land dwellers among the vertebrates. Their horny skins are almost always divided into scales and plates for protection. Their body temperature depends on that of the surroundings. They prefer warm climatic zones. Among reptiles the large turtles under favourable conditions be able to live for about 200 years. Reptiles have a remarkable capacity to change their body colours and patterns by expanding and shrinking the pigment cells present in their body. There are at present about 2750 species each of lizards and snakes; about 220 species of turtles and about 21 species of crocodiles in the world. The only reptiles which harm man directly are a few species of poisonous snakes. Even in these cases, the danger they present to mankind in their own habitats is overestimated. Snake poisons are special objects of biomedical research. Snake serum which is the only real help for snake poisoning is prepared from the poison obtained from the captured wild snake. The flesh of many snakes, lizards and turtles are used as food. Their skins are also used in making many fancy articles. Above all, the snakes control the rodents in the agricultural fields and the lizards check the insect population. The information on the

occurrence and distribution of the reptilian fauna of Arunachal Pradesh as a whole is scanty.

The available information regarding the occurrence and distribution of the reptilian fauna of Kameng is very scanty. The following is a list of reptiles recorded from this region.

Family : Agamidae

1. *Japalura andersonian* Annandale.
2. *Mictopholis austeniana* (Annandale.)

Family : Colubridae

3. *Boiga multifasciata* (Blyth.)
4. *Rhabdophis himalayana* (Guenther.)
5. *Sibinophis collaris* (Gray)

Family : Viperidae

6. *Trimeresurus monticola* (Guenther)
7. *Trimeresurus steinegeri* (Schmidt)

Fishes

Fishes are the oldest major group of vertebrates. Fossilised fish bones and scales have been found in rocks 400 million years old. They show great diversity in their way of life. Fishes are finned, back boned animals that live in water, and breathe by means of gills. Many fishes live only in fresh water; many are marine and a few divide their lives in between. Some prefer brackish water, where rivers mingle with the ocean. Some species live only in cold water, others in warm. Fishes as wild life play an important role in the natural environment. Oceans, lakes and rivers have their own natural communities of plant and animal life that include fishes. Fishes serve as food for many vertebrates.

The following information about the fish fauna of Kameng is on the record.

Class : Pisces

Sub-Class : Teleosti

Order : Cypriniformes

Family : Cyprinidae

1. *Acrossocheilus hexagonolepis* (Mc Clell)
2. *Barilius bendelisis* (Ham)
3. *Danio aequipinnatus* (Mc Clell)
4. *Garra lamta* (Ham)
5. *Garra nasutus* (Mc Clell)
6. *Labeo dero* (Ham)
7. *Labeo dyocheilus* (Ham)
8. *Oreinus plagiostomus plagiostomus* (Heckel)

Family : Cobitidae

9. *Neomacheilus beavani* Gunther
10. *Neomacheilus corica* (Ham)
11. *Neomacheilus rupecola* (Mc Clell)

Family : Amblycepididae

12. *Ambyceps mangois* (Ham)

Family : Olyridae

13. *Olyra longicaudata* (Mc Clell)

Family : Sisoridae

14. *Euchiloglanis hodgarti* (hora)15. *Euchiloglanis kamengensis* (Jayaram)16. *Glyptothorax gracilis* (Gunther)17. *Pseudecheneis sulcatus* (Mc Clell)

Order : Perciformes

Family : Anabantidae

18. *Anabas testudineus* (B1)*Invertebrata*

A large variety of invertebrates have been recorded. They are broadly as follows :

- phylum - arthropoda
- class - arachnida
- order - scorpionis
- family - chaerilidae and argiopidae
- class - insecta
- order - diptera
- family - tipulidae, bibionidae, mycitophilidae, tabanidae, syrphidae, pipunculidae, muscidae, stratiomyidae, bombylidae, asilidae, tephritidae, calliphoridae and sarcophagidae
- order - isoptera
- family - rhinotermitidae and termitidae
- order - hymenoptera
- family - formicidae (ants), apidae (honey bees and carpenter bees), vespidae (wasps) and ichneumonidae (parasitic wasps)
- Family - agriidae, coenagriidae, libellulidae, gomphidae
- order - dictyoptera
- family - blattidae and mantidae
- order - dermaptera
- family - carcinophoridae and pygidicranidae
- order - orthoptera
- family - acrididae, pyrgomorphidae, enumastacidae,

GENERAL

telligoniidae, gryllidae, tetrigidae,
tridactylidae, gryllotalpidae, brentidae
carabidae, corambycidae, coccinellidae,
cicindelidae, chrysomelidae, curculionidae,
cucujidae, cleridae, entomychidae, erotylidae,
elateridae, helotidae, histeridae, lucanidae,
languriidae, meloidae, passalidae, hydrophilidae,
dytiscidae and scarabaeidae

order - lepidoptera

family - danoidae, satyridae, nymphalidae, amathusidae,
erycinidae, acreeidae, lycaenidae, papilionidae,
pieridae, arctiidae, noctuidae, pyralidae,
agaristidae, pterothysanidae, limacodidae,
geometridae and cymatophoridae

CLIMATE

The climate of the Kameng region comprising the East Kameng and West Kameng districts is influenced considerably by the mountainous terrain along the southern slopes of the Eastern Himalayas, cut across by long, deep and narrow valleys through which the Kameng and most of its tributaries as also other minor rivers flow south-wards, eventually to join the Brahmaputra. The elevation along the southern border of this region is as low as 200 metres, but it rises steeply towards the north to four or five kilometres and even further on to some peaks soaring as high as six kilometres or so.

Meteorological data for sufficiently long periods are not available for any station in this region. Spatial variations in climate are considerable due to the nature of terrain. The following account is to be treated as a general description of the climate based on the data of other contiguous stations with similar terrain and location.

From climatic point of view the year may be divided into four seasons: (1) the winter season prevailing mainly from December to February, (2) the pre-monsoon season extending from March to May, (3) the South-West Monsoon season lasting normally from June to September and (4) the post-monsoon season or the transition period during the months of October and November.

Meteorological data are given in the tables at the end of this chapter.

Rainfall

Annual rainfall exceeds 250 cms over the southern parts. The rainfall decreases with elevation as one proceeds north and north-west. In the extreme north-west corner the annual rainfall is only about 100 cms. Southern half of Kameng gets more than 70 per cent of the rain during the period June to September, while northern half receives 50 to 60 per cent of the annual precipitation in the same period. Pre-monsoon showers during March to May account for slightly more than 20 per cent for the southern half and less than 20 per cent for the northern half. Winter precipitation during October to December over the northern parts constitutes 10 per cent of the total annual rainfall. Variation in the amount of precipitation received from year to year is not significant.

In the months from November to March, the region is periodically affected by western

disturbances passing across or near it from west to east. During this period of disturbances, precipitation, mostly as snowfall, occurs over the northern parts. Thunderstorms preceding the disturbances are common. In the monsoon season, the southerly moisture laden winds strike against the southern slopes of the mountain ranges and also penetrate deep into the interior through the valleys. This forced ascent of moisture results in copious rainfall over the southern parts and in the valleys. The rainfall is particularly heavy on the occasions of storms and depressions in the Bay of Bengal.

Temperature

Temperature fluctuates according to elevation and exposure to the sun. Therefore, it varies considerably from place to place. Diurnal range is also large, especially in the valleys during the winter.

January is usually the coldest month with mean maximum and minimum temperatures of about 23°C and 12°C respectively over the plain areas. Low temperatures are experienced over the mountains depending on elevation. At places with elevation exceeding three kilometres, the mean daily temperature is below 0°C . Occasionally, the cold weather conditions are accentuated in the wake of western disturbances and temperature may fall even more than 5°C below the mean minimum.

Temperature begins to rise in March, rapidly at first and later steadily till August. The month of August is generally the warmest with mean maximum and minimum temperatures of about 31°C and 23°C respectively over the plains. Occasionally, the temperature may rise to 37°C during the monsoon, when weather becomes oppressive. At places of higher elevation lower temperatures are recorded. The mean temperature at the elevation of 3 kilometre is of the order of 10°C — 15°C .

From October onwards temperature falls gradually till January.

Humidity

Humidity is generally high throughout the year, the winter months being less humid.

Clouds

The morning sky often remains obscured during the cold season due to lifted fog, which disappears as the day advances. The clouding is moderate but occasionally heavy during the period March to May. Overcast or heavily clouded skies are a very common feature of the South-West monsoon season, when the hills are enveloped in cloud. In the post-monsoon season, skies are generally clear or lightly clouded.

Winds

Winds are moderately strong during the winter months and they blow generally from a northerly direction. During the monsoon, the southerly to south-easterly winds are generally light. Strong katabatic winds down the valleys are experienced as local effects produced by the nature of terrain. The direction of wind is highly influenced by local conditions obtaining in the mountains.

Special Weather Phenomena

Thunderstorms mostly occur during the pre-monsoon months — March to May. Often violent and accompanied by hail, they continue in a lesser frequency throughout the monsoon season till the month of October, when the monsoon recedes. Hill fog is a normal feature of weather during the monsoon months. In the valleys, morning fog occurs frequently in the winter.

Table 1
TEMPERATURE RAINFALL AND HUMIDITY IN KAMENG
Year 1974

Month	Temperature (centigrade)		Rainfall (millimetre)	Humidity (percentage)
	Maximum	Minimum		
1	2	3	4	5
January	10.1	1.1	15.4	97%
February	12.9	2.2	26.9	97%
March	15.4	4.3	46.6	83%
April	16.3	4.2	16.3	89%
May	20.1	6.1	229.5	87%
June	20.0	7.3	206.4	94%
July	19.9	7.5	90.4	92%
August	19.9	7.1	16.4	88%
September	18.9	6.3	50.3	98%
October	20.6	6.1	111.0	84%
November	19.0	1.5	0.0	90%
December	11.9	2.1	13.9	75%

Source : Regional Meteorological Centre, Alipore, Calcutta.

Table 2
ANNUAL RAINFALL AT DIFFERENT PLACES OF KAMENG

(in centimetre)

Sl No.	Rain Gauge Stations	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
1.	Bomdila	100	56	NA	NA	NA	NA
2.	Seppa	180	178	212	160	246	624
3.	Bameng	181	181	255	198	499	333
4.	Thrizino	171	103	78	NA	NA	NA
5.	Kalaktang	91	74	NA	109	101	92
6.	Dirang	82	87	91	72	84	NA
7.	Tawang	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	77
NA - not available							

Source : Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1980-81.

Table 3

Annual Rainfall at Selected places of West Kameng, East Kameng, Tawang districts during the period for 1980 to 1990

(In Centimetre/Milimetre)

Rain Gauge Stations	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Tawang	NA	NA	14	95	1594.40	1267.75	1755.16	85.33	1393.44	1456.65	1761.65
Bomdila	NA	NA	NA	NA	102.29	343.45	105.76	723.00	871.10	1268.90	962.00
Seppa	624	475	328	213	976.88	1306.56	1632.48	1979.70	2052.11	2291.04	1624.09

Source :- Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1986 to 1990.

Chapter II

H I S T O R Y

Prehistory and Archaeology

It has been aptly said that 'life is a constant balancing on the point of intersection where the past and the future meet.' This gives precisely an answer to the question why a knowledge of the past is necessary. Indeed, history becomes lively, meaningful and purposive when a link of the present can be established with the past.

The extant sources, literary or material do not provide a comprehensive account of the prehistory of the area. The study of the extant sources is yet to be completed. Current archaeological and ethnological investigations and researches in Arunachal Pradesh may assist in further improving our knowledge of the early history of the area.

Neoliths

Neolithic celts are found to have a wide distribution in Arunachal Pradesh. The existence of these celts in the Kameng region has been reported from different areas inhabited by the Monpas, Mijis, Akas, Sherdukpens, Khowas and Sulungs. The celts are of various types, such as shouldered celt, faceted celt, tanged axe, chisel, ground celts of triangular or sub-rectangular shape etc. The stones which were used to make these tools are jadeite and shale. Techniques of grinding and sawing or chiselling were adopted to manufacture them.

These neolithic celts are associated with various myths and beliefs of the tribal people. It is generally believed that the celts are thunderbolts or axes of the sky or of some deity fallen from above during thunder and lightning. The celt is called *kyug* (thunderbolt) by the Monpas of Tawang, *chubiangra* by the Monpas of Dirang and Kalaktang, *michaflu* by the Sherdukpens, *jeu-forje* (Jeu-name of a deity, *forje-axe*, i.e. axe of Jeu) by the Akas, *hakraw-thapiuh* (hakraw-thunder, *thapiuh-axe*) by the Khowas and *chambeo-blu* (*chambeo*-thunder and lightning, *blu-axe*) by the Mijis.

A large number of neoliths have been collected from all parts of Arunachal Pradesh, and the record of this collection dates from 1870 till recent times. The earlier collections are in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. As the neoliths were casually found lying over the ground or just below the surface without any stratigraphic relevance, nothing definitely is known about the period of the widespread neolithic culture that once existed in Arunachal Pradesh and which is represented by the relics of the stone tools and artefacts discovered so far. Evidently, the neolithic men lived in this region. But how did they make their living and what type of material culture did they build? These are some of the pertinent points which still remain as matters of conjecture. Besides these, the important questions as to who were the neolithic people and whether or not they were the ancestors of the present tribal inhabitants of Arunachal Pradesh are yet to be answered.

The north-eastern region of India lay on the routes of prehistoric movements of the early people. Waves of tribal migrations passed through this region from times immemorial. The existence of a neolithic culture in Arunachal Pradesh assumes greater significance against this wider background of prehistory. It might have affinities with the neolithic culture of

the Mon-Khmer speaking people of the north-eastern India. But, this is a matter to be studied and opined by the research scholars.¹

Megaliths

Megaliths and menhirs belonging to prehistoric times occur almost all over the world. These monumental stones were erected probably for tombs and they had a socio-religious significance. In the north-eastern India, there are many megalithic sites in the Khasi, Jaintia, Mikir and Naga Hills. In Meghalaya, in particular, live by the Khasis and Pnars (Jaintias), memorial stones - menhirs with dolmens are a familiar sight.

Arunachal Pradesh has a solitary megalithic site. At the Aka village of Jamiri in the Nafra-Buragaon Sub-division of the West Kameng District, there are standing stones resembling menhirs. The Akas have great reverence for these stones. They believe traditionally that these stones are of divine origin. The Akas are staying at Jamiri for several generations, but they do not know who erected those stones and when. It may be surmised that some group of people belonging to a megalithic culture preceded them at Jamiri.

Bhalukpung

Bhalukpung, now a circle headquarters in the Bomdila Sub-division of West Kameng District, is situated on the western bank of the Kameng (Bhareli) river at a point close to the Assam-Arunachal border. It lies along the main road leading to Bomdila.

Bhalukpung is a place of historical fame. The tradition has it that Bhaluka, the grandson of Bana, had established his capital at this place. According to the Vishnu Purana and Kalika Purana, King Bana of Sonitpur, a place identified with modern Tezpur in Assam, was a contemporary of Naraka, the King of Pragiyotisha or ancient Kamarupa. The Akas, it is said, claim descent from the legendary King Bhaluka.

What is important in this context is that there existed widespread remains of a fortress at Bhalukpung. B.C. Allen writing in the beginning of the present century accounted for it as follows:

"The fortress at Bhalukpung is situated on the top of a hill, 300 feet high, near the point where the Bhareli issues from the Aka Hills. Three sides of the hill are surrounded by a brick wall and, on the fourth, the fortifications are carried across to an adjoining hillock which slopes gradually to the plain. Hewn stones and the remains of plinths are to be seen within the ramparts and a steep pathway paved with stone runs up the eastern face of the hill"²

The remains of the old fortress were visible even in early seventies of the present century. But, it is very unfortunate to note that the remains are no longer where they were. They have disappeared due to destructions by nature and also depredations of men.

The Bhalukpung remains were not accurately dated. It was however, observed that the fortress was probably built during the late Salastambha Period or the early Pala Period, i.e. 10th-11th centuries, of the history of Assam.

1. For details, see:

(a) Archaeology in Arunachal (Shillong, 1980) by Y.A. Raikar and S. Chatterjee, pp.8-13.

(b) Neolithic Celts from Arunachal Pradesh by Niranjan Sarkar, Published in the Resarun (Shillong, 1982), Vol. VIII, No.2, pp.11-15.

2. B. C. Allen, Assam District Gazetteers, Vol.V, Darrang (Allahabad, 1905), pp 67-68.

Naksaparbat

The foothills belt of Arunachal Pradesh is dotted with a number of archaeological sites of which the important ones are Bhismaknagar in the Lohit District, Malinithan in the West Siang District and Ita Fort in the Lower Subansiri District. Besides Bhalukpong, as already described, there is in Kameng yet another site called Naksaparbat on a hillock at the foothills of the Seijosa circle of East Kameng District, where ruins of an old settlement have been discovered and excavated.

Naksaparbat is about 36 km by a motorable road from Biswanath Charali in the Sonitpur District of Assam. The site is bounded by a stream known as the Kalpong Nala in the east, the Bargang river in the north west and south and some high mounds and forest plantations in the north.

According to a local tradition, the Himalayan range North of Tezpur, the headquarters of the present Sonitpur District of Assam, was called Natak Parbat and the river Swarnabaha which flowed from that range came to be known as the Bargang. The present Naksaparbat clearly lies within this region as described. But, it is not known how the place has come to be called Naksaparbat. There is an obvious similarity between the two names Natak Parbat and Naksaparbat. It is plausible that Naksaparbat (naksa in Assamese meaning sketch and parbat = mountain) has been so named because of the existence of carved pillars in this hilly region.

Late R. M. Nath, who seems to have visited Naksaparbat as early as 1930, made mention of some of the ruins in his book 'The background of Assamese Culture'. Next to him was Shri G. C. Talukdar, who visited the site and published a report on the ruins in August 1973. In the late seventies, a preliminary survey of the site carried out by a team of officials of the Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh was followed by the first archaeological exploration of Naksaparbat in December 1979. The site was excavated during 1980-81 and 1982 under the guidance of Dr. D. K. Borah, an archaeologist and Deputy Director of Research (History), Arunachal Pradesh.

The following is a brief account of the findings.

The Naksaparbat hillock extends over an area of 240 sq. metres and is about eight metres high. There is now no human habitation at the site and the neighbouring Bangni (Nishi) villages are quite away. The hillock is enclosed by an earthen rampart, a portion of which is of stone. The rampart runs for about 766 metres and has an opening of 125 metres on the north-east corner. The enclosed area is almost a flat land.

Excavations on the hillock, which was covered by a jungle mainly of cane, have brought to light traces of nine houses in absolute ruins and pillars of chiselled stone—mostly broken. The pillars are hexagonal and without any curving except the resemblance of an arch on one suggesting a chaitya (Buddhist shrine). The floor of one of the houses made of stone blocks appeared to be smooth-faced. The fallen pillars lay scatteredly.

Incidentally, it may be noted that there are some sculptures on stone pillars preserved in the Assam State Museum at Gauhati, which are reported to have been collected from Naksaparbat long ago by an European manager of the nearby Bargang Tea Estate. The sculptures depict human figures wearing dhoties and shirts, two men fighting closely, woman with child, man standing on one leg, and also carving resembling chaitya, tree, snakes etc. Besides these, some crude sculptures of elephant heads carved on sandstone are said

to have been taken away from Naksaparbat to the Forest Rest House at Namura. Naksaparbat falls within the area of the Namura Forest Range of Arunachal Pradesh. There are more reports about the Naksaparbat relics having been shifted previously. It seems that the archaeological wealth of this site was far more richer than what it is now.

There is a pond to the south-east about 60 metres below the hillock and outside the rampart, the size being 276 metres long and 54 metres broad. The pond is fed by a small stream, serving as an inlet as well as an outlet, which falls into the Kalpong Nala. The area around the pond is skirted by a bund. Some scatteredly lying broken pillars were found within the bund.

In the course of exploration, two wells also came to view, one was of dressed stone and the other of burnt clay rings. Situated on the hillock near the house-sites the stone well was topped by a line of burnt bricks, which appeared to be of a type different from the bricks found at Ita Fort. The other well of clay rings is smaller in size. It was observed that the rings were so made as to fit perfectly one above the other. This ring-well is located at a distance of about one kilometre down below the hillock.

A striking feature of the relics found at the Naksaparbat site is that there is no image of a deity and hardly any sculpture carved in stone. Now, if the sculptures preserved at the Assam State Museum at Gauhati, as already mentioned, belong to Naksaparbat then it is obvious that they are mainly secular in character.

Naksaparbat poses two important questions who were the people living at this place and how old are the remnants they left behind? The relics bear ample testimony to the fact that the people who built a walled settlement at Naksaparbat were skilled at masonry and architecture, and in all probability they came to settle at this site from the plains of Assam. The achievements were doubtlessly of a culturally advanced people. Dr Borah holds the view that Naksaparbat was a Buddhist settlement, as proved by epigraphic evidence and the relics of chaitya carvings in some broken pillars. According to him, the ruins of Naksaparbat belong to a period not earlier than the 16th century A. D. The ruins are peculiar and their stylistic pattern does not resemble the pre-Ahom relics.¹

BUDDHIST SHRINES

The Monpas and the Sherdukpens are two Buddhist tribes of the West Kameng and Tawang Districts. Their heritage of Buddhist religion and culture is enshrined in a number of old *gompas* (monasteries or lamaseries) and *chortens* (Buddhist *stupas*) that exist in this region. These shrines are not only the centres and epitomes of their religious life, but are also closely associated with their history. Some of the important shrines may be briefly described here as relevant to this context.

Tawang Monastery

In the midst of lofty mountains stands the great and celebrated Buddhist monastery of Tawang on a ridge of about 3,050 metres above the sea level. Founded in the 17th century A. D., the monastery is now about 350 years old. It is said that it lies at a vital point where three routes from Tibet, Bhutan and eastern Kameng converge.

1. For more details, see:

- (a) Archaeological Ruins of Naksaparbat by Dr D. K. Borah, published in the Resarun (Shillong, 1983), Vol. IX No. 1, pp. 26-33.
- (b) Notes on the ruins of Naksaparbat in Arunachal Pradesh by J. C. Dutta, published in the Resarun (Shillong, 1982), Vol. VIII No. 2 pp. 30-34.

The monastery is in fact a large complex resembling a castle. Enclosed by a 610 metres long wall, it extends over an area of 135 sq. metres. The complex contains within itself 65 dormitories or residential buildings besides other structures, of which the two great halls—the assembly and the library, housed in separate three-storied buildings are the most imposing and excellent. The monastery is capable of accommodating 500 lamas to live in, though the actual number of resident lamas may at times be much less than that. It is the largest Buddhist monastery in India.

An admirable feature of this religious institution is that its repository of valuable old scriptures. Its library has a surprisingly rich collection of about 850 rare volumes. "The library contains two printed sets of *Tanjur*,¹ three sets of *Kanjur* and five vols of *Changia Sungbum*. Each set of *Tanjur* contains 225 volumes. Among the three sets of *Kanjur*, two sets are hand-written and one set printed. The printed set extends to 101 volumes. One hand-written set has 131 volumes and the other 125 volumes. The letters of the latter set are washed with gold. There are three pages of the religious text, called *Gyetongpa*, embossed throughout in letters of gold".² The volumes were printed from wood-cut blocks and have been preserved by holding them together with boards. The collection also comprise texts on grammar, logic, theory of poetry, mathematics, chronology, astrology and medicine. The *Tanjur* is said to contain also a version of *Kalidasa's Meghadutam*.

The wonderful works of art and sculpture which the monastery is adorned with are sublime. Hardly any space on the wall is to be found without colourful paintings. The murals painted in bright colours depict figures of various deities of the Mahayana Buddhist pantheon and mystic circles and diagrams. The richly-gilded magnificent seated image of Lord Buddha, about 26 feet high, and a number of statuettes and icons extols its sanctity and grandeur.

The Tawang Monastery has been described as 'the heart of life and culture of the Monpas,' who inhabit this area.

The Monpas in general are said to have a deep sense of attachment to the legends of Shanta Rakshita and Maharimpoche Pema Jungne or Padmasambhava (C. 8th century A.D.), the two Indian saints who carried Buddhism into Tibet and are believed to have passed through Tawang on their way. In course of the development of Buddhism in Tibet, there emerged four sects, namely Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Kargyupa and Gelugpa. The history has it that Mera Lama, a contemporary of the fifth Dalai Lama, Nagwang Lobjang Gyatso (A.D. 1617-1682), was the founder of the Tawang Monastery. Mera Lama belonged to the Gelugpa sect of the Buddhists. There is a statuette of this great lama installed in the dome of a *chorten* (Buddhist *stupa*) inside a building which is supposed to have been used by him as his residence. This building is regarded as a mausoleum.

The Gelugpa sect was introduced in the areas now known as Tawang and West Kameng districts by Tanpei Dronme of the house of Poudun of the Monpa village called Berkhar near Kraling. He was ordained as a monk by the second Dalai Lama, Gedun Gyatso (A. D. 1475-1543), himself. Tanpei Dronme was a great religious preacher and builder of monastery and many Gelugpa temples. The fourth of his incarnation Lodre Gyatso renowned as Mera Lama was also of the same Monpa house of Poudun.

1. "The scriptures are classified into two groups, *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*. The *Kanjur* is the canon containing the translation of the Buddha's precepts and the *Tanjur* contains the commentaries."

2. Niranjan Sarkar, Tawang Monastery, (Shillong, 1981), pp.24-25.

The Tawang Monastery had its origin in the ascendancy of the Gelugpa sect in this area. The Gelugpas were opposed by some other sects — the Karmapas (a sub-sect of the Kargyupa) Nyingmapa and the Dukpas (another sub-sect of the Kargyupa). Without going into the details of the prolonged sectarian struggle for supremacy, it would be quite pertinent to relate here that the Dukpas of Bhutan were particularly hostile to the Monpa followers of the Gelugpa sect, and they made several attempts to seize Tawang. Mera Lama faced stiff opposition from the Dukpas, who were bent on obstructing him so as to foil his every attempt to build up a Gelugpa monastery. The hostilities between these two sects broke out in 1643 and continued for years. Eventually, with the help and blessings of the fifth Dalai Lama of Tibet, Mera Lama succeeded in establishing a monastery at a place called at that time Tsosum. In recognition of the part played by his horse in helping him to find out a suitable site for the monastery, he auspiciously renamed the place as Tawang (ta = horse; wang = chosen) or the place chosen by horse. The full name of this monastery is Tawang Galdan Namgye Lhatse: 'Tawang-site chosen by horse; Galdan-paradise; Namgye-celestial; Lhatse-divine' or the celestial paradise of the divine site chosen by horse'. The people of Tawang gradually gathered round Mera Lama and helped him to fulfil his mission. The establishment of the Tawang Monastery was in itself a sign of victory of the Monpa followers of the Gelugpa sect, who by and by gained prominence over other sects in this area. The influence of the Gelugpa sect spread out to wider areas inhabited by the Monpas and Sherdukpens.

The great monastery standing like a fort on the hillside is visible from long distances. The internecine strife between different sects and the repeated attack of the Dukpas might well be the reason for the apparent fortification of the monastery and its placement at a strategic position for defence. It was obviously vulnerable as the lamas still show some bullet marks on the south-eastern gate of the monastery, which are said to have been caused by the firing squad of the Dukpas of Bhutan.

The Tawang Monastery is the paramount Buddhist shrine in this region. The temples of Sakti; Momang, Manjing and Kharung in the Lumla area, Ugyeling, Changbu, Shermang, Khromten, Ariakdun, Brakar and Kimnash in the Tawang area and Namchu in the Dirang area are affiliated to the monastery of Tawang.

Through the centuries of its existence as a temple of enlightenment giving spiritual guidance and inspiration to the Monpas as well as the Sherdukpens, the Tawang Monastery has become a place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. It is a sacred centre of religion for the devotees and an inexhaustible source of Buddhist literature and culture for the scholars.

Ugyeling Gompa

It is a remarkable event of the history of the Monpas of Tawang that the sixth Dalai Lama, Tshangyang Gyatso (A.D. 1683-1707), was born among them at the Ugyeling Gompa. He was taken to the Potala, the palace of Dalai Lama at Lhasa, when he was a grown-up boy.

From Tawang Ugyeling is five kilometres away by the main road and at a distance of only two kilometres by a track. Set against the background of snow-capped mountains and amidst exquisitely beautiful and serene surroundings, the Ugyeling Gompa, a two-storied building, is one of the oldest monasteries of this area.

The Ugyeling Gompa originally belonged to the Nyingmapas. The Gelugpas took it over after the birth of the sixth Dalai Lama.

Gorcham Chorten

A *chorten* is a Buddhist *stupa*, meaning originally a tumulus or a mound commemorating the Buddha's death. The *chorten* at Gorcham near Zemithang in the Lumla Sub-division of the Tawang District is a cenotaph.

Built in stone and raised to a height of about 100 feet, the *Gorcham Chorten* is the largest Buddhist *stupa* in Arunachal Pradesh. "The hemispherical dome rests upon three plinths. Four miniature stupas are set on the four corners of the lowermost plinth. The base is square with each side about 175 feet in length, with a niche running all along its whole length and 120 prayer-wheels (*manes*) are set in frames of wood in the niche of each side of the base. A paved path goes all around for the pilgrims to follow in respectful circumambulation 'keeping the chorten on their right, turning the *manes* and muttering 'Om mani peme hum'. There are also tiny clay *chortens* and miniature clay bas-reliefs of Tsepame (Amitayus), the Buddha of Infinite Life along with the *manes*. These are the offerings of the pilgrims. The dome is surmounted by a square capital with a spire of thirteen step-like segments topped by an umbrella. This *chorten* is on the bank of a stream and lies beside the path between Lumla and Zemithang"¹

Lama Pradar, a Monpa Lama born in the nearby Kharmin village is reputed to have built the celebrated *chorten* at Gorcham probably in C. 17th century A.D. after the Tawang Monastery was constructed.

ANCIENT PERIOD

Very little is known about the ancient history of Kameng owing to the paucity of historical evidences. The meagre sources, vague and fragmentary as they are, do not give a clear and connected account of the sequence of history, but they do convey a good deal of important information about the early people of north-east India and their course of migration that passed through this region in waves from times immemorial. The indigenous tribes have no written traditions, the Monpas only used a script. Our sources for this period are tribal traditions transmitted orally, myths and legends, classical Sanskrit literature and other contemporary sources as well as the historical and ethnological research works.

Early Migrations

From the evidences of the Vedic literature and old Sanskrit scriptures as well as the epics—Ramayana and Mahabharata, it seems quite probable that hordes of some migratory tribes of the early Mongoloids were drifted to India through the eastern extremity of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam before 1000 B.C. Their advent in the east was an event probably as old as the arrival of the Aryans in the west. Judging from the widely scattered tribal settlements all over Assam and its adjacent hills, it may reasonably be surmised that these early migrants belonged to the great tribal community of the Bodos, who were the most dominant people of north-east India till the advent of the Ahoms in the 13th century A.D. According to Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterji, 'the North-Assam tribes of the Adis, Akas, Nishis and Miris, and Mishmis appear to have come later, and to have established themselves in the mountains to the north of the Brahmaputra plains already in occupation of the Bodos, and by some Austric and possibly also Dravidian tribes which preceded the Mongoloid Bodos in this tract...'²

1. An Account of Gorcham Chorten: The Largest Stupa in Arunachal Pradesh by N. Sarkar, published in the Resarun (Shillong, 1977), Vol.03 No.4, p.11.

2. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India (Gauhati, 1970), p.9.

In all probability, some of the 'North-Assam tribes' made their way into India from the east and proceeded along the western course of the Brahmaputra down to Assam and then turned north towards the mountainous tracts of what is now known as Arunachal Pradesh¹. There in the hills they settled and there they remained to this day.

Kameng comprising both East Kameng and West Kameng and Tawang districts is inhabited by a variety of tribes of whom the Bangnis, Monpas, Mijis, Sulungs, Akas and Sherdukpens are considered as major tribal communities. Besides them, the Buguns (Khowas) and Bangros are two small well-known tribal groups. These tribes have varying traditions about their origin and migration. Some among them trace their course of migration to the areas of their present settlement from the north. Their legends indicate a general north-south or north-east to south-west trend of movements in the olden days. The Monpas, however, migrated from different directions.

BANGNI: The Bangnis of East Kameng District and the Nishis of Subansiri appear to be akin to each other. Indeed, they are the western and eastern sections respectively of the same tribal community. Apart from their geographical distributions in different areas, they in fact differ little from each other except in names and probably for some dialectal and other variations. Their ethnic affinities and similarities of social and family life, house types, dress, hair-do and temperamental characteristics show amply clearly that they are one and the same people. The Bangnis as also the Nishis trace their descent from a common mythical ancestor called Abo Teni (Abo Tani). Above all both the sections have a feeling of kinship, solidarity and brotherhood between themselves. Incidentally, it may also be mentioned that the term Bangni, as noted by Dalton over a century ago, signifies a man.² The root term *ni* of the name Nishi also means man.

As for the migration of the Nishis, we have the following account:

"No one knows the original home of the Nishis or when they left it. All that is lost in the mists enshrouding the unwritten past as the people have no written traditions..."

"All Nishis believe that they descended from Abo Teni, a mythical ancestor,³ and lived at a place called Supung which, they say, exists somewhere in the far eastern Himalayas. Later they came to Narba and drifting from village to village through Begi, Bolo, and Yalang successively, crossed the Shinit or Subansiri river, and then the Kumme or Kamla river. Here they spread all over the hills lying between the Kamla and the Khru, and later made their way to the Palin and the Panior hills. While coming to these hills they brought with them animals like mithuns (*bos frontalis*) and pigs, and such articles of value as *majis* (Tibetan tongueless bells) and *talus* (metal plates) and beads. They wore their hair in a bun called *podum* and knew even at this early stage weaving and agriculture.

"That this myth has come significance in throwing light on the tribe's origin and migration is beyond doubt. All the priests, and many others, remember their genealogies from their own time back to Abo Teni, and a large number of myths gather about his person. The various places mentioned in the above myth are narrated in the *id* songs, which are sung

1. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kirata-Jana-Krti*, (Calcutta, 1974), pp 44-45.

2. E.T. Dalton, *Tribal History of Eastern India (Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal)*, (Delhi, 1973), p.35.

3. "Indeed, as the Nishi tradition lays it down, Abo Teni is not only the eponymous ancestor of the Nishis, but also of Apa Tanis, Sulungs, Miris and Bangrus, as well as of the people of the plains or Halyangs. In fact a large number of tribes in the neighbourhood are one in the person of the ancestor.

during marriage and the Yulo ceremonies. What remains obscure, however, is the geographical location of each place. Nevertheless, one thing is certain. If the people's traditions are to be taken as a guiding factor, then in all probability they originally dwelt in some remote corner of the eastern Himalayas. At some early date in human history, they migrated in groups to their present habitat in waves. The migration extended perhaps, over several centuries—one group ousting the earlier settlers, till it was itself ousted by yet another and stronger group. This process must have continued till the people finally settled in the hills north of the Khru, and made further excursions to the west in the hills of the Palin, Panyu and Panior river valleys.¹

It seems that in their westward drive the Nishis had pushed their way into eastern Kameng and settled in the Kameng river valley and along its many tributaries. According to Dr. Furer-Haimendorf, the Nishis of the Lower Subansiri District extend westward under the name Bangni into the adjacent East Kameng District. The area of Kameng adjoining the Subansiri region 'represents ethnographically', as noted by him, 'an extension of the Nishi country though its inhabitants are referred to not as Nishis but as Bangnis, a term whose derivation remains unexplained. As early as 1945 he had 'learnt of cases of intermarriage linking the populations to both sides of the boundary between the two districts'.² The history of origin and migration of the Bangnis appear to be essentially the same as of the Nishis. The *inter se* dissimilarities, whatever they have, might have been acquired by them from their different environments.

MONPA: The Monpas of the West Kameng and Tawang districts have close ethnic affinities with the neighbouring people of eastern Bhutan. It seems that in course of the trans-Himalayan trade which was traditionally current in the region in the old days, they developed cultural and ethnic relations with their northern neighbours as well and were strongly influenced by Tibetan Buddhism. The Monpas are mainly settled in three areas — Tawang, Dirang and Kalaktang. Accordingly, they are called the Tawang Monpas or Northern Monpas, Dirang Monpas or Central Monpas and Kalaktang Monpas or Southern Monpas. Among these three broad sections of the Monpas there are several Sub-section or small groups, such as Lish Monpas, Panchen Monpas and so on.

There are legends, vague and often dubious, of Monpa migration from the west, the north and also from the south. It is, however, certain that various sections of the Monpas did not migrate to West Kameng all at a time in a single wave. The migration must have taken place over centuries, involving many groups who were on the move under unknown historical predicaments. A legend states that the Monpas migrated from the plains of Assam along the Udalguri-Kalaktang route. Another legend indicates that the Monpas of Tawang came from Sikkim and Phari. In all probability, a large body of the Monpas migrated from the west through Bhutan. It is also suggested that the Monpas of the Dirang area came down following the Mago route. According to some recent accounts, there was a population of the Monpas living in the Kameng region probably from the early days of the Christian era. With the passage of time, later groups of the Monpas entered this region in successive waves through different routes of migration. With the inception and

1. B.K.Shukla, *The Daflas of the Subansiri Region*, (Shillong, 1965), pp.3-4. (N.B. The name Dafla occurring in the book is changed into their actual name Nishi throughout the text).

2. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), pp.5, 146-147.

spread of Buddhism in this region, or more particularly from the days of the second Dalai Lama (A.D. 1475-1543), the people from across the Himalayas trickled into the Tawang area.

R.P. Kennedy writing in 1914 observed that the Monpas settled around Kalaktang and Moshing areas had 'distinct traces of admixture with, if not actual descent from, a primitive Eastern Himalayan hill tribe.' It appears from his account that the Dirang valley was once upon a time occupied by a tribe named Lopa. They lived together with the Monpas, who were later immigrants in this area. They were friendly with each other until a serious dispute arose and the Lopas were forced out. The Monpas then built a *zong* or fort at Dirang for defence. It is not clear who were the Lopas although it has been surmised that they might be Miji or Aka.

MIJI: The Mijis of the West Kameng District call themselves Dammai (or Dhammai). According to their tradition, they were originally inhabitants of the plains and had connections with the Ahom kings of Assam. It is, however, not known to them at present as to how they came to settle in the Bichom valley crossing the hills.

The Miji country lies to the adjacent north of the Akas. The two tribes have a long tradition of close neighbourly relations. The Mijis have many traits in common with the Akas, and are known to intermarry with them. A century ago in 1884 Mackenzie wrote of the Mijis as 'a fierce and cognate race in the interior', allied with the Akas. Dalton also noted earlier in 1872 that the Akas and Mijis 'may be regarded as kindred clans.'

AKA: The Akas call themselves Hrusso. Their concentration in the West Kameng District is in the hilly area of the Nafra-Buragaon Sub-division watered mainly by the Bichom (*Humschu*), Tengapani (*Hudju*) and Kheyani (*Khuwa*) rivers.¹ The Kameng (Bhareli) river forms its eastern boundary.

According to Hesselmeier, 'the Hrusso do not pretend to be aborigines of the country they now inhabit.' But, the history of their migration to this area is veiled in mystery. 'They are unable to tell where the real home of their tribe is.' They have a legend that they came to their present homeland from the plains where their ancestors 'lived in Partabgor on the banks of the Giladhari river, north of Bishnath, and were ousted from there by Krishna and Boloram.'² Pratapgarh (a historical rampart), the Ghiladhari river and Viswanath are all in the Darrang District of Assam south of the Kameng region. The legend seems to convey unambiguously an historical truth that the Akas were once settled in the plains of Assam and they migrated from there to the northern hills as a result of a feud. This conjecture is supported by another Aka legend, quoted by R.S. Kennedy, which is in brief as follows:

'In search of land... the Akas first settled near Bhalukpung, where, on the right bank of the Bhareli river, their two Chiefs, Natapura and Bayu, built their respective capitals. Bayu demanded Natapura's beautiful wife as a sort of tribute and, after a number of adventures the girl with a newly-born child arrived at Bayu's court. The child Arima grew up to be a great warrior and finally killed his own father by mistake. Overcome with remorse he migrated to the present country of the Akas; it is from his children that the present day Akas are descended.'³

1. The italicised names of the rivers given in brackets are as they are called by the Akas.

2. C.H. Hesselmeier, *The Hills Tribes of the Northern Frontier of Assam*, J.A.S.B., 1868, Vol. XXXVII, p.192 ff, quoted by Verrier Elwin, *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, (London, 1962), p.438.

3. Verrier Elwin, *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, (London, 1962), p.438.

It is interesting to note in this context that, as stated earlier, the Akas have also a belief that the legendary king Bhaluka, who had his capital at Bhalukpung named after him, was their progenitor.

SHERDUKPEN: The Sherdukpens are mainly concentrated in a few villages of the Bomdila Sub-division, of which Rupa (formerly Rooprai Gaon), Shergaon and Jigaon are their important settlements. Sherdukpen traditions about their origin and migration consist of myths and legends. According to these traditions, the direction of their original migration is indicated from the north. It is also said that they came from the north-west in view of the cultural affinities they probably had with the people of Bhutan.

The Sherdukpens related a story that a Tibetan prince married an Assamese princess and had two sons by her. The first son ruled in Bhutan and the second son named Japtang Bura became the king of the area now occupied by the Sherdukpens. The present-day Sherdukpens are said to be the descendants of Japtang Bura and his followers.

“Japtang Bura first came to But and Khoina, and found that the neighbouring tribes (the Akas and the Mijis) were at constant war. He toured the entire area including Buragaon and Jamiri, and promised to give salt, cloth and cattle to the Aka king, Nimmo Chhonjee, provided he maintained law and order in his area. He held out similar promises to the Miji king and the Monpa chiefs so as to ensure peace and harmony in the area. It was possibly the payment of these tributes that brought these tribes on the side of the Sherdukpens in their feuds with the Thembang people over the issue of forced inter-marriage. These tributes continued to be paid for a very long time and were stopped only about in early forties.

“The details of the payments to the Mijis were as follows: Each of the six Miji kings received annually one bullock, one load each of salt and *jabrang* spice, two goats and a cowrie waist-band. In addition, three cows, one goat, one large and one small piece of *endi* cloth and one dao were paid every fifth year. This payment was for the Miji chiefs alone; their followers, however, used to raid the houses of well-to-do men and take away whatever they could lay their hands on.

“To each of the Aka kings, the Sherdukpens paid an annual tribute of three bullocks, ten woven bags, one large and six small pieces of cloth, ten loads of salt, twelve loads of *jabrang* seed, twenty-three fowls and two goats.

“The Sherdukpens also paid every three years to the local Monpa rulers of Tawang 18 pieces of *endi* cloth, 20 seers of rice and 40 seers of paddy. The Tawang Monpa officials made return gifts of coats, hats, shoes, blankets, and necklaces.

“Japtang Bura came to be held in high esteem by the neighbouring tribes, and was regarded as an apostle of peace.

“He afterwards shifted his capital from But to Rupa and, while there, he once went out hunting, in the course of which he chased a wild pig and overtook it near Doimara. There he met the Kacharis, from whom he came to know about his maternal grandfather, the Ahom king, who was then ruling from Sibsagar. Japtang Bura went there to meet the king who was so happy to see him that he ceded him all the land between the Dhansiri and the Gabru (Belsiri) rivers and its revenue. The Sherdukpen tradition of going to Doimara every winter is held to have started from this date.

“After his return from Doimara, Japtang Bura visited the Kalaktang area, where he soon

became popular and his influence began to be felt. There he met Lama Khambu Takha who had killed a man-eating snake and saved the people of the area from its depredations. He invited the Lama to visit the Sherdukpen territory once every three years in order to conduct worship and receive gifts from the king.

“When king Japtang Bura came to Thongthu (Rupa), he was accompanied by a large number of porters and servants, who formed his retinue. The descendants of the king himself are now called Thongs, while the descendants of the porters are called Chhaos. The villages of But, Rahung, Khudum and Khoina, according to the Sherdukpens, are inhabited entirely by the Chhaos. Whether this is correct or not, the inhabitants of these villages do have marked affinities with the Sherdukpens in their way of life, physical features, tradition of origin and marriage customs”.¹

The story alludes to a fact that the Sherdukpens came to their present area of settlement after the arrival of the Akas and Mijis in this region. As stated in the preceding quoted passage, the Sherdukpens are indeed in the habit of migrating down to the plains every winter, where they camp at Doimara. They now do so for trade and also avoidance of cold.

The descendants of Japtang Bura are even to this day known as raja or king to the neighbouring tribes. The people of Dirang call them *bapu* and the Akas and Mijis called them *thongli-thongcheng* meaning *raja*².

Dr Furer Haimendorf has however, given a slightly different account of the early history of the Sherdukpens. He writes:

“Tribal history traces their origin to a Tibetan prince Gyaptang by name, who is believed to have emigrated from Beyalung, the place of his birth, and to have established himself first at But, today Monpa village, where the ruins of a fort are still to be seen. Local history has that Gyaptang imposed his rule over a large area, including some territory in Assam, and received from the inhabitants a tax paid in grain.

“There can be no doubt that the Sherdukpens have old connections with Assam, for at Sapai Jergaon, near the border between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, there is still an area of 130 acre which remains under the control of Rupa, the Government of Assam levying no land-revenue on the area in question. Sherdukpens go there once a year and stay with the local people. Two new Sherdukpen settlements have sprung up in the same area.

“The Assamese used to refer to the Sherdukpens as the Sat Raja, i.e. the Seven rajas. Five of them were from Rupa and two from Shergaon, each representing one of the major clan”.³

SULUNG: The Sulungs live in very widely scattered and thinly populated villages, which are mostly situated in the northern part of the East Kameng District. The Sulung settlement extends also to the extreme north-western corner of the adjoining Lower Subansiri District.

1. R. R. P. Sharma, The Sherdukpens, (Shillong, 1961), pp.6-7

2. L.N.Chakravarty, Climpes of the Early History of Arunachal (Shillong, 1973). p.6

3. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh, (New Delhi, 1982), pp.172-173.

As noted by Dr Furer-Haimendorf, the Sulungs are believed to have been in the country when 'the other races' migrated in, and 'are of comparatively primitive racial type and are distinguished from all the other tribesmen by a pronounced prognathism'.¹ Indeed, there are reasons, as we shall see later, to believe that the Sulungs were the earliest migrants to this region. "The Sulungs have a tradition that originally they were in heaven but long ago they descended to earth and began to settle in a place where wild sago-palms were abundantly available and that place may be Sakmakhang, but according to the Buguns with whom they may have affinity, the place might be somewhere towards the north of present Chayengtajo in East Kameng District where the Sulungs and Khowas traditionally lived together. According to them they were the original inhabitants of north-eastern part of East Kameng District. When there was shortage of land for habitation due to the increase in the population then the Khowas and Sulungs migrated together from there towards the southeast in search of fertile land for cultivation and habitation. While coming down they settled together in a place named Sikhranrai. Though there is no written record about the route and time of their migration from their original place to Sikhranrai, the author has been told by the Buguns that they migrated to Sikhranrai about a thousand years ago along with the Sulungs. Sikhranrai, their first place of settlement in a new country was nearby the present Tenga valley area of West Kameng District. At Sikhranrai, the Buguns found the Sulungs a happy-go-lucky community and planned to get rid of the latter. With a view to avoiding the Sulungs, the Khowas offered some pop-corns to the Sulungs for sowing. Later the humble Sulungs sowed those pop-corns in their field, but after some months when no offshoots came out from those pop-corns, the Sulungs became very angry at the failure of their crops and went back to Sakmakhang thinking that Sikhranrai was not a suitable place for their settlement. Since then they have been inhabiting northeastern part of this district. A few of them in time migrated to Lower Subansiri District."²

Kirātas

Assam and its neighbouring hills came within the domain of the 'Mahabharata' in the pre-Christian era. The early people of the Brahmaputra valley and the hill tracts of what is now Arunachal Pradesh were known to the Vedic Aryans as Kirāta long before Christ. According to the Indologists, the term Kirata occurring first in the Yajurveda and subsequently in the Atharvaveda, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana and other ancient scriptures refer to the Indo-Mongoloid tribes living in the hills and mountains, particularly the Himalayas and in the north-eastern areas of India. "From the Yajurveda onwards, the mountain regions of North and North-eastern India — the Himalayas particularly, are well attested as the abode of the Kirātas. In the Mahabharata, the Kirātas are dwellers in the Himalayan regions, particularly in the Eastern Himalayas...

"We may be permitted to reconstruct the picture of the Kirātas or Early Mongoloid Movements on the soil of India right down to the beginning of the Christian era. They entered probably through Assam and their advent in the east might have been as old as that of the Aryans in the west, at some period before 1000 B.C. By that time they might have pushed along the Himalayan slopes as far west as the Eastern Panjab Hills. They came to be known to the Vedic Aryan as a cave-dwelling people from whom the Aryans

1. C.R.Stoner, The Sulung Tribes of the Assam Himalayas, published in Arunachal Research Bulletin, (Shillong, August 1972), p.1.

2. R.K.Deuri, The Sulungs, (Shillong, 1982), pp.6-7

obtained mountain produce like drugs and herbs and the *sōma* plant. The four books of the Vedas were compiled in all likelihood in the 10th century B.C., so that the passages in the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda mentioning the Kirātas are at least as old as that period. When the Mahabharata and the Ramayana were taking shape, between 500 B.C. to 400 A.D., particularly in the pre-Christian centuries, they had occupied the southern tracts of the Himalayas and the whole of North-eastern India, North Bihar contiguous to Nepal and to the north of the Ganges, the greater part of Bengal, and Assam, including the areas through which the Ganges (the Padma or Padda of the present day) passed into the sea. Eastern Nepal and the Lauhitya or the Brahmaputra valley were the lands specially connected with them.”¹

The Kirāta people of Assam, as observed by Dr S.K. Chatterji, ‘appear to have been of the great Tibeto-Burman tribe of the Bodos.’² According to him, the North-Assam tribes of the Adis, Akas, Nishis, Miris and Mishmis, as already mentioned, may also reasonably be identified with the Kirāta.³

In the Vedic literature the name Kirāta was also applied to a people living in the caves (*guha*) of mountains as it appears clearly from the dedication of the Kirāta to the caves in the Vajasaneyi Samhita and from the reference in the Atharva Veda to a Kirāta girl (*Kairatika*), who digs for a herbal remedy on the ridges of the mountains. In the Puranas, Kirāta are designated as ‘foresters’, ‘mountaineers’ etc. Kirāta appears to be a common name given to all the Indian tribes of Mongoloid origin. They are described in the Mahabharata as ‘gold-like’, i.e. yellow in colour unlike other pre-Aryan peoples. In the Ramayana, they are mentioned as pleasant-looking with hair done in pointed top-knots (cf. the hair-do of the Nishis, Bangnis, Hill-Miris and Apa Tanis) and shining like gold. Their yellow complexion evidently distinguished them from other peoples of India. They were experts in the art of weaving (as they still are), making cloth of various kinds. Their cotton and woollen fabrics were very much in demand among the civilized Hindus of the plains.

The Mahabharata bears eloquent testimony to the fact that the Kirāta of North-East India came into contact with the Vedic Aryans as far back as the Battle of Kurukshetra (c.900 B.C.). The *Sabhā Parva* (Book II) of the Mahabharata testifies that Bhagadatta, the King of Pragjyotisha (Kamarupa of Assam), with his army of Kirātas took part in the battle as an ally of the Kauravas. He was defeated by Arjuna and both the king and his Kirāta followers were compelled to pay tribute. Elsewhere in the Mahabharata, Bhagadatta is addressed as Shailalaya Raja or ‘the mighty king whose home is in the hills,’ and the Kirāta soldiers of his army are described as ‘as appeared to be in gold; their troops had the appearance of a forest of *Karnikaras* (with yellow flowers).’

The Greek classical literature also bears evidence that the north-eastern region of India was not wholly unknown to the author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (1st-2nd century A.D.) as also to Ptolemy. The *Geography of Ptolemy* (c.150 A.D.) states that *Serica*, a country probably located in Assam, is bounded on the east and the north by hills and forests where canes are used for bridges. Verily, there are wonderful cane-bridges in Arunachal Pradesh even today, and they display the superb craftsmanship and engineering skill typical

1. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kirāta-Jana-Krti*, (Calcutta, 1974), pp.30, 36-37.

2. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *The place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India*, (Gauhati, 1970), p.17.

3. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kirāta-Jana-Krti*, (Calcutta, 1974), p.38.

of its people. Although these vague allusions do not convey much about the land and the people, the Kirrhadae mentioned in the Periplus and the Kirrhadia of Ptolemy have an unambiguous reference to the country of the Kirātas extending from the far-off North-East India to South-East Bengal.

Account of Hiuen Tsang

Hiuen Tsang, the great Chinese traveller who came to Assam in about 642 A.D. during the reign of Bhaskaravarman, noted that the country of Kamarupa was ruled over by a Hindu king and its extent was about 10,000 li (nearly 1,7000 miles) in circumference. He observed that the manners of the people were simple and honest. The men were of small stature and their complexion a dark yellow. Their language differed a little from that of mid-India.

The boundary of Kamarupa as described by Hiuen Tsang suggests that it included almost the whole of erstwhile Assam. Incidentally, the Yogini Purana (c. 8th century A.D.) states that Kamarupa extended right up to the Himalayan range in the north. The description of the people as having short stature and yellow complexion may be taken as proving their Kirata or Indo-Mongoloid origin, more particularly their Bodo characteristics.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Ahom Ascendancy

The political scene of north-eastern India in the late medieval period was dominated by the Ahoms, who ruled in Assam for long six centuries from 1228 A.D. to 1826 A.D. Our sources for this period are mainly a series of valuable chronicles known as the Ahom Buranjis. These buranjis are written records, which contain *inter alia* a wealth of information about the political relations the Ahoms had with the tribes of the hill tracts now known as Arunachal Pradesh, and these records throw a flood of light on the later medieval history of this territory. Indeed, from the days of the Ahoms onwards we can clearly trace the main course of political developments that took place in the north-eastern region. Although the buranjis do not give us a connected account, they are precise as historical documents. The written history of this part of the country evidently begins with the advent and ascendancy of the Ahoms.

The Ahom invasion of Assam led by Sukapha began in 1228 A.D. They came from North Burma crossing the Patkai range, and made steady advances along the course of the Noa-Dihing river and then forced their way along the western course of Brahmaputra. In their bid to gain supremacy in Upper Assam the Ahoms had to measure their swords first with the Chutiyas¹ and the Kacharis, the two powerful Bodo tribes of the north-eastern Assam, and in a series of battles lasting for centuries they came out victorious. Consequent on the decline of the Chutiyas and also of the Kacharis the Ahoms gradually annexed the whole strip of land from Sadiya up to the area east of the Kameng (Bhareli) river on the north bank of the Brahmaputra fringed by the hill ranges of Arunachal Pradesh, and in doing so they gradually came into contact with the northern tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, such as the Mishmis, Adis, Nishis, Bangnis, Hill Miris and Akas, and established extensive relations with them.

1. The name Chutiya is also spelt as 'Sootiya'.

The works of the Muslim writers and historians of this period contain valuable information about the political relations between the Ahoms and the northern tribes. One such writer was Shihabuddin, also known as Talish, who accompanied a Mogul expedition to Assam in 1662-63 led by Mir Jumla during the reign of Jayadhwaj Singha (1648-63). Mir Jumla's forces advanced to the fringes of the present Arunachal Pradesh bordering Assam. Shihabuddin's *Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah* conveys that 'although most of the inhabitants of the neighbouring hills paid no taxes to the Raja of Assam yet they accepted his sovereignty and obeyed some of his commands'.

Another document containing an account of the interview which the Assamese ambassador Madhabcharan Kataki had with the Mogul commander Raja Ram Singh refers to the tribal legions of the Ahom army and it declares, 'Numerous chieftains of the mountainous regions have become our willing allies in the campaign. They consist of a total strength of three lakhs of soldiers... Their participation in this campaign has been directly sanctioned by His Majesty.'

Ahom-Bangni Relations

The Ahoms, as already stated, gained gradual control of the entire stretch of level area on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. In the adjoining northern hills and valleys extending westward of the Subansiri river to the bank of the Bhareli in Kameng lived the Nishis and Bangnis. The Nishis of Subansiri and the Bangnis of Kameng area, as shown earlier, cognate tribes belonging to one great tribal fraternity, and both of them appear to have been commonly mentioned in the Ahom chronicles as 'Dafla'¹. The Bangnis and Nishis living across the northern borders of the Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam were previously referred to as 'Paschima Daflas' or 'Western Daflas' and 'Tagin Daflas' or 'Eastern Daflas' respectively. They were also called by various other names. The westerners, however, call themselves Bangni, while their kinsmen the easterners are known as Nishi. The term 'Tagin Dafla' used to mean the Nishis is obviously a misnomer, for the Tagins and the Nishis are two different tribes, although they have cultural affinities with each other. It was unlikely for the Ahoms to come across the Tagins living rather remotely in a formidable tract of the present Upper Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh.

Michell observed as early as 1883 that "The Daphlas (Nishis) extend from the hills to the east of the Bhoroli (Kameng) river to the mountains on the east of the Ranga (Panyor) river (in the Lower Subansiri District), that is to say, about 60 miles from east to west".²

As the Bangnis and the Nishis are the western and eastern sections of one and the same tribal community and both of them were previously addressed as 'Dafla' meaning Nishi, they may be conveniently referred to as Western Nishi and Eastern Nishi respectively. The single word Nishi is commonly used in this context for both of them.

1. N. B. The term 'Dafla' was in former times used to denote, though wrongly, the Nishis. This foreign appellation given to them might have carried with it a derogatory undertone, and it has now been discarded.

2. John F. Michell, *The North-East Frontier of India* (Delhi, Reprint 1973, p. 255, (words within brackets are insertions in the quoted passage)

Formerly the Nishis were divided into many clans under numerous chiefs, for which they were incapable of combined action except casually. As observed by Robinson and Dalton, there were as many as 238 Nishi gams or chiefs who received since 1836-37 a compensation amounting to Rs.2,543 for the loss of *posa* granted to them by the Ahom rulers. The Nishi owed allegiance to an oligarchy of chiefs numbering from two or three to thirty or forty in a clan. Their villages consisted of long houses, and a house was occupied by related families. They were usually attached to the house rather than to the village.

Yet, of all the Arunachal tribes met by the Ahoms, the Nishis were found to be the most formidable. According to Mohammad Kazim, a writer and a contemporary of Aurangzeb, the Nishis were an independent people. In fact, the Ahoms were never quite successful in their attempts to reduce the Nishis to complete submission. When king Udayaditya Singha (1670-72) wanted to send a force to punish the Nishis for having taken away from the plains a number of men, women and children, his celebrated Prime Minister Atan Buragohain said that it was impossible to capture the Nishis. The Nishis in their inaccessible hill abodes were invincible indeed.

A work written in the 17th century on the Political Geography of the Assam Valley contains the names of tribes who were tributaries of the Ahom kings. The Nishis, Akas and Bhutias were referred to in this list. It also makes mention of the tributes paid by them and the passes by which they descended to the plains. The work further gives description of certain villages of the Mikirs and Miris which were under direct Ahom rule.

The Ahom Buranjis made the first mention of the Nishis as allies of the Koches who invaded Assam in 1562 A.D. After the withdrawal of the Koches, the Ahom king Sukhampha, Khora Raja (1552-1603) brought the lost territories on the north bank of the Brahmaputra up to the river Bhareli directly under the Ahom administration and a new officer called Salal Gohain was appointed to administer it. This measure was taken to keep the Nishis and the Akas in check.

The Buranjis refer to several Ahom expeditions into the Nishi country. The first was directed against the Western Nishis in 1614, which ended in a total defeat of the Ahoms. In order to resist the Nishis, King Pratap Singha (1603-41) constructed a fort called Dafala-garh in the Darrang District which was also known as Rajgarh (i.e. royal fortification). He also granted the Nishis right of *posa*, that is the right to receive payments from certain specified villages in the foothills, provided they paid annual tribute to the king. *Katakis* were appointed for this purpose. A number of *paiks* settled in the duars or passes were assigned to the Nishis in order to supply them with certain necessities of life. These *paiks*, who were actually cultivators working under an officer called Dafalaparia Phukan, came to be known as '*Dafala-bahatias*'. This was a special privilege enjoyed by the Nishis.

The records of 1825 as quoted by Mackenzie testify that the Nishis were entitled to receive, from every ten house at the foothills, one double cloth, one single cloth, one handkerchief, one *dao*, ten heads of horned cattle and four seers of salt.

Mackenzie also noted that 'the different clans of Nishis did not interfere with each other on the plains. Each knew the villages to which it had to look for *posa*. But they claimed a right to collect from their allotted *paiks* wherever these might migrate, and they demanded full dues whether the *paiks* could pay or not. This exacting spirit made them very difficult to deal with'.¹

1. Alexander Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier of India, (Delhi, Reprint 1979), p.27.

Despite the grant of *posa* the Nishis could not be prevented from committing raids in the plains of Assam. In 1646, during the reign of Sutyinpha also called Naria Raja (1644-48), a punitive expedition was sent against the so-called Eastern Nishis to avenge the outrages committed by them. The expedition failed and a second expedition against the same tribe was undertaken in 1648. This time the Nishis were assisted by the Hill Miris. After a fierce battle the Ahoms compelled the allied force to retreat. The Nishis, however, proved that they were not to be subdued easily. They yielded at length only when they faced an acute scarcity of food.

The Nishis reciprocated the help rendered by the Hill Miris by taking side with them in their rebellion against the Ahoms during the reign of Chakradhwaj Singha (1663-70).

A section of the Eastern Nishis rose in revolt in 1672 and refused to pay tribute to the Ahom king. They raided a village called Taiban in the Lakhimpur District, and carried off a number of people. Some of the Buranjis assigned the cause of the raid to the extreme sufferings of the Nishis for want of food. As mentioned earlier, the reigning king Udayaditya Singha despatched a retaliatory force against the Nishis, ignoring the caution of his wise Prime Minister. The expedition dragged on for some time until it ended in a failure with heavy loss of lives.

Hostilities between the Ahoms and the Nishis continued until the latter came to terms during the reign of Rudra Singha (1696-1714), the mighty king of the Ahoms. The Nishis agreed to supply six hundred soldiers to the Ahom army, four hundred from their western section and two hundred from the eastern section. The peace and friendship, however, did not last long. The Nishis committed a series of raids in the plains of Assam following the death of Rudra Singha. The Eastern Nishis were subdued in 1717 by the next Ahom king Siva Singha (1714-44), and an embankment was raised along the border of the hills to foil future incursions of the Nishis. To counteract the raids of the Western Nishis, King Rajeswar Singha (1751-69) imposed a blockade on them by closing the passes leading to their hills, and fortifying the strategic points along the border. Consequently, the Nishis led a deputation to the king, and gave him presents. They also returned the captives taken away previously. But the arrest of the Nishi representatives by the king resulted in the renewal of hostilities, and finally in the restoration of the right of *posa* to the Nishis.

When the Moamaria rebellion broke out in Assam in 1769 and continued till the early part of the 19th century, the Nishis made a common cause with the rebels in their bid to overthrow the Ahom domination. They rose in sporadic revolts and were said to have devastated a couple of villages on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. During the reign of Kamaleswar Singha (1795-1811) they once proceeded as far as Duimuni-sil in Koliabor in Assam, but were defeated by the Ahoms. The rebellion eventually subsided.

Ahom-Aka Relations

The Akas are renowned in history. An energetic tribe as described in the old records, the Akas were a force to be reckoned with. They were mentioned as consisting of two clans: Hazarikhowa and Kapaschor, which in fact were the nicknames given by the plains people to the Kutsun and Kovatsun sections respectively of the Akas. Each of these clans was organised under a raja or chief.

The Hazarikhawas had a right to *posa*, granted by the Ahoms. This right formally entitled them to get a share of the produce of the Charduar area in the plains of Assam. The Kapaschors had no such rights, but they managed to extort certain contributions from the

cultivators of the plains. These relations of the Akas with the plains seem to have earned for their two main clans the Kutsun and Kovatsun the sobriquets of Hazarikhowa and Kapaschor respectively.

The Akas were a small tribe, yet they wielded considerable power and authority over a wide region. They were for many years dreaded by the neighbouring people, particularly of Charduar in the Darrang District of Assam. Led by their chief, Tagi Raja, the Kapaschors made a series of daring raids upon the plains in the early decades of the last century. They long defied the might of both the Ahom and the British Governments. In their activities the Akas were greatly helped by their powerful kinsmen, the Mijis, who reinforced their ranks when occasions so demanded.

It is important to note that the buranjis of the Ahoms make no mention of any direct confrontation between the Ahoms and the Akas during the whole period of Ahom rule in Assam. The Ahoms seem to have befriended the Akas by conceding to them the right of *posa*.

Ahom Policy

The Ahoms, as already stated, had extensive political relations with the northern tribes. Special officers were appointed by them to keep close contact with the hill tribes and also to regulate the relations between the tribesmen and the villagers living in the plains along the foothills belt. In order to induce the tribal people to settle on peaceful life, they granted them what is called *posa* and other concessions in return for tributes paid by them to the Ahom kings. The Ahoms, however, in exercise of their sovereignty sent out punitive expeditions to the hills and imposed blockades when there were serious raids and outrages committed by the tribes whom they tried to contain in their own hills. They adopted and successfully pursued a policy of conciliation backed by force.

The Ahoms granted the Nishis and the Akas the right of *posa*. The word *posa* literally means a collection or subscription for a common purpose. In the olden days, the various hill tribes from the north would descend annually to the plains to receive subscriptions from certain border villages. The subscription raised by a village to meet the customary demands of the hillmen was paid in kind. 'It appears that the quantities demanded from each village or hamlet were fixed and well known to both parties; and as no individual inhabitant of a plains village was liable for any particular article, the whole amount was raised collectively by a village subscription, or *posa*'.

After the British took over possession of Upper Assam from the Ahom king Purandar Singha (1832-38) in 1838, the payment of *posa* in kind was commuted for fixed money payments. In 1852, the Nishis were finally induced to commute their claims for a money payment. The system of *posa* introduced by the Ahom king Pratap Singha (1603-41) to deal effectively with the northern tribes and maintain peace and order in the country was in fact followed by the British for many years as a legacy until the payment was finally stopped from the forties of the present century by order of the government.

The policy of the Ahoms towards the hill tribes, as we have seen, was conciliatory. But they made full use of their political authority to make the policy effective. In exercise of their sovereign power, they mediated and settled disputes and regulated relations between the tribal people and those of the plains. The part played by them as a unifying force is of great historical importance. In fact, the Ahoms controlled and shaped the course of history of the north-eastern region they ruled over till the British annexation.

MODERN PERIOD

The British gained ground in Assam as the decline of the Ahoms began towards the end of the eighteenth century. Misrule of some weak and incompetent kings, internal dissensions and uprisings in different parts of Assam had shaken the very foundation of the Ahom kingdom. The serious turmoil caused by the Moamaria rebellion was further aggravated by the Burmese incursions in Assam (1816-24), which finally led to the downfall of the Ahoms. The devastated Brahmaputra Valley fell into a deplorable state of chaos, disorder and extreme sufferings of the people. The Burmese were driven out with the help of the British, but the Ahoms were then a spent force and there was no effective administration. In the absence of a strong central authority, the stage was set for the British to annex Assam gradually. The appearance of the British as the ruling power was indeed a great turning point of history. It was decided that the Brahmaputra Valley with the exclusion of two tracts in Upper Assam, namely Sadiya and Matak,¹ would be provisionally administered as a British province. In 1823, David Scott was appointed Agent to the Governor General for administration of the whole eastern frontier. By the Treaty of Yandabo (1826) Assam was ceded to the British. Eventually, in 1838, as already mentioned, the British took over the administration of Upper Assam from Raja Purandar Singha, the tributary ruler of that region, who was for his misrule deposed and pensioned. 'When the British took over the control of Assam from Purander Singha in 1838,' write Verrier Elwin, "they found that the warlike tribes of the frontier had become even more aggressive as a result of the breakdown of the authority of Government, and for the remainder of the century they largely followed the policy of the Ahom kings. They did what they could to make friends with the tribes; they protected the plains people against their raids; they established outposts in the foothills, and from time to time imposed blockades and made punitive expeditions into the interior. In addition, a few daring explorers penetrated deep into the mountains, but it is doubtful whether they had any very great effect upon the outlook of the people, most of whom continued to resent visitors".²

British - Bangni Relations

During the entire period of the Ahom rule in Assam, the Bangnis called 'Paschima Daffas' or Western Nishis and their kinsmen the Eastern Nishis of Subansiri were as we have seen, restive and turbulent. They enjoyed the right of *posa* conceded to them by the Ahoms, and they continued to assert this right during the rule of the British, who had no other option than to acknowledge it. The Nishis were said to be so exacting and vehement that the British Government 'did not for many years see its way to insisting upon commutation of *posa* where the clans objected to it.' It was further observed by Mackenzie that 'from the beginning of the British occupation of Assam they gave much trouble to the local officers, and many fruitless efforts were made to induce them to resign the right of collecting *posa* directly from the *ryots* (subjects). The intention of the government was to make money payments in exchange for *posa* so as to relieve the *ryots* and evade many complications that were inherent in the system of *posa*. With this object in view they endeavoured to persuade the tribes to agree to commutation of *posa*, but the government offer was not acceptable to the tribesmen, probably for the reason that at that time money had no exchange value in the interior areas where barter of goods was the mode of transaction. 'It was not however, till 1852 that the *posa* was finally commuted for a money payment.'

1. Matak lay to the south of Sadiya between the Brahmaputra and the Burhi-Dihing, and was inhabited by people belonging mainly to the Moamaria Sect, Sadiya and Matak tracts were annexed to the British territory in 1842.

2. Verrier Elwin, A Philosophy for NEFA, (Shillong, 1964), p.2

The Western Nishis of Charduar, who were probably in alliance with the Akas under Tagi Raja, committed a raid at Orung in Darrang in April 1835. As a measure of punishment, they were forbidden to enter the plains to collect *posa*. In the following month of November, the Nishis made a retaliatory attack on that place and carried off a number of Assamese subjects. A punitive expedition of a small force was sent out to the hills, which succeeded in rescuing the captives and also arresting two Nishi gams or chiefs. Consequently, eight out of thirteen Nishi clans north of Charduar made their submission to Captain Matthie, the officer in charge of Darrang. "They agreed to resign the right of collecting direct from the *ryots*, and consented for the future to receive the articles of *posa* from the *malguzar* or revenue officer of the villages according to a revised tariff. Any complaints they might have against the *malguzars* they promised to refer to the Magistrate. They undertook not to aid the enemies of the Government, and to help to arrest offenders"¹. Thus the Western Nishis of Charduar were the first to come to a settlement.

The remaining five chiefs were successfully negotiated by Lieutenant Vetch, who succeeded Matthie in charge of Darrang, and in 1837 they also surrendered their right of collecting *posa* directly.

It was, however, not found easy to bring the Nishis of Naoduar to terms. Despite a consent given by them in 1837 that they would receive their dues through the *malguzars*, they claimed a right to two-thirds of all the revenues paid by the *paiks* called '*Dafala-bahatias*' as previously mentioned. They became so turbulent and defiant that the payment of *posa* was for the time being completely stopped. Unexpectedly though, this measure had the desired effect on the concerned clans, who preferred a settlement to loss of *posa*. It appeared that the Nishis of the remote higher regions apprehending a loss of regular payments, had insisted the Nishis of the lower areas near the plains on submission being made.

Up to 1852 the Nishis had been a source of frequent anxiety to the Government, for which it became necessary to establish military posts along the frontier to secure its peace. From 1852, however, the Nishis, much to the relief of the local officials and somewhat to their surprise, settled quietly down, many of them devoting their attention to agriculture and residing permanently in the plains. In the year 1853-54, at the time of Mills' inspection of Assam, the following payments were made to them:

	Rs.	as	p
From Tezpur Treasury to Nishis of Charduar and Naoduar	2,494	0	0
From Lakhimpur Treasury to Nishis of Charduar	1,243	14	5
From Lakhimpur Treasury to Nishis of Banskotta	392	1	6

With 24 maunds of salt to the last named in lieu of certain *hath* or market dues. The tribe remained quiet and gave no cause of anxiety up to 1870'.¹

1. Alexander Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier of India, (Delhi, Reprint 1979), p.28.

1. Alexander Mackenzie, the North-East Frontier of India, (Delhi, Reprint 1979), p.29.

In 1870, there were, however, reports of two incidents of outrages committed by the Nishis of the upper regions on certain Nishi villages in Naoduar within the district of Darrang. Besides these, the Eastern Nishis perpetrated a massive raid on the village Amtola near Gohpur in Darrang in February 1872. The Administration Report of 1872-73 described the raid to be 'too serious to be overlooked.' Directed against the Nishi settlers in the plains, the raiders sacked the village, killed two persons and carried off some 44 Western Nishi villagers. To punish the offenders, all the passes leading to the country of the Eastern Nishis to the east of Darrang and along the Lakhimpur districts of Assam were blockaded, and annual payments to them were stopped. 'The cause assigned for the outrage is a curious one. The hillmen had, it seems, been much troubled by an epidemic, which they believed to have been imported from the plains. They called upon the Nishis of the plains to compensate them for the loss they had sustained in children and adults from the disease; and because the Nishis of Amtola declined to meet their wishes, they came down to recoup themselves by seizing them all as slaves. The Eastern Nishis refuse to surrender the captives save on ransom paid, and even threaten further raids if the blockade is maintained'.¹ The blockade, though strictly maintained, having proved ineffectual, a military force was despatched into the hills in 1874-75. It succeeded in obtaining the release of the captives without any active opposition being offered by the Nishis.

The later history of the British Nishi relations up to forties of the present century is comparatively uneventful except for some sporadic raids and endemic feuds raging now and then, and the government taking stern punitive measures to avenge serious crimes for maintenance of law and order.

The Annual Administration Report for 1927-28 sent by Captain G.A. Nevill, Political Officer (1914-1928) of the Western Section, North-East Frontier Tract later known in 1919 as the Balipara Frontier Tract, shows how a friendly relationship was gradually growing. It is interesting to quote the following from his report:

"As years have passed by, the Akas, Dufflas and the other tribes have gained confidence and learnt to appreciate the benefits of the new order. The people are increasingly bringing their disputes for settlement and they fully appreciate the fact that their grievances are sympathetically listened to and dealt with when possible.

"This growing friendliness has brought about the desire for a still closer relationship. Nowadays the constant request from all sections of the hills is to establish a garrison in their country. Wherever I go, I am asked to plant a boundary post so that others may know this portion is under my immediate control. This request is not made by the small villager frightened of his stronger neighbours but invariably by the wealthiest and most important men in the villages. The reason being that in Duffla land a most terrible state of unrest prevails; amongst the tribes there is no cohesion or combination. Every village is an independent unit, and even in the village there may be several factions...There is no certainty of life and no peace. All Dufflas realise the benefit of peace, but owing to their entire lack of combination they are unable to make a united effort to stop this anarchy. I have constantly been asked to help one faction against another. Of course such action is out of the question. I have many times called a meeting of headmen and explained the benefits of a miniature

1. Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, (Delhi, Reprint 1979), p.31.

League of Nations. Such meetings always end with the request that I should come and administer affairs for them I have constantly arbitrated between two villages and have been able to patch up quarrels and effect peace which in some cases has been lasting.

"However with the headquarters sited in the plains cut off from the hills from June to October the Political Officer cannot in any way administer the Hill Tracts nor can he exercise very much control in inter-village or inter-tribal affairs. I am quite convinced that the only way to effectively deal with the tribes of this Frontier is to make roads and establish outposts at different points in the Hills.

"A small garrison with a British Officer, a dispensary and a Sub-Assistant Surgeon should be attached to every post..."¹

British-Monpa Relations

Mackenzie in his book 'History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes, of the North-East Frontier of Bengal (1884)' has devoted one full chapter to what he entitled 'The Extra-Bhutan Bhutias. The title is rather curious in that the appellation was seemingly used to denote the Monpas and the Sherdukpens, for the reason that they resemble the neighbouring Bhutanese in some ways.

The British relations with the so-called Bhutias of the present West Kameng District were entwined with the question of holding the *duars* or passes to the north of Darrang leading to the interior of the hills. A flourishing trade between Assam and Tibet was carried on through these *duars*. The Kuriapara *duar* was a principal channel of this trade. An annual fair was held in this area at Udalguri in the Darrang District of Assam, where traders from Lhasa and all other parts of Tibet brought down valuable goods. During the Ahom rule, the so-called Bhutias of the Kuriapara *duar* under the sath Rajas, or seven kings were permitted by an agreement to hold the *duar* for eight months in a year. Accordingly the *duars* remained under the control of the Ahom Government for the rest of the year. 'These Sath Rajas called them-selves subordinates of the Tawang Raja or Chief.' Between 1830 and 1840, the so-called Bhutias gave the British authorities as much trouble as their neighbours on the west, and as a result of some outrages committed by them, the Kuriapara *Duar* was resumed by the authorities of Darrang. "In the cold season of 1843-44, the Sath Rajas, in company with representatives of the Towang Durbar, had an interview with Captain Gordon, Assistant to the Governor General's Agent, and formally relinquished all claim to the lands of the Kuriapara *Dwar* in consideration of an annual payment of Rs. 5,000; this sum very nearly representing the amount which they used to realise from the tract by direct collection during the eight months of the year for which they held it".²

In 1844, the Chief of Tawang, called the Deb Raja, and his dependents made a submission to British authorities and agreed to recognise the Government Jurisdictions. An annuity of Rs. 5,000 was paid to them on the condition that they would abide by all the terms of their undertakings.³ Besides them, other chiefs of the so-called Bhutiyas also undertook in the same year 'never to join any person or persons that may be at enmity with the British Government; and furthermore to oppose every effort made against the Government...' They also agreed 'to act up to any orders they may get from the British authorities.' On these conditions as well as of an assurance of good behaviour, they were given a monthly pension.

1. Sir Robert Reid, History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam, (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), pp.291-292.

2. Alexander Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier of India, (Delhi, Reprint 1979). p.16.

3. The text of this undertaking was published in 1862 in C.U. Aitchison's 'A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads' (Volume I), pp.145-146.

The relations of the government with the Thalong Bhutia' tribes as existing in 1867 were stated to 'have for many years been perfectly amicable, and limited mainly to payment of the annual stipend, and the commercial intercourse of the Udalguri fair.' The Assam Administration Report for 1879-80 bears a clear evidence to the existence of friendly relations between the British authorities and a group of the so-called Bhutias. The Annual Report for 1885-86 of the Deputy commissioner, Darrang States that the Tawang representative attended the *darbar* (council) held by him, where a dispute between the traders of Tawang and the Kuriapara people over the question of exchange of salt for rice was *settled*. The Tawang representative received his annual pension of Rs. 5,000 at this *darbar*. He had also informed the *darbar* of the economic conditions prevailing in Tawang at that time. This incident testifies that the administrative jurisdiction of the government was exercised as far as the international boundary in Tawang and Tawang's acceptance of the British sovereignty.

Captain F.M. Bailey was the first British officer to visit Tawang. His report on 'Explorations on the North-East Frontier 1913' states :

Monyul (*the lower land*) consists of the Tawang chu, down to the Bhutan Frontier, the Nyamjang valley and the Dirang valley as well as some valleys south of this down to the plains. The Monpas are distinct in many ways from the Tibetans. Tibetans as a rule do not live below 10,000 feet and prefer high altitudes whereas the Monpas live at altitudes between 4,000 and 10,000 feet. Their language is distinct from Tibetan though they have many Tibetan words : they say that their language is nearer to the Bhutanese of Eastern Bhutan than to Tibetan. We usually found one or two people in the Monpas villages who could speak Tibetan. At Trimo (Khrimu) the people all speak Tibetan well. The people had cushions for us to sit on-they also grow peach trees on which we found excellent fruit. Both in the nature of the country they inhabit, customs, dress and method of building house the Monpas are very distinct from the Tibetans and resemble more the inhabitants of Bhutan and Sikkim. Their country is low-lying and well-wooded and their villages large and prosperous.

"In Captain Bailey's report there is a slight inaccuracy. Dirang is described as a part of Monyul whereas actually it lies south of Sela. The Tawang gumpa and extensive taxation rights south of Sela but Monyul itself refers to the present area of Tawang which lies wedged between Bhutan and Tibet, connected with the rest of the country by the Sela Pass..."¹

In the early part of 1914 Captain Nevill, Political Officer at the head of the 'Aka Promenade' visited Tawang and other areas of Kameng further south inhabited by the Monpas and the Sherdukpens. His report contains detailed description of the conditions obtaining in these areas and suggestions for their better administration. He observed that the condition of the Tawang Monpas, more especially of those south of the Sela, was one of extreme poverty. They were greatly harassed by the Lobas (or Lopas), who are supposed to be either Mijis or Akas. They were also oppressed by the monastic authorities of Tawang, who imposed on them excessive and unjust taxation, which was collected in kind. In order to ameliorate the conditions of the Monpas, Nevill suggested that (1) the depredation of the Lobas must be stopped and police posts be established at Dirang and Rupa and possibly in the Aka country to give protection to the Monpas, and (2) the value of the supplies

1. Neeru Nanda, Tawang - The Land of Mon, (New Delhi, 1982) p. 2.

drawn by the monastery from the district should be carefully assessed so as to subsidise the monastery on the basis of this assessment. He further suggested that the annual pension of Rs 5,000/- paid by the government should be used for the Tawang monastery and not sent to the Drepung monastery in Lhasa to which the former owed religious obligations. He also made an important recommendation that an officer should be stationed at Tawang for effective administration.

At this time the World War of 1914-18 overshadowed the developments in this North-East Frontier Tract, and the administrative measures suggested by Nevill lost their immediacy. Sir Archdale Earle, the Chief Commissioner of Assam (1912-1918), reserved his recommendations on the proposals put forward by Nevill as he understood that 'the Government of India were averse from anything in the shape of a forward move upon the frontier at the present moment. He also observed that 'the country awaited a more advanced form of government for proper development.¹

The Annual Administration Report of the Balipara Frontier Tract for the year 1918-19 contains information about administration of Tawang by the Political Officer representing the Govt. of India. That the Political Officer held the administrative charge of the entire area is borne out by the facts that he regulated the inter-tribal relations of the Monpas sent regular reports on the local economic conditions and received complaints from the people of Rupa and Shergaon requesting him to redress their grievances.

As earlier stated the traditional and customary boundary of India in the Eastern Sector obtained added sanction when the Indo-Tibetan Agreement of 24-25 March, 1914 was concluded.

The Chief Secretary of Assam in a letter dated the 17th September 1936 to the Political Officer of Balipara Frontier Tract stated, "The Tibet Conference of 1914 resulted in the delimitation of the Indo-Tibetan frontier from the eastern frontier of Bhutan to the Isu Raji pass on the Irrawaddy-Salween water parting. The line, which was accepted by the Government of Tibet, was demarcated on maps then specially prepared, and is known as the Mc Mahon Line. Sir Henry Mc Mahon recommended in his memorandum that while great care should be taken to avoid friction with the Tibetan Government and the vested interests of the Tawang monastery, an experienced British officer should proceed to the western part of the area south of the Line to settle its future administration."²

The government could not give immediate effect to McMahon's recommendation for extension of administration in the Tawang area, which was within the Indian jurisdiction, due mainly to the exigencies of the World War of 1914-18 demanding prompt attention. The importance of the recommendation was emphasised in a letter of May 1937 written by the Governor of Assam to the Government of India, which *inter alia* stated that 'the time has now come when the policy advocated in 1914 but so long held in abeyance should be carried out', and an officer should proceed to Tawang.

After further consideration it was decided that, as a preliminary, a small expedition should go up to Tawang. The expedition led by Captain G.S. Lightfoot, Political Officer, Balipara Frontier Tract reached Tawang on 30 April 1938. He sent a full report on the condition prevailing in Tawang and suggested concretely that the Tibetan Government should be asked to withdraw their officials because only with the departure of these officials would automatically

1. Sir Robert Reid, History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam, (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), p.289.

2. Sir Robert Reid, History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam, (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), p.294.

disappear their exactions of tribute and forced labour, the oppression which the Monpas bitterly resented. He also made a strong plea that the Tibetan officials should be withdrawn from the Tawang monastery belonging to the Monpas, for as he pointed out, 'so inextricably are State and religion intermingled in Tibet that till the Tibetan monastic officials are withdrawn, Tibetan influence and intrigue must persist in the surrounding country'.

The acting Governor accepted in general Captain Lightfoot's proposals. In September 1938, he forwarded these proposals with his recommendations to the Government of India. Eventually, it was decided in July 1939 that the question of future policy should be determined after the expiry of one year. Meanwhile, the Second World War began, and the whole issue remained again in abeyance.

It may be noted incidentally that in December 1938 an expedition visited the Miji-Aka village of Nakhu in order to warn them that raiding and taking tribute from the Monpas of the Dirang-dzong area must stop. In 1914, an Assam Rifles outpost was established at Dirang, and Mr. Mills, the then Adviser to the Governor of Assam, visited Dirang-dzong in May 1945.

The question of Tawang was engaging government's attention for quite a long time past, and at last in 1950 after the independence the Government of India decided to take effective steps. An expedition led by Major Bob Khathing, the then Assistant Political Officer, was sent to Tawang in 1951. He succeeded in establishing the headquarters of an Assistant Political Officer at Tawang, which from then on came under regular administration. The fact that Indian jurisdiction extends over Tawang was soon realised by the local Tibetan officials, who gradually withdrew from the area. In 1959, an Additional Political Officer was posted to Tawang.

British - Miji Relations

The Mijis of the Bichom and other valleys north of the Aka territory went unnoticed for a long period of time. The early British records refer to them cursorily. But, the records, however, scrappy, reveal that the Mijis were a powerful tribe, a strong ally of the Akas. The Akas seem to have depended largely on the Mijis for the success of their daring raids and their alliance proved to be formidable. The Monpas, in particular, who were their western neighbours, suffered long for the plundering raids and outrages committed by the Mijis. They also exacted tributes from the Sherdukpens and the Monpas of the Digien valley. The Mijis were comparatively a small tribal community, but strangely enough they dominated over some of their neighbours, whom they practically put under their subjection. They lived in some 25 villages, the chief among them were Nakhu and Kujjalong.

Hesselmeyer wrote about the Mijis in 1868 in relation to the Akas thus:

"The importance which attaches to the Akas is first the bad name which they bear among the people of the valley who inhabit the tracts of country bordering on the Aka hills. For the Akas, few as they are in number, make up for this deficiency by being bold and daring. Next in importance is their situation between the people of the valley of Assam and the powerful and very numerous clans of the Miji tribe. The Mijis, it would seem, are not in the habit of visiting Assam, except only one small Chief; but they highly prize the silk and cotton cloth the Akas are able to procure from the plains, and for which these demand from the Mijis exorbitant prices. As a third cause of their importance may be adduced the fact that... they know how to make themselves formidable through the influence they manage to exercise over the Mijis, whose countless hosts they would

be able without much difficulty to lead any day against any foe."¹ Sometime later in 1884 Mackenzie observed that 'with the aid of the Mijis, a fierce and cognate race in the interior, the Akas long defied the power of the Towang Deo (*the Chief of Tawang called the Deb Raja*) in the hills.'

Captain Nevill visited the Miji villages in the Bichom valley early in 1914, and left the following account:

"The Mijis are very like the Akas in most things, but have no Chief; each village is the unit having each its own council and headman, who settle all the external and internal affairs of the village. There is, however, a good deal of tribal spirit amongst the Mijis; there are practically no inter village quarrellings, and in affairs concerning the whole community, the different village representatives meet together and talk the matter over. Against a common enemy, I think there would be a solid combination² Nevill also visited the Monpa villages of But and Konia, the people of which he described as 'a miserable lot... entirely under the thumb of the Mijis who make them cultivate for them... very poor'.

Nevill's report contained, among other things 'recommendations for' establishment of police posts at Dirang and Rupa, and possibly in the Aka country to enforce law and order. He indicated how the Lobas. (or Lopas), who were presumably the Mijis, harassed the people and indulged in blackmailing raids. 'They look on the Monpas as their lawful prey and talk of their visits as collecting taxes. These things must be stopped at once, and the Lobas be clearly told that this state of things cannot continue.'³

In December 1938, as mentioned earlier, an expedition was sent to the Nakhu and several other villages of the Bichom valley to keep the Miji raiders in check. The chiefs of Nakhu and Kujjalong were warned that they must stop oppressing the Monpas of the Dirang-dzong area. But, the Mijis seem to have ignored the warning and continued their depredations. In 1939-40, they again become troublesome, 'attempting to exact tribute from the Monpas of the Dirang-dzong and Sherukpen areas, Nakhu again being conspicuous'. 'In 1939, a temporary outpost was established at Rupa, and thereafter periodic patrols of the Assam Rifles were sent to the villages of Rupa and Shergaon in the Sherdukpen area to prevent the Mijis and also the Akas from harassing the villagers. Two Miji chiefs trying to extort tribute from these two villages were heavily fined by the Political Officer.

Besides these administrative measures, the Political Officer took a more effective step to discuss matters straight with various group of tribal people concerned. In 1940, he called a mel (meeting) at the Monpa village of Kudum, which was attended by the Mijis, Monpas and Sherdukpens. The Mijis agreed to stop taking tribute from the Sherdukpens, but they claimed that their right to take tribute from the Monpas was based on a written agreement concluded between themselves and the Tawang Dzongpens, which was kept either at Dirang-dzong or Tawang-dzong. There was no means of confirming the authenticity of the claim, and hence no settlement could be reached on the question of tribute extorted from the Monpas.⁴

1. Reverend C. H. Hesselmeier, *the Hill Tribes of the Northern Frontier of Assam*, J. A. S. B., 1868, Vol. xxxvii, p.192 ff, quoted by Verrier Elwin in his *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, (London, 1962), p.439.

2. Sir Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam*, (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), p.285.

3. Sir Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam*, (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), p.288.

4. L. N. Chakravarty, *Glimpses of the Early History of Arunachal*, (Shillong, 1973), p.14.

Assam Rifles outposts were established at Rupa in 1941 and Dirang in 1944. These and other measures taken to regulate inter-tribal relations and exercise an administrative control were conducive to bring about a semblance of peace in this area. The Mijis were in a way held in check. At this time, they themselves were involved in troubles because of their inter-village feuds and the constant pressure exerted on them by their powerful eastern neighbours, the Nishis (Bangnis). They sought government help and wanted to have an Assam Rifles post set up also at Kujjalong for their protection against the Nishi inroads.

The Mijis of the Pachak valley appeared to be particularly restive. In collaboration with their Nishi neighbours, they used to commit raids on the Monpas and also on the Mijis of the Bichom and Dinam valleys, and demand heavy ransom for the captives. In late 1946, the Political Officer visited the Miji country, and secured release of the captives held by the Mijis of Lada and Sokong villages, who made their surrender. The visit was successful in that a friendly rapport was established with the turbulent Mijis, and the position of the Monpas of But and Konia villages was somewhat safeguarded. These two villages, under the brunt of constant Miji raids, were in the process of gradual disintegration. The Monpas, who shifted their houses to other villages, now started returning to their original abodes.

In 1946, an Assam Rifles outpost was opened at But to bring the area under more effective administration. At about this time, two groups of the Mijis of Sachong village came into conflict as a sequel to an old feud, which resulted in the death of eight persons. The situation was promptly brought under control by a patrol sent from the outpost at But.

British-Aka Relations

The Akas figure prominently in the British accounts. Indeed, they played an important role in shaping the fabric of history of the Kameng region and the adjoining plains of Assam. According to the early records, as already stated, the Akas were divided into two main clans, the Kutsun or Hazarikhowa and Kovatsun or Kapaschor. They were, as noted by Aitchison, 'small but on account of their superior civilization they are much respected and even feared by the surrounding tribes.' Kennedy, who accompanied the Aka Promenade in 1914, observed that 'the Akas are comparatively an enlightened and civilized people'. 'The Akas in later years continued to win the respect of those who visited them,' remarked by Dr Elwin. Thus Captain Nevill wrote of them in 1925 that 'these Akas are an excellent and most interesting people... they are capable of great improvement.'

Each of the two main clans of the Akas had a raja or chief who was the nominal head of the clan and whose post was elective. As mentioned earlier, the Hazari-khowas were granted by the Ahoms a right to *posa*, that is the right to receive collections from certain specified areas in the adjacent plains of Assam. "According to the records of 1825, it would seem that the Hazari-Khawas were entitled to receive from each house of their allotted *khels* 'one portion of a female dress, one bundle of cotton thread, and one cotton handkerchief.' At this period the Kapachors (or Koppa-turas as the old records style them) were probably not looked upon as a separate clan, for we read that the Hazari-Khawas were expected to give 'a part' of their collections to the Kapachors."¹

1. Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, (Delhi, Reprinted 1979), p.22.

The Akas, like other hill tribes who had a right to *posa* since the days of the Ahoms, would descend annually upon the cultivated lands to collect their petty dues. Quarrels and outrage were the natural concomitants of such a custom which also gave rise to a good deal of complications. The British Government soon felt that the practice of permitting the tribal hordes to come down to the plains to extract their dues was unbearable, and wanted the hillmen to surrender their right of direct collection for an annual lump payment in lieu. The claims of the Hazari-khowas were eventually commuted for a yearly sum of Rs. 175/-. They did not continue to draw this sum for long because their connexion with the Kapaschors brought them into trouble with the government in 1835. At last in 1844 they finally came to terms.

The Kovatsuns or Kapaschors under the leadership of their mighty chief, Tagi Raja, had for a long time created terror in the neighbouring regions, particularly along the adjoining border areas of the Darrang District of Assam, by their raiding campaigns. Shortly before the British annexation, Tagi Raja 'murdered the native official in charge of Char Dwar, with twenty of his immediate followers.' As a punishment the clan was outlawed, and David Scott, who was appointed Agent to the Governor General in 1823, forbade their entering the plains; 'but they nevertheless extorted from the ryots of Burgong a contribution of cloths year by year, just as though they were implicated in quarrel with their kinsmen, the Kutsuns or Hazari-khowas, and their leader, Tagi Raja, fled to Assam, where he was arrested and imprisoned in the Gauhati Jail. On his release in 1832 and returned to the hills, he mobilised his broken clan and 'murdered all who had been in any way concerned in his capture.'

The most stunning and daring act of his career was his attack on the police outpost at Balipara in February 1835. The outpost was cut up and burnt, and had suffered a number of casualties. Mackenzie writes:

"In this outrage it was believed that the Taghi Raja had been assisted by the Hazari-Khawas, and there were good reasons for suspecting that his energy and daring had made him at this time virtual Chief of both clans of Akas, and given him influence even over the Duphlas (Nishis) in the neighbouring hills."

As a result of this outrage, the money payment made to the Hazari-khowas in lieu of *posa*, as already mentioned, was stopped by the government for seven years after the Balipara incident. Tagi Raja, the 'successful brigand haunted the border jungles, evading every effort made for his capture and leading repeated forays into Char Dwar.' To avenge a previous grudge, he, in April 1835, raided the house of a *patgiri*, Madhu Saikia, at Orung, killing three persons.¹ In December 1837, he carried off several captives, and he kept on committing similar raids in 1838-39, and yet again in March 1841. But, surprisingly enough in 1842 when the government was contemplating an expedition for a drastic action, Tagi Raja all on a sudden came in and surrendered. The Raja was, however, released on a solemn oath taken by him that he would not cause any further injury or trouble. "He gave hostages for his good conduct, the Kotokies (an officially recognized class of interpreters and clan-agents) on this occasion becoming his formal sureties. He even agreed

1. H. K. Barpujari, Problem of the Hill Tribes, North-East Frontier, (Gauhati, 1970), Vol. I, p.122.

to live permanently on the plains, and a small allowance of Rs. 20 was settled upon him."¹ Stipends amounting to a total of Rs 360 per annum were also granted to the other leaders of the Akas, who accepted it, and bound themselves to preserve the peace of Chardaur.³

The oaths taken by the Akas were on the whole observed faithfully, though they made several attempts to get their allowances raised. The annual stipends of Rs. 360 were gradually enhanced to Rs. 668. In April 1857, they were reported to have refused to accept their stipends, and Tagi Raja was believed to be the leader behind this move. The government took a serious view of this matter and at once stopped payment of the stipends and also closed and the *duars* (passes) to trade. As a result, early in 1859 some of the chiefs made their submission.

In 1860, Tagi Raja himself submitted, and he was benignly allowed to draw his former pension.

The boundary line of the Akas was demarcated with those of their western tribal neighbours in 1872-73. The Kutsuns took no objection to this line. In 1873, they were granted by the government 49 acres of land in the plains, and for this gesture they were much gratified. But the Kovatsuns did not at first agree to recognise the line between the Bhareli and Khari Dikrai rivers, and were said to have made excessive claims. Their chief, Medhi, the son of Tagi Raja, eventually gave in and the line was demarcated in 1874-75. The later events however, show that the Kovatsuns had their own reasons for objection to the boundary as was delineated, and they strongly felt that their grievances were not redressed. The smouldering discontent coupled with an incident as described by Mackenzie as follows incensed them.

"When a grant of land was made to the Hazari-Khawas in 1873, a similar grant was made to the Kapachors to be devoted to the maintenance of Cachari priests. The Kapachors were not satisfied with their grant; in 1875 they demanded much more, and this was summarily refused. They have, therefore, never taken possession of their grant. It has already been stated that they objected to the boundary line laid down in 1875, though they afterwards professed to accept it. This boundary line cut them off from a tract of land claimed by them between the hills and the Bhoroli River. Present at the demarcation on behalf of Government was one Lakhidar, the Mouzadar or native Revenue Officer of Baleepara. The tribe has also by the extension of forest reserves been deprived of what it doubtless considers its ancient right to tap rubber trees at pleasure. They had further been forbidden to catch elephants within the reserves, and threatened by the forest officers with the loss of one of their paths to the plains which runs through what is now a Government forest. Such being the state of things, the Deputy Commissioner of Durrung deputed Lakhidar to procure for the Calcutta Exhibition specimens of agricultural and other implements of the Akas, and to persuade some individuals of the tribe to come down to be modelled. Now, hitherto none but the regularly recognized Kotokies or clan-agents had even sought to penetrate into the Aka Hills. Lakhidar, however, took with him twelve village elders and *ryots* of Baleepara and a private servant, and went straight to Midhi's village. The Akas declare,

1. Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India* (Delhi Reprinted 1979) p.23.

2. See C.U.Aitchison, *a Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads* (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), Agreement, Nos.XXXII and XXXIII. Vol. XII, pp 149-150.

and the evidence of one of the Mouzadar's companions supports the statement, that Lakhidar said he had been sent to take down to Calcutta a 'Rajah and a Rani with all their ornaments', for which he was ready to pay. The Akas professed to be furious at this demand, alleging that, when they had given ornaments on former occasions, they had only been partly paid, while the idea of sending a 'Rajah and Rani' to the show was intolerable to them. Anyway after some days' palaver, charging the Mouzadar with being the man who had robbed them of their land, they sent him and his servant under guard to another village. The rest of the party they kept for a week, and then let them go."¹

On November 10, 1883 a raid on Balipara took place when a party of about 100 Aka young men led by Chandi, brother of Medhi, who had been educated at Balipara School carried off to the hills the forest ranger, a forest clerk, two guns and some money.

The return of the captives was demanded, but the Akas in response sent 'very insolent letters' reiterating their claims to the land and forest in the plains, and 'announcing at the same time the death from fever of the Mouzadar.' It was, however, proved subsequently that no violence was used on him.'

A military expedition was promptly organised to recover the captives, and punish the offenders, and a 'flying column' started for Medhi's village from the base camp at Dijumukh on December 17, 1883. Attempts for negotiations failed, and the Akas, aided by the Mijis, made a surprise attack on the column when it was camping at Maj Bhareli on the night of December 23. Even though the Akas suffered rather heavy casualties, they again attacked this column when it was attempting to cross the Tengapani, the river which lay between the expeditionary force and Medhi's village, and compelled it to fall back on its precious camp. "When the troops advanced to the Tengapani", writes Mackenzie, "they found it strongly held by the Akas, whose clouds poisoned arrows the sepoys much dreaded". Reinforcements soon arrived and Brigadier General Sale Hill, who was in charge of the operations, reached the camp on January 5, 1884. The advance began on January 8, and the Akas retreated before the superior fire-power of the British. Medhi's village, strongly stockaded, was taken.

The captives were surrendered after a few days, but the chiefs did not submit. The houses of Chandi, Nakoo and Kota, who were alleged to be the ring leaders of the Balipara raid, were destroyed. Meanwhile, General Hill became anxious to withdraw and the force returned hastily without any contact having been made with the chiefs. The Kutsuns, it may be noted, remained perfectly friendly all through the period of these incidents.

While the expedition was, on the whole, regarded as successful from a military point of view, the Chief Commissioner of Assam observed that 'the political success would have been more complete if the force had remained longer in the hills and if more time had been allowed for the chiefs to come in'.³

To secure the submission of the Kovatsun Akas, a blockade of their country was imposed immediately after the expedition. It was not lifted until Medhi and Chandi made their submission in January 1888. The chiefs had sworn to abide by the written agreements⁴ that were executed, but the payment of *posa* to them was withheld for two years. In

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1. A. Mackenzie, quoted by Verrier Elwin in *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, (London, 1962), pp.433-434.
 2. *Ibid*, p.434
 3. Sir Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam*, (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), p.272.
 4. See C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads* (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), Vol.XII, pp.164-165.

1889-90, the Kovatsun Aka chief came to Tezpur and received the *posa* withheld since 1883.

In the cold weather of 1913-14, Captain G. A. Nevill, Political Officer, Western Section, North-East Frontier Tract, visited the Aka country, with the objects of establishing friendly relations with the hill tribes, the Akas, the Mijis and the people living north of the Akas ; and also surveying as much of the country as possible. The expedition of Captain Nevill with a large party, which was carried out on a considerable scale, came to be known as the 'Aka Promenade'. In the course of the promenade, he met the Akas, Mijis and Monpas, and was accorded friendly receptions everywhere. He also came across the Nishis. He reached Tawang on April 1, 1914 and received what he described 'a most overwhelming welcome'. His report also mentions that 'most excellent relations were established with the Akas, and 'over 4,000 square miles of country was surveyed.'¹

In February 1925, Captain Nevill visited the Akas again, this time at their own request. He wrote of them as follows:

"Since Kalao and Tagi the two old chiefs died there has been no one to take their place, all the older men of standing have died and only young men with no experience remain. The most important people in the country are Kelime, widow of Tagi, and Dibru, the present head of the Kovatsun. These two and all the principal people early in the season put in a petition to Government that we should station a guard in their country and establish a dispensary.

"The reason for this is that for the past three years they have been much worried by the Mijis, a neighbouring tribe closely related to them who finding they are weak and leaderless have taken to bullying them.

"They also have become painfully aware that for sometime their death rate is larger than their birth rate, and that their numbers are seriously decreasing. This is why they are so anxious for a dispensary, that is not a new idea, but they have continually spoken about it for the past ten years.

"I strongly recommend that a garrison should be stationed in the Aka Hills and that a dispensary with a good competent Sub-Assistant Surgeon be established."²

Establishment of an Assam Rifles outpost and a dispensary at Janicri, an important Aka village, was soon sanctioned. The outpost was temporarily opened in 1928-29. At about the same time, construction of the Jamiri-Charduar road was also started. This road proved to be of great help to the Akas.

In about 1933-34, Dibru Jushosho, the Aka Raja, a most influential man in the hills and a good friend of the government, died. He was succeeded by his son Shree shadeo, who was elected the Raja or Chief. The old 'Rani' Kelime, widow of Tagi Raja, died some time in 1936-37. She had great influence over her people, who held her in high esteem. In 1939-40, the government relations with the Akas were somewhat strained over the question of forbidding them to exact tribute from the Sherdukpens. Violation of the government orders was, however, suitably dealt with.

1. Sir Robert Reid, Op.cit., p.286.

2. Sir Robert Reid, Op.cit., pp.290-291.

British-Sherdukpen Relations

Some indications of the nature of relations the Sherdukpens had with the government and also with their neighbouring tribes the Monpas, Mijis and Akas, have been given in the preceding contexts. In fact, the history of a tribe of this region is closely interrelated with that of their neighbours, and this relationship between themselves and their response to the government policy had considerably influenced the course of political and administrative developments in this area during the British days.

In the British records, the Sherdukpens have been variously referred to as 'Rooprai Gaon and Sher Gaon Bhutias, who claim to be independent of Tawang,'¹ 'the Mombas of Rupa and Shergaon'² 'Charduar Bhutias' and so on. Rupa (formerly called Rooprai Gaon) and Shergaon are, as mentioned earlier, the two most important villages of the Sherdukpens, lying beyond Charduar or 'the four passes' to the east of Kuriapara duar. Like those of the so-called Bhutias of the Kuriapara *duar*, who were apparently the Monpas, the Sherdukpens had also a body of chiefs called Sath Rajas or seven kings, the principal among them was known as Durji Raja. As stated earlier, five of the rajas were from Rupa and two from Shergaon.

At the outset of the British administration of Assam, the Sherdukpens claimed a tribute or payment from the plains which they collected annually. In 1826, by virtue of an arrangement made with them by Captain Matthie, the Sherdukpens relinquished their right of direct collection in lieu of a compensation of Rs.2,526-7-0. In 1839, the payment was stopped as they were suspected of having lent a hand in the murder of one Madhu Saikia, 'the faithful Patgiri' of Orung. The Durji Raja together with the other rajas pleaded innocence most earnestly and pledged themselves to act up to the terms of an agreement executed in 1844, and eventually a reduced allowance of Rs.1,740 was granted to them³.

The boundary line of the 'Charduar Bhutias,' who were obviously, the Sherdukpens, was laid down in 1872-73 'from the Rowta river on the west to the Ghabroo river on the east.' Their claims on lands in the plains were rejected. At a meeting with the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang held in 1876, the Sherdukpen chiefs expressed themselves satisfied with this decision. They came down to Doimara regularly every cold season to trade, and for them the Inner Line Regulation had been kept in abeyance.⁴

The Sherdukpens were a gentle, peace-loving and law-abiding village community settled on agriculture. "Once they told the Political Officer that they have never heard of a murder committed by their people."⁵ The Sherdukpens had undergone a period of distress owing to marauding activities of the Akas and the Mijis. The Akas exacted the heavy tolls from them and the Mijis forced them to pay tributes.

1. Alexander Mackenzie, *Op.cit.*, p.18.

2. Sir Robert Ried, *Op.cit.*, p.292.

3. (a) C. U. Aitchison, *A collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), vol.XII, pp.150-151.

(b) Alexander-Mackenzie, *Op.cit.*, p.19.

4. Alexander Mackenzie, *Op.cit.*, p.19.

5. L.N.Chakravarty, *Glimpses of the Early History of Arunachal*, (Shillong, 1973), p.7.

"It may be mentioned here that, before the coming of the British, the Sherdukpens, by an established convention, used to pay a token tribute to Tawang-dzong once in every three years possibly in the hope of getting some measure of protection against the inroads of the Lobas. But it did not stop the marauders from carrying on raids, the Tawang-dzong was clearly incapable of giving any protection to them against the inroads of the Akas and the Mijis. A temporary clash of interests arose in 1934-35 between the tribes and the Tawang-dzong when he claimed a third of the annual *posa* being paid by the British Government in cash to the Monpas and the Sherdukpens."¹ The claim was, however, not insisted upon from the next year.

An effective measure to stop the depredations of the Mijis and Akas and protect the Sherdukpens was taken in 1941 when a permanent Assam Rifles outpost, as already stated, was opened at Rupa.

A striking features of the early inter-tribal relations in this region is that a powerful group often tried to exploit its neighbours, who in turn made attempts to extort payments from the weaker, peaceful or less turbulent group. As a result, the pressure of one fell heavily upon the other. Thus, the Akas were at times harassed by their ally the Mijis while the Mijis were pressed by their eastern neighbours, the Nishis. The Monpas were oppressed by the Mijis, but although the Sherdukpens suffered from the depredations of the Mijis and also the Akas, they themselves had recourse to extract payments from the people of the adjacent plains of Assam. It should, however, be noted that the internecine strife and feuds, which may be largely due to the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the tribes living in a state of poverty, turmoil and isolation, are not the whole of history of tribal relations of this period, there are evidences of friendly negotiations and understanding. With the establishment of a central authority during the British rule, the law and order situation in this area showed signs of steady improvement and the tribes increasingly responded to the government endeavours for settlement of disputes and reconciliation.

Administrative Policy and Developments

The administration of India's North-East Frontier now known as Arunachal Pradesh has been established and consolidated all over the territory through many decades of administrative jurisdiction and control exercised effectively by the Indian Government up to the international boundary and the constructive activities under taken by them for development of this tribal area. The history of the government jurisdiction over Arunachal Pradesh dates from long before 1914.

The policy of the British Government in the north-east frontier tracts till the first decade of the present century was generally intended to leave the tribes more or less to look after themselves, and not seek to establish any detailed administration such as was to be found in the rest of British Indian territory. The situation was precisely described by Mackenzie writing in 1884 as follows:

"... So much as has been stated it was desirable to bring into prominence, that there might be a clear understanding of the circumstances under which a frontier policy first became necessary for us in the north-east. These will be made more apparent as we deal with the history of each tribe. But I may here remark, by way of general preface, that

1. J.N.Choudhury, Arunachal Through the Ages, (Shillong, 1982) pp. 99-100.

we found the Assam Valley surrounded north, east, and south by numerous warlike tribes whom the decaying authority of the Assam dynasty had failed of late years to control, and whom the disturbed condition of the province had incited to encroachment. Many of them advanced claims to rights more or less definite over lands lying in the plains; others claimed tributary payments from the villages below their hills, or the services of *paiks* said to have been assigned them by the Assam authorities. It mattered of course little to us whether these claims had their basis in primoeval rights from which the Shan invaders had partially ousted the hillmen, or whether they were merely the definite expression of a cupidity. Certain it was that such claims existed, and that they had been, to some extent and in some places, formally recognised by our predecessors. The engagements under which the Native Governments lay were transferred to us with the peculiar revenue system above described; and it was one of our earliest tasks to endeavour to reconcile such arrangements, where we could discover them, with the requirement of enlightened policy... When we did arrive in any case at a definite understanding as to the rights of any tribe, we were ready, as a rule, to treat them fairly and liberally; and, on the whole, we have no reason in this respect to be ashamed of the general bearings of our policy upon the North-East Frontier. But we are met to this day by difficulties arising from the indefinite nature of the connexion subsisting between the Assam sovereigns and their neighbours. These difficulties, as they arise, have not been lessened by the fact that here, as elsewhere in British India, the Government has had an active policy forced upon it uniformly against its will; and while anxious in the extreme to leave the tribes alone, if they would but consent to be let alone, it has been compelled from time to time by the mere force of events to take up questions it would have gladly overlooked, and to govern actively where it would have been content to be at peace."¹

Obviously, this was not a policy aiming at a regular administration of the frontier region, and in effect it sought to isolate the tribes. But, it needs to be stressed that the British authorities never failed to exercise the sovereign jurisdiction of the Indian Government where questions of law and order were involved. They regulated inter-tribal relations and the relations between the tribal people of the hills and the inhabitants of the plains in an effort to provide security to different ethnic groups and maintain peace and tranquillity in this frontier region.

They were generally inclined to 'leave the tribes alone' and 'conciliate them', probably because of the historical predicaments and the task of administering the remote mountainous area which seemed to be too heavy and costly for them to accomplish effectively at the formative stage of the British Indian Administration. The result was, therefore, what Nevill later wrote in March 1914 in his report on the 'Aka Promenade' that, '... we should get the loose political control which it is our policy to exercise over the frontier tribes...'²

The conciliatory policy of the Ahoms was pursued as we have seen, by the British as a legacy in their relations with the frontier tribes throughout the nineteenth century. It was in practice a policy of expediency devised to meet emergent situations. Following the footsteps of the Ahoms, the British tried to contain the tribes in their own hills and protect the people of the plains. They also, like the Ahoms, endeavoured to befriend them

1. Alexander Mackenzie, Op. cit., pp.7-8.

2. Sir Robert Reid, Op. cit, p.285.

and avoid friction save on the occasions of serious tribal raids and outrages calling for punitive expeditions and imposition of blockades. For administrative and political control, they established base camps and outposts in the foothill areas, while the Political Officer of this frontier tract was stationed at Charduar in the Darrang District of Assam.

The Inner Line restrictions enforced under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation I of 1873 were an important administrative measure taken by the British Government to regulate the commercial relations between the frontier tribes and the plains people. The Regulation of 1873 empowered the British authorities to prescribe a line to be called the Inner Line and to prohibit any British subject living outside the area from going beyond that line without a licence. No rubber, wax, ivory or other jungle products was to be obtained from the hill areas by people from outside. They were also not to hunt wild elephants beyond the Inner Line without special permission of the Government.

Under this Regulation of 1873 a detailed description of the Inner Line dividing the tribal areas from the plains districts of Assam was issued. This line has been laid down along the northern, eastern and south-eastern borders of the Brahmaputra Valley. Notifications describing the Inner Line in the Lakhimpur District and the Inner Line in the Darrang District were issued in 1875 and 1876 respectively. In 1884, a revised notification regarding the Inner Line in Lakhimpur was issued. Under the Regulation of 1873 passage to the hill areas now known as Arunachal Pradesh was not permitted without a permit or licence. This Regulation was enacted not with the intention (as is so often thought) of isolating the hill people from the plains, but to bring under more stringent control the unrestricted commercial intercourse which formerly existed between the traders from the plains of Assam and the frontier tribes, and prevent the traders from exploiting rubber and other hill products. In Lakhimpur the operations of speculators in rubber had led to serious complications, and the spread of tea gardens beyond the fiscal limits of the settled territories of the day had involved the Government in considerable difficulties. In order to prevent the recurrence of these difficulties, power was conferred on the local authorities of 1873 to prohibit people from going beyond a certain line, laid down for the purpose, without a pass or licence. The Regulation also laid down rules concerning trade and possession of land and property beyond the line.

The Inner Line marked merely an administrative limit and the area north of it was also controlled by the Government of India. The Inner Line, revised by notifications from time to time, e.g., in 1928, 1929, 1934 and 1958 still remains in force.

The political and administrative developments that took place in the second decade of the present century are of great historical significance. In this decade, extensive topographical survey and exploration of the deep interior areas were undertaken by civil and military officers in different parts of the north-east frontier. In this context, the Miri Mission (1911-12)¹, the 'Abor Expedition of 1911' followed by considerable activities for topographical survey² and the 'Aka Promenade' (1913-14) as already described in this chapter merit particular mention. As a result of these activities, the government came into much closer contact with various tribes and succeeded in winning their friendship. The British records dating

1. See Subansiri District Gazetteer (Shillong, 1981), pp.90,91,93.

2. See East Siang and West Siang Districts Gazetteer, (Shillong), pp.84-86, 92-93 of M.S.

from 1911 are replete with reports and statements which are indicative of a better understanding and appreciation of the tribal problems and even the need for development and social welfare. Indeed, this decade marked the beginning of a positive change in the government policy — a change from exercising the so-called 'loose political control' to establishment of a more effective and functioning administration by gradual extension of government activities.

In 1912, General Bower, the Officer in Command of the 'Abor Expedition of 1911' and A.H.W. Bentinck, the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur made a suggestion for a division of the north-east frontier into three sections and separation of the frontier from the control of the Deputy Commissioners of Darrang and Lakhimpur. These suggestions came into effect under the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department, Notification of 1914, which promulgated that the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880 would extend to the hills inhabited or frequented by Abors (Adis), Mishmis, Miris, Singphos, Nagas, Khamptis, Akas, Daflas (Nishis) and Bhutias.¹ These hill areas were separated from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur Districts of Assam, and as a result the North-East Frontier Tract consisting of the following three administrative units came into existence:

- (1) The Central and Eastern Sections, North-East Frontier Tract,
- (2) The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract,
- (3) The Western Section, North-East Frontier Tract.

In 1914, the first and third units were each placed under the charge of a Political Officer and the second unit under the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur District, in addition to his own charge. The Political Officer of the Central and Eastern Sections had his headquarters at Sadiya, while the Political Officer of the Western Section was stationed at Charduar.

In 1919, on the recommendation of Beatson Bell, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, the Central and Eastern Sections was renamed as the Sadiya Frontier Tract and the Western Section as the Balipara Frontier Tract. The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, however, continued to be known as such. This position held good till 1937 during which period certain areas were either excluded from or included in the so-called North-East Frontier Tract.

In 1921, all the frontier tracts of Assam were declared 'backward tracts' in which, under the new Government of India Act of 1919, only such laws would operate as the Governor in Council might direct. The Government of India Act of 1935 made special provisions for the administration of these hill areas upto the international boundary whereby the erstwhile 'backward tracts' were reclassified as 'excluded' or partially excluded areas. In 1937 the

1. "Abor is the old name for Adis. Miris are a section of the Adis mostly settled along the foothills and the adjoining plains. Mishmi includes the Idus, Digarus and Mijus of the Lohit district. Bhutia is a general name for Bodic groups and here refers to the Monpas and Sherdukpens of the Kameng and the Membas, Khambas of the Siang and the Zakhrings and Meyors of the Lohit District. The Daflas are a large group spread over a wide tract stretching from the eastern half of the Kameng in the west to the eastern boundary of the subansiri District in the east, under various local names such as Bangni, Nisi, Nishang etc. Akas are a small but prominent tribe - akin to Khoas and Mijis. Naga is another 'general' name for tribal groups south and east of the Brahmaputra valley - and include the Tangsas, Noctes and Wanchos of the Tirap District. Singphos belong to Tirap and the Khamptis to the Lohit District." See P.N. Luthra, *Constitutional and Administrative Growth of the North-East Frontier Agency*, (Shillong, 1971), pp.9-10. footnote.

Balipara, Sadiya and Lakhimpur Frontier Tracts came to be known collectively as the excluded areas of the province of Assam under the provision of Section 91(1) of the Government of India Act of 1935, which was given effect to by the Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order of 1936. Under Section 92 of the 1935 Act these excluded areas came under the charge of the Governor of Assam who administered them in his discretion under the general control of the Governor-General.

“In the year 1943, a new administrative charge was created with certain areas from the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and the Sadiya Frontier Tract and was named as the Tirap Frontier Tract. The Tirap Frontier Tract was placed under a separate Political Officer with headquarters at Margherita. In 1946, the Balipara Frontier Tract was divided, for administrative convenience, into the Se La Sub-Agency and the Subansiri Area. In 1948, the remaining portion of the Sadiya Frontier Tract was bifurcated into two separate administrative charges, namely, the Abor Hills District and the Mishmi Hills District.

“In the year 1943, it was felt that these areas should be brought under normal administration and developed through the policy of gradual penetration of the administrative machinery. Consequently, it was considered essential that above the Governor’s Secretary, there should be an Adviser to the Governor of Assam which post was accordingly created in that year directly by the Government of India. The office of the Adviser was first established in 1943 and it was concerned with the administration of North-East Frontier Tracts”.¹

Since 1937 the excluded areas, as already stated, were administered by the Governor of Assam through the Political Officers and the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur. The Constitution of India, which came into force on the 26 January, 1950, made detailed provisions under the Sixth Schedule for the administration of the whole area now known as Arunachal Pradesh. The Constitution brought about a change in the administrative set-up of the ‘excluded areas’, and accordingly the North-East Frontier Tract comprising the Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills District and Mishmi Hills District was administered by the Governor of Assam acting as the agent of the President of India under the provisions of paragraph 18 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and Part B of the Table below paragraph 20 of that Schedule.

“In the year 1951, the plains portions of the Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills District and Mishmi Hills District were transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Government of Assam. The aforesaid areas minus the transferred plains portions of the Frontier Tracts together with the Naga Tribal Area were thereafter renamed collectively as the North-East Frontier Agency”.²

Under the ‘North-East Frontier Areas (Administration) regulation of 1954 the North-East Frontier Tract came to be known as the North-East Frontier Agency, and according to this Regulation the administrative units were also reconstituted and renamed with redefined boundaries. The administration of the North-East Frontier Agency was carried on by the Governor of Assam as the agent of the President of India.

With the gradual extension of government activities, administrative centres were established in all parts of Kameng comprising the East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts.

1. P.N.Luthra, Constitutional and Administrative Growth of the North-East Frontier Agency, (Shillong, 1971), pp.11,14.

2. P.N. Luthra, Op.cit., pp.11-12.

Prior to 1950, there were outposts at Rupa, Dirang and But opened in 1941, 1944 and 1946 respectively. Most of the administrative centres were set up in the fifties, at Tawang in 1951, Bomdila, Kalaktang, Thrizino (Buragaon) Seppa, Khenewa, Bameng and Chayangtajo in 1953, Lumla and Nafra in 1954, and Bumla and Zemithang in 1959. The headquarters of the Political Officer shifted from Charduar to Bomdila in February 1953. The civil administration continued to extend in the following decades when new centres were opened at Pipu and Pakke-Kessang in 1966, Thingbu in 1969, Mukto in 1972. The administration was further consolidated and strengthened when more such centres came up at Seijosa and Bhalukpung in East and West Kameng Districts respectively. The whole of the three districts thus came under the sphere of a regular and effective administration.

Under the North-East Frontier Areas (Administration) Regulation, 1954 (Regulation No. 1 of 1954), the Balipara Frontier Tract, which was in 1946 divided into the Se La Sub-Agency and the Subansiri Area for administrative convenience, was bifurcated into two separate units of administration called the Kameng Frontier Division and the Subansiri Frontier Division. The new administrative units were each in charge of a Political Officer. According to the North-East Frontier Agency (Administration) Regulation of 1965 (Regulation No. 7 of 1965), the Kameng Frontier Division was renamed as the Kameng District, and the Political Officer of the erstwhile division was redesignated as the Deputy Commissioner. Under the provisions of the Arunachal Pradesh (Reorganisation of Districts) Act, 1980 (Act No. 3 of 1980), which came into force on and from June 1, 1980, the Kameng District was divided into two districts, namely the East Kameng District and the West Kameng District with headquarters at Seppa and Bomdila respectively. As provided in the Arunachal Pradesh (Reorganisation of Districts) Second Amendment Act, 1984 (Act No. 7 of 1984) coming into force on and from October 6, 1984, the Tawang Sub-division of the West Kameng District was constituted as a separate unit of administration known as the Tawang District.

The first Political Officer of the erstwhile Kameng Frontier Division formed in 1954 was Shri P.N. Kaul.

Shri T. Haralu became the first Deputy Commissioner of the Kameng District constituted in 1965. Shri V.K. Bhalla and Shri O.P. Kalkar were the first Deputy Commissioners of the East Kameng and West Kameng districts respectively, which were created in 1980. The first Deputy Commissioner of the Tawang District formed in 1984 was Shri T. Lhendup.

Epilogue

The sovereign jurisdiction of the Government of India over the frontier now known as Arunachal Pradesh was actively exercised right up to the international boundary throughout the British period. The British policy, though conciliatory and in some measure isolationist at the initial stages, became more and more effective and purposive in securing a stable administrative and political control. The British authorities were primarily concerned with the questions of law and order, which they tackled rather creditably. Towards the end of the British rule, the frontier appears to be more peaceful than before. But their policy had very little to do with the welfare of the tribal people. There was hardly any emphasis on improving the living conditions of the people. Despite the later British records contain reports and proposals made fervently by some Officers emphasising the need for better communications, medical aid and so on, the authorities were generally apathetic to the developmental aspects. The overall effect of the policy tended to seclude the tribes. As

a result, the people continued to live in a state of isolation and distress during the British regime.

The barriers of isolation were broken in 1947 when India won freedom. A new era of progress and developments in all spheres of tribal life began with the attainment of independence. It brought about a fundamental change in the government policy in regard to tribal administration in the north-east frontier. There could be no longer any question of leaving the tribes in isolation or neglecting them in a free welfare state. They were given the full rights of Indian citizenship, and their socio-economic, cultural and educational interests were to be promoted with special care according to the specific provisions of the Constitution of India for the Scheduled Tribes and national objectives for integration and development.

This was entirely a new approach to the tribal problems, based on the policy formulated by the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. He said 'It was not possible or desirable to isolate them...', 'Development in various ways there has to be, such as communications, medical facilities, education and better agriculture'. 'The Government of India', he declared, is determined to help the tribal people to grow according to their own genius and tradition; it is not the intention to impose anything on them'. 'Development', he emphasised again, must be according to their own genius and not something that they cannot absorb or imbibe'.

An awareness of the changes brought about by the new policy dawned gradually upon the minds of the tribal people. A new horizon of life was opened for them in which they would take part as free citizens of India. They saw in the policy of the National Government an expression and fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations for a better and prosperous life. Indeed, it created immense opportunities for them for development and advancement, and they came forward to associate themselves with the developmental activities and avail themselves of the opportunities with a remarkable ability to adopt themselves with the changing conditions.

Under the provisions of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act of 1971, the erstwhile North-East Frontier Agency was formed as an Union Territory on January 21, 1972, the date from which the territory came to be known as Arunachal Pradesh. According to the Constitution 37th Amendment Act 1975, the territory has been provided with a legislature from August 15, 1975. There is now an elected government in Arunachal Pradesh formed by the representatives of the tribal people, which is a fact of great historical importance and a proof in itself of the progress achieved by them since the Independence of India. The Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh has attained the statehood on February 20, 1987.

Shri Prem Khandu Thungon, the first Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, and later the Union Deputy Minister, is from the West Kameng District.

Chapter III

P E O P L E

Population

According to the Census of 1991 the total population of Kameng comprising the three districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang is 1,34,214 souls. The whole of this region is rural barring the only town of Bomdila with a population of 5570 persons. The density of population per square kilometre is 12 in East Kameng, 7 in West Kameng and 13 in Tawang. The composition of population according to the census 1981 is as follows.

East Kameng District	Total	Rural	Urban	Male	Female
Total Population	42,736	42,736	—	21,999	20,737
Scheduled Tribe Population	37,286	37,286	—	18,410	18,876
West Kameng and Tawang Districts					
Total Population	63,302	59,442	3,860	34,078	29,224
Scheduled Tribe Population	41,963	40,797	1,116	20,900	21,063

The Scheduled Tribes constitute 87.24 per cent of the total population of the East Kameng District and 66.29 per cent of that of the West Kameng and Tawang districts combined together. The Scheduled Caste population is only 159 persons in East Kameng and 259 persons in West Kameng including Tawang.

The Scheduled Tribe population is constituted by a variety of indigenous tribes. Besides them there are other groups of people who have come from different parts of India in connection with government services, public works, trade and business etc.

The decennial growth rate of population from 1971 to 1981 is 21.60 per cent in East Kameng and about 23.75 per cent in West Kameng including Tawang.

The following table shows the distribution of population according to the districts, sub-divisions and circles as enumerated in the 1981 Census.

District/ Sub-division/ Circle	Scheduled Caste Population	Scheduled Tribe Population	Total Population
1	2	3	4
EAST KAMENG DISTRICT	159	37,286	42,736
Seppa Sub-division	138	22,257	26,938
1. Seppa Circle	83	12,213	15,290
2. Pakke-Kessang Circle	7	2,838	2,938
3. Pipu Circle	3	4,589	4,692
4. Lada Circle	4	1,903	1,929
5. Seijosa Circle	41	714	2,089
Chayangtajo Sub-division	21	15,029	15,798
1. Chayangtajo Circle	5	6,922	7,171
2. Bameng Circle	6	4,403	4,748
3. Khenewa Circle	10	3,704	3,879
WEST KAMENG DISTRICT	246	23,101	411,567
Bomdila Sub-division	200	16,907	33,538
1. Bomdila Circle	125	1,805	10,861
2. Kalaktang Circle	16	4,239	8,206
3. Dirang Circle	43	10,325	12,620
4. Bhalukpung Circle	16	538	1,851
NAFRA-BURAGAON SUB-DIVISION	46	6,194	8,029
1. Nafra Circle	41	3,490	3,866
2. Thrizino	5	2,704	4,163
TAWANG DISTRICT	13	18,862	21,735
Tawang Sub-division	9	11,855	14,563
1. Tawang Circle	8	7,366	9,111
2. Mukto Circle	1	3,108	4,038
3. Thingbu Circle	—	1,381	1,414
Lumla Sub-division	4	7,007	7,172
1. Lumla Circle	—	5,268	5,388
2. Zemithang	4	1,739	1,784

Tribal groups of population and their distribution

The indigenous tribes are mainly the Bangnis, Monpas, Mijis, Akas, Sherdukpens and Sulungs. Besides them, there are small groups of Khowas (Buguns) and Bangros. A group of Tibetan refugees numbering about a thousand were allowed to resettle at Tenzingaon.

BANGNI : The Bangnis including their kinsmen the Nishis are one of the largest tribal groups of Kameng, numbering 28,468 persons in 1971. They figure prominently in the Ahom and British records as 'Western Nishis'.

The Bangnis occupying almost the whole of East Kameng District is energetic and powerful tribe. The Nishis of Lower Subansiri and the Bangnis of East Kameng living neighbourly in the two adjoining districts are, as stated in detail in Chapter II, the eastern and western sections respectively of the same tribal community. They seem to resemble each other in many ways.

The Nishis as well as the Bangnis are sturdy, virile and physically well-built with marked Mongoloid features. Their complexion varies from brown to fair.

MONPA: The Monpas are a large tribal community, numbering 27,812 souls in 1971. A wide area comprising the Dirang circle north of Bomdila, the Kalaktang circle in the south-western part of West Kameng District and the entire Tawang District is inhabited by them. According to their concentration in these areas they are called, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, the Tawang Monpas, Dirang Monpas and Kalaktang Monpas respectively. Besides them, there are other groups of the Monpas, such as Lishpa and Panchen. The Tawang Monpas are sometimes called Brahmi Monpas and the Kalaktang Monpas are known as Tsangli. The country of the Monpas northward beyond Bomdila is of great elevation, the altitude of some villages rising above 3,048 metres.

The Monpas are Buddhist by religion. They were described by Verrier Elwin as 'quiet, gentle, friendly, courteous, industrious, good to animals, good to children, you see in the Monpas the influence of the compassionate Lord Buddha on the ordinary man. Pleasant-looking and soft-spoken they are of robust physique resembling in a measure the Bhutanese as well as the Tibetans.

MIJI: The Mijis who call themselves Dammai live in the Bichom and other river valleys in the Nafra-Buragaon Sub-division of West Kameng District. Bounded on the north and east by the Nishis on the south by the Akas and on the west by the Monpas, the Mijis are settled in about 25 villages of which Nakhu and Kujjalong are important. The Miji population was 3,549 persons in 1971.

The Mijis figure in the British records as a turbulent, warlike tribe, a great ally of the Akas. In fact, they held sway over some of the neighbouring tribes in the old days. The Mijis are closely related with the Akas whom they resemble in dress, manners and customs, and with whom they sometimes intermarry.

AKA: The Akas of West Kameng call themselves Hrusso. But they have come to be known as Aka meaning painted. In fact, the Akas used to paint their faces profusely with a mixture of black resin for which the name Aka was given to them probably by the plains people.

In the hilly region of the Nafra-Buragaon Sub-division drained by the Bichom (*Humschu*), Tengapani (*Hudju*) and Kheyang (*Khuwa*) rivers live the Akas. The Aka villages are situated

on the hill-tops and among them Dijungania is the largest but Jamiri and Buragaon are the best known.

The Akas are known in history as a commanding tribe, akin to the Mijis who live to their adjacent north. The formidable alliance of the Akas and the Mijis played an important part in determining the course of early history of tribal relations. The other neighbouring tribes of the Akas are the Bangnis to the east and the Sherdukpens to the west. The plains of Assam lie to the south of the Aka country.

The Aka population is small numbering 2,333 in 1971.

“The Akas have fair complexions. They have a well-built body, usually a flat nose, conspicuous cheek-bones with black hair and usually brownish to pale blue eyes. Men grow scanty hair on the face as well as over the body. Their stature varies from medium to tall, men being usually taller than women”.¹

SHERDUKPEN: The Sherdukpens, a small Buddhist tribe numbering 1,635 persons in the 1971 Census, live in a long and narrow strip of valley in the Bomdila Sub-division of West Kameng District. The valley is watered by many streams and a rivulet which rises in Bhutan and flows into the Tenga-chu not very far from Bomdila. Their homeland is in the shape of an enclave between the Monpa area of Kalaktang and the Bomdila circle. It lies south of the Bomdila range and is bounded on the north by a high hill rising some 610 metres above the level of Rupa situated at an altitude of 1408 metres above the sea-level, on the east by the area occupied by the Akas and the Buguns (Khowas) and on the west by a high hill known as Thongpu La which separates the Sherdukpen area from the Kalaktang region inhabited by the Southern Monpas. To the south the area extends up to Thungri and Jabrang.

The Sherdukpens call themselves Senji-Tonji, but they prefer to be addressed as Sherdukpen by others. Senji is the local name for Shergaon and Tonji for Rupa. The main concentration of the Sherdukpens is in these two most important villages of Rupa and Shergaon. Jigaon is also an important village. There is another version of the name Senji-Tonji. “The local names for Rupa and Shergaon are Thongthui and Senthui, and the people living in these villages are known as Thongjis and Senjis respectively. The word *thu* means village, and *ji* means people.”² Besides these villages, the Sherdukpens live scatteredly in some hamlets known as *pams* or *lurek* where originally they settled in connection with *jhum* cultivation on hill-sides.

The Sherdukpens are a peace-loving people, mild, cheerful and gentle. They are physically well-developed and have fair complexions and refined mongoloid features. In stature they are generally of medium height.

SULUNG: The Sulungs who call themselves Puroik are widely dispersed groups of a small tribe inhabiting the remote hills across the north-eastern extremity of East Kameng District and the north-western corner of adjoining Lower Subansiri District. Although their settlements spread over both the districts, they live more numerously in East Kameng where they numbered 2,770 persons out of their total population of 4,250 persons as enumerated in the 1971 Census. Their mountain abodes are at altitudes ranging between 914 and 2,134

1. Raghuvir Sinha, *The Akas*, (Shillong, 1962), p.4.

2. R.R.P. Sharma, *The Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1961), pp.1-2.

metres. Some of their settlements are interspersed with the Bangni and Miji villages. Their main area of concentration is bounded on the north by the international boundary adjoining Tibet, on the east by the Lower Subansiri District, on the south by the Bangni territory and on the west by the Miji area. Their remotest village to the north is Linchup beyond which the area remains snow-covered for most part of the year.

The economy of the Sulungs is essentially based on food-gathering and hunting. 'They were at heart food-gatherers', which they still largely are, even though they have taken to minimal *jhum* cultivation. The Sulungs had a position of socio-economic dependence on the Bangnis who used to treat them as serfs. Their primitive racial type as distinct from other local tribes, semi-nomadic way of living, their language which is not understandable to their neighbours the Bangnis or Nishis, their exceedingly long isolation in a remote corner, their legends alluding that they are an aboriginal people in the region they live in and the tradition of common origin and migration they share with the Buguns (Khowas) suggest that the Sulungs were probably the earliest migrants to this region.

The Sulungs are still in the habit of hunting and food-gathering, but they are now taking to agricultural practices as well. Although it is a matter of conjecture whether they are undergoing a process of transition from a primitive stage of hunting and food-gathering to a comparatively advanced socio-economic system based on sedentary cultivation, a change in their way of life is quite perceptible.

Physically the Sulungs are medium-statured with flat nose and prominent epicanthic fold. The prognathism among them as emphasised by Dr Furcr-Haimendorf 'is by no means universal'. Majority of them are of fair complexion. The colour of the eye varies from pale to blue. 'There is no tendency whatever to woolly or curly hair.' Temperamentally the Sulungs appear to be shy and quiet, and most unobtrusive among strangers.

BUGUN: The Khowas who call themselves Buguns are a small tribal group numbering 703 persons in 1971. Their villages in the Bomdila Sub-division of West Kameng District are surrounded by the Akas, Mijis, Monpas and Sherdukpens. They are said to have some remote kinship relations and linguistic affinities with the Sulungs.

The Buguns have well-built bodies, flat nose, conspicuous cheek-bones, brownish eyes and complexion tending from fair to dark. They resemble the Akas and Mijis in dress and appearance.

The Buguns received scant attention from early explorers and writers probably because of their small number, and mild, peace-loving and unassertive nature. They for generations had endured a kind of servitude to the Akas. Captain Kennedy, who first took notice of them in 1914, had made mention of their subjection to the Akas.

The Buguns are settled in only ten villages. They are good cultivators and raise a variety of crops. They rear cattle and milk their cows.

Though a small group, the Buguns are distinct as an endogamous tribe consisting of exogamous clans. They have a language of their own, which they have been able to preserve despite their being encircled by numerically stronger and more assertive tribes.

Language

G.A. Grierson in his Linguistic Survey of India had classified the languages spoken by a variety of tribes inhabiting 'the mountainous region between the Assam Valley and Tibet, from Bhutan in the west to the Brahmaputra in the east, 'the area which is now called

Arunachal Pradesh, as belonging to the 'North Assam group' of the Tibeto-Burman speech-family. It may be noted that the term Tibeto-Burman denotes a broad linguistic classification comprising several groups, such as Bodic Group, North-Assam Group, Assam-Burma Group etc. as Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterji following Dr Grierson had tabulated.¹ "The North Assam group is not a well-defined philological group with salient grammatical features distinguishing it from other Tibeto-Burman forms of speech."²

According to the linguistic groupings the languages of the Akas, Mijis as well as the Hill Miris, Nishis, Adis and Mishmis belong to the North Assam Group, while that of the Monpas belong to the Bodic Group which probably includes the related Sherdukpen and Lishpa languages. The Sulung and Bangro dialects have not been specifically categorised, but like the Bugun they are seemingly affiliated to the Tibeto-Burman languages.

A tribal speech may vary from one region to another, as in the case of the Monpas for example, and even differ from villages to village. Conversely there may be broad dialectal affinities between one tribal group and the other as in the case of the Bangnis of East Kameng and the Nishis of Lower Subansiri.

A characteristic feature of the Tibeto-Burman languages is that they are largely monosyllabic. This is, however, not true to all such languages. For example, in Adi spoken in Siang 'words with two or more syllables are far more common than words with single syllables.'

"Broadly speaking, the languages of Arunachal, like their cousins within the Tibeto-Burman family found elsewhere, are of the agglutinative type in which relationship between principal words in sentences is expressed by means of affixes generally suffixes and infixes. Such distinctives as reciprocity repetition, etc. are conveyed by the addition of such affixes ...". Nature has itself played a significant role in the evolution of tribal languages in the hills of Arunachal as elsewhere. In a country of ups and downs, one word for the action of going or of coming generally may not be adequately clear; there are different words for going up, going down or going on level ground. Likewise different words are used for going when applied to a local inhabitant and to an outsider. There is also no general word for 'there' or 'that'. The position of the place or object indicated in relation to the speaker is more explicitly stated. Simple operations like washing or cutting are similarly expressed differently according as they signify, washing the face, washing the hands, washing utensils, washing clothes or cutting a stick, cutting fruit, cutting diagonally, cutting vertically and the like."³

Among all the tribes of East and West Kameng and Tawang, the Monpas only have a script known as Bodic.

The other Indian languages spoken in these districts are mainly Assamese, Bengali and Hindi. But these language are confined mostly to government employees and people engaged in trade and business, public works etc. A colloquial form of Assamese used in this region serves as a medium of speech between different tribes as well as between the tribal and the non-tribal people. A form of broken Hindi is also generally used. English is the official language and also the medium of instruction in educational institutions.

1. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kirata-Jana Krti* (Calcutta, 1974), p.25.

2. G.A.Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. III, Part I, (Delhi, Reprint 1967), p.568.

3. I.M.Simon, *A Brief Note on the Languages of Arunachal*, Resarun, (Shillong, April 1976), Vol.2, pp III 2-3.

RELIGION

The religious ideas and beliefs of the Bangnis, Mijis, Akas and Sulungs have much in common with that of many other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Their conception of the supernatural is complex and subtle in nature which envisages a domain of spirits and deities as well as a sphere of celestial gods.

Belief in a host of spirits is common. These spirits are believed to have great powers to influence the destiny of mortals for good or evil. The ideas of the soul and a spiritual existence beyond death seem to be either anterior to or concurrent with this belief. Human miseries, diseases and misfortunes are attributed to designs of evil spirits. Propitiation of the evil spirits by incantations, prayers and sacrifices is, therefore, an essential part of the ritual of tribal region.

Now, the belief in the existence of an invisible world of hostile spirits or a form of animistic belief is not peculiar to any tribe, it more or less plays a part in the ritualistic and popular practices of even world religions. As observed by Dr Elwin, 'similar conceptions are to be found in popular Hinduism today, and for centuries the sable wings of Satan overshadowed the sunlit teachings of Jesus Christ.' There is an element of awe, fear or helplessness in the genesis of all religions.

The tribes do not merely conceive of the world as endowed with spiritual qualities, but their belief also transcends into a conception of a Supreme God or Creator who is infinitely more powerful, good and benevolent. Donyi-Polo, the Sun-Moon god is regarded by some tribes as a great divinity symbolising the eternal truth. High gods and goddesses who are identified with natural phenomena are held in great esteem and reverence.

Mythology of the tribes is an imagery of their religious experiences and visions. A body of myths composed by them relate allegorically the mysteries of nature and creation as they comprehended and visualised.

"Myth is regarded as representing metaphorically a world-picture and insight into life generally and may, therefore, be considered as primitive philosophy or metaphysical thought.' If this is true, as I think it is, it means that the NEFA tribes have their own philosophy of religion, even though it is expressed in poetic or metaphorical form. In the tribal Puranas, as we may call them, we find a strong sense of history, a pride in the descent of the race from a great ancestor, the record of heroic deeds and, most interestingly, traces of a belief in the value of supreme self-sacrifice for the good of mankind"¹

A significant feature of the tribal mythology is the idea of some compound deities who occupy exalted positions in the pantheon of gods and goddesses. These deities are regarded either as a duality or divine manifestation of husband and wife relationship. They are conjugal and not ambivalent. They appear to be instrumental in the cosmic process of creation of the world.

The following observations of Dr Elwin about tribal religion are significant.

"It has its drawbacks, it is not fully thought out, there are many problems to which it has no answer. But as a working way of life it brings consolation to its adherents and gives them hope and courage...

1. Verrier Elwin, *A Philosophy for NEFA* (Shillong, 1964), p.212.

“Tribal religion is associated with a social ethic that unites the tribe in its discipline and undoubtedly makes for a certain nobility of conduct. The great tribal virtues are discipline, devotion to work, generosity and hospitality, truth, kindness. Many tribes, while permitting considerable freedom to the unmarried, insist on a high standard of marital fidelity. The folk-tales of the tribes that have come under Buddhist influence stress the gentle virtues of mercy and compassion.

“The ethic is not related to the religion in the sense that virtue will normally be rewarded and vice punished in the after-life. But the absence of an eschatology of rewards and punishments is no disadvantage: it rather links tribal religion with the most advanced ethical and religious system.”¹

BANGNI: Like their eastern kinsmen the Nishis, the Bangnis also believe that they are under watch and influence of a multitude of spirits and deities, who dwell everywhere. They are in the high hills and big trees, jungles and forests and in the rivers. They also reside in houses. The spirits are of two kinds, malicious and benevolent. The malicious spirits are dreaded for their evil designs. They do harm to human beings by causing diseases and accidents. Doli is one such evil spirit who brings epidemics like small-pox, blood dysentery etc. Doli is identified with a number of spirits whom various maladies are attributed. Tabong Doli is responsible for pox, Aching Doli for dysentery, Sako Doli for whooping-cough, Tame Doli for malaria and so on.

Birds and animals are sacrificed to propitiate the malicious spirits and avert evil. Blessings of benign spirits and deities are sought for health, wealth and happiness. The yearning for eternal bliss and avoidance of evil is expressed in a Bangni folk song thus:

‘Oh dear friend, let us cross the
great mountain and big river.
In future, we shall remain united
and let our life be bright.
Oh, my dear friend, let us go
to such a place where nobody
may suffer from any illness
and everybody may have a
happy and prosperous life.’

This in a way speaks of the helplessness of the people in the face of hostile environments.

The Bangnis like the Adis and the Nishis believe in a Sky-god addressed as Dony-Polo or Doini-Pollo, the Sun Moon god. Donyi-Polo is not that which may literally mean simply the sun and the moon. He is regarded as a celestial being, a high god who ‘watches everything’, is ‘the great witness in the sky’. He is the lord of truth’. He guides men and protects them. He is merciful and benevolent.

MIJI: The Miji religion has the same traits as that of the other tribes but, like the Akas, they have come under some influence of Buddhism. They believe in numerous spirits and deities of whom Jang-lang-nui is the most powerful. A festival is held in the month of October in honour of him for which a new shed is constructed every year. On the first day of the festival a cow and a pig are sacrificed. Any villager can perform the sacrifice of the cow, but the pig is slaughtered by the village priest. The festival is marked by customary rejoicings which continue for seven days.

1. Op. cit., pp.210-214.

In a myth of the Mijis the creation of the world is narrated as follows:

At first there was neither earth nor sky. Shuzanghu and his wife Zumiang-Nui lived above. One day Shuzanghu said to his wife, 'How long must we live without a place to rest our feet?' ...

In due time Zumiang-Nui gave birth to a baby-girl, Subbu-Khai-Thung, who is the Earth and to a baby-boy, Jongsuli-Young-Jongbu, who is the Sky'

From the Union of the Earth and Sky were born a son and a daughter who were gods but they had the shape of mountains. The Earth and the Sky gave birth to two other children, a boy and a girl, who had the form of frogs. They mated and from them a boy and a girl in human form were born. They were human but were covered with hair.¹

AKA: The Akas believe in a hierarchy of spirits, deities and gods who rule over mankind. The spirits are thought to be shadowy beings of the unseen world who cast an influence, of ten uncanny and inimical in nature upon the human life. The deities who have a command over the spirits as well as human beings, are in turn controlled by high gods who reign supreme above all and over all natural phenomena.

Over a century ago in 1872 E. T. Dalton wrote of the Aka religion thus: 'The Aka invests the dark and threatening power of nature with supernatural attributes. They are his gods, and he names them, *Fuxo*, the god of jungle and water, *Firan* and *Siman* the gods of war, and *Satu* the god of house and field... Offerings to the gods are made at the different cultivating seasons, and also in token of gratitude when children are born. If a Hrusso (Aka) falls sick, fowls or other animals are offered to *Fuxo*, and the patient is mesmerised,²

The high gods, who are adored with awe, command the greatest reverence. These gods are four and they are identified with four major natural phenomena, such as God of the Sky, God of the Mountain, Goddess of the Earth and Goddess of the River or water.

'The God of the sky is known as *Netz Au* (*Netz* = Sky, *Au* = Father). He reigns above and guides all human activities. *Phu Au* (*Phu* = Mountain), the symbol of natural prowess, is the Mountain God. the Earth and the River are the mother goddesses, *No Ain* (*No* = Earth, *Ain* = Mother) being the Goddess of the Earth and *Hu Ain* (*Hu* = Water) the Goddess of the River. Each of these gods and goddesses have a qualifying term of address of 'father' and 'mother' respectively.'³

Besides the four high gods there is a fifth god whose realm is under the earth. He is the god *sikchi*. All human settlements and vegetation are supported by him, and unforeseen calamities may ensue if he is slightly disturbed. Appeasement of *Sikchi* is, therefore, imperative.

Next to the gods are the deities representing supernatural powers. They are worshipped and entreated for worldly things. The deities are supposed to be nearer to men. Elaborate rituals are observed by prayers and offerings for their propitiation and blessings. High gods are invoked only in times of crisis when the power of deities is not considered good enough to get over it or when there is a case for appeal.

1. Verrier Elwin, *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, Reprint 1968), pp 14-15.

2. E.T.Dalton, *Tribal History of Eastern India (Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal)*, (Delhi, Reprinted 1973), p.38.

3. Reghuvir Sinha, *The Akas*, (Shillong, 1962), p.122.

There are many deities in the Aka pantheon. The highest deity is *Tcharo*. He is the benign ruler who looks after the welfare of human beings and protects their cattle. Another important deity, esteemed high in the order, is *Aphinchi*. He is the power behind child-birth. A healthy or an infirm child is born according to this wishes. Among the other main deities are *Chamrom*, who takes care of the child, *Jinte-Pinte-Murje*, who looks after the cattle-wealth, *Pamle-gri*, who is the lord of wild life and *Wee-Oesche*, who is the godhead of agriculture.

"Since the ritual for the higher gods is an important affair, it always calls for the presence of the chief *Mugou*, (priest) for, an ordinary *Mugou* is not supposed to be endowed with such priestly powers as may be required to handle the greater religious ceremonial. Usually a mithun, several pigs and a dozen or two of fowls are sacrificed for the occasion.

"Immediately after the ritual, a taboo suspends all outside activities for a period of about ten days. The people of the house are not allowed to come out as long as this taboo remains in operation. They get relieved of the taboo by a secondary small ceremonial involving the offering of pigs..."¹

The last in the hierarchical order of the supernatural powers are the spirits of the departed souls, especially those that are believed to have left the body with unfulfilled or suppressed desire. In their attachment to the material world they hover around their earthly place and cause troubles. The spirits are called *Chigje* and they are dreaded.

A priest is consulted whenever it is felt that a house is haunted by a spirit. This leads to prayers and sacrifices of birds or animals, usually fowls and pigs and in a serious case a mithun, for appeasement of the spirit. The ritual may continue for about eight or ten days and followed by a taboo which calls for immediate suspension of work.

An insight into the Aka religion suggests that it extends from a sort of animistic belief to the lofty conception of divine powers behind some natural phenomena. The nature gods are venerated with highest devotion and prayers are offered to seek their blessings.

The Aka conception of primordial egg as expressed in the following myth gives an explanation of the cosmic process of creation as imagined by them.

"At first there was no earth and sky; there were only two great eggs. But they were not ordinary eggs, for they were soft and shone like gold. They did not stay in one place, but went round and round. At last, as they went round, they collided and both the eggs broke open. From one came the Earth, from the other the Sky, her husband.

"Now the Earth was too big for the Sky to hold in his arms and he said, 'Though you are my wife, you are greater than I and I cannot take you. Make yourself smaller.'

"The Earth accordingly made herself pliable and the mountains and valleys were formed, and she became small and the Sky was able to go to her in love.

"When the Sky made love to the Earth, every kind of tree and grass and all living creatures came into being."²

"The NEFA stories, remarked Dr Elwin, "of the origin of creation of the world, the sky and the earth, and the heavenly bodies, have almost Miltonic grandeur of conception.

1. Raghuvir Sinha, the Akas, (Shillong, 1962), pp.123-124.

2. Verrier Elwin, Myths of the North-East Frontier of India (Shillong, Reprint 1968), p.17.

Earth and sky are lovers and when the sky makes love to earth every kind of tree and grass and living creatures come into being. But the lovers must be separated, for so long as they are together there is nowhere for their children to live."

SULUNG: The Sulungs, like the neighbouring tribes, believe in the existence of a horde of spirits who in relation to human beings are either malevolent or benevolent. Each of these spirits has a name, such as Seki, Miyo, Miyoli and so on, and a sphere of activity. They lurk everywhere, in the recesses of jungles, forests and caves, on the high hills and tree tops and in the house and village. Belief in a spiritual world, superstitions and propitiation of spirits to evade their wrath and avert evil by offerings and sacrifices are the dominant features of their religion. It has been said that the Sulung is often obsessed with a sense of fear, a fear of the dreadful spirits, the lurking dangers, the unseen and inexplicable. They have a belief in the Soul which they think leaves at death and becomes spirit. Now, if belief in spirits is a form of animism then the Sulung religion is certainly animistic. The Sulungs have no conception of a Supreme Being, who is good and just and who punishes the evil.

BUGUN: The religion of the Buguns is essentially identical with that of the other tribes of this region, 'but slightly influenced by the prevailing Buddhism of the area in which they live'. They sacrifice animals to propitiate various spirits.

The Bugun conception of the creation of the world and the Sun and the Moon as the great luminary deities are illustrated in their following two worth-quoting myths.¹

1. "long ago, before the earth or the sky was made, Zongma, who is the greatest of all, had two sons Nipu and Nili.

"Nipu and Nili were without form, they were not human beings, they were not animals, nor were they like the rocks. Many ages passed and then Nili made the earth and Nipu made the sky. When it was ready the earth was very big and Nipu put the sky like a lid above it. But the lid was too small and Nipu said, 'Brother, make the earth smaller so that the sky will fit it.' So Nili pushed and pulled the soil together until the sky and earth were of the same size, and as a result parts of the world stood up as mountains."

2. "The sun is the Rani of the day and the Moon is the Raja of the night. But the great serpent, Ettong, is jealous of them and wishes to kill them and become Lords of the sky in their place. From time to time he goes into the sky and seizes the Sun or Moon, thus causing an eclipse.

"But whenever he does this all the people on earth shout, 'Let go, let go,' and he is frightened and lets them alone."

BUDDHISM

Monpa and Sherdukpen: The history of Buddhism among the Monpas and Sherdukpens may be traced back to the legends of Shanta Rakshita and Maharimpoche Pema Jungne or Padmasambhava (c. 8th century A.D.), the two Indian saints who took Buddhism to Tibet and are believed to have visited the area now known as the districts of Tawang and West Kameng. The Monpas and Sherdukpens have a firm belief that Lopon

1. N. Sarkar, *The Buddhist Sects among the Monpas and Sherdukpens* published in Resarun, Vol.3 no.2 April 1977, p.27.

Rimpoche or Lupon Pema Jungne, which are the local names of Padmasambhava, visited their areas and brought the message of Buddhism to them. There are a number of places hallowed by the visit of this great saint. The religion preached and established by Padmasambhava in Tibet was a form of Mahayana Buddhism, then popular in India. In course of time the Mahayana Buddhists in Tibet were divided into various sects, such as Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Kargyupa and Gelugpa. The celebrated Mera Lama, who belonged to the Gelugpa sect and was a contemporary of the fifth Dalai Lama (A.D. 1617-1682), founded the Tawang Monastery.¹ The precursor of the Gelugpa sect in this area was Tanpei Dronme, a great religious preacher of the Monpas who was ordained as a monk by the second Dalai Lama (A.D. 1475-1543).

“The sectarian distinctions between the Nyingmapa and Gelugpa, the two sects operating now in this area, are expressed by differences in dress, rituals and other practices. The Nyingmapa lamas wear red hats and the Gelugpa lamas yellow ones. The former gives precedence to Padmasambhava, while the latter to Tsongkhapa, founder of their sect. In the Nyingmapa temples, the chief image is generally that of Padmasambhava, while in the temples of the Gelugpa, the chief place is given to Tsongkhapa. There are also differences in the rituals. The Gelugpas have to keep the two hundred and fifty-three disciplinary rules as laid down in the Buddhist canon. The Nyingmapas rarely practise celibacy and abstinence. The sectarian distinctions of the Nyingmapa are that it has Kuntu-zang-po (Samantabhadra) as its primordial deity or Adi-Buddha and Dsogchen ‘Maha-utpanna’ or ‘the great ultimate perfection’ as its mystical insight. Dorje Phurba is its tutelary demoniacal Buddha and Gonpo Gur is the guardian demon. The Gelugpa regards Dorje Chang (Vajradhara) as its Adi-Buddha. Its mystical insight is Lamrim (“the Graded Path”) and the Tantra is the ‘rgyach’en spyod’ (‘Vast Doer’). Its tutelaries are Dorje Jigje (Vajra Bhairava), Demchog (Samvara) and Sangdus (Guhya-kala). Its guardian demons are Gonpo P’yag-drug and Tamdin (Hayagriva).”¹

The Buddha, the *Dharma* (righteousness) and the *Sangha* (order of monks) constituting the Buddhist Trinity are the three sacred ideals of Buddhism. Among the Monpas and Sherdukpens, the religious functionaries, monks and the village priests, are known as lama as they are called in Tibet. The *Sangha* or lamaist order is formed collectively by the incarnate lamas, the monks and the village priests. “The monks are members of the Tawang monastery and they belong to the Gelugpa sect. They observe celibacy and their life revolves round the activities of the monastery. Though they are busy with the religious observances in the monastery, yet when invited the fully ordained monks (*gelong*) visit the villages and minister to the ceremonies arranged by the laity. The village priests have their training in the village itself under the tutelage of the senior members of the village priesthood. They belong to either of the two sects — Gelugpa and Nyingmapa — present in this area. They marry and lead life almost similar to that of the laity. It is the village priests who mostly attend to the religious needs of the community. The incarnate lamas occupy the highest rank in the religious community with the monks holding the intermediate position between them and the village priests.”²

1. See Chapter II for a detailed description of the Tawang Monastery.

2. N. Sarkar, *The Buddhist Sects among the Monpas and Sherdukpens*, published in Resarun, Vol. 3 no.2. April 1977, p.27.

3. Niranjan Sarkar, *Buddhism among the Monpas and Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1980), p.37.

The form of Buddhism followed by the Monpas as well as the Sherdukpens is broadly of the lamaist Mahayana School. Indeed, Mahayana Buddhism is the essence of their cultural life. Even the laity among them have some understanding of the Buddhist tenets and teachings which influence their thoughts and actions and also guide and chasten them. According to Buddhism, human sorrows and sufferings are due to desire for worldly life and the consequent transmigration of soul. Extinction of all desire leads to *nirvana* or blissful quietude of existence beyond the cycle of births and deaths. Right path as taught by Lord Buddha is to be followed to attain to this goal. Buddhism, in practice, is a moral code. The profoundly benign influence of Buddhist religion on common men has made the Monpas and Sherdukpens what they are today. These two polite, gentle, amiable, cultured and refined tribal communities are clearly distinguishable in the population milieu of Arunachal Pradesh.

"They believe that every morally good action helps to build up the store of merit so essential for their spiritual progress while every morally bad action leads to its decrease. So every individual earnestly tries to build up his store of merit by concentrating on those actions which are considered virtuous. Such virtuous activities are manifold comprising the acts of compassion to the living beings, making gifts to monasteries or lamas and to the poor, chanting of *mantras*, worshipping various gods and goddesses, private prayer and meditation, pilgrimages, turning of prayer-wheels, circumambulation of the temples and stupas, offering incense and butter lamps before the images, making large number of prostrations before certain images, counting religiously their beads, help by cash, kind or labour in the construction or repair of the religious structures, etc.

"It is this motivation to secure a better rebirth in a higher realm of existence in their spiritual quest of salvation that has made their thoughts and actions so completely dominated by their religion. Success of an individual is not judged so much by one's progress in this worldly pursuits but by his devotion to religion as well as the extent of his religious endeavours. The social fame and standing of an individual primarily depend on his pursuits in the religious plane."¹

MONPA: Although the Monpas and Sherdukpens are Buddhist, they also believe in various spirits and deities. Sacrificial rites are observed to propitiate them. Exorcism is also practised to avert evil. The religion of the Monpas retains remnants of the old Bon religion. The followers of this religion are called Bonpos. Old beliefs and rituals are still adhered to by the Monpas even though they are essentially Buddhist.

"Besides the orthodox Buddhist religion based on the sacred Tibetan scriptures, there is a cult of local deities. The practices, connected with their worship are referred to as Bon, a term used also in Tibet and the Tibetan-speaking parts of Nepal to describe a faith different from Buddhism and often considered as pre-dating the introduction of lamaistic ritual.

"Close to many a Monpa village there is a sanctuary consisting usually of several flat stones or a stone structure used for the burning of incense, where rites in honour of local deities are performed. The sentence may read-"The priest of this cult are called *bun* in Jawang region and *Phramin* in the Dirang area." The priests of this cult are. They have no connection called *bun* in the Tawang region and *phramin* in the Dirang area. They have no connection with lamas and the Buddhist *gompa*, worship the local deities with animal sacrifices and also offer eggs, meat, fish, rice and beer to various spirits and local gods.

1. Niranjan Sarkar, Buddhist among the Monpas and Sherdukpens, (Shillong, 1980), pp.71-72.

“Besides these priests there are also shamans known as *yu-min* who are subject to possession by gods and spirits, and who prophesize while in trance. Both men and women can become *yu-min*, but it is not possible to combine the function of a lama with that of a Bon shaman. *Phramin* and *yu-min* are believed to be able to see the soul of the departed and know where they go. In this respect their function is similar to that of the priests (*nyubu*) of the Nishis, and it is not unlikely that the Bon cult represents an archaic local religion which was overlaid by Buddhism. In the village of Lish, which has now two Buddhist *gompa* well stocked with Tibetan books, I was told that until three generations ago Lish has only Bon priests and neither lamas nor any Buddhist shrine.”¹

The Bon religion is practised by the Kalaktang Monpas as well. The priest performing the worship of their deities is known as Bonpa.

SHERDUKPEN: All Sherdukpens identify themselves as Buddhists. There are large gompas (monasteries) in Rupa and Shergaon, which are adorned with many images of Lord Buddha and his disciples. They also contain libraries of sacred books. The gompas are decorated with wall paintings by artists from Tawang. Both the gompas have a gate each the domed roof of which is elaborately painted with designs and images of the Buddha. Rupa Gompa, which is the largest and oldest gompa in the Sherdukpen area, is said to have been built about 190 years ago.

“Buddhism appear to be of relatively recent introduction, and an older indigenous religion centring in the worship of Khik seems to be much more deeply rooted in Sherdukpen tradition. The main rite in honour of Khik can only be performed at Rupa on a site outside the village. The feast known as Khiksaba is celebrated in November or December and lasts for seven days. Without performing this feast and giving offerings to Khik Sherdukpens may not partake of the grain from the new harvest.”²

It has been observed that the religion of the Sherdukpens ‘is a curious blend of Buddhism and local beliefs’. Their faith in Buddhism is expressed in their reverence for Lord Buddha who is known to them as Konchasum and is regarded as a divinity, a great embodiment of righteousness, compassion and mercy. Temples and shrines are dedicated to him and festivals are observed in his honour. But they have belief also in their own local deities and spirits whom they invoke for help in times of distress and suffering.

The deities and spirits are numerous. The deities are generally regarded as great, powerful and benevolent though not omniscient and omnipotent. Some of the important deities are protectors of human beings. They save man from evil spirits and diseases caused by these spirits. The deity called Phakwal Chandre Zi ‘is worshipped so that he may be pleased to guide the soul to the heaven after death.’

The spirits residing in water are responsible for spreading diseases among men. A malicious spirit called Thebrang lives on large rocks in the hills. It does harm to children.

There are two mighty beings in the sky — Brux and his wife Nimibatapa representing thunder and lightning respectively.

The Sherdukpen conception of creation of the world is expressed beautifully in the following myth.

1. C. Von Furer - Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), pp169-170.

2. Op. cit., p.174

“Before the earth was made everything was water. There were two brothers who were supreme in the sky. The elder was Lopong-Rimbuche and the younger was Chom-Dande. One day they said to each other, ‘when men are created, how will they live if there is nothing but water in the world?’ There was a lotus flower growing in the sky. The brothers threw this down and immediately the water was covered with flowers. Then they called the winds from the four quarters. The east wind brought white dust and scattered it on the flowers. The west wind blew yellow dust, the south wind red dust and the north wind black dust. The wind blew the dust round and round and mixed it up together until the earth was formed. This is why the earth is of different colours.

“The wind scattered the dust unevenly and the two brothers levelled it with their hands, piling it up here and making a hole there, with the result that there are today hills and valleys on the face of the earth.”¹

FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES

Festivals and ceremonies are an essential feature of tribal life. The tribes are generally fond of festivities and rejoicings. A festival or ceremony is observed in a tribal society in accordance with the tradition, customary rites and religious beliefs of the tribe, and it is intended for well-being and prosperity of an individual or a family or the community as a whole for whom it may be celebrated. The festivals may be held seasonally in connection with different phases of agriculture or fertility rites, or for socio-religious purposes. Some of the festivals are commemorative. All festivals are religious in character even though they are held for different purposes. The festivals are observed with great solemnity, traditional gaiety and jubilation. The community festivals are not only occasions for general enthusiasm and merriments, but they are also an expression of the cultural heritage of the tribal people, their unity and fraternity.

Some of the popular and important festivals are described as follows.

Bangni

Mlokom-Yulo: The Bangnis observe a number of festivals and Mlokom-Yulo is one of them. This popular festival is celebrated just before the commencement of cultivation in the months of March and April every year. Although various deities are invoked during the festival and animal sacrifices are offered to them. Mlokom-Yulo festival is dedicated to the Donyi-Yulo, the Sun-Moon god to whom prayers are made for welfare of the village and domestic animals, a good harvest and for remedy of all diseases. The festival continues normally for five days, or more as determined by the local priest (nybu) by the way of divination.

A suitable place in the village is selected for celebration of the festival. This place is known as *Mlokom-Yulo Nyageng* where a temporary hut is constructed. Eggs, rice for rice powder (*atong*), *endi* cloth etc. are collected by the villagers for the festival. A common village fund is raised for procurement of the sacrificial animals, such as mithuns, cows, pigs, goats and fowls. Several effigies made of bamboo are erected at the festival place. These effigies represent various spirits and deities.

In the beginning of the festival *Donyi-Yulo* is worshipped with offerings of rice powder, a white cock and rice beer. Another god named *Kamjo-Yulo* is also worshipped along with *Donyi-Yulo* in the same place, and only rice beer is offered to him. The lesser gods

1. Verrier Elwin, *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, Reprint 1968), p.21.

are usually invoked on the first day and animals are sacrificed to them. Some other gods namely *Doble-Yu*, *Yabrilo-Yu*, *Namsengmlo-Yu* and *Namdodoble-Yu* are invoked on the second day and mithuns are sacrificed to them. Each of the sacrificial mithun is shot first by one of the villagers with an arrow which is made by the preist himself by chanting mantras.

The other gods who were invoked and for whom animals are sacrificed during the festival are *Selikiri*, the god of water, *Yapom*, the god of jungle, *Ogu-Yu*, the household god, *Pamle-Yu*, the god of hills, *Langrikiri*, the god of rocks, *Tamoi - Yu* the god of sky, *Kepikiri-Yu*, the god of earth, *Seki-Yulo*, the god of the underworld, *Kanjareng-Yulo*, *Tangrang-Yulo* and *Regeu-Yulo*, the gods of agriculture and *Sangtam-Yulo*, the god who helps women at the time of delivery.

The Bangnis have conceived of deities or gods acting behind various natural phenomena. It is a common belief among them that human beings after death become *ramloaram* or spirits. Those spirits are also propitiated with oblations.

The presiding preist of the festival is paid in kind with an *endi* silk cloth, a piece of locally-made cloth, a *dao* and a portion of the meat of sacrificed animals. His helpers also get some shares of the meat and a pair of bangles each. This rite is followed by a community feast and the rest of the meat is distributed equally to the village households.

After the festival is over the villagers observe a taboo for five days during which they do not go outside the village, even not to the agricultural fields, not do they allow any outsider to enter the village. This prohibition is known as *Mlokom-Arina*. If any outsider happens to enter the village, he is made to walk round the *Mlokom-Yulo-Nyageng* three times and pay a fine of five to ten rupees or a cock.¹

Monpa

Loser: Loser, the new year festival of the Buddhist Monpas as well as the Sherdukpens, is celebrated during January - February every year and it continues uninterruptedly for five to fifteen days.

Couple of days before the commencement of the festival every body gets busy in preparing special kinds of food to be offered to god and in cleaning the houses. Dirts are thrown far away with a belief that ill health and evil spirits are dispelled from the house with the removal of dirts. The house cleaned and ritualistically renovated on this occasion is looked upon as a new house to stay in for a new life free from evil.

The first day of the Buddhist new year is locally known as *Lama Loser*, for on this day the junior monks call on the lamas to pay respect to them. Every body gets up from bed early in the morning and puts on new clothes. It is believed that the new year will be unhappy if they do not get up on the new years day before the birds. They pray to god for health, wealth and prosperity and wish each other a happy loser. All remain at home throughout the day and celebrate the occasion by eating, drinking and entertainments. Lamas are called in every house to perform ceremonies for a happy new year for all the inmates of the house.

The second day of the festival is known as *Cyano Loser* or Kings' Loser for in the old days the kings used to visit each other on this day. In commemoration of the day friends meet each other to wish a happy Loser and a sports meet of children is held.

1. This account is based on the article 'The MLOKOM - Yulo festival of the Bangnis of Kameng District' by R. K. Deuri, published in Resarun (Shillong) Vol. IV No.2.

On the third day known as Yuilha Loser religious flags are hoisted on house-tops and the people pray to god for health and prosperity.

The concluding day of the festival is marked by prayers of the villager sat the gompas for blessings of the compassionate for the new year. The day is also celebrated by picnics and merriments on the stream sides or hill-tops. Young men and women splash and sprinkle water on each other. The festive mood of the people finds expression in a lot of fun and frolic. Horse-race is an attractive feature of the day. An exciting game of the Sherdukpens held on this day is the shooting at targets from the back of racing horses at the signal of a bugle.

The Loser festival which the Buddhist await eagerly comes to an end as the people in new dress give presents to the elders of the village, the young prostrates before them and receives blessings.

Torgya: Torgya is a dance festival held in the Tawang Monastery in January-February every year. Dances are performed by the lamas in the huge courtyard of the monastery before a large gathering. The festival continues for three days during which the lamas recite some religious texts called collectively Torgya Chakhar. A pyramidal structure about one metre high and made of millet flour, is prepared to serve as a ritual offering. This is known as torgya.

The lamas in full warrior dress carry the *torgya* in a procession in the afternoon of the last day of the festival to a place outside the monastery where the abbot consign it to fire. The burning of the torgya symbolises destruction of evil. On this occasion, colourful dances are performed by the lamas dressed in magnificently designed costumes and fantastic masks. A variety of dances including devils' dance, dance of the good spirits and so on are presented to the accompaniment of solemn and fascinating music composed with drums, cymbals etc.

"Every third year this festival is called *Dungjur* when it is performed on a grander scale. *Dungjur* is believed to bring more divine blessings to the people actively participating in it as well as to the spectators. A message is sent to the Dalai Lama one year ahead of its performance. He sends an article called *fobjon* to the abbot of this monastery. It is then mixed with dough of barely and small pills of at least the number of one *dung* i.e. ten crores are made out of this and coloured red. These pills are called *maneribu*. In the temple-services, the *Torgya Chakhar* texts are recited as usual. A special service is held for the divinity called *Chenrezi Chugchiji* (*Avalokitesvara* in his elevenheaded manifestation) on the recitation of *Mane Dungjur* text when the mystic formula, '*Oh mani peme hum*', is chanted one *dung* times. The ritual offerings for this service include the *maneribu* pills also. The *torgya* is consumed in fire and the dance starts as usual on the twenty-ninth. In the afternoon of the thirtieth, the abbot takes his seat on a throne in the ground floor varandah of the library building. The votaries file past him when he bestows his blessing by lightly touching their heads with the holy water vase. Some of the lamas distribute the *manoribu* pills, which the pilgrims take home. The eating of these pills is believed to ensure one's welfare and longevity."¹

Choikor: Choikor or Chosker ceremony is observed by the Monpas in the seventh month of the Buddhist year or slightly thereafter while the Sherdukpens celebrate it in

1. Niranjana Sarkar, *Buddhism among the Monpas and Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1980), pp.47-47.

the fourth month. It is called Choikor (choi-sacred texts; *kor*-ritual circumambulation or walking round about), the ceremony in which religious scriptures are recited by the lamas and carried in ritual circumambulation.

Choikor is an agricultural ceremony performed for the protection of crops. On the last day of the ceremony, the lamas and laity go round village cultivation fields in a procession led by a senior lama with the sacred texts on their back. The texts are usually carried by boys and girls. In front of the procession two young men in wooden monkey masks and wooden replicas of the phallus go on dancing. These dancers are called kiengpa. It is believed that their dress, mask and movements would frighten away the evil spirits.

The significance of this ceremony, as already indicated, lies in the desire to save crops from pests and insects, wild animals and hailstorm, and thus secure better harvest and prosperity of the villagers.

Sherdukpen: Some of the common festivals observed by the Sherdukpens and the Monpas have been described in the preceding passages. An account of the Sherdukpen festival of Chhakur (or chhokar) which seems to be a variant of the Monpa ceremony of Choikor and which is celebrated in March-April for welfare of the community, mitigation of sufferings and good harvest, is quoted as follows.

Chhakur: "This is the festival of sacred books and is observed a month or two after the people return from Doimara. The Lama chants prayer from holy books in the Gumpa for six days burning incense and ringing bells before the images of the deities. On the seventh day, the unmarried girls go in a procession round the village carrying holy books on their heads. They visit all the holy places including such places as the confluences of streams where sacrifices are made to the spirits of forests, hills and water. They also go round the fields and bless them.

"The villagers remain engaged in their work during the period and scriptures are read, but from the date of procession they stop work for several days and spend their time in drinking, feasting and merry-making.

"After Chhakur, the villagers may go to Rupa Lagong or Kro the last named being a place on top of a hill near Shergaon where the village deity is supposed to reside. The Lama reads from the religious books. In the evening, the people get together and have their meals. The Lama places ceremonial scarves round the necks of such married women who have remained barren for many years. The women, carrying stones on their back, go round the Kro thrice; the stones symbolise the conception of child in the womb.

"The youngmen assembled there cut jokes with women and mimic the sound of a young child crying. These women come back maize seeds on their backs.

"Those who do not have sufficient cattle, wealth or food, go round the Kro in the belief that they will be blessed with what they lack.

"On this day, the youngmen pat the young girls with affection and suggest to them that they should allow their hair to hang.

"The women, who have only one child for many years, and desire another, perform this ceremony. If in the following year, a women, who undergoes the above ritual, bears a child, she is required to give feast to her relatives and friends. The ceremony of going round the Kro is observed by different groups separately."¹

1. R. R. P. Sharma, The Sherdukpens, (Shillong, 1961), pp. 84-85.

Miji

Khan: The Khan festival of the Mijis is celebrated in January-February. In this festival they pray to goddess Khan for a rich harvest, health and wealth.

Fung-Glin: Fung-glin is a popular annual festival of the Mijis. It is celebrated villagewise with great enthusiasm in the month of *Gurkhiyang* or *Nandinew* corresponding to October and November respectively. The purpose of the festival, which continues for six days, is to worship the Sun god (*Ju*) and the Moon god (*Lu*) and also appease the evil spirits so as to achieve welfare of the entire village.

The festival is held at a fixed place in the village which is known as *Fung-brang*. Preparation for celebrating the festival begins with the villagers getting together for cleaning the village, the inter-village paths and the paths leading to their *jhum* fields. At least one man from each house must come forward to do this work, else the defaulting house is liable to pay a fine. Sand, pebbles, jungle leaves etc. are collected by the village youths who stay on in a temporary hut constructed at the *Fung-brang* till the work is completed. Sand and pebbles are cast about by menfolk from one end of the village to the other in the following morning and as they do so they shout 'gro-gro', meaning go out go out, to drive away the evil spirits from the village. With the leaves tied to their waistbands, head and hands they proceed to a long distance accompanied by village priests who chant prayers and incantations all the while. They close the paths leading to the village with the leaves to prevent the evil spirits from entering. The blockage of village paths ritually with leaves is known as *drinji*.

On the occasion of this festival the Mijis of Nakhu area sacrifice a bull, while the Mijis of Dibbin area sacrifice a yak. A white fowl is sacrificed in the name of the Supreme Being and a slaughtered pig is offered to propitiate the ancestral deities.

"During the festival days, four men are engaged from among the villagers to dance at the *Fung-brang*, two of them being dressed in male dress and the other two in female dress. At the beginning they move round the *Fung-brang* two or three times before they make several dancing circuits round the village. The dancers are accompanied by four other men, two of whom go just ahead and two just behind the dancers holding long poles with flags of coloured cloths. This dance is called *Fung-jeik*. While dancing, the dancers take their daos (*Wai*) in their right hands and shields (*Dizeeg*) in their left hands. This dance continues off and on for two days and while dancing the dancers shout "ho ho!" At the end, they again return to the *Fung-brang* which they circle two or three times before they stop their dance, facing towards the east and giving a final shout of, "Gro-gro, Ho-ho! The dancing marks the last day of the festival and either a bull or a yak is slaughtered on that day in the evening by the villagers by means of bows and arrows. This day is also called *Fung-glin*.

All the above acts of worship are performed by the Senior priest. However, the junior priest is allowed to perform only the *Jung-Nung* worship wherein a fowl is sacrificed in the name of the spirit *Jung-Nung*. The head of the fowl is hanged on a post and the villagers shoot arrows at it. Meanwhile, the senior priest cuts the liver of the bull or the yak, whichever is slaughtered, and offers it to the Sun-god and the Moon-god respectively. This worship is known as *Jung-no*. At the same time some edible items of food such as maize, paddy, arum and potato are hanged on a post and prayers are offered near sources of drinking water to appease the spirits of water sources like *Buthung-veu*. *Buthung-neik*

and *Nan-chin-neik*. After that all the males of the villages dance in their usual dresses at the place where two paths join together with a view to preventing the diseases of other villages from entering their village.

The gods, namely *Sajan-neik* and *Janglang-neik*, who are regarded as supreme gods are worshipped in this festival. Moreover, the god of rivers (*Vudho-Lamo*) and the god of the underworld (*Sajong-neik*) are also worshipped for better crops and for the welfare of the entire village.

On the last day of the festival the priests go to each house in the village and tie a piece of wool around everybody's neck or hands for that person's well-being and after that a community feast is arranged for the villagers.

In the *Fung-glin* festival the priest is remunerated with an article whose value would be thirtyfive rupees and the junior priest by one of fifteen to twenty rupees. Apart from these the senior priest is given one forelimb of the bull or yak and a portion of the liver but the junior priest is given meat from the chest portion of the sacrificial animal (*Mulung-khieu-bicha*) and a portion of the liver of the bull or yak. When the presentation of these portions to the priests has been made a community feast is arranged for the villagers at the *Fung-brang*.

When the festival is over, the next day is set apart for hunting and chasing. Since the beginning, the Mijis have observed a taboo in the village during the period up to this day, and during these days no outsider can come in and no villager can go out. This prohibition is known as *Fung-Niyen*. In this way the Mijis of Kameng celebrate the popular *Fung-glin* festival every year with ardent zeal."¹

Aka

Huphu Khru: Huphu Khru or Nechi Dau is a harvest festival of the Akas. It is celebrated for one day only after the annual harvest in the beginning of winter. The date for the festival is fixed by the villagers through mutual discussion.

Wearing of new clothes, community feast and hunting are the highlights of the festival. Each house of the village donates food-stuff and the well-to-do villagers give mithun, pigs, goats and fowls to make the festival a success.

On the auspicious day the villagers rise from bed early and men, women and children in new dress make for the festival ground outside the village. The priest makes prayers for the welfare and prosperity of the people, which is followed by slaughter of animals and birds to be offered to god. After this ceremony cooking for the feast starts. In the grand community feast one is expected to take as much as one can consume the feast ends, dance and music begin. The day is thus spent in eating and enjoyments.

No outsider is allowed to enter the village for two days after the festival is over, for the Akas believe that a visitor from outside at this time will bring evil.

The concluding part of the festival is marked by a week-long hunting in the forest. The festival comes to an end thereafter and the people return to their agricultural work.

Sarok: The Akas celebrate the Sarok festival in February every year. Sarok signifying *Meneyi*, the Sun goddess and *Al-La*, the moon god, comonly called *Meneyi-Al-La*, the creator, is worshipped by them.

1. R. K. Deuri, The Fung-Glin Festival of the Mijis of Kameng District, published in Resarun, (Shilong), Vol.3 No.4, October 1977, pp. 24-25.

Conducted by a high priest the festival continues for about seven days and the neighbouring villages participate in the celebrations. Formerly the Sarok was observed individually, but of late it has assumed the importance of a common festival. Sacrifice of animals for sake of the creator god, group dance of boys and girls, sports and games are the salient features of the festival.

On the last day of the festival, the guests and villagers go round the altar and pay homage to the Creator of all living things. After this ceremony the villagers bid good bye to the guests and then go for hunting.

The Akas believe that they can get peace, happiness and prosperity by observing the Sarok festival.¹

Bugun (Khowa)

Kshyat-Swai: The Kshyat-Swai, a religio-agricultural ceremony of the Buguns, is observed annually in December-January for five to ten days in which they worship god Kachi and goddesses Loung, Digiye and Yalo for good health and good crops. Phabi, the village priest, performs the rites and ceremonies with the help of his assistants.

On the first day of the ceremony called Siramrung, the villagers clean Sraiba (a place near the village where the rituals are performed every year) and also the surroundings of the priest house. Various materials for the festival are collected which include maize and maize bear from each house of the village. Flag posts are erected in the names of each clan of the village which is followed by a prayer by the priest for welfare of all.

On the second day the priest performs a ceremony called *layio-chyang* and with a bowl of burning incense in his hand he gives blessings to all villagers. He also pours beer on the heads of women for long healthy life. On the third day the priest offers rice, maize etc. to the aforesaid god and goddesses. During the following days various rites are performed in the houses of leading persons of different clans. Two cocks are sacrificed at the Sraiba, one in the name of Phamkhoo, the hill god, and the other in the name of god Chago so that no fire accident takes place in the village. A hen is also sacrificed to propitiate Nilithang, the god of earth, for a rich harvest. Evil spirits are driven out from the village by ritual means. On the eighth and ninth days of the ceremony the Buguns observe a taboo. They do not go out of the village nor do they allow any outsider to enter the village.

A feast is held at the Sraiba on the concluding day which is known as thaplam.

SOCIAL LIFE

Organisation of Society

All tribes are territorially organised in cohesive societies based on kinship and clan relations. Division of society into patrilineal exogamous clans is common to all the tribes of this region except among the Monpas. Each of the tribes is broadly endogamous which implies that marriage is usually legitimate within the tribe. The endogamous tribes are each divided into a number of clans which are exogamous, to wit, marriage is forbidden within a clan. The rule of clan exogamy is rigidly followed and a breach of the rule is considered to be a major offence. The clan is the basic unit of the society.

1. Based on the article 'The Sarok Festival of the Akas by Jamja Yeme,' published in Arunachal Pradesh News, June-July 1977, p.26.

Although the societies are in general egalitarian, some of them are divided into classes of different social status. The Mijis, and Sherdukpens have a two-class system. The akas had three divisions — the aristocracy, the middle classes and the slaves. Monpa society is stratified into a large number of status groups.

Despite the social divisions into classes or status groups among some of the tribes, there is no caste system though semblance of caste features are noticeable in some societies. Inter-marriage across the class-lines is not usually permitted, but there is no commensal taboo. Normally, all eat together, take part equally in tribal councils, religious ceremonies and festivals. Crafts are not hereditary though craft-exclusiveness is found in a few professions.

The Bangnis trace their descent from Dodum, Dolo and Dopum, the three progeny of their remote mythical ancestor Abo Tani. Some of their priests are capable of recounting the genealogy of the tribe right from Abo Tani to the present generation. According to the genealogy, the Bangnis have three social groups named after their three above-mentioned progenitors. Each of the groups consists of a number of patrilineal clans, which again bear the name of an ancestor. A sense of kinship binds the members of a clan and the rule of clan exogamy regulates marriages in the society.

The social structure of the Monpas is rather complex, for they are divided, as mentioned earlier, into various status groups and this grouping does not resemble a simple division of the society into an upper and a lower class like that of the Sherdukpens. Unlike other tribal societies, unilineal exogamous clans are not the basis of the Monpa society. As observed by Dr Furer-Haimendorf, 'there are in some Monpa villages clan-like groups which may be described as pseudo-clans as they trace their descent from men whose origin in specific localities has given the whole descent-group a name derived from that locality.'

Society of all sections of the Monpas is a stratified structure, but there are regional differences.

"In the village of Sangti of the Dirang circle there are three status groups each of which comprises several sub-groups. The highest class consists of Bhapu and Serchipa. Next in rank is a class known as Pechupa. A middle stratum consists of Bagipa, Tsongkapa, Tukshipa, and Bomyakpa. These classes intermarry among themselves while Pechupa normally do not intermarry with the latter four classes, but do intermarry with Bhapu and Serchipa, even though slightly inferior in rank. The two lowest classes are Merakpa and Sermu, and the former is believed to be descended from immigrants who had arrived from Merak, a village in Eastern Bhutan.

"Members of the higher classes do not share a drinking cup with members of lower classes, but there is no ban on inter-dining. In recent years class distinctions have diminished in importance, but previously there was a strict ban on any marriage between high and low class people, and if an unsanctioned union occurred the couple was not permitted to enter the house of the concerned high class family."¹

There may also be certain status differences between some villages, but generally there is no village endogamy. Marriages may take place between the Dirang Monpas and the Tawang Monpas.

1. C. von Furer - Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), p.159.

The social stratification of the Tawang Monpas is comparable to that of the Dirang Monpas. There the society is also broadly divided into three status groups, high, middle and low. The highest group is known as Shermu. Three groups of middle status are Kam, Dhan and Ki, but Ki is of lower status than the former two. Members of Kam group usually marry among themselves or intermarry with persons those of Shermu group. Hypergamy, a practice which allows a man but forbids a woman to marry a person of lower class, is not noticeable while the opposite hypogamy is frowned upon. Shosha (butcher) and Raiyapa (blacksmith) are two groups of very low social standing. Members of high and middle classes only can become monks or nuns.

Social distinction in some form exists, also among the Kalaktang Monpas. Here status is not determined by birth but by wealth, education and respectability. A knowledgeable village elder commanding respect occupies a high position in the society. The rich and respectable sit separately in a social gathering.

The society of the Kalaktang is patriarchal, and patrilocal. They can marry within the same village if there is no consanguinity or outside the village or even community. There may be marriages between the Dirang Monpas and the Kalaktang Monpas as well as the Monpas of various groups and the Bhutanese or Tibetans who are Buddhists.

The Mijis are divided into two classes, the Nyubbu and the Nyullu. Members of these two classes do not intermarry.

The division of the Aka society into three broad sections of aristocracy, middle classes and slaves as observed by Dr Elwin and stated earlier seems to be an old form of their political set-up rather than a social division, for there is no stratified class system among the Akas. The slaves, known as khulo, were mainly the Sulungs whom the Akas in former times used to purchase from their Bangni neighbours. Slavery among the Akas as among other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh today is no longer a social reality. As a result of the administrative measures taken for emancipation of slaves, the slavery as a system has come to an end.

The Aka society is divided broadly into two sections, kutsun and kovatsun.¹ A sub-division of the tribe is known as Miri-Aka or Khrome, who live on the other side of the Kaya river in the neighbourhood of the Bangnis. The Miri Akas have the same customs and beliefs as of the Akas and in physical features the two are much alike. It is only the language which is different. The Miri-Akas have social relations with the Akas though they live separately.

Like many other tribes the Akas are divided into a number of exagamous clans which constitute their village community.

"The clans are the further sub-divisions of the tribe. They are based on an assumption of common origin-the members of the clan regarding themselves to be the descendants of a common ancestor and thus avoiding marital relations with the members of their own clan-group. Wherein marriage within tribal group is made compulsory, the members of the different clans of the tribe are required to marry strictly outside their own sub-group. Since the clan members regard themselves to be of the common blood, any marriage within one's own clan would be tantamount to marriage within one's own family, thus causing

1. See Ahom-Aka Relations in Chapter II

the breach of incest taboo, and hence restricted by the rule of clan-exogamy. The rule of clan exogamy is as strict in nature as the rule of tribal endogamy. Tribal endogamy and clan exogamy thus go together in Aka society as in all societies, and are in no way contradictory to each other...

"There is no class system known to the Akas. All the clans enjoy an equal social footing and there is no dogma of higher or lower creed associated with any of them. However, the people of the three Aka villages, Buragaon, Hushigaon and Jamiri, do not freely entertain the idea of marriage-relations with the members of Sichisow clan. As the rule of tribal endogamy safeguards the interests of the tribe, the rule of clan-exogamy keeps intact the clan organization."¹

The Sherdukpen society is divided into two well defined classes, Thong and Chhao, each of which is further sub-divided into a number of socially equal exogamous clans. There is hardly any mobility between the classes and they do not intermarry. Recently the class-rule has been somewhat relaxed and a few marriages across the class-barrier have taken place, but such marriages are still viewed with certain disapproval.

Thong, the upper class, comprises eight class and Chhao, the lower class, consists of five clans. 'Most of the clans within a class can intermarry'. There are certain hereditary links between some Thong and Chhao clans.

Besides the two classes, there is another group of lower social status called Yanlo.

"The Yanlos are believed to have emigrated from Barsan village near Tashigong in Bhutan about seven generations back. The Yanlos are good carpenters, and are known for their skill in smithy. They are grouped into two distinct exogamous clans: the Kenkhar and the Barasn Nai Atthok. In the beginning, the Yanlos had a distinct dialect of their own, but now they speak the Sherdukpen language. They have now lost their identity and have become completely assimilated with the Sherdukpens."²

The Sulungs consist of a large number of clans which are regarded as socially equal. They still maintain some inter-clan lineage relationship for which marriage is prohibited between certain clans. Most of the clans, however, freely intermarry. The Sulungs are a distinct social group. The rule of tribal endogamy is strictly followed by them to ensure the solidarity of the tribe.

Family, Property and Inheritance

All the tribes of this region are patrilineal whereby descent is reckoned through the father being the head of the family. The nucleus of a family normally consists of father and mother, their sons and unmarried daughters. The agnatic relationship determines the right of inheritance to property, which devolves through male members of the family.

BANGNI: A bangni family comprises man and his wife or wives and their children. When a son grows up and marries he may stay with the parents under the same roof, but after the birth of his first child he with his family is to live in a separate apartment of the house with a separate hearth. The Bangnis are individualistic in temperament and their way of living. Their houses occupied by a number of related families are usually

1. Raghuvir Sinha, *The Akas*, (Shillong, 1962), pp.53-56.

2. R. R. P. Sharma, *The Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1961), pp.49-50.

very long. In the house they follow a single family system. There may be several such houses in a village. The Bangnis are attached to the house rather than to the village. In the old days there were feuds between houses and 'individual families often shifted their homes to other locations'. This flux must have acted as a deterrent to formation of a stable and organised village community. A single family has a separate plot of land and makes its living separately.

Father is the patriarch of the Bangni family. He commands respect from all. Property is distributed by him to his heirs. Sons or in their absence other near male relatives such as brothers inherit the property. In a polygynous family, property is distributed equitably among the sons born of several wives. When there is no heir, the first wife has the right of a over-all say in the matter of property inheritance. The youngest son usually remains with the parents and gets a major share of the property. Daughters have no right to property other than those they themselves acquire. Married daughters go to live in their husbands' house and they are entitled to get mani or bead necklaces and some utensils as dowry.

In the family the housewife is responsible for management of all household work. She fetches water and firewood, collects vegetables from the fields and cooks for the inmates of the house. She also works in the *jhum* fields. Family bond is strong. Children are treated with loving care and taught to obey the elders and look after the younger brothers and sisters. When they grow up they help their parents in the household work and agricultural activities. Widow remarriage, especially when the widow is young is allowed in Bangni society. A widow can marry a person within the family group.

MONPA: Cohesive nuclear family is the primary social unit of the Monpas, which consists of a married couple and their children. In the case of a polyandrous marriage, a wife, her husbands who are generally brothers (adelphic marriage) and her children form the family. Marriage is not patrilocal in all cases.

"A newly married couple may live in the house of either the husbands or the bride's parents ...

"As among other populations under Tibetan cultural influence, such as for instance most Bhotias of the Nepal Himalayas, a man marrying a girl whose parents have no sons, may be invited to join his wife's family as resident son-in-law (*makba*) and if he accepts this position he is given a share in the property of his parents-in-law. For a *makba* the bride's parents pay to those of the *makba* a bridegroom's price equal in value to a normal bride-price.

"While a *makba* and his wife may remain permanently in her parents' house, a husband who took his bride to the house of his own father usually builds as soon as possible a house of his own and sets up an independent household".¹

Among the Tawang Monpas, the parents move out of the main house and stay in the outhouse so as to make room for the eldest son when he marries. The son in turn takes care of the parents and gives them for their subsistence a plot of land for cultivation. The gumpa tax for this land, which is known as phoreng moreng, is paid by the son. Old parents are looked after by their sons. The village community also takes the responsibility for feeding the old who are destitutes and infirm. In the family all work collectively "Little

1. C. von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh* (New Delhi, 1982), pp.161-168.

children learn early to share the burdens of the family-fetching water or little bundles of firewood and carrying their tiny brothers and sisters on their backs. Once a child is ten years old he starts helping in the fields and participating in community labour if required. The little ones also tend sheep-sitting on a stone and playing their flutes. The young men go up to the chowrie (yak, dzo and other related species) huts or remain with the horses along with the portage loads. All the hard work of felling timber, pulling bamboo, building bridges, constructing water channels, repairing the village gompa roofs are done by the men. Hoeing and ploughing, sowing, transplanting, weeding and harvest are jointly done by men and women. There is no strict division of labour between the sexes. Even cooking is not strictly a woman's preserve, but weaving of the Monpa woolen cloth is performed exclusively by women."¹

Among the Kalaktang Monpas, sons and daughters in a family stay with their parents till they are married. Normally the eldest son after marriage continues to live with the parents in the same house. Families of two or more sons do not stay in a single house. Movable property is divided equally among the sons and the one who stays with the parents to look after them inherits after their death the immovable property including the parental house. The daughters have no right to property except for the ornaments of their mother which they get at the time of marriage. If a man dies without issue his property is distributed among his next of kin.

It is worthwhile to quote the following account of the inheritance of property among the Dirang and Tawang Monpas.

"The rules of inheritance vary from region to region and in minor details even from village to village. The distribution of a man's property begins usually before his death. Once his sons are grown up and married his land is divided. One share remains with the father, a somewhat larger share goes to the eldest son, and the remaining land is divided equally between the other sons. After the father's death the land which he had kept for himself is distributed among the sons, but all his movable property goes to the youngest son. These are the rules prevailing in the Dirang region.

"In the Seru-tso of the Tawang circle all sons get shares of the father's property, but the eldest son's share is larger than those of the other sons. Middle sons are expected to enter a monastery, but if any such son returns to secular life he can claim a share of the family property. The parental house goes normally to the eldest son, and the younger sons can either stay in it, even if married, or build separate houses on the family's land. In the absence of sons the daughters have a claim to their father's property, and no consultation with the male kinsmen is required at the time of division.

"In the Bomba *mang* of the Sher-tso most of the land does to the eldest son, and even the movable property is largely given to him. If there is a middle son he is likely to become a monk, and the youngest sons gets one plot of land and a share in the movable property. If there are no sons the eldest daughter gets the entire property and her sons will ultimately inherit from her.

"In Kitpi and the surrounding hamlets the sons inherit nearly equally though the eldest son may get one or two plots more than his brothers. As the eldest son is expected to remain in the family house during his father's life-time his marriage is normally arranged

1. Neeru Nanda, *Tawang-The Land of Mon*, (New Delhi, 1982), pp.56-57.

with his parents' consent, and the bride is expected to bring a dowry to the house of her parents-in-law. If the eldest son marries without his parents' knowledge they may still allow him to bring his wife to their house, but they will see whether she fits into the family and if they do not approve of her, she and her husband may be asked to leave the house, and the father may or may not give the eldest son a share of the land.

"An eldest son staying in the parental house and managing the family property may build a separate house for his aged parents, and in this case his father will retain one or two fields. These will ultimately go to the eldest son who will pay for the father's funeral.

"The youngest son has three options : (1) He can join the eldest son in a polyandrous marriage; (2) He can build a separate house with the help of his eldest brother; (3) He can marry a girl who has no brothers and enter as *makba* his father-in-law's house.

"An eldest son will never be allowed to become a *makba* and the second son should become a monk and for this reason is not likely to become a *makba*. Any third, fourth or fifth son may become a *makba* and thereby relinquish may claim to the parental property.

"All such rule are adjusted to the actual situation in a family and this may necessitate a deviation from the customary practice...."¹

"In most villages the elder son inherits the property while the younger fares for himself, but in some villages this pattern is reversed. In any case, the son who does not inherit the land by right gets some share in it if there is a mutual understanding between the brothers. A common recourse is to go as *makpo* (son-in-law) to a family where there is no male heir. The *makpo* resides in the father-in-law's house, works on the land and inherits his property."²

MIJI : The Miji family is patriarchal. The sons inherit the father's property in equal shares. But the dwelling house falls in the share of the eldest son and the other sons are compensated for the loss. The daughters get nothing of their father's property. After death of the father the unmarried girls live with their brothers who give them in marriage which is patrilocal.

AKA : "The Family—The Aka family comprises the husband, the wife and their children. The sons stay with their parents till they attain maturity and are married in their turn, after which they separate from the parental roof to found their individual families. The daughters on marriage go to live with their husbands and become henceonwards the members of their families. The parental family thus eventually splits into individual families in either case, and returns to the same stage from where it had started, consisting of the husband and the wife. Joint families are not popular among the Akas.

The sons may not separate from their parents immediately after marriage but such a separation becomes almost necessary as soon as the first child is born. But even where such a division of family may become necessary, at least one of the sons has necessarily to stay back with the parents to look after them. This is more or less a social convention, rather an obligatory duty on their part which is discharged sincerely.

"As to who among the sons should be the person to stay with the parents, there is no fixed rule. It is largely a matter of mutual adjustment between the parents and the

1. C. von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), pp.162-164.

2. Neeru Nanda, *Tawang-The Land of Mon*, (New Delhi, 1982), p. 58.

son and often the personal choice of the former decides the issue. Naturally, this son has more privileges than his brothers since he is the eventual successor to the parental property and the household. Of course, he does not get any share at the time of the division of property among his other brothers, but it does not mean much to him as the share, which would ultimately come to him by way of inheritance of the parental property, is far larger than what may go to any of his brothers under the regular distribution. None of his brothers can have any legal claim over it. It is only on the generosity and good will of the inheritor that they may hope to get a part of it.

“At the time of the separation of the sons from the parental roof, the proper distribution of property among them is made. In such a division, the law of primogeniture normally prevails as a part of social convention. All the sons get an equal share in the property of their father except the eldest, who may get a little more than his brothers. However, in principle at least, the law of primogeniture stands in conflict with the practical arrangements, since the son, who stays back with the parents and inherits their property in due course, getting thus more share in effect than his brothers, is not necessarily the eldest.

“Such a division of the family and the distribution of the property generally affects all the articles of the household which may be included in the list of property of the family, except the ancestral ornaments which are kept reserved for the girls to be given to them at the time of their marriage. Besides these ornaments, the girls do not get any other share in their father's property. The division of property among the brothers thus usually means the distribution of cattle, utensils, cloth, hearths and other household articles of daily use. Land is not subject to division, partly because it is changeable every year, and partly because it is acquired by one's own toil. House is also not a part to this division as, firstly, the parents may themselves need it for their shelter and, secondly, it cannot serve the purpose of all the families. The distribution worked out by the father is accepted as final by his sons and usually no disputes arise over this arrangement.

“At the time of parting from the parental roof, the sons have an obligation to fulfil towards the parents. Each of them, according to his will and capacity, contributes some cloth, utensils, pigs and other things of the household that may be at his disposal at the time. The contribution is usually entrusted to them in the presence of the villagers who may gather there for the community feast given by parting people. It is considered rather necessary on the part of the sons to invite all the members of the village community on such an occasion. This is more or less a social approval sought to affect the division of the family....

“The Position of Women in Society Women in Aka society, as in most of the tribal communities of the world, enjoy a better status than many women in sophisticated societies. An Aka woman is not merely a wife who bears children to her husband and does the domestic tasks laid down for her. She is in no way a drudge. On the other hand, she is an equal partner to her husband throughout his life. She keeps pace with him in most of his economic pursuits. She works with him in the fields to clear the forest for cultivation, sows and harvests the crop, and supplements the food supplies of the house by food-gathering. She also shares with her husband many socio-religious observances. The larger field of her activity prevents her from being a non-entity. She, on the other hand, becomes an asset to her husband's family and to secure her for life-partnership the husband willingly accepts economic obligations.

"The institution of polygyny also does not affect her position in any way. Whenever a man decides to bring home a second women, he has to first take counsel of his wife, and find out if she is willing to accept a helping hand. And her opinion remains final."¹

SHERDUKPEN: "Family—The family set up is patriarchal, and the father is the head of the family. On his death, the eldest son succeeds him. Descent is partilineal and marriages patrilocal.

Joint families are common, though the tendency for such families to break up into separate units has already manifested itself. Polyandry and polygyny are unknown amongst the Sherdukpens. Although indulgence in illicit relations is frowned upon laxity in sexual morality is by no means uncommon. Frequency of divorce is not high, and widow remarriage is permitted.

In the domestic affairs of the family, the father usually wields a dominating influence, and his will generally reigns supreme. It is he who mainly provides for their comforts, and arranges the necessities of life. This is not, however, to suggest that the other grown-up members of the family do not contribute their share towards its maintenance.....

"Position of Women—As already noted the father is the head of the family in Sherdukpen society. All the same, the mother does not in practice have a lesser status. She sets the general pattern of family life, and is invariably consulted in all matters of family importance.

"Women, however, play an insignificant role in administrative matters, though they can freely take part in practically all festivals, and are not secluded from any social gathering or public amusement. They are also free to move about, and can call on each other.

"The marriage customs of the Sherdukpen people give a high status to women. It is the boy's father who requests the girl's father for his daughter marriage to his son. In place of the dowry system of the plains, the system of brideprice is prevalent, and it is the boy's father again who has to pay a substantial price for the bride.

"However, society has imposed certain restrictions on women in matters of religion. They have practically no part in religious rites; it is taboo for them to officiate as priests.

During the course of sowing and harvesting, the women help their husbands in the fields. In domestic matters too, they have to work hard. Their primary duties are cooking, pounding and sifting of grain, fetching fuel from the jungle and the like. By nature they are conservative and dislike change in the family pattern and traditions.

They are, as a rule, gentle-hearted and amiable. Their gay disposition and modest demeanour are attractive. They are open and frank in their conduct, and readily join in conversations. Generally speaking, the sexes have equal rights in Sherdukpen society, and stand almost on an equal footing in social intercourse.

"Inheritance of Property—The immovable property of a Sherdukpen family consists of the house, the cultivable lands and the areas reserved for fishing, collection of honey and fuel gathering.

"The movable property includes livestock, household belongings, clothes, ornaments, domestic utensils, agricultural implements and so on.

1. Raghuvir Sinha (Formerly Divisional Research Officer, Kameng Frontier Division), *The Akas*, (Shillong, 1962), pp.56-58, 65.

"If a member of the family produces, manufactures or acquires a piece of property through his own efforts, he exercises exclusive rights of ownership over it and can dispose it of at his discretion. Domestic animals are owned by the menfolk, but ordinarily they are not disposed of without the consent of the elder members of the family.

"Inter-village boundaries are well-demarcated, and are based on the position of natural features, like hill-slopes, streams or stones. The same is true of cultivable lands. Individual hunting and fishing areas are also clearly demarcated, and no trespass is tolerated.

"Non-jhum land can be purchased on payment in cash or in kind in the form of cattle. Distribution of jhum land is made after deliberation among the clan members, according to individual need and convenience.

"A poor man who does not possess any land, can help a land holder in cultivation, and in return get half of the crops produced. Individual right over a jhum land exists so long as it is under cultivation.

"Women do not have any right or claim over immovable property. They are, however, encouraged to rear poultry and breed cattle which they can sell on their own, and retain the sale proceeds for personal use.

The following points may be noted in regard to inheritance of property :

- (i) Property is not divided equally amongst the sons on the death of their father. The eldest son gets a major share, and the rest is divided equally among the other sons.
- (ii) Personal garments are generally placed in the grave along with the dead body. Any surplus garments that he may leave behind, are divided equally amongst the sons.
- (iii) If a man dies without leaving any son, his estate goes to his nearest male relative. For instance, if the deceased has no sons but has brothers, the property is distributed equally among them.
- (iv) The bride-price, obtained during marriage of a daughter, always goes to the father but, when the father is dead and the brothers perform the marriage of their sister, the bride-price is shared by all the brothers equally.
- (v) The person who gets the major share in the estate left by the deceased person, has to accept the obligation of performing the death rites and to bear the expenses of the funeral feast.
- (vi) Adoption of a son is permitted by the customs of the society. The adopted child is treated like a real son, and is entitled to inherit the property of his foster-father, but not that of the real father. In cases, when the foster-father gives up the adopted child, he has to pay a stipulated compensation to his real parents."¹

SULUNG : The primary unit of society is the nuclear family consisting of parents and their unmarried children. Joint family is not common. The father is the central figure in a family, in whom all authority is vested. The set up of the family is patriarchal, descent is patrilineal and residence patrilocal. After marriage the sons live either in their parent's house or houses of their own. They must have separate establishments if they live in their parent's house. It is a social convention rather than an obligatory duty that one

1. R. R. P. Sharma (formerly Divisional Research Officer, Kameng Frontier Division), *The Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1961), pp.52, 58-62.

of the married elder sons is to reside with the parents until one of his younger brothers gets married. In that event the married son with the members of his own family takes food from the common hearth and owns jointly with his unmarried brothers the property and produces of land.

Orphans are taken care of by some family of their same clan. In the case of a female orphan brought up and given in marriage, her parental property is divided among those who looked after her.

A widow lives in her husband's house along with her children. The daughters on marriage go to live in their husband's house. In a polygynous family, which is not common all wives live together in the same house. Although polygyny is socially approved, the husband has the obligation to take prior consent of the first wife. Divorce by either husband or wife is allowed, but in the latter case the wife is to refund the bride-price to her husband. Women can move freely, attend village meetings as onlookers and take part in religious matters and festivals equally with men, but they cannot become village headman or priests.

Property is inherited through males. A woman cannot dispose any property except her personal belongings. The widow looks after her husband's property and widow remarriage is permissible provided she has the age to bear children.

BUGUN : The Bugun family like that of many other tribes is patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal. The sons inherit equal shares of their father's property. The unmarried daughters are only entitled to get shares of ornaments. Brothers have the duty to look after their sisters until they are married.

MARRIAGE : Monogamy is the established norm of marriage amongs all the tribes, but polygyny is also recognised. The Monpas have, however, a marriage custom of adelphic polyandry whereby a woman may have a plurality of husbands who are brothers. The rule of clan exogamy is strictly adhered to in marriage relations, but the marriage system of the Monpas differs from others in some respects. A clan consists of a number of allied families who trace their descent from men of a common ancestry. The members of a clan regard themselves as close kins tied by blood relationship. It is, therefore, customary for them to marry outside their own clan. Marriage within the clan or consanguinity is abhorred as incestuous, a serious breach of the clan rules and a major offence against the society. Although polygyny is permissible, it is not common in all tribal societies where only a few rich can afford to have more than one wife by paying the heavy bride-price for each marriage. Levirate, sororate and cross-cousin marriages in various forms are also recognised.

BANGNI — Polygyny is not uncommon among the Bangnis. Other types of marriage besides monogamy are also in vogue. The Bangni is inclined to marry a woman after having his first wife for the sake of getting an additional working hand in the family which he considers as wealth. In this he is not only motivated by pragmatic or economic considerations but also by a desire for procreation or fulfilment of love. He 'quite often expresses the deepest and purest kind of affection for his wife' and believes that they 'who have joined in marriage will also be re-united in life after death.'

Marriage by negotiation is the general practice. Of the other forms of marriage, love marriage is familiar, marriage with mother's brother's daughter is permissible and marriage by capture or elopement is very seldom resorted to. Negotiated marriages are normally arranged by parents or next of kin. Sometimes a marriage is arranged between a boy

and a girl when either of them or both is or are yet to attain the age of puberty. In such cases, if the girl is young she will continue to stay in her parents house until she obtains puberty.

"A man may be considered as having married a girl when:

- 1) Full bride price has been paid for the girl even if the girl is not actually living in her husbands house.
- 2) The girl has actually gone to live in her husband's house.

"When the interested parties to a proposed marriage get together for the purpose of discussing the bride price, the meeting is known as the *nida gahna*. In this meeting it will be decided just how much the bride price will be and the time when the girl will leave her parent's house to join her husband in his village or house. The bride price is known as *damre*. Two witnesses are to be present at the *nida gahna*. One from the girl's side, known as the *chene* and one from the boy's side known as the *bungte*..."¹

Negotiation for marriage is initiated by a go-between called *padom malap*. After the bride-price, which has no fixed standard and depends upon the status and wealth of the boy's family, is settled, the *nyibo* or priest fixes the date of marriage.

Marriage is normally patrilocal. It is customary for the wife to live in her husband's house unless otherwise agreed upon by both sides. If a young wife dies before she joins her husband then her bride-price which has been paid is to be either returned or her sister (a kind of sororate) or some other girl is given in marriage in her stead. A widow continues to live with her husband's family.

In the event of a negotiated marriage the groom's party consisting of the boy's parents and his other kinsmen go to the bride's house with mithuns, beer and some other articles on an auspicious day as is fixed by the priest by divination. Two priests accompany the party, one in the front and the other at the back. The party stays in the bride's house for three days, where mithuns are sacrificed, elaborate rituals are performed and grand feasts with songs and dances are held. The bride-price and dowry are exchanged on the third day of the marriage ceremony. The groom's party leave for their own village on the following day. The bride and her parents follow their course. At some entry point of the village propitiatory rituals are performed in the name of god and chickens are sacrificed. The bride enters the groom's house by a new ladder made for her. Sitting in a corner of the house the bride's parents recite in a soft weeping tone the tribal myths expressing wishes for a happy life of the bride. All the villagers carrying hens or some other articles of presentation come in for a happy get together and they celebrate the occasion by singing and dancing throughout the night.

Separation of a married couple may take place for reasons of maltreatment of a girl by the husband or his first wife, dislike for the husband falling in love with another man and so on. But desertion by the husband is very rare.

MONPA — Monogamy is the normal rule of marriage, but a man can take a second wife as in Tawang only with the consent of his first wife. "The Monpa term for a marriage arranged by negotiation is *zeroo* in the Tawang dialect and *phunban* in the Dirang dialect. A love marriage concluded with or without the parents' consent is called *leh* in all dialects,

1. David N. M. Duncan, The Marriage Customs of the Bangnis of Sepla, published in Arunachal Research Bulletin, (Shillong, August 1972), pp.21-22.

and the term for elopement is *krigu*'.¹ Premarital sexual relations between boys and girls of similar social status are not considered objectionable and the initiative for marriages is often left to the young people.

The bride-price usually comprises one horse and one yak, and normally it is paid when a boy expresses his desire to marry a girl or a child is born after the girl has already come to the boy's house without formality. Payment of bride-price for settlement of a marriage is not as rigid custom among the Monpas as it is in many other tribal societies. If a man is too poor to afford the bride-price, the liability to pay it may pass on to his son. A dowry of ornaments, utensils and clothes is normally given to a daughter in marriage when she goes to her husband's house. A man of wealth may even give his daughter some land or cattle.

The consent of parents and the mutual consent of the boy and the girl both play their parts in the Monpa marriages. If a marriage, ceremony is formally solemnized the groom's party carrying beer, grain and ceremonial scarfs (*kata*) go to the bride's house. From the bride's house in turn the marriage party led by a lama go in a ceremonial procession to the groom's house. The party on its way stops at the houses of kinsmen and friends who offer scarfs and entertain the party with drink. The entire marriage party is invited to a feast in the groom's house.

As earlier, the Monpa societies of Tawang and Dirang are divided into a number of status groups or classes and this division regulates marriages among them. These classes are not actually exogamous unilineal clans as members of a class or division may marry among themselves if there is no consanguineous links between the preceding two generations. "Thus a man and woman who have the same grandfather cannot marry, but descendants in either the male or the female line of the same great-grandfather are not debarred from marriage."²

Divorce is allowed. The reasons why a married couple seek separation from each other are, *inter alia*, maltreatment of wife by her husband or mother-in-law, falling in love with another woman and infidelity. If a wife wants to leave her husband she is allowed to take the dowry she brought. Infidelity on the part of either husband or wife may also lead to divorce, but desertion of this ground is rare. If a man in love with another woman wishes to divorce his wife he has to seek prior separation from her and give her a piece of cultivation land, which reverts to him after her remarriage or death. In such case of divorce, the daughters usually go with the mother while the sons are kept by the father. If a husband divorces his wife without a valid reason, the bride-price is not refunded, but if a wife unreasonably deserts her husband, she or her parents have to pay double the bride-price. In case of abduction of a married women, double the bride-price which was paid for her has to be paid to the husband.

Incidentally, it should be noted that despite the liberality of the Monpa society in matters of marriage and the considerable amount of freedom given to the young people, incidence of illegitimate birth is fairly low. This may perhaps be due to the fact that in most cases the couples eventually marry and settle down. No social stigma is attached to a illegitimate child called *shou* who lives in the mother's family and is often brought up by the next husband.

1. Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), p.161.

2. Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), p.161.

Among the Kalaktang Monpas monogamy is the general rule as among the other groups of the Monpas, but a man can marry more than one woman if his social and economic status permits him to do so. Marriages are normally arranged by the parents or near relatives. The negotiation is initiated by the boy's parents who make an approach to the parents of the girl. They do not go to the girl's house direct but stay in another house of the village and apprise the girl's parents of the purpose for which they have come. The negotiation starts with the boy's parents offering a jar of local drink and a piece of cloth (*khado*) to the girl's parents, who receive the offer if the marriage proposal is acceptable. The matter is then discussed in detail. If both the parties agree and decide for the marriage, a date of wedding is fixed on the advice of a lama. Accordingly, the groom's party proceeds to bring the bride after having performed the customary rites and rituals conducted by the lama. The party is cordially received by the bridal group and entertained with food and drink. The groom side also thrown a grand party in honour of the bride's relatives in their village. After staying for a night in the bride's house, the marriage party accompanied by the bride leaves for the groom's village in the next morning. On the arrival of the bride in the husband's house the groom's father gives a feast to the villagers.

Not all marriages are arranged by the parents. Love marriages are also popular.

Cross-cousin marriages among the Kalaktang Monpas are socially acceptable. But, there is no social acceptance for parallel cousin marriage between children of brothers. One can marry his mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter, but not his or her father's brother's daughter or son as the case may be. Sororate, i.e. marriage with a wife's sister is permissible widow remarriage is allowed. Polyandry is very rare. There may be few instances of a woman having two husbands who are brothers. Divorce is permissible only in special and unavoidable circumstances.

As in other tribal societies, payment of bride-price to be made to the bride's family in marriages is obligatory for the Kalaktang Monpas as well. The amount of bride-price, which in their case usually consists of some cattle, sheep and cloth, varies according to the social status and economic position of a man and his family. The bride's parents have also an obligation to give some ornaments and utensils to their daughter as marriage gifts.

MIJI - Marriage is called *gi* by the Mijis. Although the Mijis as a tribe are endogamous, they intermarry with the Akas, their neighbouring tribe. But, like other tribes they scrupulously adhere to the rule of clan exogamy which regulates the marriage system. Monogamy is the normal rule of marriage. Polygamy, but not polyandry, is, however, recognised. Marriage between cross-cousins, such as mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's son, is permitted and preferred. Parallel cousin marriage, to wit marriage between children of brothers or children of sisters, is strictly prohibited. Levirate, both senior or junior types, are recognised, whereby one can marry the widow of his elder or younger brother. Junior levirate is, however, not common. This apart, a widow with children can remarry either a widower or a bachelor. Such marriage is possible only on the advice of village elders after a lapse of one year from the death of her husband. Sororate marriages are also in vogue. A person can marry his wife's elder or younger sister by paying the bride-price, which payments is reduced to half of the amount originally paid if the marriage takes place after the death of his first wife. The elder sister of the wife can be married only after his wife's death.

The common form of marriage is that which is arranged by the parents through negotiation.

“Marriage by negotiation is the regular and common custom of society. If a marriage is to be solemnized then, in fact, it is initiated from the boys’ side. Marriage proposal comes hardly from the girl’s side. The boy usually communicates his desire to marry a particular girl of his choice to his parents through his friends. When the proposal is agreed upon by the parents then they may summon a village priest *Gebi* to examine the auspiciousness of the proposal and the *Gebi* makes his diagnosis by killing a fowl and reading its liver through divination the favourable or unfavourable signs contained. Therein if the signs are favourable then the parents of the boy send two go-betweens *Bangzo* to the girl’s house in order to initiate the marriage proposal on behalf of the boy’s family. One of the go-betweens is regarded as senior and the other as junior. The senior go-between has the superior rights and power than the junior. The go-between play a vital role in negotiating the marriage proposal in consultation with the parents of the boy and the girl. The success and failure of the marriage proposal depends mainly upon their skill, intelligence and tactfulness.

“Rituals performed on the occasion of marriage appear to be of secondary importance as the possibility of marriage is virtually determined by the amount of bride-price to be paid to the girls family. Normally, the bride-price is to be settled up by the go-between on behalf of the boy’s parents with the parents of the girl. If the parents of the girl do not agree to the decisions of the go-between then the go-between return to the boy’s house to convey the opinions of the girls parents. The marriage day is fixed by the parents of either party with the help of the go-between and after that the days are normally reckoned with by counting the number of knots bound to a piece of cane string *Jebrang*; the number of knots indicates the days that are required to pass before the marriage to be solemnized. Normally, the bride does not come to her husband’s house immediately after the marriage. According to their custom she is to come to her husband’s house after a year or two. Further, as per custom the husband and wife should not take the meat of the mithun which is killed on the occasion of their marriage. If the girl does not like to sit in the proposed marriage then she forcibly takes the meat of that mithun and rebukes the boy’s party. In such circumstances, marriage is out-rightly cancelled. Marriage ceremony is held at bride’s house by sacrificing a mithun in the name of their ancestral deities and blood of that mithun is besprinkled with its tail and village priest recites mantras for propitiating their ancestral deities. At the end of the marriage the go-between are remunerated with iron hearth-stand and rupees one hundred each. The senior go-between gets his share of remuneration from the boy’s parents and junior go-between from the girl’s parents.

“Marriage in Miji society is primarily based on the payment of bride-price *Nemrañneu* and it is paid not in cash but in kind in the form of cattle, clothe, utensils etc. However, the amount of bride-price varies according to forms of marriage and it is to be fixed by the parents of either party in consultation with the go-between. The bride-price in case of marriage by negotiation generally includes one mithun, one pig, one cow, one woolen blanket, one brass bin, four to six iron hearth-stands and a few metres of white markin cloths. If the boy’s parents cannot pay the entire amount of bride-price at the time of marriage then at least half of the total amount is to be paid at the time of marriage and the rest afterwards by instalments. It is also not uncommon that, however, the payment of mithun as an item of bride-price is a must but for pauper son-in-law the payment may be exempted by the prospective father-in-law. In case of marriage with youngest daughter the bride-price is slightly higher. It is also a fact that the amount of bride-price is mostly

determined by the amount of marriage gifts which are to be paid to the girl by her parents at the time of her marriage."¹

Marriage gifts given by the parents to their daughter usually consists of a silver head-gear (*hautau*), a pair of ear-ring (*jawbeinini*), a pendant (*gau*), a chest ornament (*sangphangau*), a pair of bangle (*nimukriri*), beads of various size and shape, ten bowls (*tile*), five *daos* (*unabai*) and dishes and pots. Marriage gifts are considered to be the personal property of the girl to whom these have been presented in her marriage, but the inmates of her husband's house and her own daughters can use them.

A poor man can pay the bridge-price by way of service to be rendered at his would be father-in-law's house.

Love marriage is permissible. But, for a love marriage to be solemnized, the consent of the girl's parents is essential. Marriages by elopement or capture are also performed occasionally.

An elaborate marriage procedure extending for five days of ritual feasts, drinks and merry-making is followed in the event of a negotiated marriage. On an auspicious day the marriage party comprising the groom, his parents, relatives and followers set out for the bride's house in a procession led by the go-between. The party carries with it the bride-price and rice-bear. They shout as they proceed. The bridal party comes forward to receive and entertain them with beer and meat. Near the bride's house the groom's party shouts again and the two parties take their positions as if in a confrontation. The bridal party pulls out their swords as a sign of resistance. None of the groom's party except the go-between is allowed to enter the bride's house until the bride-price has been paid. The payment is made on the second day of the marriage. A piece of endi silk and a woollen blanket are also presented to the bride's mother and father respectively. The groom's party leaves the bride's house on the fifth day without the bride who remains at her father's house. After a lapse of one year or two since then, the groom comes to the bride's house on a mutually fixed date to take the bride to his house. The bride accompanied by four girls of her village, her parents and relatives goes with the groom and his party in a procession. The bride enters her husband's house together with the groom by a new ladder made for the purpose. The next day the bride lifts a sword brought from her father's house by the girls who accompanied her. The bridal party stays also for five days at the groom's house during which they attend the marriage feasts and the marriage gifts given to the bride by her parents and relatives are handed over. At the time of departure of her parents and other followers, the bride goes with them to a little distance to see them off.

Divorce is not a common occurrence. But, separation is possible by way of compensation to be paid by husband or wife as the case may be. If the husband seeks separation he has to give a mithun to his father-in-law as marriage compensation. On the other hand, if divorce is initiated by the wife for the reason of her husband's second marriage without her knowledge and consent then he has to forfeit the bride-price he paid to his father-in-law. But the wife is to return the full bride-price to her husband if she deserts him without assigning any reason. Divorce by mutual consent of the couples, which is rare, does not entail any compensation to be paid by either side.

1. R. K. Deuri, Marriage System of the Mijis of West Kameng District, published in Resarun, Vol VII (No. 1 & 2) 1981, Shillong, pp.56-58.

AKA: The Mijis and the Akas intermarry between themselves as already mentioned. Their marital relation seems to be the result of a traditional bond — their neighbourliness, ethnic and economic ties. They resemble each other in physical features, and this may be in some measure due to the intermarriages.

Polygyny is familiar among the Akas. Marriage with more than one woman is possible provided a man's economic and social status enables him to do so and he has the consent of his first wife. But the opposite polyandry is absent in their society.

Levirate is popular. A man in the Aka society usually inherits his elder brother's widow. This is senior levirate. But junior levirate whereby a brother marries the widow of his younger brother is not in vogue. It is customary for a widow to live with her husband's younger brother as his wife. If she refuses and her husband's brother does not accept her refusal by virtue of his legal claim upon her, then either of them may refer the dispute to the village council for settlement. The decision of the council is legally binding on both of them.

The Akas has also the custom of sororate. A man may marry his wife's sisters before or after her death. But, like the levirate, sororate is also restrictive. Marriage with wife's younger and not elder sisters is only recognised, and in that sense this type of marriage may be termed junior sororate.

Cross-cousin marriages are considered preferential. A boy can marry his mother's brother's daughter and likewise a girl can marry her mother's brother's son. Society also accepts a kind of parallel cousin marriage in which 'a boy or a girl can also marry his or her mother's sister's daughter or son.' But direct parallel-cousin marriages with one's father's brother's son or daughter are forbidden. As the Aka society is patriarchal and patrilineal, marriage between agnates is looked upon as incestuous.

The traditional and the more popular form of marriage is the wedding which comes through negotiations by the parents.

"Marriage by negotiation is generally initiated from the boy's side. The boy who has seen a girl or known her for some time past and has made up his mind to marry her, may give an indication of his desire to his parents. They then call the *Mugou* (village priest) to examine the auspiciousness of the proposal. The *Mugou* makes his diagnosis by killing a fowl and reading through divination the favourable or unfavourable signs contained therein. With the obtaining of a favourable opinion from the *Mugou*, the first step towards the settlement of marriage is supposed to have been covered, for it is here that a proposal may break down as few would dare to conclude a marriage in spite of the unfavourable pre-monitions of the priest. If the omen turns hopeful, a go-between is summoned to initiate the marriage proposal on behalf of the boy's family. The go-between or the *Mukhou*, as he is known, may be a relative of the boy or some elderly person of his village community. He plays the most important role in negotiating the marriage on behalf of the boy's parents and success or failure of the proposal depends largely upon his intelligence and tactfulness. If the two parties reach a settlement, the credit is often attributed to the initiative and personal efforts of the *Mukhou*.

The *Mukhou* knows, of course, the fundamental things necessary to initiate the negotiations, such as the bride-price the parents are willing to pay and the time when they want marriage to take place. He travels to the girl's village, meets her parents and tells them about the boy's desire to marry their daughter and that his parents approve. He assures them

that the proposal has been duly examined by the priest and declared to be favourable. With this, he also gives them an idea of the amount of bride-price. If the parents of the girl agree to the proposal, the go-between returns to his village to convey the news to the boy's parents. He may be sent a second time to the girl's house to settle other preliminaries to marriage. Often he has to pass between the two parties twice or thrice, for a marriage is not supposed to be auspicious, if it is settled during the very first visit of the negotiator. The date of marriage is fixed in consultation with the girl's parents. The time of marriage is calculated by counting the number of knots bound with a piece of cane-string. The number of knots indicate the days which are required to pass before the marriage may be celebrated. The first string of knot brought by the negotiator is, however, of only formal importance since the marriage never takes place according to the first plan. To do so, the people believe, is only to invite a bad omen. It is believed that, if the first programme of marriage is not altered by a secondary fixture, one of the parties, either the bride or the bride-groom, may be visited by some evil influence in later life. It is an attempt to avert this danger that the first plan is always allowed to be passed off and a second piece of string has to be brought from the girl's house to know of the next and the final programme. The date fixed upon this time remains definite and final for the marriage ceremony.

In return for his services in negotiating the marriage and in helping the people to reach an agreement, the *Mukhou* is paid a good remuneration. This is usually paid in the form of the gift of *aeschperi* (or *udhan*, as it is known in Assamese) — an iron hearth-stand. If the union proves happy, the *Mukhou* can always boast of his part in it. Both parties sincerely acknowledge his part in uniting them together.

“Marriage ceremony — Around the date of marriage, the marriage party comprising the groom, his parents and relatives and some of the members from village, starts in a procession for the bride's village, where the marriage is to take place. All their way on the journey, the party makes a lot of noise. On reaching every hill-top, they make a loud shout of ‘Ho’. As they arrive at the village entrance, they signal their arrival again by a shout. At this, the people of the bride's house, accompanied by other villagers, come to receive them. They also give a small feast to the guests at the place of the first meeting. After the feast, the members of the groom's party march to the bride's house with their hosts. When they approach the bride's house they again raise a loud shout and their hosts pull out their swords (*daos*) as a sign of resistance. The groom's party also pretends a similar gesture and there ensues a mock fight between the two parties for a couple of minutes, with the brandishing of swords in the air. Ultimately, the bride's people feign to yield and allow the groom's party to enter the house. This demonstration of a mock fight between the two parties seems to be a cultural survival from the times when runaway marriages might have been quite common.

“The hosts arrange a big feast in honour of the marriage guests later in the day. The function, which includes songs and dances by the girls of the village, continues till late at night. Almost all the villagers participate in the ceremony. While the older people may return to their homes after some time, the youths continue to sign and dance the whole night.

“On the following day, the people of the groom's party have to play host to the bride's people in a feast arranged by them. A mithun brought with them is killed for the feast.

Later in the day, while the groom's people may take rest in their camp, the people of the bride's house discuss among themselves the remaining details of the marriage like the marriage gifts to the bride.

"Sometime during the day, the elder women of the bride's village dress themselves as men and join the groom's party to gossip and joke with them. The fancy dress of the women and their merry-making creates much fun and frolic among the members of both parties and they immensely enjoy the novelty.

"The third day begins with some other jovial features. The girls of the bride's village take a ceremonial liberty to play jokes with the youths in the groom's party. They prepare a special blackish paint from wild pine (which they call *muphori* and which is also commonly known as *lingchong*), and paint the faces of the boys at the first opportunity. The boys also return the compliment with equal enthusiasm and black-paint the girls' faces. This joking goes on for almost the whole day. Lest the boys may take these jokes ill, the elderly people from among the hosts brief them with the custom on the very day of their arrival in the village.

"On all nights during the marriage-party's stay in the village, dances and songs are arranged regularly and the members of the village community, along with their marriage guests, share and enjoy the gay festivity. A special song for the occasion is sung by the people of the bride's side to express humility and gratitude on their part. They sing: 'Before this eventful day (of marriage), we had not known each other. We had never met nor talked (so closely) to each other. The gods above have united us and we start living as one from this day. Your son we regard as our own (son) and entrust our daughter to your charge. We offer this humble food of ours with affection and pleasure, and, though it may not be as rich as the food to which you are accustomed, in all kindness please accept it.'

"At the conclusion of the three-day ceremony, the marriage party returns to its home. The girls of the bride's village usually come with the party upto the village-gate to see them off. Before final parting, they dance and joke once again with the boys of the marriage party and paint their faces black. They then bid farewell to the marriage guests and the party marches towards its village.

"The bride does not accompany the groom to his home soon after the marriage ceremony. She has to stay back with her parents for about a year more after the marriage. The husband may, however, visit her during this period at her parent's house. At the end of the year, the husband accompanied by the *Mukhou* (the go-between) goes to bring her home. The parents and some brothers or relatives of the bride may also come to escort her to her husband's place. There is, however, no need for any special ceremony this time. The bride's people, when they arrive at the groom's house, are treated with honour and given a good reception by the groom's family. The ceremony in their honour, which mainly consists of feasting and dancing, continues for about four days. They may then return to their home, leaving their daughter in her husband's charge. From now, the bride assumes full membership of her husband's family.

"Though the traditional custom is for the bride to stay for about a year with her parents after her marriage and before she goes to live with her husband, the usage is now being relaxed and a bride may begin to live with her husband even earlier than the specified time."¹

1. Raguvir Sinha, *The Akas*, (Shillong, 1962), pp.70-75.

Marriage by capture or elopement, which is often the result of love between a boy and a girl, is also accepted with social connivance. Such marriages are normalised with the payment of bride-price as settled between the parents of both sides.

The obligatory bride-price is paid by the bride-groom and his family in kind, and it usually comprises cattle, cloth and utensils. A man may pay the bride-price by service at her prospective father-in-law's house as in the case of the Mijis. The amount of bride-price may vary according to the social status of the bride's father. The higher the status the larger the amount he may expect as bride-price from a man seeking his daughter's hand. The bride's parents in their turn have also an obligation to give some gifts to their daughter in marriage. The usual marriage gifts are ornaments and a variety of utensils.

Among the Akas, a boy normally marries around the age of twenty. The marriageable age of the girls is usually between the age of fifteen and twenty. Child marriage is rare.

SHERDUKPEN: Monogamy is the prevalent rule. Polygamy and polyandry are never practised. Concubinage is frowned upon. 'A Sherdukpen cannot have two wives at the same time under any circumstances.' Pre-marital relations are common. But adultery and incest are treated as crimes and do not go unpunished.

Both cross-cousin and parallel-cousin marriages are not unknown. The union between mother's brother's son and father's sister's daughter is considered as preferential cross-cousin marriage. But marriage with the daughter of mother's brother or sister is not common.

Some forms of levirate and sororate are known to exist. Marriage with the widow of a brother, elder or younger, is accomplished without any elaborate ceremony or payment of bride-price. A man may also marry his wife's sister after the death of his wife. Both junior and senior sororate are practised. Marriage with wife's widowed sister can also take place. Remarriage with wife's widowed sister can also take place. Remarriage of widow is not objected.

The Sherdukpens, as stated earlier, are divided into two clearly defined upper and lower classes known as *Thong* and *Chhao* respectively, each of which consists of a number of socially equal exogamous clans. The two classes do not usually intermarry. Besides these, there is another class called *Yanlo* of lower social status as described earlier. It is important to note that the Sherdukpen system of marriage is regulated by the rules of class endogamy and clan exogamy. It is forbidden for a *Thong* girl to marry a *Chhao* or *Yanlo* boy. Such a marriage is possible only on payment of a heavy fine to be paid to the village council by the bridegroom's family. Until recently the rule of class endogamy was rigid and strictly adhered to by the *Thongs* as well as the *Chhaos*. Of late, some marriages between these two classes have taken place following certain relaxation of the rule.

Marriage is arranged most commonly by negotiation initiated by the parents of the boy and the girl. Various other forms of marriage are also in vogue. Marriages by elopement and capture take place occasionally. Marriage by exchange is possible, but uncommon. Sometimes marriage is performed by service rendered by a boy at the house of a girl whose father has no son and needs a helping hand in agricultural work. The boy serves him for some months during which his character and capabilities are closely watched. If he is found fit, the girl is given in marriage to him.

"One peculiar feature of Sherdukpen life is that young boys and girls do not normally sleep in their own houses at night. On attaining puberty, they start sleeping separately

with their friends in batches, and thus get opportunities for making love and choosing mates. They may exchange their sashes in order to show their willingness to marry. Soon the matter also comes to the notice of the boy's father who takes into consideration his son's choice, judging by such qualities as physical appearance, grace, temperament and social status of the girl. The parents of the boys also consult a Lama about the selection of the bride, and about the day on which the bride should be brought to the boy's place. On the appointed day, the groom's friends, in a body go and bring the girl to the boy's house by a show of force. The girl is made to stay there for three days after which she runs away to her father's house before dusk. The groom does not remain in his house during this period. The groom's father next searches a suitable go-between (*achung jering*) for further negotiations. He is sent to the bride's father's house to persuade him to accept the proposal. He offers local drinks and one scarf each to the girl's father, mother and elder brother to indicate that the proposal has finalised. Thereafter, a day is fixed for performing the formal marriage ceremony after consultation with the Lama. On this day, the marriage party consisting of the groom's father, mother and other near relatives, the Gaonburas and influential members of the village go to the bride's house. Presents are exchanged between the two sides on this occasion. The boy's father offers cow, sheep, *endi* cloth and scarves to a bride's parents. He also presents a scarf each to all the important relatives of the bride and the *Chhao* families attached to her father. After this, all the people, gathered there, are entertained by the bride's people with local drinks and food. Meanwhile, the bride gets ready and adorns herself with new clothes and ornaments given by her parents. As she comes out to depart, she first bows down to her father who gives her a cow, iron hearth and scarf; then to her mother who gives scarf and cooking utensils, and finally to her brothers and uncles from whom she receives *endi* cloth, scarves and other things.

This over, the girl starts for her new home escorted by her relatives and friends. On reaching there, the groom's father offers drinks and food to all the members assembled. Songs are sung to celebrate the occasion. The groom, significantly enough, is not present during all these ceremonies. He is not also seen during the ceremony performed on that day by the Lama to bless the home and the new couple for prosperity and happiness.

At the conclusion of the marriage ceremony, the go-between and the Lama get drinks, scarves and about five rupees each.¹

It may be noted that some forms of marriage like levirate, sororate, marriage by service, widow remarriage and remarriage after divorce are solemnised in a simplified manner without much feasts and festivities. These marriages are relatively less expensive.

"Sherdukpens do not pay a bride-price in the usual sense but men of both upper and lower class are under an obligation to give the head of any animal they kill in the chase to their mother's brother, and this gift known as *ru* is considered as a belated payment for their mother to her natal family. The payment of *ru* to her kinsmen begins only after a woman's death, and if a man does not hunt he may give cattle or valuables in lieu of *ru*. After the mother's brother death his sons or even grandsons may be given *ru*, and in this way the links between the two families are perpetuated."²

1. R.R.P.Sharma, *The Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1961), pp.55-58

2. Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), p.174

Divorce is not very difficult, which normally comes into effect with the mutual consent of both husband and wife.

SULUNG: Tribal endogamy and clan exogamy are the fundamental rules of Sulung marriage as they are amongst the other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. But there are certain Sulung clans which do not intermarry because of their common ancestry. For example, marriage is prohibited between the clans Hele and Kopik, Seji and Wanga, Langa and Sario and so on. Except for this prohibition intermarriage is free among the clans.

Monogamy is the norm of marriage. Polygyny is seldom practised, but polyandry is never allowed. Cross-cousin marriages are recognised in which mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter is preferred and considered as the potential wife. Such marriages are possible if the father of the boy and the mother of the girl or *vice versa* are two siblings, i.e., brother and sister of the same parent. Parallel-cousin marriages are, however, strictly forbidden. Levirate of both senior and junior types is recognised, but it is not popular. Similarly sororate is also a socially acceptable type of marriage. A man can marry his wife's elder or younger sister before or after the death of his first wife. A widow can remarry a widower, or a bachelor or a person having a wife.

Negotiated marriage initiated by the parents is the most common and regular form of wedding in which opinion of the boy and the girl is of course taken into consideration. Proposal for marriage generally comes from the boy's side. The go-between engaged for the purpose play an important part in arranging the marriage and settling the bride-price. The marriage ceremony continues for two days at the bride's house and one day at the groom's house. A lot of merrymaking and feasts make it a happy affair. The go-betweens are suitably rewarded when the marriage is over.

Love marriage is also in vogue, in which the whole amount of bride-price is required to be paid at a time as and when the marriage takes place, and no formal feast is held. Some other forms of marriage, such as marriage by elopement or capture and marriage by service, as described earlier, are rare, but not entirely unknown.

The customary bride-price due to the bride's parents is paid in kind as it is done in other tribal societies of this region. It usually consists of cattle, cloths and *daos*. The quantity and type of articles vary according to various forms of marriage. Marriage by elopement or capture entails higher bride-price than that in other marriages.

The bride's parents have the obligation to give their daughter some ornaments as marriage gifts. These gifts held by the girl as her personal property are taken to the husband's house when she goes there.

Divorce is not frequent, though it is permissible subject to return of the bride-price to the husband.

BUGUN (KHOWA): The Buguns are divided into a number of patrilineal clans, and the rule of clan exogamy is rigidly followed in matrimonial relations. The Bugun marriage like that of other tribes of this region is normally patrilocal. Monogamy is the social norm. Although theoretically a man can have a plurality of wives if he can afford to pay the bride-price, yet polygyny is rare. One may take recourse to bigamous marriage if his first wife is barren or incapable of doing agricultural work. Polyandry is, however, unknown. Cross-cousin marriage is permissible, but marriage is not allowed with the daughter or father's sister during their lifetime. Parallel-cousin marriage is strictly forbidden.

Marriages are commonly arranged by negotiation. A negotiated marriage is usually initiated from the boy's side, and if settled the marriage ceremony continues for six days. Marriage by elopement is not infrequent. Levirate and sororate are also not unknown.

The bride-price is paid to the girl's parents in the shape of cattle, cloths and utensils. The type of marriage to be performed determines the quantum of payment, which is heavier in marriages performed by elopement, capture and love than in other marriages. But it has to be paid compulsorily if a marriage is to be solemnised irrespective of the type of marriage.

Marriage gifts given to the bride by her parents usually consist of one cow, one pig, one hen, ornaments and utensils. These are treated as her personal property, but the inmates of her husband's house can well utilise them.

Right to divorce is recognised. "However, divorce (Kikesung Guina Suina Dun) is not so common in the society but a woman has the right to divorce her husband on grounds of incompatibility and under such circumstances she is allowed to take back all the movable properties that has been brought by her from her parents' house. If the husband deliberately divorces his wife then he is to forfeit the bride-price paid by him and apart from that he has to pay three cows, one endi silk cloth, one Bhutia blanket, two iron hearth-stands as fine to her parents and contrary to that if the initiative is taken from the wife's side and if she is married immediately to some-one else then her second husband will have to pay double the amount of original bride-price to her deserted husband. The divorce cases in the society are usually tried by a body of village elders and they are known as Nimiayang-maliarer".¹

DEATH AND FUNERAL

A belief in the existence of life continuing in some form after death is common to the tribes. This belief is based on an idea of the soul. It is commonly believed that at death a separation between the body and the soul takes place and the disembodied soul goes to the other world where the departed lives an unearthly life. This further gives rise to the belief in a host of spirits who are either good or evil in relation to man. The mortuary rites of different tribes are essentially based on a belief in after life. Burial is the common method of disposal of the dead, but the Monpas and the Sherdukpens follow peculiar methods of both burial and cremation which will be discussed later. The rites performed by various tribes funeral are diverse in nature. In the case of burial, it is customary for the tribes to offer grave-goods to the departed soul, but their customs, beliefs and rituals associated with this practice are distinctly different.

BANGNI: Death in old age or death of a grown up person due to disease is treated as natural. But a case of death is viewed as unnatural when somebody expires prematurely due to sickness or dies by accident. Such death, it is believed, is caused by evil spirits.

The Bangnis bury their dead in the compound of their house or near it. In the event of a natural death the dead body with a lighted lamp held near the head of the deceased is taken to the grave. There the body is placed usually in a lying position. A wild animal, preferably a monkey, or bird is killed and offered to the dead. Rice and beer are also offered at the grave. The rich may get more animals even mithuns sacrificed for them at death than the poor. The offering of food continues for several days. This is done

1. R.K.Deuri, *The Khawas of Kameng*, published in *Arunachal Pradesh News*, June-July, p.4

with a belief that the departed would be in need of meals in his last journey to the other world and things which he enjoyed in life must be given him so that his soul may rest in peace.

The funeral rites observed in an incidence of unnatural or accidental death are, however, quite different. The dead body of a person died in an accident in the field or forest is not usually brought to the house. It is buried in a standing or sitting position near the place of accident. No death rites are performed. The priest performs certain propitiatory rituals to purify the house as well as the village of the deceased. A dog is sacrificed at the village gate and kept hanging over it.

The Bangnis believe in ghosts or spirits. The ghost of a person died accidentally or under abnormal circumstances is called *aram*. It is the unsatiated soul which being unable to go to the other world hangs around, and is prone to do harm to human beings. *Ramto* is the ghost of a parent or a near relative, which, as they believe, has a feeling of strong attachment towards its family and may try to snatch someone it loved. It is, therefore, necessary to appease it with proper sacrifices and prayers.

MONPA: It is customary for the Dirang Monpa to call in a lama to perform the death rites. As a matter of rule, the dead body of a rich man is cremated while that of a commoner is thrown into the midstream of a river after it is dissected. But a person died of a contagious disease is buried. A religious rite called *segu* is observed 49 days after death when the lama lights a lamp ceremoniously for the departed soul.

The Tawang Monpas are said to have a custom of exposing the dead body to vultures. They also follow the same methods of cremation, immersion and burial of the dead body just as the Dirang Monpas do. When a person dies, the services of a lama are sought to perform the customary rituals, and food and drink are offered to relatives and friends. Religious rites are observed by the rich throughout the first week following the death when articles of food are sent to the monasteries and nunneries. Prayer flags and wheels are hoisted, and also a *chorten* (Buddhist stupa or burial mound) is raised.

Both burial and cremation are practised by the Kalaktang Monpas for the disposal of the dead. It is the village lama who decides about the funeral and the dead body is disposed off according to his direction. The last rite for the dead is observed 49 days after one passes away. On that day, the members of the bereaved family offer food and drink to the local gompa for a vegetarian feast to which relatives and villagers are invited. The neighbours help the bereaved family by providing them liquor and other necessities as much as they can.

MIJI: The Mijis bury their dead. They have separate burial grounds for the two classes, Nyubbu and Nyullu, into which their society is divided. The dead body wrapped in a piece of cloth and in a sitting position is carried to the burial ground by the relatives. In the grave, the body is placed on its back with head and feet bent towards the chest. Some eatables and a knife are placed in the grave. The dead man's bow and arrows, *dao*, cap etc. are hung over the grave. The dead body is protected by placing wooden planks all around. Some arrow like bamboo sticks are fixed on the burial ground. When somebody dies in a village, the villagers abstain from work and attend the funeral ceremony. They are fed by the relatives of the deceased after the funeral. A feast is arranged on the fifth day following the death and a portion of food put on a wooden plate is kept hanging over the grave.

AKA: Over a century ago C.R. Macgregor noted on the mortuary rites of the Akas thus:

“Corpses are buried, not burnt; a small square stone building about 4 feet high is sometimes erected over the body. A species of altar of split wood, streaked with blue dye and smeared with fowl’s blood, is placed near the body, which is always interred with the clothes worn by the individual when alive. Brass cooking utensils are (when the deceased was fortunate enough to have possessed them) placed in the grave.”¹

A case of death is mourned ceremonially for ten days. The village priest *mugou* performs the funeral rites on the first and the last day of mourning. The whole village community participates in the funeral. The bereaved family stops all socio-religious observances during the period of mourning.

“The Akas have a belief in the life hereafter. The soul, according to the Aka belief, after leaving the body goes to dwell in a place known as *jana*. All souls, good or bad, have to pass through this *jana* from where they are sorted out by the deities according to their merits or demerits during their life. The *Mugou* raises his prayers to the gods so that they may bless the soul to rest in peace, otherwise it wanders and troubles the people. As the Akas believe in the transmigration of the soul, the *Mugou* also makes his prayers to let the soul take birth again in the same family.”²

SHERDUKPEN: The following account quoted from a research monograph gives a vivid description of death and disposal of the dead among the Sherdukpens.

“When a Sherdukpen dies, there is an atmosphere of profound sorrow in the house and the family members wail from time to time. Since it is a taboo for the Thongs (the upper class) to touch the dead body, the preliminaries in regard to funerary rites are performed by the Chhaos (the lower class). The Chhaos attached to the clan of the deceased wash the corpse, anoint the head and face with butter, wrap a piece of cloth round the body and place some coins over it. They then consult the Lama as to the site where the corpse should be taken. The funeral procession is led to the burial or cremation ground by the village priest who recites charms on the way. In case of a rich man, the body is cremated, but in the case of an ordinary person, the body is buried. The grave is dug by the Chhaos and is about four feet deep and two feet wide. After the corpse is lowered into the cavity, it is covered with mud and plantain leaves and some drops of liquor are sprinkled over it.

“When the pall-bearers come back from the burial or cremation ground, they wash their bodies, and are fed by the deceased’s family and given five rupees in cash for their labour.

“On the third day, the village priest performs some ceremonies and offers water, rice and maize in the name of the departed. People present on the occasion are served with local beer. This is continued up to the seventh day and repeated on the 14th day and 21st day, when prayer flags may be erected.

“Mourning continues for several days. The near relatives of the dead do not wear ornaments and caps for a week or so; they also abstain from taking meat and do not sing and dance for a year.

1. Verrier Elwin, *India’s North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, (London, 1962), p.448.

2. Raghuvir Sinha, *The Akas*, (Shillong, 1962) p.98.

“The Sherdukpens believe in rebirth and have some idea of Karma. The man who has done good and virtuous deeds according to them goes to Chungba Sangze. He sees the sun, is feasted on splendid food, and then sent back to the earth as a human being. But a bad man goes to Singchhan Gepu or Sango Thung, the god of death, who punishes him in various ways and sends him back to the earth as an animal.”¹

SULUNG: Premature or accidental death is looked upon as unnatural and the cause of such death is attributed to an evil spirit called *arung*. Death of a pregnant woman, still-birth and prenatal death are also ascribed to the mischiefs of evil spirits.

All villagers are informed to attend the funeral when somebody dies. The dead body is usually buried in the vicinity of the house. The corpse is stripped of all personal belongings except for some ornaments and an old piece of cloth with which the body, folded in a sitting posture, is wrapped. A cane rope is used to fasten the body tightly. In this shape the body is placed in the grave dug for the purpose. Dry banana leaves are spread on the bottom of the grave which the body is laid. Two layers of small logs are placed over the body and then the grave is filled up with earth. In the case of a still-born baby or prenatal death, the mother is supposed to carry the dead body to an out-of-the-way place away from the village and leave it under a big tree.

The Sulungs observe a period of uncleanness for six days following the death of a family member. In the evening of the day of burial, the family lights a fire near the grave and hangs on a post two bamboo tubes containing separately cooked-rice and beer. Most of the articles of daily use belonging to the deceased are regarded as grave-goods and they are kept suspended from a post over the grave.

BUGUN: The Buguns bury their dead, at some distance from the house. The articles used regularly by a person when alive are given him at death as grave-goods. In a shed constructed over the grave they also keep food for the departed and this they do for five days following one's death. A big feast is held on the fifth day when they eat, drink and dance throughout the night.

VILLAGE AND HOUSE

Barring the town of Bomdila the whole area covered by the East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts is rural. The total number of inhabited villages in these districts according to 1971 census is 492, which are of different categories ranging from diminutive to large. The villages classified by population are as follows:

Population				Number of Villages
(1)	less	than	200	354
(2)	200	to	499	117
(3)	500	to	999	16
(4)	1000	to	1999	4
(5)	2000	to	4999	1
Total				492

1. R. R. P. Sharma, The Sherdukpens, (Shillong, 1961), pp.88-90.

The percentage of rural population living in the villages of various population ranges in 1971 is shown in the following table.

Categories of villages with population	Percentage of rural population	Percentage of villages
Diminutive villages : population less than 200	36.50	71.95
Very small villages : population 200-499	41.06	23.78
Small villages : population 500-999	11.65	3.25
Medium villages : population 1000-1999	6.68	0.82
Large villages : population 2000-4999	3.96	0.20

The census tables of 1971 indicates that nearly 96 per cent of the villages lived by about 78 per cent of the rural population were either diminutive or very small. Evidently, a large section of people live in hamlets.

The number of census houses enumerated in 1981 is as follows:

District	Census houses		
	Rural	Urban	Total
West Kameng including Tawang	14,361	1,326	15,237
East Kameng	5,931	—	5,931

BANGNI: Surrounded by forests and *jhum* fields Bangni villages are generally situated on the higher slant of hills. There are villages also on the gentle slopes and level ground. One may find a stream or river flowing nearby or deep down below the village, which is the perennial source of water for the settlements. Foot tracks going far into the hills and forests, connecting one village with another, leading to the agricultural fields and intersecting at places are the means of road communications for the villagers living in the deep interior areas. Every village has its own name and the village boundary is well defined. The villages nestled in the hills with patches of cloud hanging low over them look beautiful and picturesque from a long distance.

The Bangnis build houses on poles, some of which are very long. The length usually varies from 9 to 21 metres. They have smaller houses as well. Mild slope is preferred

as the site of a house. The house is made mainly of bamboo and strengthened by timbers. The floor and the walls are works of matted bamboo, while the roof is usually thatched with dried plantain leaves or other leaves and straw. A small porch not much above the ground at one end of the house serves as the entrance. At the rear end there is a platform high above the ground, which is reached by a wooden ladder. Verandahs run along both the sides of the house. The ceiling is used as store. The doors at both ends of the house are of matted bamboo or wood, but inside the house it is dark for lack of windows.

A number of related families lives in a long house in apartments with their separate hearths. The owner of the house usually occupies a big room at the back of the house.

MONPA: Monpa villages differ distinctly from those of most other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh barring the high altitude dwellers in the extreme north of the West Siang District by their unique house types which are normally double-storeyed structures largely of stone.

“Within the Kameng District the Monpas’ style of house building varies with the differences in altitude. Whereas the Monpas of the relatively low lying Kalaktang area build largely in wood, those of Dirang use mainly stone as building material though the super-structure of houses as well as verandahs are made of wooden planks. In the Tawang region, where settlements lie at altitudes between 6,000 and 12,000 feet, the entire outer shell of houses is usually made of stone, while wood is employed in the interior and in the shape of stout planks covering the roof.”¹

Among the Tawang Monpas, the rich people build three storeyed houses instead of the normal two storeyed buildings. They may also replace the normal plank roof with brightly painted corrugated iron sheet roofing if they can afford to do so. The naming of individual houses is popular.

A gumpa enshrined with an image of Lord Buddha and a number of prayer flags hoisted outside it is a common feature of Monpa village. Inscribed stone wall called *mane* with prayer wheels on which the sacred words *om mane pame hum* are engraved is also a familiar sight in the Monpa area. These walls are erected on the roadsides and pedestrians move the prayer wheels as they pass by.

In the Kalaktang area a Monpa village is called *dung*. The villages are generally situated on the slant of hills. A place having easy access to sources of drinking water, good arable land and forest resources is considered to be the ideal site for a village. The hill slopes are preferred to get some open space below the house, which touches the ground on one side and rests on piles or pillars of stone on the other, so that the open space can be utilised as a stable. Construction of house in a village does not usually follow a systematic pattern, they are often huddled together.

The house is called *pitei* by the Kalaktang Monpas. They have no dormitory system. Wood, bamboo, stones, mud etc. are used as materials for constructing a house. The houses are rectangular in shape with convex roofs made of split bamboo. Corrugated iron sheets are now being used for roofing. The corners of the roof are tied to the walls as protection against strong winds. The walls are of wooden planks which are removable, and when removed the open space serves as window. The floor is also made of wooden planks but not nailed. A small verandah at the entrance of every house often serves as a cow-shed and as an annexe for keeping ploughs and things used for horses and cows. The house has only one big room with a fireplace called *medrang* at the middle. The space between the ceiling and the roof known as *yap*, is used for storing grains, which is reached by a wooden ladder.

1. C. Von Ruer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), p.149.

Miji: The mijis build their house on a bamboo machan. The walls are of flattened bamboo and the roof is thatched. The houses are 9 to 21 metres in length and 3.60 to 6 metres in breadth with a verandah at one end. A small room with a fireplace next to the verandah is usually meant for guests. Then a passage leads to a long hall-like main room with several fireplaces. This is the living room. Over the fire-places large bamboo racks used as cupboards for fish, meat and other edibles, which need to be smoked, hang from the ceiling. The ceiling is used for storing grains and other valuables. There may be several families living in this one main room.

AKA: Over a century ago in 1872 E.T. Dalton wrote about the Aka houses that they were 'more carefully and substantially built. The flooring was of well smoothed and close fitting planks.' C.R. Macgregor writing in 1884 described the houses of the Akas as follows:

"The Akas are very hospitable, and guests are treated to the best of everything, even children (who are very obedient) are taught to be hospitable. The houses are substantial erections, the sides of which are planked; they vary in size. Laby's house, an average one, was 63 feet long by 15 feet wide, the height the *machan* (i.e. floor) is from the ground, depends on the slope of the ground-it may be 2 feet at one end and .6 feet at the other. One of the houses in Mehdi's village measured 140 feet in length and 22 feet in width. In the large houses there are partitions and swing doors; the fireplaces are usually in the middle of the dormitory, and round this all the members of the family, both young and old, sleep. The roofs are formed at a good angle for running the rain off by placing mats over the bamboo framework and covering them with cane leaves; the canes reach to the *machan*. There is very little attempt in decorating the front of the house; a few horns of the *mithun*, &c. are sometimes put up. Pigs and poultry live under the floor. Sanitary ideas do not exist in the Aka mind."¹

A comparatively recent monograph gives the following description of the Aka house in detail.

"The Aka house is a long structure raised on a platform, about six feet above the ground, and divided into two compartments by a partition wall. The space between the platform and the ground serves as a shed for pigs and goats of the household. The house is a work of bamboo and wood, bamboo sheets forming the floor, the wall and the roof, and wooden logs serving as the main pillars over which the structure of the house is raised. The roof is usually thatched, and often supported by bamboo sheets. The four walls of the house are usually high.

The main entrance to the house is from the front though there are inlets both in the front and at the rear of the house. Just behind the front door, there is the first and the small compartment called *thumona* and built specially for guests. As a part of the social tradition, guests from even distant villages visit their friends and relatives from time to time; hence the special provision for their lodging in every Aka house, with a view to ensure every possible comfort to them. Even when there is no guest staying, the *thumona* is left unoccupied.

"Next to this compartment for the guests, is a small enclosure, called *nemkhowri*, which serves as the main entrance to the inner big hall such a *nemkhowri* is usually made also at the rear of the house. The main hall, known as *uluri*, is a big compartment, standing behind the above enclosure. It is the main and the only hall, practically for all purposes,

1. Verrier Elwin, India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century, (London, 1962), p.450.

for the occupants of the house. Where the families of two brothers have to live together (which in fact is not common as the people do not favour joint-family system), they may occupy two different sides of the same main hall, there being no provision for a partition wall inside the *uluri*. In such a case, what may be required is not a separate room but only a separate hearth for each of the families. Almost every compartment in the house has at least one hearth with an iron-stand known as *aescheperi*. To keep the house warm, fire is kept burning in the hearths. The iron hearth-stands are made from both pig iron and cast iron, which may be procured from the plains, and are considered a valuable part of the household property.

"On one side of the house, there is built a small cell to serve the purpose of store-room where the articles of the household or any other belongings of the owner may be kept. This is known as *rin*. On the other side of the hall also, a small enclosure is built into the wall to keep firewood, and is known as *sejourin*. All these compartments in the house, including the main hall, are kept completely shut off from light to keep away the *dim-dam* flies which are a constant nuisance in these areas.

"A small granary is built usually near the house and food supplies for the year are kept here. this called *nechi*. Like most of the tribes of the plains, who have no common granary for the whole village community, the Akas have a separate granary for each house. Commonly, a small kitchen-garden is attached to the house to grow vegetables. Where enough land is available near the house, the people may convert it into a small field to grow crops like maize on a small scale. The garden is enclosed either by bamboo or wooden fencing to protect the growth against wild animals as well as against their own semi-domestic animals like mithun.

"The houses in Aka villages are not compact; they are generally scattered throughout the village. Only in Dijungania, the houses are situated close to each other.

"The house is built with the joint labour of the members of the village who help one another in building a house for every household of the community. No remuneration in cash or kind is required to be paid for the labour. Only a big feast is given to those who participate in the construction of the house, by the owner at the end of their toil."¹

SHERDUKPEN: "The important villages of the Sherdukpens are situated in a flat valley along the banks of the Duphlahkho river. Hamlets, which are locally known as *pams*, are snuggled in the niches of towering hills or are picturesquely clustered on sunny slopes, not far away from water supply and cultivable lands. They vary considerably in size. Rupa, the largest village in the area, consists of about 60 houses, while Brukpublong, which is perhaps the smallest, has barely four houses. Each village has a well-defined territory for hunting and cultivation.

"The habitations, made up of stone and wooden planks in a traditional pattern, illustrate the effect of environment on the life of the people. They are scattered at random without proper streets, though there may be passages between them. The houses do not always face the same direction, for they are constructed more in conformity with the physiography of the ground than on a conscious plan or pattern. Sometimes, a village is split up into several parts with different names.

"In important villages, there is a common place where the villagers meet and discuss their affairs. In smaller ones, however, any convenient level ground between the houses

1. Raghuvir Sinha, *The Akas*, (Shillong, 1962), pp 18-20.

is good enough for the purpose. Usually, such gatherings are held near or in front of the house of the village headman, the latter invariably sitting on a slightly higher place than the others.

"In the case of *pams*, water is usually obtained from small hill streams caught in a hole. Important villages are served by bigger streams.

"The Sherdukpens generally have small fenced kitchen gardens attached to their houses.

"The Sherdukpen houses are generally erected on a substantial stone foundation, five to seven feet high; the basement is used for sheltering goats and other animals. The lower half of the wall is constructed with timber and the upper half with bamboo matting. The roofs are built with light planks, bamboo matting and occasionally grass-thatch weighed down by heavy stones. The floor are of thick wooden planks.

"The houses are generally double-storeyed. The lower apartment is used by the household, while the upper one serves as a store-room and granary. The Sherdukpens do not have separate granaries.

"The living apartment of a typical house has two rooms with a portico in front. The room next to the portico is used as kitchen, dining room and bed-room. The other room is used for storing important household belongings, and is at times utilized as a bedroom or for the performance of religious rites.

"Entrance to the house is usually by a rough wooden ladder. The living room has usually two iron hearths, one near the entrance and another at the other end. A stone platform behind the hearth is used for keeping the cooking utensils. A bamboo structure called *bakhi* (four by two feet) hangs usually four or five feet above the hearth and the warmth of fire from the hearth dries and preserves the foodgrains and meat kept on it. Sometimes, a long table is kept on one side of the room for keeping various odds and ends. The family members sleep by the side of hearth, on bamboo mats which are spread on the wooden floor.

"A number of big rectangular bamboo containers for storing a variety of grains, millets and pulses is kept in the portico which is reached by a staircase.

"There are no windows or chimneys in the Sherdukpen houses. The interior is often dark, smoky and ill-ventilated.

"The walls of some houses are fitted with racks over which household articles are kept. Sometimes such articles are suspended from pegs inserted into the wall.

"Among the Sherdukpens, there is no separate cabin reserved for the expectant mother, where she could lie in private and be delivered of her child.

"The doors of the houses are made of bamboo and can be bolted, but locks are rarely used. Poles decorated with prayer flags of paper or cloth are found on tops of the houses.

"In winter, chillies are spread on the roof to dry. In the courtyard, women pound grain with pestle and mortar to the accompaniment of pleasant songs. The process involves a good deal of hard toil; a stout pole is driven with considerable vigour into a hollowed-out log which contains the grain.

"As among other tribes, the construction of a house is a solemn occasion in the life of a Sherdukpen, and involves consultations and ceremonies for the selection of the site, for bringing wood from the forests and laying the foundation. There are ceremonies at the completion of the first roof and again after the entire house has been built. The Lama

is frequently consulted during the various stages of construction. Friends and neighbours help in the work and are compensated in kind. There is a house-warming feast before the building is occupied, when maize-beer and even the potent spirit, distilled from maize or rice, is liberally served."¹

SULUNG: The Sulung villages are considerably small in size compared to those of other tribes of this region. They are scattered hamlets consisting generally of five to ten houses perched on the top of the spurs of inaccessible hills. Villages are sited near water springs and forests where wild sago-palms are abundant. A village may shift occasionally, but a house site may be frequently changed. No fruit or vegetable garden is seen in their villages. But they are comparatively neat and clean, free from congestion of houses. The pigs roaming about in the villages act as scavengers.

The Sulung house is a *chang* type structure rectangular in shape. The platform resting on a number of wooden stakes is raised to a level of one to one and a half metres more or less above the ground on a slope. The roof is supported by three principal rafters of wood or solid bamboo, which are tied to the posts with cane strings. Timbers or bamboo poles are used as purlin to support the roof. The ceiling of matted bamboo placed over the cross-beams is used for keeping household articles. The walls of split bamboo woven in twilled or check pattern enclose the house on all sides except for a front and a back door. Every house has two porches, two doors and two ladders at either end. The roof is thatched. A house is usually occupied by a single family.

"When a house is shared by more than one family then there are separate rooms for each family, but if a house is occupied by a single family, then there is no partition wall and the inside of the house looks like a hall (Soyak). In every house there is a narrow passage like a corridor extending from the front to the rear. Besides the passage there is a veranda (Kuweko) where the fowls and goats are kept at night."²

Unlike the Aka and Miji houses, there is no separate guest room in the Sulung house. They do not have any dormitory either. Every family living in a house has a hearth of its own. A thinly woven bamboo shelf tied to the ceiling is kept suspended over the fireplace for smoking or drying fish and meat and other foodstuff. A Sulung family normally has a granary built at some distance from the house.

The materials used for constructing a house are timber, bamboo, cane, leaves of plantain or banana and palm. No nail is used.

BUGUN: The Bugun house is a well-made structure of cane, bamboo and wooden posts. Rectangular in shape the houses are usually about 6 to 9 metres in length and 3.60 to 4.50 metres in breadth. The platform made of bamboo is raised about one metre more or less above the ground. The houses are roofed with bamboo mattings. There is no separate granary. Food grains are stored in the overhead *changs* of the living houses.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

Every tribe has its own unique style of dress and adornments. Indeed, a tribe is identifiable by its manner of dressing, hair-do and ornaments which distinguish it from others. Arunachal Pradesh is the homeland of a variety of tribes. The diversity of their costumes and ornaments make them look attractive and colourful. Under the impact of modern civilisation, the traditional tribal dress and hair style are now undergoing some obvious changes, but these changes have not yet gone as far beyond the circles of educated elite as to deeply affect the masses of the people. It is also noticeable that men much more than women are being drawn towards adopting modern style of dress.

1. R. R. P. Sharma, *The Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1961) pp.11-15.

2. R. K. Deuri, *the Sulungs*, (Shillong, 1982), p.13.

BANGNIS: The Bangnis dress themselves in a very simple manner. The lower garment of men is a locally-made coarse loin-cloth fastened tightly at the waist with a finely woven cane belt or a rough leather belt. A mantle of coarse cloth covers the body from shoulder to calf with its ends fastened with a bamboo pin. Sometimes a mill-made black markin or coloured sheet or Assamese *endi* silk is used for this purpose. A band of coloured thread known as *larom* or a chain of beads is worn between the calves and the knees as leggings.

The female dress consists of the mantle like that of the males, a piece of cloth sometimes red in colour as a waist-band, a can-girdle decorated with some locally-made brass discs, finely woven cane gaiters round the ankles and the *larom*.

The Bangnis are very fond of ornaments which are of brass, nickel, silver and aluminium. The ornaments commonly worn by men as well as women are necklaces of multi-coloured beads, a nickel ring, a brass or nickel bangle and a variety of metal earrings.

The Bangni men, like their kinsmen the Nishis, plait long hair and make a bun on the forehead called *podum*, which is tied with green or yellow thread. A bamboo or brass skewer is passed through it horizontally. The women let their hair grow and collect it in a loose bun at the back of the head, but some of them keep a pigtail behind. Bamboo combs and hair-pins are used to dress the hair.

Men do not tattooing to decorate their body, but women are fond of tattooing their cheeks and chins for beautification.

MONPA: Monpa dress is remarkable for its colour, variety, richness, style and beautiful designs. "They are artistic too, even if their art is sometimes restricted by poverty to the love and decoration of flowers. But they nearly all have pretty things — a coloured sash, a decorated hat, a silver sword, and little cups exquisitely painted of wood or china... Monpa dress is of the typical Kalimpong type, but the women make a charming cloth, which is used as a shawl, sash or coat, of a maroon colours decorated with stylized figures of men and animals. Bhutanese influence is also evident, and a certain amount of cloth is imported from Bhutan and Tibet while brocades and other silks from Banaras are used for women's caps and aprons and in hats and shirtings for men. They also make beautiful carpets."¹

Monpa women normally weave their own essential garments. The *endi* silk is usually purchased from the markets in Assam. They, both men and women, wear different kinds of woollen hats exquisitely decorated with coloured embroidered cloth and animal skin. In the Dirang and Kalaktang areas Monpa men wear a kind of short trouser of silk called *dorna*. A similar garment red in colour and made of yak pelt is worn by the Monpas of Tawang where it is known as *dorma*. A woollen or silk shirt and a jacket is put on over the *dorna* or *dorma*. They also wear a full-sleeved open-breast woollen black or red coloured coat called *chupa* and over it a designed red coloured sash of silk with a dao stuck into it. Monpa men in Kalaktang wear a maroon garment cross-wise of over the chest and carry a colourful side-bag.

The women wear a sleeveless garment known as *singka* with its opening at the nape pinned by a silver locket, and it garbs the whole body from shoulder to knee as a gown. A sash of coloured and designed silk is worn tightly round the waist just as the men

1. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), pp.67-68.

do. A piece of striped black woollen garment covering the back from waist to the hollow of the knees is invariably worn. Over the *singka* is worn a full-sleeved embroidered jacket of coloured silk. The women also add to their dress a red or black woollen cloak to cover the back from the shoulder to the waist.

Apart from their normal dress the Monpas have special costumes for festivals, dances and religious ceremonies. The robes of the Buddhist monks and nuns differ from that of the laity.

Footwears used by the Tawang and the Dirang Monpas are local made boots of leather and woollen felt or cloth. The women wear a type of beautifully decorated woollen boots. Nowadays the Kalaktang Monpas are using sandals, but most of them go bare-footed.

The ornaments used by the Monpas are elegant, mostly of silver. The favourite ornaments of the women are silver bangles studded with red and green stones; earrings, armlets finger-rings and breast-pin of silver set with coloured stones silver necklaces with locketts embossed with green stones, bead necklaces etc. The men also wear silver bangles, necklaces finger rings of silver and ivory.

Miji : The dress of the Mijis, like that of the Bangnis, is simple. The male dress consists of a loin-cloth worn at the waist with a cord, a *kobogi*, which is a piece of mill-made markin cloth put on like a sleeveless attire fastened crosswise over the chest and wound round the body from the shoulders to the thighs, a white or red narrow piece of cloth as waist-band, a full-sleeved open-breast shirt, called *palo*, flowing from the shoulders to the knees, another piece of cloth tied over the shoulders and used as a bag (*gridung*), a sheathed dao tucked in the waist-band and garters for calves called *lailo*.

The female costume comprises a full-sleeved apparel called *giede*, which hangs from the shoulders to the calves, an waist-band of white or red piece of cloth over the *geide* and also a *palo* like that of men.

The Mijis keep long hair and the men tie it in a knot at the crown of the head. The women dress it in a loose bun over the nape or maintain a pigtail.

The men wear a kind of bamboo ring-cap with paker-work designs. The rich adorn the cap with a silver fillet. This cap is often decorated with feathers of a falcon. The women put on a silver fillet as headgear. They also occasionally use hair-tassels attached with brass bells.

Tattooing is done by women only. They tattoo the forehead, nose and chin with vertical lines. This is done before reaching puberty. A girl observes some food taboo from the day of tattooing. She does not take fish and meat until she becomes a mother.

The ornaments worn by the Mijis are purchased from the Sherdukpens, the Monpas and from Assam markets. These are mostly of silver, nickel, aluminium and multi-coloured beads. The women ornate themselves with silver ornaments, such as earbob, finger-ring, fillet, bangles studded with red and green beads and necklaces. These apart, they also use earrings of nickel, bangles of aluminium and nickel, bead chains of coins and bead necklaces. The earbob and finger-ring are also worn by men.

AKA: Reverend C. H. Hesselmeyer wrote in 1867 that 'the dress of the Akas has nothing national, or nothing that could distinguish them from other hillmen that border on assam, except the profusion of silk cloth...' The fact which prompted him to make this remark is probably that the Akas do not weave their own clothes, they depend mainly

on the plains of Assam for their garments and this dependence dates from early times. Seventeen years later in 1884 C. R. Macgregor observed thus:

"The Akas wear a kind of toga made of rough Assamese silk of Bhutia blanket cloth. Leggings are also worn; these are tied at the knee and folded round the leg, giving them the appearance of trousers. The arms are bare, and they do not wear shoes. Their head-covering consists of cane hats like those worn by the Daphlas, or rough felt skull caps similar to those used by the Bhutias. Occasionally a three-decked can hat, like those used in Thibet, is worn; but the use of this hat is, I believe, confined to the Chiefs. Ear-rings and bead of which the Akas (in common with all the tribes on the north-east frontier) are inordinately fond, complete the costume. A cumerband in which a sword is placed, is usually part of the dress. The women are decently clad, generally in Eria silk clothes; they wear necklaces of beads, and some of them carry about egg-shaped silver cases obtained from Bhutan. These silver ornaments are much valued, and worn only by the wives of Chiefs.¹

Then again much later in 1913-14 R.S.Kennedy described the woman's dress of the Akas as follows:

"It consists of a cloth wound round the body similar to that worn by a man, except that it reaches almost to the ankles and is often of Assamese silk. She wears a jacket of Assamese silk, rather longer than a man's jacket. Her hair is invariably tied at the back of the head. Round her head, a well-to-do woman wears a very striking and pretty fillet of silver chain work. In her ears are large vase-shaped silver earrings, whilst innumerable necklaces of coloured beads encircle her neck. As a rule the women wear gaiters just like those worn by the men. It may not be out of place to mention that all their silver ornaments are made either in Assam or the neighbouring parts of Tawang."²

Finally in 1958 Verrier Elwin commenting on Kennedy's description had written the following.

"Photographs taken at the time suggest that there has not been any very great change in the dress and appearance of the Hrussos (Akas) during the last fortyfive years. Their culture is a mixed one; They have borrowed the Kalimpong hat and the attractive maroon coat, decorated with human and animal designs, from the Monpas; they have copied the bogre sack and ornamental bag from the Sherdukpens; some of them wear a fibre knapsack similar to that used by the Bangnis; silk cloth from Assam is always popular. While the traditional style of headgear for the aristocracy is the Tibetan gilt hat worn long ago by Tagi Raja, ordinary people wear a tall hat of bamboo bark, decorated with a narrow band of hand-woven cloth and sometimes with feathers, leaves and flowers. With increasing prosperity the women are now adorning themselves with more and more silver ornaments of the Tibetan type, and are wearing more, not less, hand-woven cloth. In general appearance the Buguns closely resemble the Hrussos."³

The Akas, both men and women, are obviously well dressed. They seem to have a great liking for good and fashionable costumes which they readily borrow from others. The Aka dress as it is now seen may be briefly described here.

1. Verrier Elwin (ed), *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, (London, 1962), p.450.

2. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), pp.81-82.

3. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), pp.81-82.

The male dress of the Akas consists of a small garment for the upper half of the body, a kind of long coat or full sleeved jacket reaching the knees called *pol* or *polu*, a loin-cloth and a sash. Like the *kobogi* of the Mijis, they also wear a sleeveless garment which they call *gechu*.

The women adorn themselves with a full-sleeved robe falling from the shoulders to the ankles which is known as *ge* and usually deep red in colour. The other articles of female dress are a designed and embroidered upper garment reaching the thigh and a sash of silk.

The hair style of the Akas, both men and women, is just the same as of the Mijis. Tattooing among women is also like that of the Mijis, which is always done before puberty. The face is tattooed with straight line running from below the forehead to the chin where it bifurcates into two directions.

The Aka women love to deck themselves profusely with ornaments, which are mostly of silver and also of beads. These ornaments are procured from the plains of Assam and from the Sherdukpens and the Monpas. The common silver ornaments are *melu*, a flat-shaped ornament worn over the chest, *rombin*, a large vase-shaped earbob, *gichli* or earrings, *gejjui* or wristlets, *lenchhi*, a fillet worn by well-to-do women, *raga* a flat shaped fillet worn by rich men round their bamboo ring-caps and various other chest adornments. Besides these, a number of coloured bead necklaces are worn.

SHERDUKPEN: The main component of the male dress of the Sherdukpens is a long sleeveless coat or piece of silk or cotton which they wrap round the body from shoulder to knee. It is locally known as *sape* and its two ends are pinned on the shoulders. Over the *sape* is worn a full sleeved jacket called *ringa*, reaching below the hips, which is open in front with a round neck. In the winter, some people wear a short coat over the jacket and may even wrap it with another longer one. Trousers and a sash of *endi* silk or maroon cloth with a dao tucked into it are also worn. They carry decorated bags. Some of them use popular ornamental hat of the Kalimpong type, but most have an attractive black felt skull-cap of yaks hair.

Men do not let their hair grow very long. They get it cropped. Even young girls cut their hair round the head, and as they grow they let the hair grow long and fall over their face as a veil. Married women tie their hair into a loose bun just above the nape. The Sherdukpens do not tattoo their body.

The women clad themselves with a loose sleeveless garment which covers the body from shoulder to calf. This is known as *singko*. Over it a small full sleeved coat is worn, the lower border of which is sometimes embroidered with coloured thread. Like men the women also tie a coloured sash called *mukhiak* round the waist. The sash is fastened over the *singko*. They protect the lower leg with gaiters. The women do not use any head-dress except on ceremonial occasions when some of them put on small attractive caps. Shawls are also used by them.

“As elsewhere, ornaments are an indication of prosperity and wealth in the Sherdukpen society. These are especially worn on festive occasions, and also while visiting neighbours. The rich who possess valuable ornaments usually keep a part of the possession in hidden holes dug in the jungle known only to the owners and sons who are to inherit them.

“Men wear bead necklaces round their necks and silver or brass rings on their fingers. Women wear bead necklaces of different varieties and colours, bangles and rings, made locally by melting rupee coins. They also wear silver locket and brooches purchased from the plains.

“When a man dies, the family members, among other things, stop wearing ornaments, especially beads, for about a year.”¹

SULUNG : The male dress of the Sulungs is very simple. It consists of a coarse loin cloth firmly fastened at the waist with a finely woven cane belt and another piece of coarse cloth wound round the body from the arms to the knees. Mill-made coloured bed sheet is also used as a garments. Some of them wear a kind of rough leather waist-belt. Their head-dress is a prominent helmet of cane decorated with the beak of hornbill. They dress their long hair to form a knot on the forehead.

The women's dress is also an equally simple locally woven coarse cloth called *kameyit* which is worn round the body up to the calves or even ankles with its ends tied over the one shoulder while the other shoulder remains uncovered. Sometimes this cloth is designed with striped black and red borders. Mill-made coloured bed sheet or a woven cane belt is also worn as a waist-band. Blouse is a new addition to women's dress. Gaiter of cotton is used to cover the ankle. They do the hair in a bun at the back of the head, but most of them plait it into a pigtail.

The Sulungs have the practice of tattooing which is locally known as *sek* for decoration of the body. But, this is not compulsory. It is only the women and not the men who tattoo. Generally, the women after puberty get their face tattooed with vertical and horizontal lines.

The Sulungs, both men and women, wear various types of brass, silver, nickel, aluminium and copper ornaments. These ornaments comprise earbobs, necklaces, bangles and bracelets. In addition, they adorn themselves with multi-coloured bead necklaces.

BUGUN : The Buguns have no art of weaving and smithery. In dress they resemble the Akas, and depend largely on the Sherdukpens and mill-made textiles for their clothings.

The normal under-garment for men is a loin cloth tied at the waist with a string. They wrap the body from shoulder to knee either with a *phatap*, which is a white markin or an *endi* silk. Over it, a piece of markin or silk is worn round the waist as waist-band. A rich man often carries a silver sword tucked into the band. They also wear a full-sleeved jacket called *shabe* over the *phatap*. The legs are covered from knee to ankle with cylindrically shaped gaiters of cloth. A chain of beads is worn in between the knees and calves for decoration.

The women wear a kind of gown flowing from the shoulders to the ankles, known as *bimi-singkhan*, which has a designed border embroidered with red and blue yarn at the lower rim. It serves as an outer as well as under garment of a woman, and over it a waist-band of markin cloth or silk is worn in the fashion of men. The women also wear a designed full sleeved and open-breast jacket over the *bimi-singkhan*.

The Buguns let their hair grow long. Men tie it in a knot at the crown of the head while women gather it in a loose bun or make a pigtail. The men put on occasionally a kind of bamboo ring-cap and the well-to-do women wear a silver fillet.

1. R. R. P. Sharma, The Sherdukpens, (Shillong, 1961), pp.20-21.

They, both men and women, are very fond of ornaments, which are usually purchased from their neighbours, the Sherdukpens and the Monpas, and also from Assam markets. The ornaments comprise silver ear-bulbs, lockets, bangles and finger-rings, and necklaces of multi-coloured beads.

FOOD AND DRINK

Ecology, agricultural practices, availability of vegetable and non-vegetable food, religious or customary taboos and tradition—all these have a bearing on the food habit of the people. Accordingly, food and drink of various hill tribes living in this difficult mountainous region differ in some respects though they are basically common.

Although the Monpas and Sherdukpens are Buddhist by religion, they take meat with certain reservations. 'Meat is often taken by the Tawang Monpas in the form of *me-mo* or steamed meat balls.' The Kalaktang Monpas take beef, fowl, pork and meat of deer. But goat-meat was not eaten until recently. The Sherdukpens, however, do not take these meats except that of deer and certain non-domestic animals and birds which are not forbidden as food.

The staple food of various tribes is as follows :

Bangnis and the Dirang and Tawang Monpas	—	rice,
Monpas of Upper Tawang	—	wheat,
Kalaktang Monpas	—	maize and rice,
Akas, Mijis and Sherdukpens	—	Maize and millets,
Sulungs	—	wild sago and rice,
Buguns	—	maize.

The diet of the Bangnis normally consists of cooked rice or maize and millet as substitutes for rice, vegetables, fish and meat, preferably beef. The favourite drink is *opo*, a rice-beer, which is also prepared from maize and millet.

Meals of the Tawang Monpas comprise boiled rice or porridge of millet or barley taken with condiment of red chillies mixed with cheese or fomented soyabean, vegetable stew prepared with cheese and ghee, popcorn, potato and rice-beer. The basic diet of the Kalaktang Monpas is supplemented with a variety of vegetables and chillies and also by liquor brewed from maize and millet. The Monpas, in general, take milk.

With maize and millets as their main items of food the Akas take pulses, sweet potatoes, edible tubers etc. Meat pork, beef and goat-meat, is taken but occasionally. Fowl also provides a favourite dish, but the women do not take it. Milk is another tabooed item for women. Liquor distilled from either maize or millet is an essential item of their daily meals. The Akas are very fond of smoking and betel.

The Sherdukpens add to their basic diet of maize and millets varieties of bean and vegetables. A porridge prepared from the powdered cereals and flavoured with chillies and salt is taken with cooked fish or vegetables. In the lean season, they take to various jungle roots, tubers, berries, mushrooms and leaves. They take milk, butter and wild honey. Local beer brewed from either maize or millets is a delicacy and an important item of food.

Wild sago is the staple food of the Sulungs even though rice is a major item of their

diet. The sago or rice is taken with curry of leafy vegetables or with salt, chilli and casually ginger in the absence of vegetables. The Sulungs take a wide variety of meat of animals and birds, domestic or wild. But meat and fish are not the daily items of their food.

In addition to maize being their staple food, the Buguns supplement their diet with finger-millet, wheat, buck-wheat, potatoes and vegetables. Mutton and fowl are not taken by their womenfolk.

Milk is tabooed among most of the tribes barring the Monpas and Sherdukpens. Ghee is also not normally used except by these two Buddhist tribes. Oil as a cooking medium is yet to become popular. But most of the food taken by the people in general is boiled. Fish is relished by most of the tribes, but its preparation as food may vary. Meat and fish are often dried and stored. Meat may also be roasted. A form of beer, which goes by different local names, brewed from rice, maize or millet is considered to be a delicious drink of high nutrition value. It is indeed an indispensable and regular item of food for the tribal people¹.

DANCES AND FESTIVITIES

A tribe without dances is normally inconceivable. Dances are an expression of the exuberance of tribal life, its joys, sorrows and aspirations. The corporate life of a tribe finds its meaning and significance through colourful dances performed on special occasions. Indeed, dances and music are vital for tribal society. Dances are also closely associated with the religious beliefs and ideas, rituals and ceremonies and agricultural practices of a tribe. Tribal dances organised on communal basis further help foster a sense of unity and fraternity. Most of the tribes of this region have numerous traditional dances of their own, and they are usually performed collectively rather than individually. The artistic pantomimes of the Monpas and Sherdukpens are delightful. The Mijis, Akas and Buguns have fascinating dances, performed mostly by girls. It was observed by Dr. Elwin that 'the Bangnis are more vigorous than artistic'. The dances of these tribes may be broadly classified as ritual, festive, recreational and pantomimes and dance-dramas. The ritual dances may further be divided into five categories as follows :

- (1) ritual dances performed to secure prosperity, health, happiness and well-being of the dancer, his family, village or the whole community;
- (2) ceremonial dances relating to agriculture and domestication of animals in order to secure a better harvest and good stock of domestic animals;
- (3) dances associated with funeral;
- (4) Dances performed to promote fertility, and
- (5) war dances, occasioned in the olden days due to internecine strifes, feuds and raids, which are now on the decline.

Festive dances are amusements associated with festivals or marriages, while recreational dances are not necessarily connected with any particular ritual or festival.

Pantomimes and dance-dramas performed by the Buddhist tribes in an organised and ceremonial manner narrate a mythical story or illustrate a moral. These dances have an educative purpose to serve.

1. Also see Chapter XIV under Sub-head, 'Nutrition'.

Normally, the dancers except in pantomimes and dance-dramas do not get any formal training, nor do all of them have any special dancing attire or set stage. They wear their usual dress during dance performances. A war dance is, however, performed in traditional warrior's dress. Tribal dances are solemn in form and content, they are often spontaneous but not disorderly. Their art of dance is something more than recreation, mirth or merriment, it is a display of their intense and serious feelings, their sense of beauty, rhythm and delight.

Some of the important dances are described as follows.¹

Aka Dance: The Akas have no organised dance party, but everyone, man and woman, is a dancer. Boys and girls learn dances by imitation of dance movements of their elders. The young men and women may dance separately or in a mixed group. The musical instruments, played usually by men in accompaniment of the dances, are drum, a stringed instrument and cymbals.

Niuksidou Dance: The boys and girls dress themselves in their best. The boys wear a long white garment which hangs from the shoulders to the knees and over it a black coat. They also put on a bamboo ring-cap. The girls wear a purple-coloured coat over a long white gown and they deck themselves with a profusion of silver ornaments and bead necklaces around their necks, big silver ear-bulbs and a silver fillet as well as coloured waist bands. Thus attire the boys and girls stand in separate rows. One or more from the boy's group come forward to give a dance performance for some time and then fall back. This is repeated from the girl's group. This is rotation of dances by boys and girls continues to the accompaniment of the playing of drum and cymbals. The boys dance with vigorous movements twisting their bodies and waving their hands up in a circle while the girls dance gracefully with slower and gentler movements. Sometimes the boys and girls dance separately also. In another movement, the girls stand in a line, one beside the other and dance with various movements of their hands. Two men, standing at one end of the line, play drum and cymbals. These dances are performed after the death of a person and also generally in the marriage and house warming ceremonies. These dances are also sometimes performed for merriment when there is a feast.

Mask Dance: The Akas and Mijis have a type of mask dance performed by two to four dancers. They wear masks and cover the whole body with leaves. The purpose of the dance is to drive away epidemic from a village. The dancers accompanied by a priest and the villagers go round the village. The villagers shout *ho ho* as the dance starts. Women do not take part in this dance.

Miji Dance: The Mijis have no dancing costumes. They wear their usual dress when they dance. Drum and cymbals are played to the accompaniment of dance. Both men and women can play on these instruments.

Jei Dances: Jei dances are performed on various occasions such as marriage, house-warming, good harvest, and for jubilations. In the marriage ceremony, when the bridegroom's party

1. The description of the dances given here is mainly a reproduction of some selected excerpts from the book entitled 'Dances of Arunachal Pradesh' (Shillong, 1974) by Niranjana Sarkar, published by Arunachal Pradesh Administration.

comes to the bride's village, each side slaughters one mithun and there is a grand feast. At night these dances are performed inside the bride's house for merriment. All-men and women, young and aged-take part. Similarly when the bride comes to live in her husband's house, each side slaughters one mithun and there is a grand feast. At night these dances are performed inside the bridegroom's house for merriment.

Bugun Dance: Among the Buguns dances are performed mostly by girls, but the young boys also participate in them at times. The dancers sing in chorus to the accompaniment of the dance. Women spectators may join them in the singing. Drum and cymbals are the usual musical accompaniments for dance. They have no special dancing costumes.

Gasisiu Dances: The Buguns perform these dances in the marriage and house-warming ceremonies and also after the death of a person. Occasionally when the girls are in merry mood, they perform these dances for amusement inside the house after dusk and continue it as long as they like.

On the day of marriage when the bridegroom's party arrives in the bride's house, a feast is arranged during the daytime and after dusk they perform dance for merriment inside the bride's house. Similarly when the bride's party comes to the bridegroom's house there is feasting during the daytime and dancing for merriment at night inside the bridegroom's house.

After the construction of a house the priest performs the house-warming ceremony to ensure that the inmates of this new house do not suffer from disease and death but prosper. After the performance of this ceremony, the house-holder enters the house and entertains the villagers, who lent their helping hands in the construction, with beer and snack. At night, there is dancing inside the house.

After death of a person, the corpse is kept for one night in the house. It is buried in the following day. In that night when the corpse is in the house, the villagers-men and women, young and old-dance inside the house.

Chasoai Ceremony and Dance: The Buguns celebrate this ceremony for eight days in the Khowa month called the Ruahabi (January-February). They perform it to ensure their prosperity and a good harvest as well as to drive away the evil spirits from the village so that these cannot afflict them with various calamities. On the first day the priest worships the deity called *khatchoaih* in the jungle. The girls, boys and adult men perform a dance at the place of worship in veneration of the deity. The girls stand in a line, side by side, and behind them stand the boys and adult men in another line. The girls take one forward step with the right foot, one forward step with the left foot and bring the right foot beside the left one. They take one backward step with the right foot, one backward step with the left foot and bring the right foot beside the left one. They dance repeating this sequence of steps. At the beginning of the movement, they clap the hands twice. With each forward step with the right foot they gracefully wave the arms up and down on the right side of the shoulder. Similarly with each forward step with the left foot they wave the arms up and down on the left side of the shoulder. They wave the arms up and down on the right and the left side of the waist for the backward steps with the right and left foot respectively. The boys and adult men dance with skipping steps behind the girls. There is no song accompanying this dance. At night they perform

the Gasisiu dances for fun in the house of the priest. They may also perform these dances in the other houses of the village from the second night of this ceremony.

In the last night of this ceremony, they perform a rite to drive away the evil spirits from the village. Two boys put on underpants, wooden replicas of the phallus and wooden masks. They are called the *Kengpo*. The priest, accompanied by men and these two *Kengpos*, visits all the houses of the village. He throws sand and small bits cut from trees sanctified after due incantation in all the corners of each house and chants incantations. These activities of the priest, it is believed, are intended to chase out any evil spirits which may be hiding in some corner of a house. The men make wild noises, carry firebrands and now and then throw pine dust in the firebrands which raise the blaze. The *Kengpos* accompany the party dancing with various erotic movements and clownish gestures and postures to frighten and drive the evil spirits away from the village.

Monpa Dance: The Monpas as well as the Sherdukpens have a rich repertory of ceremonial pantomimes, which are performed not for show, but at festivals, particularly the new year festival of Loser in January-February, to impart important moral lessons and also to bring prosperity or avert disease. The mummery act in ornate dresses and ornaments and finely carved and painted masks, some of which are so natural that they look like real faces, while others represent birds and animals, and yet others are ogres designed to drive away the evil spirits. "They are accompanied by a band of drummers, trumpeters and Lamas clashing great cymbals, and are done in front of the local Gompa or temple. They generally tell a story or point a moral, but there are clowns to provide refreshing humorous interludes. But they are too elaborate, too expensive to be performed often and for recreation boys and girls have simpler dances for everyday use."¹

"At Tawang the most striking of the pantomimes is the Thutotdam, when dancers, in masks representing skulls and in costumes designed as skeletons, show how the soul after death is received in the other world. This, and many other dances are performed at the Torgyap Festival, which aims at driving away evil spirits and ensuring prosperity, good weather and every material and spiritual blessing. Some of the dances serve as a sort of rehearsal for the soul's entry into the land of the dead, and the masks represent the denizens of that world; by seeing them now it will be easier to recognize them later on."²

Other popular pantomimes are Ajilamu, Yak and Deer Dances.

Kiengpa Dance: In the ceremony of Choskor the monks read the scriptures in the monastery. After the reading is over, the villagers carry those scriptures on their back and roam through the village and nearby cultivated fields. Two young men put on underpants with a wooden phallus tagged to these and monkey masks. They are called the *Kiengpas* (*Kieng-monkey*). They accompany the carriers of the scriptures dancing with erotic and other movements. This dance is called the *Kiengpa Cham*. This ceremony is performed to ensure a good crop and also the prosperity and happiness of the villagers.

This dance is popular in the villages of Tawang.

1. Verrier Elwin, *A Philosophy for NEFA*, (Shillong, 1964), pp.266-267.

2. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), p.71.

Monastic Dances: The Monpas also perform a number of monastic dances in the courtyard of the Tawang Monastery during the Torgya festival, which is observed in January-February. The purpose of the festival is to drive away evil spirits so that the people may have a happy and prosperous life. Every third year the festival is celebrated on a grander scale to seek divine blessings. This third year festival is called Dumgur, which is attended with the same dances. Monpas from far and near assemble at the monastery to see the festival. The dancers put on magnificent costumes and colourful masks. Drum and cymbals are the accompanying musical instruments. Dances performed by monks and other dances continue for three days during the festival.

Sherdukpen Dance: The pantomimes of the Sherdukpens show a marked similarity to those of the Monpas. The dancers in gorgeous dresses, magnificent and colourful masks stage the pantomimes during the festivals of Chokor or Chhakur Chosiwang and Tonuwang. The masks, which are of a large variety and meant for different dances, are indeed works of art and they are mostly obtained from Tawang and Dirang-Dzong.

"The masks are made of single blocks of wood hollowed out inside : holes are usually but not always made for eyes and mouths; most masks are painted, but the older ones are generally found dark and discoloured. The paints are brought from Tibet or the Assam plains. Women never wear the masks, which are used only by men and boys and in Tawang, by the Lamas themselves.

A special mask for the Ajilama dance is made of a sort of felt and decorated with bits of coloured cloth and goat's hair."¹

In the performance *brohmo* i.e. pantomimes, only the trained men do the dances. The trainers are called *lopon* who play the drum and the cymbals. The women also dance but indoors. A group of them stand in a row holding one another's hands. They swing their arms backwards and forwards, move their feet very slightly at the same time and sing in a chorus.

"Perhaps the most important of the Sherdukpen pantomimes is the Yak Dance, in which a large dummy animal, the body of black cloth, the head of wood, is carried about by two men concealed within it. On its back sits the figure of a goddess with upraised arms. Three masked men representing an ancient hero named Apapek and his sons dance round the yak and tell the romantic story of its origin. Another popular dance is the Ajilama, which has two figures masked as demons with flowing hair who dance with a boy dressed as a Raja and two others dressed as Ranis."²

Apart from the pantomimes, the Sherdukpens have two types of dances-the Kiengpa and the Brohpu.

Kiengpa Dance: The Chokor festival is celebrated in the Sherdukpen month called Foh (May-June) to ensure a good crop and a happy life free from disease and death. The monks read the scriptures in the temple from the 9th to the 15th Foh. On the last day, the boys and girls, clad in new clothes carry the scriptures on their back in a ritual procession.

1. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), p.75.

2. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), p.72.

They pass through the fields circling the villages once clockwise and return to the temple. Two young men, bare-bodied but for their underpants, put on wooden monkey masks and wooden replicas of the phallus. They go dancing in front of the carriers of the scriptures. They are called the Kiengpa. The persons, acting as the Kiengpas, may be bachelors or married men. They dance with erotic movements which they direct sometimes towards the carriers of the scriptures and the spectators particularly girls. They do it with impunity as according to custom the harassed persons are not to reprimand the Kiengpas. It is believed that the evil spirits, who afflict the villagers with calamities like disease and death get frightened seeing the kiengpas and their performances and they run away from the village out of fear. So the villagers do not suffer from calamities.

Brohpu Dances : This is a group of dances performed on festive and happy occasions such as the Chokor festival, marriage ceremony, house-warming ceremony and so on. These dances are normally held at night without any musical accompaniment. The dancers are usually boys and girls performing jointly or separately. A choral song accompanies the dance. The dancers wear no special costumes for these dances.

Games and Amusements : The popular indigenous games played by boys and girls in the districts of East and West Kameng and Tawang are remarkably simple, inexpensive and suited to local conditions. They are also not devoid of thrill and excitement. Enjoyable as they are, a good deal of entertainments and recreation is derived from these games by the young and old alike. A description of some of these games is quoted from the book entitled 'Games of NEFA' as follows :¹

Archery : Some form of competition in archery is practised by children in Kameng.²

In Kameng the Akas the Bangnis participate in archery during the *Deu* festival in the Tawang area of Kameng it is known as *Mlathan*, and is popular during the New Year celebrations in February and March. The Bhutias and the Mijis, who know it as *Micharagphu* and *Kabrangbau*, respectively, can participate in an archery competition at any time. In the Sepla area it is known as *Sanggran Grana*.

Tug-of-War : Tug-of-War appears to be a common game in Kameng. The players divide into two teams which range themselves opposite each other and, holding on to either end of a long rope generally made of cane, do their utmost to pull the opposing team over. In Kameng the Tug-of-War is known as *Morshing Jampa-Jampa* in the *Dirang Dzong* area, as *Sutakgiephy* by the Bhutias, and as *Sinthang Rory* by the Mijis.

Putting the Shot : A kind of sport almost identical with the modern putting the Shot is practised in many parts of Arunachal Pradesh. However, large, round, and fairly heavy stones are used instead of the shot. In general, the stones vary in weight from 10 to 16 pounds.

In Kameng it is known by the Mijis as *Ubang Solou*, and by the Bhutias as *Khajunglo champu*. In the *Dirang Dzong* area, it is known as *Lunk-Jok Firpana*.

1. Marion D. Pugh, Games of NEFA, (Shillong, 1958).

2. The name Kameng includes East and West Kameng and Tawang districts.

Pick-a-Back Kick-Fighting : Pick-a-Back Kick-Fighting consists of two boys kicking one another while riding on the backs of two other stalwarts. The boys who carry the kickers turn their backs to one another, thereby giving ample opportunity to the boys on their backs to exchange kicks. Kicking from this position is not as easy as it may seem.

This game appears to be quite a favourite with the players and is naturally an interesting spectacle for the on lookers.

Pick-a-Back Kick-Fighting is a Sherdukpen game. The Sherdukpens call it *Wi-rola-khiadia*.

Hand-Fighting From Backs : Hand-Fighting from Backs is analogous to Pick-a-Back Kick-Fighting, except that hands are used as weapons instead of the legs. There must be at least four players, two 'riders' and two 'backs' on which to ride. Here the boys who carry the riders may stand alongside one another but not too close, and from this position each of the two riders tries to drop the other by pulling him off the back. It is often very difficult to achieve this goal.

Monpa Wrestling : *Ohi-Jakso*, has advisedly been called 'Monpa Wrestling'. It differs from ordinary wrestling only in that the wrestlers hold one another by the waist band instead of by the body. As in most wrestling bouts, the object is to throw down the opponent.

Moving Gold and Moving Silver : *Sinkrititi Ninkrititi* is a graceful and invigorating game, and is fun to watch. The literal meaning of the word '*Sinkrititi, ninkrititi*' is 'moving gold' and 'moving silver', and the players of the game attempt to simulate the moving gold and silver.

Two boys stand facing one another. One boy bends forward and takes hold of the waist band of the other. The second boy lies on the bent back of the first boy and also clings tightly to his waist band. Thus with bent backs the boys in unison thump their feet and rotate to the rhythm of *Sin-Kri-titi, Nin-kri-titi*.

The Tiger and the Bulls : 'The Tiger and the Bull's is a game that dramatizes the hostility between tigers and bulls. Usually five players, one 'tiger' and the rest 'bulls', take part in the game.

Pretending it is night, the tiger prowls around in search of the bulls. The scent of danger brings out the herd instinct of the bulls, whose will for self preservation makes them rally together against the common foe. While the tiger takes his stand in the centre of the field, the four bulls wait at the four corners and then slowly surround him. However, the tiger mauls a couple of bulls, and they grope down and writhe with pain. The game generally comes to its end when the tiger has vanquished all the bulls.

The Bull Fight : The 'Bull Fight' or *Spu Markadia*, is very much a boy's game. Two boys at a time, get down on all fours at some distance from one another, then draw closer and closer together, and when they are close enough, charge at one another with all their might and main. The players must use only their shoulders in the clash, and the one who tumbles down loses.

As in most games, the players must use not only their strength but also their wits, in this case to strike at the opponent when he is least prepared to withstand an onslaught.

Tug-of-War on All-Four : 'Tug-of-War on All-Fours' is a game that is peculiar to Kameng. It is generally played by boys, as it is rather strenuous, but it provides fun for all to watch.

The two ends of a stout rope are tied together, to form an elongated loop. The two players stand with their backs to each other while for each player, the rope is passed round the back of the neck and then down the chest and under the legs. At the word 'Go' the two players pull and tug and try with all their might and main, to pull the opponent over to their side. The players usually begin the contest with their bodies half upright, but when well-matched, the two inevitably get on all fours, use their feet as anchors, and thus fortified resume the struggle.

A Race : A 'Race' that is called *Mirgyu* in the Tawang area where it is played is very similar to the more widely known '220-yards dash'.

The competitors have to run over fairly rough ground and overcome a number of natural obstacles to reach a flag that has been stuck in the ground to mark the end of the track.

This race is usually held during the New Year's Day festival, which occurs in February or March.

Javelin Throw : The 'Javelin Throw' is practised throughout the Sepla area, where it is known as *Nengkre Cheгна*. Several posts to be used as markers are kept ready at hand. The contestants throw the javelins one at a time. At each succeeding round the contestants try both to outdo their own previous efforts and also to surpass the others.

Wrist-Gripping Competition : The 'Wrist-Gripping Competition' locally known as *EK Jomba*, is similar to hand wrestling described under 'Games common throughout NEFA'. It differs in that it is rather more up to just one of the two players, the challenged, to singly demonstrate his prowess and thus either win or lose the game.

The two players decide among themselves as to which of them will be the gripper, or the challenger, and which the challenged. The challenged, the one whose wrist is held, must free his wrist from the other's vice-like grip by means of twisting and otherwise deftly manipulating his arm. Both contestants must use only one hand each. If the challenged can free his hand, he wins the contest; if not, he loses.

CHAPTER IV

AGRICULTURE

Modes of Agriculture

The whole region comprising the districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang is rural barring the town of Bomdila, which has a population of 3,806 persons only according to the 1981 Census. The tribes by and large living in this region follow a system of shifting cultivation, called *jhum*, which is practised by slash and burn of jungles and dibbling of seeds on the rain-fed slopes of the hills. Agriculture is the chief means of livelihood of the people, and the economy mainly based on jhuming being a subsistence cultivation is essentially agrarian. According to the Census of 1981, the number of cultivators in the total population and their percentage to the 'main workers' engaged in different economically productive activities are as follows :

District	Total population	Total number of workers	Cultivators	Percentage of cultivators to total workers
East Kameng	32,736	23,688	19,397	81.04
West Kameng	63,302	31,128	18,442	59.24

The census figures indicate that a high percentage of the working people, particularly in the East Kameng District, is engaged in cultivation. Agriculture is obviously the main-stay of the people, which determines their socio-economic relations and cultural life

Jhuming or shifting cultivation is done by the villagers by co-operative efforts. A *jhum* field is prepared by cutting shrubs and trees on the hill-sides during the dry season and they are burnt when dry along with the organic deposits accumulated during a long period of leaf fall. The clearing is done most thoroughly and nothing of the jungle remains save the stumps of trees. It needs to be mentioned in passing that shifting cultivation does not mean shifting village. The village remains at its site and does not normally shift with the shifting of cultivation to a new clearing. All villagers except infirms and infants work together to make a clearing of new plot of land for *jhum* and they co-operate with each other in felling the trees, burning the debris, fencing the area etc. Indeed, the shifting cultivation is an expression of the mutual help and dependence which are essential virtues of the corporate life of a tribe. In this cultivation seeds are not sown broadcast, virtues of the corporate life of a tribe. In this cultivation seeds are not sown broadcast, but are dibbled in the *jhum*-land. The agricultural tools used are the simple and indigenous hand-hoe, dibble or pointed stick and *dao*. A sharp tool like pen-knife is used for harvest of grains.

A plot of land under *jhum* is utilised only periodically, generally for two years and then abandoned to allow the natural recuperation of soil fertility so as to use it again after a lapse of years. Another plot is then cultivated which is similarly abandoned after a couple of years. Plot after plot is thus cultivated and abandoned. The intervening period of abandonment, which may be anything between 7 to 20 years, is known as the *jhum*-cycle, and this cycle varies according to population density, availability of cultivable land and other ecological factors. It has been observed that *jhum* cultivation leaves no surface soil after the land is abandoned, which leads to soil erosion. The fertility of a *jhum*-land tends to decrease rapidly, and the yield is relatively low.

But, the system of shifting cultivation has evolved through centuries of experience and agricultural practices of the hill people. The social organisation of the tribes, their religion, custom and culture, their food habits are all intricately linked with the shifting cultivation they follow to eke out a living, and these are all based on the tribal economy that has developed through this system of agricultural production, the economy which has determined the course of their social development. The shifting cultivation indeed a way of life of the tribal people living in this mountainous region.¹ Therefore, supplanting the shifting cultivation by any other agricultural method for more productivity, as advocated by some observers, without taking into consideration the socio-economic implications will be disastrous. From times immemorial, the tribal cultivators have taken to shifting cultivation as a practical and viable method of agricultural production in the hills, whereby they have profitably utilised the land on the hills-slopes and even on precipices. Fruitful utilisation of land for cultivation in this region can be maximised if, in *jhuming*, fertility of the soil is retained and erosion and deforestation are kept in check. In fact, abundant rainfall and climatic conditions in this region are so favourable that no *jhum* clearing remains without a vegetal cover for any length of time. The vegetative growth is thick and quick, which prevents erosion and the run-off rain-water. In view, therefore, of the nature of the terrain, which does not offer scope for complete replacement of the shifting cultivation (*jhum*) by settled or sedentary agriculture, it seems neither possible nor desirable to abolish *jhuming* altogether. Society is susceptible to change, but a traditional method of cultivation conditioned and restricted by ecology is not easily changeable. The solution lies in eliminating the disadvantages and the wastage of *jhuming* as far as possible through improvement of shifting cultivation on scientific lines as well as introduction of permanent cultivation to the greatest feasible extent.

The villagers are induced to cultivate fast-growing leguminous crops in their *jhum*-fields during the *jhum* cycle. The legumes spread out quickly in a matted growth over the soil and check soil erosion. They also prevent the growth of weeds and other plants, and help and maintain the fertility of soil. Ashes of burnt debris accumulated in the *jhum* land can also serve as manure.

1. D. Ering, The North-East Frontier Agency, published in Tribal Situation in India, (Simla, 1972), edited by K. Suresh Singh, pp.55-60

Contour-bunding or log-bunding and sowing of *kachu* along the border of the *jhum*-fields are also some of the simple methods adopted by the cultivators to prevent soil erosion. For this purpose, they use the large trunks and branches of trees felled in the *jhum* clearing.

It has been the persistent endeavour of the government to wean away people from *jhum* cultivation and encourage to undertake permanent cultivation — wet-rice or terrace in areas where it may prove to be more productive than *jhuming*. The transition is to take place as gradual process. Suitable areas for wet-rice cultivation in this region is limited to small strips of flat land in the riverain tracts and in some foothill areas. Terrace-rice cultivation is practised on the gentle slopes of the hills where rainfall is abundant or irrigation facilities exist.

“Even where a village has adopted permanent cultivation, it is important to allow it to do a certain amount of *jhuming* in order to grow vegetables and gourds. The ideal, in fact, is to allow both permanent and shifting cultivation to continue side by side.¹

The land tenure system generally followed is that plots of village or communal land under shifting cultivation are allotted to individual families, who have a customary right to cultivate such land, while land under permanent cultivation is privately owned.²

The Monpas and Sherdukipens are familiar with ploughs drawn by bullocks, but their Bugun (Khowa), neighbours practising shifting cultivation of the ‘slash and burn’ type do not use ploughs even today as they have hardly any flat land. The greater part of the agricultural land in both the Dirang and Tawang area is under permanent cultivation. The Monpas are remarkably good cultivators growing crops on irrigated terraces. They use oak-leaf and animal manure. The Monpas also practise shifting cultivation, though not on a large scale comparable to that of such Arunachal tribes as the Nishis and Adis. Most of the cultivators of Dirang circle grow rice on irrigated fields, whereas in the Tawang region rice is grown only in the lower parts of the valleys.

“...On steep slopes, where terracing would difficult, the forest is periodically cleared for cultivation and then allowed to grow up again. The brushwood is burnt and the soil dug up with hoes, a task which is done by both men and women. On such plots millet and maize are dibbled whereas on ploughed fields they are broadcast...

“Monpas of all areas use very large and heavy ploughs with iron shares attached to the plough by two iron rings. To draw such heavy ploughs Monpas employ crossbreeds between mithan and Indian cattle, for these animals are large and extremely strong. Two men are needed for the ploughing : One holds the plough and manoeuvres it in such a way as to dislodge the heavy stones found in most fields; the other man walks between the two plough-bullocks, which are kept far apart by an unusually long yoke; this man has to see that the long shaft of the plough remain fastened to the yoke.”³

1. Verrier Elwin, A Philosophy for NEFA, (Shillong, 1964), p.85

2. See Chapter IX for land tenure under the heading Revenue Administration-Land.

3. C. Von Furer-Haidendorf, Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh, (New Delhi, 1982) pp. 153-155.

The Monpas of Kalaktang like the Monpas of other areas practise permanent plough cultivation wherever suitable patches of plain land are available. But, their main mode of agriculture is *jhum* or shifting cultivation, which is done extensively.

Shifting cultivation is virtually the only mode of agriculture practised by the Akas. They depend for their subsistence almost wholly on *jhuming* in the hills.

The Sherdukpens, unlike the Akas, practise both shifting and permanent cultivation, which provide them their barest requirement of food. They make up their food shortage by trade and other means.

"...The *jhuming* conforms to the same pattern as is followed in other tribal areas. A portion of the jungle is cut down the felled trees are allowed to dry. When completely dried they are set on fire, and maize and millets are sown after the rains. The fields in which permanent cultivation is practised are in any case strewn with stones which are often left as they are. The main agricultural implement is a very primitive type of plough which is drawn by bullocks and has an exceptionally broad yoke and requires two men to operate it. The lands are usually ploughed twice before sowing.

"The first phase of their agriculture actually starts immediately after the Doimara winter camp. The distant fields where maize, *gacham* and other varieties of millets are grown are taken up first. Then they turn their attention to the nearest plots. By the time the plots close to the village have been cultivated, the crops sown in the distant fields are ready for reaping.

"In the permanent fields, the Sherdukpens practise rotation of crops : wheat and barley are followed by maize and millet. Their fields are fertilized by treading up cattle in them when they are lying fallow. Ploughing is done by men only.

"The fields are not irrigated and depend almost entirely on rain, artificial irrigation being seldom practised. They do not dam streams for this purpose; nor do they ordinarily cut channels from the neighbouring rivulets for irrigating their fields.¹

"The means of livelihood adopted by the Sulungs is typically different from that of the other tribes. Dr Furer-Haimendorf noted in 1954-55 that 'the Sulungs live mainly by hunting and trapping, and the collection of jungle produce, do little cultivation, and range the hills and forests for months at a time.' It was observed later in 1952 by C. R. Stonor that "The system of economic life is one of great interest, in that the Sulungs are both cultivators of grain crops and also foodgatherers; they seem to be in a state transitional between adoption of a sedentary existence based on primitive agriculture, and abandonment of a nomadic life as gatherers of wild sago and other forest products."²

1. R.R.P. Sharma, The Sherdukpens, (Shillong, 1961) pp.29-30.

2. C.R. Stonor, The Sulung Tribe of the Assam Himalayas (1952) published in the Arunachal Research Bulletin (August, 1972).....(Ed.) p.12

The agriculture of the Sulung is limited to 'a rough-and-ready system of shifting cultivation' practised on small patches of jungle, which are cleared in the dry winter season. Their agricultural technique is precisely the same as of the neighbouring Nishis and Mijis. Men, women and even grown up children work hard to prepare the *jhum* field. Men do the arduous tasks of felling the trees and removing the logs, while women and children are engaged in weeding. The burning of dried up debris is a men's job, but sowing is the task of women, which is carried out with dibbling sticks. Seeds of buckwheat, finger-millet and leaf mustered are sown by broadcasting. April and May are the months for sowing, and November and December for harvesting.

The modern methods of permanent cultivation, wet-rice and terrace-rice, have been introduced into the Sulung area since 1971. But, these new methods are yet to take root among the Sulungs. It was reported in 1982 that terrace cultivation could not make much headway for want of sufficient arable land, irrigation facilities and fertilizers, and also for lack of enthusiasm..

The Bangnis are as a whole *jhum* cultivators. Their method of shifting cultivation by slashing and burning of jungle for *jhuming* appears to be essentially the same as is followed by the Nishis and also the other tribes of this region. In fact, the Bangnis of East Kameng and the Nishis of Subansiri are the two broad divisions of one great single tribal community. Ethnologically they are akin to each other.¹

Land Reclamation and Utilisation

Under the provisions of the Jhum Land Regulation (Regulation 4 of 1947), ownership of *jhum* land rests with the government, and members of a village or a community in a permanent location have a customary right to cultivate such land. According to this regulation and the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (Act No.1 of 1894), a *jhum* land can be acquired by the government for public purposes on payment of necessary compensation.

Most of the cropped area in this region is under *jhum*. As described earlier, land for this type of cultivation is reclaimed by jungle clearing and utilised by methods of shifting cultivation.

Patches of flat land in the low-lying areas and mild slopes of the hills, where water-sources for irrigation are available, are utilised for settled agriculture. Fields are generally irrigated by diversion or gravity channels from nearby streams. Hill-sides are terraced for semi-permanent or permanent cultivation.

The cultivable land in this region comprising the three districts be broadly divided into three parts:

- (i) the mountainous terrain extending over almost the whole of this region, where *jhuming* is prevalent;
- (ii) the Dirang circle of the West Kameng District and the Tawang District, where wet-rice and terrace-rice cultivation on irrigated fields are practised;
- (iii) stretches of plain land in the reverain tracts and foothills, where some form of permanent cultivation is done.

1. See Subansiri District Gazetteer for the details of agricultural practices of the Nishis.

The Monpas of West Kameng and Tawang may be specially mentioned in this context for their productive utilisation of land to promote agricultural development. A techno-economic survey carried out in 1967 reports as follows:

"...Another region in NEFA where a high standard in agriculture has been reached is the Monpa area of Kameng district. Terraces have been built on gentle slopes and, wherever possible, gravitational irrigation is provided. Ploughs are used, drawn by bullocks and *jomos* (a cross between a cow and a mithun). The Monpas are aware of the importance of manuring. Oak leaves are collected and soaked in night soil and later the compost is spread in the fields. Maize, wheat, buckwheat, barley, millet and paddy are the important crops. The limited area on which paddy can be grown has made rice a highly valued cereal in the area. It represents only about 10 per cent of the total crops. Cultural practices are a little advanced and stand well in comparison to those practised in the rest of the country.¹

According to the Agricultural Census 1976-77 the net cultivated area in Kameng comprising all the three districts was 18084.99 hectares and the uncultivated land was as follows:

(1) uncultivated land excluding fallow land	— 2986.67 hectares
(2) fallow land other than current fallow	— 12930.44 hectares
(3) Cultivable waste land	— 10513.95 hectares
<hr/>	
Total uncultivated land	26431.06 hectares

Different Categories of Agricultural land are shown in percentage in the above-mentioned census as follows:

(1) net cultivated area	— 39.63 per cent
(2) total uncultivated land	— 57.92 per cent
(3) land not available for cultivation	— 2.45 per cent
<hr/>	
	100.00 per cent

Under the Five Year Plans, great emphasis is being laid on development of agriculture in this region so as to raise productivity and achieve self-sufficiency in food. An important step taken in this direction is utilisation of arable and uncultivated land by permanent tillage with increasing stress on development of terraced cultivation and improvement of

1. Techno-Economic Survey of NEFA, (New Delhi, 1967) by the National Council of Applied Economic Research, p.21.

irrigation facilities. The area of land developed annually under permanent cultivation in Kameng is as follows:¹

1979-80	:	384.77	hectares
1980-81	:	296.00	"
1981-82	:	336.00	"
1983-84	:	521.00	"

According to the Agricultural Census 1985-86, Districtwise land under different uses was as follows:

District	Total holding		Net area Sown. (Hect)	Current fallow (Hect)	Net cultivated Land (Hect)	Uncultivated (Hect)	Area not available for cultivation (Hect)
	No.	Area (Hect)					
East Kameng	7138	23486	7767	2985	10752	11830	904
West Kameng	4006	18421	9312	379	9691	8416	314
Tawang	3613	3880	2587	194	2781	793	309

Irrigation

The average annual rainfall in Kameng is on the whole moderate-to-heavy. The territory is watered by innumerable streams and rivers, of which the Kameng (Bhareli) river with its principal tributary the Bichom forms the main drainage system. Some of these rivers become turbulent during the rains and inundate large areas in the valleys and foothills. *Jhum*-fields on the slant of hills are usually rain-fed. Farmers depend largely on rain-water for a good harvest. Irrigation of fields in this mountainous terrain is relevant only to permanent cultivation. Land under terrace or wet-rice cultivation is irrigated usually by gravity channels and diversion weirs. Pumping sets are also used for irrigation of small holdings. In some areas, water from a nearby stream or spring is channelised through bamboo or polythin pipes for irrigation.

The Agricultural Census of 1967-77 gives out the following:

	Number of operational holdings	Area (in hectare)	Net irrigated area (in hectare)
Wholly irrigated	0068	46.55	46.55
Wholly unirrigated	8749	8588.22	—
Partly irrigated	2769	4062.38	1196.10
	11586	12697.15	1242.65

1. Source (a) Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1979-80, 1980-81 and 1981-82.

(b) Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh, 1983-84.

2. Source: Report on Agricultural Census 1985-86, Directorate of Agriculture, Arunachal Pradesh, Naharlagun-p.36

It appears from the census that out of 11,586 operational holdings, 2,837 holdings having an area of 1,243 hectares are either wholly or partly irrigated.

The irrigated and unirrigated area in Kameng under different crops was enumerated in the Agricultural Census of 1976-77 as follows:¹

Crop	Area (in hectare)	
	Irrigated	Unirrigated
Rice	1374.57	3672.77
Maize	4.42	3770.86
Millets	—	2213.88
Wheat	11.27	518.13
Barley	—	383.39
Vegetables	—	442.28
Fruits	—	305.88
Other food crops	—	138.57
Other non-food crops	—	25.29
Pulses	—	89.64
Oil seeds	—	22.67
Tobacco	—	23.16
Sesamum	—	1.02
Total	1390.26	11607.54

According to the census, the gross cropped area is 12,997.80 hectares being the sum of the total irrigated and unirrigated area. The percentage of the total irrigated area of 1390.26 hectares to the gross cropped area is, therefore, 10.69 only.

In the year 1981-82, an area of about 635 hectares in Kameng was irrigated by channels, and in 1983-84, the area brought under irrigation by other sources was 564 hectares. A number of minor irrigation projects have been implemented to promote agricultural operations and develop land under permanent cultivation. The annual progress of implementation in is indicated in the following table:¹

Year	Number of minor irrigation projects implemented		Command area (in hectare)	
	West Kameng and Tawang	East Kameng	West Kameng and Tawang	East Kameng
1980-81	49	6	275	192
1981-82	47	27	424	211
1983-84	16	27	—	—

1. op.cit., p.97 ff

1. Source: Statistical Hand Books of Arunachal Pradesh, 1980-81, 1981-82.

(b) Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh, 1983-84.

In 1984-85, a total area of 435 hectares in these three districts was irrigated under minor irrigation projects.

According to Agricultural Census 1985-86, districtwise holdings and area (in Hect) receiving irrigation alongwith percentage to total as follows:¹

Name of District	Total Holding	Holding receiving irrigation	Net area sown	Net irrigated area	P.C. of holding receiving irrigation total No. of holding	P.C. of net irrigated area to net area sown
East Kameng	7938	2036	7767	1169	28.52%	15.05%
West Kameng	4006	373	9312	287	9.31%	3.08%
Tawang	3613	1291	2587	298	35.73%	11.52%

Soil

Soil in the hills of this region, which are under thick cover of forests, contains a high proportion of humus and nitrogen. An important feature of the soil in certain areas is that it is mixed acidic. The degree of acidity, which may be attributed to heavy rainfall, may increase with the elevation of land from the low-lying areas to the hills. The soil in Arunachal Pradesh generally varies from sandy loam to clayey mixed with heterogeneous matrix. It is, however, not possible to give here an accurate and detailed description of the composition of soil, for no authentic report on soil-analysis pertaining to this part of Arunachal Pradesh is available.

"In Arunachal Pradesh the arable land is mostly available on the slope of the hills. The layer of top soil is thin. Somewhere the soil is mixed with stones and sand. Somewhere it is clay comprising black and redish. In the valleys the soil is alluvial. In the foothill it is sedimentary in character. On the whole there is dearth of sunny, flat and fertile land for cultivation of field crops.

It is known that the red soil on the hill slopes is quite suitable for the cultivation of mazie, fruits, vegetable, pulses etc. Similarly the soil mixed with sand is suitable for the cultivation of oil seeds and other rabi crops. The alluvial soil is good and suitable for the cultivation of paddy. It may also be mentioned that the alluvial soil requires heavy irrigation at a comparatively longer intervals. The red soil mixed with stone requires light irrigation at shorter intervals. This holds good with respect to soil mixed with sand. The sedimentary soil also requires heavy irrigation at short intervals in the foothills.²

1. Source : Report on Agricultural Census 1985-86, Directorate of Agriculture, Arunachal Pradesh, Naharlagun—p.39

2. State Report on Agricultural Census, 1976-77 by the Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Part I, pp. 17-18.

Major and Subsidiary Crops

The Agricultural census of 1976-77 indicates that the net cultivated area in East West Kameng, Kameng and Tawang districts put together was 18085 hectares as earlier mentioned, and the major crops were rice, maize, millets, wheat, barley, vegetables and fruits, while the subsidiary crops were various other cereals, pulses, oil seeds, tobacco etc.

In the year 1983-84, the area under crops and total production of crops were as follows:¹

District	Area under crops (in hectare)		Production of crops (in metric tonnes)	
	Food grains	Oil seeds	Food grains	Oil seed
West Kameng including Tawang	10600	645	12896	511
East Kameng	8282	54	8610	41
Total	18882	699	21506	552

1. Source: Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh 1983-84.

The following table indicates the area of production, production with yield rates of different food crops, pulses and oilseeds in East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts during the years 1984-85 to 1990-91.

Yield Rate = $\frac{\text{Mt}}{\text{Hect}}$																	Area = Hect			Production = MT/QTLS	
RICE					MAIZE			MILLETS			WHEAT			PULSES			OILSEEDS				
Sl. No.	District	Area	Pro-duction	Yield	Area	Pro-duction	Yield	Area	Pro-duction	Yield	Area	Pro-duction	Yield	Area	Pro-duction	Yield	Area	Pro-duction	Yield		
1984-85																					
1.	Tawang	1429	1527	1.07	518	595	1.15	6.08	436	0.72	2818	4907	1.74	3.20	204	0.64	235	173	0.74		
2.	West Kameng	1526	1575	1.03	3485	3866	1.11	1110	769	0.69	261	440	1.69	224	215	0.96	305	223	0.73		
3.	East Kameng	6967	7667	1.10	838	990	1.18	854	631	0.74	45	82	1.82	157	94	0.60	238	174	0.73		
1985-86																					
1.	Tawang	1466	1569	1.07	532	632	1.15	618	450	0.73	2812	5025	1.79	400	256	0.64	300	225	0.75		
2.	West Kameng	1607	1736	1.08	3540	4090	1.16	1365	975	0.71	262	440	1.68	350	224	0.64	350	260	0.74		
3.	East Kameng	6978	6758	0.97	844	902	1.07	853	565	0.66	57	102	1.79	200	126	0.63	300	225	0.75		
1986-87																					
1.	Tawang	2655	2900	1.09	4220	5240	1.24	-	-	-	4575	6052	1.32	764	846	1.10	194	182	0.93		
2.	West Kameng	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
3.	East Kameng	6050	6290	1.03	1150	1180	1.02	-	-	-	30	77	2.56	210	204	0.97	179	174	0.97		
1987-88																					
1.	Tawang	1635	1380	0.84	790	950	1.02	800	520	0.65	2950	5350	1.81	40	55	1.38	-	-	-		
2.	West Kameng	1060	1242	1.17	3650	4395	1.20	1750	1180	0.67	1815	1915	1.06	160	174	1.09	-	-	-		
3.	East Kameng	6100	7788	1.28	1150	1035	0.90	1590	1275	0.80	55	80	1.45	200	500	2.50	-	-	-		
1988-89																					
1.	Tawang	794	934	1.18	604	990	1.63	843	860	1.02	1115	3000	2.69	240	100	0.41	194	208	1.07		
2.	West Kameng	1020	1103	1.08	3860	4560	1.18	1412	1065	0.75	1797	500	0.27	553	389	0.70	283	278	0.98		
3.	East Kameng	9366	12250	1.30	1460	1645	1.12	185	155	0.83	45	100	2.22	475	382	0.80	760	570	0.76		
1989-90																					
1.	Tawang	850	1000	11.76	750	990	13.20	870	890	10.23	1500	3650	24.33	260	140	5.38	236	245	10.38		
2.	West Kameng	1000	1321	13.21	4300	5120	11.91	1420	1270	8.94	320	510	15.94	613	408	6.66	310	300	9.68		
3.	East Kameng	9540	12500	13.10	1700	1975	11.62	190	175	9.21	70	130	18.57	490	400	8.16	823	620	7.53		
1990-91																					
1.	Tawang	855	1100	12.87	756	1090	14.42	872	895	12.26	1536	3897	25.37	268	180	6.72	239	290	12.13		
2.	West Kameng	1040	1414	13.60	4307	5130	11.91	1425	1282	9.00	892	1422	15.94	620	418	6.74	315	318	10.10		
3.	East Kameng	9545	12520	13.10	1708	2008	11.76	200	210	10.50	72	136	18.89	515	412	8.00	832	628	7.55		

Source : Statistical Abstract / Pocket Book of Arunachal Pradesh 1985 to 1991

The crops may be broadly divided into kharif season crops and rabi season crops. The kharif crops are rice, maize and millets, while the rabi crops include wheat, mustard, potato, barley etc.

The following table indicate the crop wise area and production in Kameng comprising the three districts during the year 1978-79:¹

Crops	Area (hectare)	Production (ton)
Paddy	5855	10436
Maize	3720	4619
Millets	1864	1258
Wheat	963	1267
Barley	1263	1431
Mustard	57	35
Pulses	204	119
Potato	253	1689
Sweet potato	31	63
Ginger	81	305
Sugarcane (Molasses)	95	747
Soyabean	200	150
Turmeric	12	70
Chillies	131	119
Vegetables	294	604

Rice is the principal crop for most of the tribes. The Monpas are advanced cultivators, who till their fields with ploughs drawn by bullocks. Fields are tilled several times cross-wise until the soil is well pulverised. Monpas of all areas grow rice either on irrigated fields and terraces or *jhum* fields.

The cycle of agricultural activities in the Monpa area of Kalaktang is usually as follows.²

March-April	:	Sowing of millets (Italian or foxtail) and broadcasting of paddy.
April-May	:	Sowing of maize and millet.
July-August	:	Sowing of buckwheat and cow-pea.
August-September	:	Harvest of maize and millet
September-October	:	Sowing of barley and harvest of foxtail millet and paddy.
November-December	:	Harvest of cow-pea, buckwheat and barley.

Most of the Monpa farmers of Dirang area practise permanent tillage and do little *jhum* cultivation. They are adept at terrace cultivation, both wet and dry. They grow rice, as stated earlier, on wet fields. Paddy seedlings grown in a separate plot of land in the months of April and May are transplanted in July and August. November and December are the months of harvest. The other important crops cultivated by them are maize, pulses and beans are sown in April to June and the crop is harvested in August to October. Harvest of wheat, millet and barley also takes place generally after three months from the date of sowing.

1. Source: Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1978-79.

2. See the article by Bibhas Dhar, The Monpas of Khalegthang (Kalaktang) area alias, The Tsanglas, published in *The Tribes of North-east India* (Shillong, 1984) edited by S. Karotemprel, p.303.

Extensive cultivation, both settled and limited shifting, is practised by the Monpas of Tawang district. They are progressive farmers, expert in terrace cultivation. Their indigenous method of channelising water for irrigation is remarkable. Crops cultivated by them are mainly wheat, barley, rice, millet, maize and buckwheat. Agricultural activities varies with altitude. Rice cultivation is confined to the lower regions of the valleys. Villagers living in higher regions grow wheat barley and also potatoes and soyabeans. Chillies are grown abundantly in the Tawang area.

The cycle of agriculture activities in the Tawang region as observed by Dr Furer-Haimendorf, is approximately as follows:

January	:	Weeding of wheat and barley fields.
February	:	Weeding of wheat and barley fields continues. Felling of trees and clearing of brushwood on plots selected for <i>jhum</i> -cultivation.
March	:	Clearing of <i>Jhum</i> -fields continues.
April	:	Clearing of <i>Jhum</i> -fields, and burying of brushwood. Repair of terraced fields, construction or repair of irrigation channels Planting of potatoes and sowing of rice in nurseries.
May	:	Sowing of millet and maize by dibbling of <i>Jhum</i> -fields and by broadcasting on ploughed fields.
June	:	Harvest of buckwheat. Transplanting of millet and rice.
July	:	Transplanting of millet and rice. Weeding of maize.
August	:	Weeding of rice-fields.
September	:	Sowing of buckwheat.
October	:	Harvest of wheat, millet, rice and maize.
November	:	Ploughing of wheat and barley fields, followed by sowing of wheat and barley in both ploughed fields and <i>jhum</i> -fields
December	:	No agriculture work except in Lumla circle where wheat is sown. ¹

Rice is cultivated by transplantation of paddy-seedling. Seeds are sown first in well-prepared seed-beds in the months of March and April. After a couple of months, seedlings are transplanted in the paddy fields.

Radish is grown by the Monpas and Sherdukpens on a fairly large scale. Dried up radish is supplied by them to the plains of Assam.

The cultivators of the Tawang region are greatly attached to their agricultural pursuits. At the time of harvest, they select best kind of grains for seeds, which they preserve with loving care in baskets covered with mud. Two months later the seeds are dried and finally wetted with water or liquor before sowing.

"Throughout the Monpa country and particularly in the Tawang circle I was impressed by the careful utilization of the land, a phenomenon which reminded me of the intensive land-use typical of the Apa Tanis. There are few patches of land which are not put to some use. However steep and torn by ravines the terrain may be it is either under cultivation or used as pasture for cattle and ponies, or is covered by privately owned forest. Wherever possible steep slopes are terraced and used for the intensive cultivation of such crops as potatoes or soya beans."¹

1. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh* (New Delhi, 1982), p.154.

1. op.cit., p.155.

The Bangnis, Akas and Mijis are *jhum* cultivators. Of late plough and bullock cultivation in plots of land developed for settled agriculture under the subsidy of the government has been introduced in the East Kameng District. Rice, a major food crop, is grown by the Bangnis on their *jhum*-land as well as well fields. They cultivate a variety of rice. The common crops in the Aka area are maize and millet. Rice cultivation is limited to a small area. The Akas also grow pulses, french beans, potatoes and sweet potatoes.

The yearly cycle of agricultural activities of the Sherdukpens and the crops they raise are as follows :

July-August	:	Beginning of agriculture activities with sowing of millets and weeding of maize fields.
August-September	:	Measures taken for protecting the maize crops from the ravages of animals.
September-October	:	Sowing of barely and wheat. Harvest of maize.
October-November	:	Clearing of jungle for <i>jhum</i> -cultivation, harvest of millets.
November-December	:	Harvest of millets continues and sowing of barely.
January-March	:	Winter camping in Doimara for trade with the plains.
April-May	:	Ploughing of fields adjacent to village for sowing maize, chillies, soyabeans, pumpkins and mustard.
May-June	:	Sowing of maize and millets in distant fields.
June-July	:	Sowing of maize and millets in nearby fields.

The Sherdukpens hardly do any rice cultivation as their area, it is said, is not suitable for such cultivation. The staple food of the Sulungs is rice and wild sago. Maize and millet of both foxtail and finger varieties are grown in fair quantities as subsidiary crops. Among other crops are buckwheat, pulses, pumpking, arum, chilli, ginger, leaf mustard, sweet potato and tobacco. Of late, a variety of vegetables introduced by the Agriculture Department are being grown. Seeds are sown in the months of April and May and the crops are harvested in November and December. Millet, buckwheat and mustard seeds are broadcasted, but seeds of paddy, maize, pulse, bottle-gourd, ginger etc. are dibbled.

The crops and the system of cultivation of the Sulungs are identical with those of their neighbours, the Bangnis or Nishis, 'and it is stated both the tribes that the Sulungs have learnt everything they know of agriculture from their neighbours.'

Horticulture

The climatic and ecological conditions in this area, particularly in some parts of West Kameng and Tawang as in the other parts of Arunachal Pradesh, are congenial to the

growth of temperate fruits in the higher regions and citrus and other tropical and sub-tropical fruits in the lower regions. In fact, this hilly country holds out a bright prospect for horticulture. The schemes for development of horticulture taken up under the Five Year Plans are broadly as follows :

- (1) supply of fruit grafts/plants of improved varieties at subsidised cost to the cultivators,
- (2) opening of horticulture gardens on subsidy,
- (3) provision of horticultural hand-tools on subsidy,
- (4) demonstration on planting and maintenance of fruit trees, imparting of technical knowledge etc., and
- (5) raising of nurseries for fruit plants.

It has been observed that horticultural development would not only supplement the food requirement, but would also lead to employment opportunities and economic growth.

The development plan envisages progressive cultivation of a variety of food, fodder and cash crops, growing of vegetables and fruits together. Pine-apple, orange, lemon, lichi, papaya, banana, guava and temperate fruits, such as apple, plum, pear, peach, cherries, walnuts, almonds etc. are grown in different altitudinal zones. Apples, in particular, produced in this area are comparable with some of the best kinds. The Bomdila and Tawang regions offer ideal agro-climatic condition for apple plantation. Indeed, the apple has caught the imagination of local farmers as its plantation has been found to be quite promising from economic and commercial viewpoints.

There is a Regional Apple Nursery at Dirang and a State Horticultural Garden and Nursery at Shergaon. In the year 1983-84, the number of horticulture gardens in the West Kameng District including Tawang was 220 and in the East Kameng was 80. In 1981 the total area under fruit plantation in the districts was 9,873 hectares.

The area under production and yield rate per hectare of important fruit crops in Tawang, West Kameng and East Kameng districts as on 31.3.93.

Area in hectare.
Production in M.T.

Crop	TAWANG			WEST KAMENG			EAST KAMENG		
	Area	Production	Yield/hect.	Area	Production	Yield/hect.	Area	Production	Yield/hect.
Apple	1098	643	1.35	818	2256	2.75	112	143	1.27
Plum	57	44	1	36	545	1.51	19	20	1
Walnut	461	34	17 kg.	150	138	22 kg.	26	5	19 kg.
Orange	23	14	75 kg.	45	510	1.15	310	395	1.27
Guava	5	9	1.8	—	—	—	53	98	1.85
Pears	—	—	—	15	75	1.5	53	75	1.41
Peach	—	—	—	38	725	3	25	20	1.8
Banana	—	—	—	—	—	—	60	240	2.25
Others	10	18	1.8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total:-	1654	762		1102	4249		658	996	

Source: Directorate at Horticulture, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

PROGRESS OF SCIENTIFIC AGRICULTURE

It has been the constant endeavour of the government to promote agriculture in this area on a scientific basis. Effective steps have been taken towards attaining self-sufficiency in food by application of modern methods of cultivation. The programme formulated to achieve this objective include, among other things, the following :

- (1) Development of land under permanent cultivation.
- (2) Distribution of improved agricultural implements and machines amongst the progressive farmers.
- (3) Irrigation by channels and construction of minor irrigation projects.
- (4) Implementation of 'rural water supply' schemes.
- (5) Supply of fertilizers and improved seeds.
- (6) Agriculture demonstrations.
- (7) Multiple cropping.
- (8) Farmer's training.
- (9) Training of personnel in specialised branches of agricultural science, soil conservation etc.

The Gramsevak Training Centre near Pasighat opened in 1950 under the name of Agricultural Training Institute has been playing a very important role in training the local young people in the methods of rural development including agriculture. The Village Level Worker trained up in this centre have been helping the cultivators to learn the techniques of scientific agriculture for gainful and increased food production.

Besides this institution, another allied organisation namely the Farmer's Training Centre, was set up at Pasighat in 1972. The object of this centre is to provide vocational support to the farmers through need-based production-oriented training courses. For this purpose, various training programmes relating particularly to production-cum-demonstration are carried out in the fields of the farmers so as to bring home to them the utility and value of new agricultural and home science technologies. Training is imparted through work experience that is 'teaching and learning by doing', so that a sense of confidence and competency develops among the farmers as regards the new scientific methods.

Agricultural Tools and Implements

The indigenous agricultural tools are the products of age-old experience and ingenuity of the tribal farmers. These tools are specially designed for agricultural operations in the hills, mainly by slash-and-burn cultivation or *jhum* as is called. The tools are simple, handy and easily operable on the hill slopes, and they upturn or disturb the soil to a very little extent. The tools commonly used are *dao* or machete, wooden or bamboo dibbler and weeder, wooden rake and fork, hatchet, hand hoe, scythe and felling-axe. The *dao* is an all-purposive and indispensable instrument for clearance of jungle, felling of trees, construction of houses, cane and bamboo works and so on. Besides these, bamboo baskets for carrying food-stuff, wooden mortar and pestle for pounding or husking, winnow etc. are also in use.

The Monpas as also Sherdukpens know the technique of animal traction. The Monpas use very large and heavy ploughs with iron shares drawn by bullocks. The plough used

by the Sherdukpens is called *ganga* which is drawn by a pair of oxen. It is a wooden plough with a very broad yoke.

Jhuming is a subsistence cultivation. The yield per hectare of a *jhum* field is comparatively low. It has been observed food production in this hilly area can be augmented through a process of improvement of the *jhum* cultivation as well as development of permanent cultivation by scientific methods and devices. Use of modern instruments of agricultural production is essential for this purpose. Some improved types of implements, which could be easily handled and also serve as a labour-saving device, were at first introduced. The progressive farmers were provided with modern hoe, felling-axe, pick-axe, spade, shovel, jumper, rake, sickle etc free of cost till the year 1955-56 and thereafter on 50% government subsidy. The improved agricultural implements distributed to the farmers are as follows (as on March 31, 1982)¹

Type of implements	Number of Implements distributed	
	West Kameng including Tawang	East Kameng
1	2	3
1. Tata hoe	3484	1700
2. Jumper	200	400
3. Felling-axe	1056	210
4. Pick-axe	50	30
5. Khurpi	227	400
6. Shovel	50	200
7. Cross-cut saw	48	—
8. Sickle	212	—
9. Rat trap	120	325
10. Secateur	90	—
11. Dao	303	—
12. Pruning knife	90	—
13. Garden rake	37	—
14. Spade	15	—
15. M. B., Plough	—	40
Total	5982	3305

These new implements are likely to bring about a gradual change in the techniques of cultivation and also greatly facilitate agricultural operations. The demand for the modern tools and implements suggest that the farmers in general are fond of them in preference to the antique and outdated ones.

1. Source : Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1981.

The following table indicates the types of modern agricultural implements and machines distributed to the farmers in Kameng¹.

<u>Implements /Machines</u>		<u>Number</u>
1. Tractor	4
2. Power tiller	7
3. Pumping set	13
4. Power sprayer	9
Total		33

The number of agricultural implements and machinery including tractor, power tiller etc. distributed in Kameng was 8007 (as in 1983-84).

Seeds and Manure

Seeds commonly used are of local varieties of grains collected by the farmers during harvest and carefully preserved by them for the next crop. The Monpas being advanced cultivators are fairly selective about seeds to be sown. The farmers of Tawang region, in particular, take special care, as stated earlier, for preservation of best kind of seeds. Seeds of healthy plants are usually preserved.

Good quality seeds suitable to the local soil are procured from government seed farms, nurseries and other sources. These seeds are introduced into the cultivation fields through demonstrations and adaptive trials. Improved and high-yielding varieties of seeds supplied to the cultivators consist mainly of paddy (*sali* and *ahu*), maize, potato, sugarcane, wheat, vegetables etc. The following table indicates the annual supply of these seeds in Kameng.²

Year	Area brought under improved seeds (in hectare)	Area brought under high-yielding varieties of seeds (in hectare)
1979-80	390	292
1980-81	—	453
1981-82	—	839
1983-84	—	*1175

* The figure includes area under improved seeds.

Over 400 selected farmers from different villages of Tawang were associated with the activities of the Khoitam Potato Seed Multiplication Farm for multiplication of *kufri jyoti*

1. Source : Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1978-79 and 1979-80.

2. Source : (a) Statistical Hand Books of Arunachal Pradesh, 1979-80, 1980-81 and 1981-82
(b) Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh, 1983-84.

potato seeds. This helped the growth of a local potato seed industry. In 1983-84, commercial cultivation of potato in this region amounted to Rs.60 lakhs, and the *kufri jyoti* potato seeds worth Rs.20 lakhs were distributed. Besides potato, it was seen that vegetable seeds could be profitably raised as an industry at higher altitudes. In collaboration with the National Seeds Corporation, vegetable seeds such as cabbage at Shergaon and cauliflower, turnip and spinach at Salari, were successfully grown.

The people have their indigenous methods of manuring the cultivation fields, jungles slashed and burnt for jhuming form a layer of ash on the top soil on which seeds are dribbled or overcast. The soil mixed with the ash serves as manure. The *jhum*-fields are left fallow for a number of years for recuperation of soil fertility by natural processes. The use of cow-dung as manure is known. Besides cow-dung, the Monpas of Dirang and also Tawang use dried oak leaves to manure their fields. Such leaves collected and stored during the winter are spread over the fields before cultivation. Sheep dung is also used as a fertilising substance in some areas.

Under the agricultural development programmes, the cultivators are persuaded to make compost pits and use organic manures and fertilisers for better crop. Trials and demonstrations are also organised in the Community Development Blocks to show the methods by which fertility of soil can be raised. With the progress of agricultural developments especially under permanent cultivation, there has been a growing demand for artificial manures and chemical fertilisers. Effective steps have been taken by the government to meet this demand. The following table indicates the cultivated area brought annually under fertilisers in these three districts.¹

<u>Year</u>	<u>Area</u> (in hectare)
1979-80	216
1980-81	469
1981-82	534

The following table indicates the consumption of Chemical fertilisers in East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang Districts during the year 1987-91.²

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Consumption of Chemical fertilisers</u>		
	<u>East Kameng</u>	<u>West Kameng</u>	<u>Tawang</u>
1986-87	21.80	18.88	40.87
1987-88	33.80	21.50	36.30
1988-89	38.30	50.40	56.50
1989-90	38.30	61.40	67.50
1990-91	41.50	67.50	74.50

1. Source : Statistical Hand Books of Arunachal Pradesh, 1979-80 to 1981-82.

2. Source : Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1987-91.

Agricultural Diseases and Pests

Some of the common agricultural diseases affecting crops in varying degrees in different parts of Arunachal Pradesh are as follows:

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Diseases</u>
Paddy	Paddy Blast, Bacterial Blight and Root-Knot
Wheat	Smut
Potato	Early/Late Blight
Gourd	Powdery Mildew
Citrus crops	Canker
Cabbage and Cauliflower	Root-Knot
Peas	Powdery Mildew

The common insects pests that cause considerable damages to crops in this region are gandhi-bugs, rice-bugs, rice-hisp, grasshoppers, caterpillars, stembores, sawflies etc. Field rats are also a menance to young crops. They attack the crops in large numbers, particularly during the bamboo flowering season. Besides these, crops in the hills covered with jungles are damaged by birds and animals.

The Agriculture Department has been taking effective measures to save crops from diseases and ravages of pests. One such measure is the formation of plant protection units. These units work under the Agriculture Inspectors stationed at different places. The Village Level Workers may also be associated with the units. The plant protection service, rendered free to the cultivators, includes application of various insecticides and fungicides, spraying and dusting with chemicals and other protective measures. The units keep stood of equipments and medicines to deal with the crop diseases and pests.

The following table indicates the area brought annually under plant protection.¹

Year	West Kameng including Tawang	East Kameng	Total
1979-80	521	391	912
1980-81	1300	500	1800
1981-82	1300	600	1900
1983-84	1800	850	2650

Animal Husbandry and Veterinary

Rearing of livestock plays an important role in the socio-economic life of the people. Some of the very useful domesticated animals of these districts are mithuns, yaks, pigs, sheep, cattle and goats, which are reared for milk, meat and wool. These animals are also used for religious sacrifices. The mithun, in particular, is considered valuable, for it symbolises power, wealth and status. It is an animal of the bovine species, somewhat of a mixture of cow and buffalo in appearance, heavy and clumsy-looking. It has a large

1. Source (1) Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1979-80 to 1981-82.

(2) Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh, 1983-84.

massive head with a pair of huge horns, a hump and pale blue eyes. The front legs are larger than the hind ones. Its hide is very thick and the colour of the coat is brown varying from coffee to black. It is held in high esteem by the people. A man's social status is often determined by the number of mithuns owns. Mithuns are usually allowed to roam freely in nearby jungles, but they are kept under watch. The pigs, in numbers, move round house premises. The yak (*bos grunien*) is important to the people of Tawang and West Kameng districts. *Churpi* (cheese), ghee, cream etc. are made from yak's milk. Yak's hair and tail-stump are utilised for making various articles. The people of these two districts, unlike most of those of other districts of Arunachal Pradesh, are familiar with dairying even though their method is somewhat crude. Some of the breeds of yak serve as pack-animal in addition to mules. Besides the livestock, poultry is also reared for meat and eggs.

According to a 1978-79 census of livestock, the number of animals and birds reported from these districts was as follows.

Livestock/Poultry	Tawang	West Kameng	East Kameng
1	2	3	4
Cattle	6281	15509	4395
Pig	1559	4393	4490
Buffalo	—	165	2
Mithun	6	1126	17944
Sheep	10129	8600	—
Goat	3229	5220	94461
Pony	1559	2986	16
Mule/Donkey	177	76	3
Yak	3804	1734	—
Poultry	5804	35807	121654

The Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department has taken up a number of schemes for improvement of livestock poultry and their protection from diseases. These schemes comprise among other things, animal health coverage, upgrading of the local livestock development of poultry, sheep and fodder etc.

The districts have the following of veterinary institutions. (as in May 1985).

Institution	Tawang	West Kameng	East Kameng
Veterinary dispensary	5	5	5
Veterinary aid centre	8	11	4
Mobile veterinary dispensary	1	1	1
District diagnostic laboratory	1	1	—

The institutions and their numbers for upgradation of the local livestock through cross-breeding with exotic cattle are as follows (in numbers as in May 1985).

Institution	Tawang	West Kameng	East Kameng
Cattle upgrading centre	6	13	11
Cattle breeding farm	—	1	—

The cattle breeding farm at Warjung, 14 km from Bomdila, provides for better upkeep and feeding of cattle in order to improve milk production and supply of milk to nearby localities. It also provides training facilities to the farmers and fields staff. The farm produces 60 to 70 kl of milk per day.

There is a district poultry farm at Tawang. The chick rearing centre at Bomdila distributes chickens to farmers at subsidised rates.

The following institutions have been functioning in the districts for sheep development (in numbers as in May 1985).

Farm/Centre	Tawang	West Kameng	East Kameng
Sheep farm	—	1	—
Sheep and wool extension centre	5	2	—
Sheep shearing, wool grading and training centre	—	1	—

The Regional Sheep Breeding Farm at Sangti was established in the late seventies. The cross-breed sheep of this farm are distributed to progressive rearers for upgrading the local stock. The Sheep-Shearing, Wool Grading and Training Centre also at Sangti imparts training to enterprising villagers. The sheep and wool extension centres provide veterinary aids, such as vaccination and anthelmintic drenching, and also strive for development of pasture land, upgrading of sheep, castration of local scrub-rams etc. with a view to producing quality wool.

Fodder development goes simultaneously with livestock development programmes. The fodder farm at Warjung near Bomdila has 37 acres of land under it, which supplies green fodder to the local cattle farm. A regional farm has been established recently for production of fodder seeds suitable for high altitudinal areas above 1,524 metres.

The progress of animal husbandry and veterinary activities in this region is rather slow due to several constraints, such as difficult terrain, lack of road communications in the remote and deep interior areas, low educational and living standards, socio-religious taboos, dearth of trained and technical personnel and so on. Nevertheless some remarkable achievements have been made, and it is encouraging to note that there has been a growing response from the people in general to the efforts being made for development in this sector. Animals and birds are distributed to deserving farmers annually on subsidy basis through government agencies for productive purposes. Breeding bulls are provided free of cost to those 'milk pocket areas' which are beyond the coverage cattle upgrading centres or cattle breeding farms.

The following veterinary institutions have been functioning in the districts as on 31.3.91.¹

District	Veterinary Hospitals	Veterinary Dispensaries	Sheep and wool extension Centres	Cattle breeding Farms.	Poultry Breeding Farms.	Pig Breeding Farms.
East Kameng	—	7	—	—	1	—
West Kameng	—	6	3	1	1	—
Tawang	—	5	4	—	1	—
Total		18	7	1	3	—

The following table shows the number of cases of animals attended in veterinary dispensaries and aid centres for some years past.²

Year	Case	West Kameng	Districts East Kameng	Tawang
1981-82	Treated	32061	23286	—
	Vaccinated	31990	2982	—
	Castrated	1035	1472	—
1983-84	Treated	39787	16245	—
	Vaccinated	27357	12183	—
	Castrated	1644	1848	—
1984-85	Treated	19395	18053	—
	Vaccinated	7577	8929	—
	Castrated	1129	6786	—
1985-86	Treated	11350	22805	12237
	Vaccinated	7068	143	17549
	Castrated	483	5663	737
1987-88	Treated	24852	15370	14123
	Vaccinated	17548	2085	14100
	Castrated	810	3182	534
1989	Treated	5038	32717	20822
	Vaccinated	55426	43062	23742
	Castrated	343	5273	7309
1990	Treated	19053	23452	21897
	Vaccinated	8867	21568	3281
	Castrated	595	1242	6260

1. Source: Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1991, P.58.

Source: 2. (a) Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 81-82. (b) Statistical Abstract, Arunachal Pradesh, 1984-1986. (c) Statistical Pocket Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1986 (d) Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1989-1990.

Fishery

Watered by innumerable streams and rivers, all the three districts of Tawang, West Kameng and East Kameng offer ample scope for fishery developments. The riverine tracts are good grounds for the trout culture to flourish. There are natural lakes in the highlands of Tawang, which are congenial for cold water species. East and West Kameng have also number of natural lakes. Fishery development programmes are taken up in East Kameng in 1971-72. A remarkable progress has been achieved since then.

The programme for development of pisciculture in the Tawang District extends up to an upper regional height of 3353 metres. The local people have adopted the modern methods of fish farming. In the West Kameng District with many creeks and canals besides rivulets and lakes, the prospects of fishery development for both cold and warm water species are bright. Fishing in Arunachal Pradesh is something more than a search for food. It is associated with ceremonial rites and taboos. In the East Kameng District, the people have various devices sometimes lethal and harmful to catch fish.

In 1966-67, a scheme for trout culture to propagate brown trout with the consignment of eyed ova imported from Jammu and Kashmir was undertaken for implementation. The long range objective of the scheme was to raise a parent stock of this species in the small hatchery at Nuranang situated at an altitude of 3353 metres in the Sela pass region. The scheme is reported to have got under way. Trout seeds from this region have been sent to the nearby States of Meghalaya and Nagaland. Construction of another trout hatchery in Tawang is in progress. A trout hatchery set up at Shergaon in West Kameng in 1980 is provided with modern equipments.

Fish is important to the people as an item of food, and even the local Buddhists are fond of it. Considering the value of fish in the life of the people, a fish farmer's participation programme was drawn up. This has been an ongoing programme under which 50 per cent subsidy is provided to the farmers and the other 50 per cent is contributed by them in the shape of labour. The progress of the programme achieved till October 1985 is remarkable. In the Tawang region 71 domestic fish ponds covering an area of about four hectares have been constructed. The yield of fish per hectare is 800 kg from common carp. The farmers have been getting remunerative prices against their investments towards inputs of Rs. 50 to Rs 100 per annum. In West Kameng, the 50 per cent subsidy for construction of domestic fish ponds and commercial farms to the extent of Rs.10,000 has been provided to the farmers. Altogether 118 ponds occupying an area of 5.41 hectares have been constructed. The yield of fish per hectare is the same 800 kg as in Tawang from monoculture of common carp and 1500 kg from polyculture of a variety of fishes. In East Kameng, 60 domestic fish ponds, eight commercial fish farms and four *beels* covering an area of 15.57 hectares have either been constructed or developed.

The essential prerequisite for fish farming is the fish seed. To meet this requirement, the following fish seed farms have been established.

District	Name of Farm	Area (in hectare)	Production
Tawang	Tawang Common Carp Nursery	0.15	About ten to twenty thousand advanced fingerlings are produced every year
West Kameng	Bomdila Fish Seed Nursery	0.05	Common carp
	Salari Fish Seed Nursery	0.03	Catla, rohu, mrigal and common carp
	Kalaktang Fish Seed Nursery	0.05	Common carp
	Seed Nursery		
East Kameng	Seppa Fish Seed Farm	0.45	Major and exotic carps
	Veo Fish Seed	0.85	- do -

About five hectares of agricultural land in the Dirang area of West Kameng has been brought under paddy-cum-fish Culture programme. Common carp is grown here together with paddy for a period of three months. The yield of fish per hectare is 150 to 200 kg. In East Kameng, 40 hectares of paddy fields are covered by this programme for common carp culture. The yield per hectare is 300 to 400 kg of fish.

In the upper reaches of Tawang, plenty of indigenous snow trout fishes is available. An admixture of cold and warm water strains is found in the middle stretch of river in West Kameng. Warm water fish species predominate in the lower region. The potentiality of capture fisheries in East Kameng is vast. Along the stretch of the Kameng river near Seppa there are a number of breeding grounds, which can be explored for catching of fish seeds. To discourage indiscriminate killing of fishes, modern gears and tackles of 50 per cent subsidy are supplied to the fish farmers for selective fishing.

The number of fish species collected and identified is five in Tawang, 92 in West Kameng and 57 in East Kameng.

FORESTRY**Forest Divisions and Forest Area**

There are eight forest divisions in these districts, of which four are territorial as follows.

District		Forest Division	Headquarter
East Kameng	(1)	Seppa Forest Division (territorial)	Seppa
	(2)	Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary Division	Seijosa
West Kameng	(1)	Khellong Forest Division (territorial)	Bhalukpung
	(2)	Bomdila Forest Division (territorial)	Bomdila
	(3)	Shergaon Forest Division (territorial)	Bhalukpung
	(4)	Northern Resources Survey Division (functional)	Kamengbari
	(5)	Orchid Research and Development Centre	Tipi
Tawang	(1)	Tawang Social Forestry Division	

The total forest area in the above-mentioned three districts is approximately 7,000 sq. km.

Number of Forest Divisions, Ranges and Beat Offices in West Kameng, East Kameng
and Tawang Districts during the period from 1984-85 to 1990-91

(in number)

Districts	Number of Forest Circle	Number of Forest Divisions	Number of Ranges	BEAT OFFICES		TOTAL
				Account Beats	Non-Account Beats	
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
<u>1984-85</u>						
West Kameng	—	5	17	10	30	40
East Kameng	—	2	2	—	10	10
Tawang	—	1	1	—	6	6
<u>1985-86</u>						
West Kameng	—	5	17	10	30	40
East Kameng	—	2	4	—	10	10
Tawang	—	1	1	—	6	6
<u>1986-87</u>						
West Kameng	—	5	17	10	30	40
East Kameng	—	2	4	—	10	10
Tawang	—	1	1	—	6	6
<u>1987-88</u>						
West Kameng	—	5	17	10	30	40
East Kameng	—	2	4	—	10	10
Tawang	—	1	2	—	6	6
<u>1988-89</u>						
West Kameng	—	5	17	10	30	40
East Kameng	—	2	4	—	10	10
Tawang	—	1	2	—	6	6
<u>1989-90</u>						
West Kameng	—	5	17	10	30	40
East Kameng	—	2	4	—	10	10
Tawang	—	1	2	—	6	6
<u>1990-91</u>						
West Kameng	—	5	17	10	30	40
East Kameng	—	2	4	—	10	10
Tawang	—	1	2	—	—	—

Source : Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1986 to 1991.

Importance of Forestry in the Economy of the Districts

The economic importance of forestry in the life of the people of this region is enormous. Indeed, life in these hills without forests is inconceivable. The people are inextricably dependent on forests for their myriad vital needs. They derive from the forest timber, bamboo and cane for house-building and handicrafts, thatch for house-roofing, firewood etc. besides items of food. It is in the forests the *jhum* cultivation is practised, by which most of the people make their living. The importance of forests for soil conservation needs no emphasis. Repeated food production on a plot of *jhum-land* is possible because of the thick vegetative growth of the forests which retain the soil cover. Most of the revenue of the territory comes from the vast forest resources.

Forests provide necessary materials for wood-based industries. A number of small industrial units, such as saw mills, paper-making, cane and bamboo works and furniture making, based on forest produce have been set up in these districts. In fact, the economic development in this territory, particularly in the industrial sector, depends largely on forests.

Under the Arunachal Pradesh Anchal Forest Reserve (Constitution and Maintenance) Act, 1975 (Act No. 1 of 1976) as amended under Act No.3 of 1981, the Anchal Samiti shall utilise fifty per cent of their share of forest revenue for rural development.

Collection of resin from the pine trees has become a gainful economic activity of the people living in the upper regions.

Forest Produce and their Value

Forest produce comprises many useful items which are classified under two categories—major and minor. The following table indicates the produce extracted from the forests in the three districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang, their quantity and value, during the year 1983-84.

Sl. No.	Item	Unit	Quantity	Value (Rs. in thousand)
Major Items				
1.	Timber	cubic metre	15240	5968.16
2.	Firewood	ton	4138	156.21
3.	Charcoal	quintal	169	13.00
Minor Items				
1.	Post and Pole	number	4622	56.58
2.	Bamboo	number	69683	11.70
3.	Cane	cap	410083	179.89
4.	Sand	cubic metre	2110	11.75
5.	Boulder	cubic metre	18046	185.08
6.	Shingles, and gravels	cubic metre	3460	23.20
7.	Earth and clay	cubic metre	273	1.35
8.	Thatch	bundle	12810	0.40
9.	Gun and resin	litre	150000	48.94
10.	Hay & grass	quintal	50	0.76
11.	Other items	—	—	60.04
			Total	6717.06

Timber is supplied to the Indian Railways to meet its demand for sleepers. The following table indicates the number of sleepers (in pieces) supplied from the forests of these district.¹

Year	Broad Gauge	Metre Gauge	Total
1979-80	3826	5184	9010
1981-82	1481	1412	2893
1983-84	—	—	7200

Forest Revenue

The forest revenue earned from the forest divisions of these districts during a period of three years from 1982-83 to 1984-85 amounted to a total of Rs. 1,77,00,420 as follows.²

East Kameng	—	Rs. 9,75,710
West Kameng and Tawang		<u>Rs. 1,67,24,710</u>

Total Rs. 1,77,00,420

Measures to Secure Scientific Exploitation and Development of Forests

Out of the total estimated forest area of 7,000 sq. km in these districts, an area of only 2953.10 sq. km has been brought under the purview of scientific management and development till the month of May 1985. Working plans have also been drawn up for these reserved forests, which aim at development of forestry on scientific lines with special emphasis on aided natural regeneration and plantation of indigenous species without disturbing the existing forests as well as decking of denuded areas with trees. Scientific exploitation of the remaining 'Unclassed State Forest' area of over 4,000 sq.km is yet to be planned. However, steps have been taken to apply scientific methods and techniques to the management of this forest area as well. In the unreserve forests in the Nafra region of the West Kameng District, for example, tapping of resin from the chirpine trees by scientific means as allowed has produced very satisfactory results. Extraction of timber is also similarly allowed on a restricted scale.

The forest resources survey wing of the Forest Department has carried out a survey of the resources in the Unclassed State Forests so as to ensure better management of these forests. The department has also been making endeavours for improvement and development of forests in Arunachal Pradesh on a scientific basis through execution of various schemes, such as afforestation, aided natural regeneration, raising of valuable plantations, construction of forest roads, forest research and social forestry. The plantation schemes comprises in general, regeneration of economically important species like hollock, hollong, mekai, teak, simul etc. Under the afforestation scheme, pine plantations are raised in degraded forest areas and abandoned *jhum* lands.

1. Source (a) Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1979-80 and 1981-92.

(b) Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh 1983-84.

2. See Chapter IX for details under the sub-head Forest.

CHAPTER V

INDUSTRIES

Inaccessibility of the area, the erstwhile isolation of the tribal people; lack of road communication, transport and market facilities, a low level of technical development and dearth of skilled labour were some of the major constraints on the growth of modern industries in this region. Before independence, no administrative effort was made for economic developments, and the people lived in a state of abject poverty and utter neglect. They depended almost entirely on jhum cultivation for subsistence. Agriculture being the mainstay of the people, the other productive activities were subsidiary to it. Their industrial enterprises were confined to production of articles meant chiefly for their own use. Besides handloom and handicrafts, there was no medium or even small-scale industries prior to 1947. The little surplus goods that were produced were exchanged for other bare necessities, and the transaction was carried on by barter. Money was seldom used in these transactions, monetisation of the local economy was a post-independence development. There was not enough incentive for trade to flourish and expand beyond certain fixed limits and a few market places. Moreover, journey from one area to another in this frontier region was often perilous, and the traders had no free passage. The tribal economy based on subsistence cultivation, stock-breeding and traditional cottage industries suffered a long stagnation with the result that the living standard of the people remained changelessly low. Under such stringent conditions, the industrial backwardness of the territory continued to exist in spite of its vast natural resources.

But, the tribal people by their own genius and with aid of simple tools had raised their own arts and crafts of weaving, carpet-making, basketry, cane and bamboo work, wood-carving and other handicrafts to a high degree of perfection. The plan for development of the present-day cottage industries aims at promoting these traditional tribal arts and crafts.

COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

The tribes inhabiting the East and West Kameng and Tawang districts belong to diverse cultural and ethnic traditions. The Monpas and Sherdukpens are Buddhist by religion. Woodcarving, making of masks and images and carpet-making are the distinctive features of their crafts. The Mijis, Akas and Khowas (Buguns) have come under their influence to some extent. But the Bangnis of East Kameng have a completely different tradition. They are ethnically the same as the Nishis of Subansiri. Cane and bamboo work and weaving are the special traits of their culture. But wood-carving is not familiar with them. The cultural divergences of the tribes are clearly discernible in the products of their arts and crafts.

Weaving

Verrier Elwin writing in the fifties observed that 'the chief art of NEFA is weaving

and it is on the hand-loom that the greatest progress has been achieved.' Weaving is particularly important to the tribal people, for it meets their essential requirements of cloth—items of dress, bag etc. Their looms are small, simple and portable, generally a single heddle tension or loin-loom, which can be easily operated. Weaving in this area is done almost exclusively by women and it is an indispensable part of their days work. Girls in the house are trained in the art of weaving. They learn the art as they grow and thus it is handed down from generation to generation.

"Monpa women weave in wool, cotton and bark-fibre. They shear their sheep three times a year and do the washing and combing as well as the spinning and weaving of the yarn themselves. Both Monpas and Sherdukpens extract fibre from the *Rhea nivea* and other plants, and obtain cotton yarn from the plains. They have their own dyes which give them black and various shades of red and yellow. Their main products are sashes, shawls, the *bogres* used as a sort of knapsack, a wide variety of bags, coats and tapes for tying round hats or securing boots."¹

The Monpas and Sherdukpens make beautifully designed textile bags in combination of various colours—red, yellow, white, black and green.

"The Sherdukpen women are skilful weavers. There is no fixed place for weaving, nor are fixed structures required, for their loom is simple, light and portable. The articles woven are mainly attractive coloured bags with geometrical designs and rectangular pieces of cloth called *bogre* which are used for carrying things.

"The yarn is obtained from the plains or is manufactured locally from the bark of plants known as *hongchong* and *hongche*. The local yarn prepared from *hongche* is strong and is used for making fishing nets and bow-strings. The bark of *hongchong* is poisonous, and as such, women cover their hands with cloth when removing the bark which is then soaked in boiling water, and washed several times till it decomposes and becomes pulpy. The fibre is then extracted and, after drying, is spun with the help of a bamboo spindle and fly-wheel.

"The *bogre*, which is characteristic of the Sherdukpen area, has invariably a Swastika² figure in the centre around which are woven variegated patterns such as the eyes of yaks or pigeons, face of a sheep, and Tibetan flags. Sometimes, scenes of arrow-shooting or pictures of flowers, leaves or trees are also woven. The borders of the cloth are usually multicoloured.

"The bags are of different designs, and are accordingly known by different names; for instance, *sit-man daon* has a design of seven vertical lines, and *daon-dhum dham* has horizontal patterns."³

The Akas do little weaving, and it is limited to the making of colourful bags by the women of Jamiri and Hushigaon villages. The Mijis also hardly do any weaving.

1. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), pp.68-69.

2. This is a common symbol of luck among the Buddhist people.

3. R.R.P. Sharma, *The Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1961), pp.22-24.

Among the Bangnis, there has been a revival of the art of weaving, which previously suffered a decline. The fabrics they make are, however, not adequate to meet their requirements.

The Sulungs are not very skilled in weaving. They weave some kinds of coarse cloths for garments. The thread is obtained by them from fibres of a shrubby nettle plant called *hyek*. The Sulungs women make yarn for the Bangnis as well.

Carpet-making

The Monpas are adept in the craft of carpet-making. The carpets and mats woven in Tawang, Bomdila and other places of West Kameng are in great demand for their artistic beauty, lovely designs and elegant soft texture.

Wood Carving

The Monpas as also the Sherdukpens have a tradition of wood-carving. Their best work in wood is in the carving of bowls, cups, dishes, candle-stand, flower-vase and things like that, which are often painted with beautiful designs. Maskmaking is an important aspect of this craft. Wonderful masks are carved for use in ceremonial dances. "An important stimulus to artistic creation is found in the Sherdukpens, Khamba and Monpa dances or pantomimes. These require ornate dresses and ornaments and a large number of masks, some of which are so natural that they appear almost like real faces, while others represent birds and animals..."¹ The wooden images of Lord Buddha are made by Monpa artists. The masks are carved from single blocks of wood hollowed out inside, holes are usually made for eyes and mouths and most of the masks are painted.

Both the Monpas and Sherdukpens are good carpenters. They cut wood into planks and make fairly good doors, windows shelves, boxes, stools and tables.

Work in Cane and Bamboo and Basketry

A striking feature of the culture of a large number of non-Buddhist tribes settled over a vast area stretching from the eastern part of West Kameng district to Lohit district, which is described as the central cultural area of Arunachal Pradesh is the prominence of cane and bamboo craft and the absence of wood-carving or mask-making. Cane and bamboo grown abundantly in their area is utilised to the fullest extent for many important and productive purposes ranging from house-building to basketry. Even magnificent suspension bridges were made with these materials. But, wood is little used. "Indeed, they have in the past done very little work in wood at all—wood, says Dunbar, 'although their country is almost invisible for the trees, they will have none of'—and the chief defect of their otherwise attractive houses is that they seem to have no idea how to make a floor. You may sometimes find rough doors and walls of undressed planks, but there is none of the elaborate wood-work of the other areas."² The technical skill, artistic ingenuity and creative urge of the people here are expressed profusely through their fine work in cane and bamboo, which appears to be an indispensable part of their way of living.

The Bangnis of East Kameng like other tribes of the central area are greatly attached to the cane and bamboo craft. Most of their household articles are the products of this

1. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), pp.70-71.

2. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), pp.101-102.

craft. Their houses, granaries and huts are essentially cane and bamboo structures. Articles of daily use, namely spoons, plates mugs, smoking pipe, tongs etc. are made of bamboo. Besides handles of *dao*, spade and axe, bamboo is also used for making weapons, such as bows, arrows, quivers and spears. Bamboo tubes are used for fetching water. Bangni men wear a type of cane hat called *bopa*, which is sometimes decorated with feathers of birds or beak of hornbill. Bands of woven cane known as *lakang* are worn by women round the ankle.

The Akas have considerable skill in the art of basketry. Thin pieces of bamboo are intertwined to make baskets of different shapes and sizes. A common type of basket is known as *mou*. Another type is called *biu*, which is used by women for storing corn or seed. A different type of basket used for fishing is named *gizu*. Bamboo jars and pots are made for domestic use. The akas also make cane baskets, the most common being *schri* meant for carrying food during journey.

Besides these, other artefacts of the Akas, made of bamboo are combs, ear-plugs, bangles and weaving implements, which are decorated with poker-work designs. Cane bottle with rectangular base and head gear of finely knitted cane are also remarkable.

The Monpas and Sherdukpens make a fine use of cane and bamboo. Their art of basketry is splendid. They make different kinds of baskets, of which those for carrying water and other articles, beer container, storage baskets with lids are excellent artefacts. Their bottles of cane lined with rubber for water and liquor and cane tray are also of high workmanship. A rare type of beautiful carrying basket of the Monpas is called *banchung*, which is made with painted cane strips to produce a variety of colourful patterns. Many useful articles for household purposes, such as mats, mugs, jars, vessels, containers, winnowing fans etc. of various shapes and sizes, are made from cane and bamboo. *Tambo* is an excellent leak-proof receptacle made by the Sherdukpens. The weaving of the *Tambo* is so compact that it resembles a rough handloom cloth.

The Sulungs are expert basket-makers. Their baskets, mostly conical in shape, are meant for carrying as well as string. Food-grains are stored in a coarsely woven big basket-bin. Other remarkable products of the cane and bamboo work are mats woven in chequered pattern, winnowing fans, earlobes, combs with poker-work designs and tobacco pipes. Bamboo wattles are used for making walls and floors. These apart, cane and bamboo are used for making bow-shafts, arrows, quivers, spears, sheaths of daos and knives etc. Fillets and helmets are also made of cane.

Smithery

Blacksmiths in this area as elsewhere is an exclusive craft, confined generally to certain families or villages as hereditary occupation. Among the Monpas, for example, some itinerant blacksmiths from the north used to come down to the south to do the work. The Monpas of Dirang seem to have a dependence on them for articles of iron they needed. The Sherdukpens of Jigaon village are, however, known for their skill in smithery. They make daos, knives, hatchets and sickles with iron imported from the plains. Pig iron and scrap are used. The anvil is either of iron or stone. The Bangnis have also skilled blacksmiths among them, who produce essential iron tools and implements. The Sulungs learnt this

craft from the Bangnis, and now they forge iron brought from Assam to make knife, hammer, felling axe, dao, spear-heads and arrow-heads.

Silversmithy among the Monpas is a fine art, though they do not do much work in silver. Monpa ornaments of silver are surprisingly beautiful. Their silversmiths are also proficient in making various other articles such as spoons, candle-stand, ash tray of brass, rings etc. which are of high artistic value. The Sherdukpens are fond of wearing silver ornaments—necklaces, bangles, bracelets etc, but this craft is apparently confined to a few silversmiths among them. The craftsmen among the Sulungs make brass ornaments, pipes and imitation sacred bells.

Paper-Making

Indigenous paper-making is a traditional craft with the Monpas. They obtain the pulp from what is known locally as the *sukso* or *Shung-sliang* meaning 'paper-tree'. Paper is produced through an elaborate processing of the pulp. Compared to mill-made paper, this paper is much cheaper and used by the local people for writing, painting and other purposes.

DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIES

Craft Centres

The first step taken by the government after independence towards industrial development of this area, where there was no mechanised industry until recently, was an endeavour to preserve, revitalise and promote the traditional village and cottage industries so that the beauty and wealth of tribal arts and crafts were not lost. With this aim in view, a number of craft centres and weaving units have been set up. The craft centres have two functional wings—training unit and production unit, which are concerned with various crafts, such as weaving, wood-carving, carpet-making, cane and bamboo work, smithery etc. Training in improved methods is imparted to the local artisans, both men and women. The object of the production unit is to manufacture articles primarily to meet the local requirements and provide adequate jobs to the successful trainees.

Some of the tribal crafts, weaving in particular, may suffer a gradual decay unless they are protected against the impact of current economic and industrial developments. The mill made cloths are popular today. Fly-shuttle loom has been introduced in the craft centres to increase their efficiency and productivity. But, it has been suggested that application of modern techniques, installation of power looms and wider markets are necessary for the growth and further development of the cottage industries. Of late, there has been a considerable growth of internal market. External market facilities are also being extended. Emporiums have been set up at the district headquarters and outside. Articles produced in the craft centres are sold through the emporiums and show-rooms.

In the year 1983-84, there were four craft centres and five weaving units in the districts of East and West Kameng and Tawang. In that year the total value of the annual output of these centres was Rs. 2,59,000 and the total annual sale proceeds of the emporiums and show-rooms was Rs. 3,16,000.

Power

The rich hydel resources of those districts are being increasingly harnessed for power generation. Five microhydel stations were operating in March 1983 and their combined installed capacity at that time was 3,710 kw. Power is also available from the diesel generating sets having a total installed capacity of 312 kw in March 1983.

The progress achieved in the field of rural electrification is remarkable. By March 1983, altogether 142 villages-124 in West Kameng including Tawang and 18 in East Kameng were electrified.

Small-Scale Industries

The districts had, as mentioned earlier, no modern industry of any size before independence. Lack of infrastructural facilities, such as power, roads, entrepreneurial and technological know-how as well as knowledge of production techniques, have for a long time acted as deterrents to industrial development of this area. This apart, industrialisation of a difficult mountainous terrain with a low manpower and dearth of labour, skilled and unskilled, is evidently an uphill task. In view of the objective conditions peculiar to this area, the development programmes, drawn up in a phased manner, aim at building an infrastructure to boost the growth of modern industries larger than indigenous crafts so as to initiate the process of industrialisation.

A considerable progress towards establishment of small scale industrial units has been achieved. Altogether 138 such units in the districts were registered till February 1985 as follows:

District	Number of Small Industrial Units	Number of Persons Employed
East Kameng	40	160
West Kameng	69	385
Tawang	29	47
Total	138	592

Some of the important types of small industries are the following:

Type of Industries	Number
1. Rice Mill	1
2. Flour Mill	4
3. Saw Mill	8
4. Handloom / Weaving	16
5. Cane and Bamboo Works	8
6. Carpet-making	7
7. Candle / Soap manufacturing	4
8. Paper-making	3
9. Steel fabrication	3
10. Metal works	5
11. Electrical works	2
12. Agricultural and other implements manufacturing	7
13. Wooden furniture-making	15
14. Printing press	2
15. Bakery	7

Also see Appendix I at the end of the Chapter.

Industrial Development and Financial Corporation

The Arunachal Pradesh Industrial Development and Financial Corporation Ltd., Itanagar was formed in 1978 in order to co-ordinate, guide and assist the industries in various fields of production. The corporation has taken up the following schemes:

- 1) Procurement of raw-materials,
- 2) Assistance of entrepreneurs and services to the existing small scale industrial units,
- 3) Grant of industrial loans and subsidised loans and
- 4) Training to be imparted to the artisans and entrepreneurs.

The corporation is to bring all small and medium industries under its control and provide them necessary assistance. It was also decided to place all production units of the craft centres under its guidance.

A preliminary study of the resources available for utilisation by various industries has been made. This would provide a basis for industrial planning. Besides the extensive forest resources, the area is also rich in mineral deposits and hydel potential. Vast deposit of dolomite exists at Rupa in the West Kameng District. Occurrences of coal, quartzite, limestone, iron ores have also been reported.

Technical education and training facilities in various trades are imparted in the Industrial Training Institute at Roing in the Dibang Valley District. There are several industrial estates in Arunachal Pradesh today and one such estate at Tawang is being set up. District Industries Centres have been opened at Bomdila, Tawang and Seppa. These centres provide necessary assistance and guidance for development of village and small-scale industries.

The Arunachal Pradesh Industrial Development and Financial Corporation offers enough incentives to industrial enterprises to help them grow. The incentives are, among other things the following:

- 1) No registration fee is charged for small-scale industrial units.
- 2) Sheds in the industrial estates are allotted to the local entrepreneurs at concessional rent.
- 3) Government land for establishment of industries is allotted to industrial units on lease at nominal rent.
- 4) Facilities for training in management and other subjects in different institutions are provided to the entrepreneurs at government expense.
- 5) Stipend and hostel facilities are granted to enterprising local youths for training in the craft centres as well as the Industrial Training Institute at Roing.
- 6) 25 per cent central investment subsidy and 75 per cent transport subsidy are provided to the industrial units
- 7) Under the IDBI Refinance Scheme industrial loan is granted to the deserving industrialists for setting up small-scale and other industrial units.
- 8) Financial aid by way of margin/seed money to the entrepreneurs is granted to enable them to obtain assistance from banks and financial institutions to set up industries.
- 9) Scarce and indigenous raw materials are procured to feed the village and small scale industrial units.

In addition to the above facilities and concessions, the industrial units are given liberal subsidies on the cost of power supply, purchase of captive diesel sets, construction of residential quarters for workers and staff, preparation of feasibility report etc. No sales tax is levied.

District Industries Centre

A District Industries Centre has been set up at Bomdila. There are two sub-District Industries Centre, one at Tawang and the other at Seppa. These centres provide guidance and assistance to small-scale and village industries.

Sericulture

The climate of Arunachal Pradesh as a whole is congenial to varieties of serigeneous insects, namely eri, *philosamia ricini*, mulberry silk worm *bomby mori*, muga *antheraea assama* and oak tasar silk worm *antheraea proyelei*, and their corresponding food plants. Sericulture is an important village industry of the people which help them to promote the rural economy and their living conditions. Quite a number of people inhabiting the lower belt adjoining Assam are eri rearers. Rearing of other varieties of silk worms, such as mulberry and muga, is somewhat new to the local people. Culture of these varieties has been taken up in some selected areas where the climate is favourable and the people are interested in it.

Eri culture is practised as a subsidiary occupation. Rearing of eri worms is done mainly on the leaves of castor (*ricinus communis*), *kecheru* (*heteropanax fragrant*) and *barpat*, a kind of *ailanthus*. There is an Eri Seed Production Unit in Seppa for supply of disease-free eri seeds to the village rearers. *Jakli* and common charkhas (spinning wheels) are used for production of yarn from cocoons.

Oak tasar centre have been opened at Dirang and Jerigaon in the West Kameng District for development of oak tasar culture in this region. The local people have enthusiastically participated in this endeavour. Tasar silk worms are reared in indigenous oak plants. Establishment of a oak plant nursery at Jerigaon is under way. Sponsored by the Central Silk Board, a research and extension centre for oak tasar has also been set up at Dirang.

Details of Industries in West Kameng, East Kameng and Tawang Districts during the years 1986-87 to 1990-91

Particulars	Unit	1986-87			1987-88			1988-89			1989-1990			1990-1991		
		West Kameng	East Kameng	Tawang	West Kameng	East Kameng	Tawang	West Kameng	East Kameng	Tawang	West Kameng	East Kameng	Tawang	West Kameng	East Kameng	Tawang
1. Craft Centre / Weaving unit/ Knitting unit	Nos	2	6	2	2	6	2	2	6	2	2	6	2	3	7	2
2. Annual Out turn of different craft centre	'000 Rs	193	72	130	161	56	131	154	50	215	217	51	224			
3. Annual sale proceeds of Emporium and showroom cum sale counters	'000 Rs	NA	NA	NA	150	76	145	175	50	188	205	54	190	283	72	371
4. Sericulture Demonstration Centre	Nos.	4	1	—	3	1	—	4	1	—	4	1	—			
5. Medium Industries	Nos	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—			
6. Village and Small scale Industries	Nos.	206	48	12	232	56	22	126	50	65	128	51	67	189	42	67
7. Rural Industries Project / District Industries Centre	Nos	1	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
8. Sericulture Scheme under N E C	Nos	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
9. Weaving unit	Nos.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	5	6	2	6	3

Source:- Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh 1987 to 1991.

CHAPTER VI

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

Banking

In former times, business transactions in this area were carried through barter, whereby goods were exchanged according to their necessity rather than value. Money was not commonly used as medium except occasionally. The process of monetisation began after independence, when a new administration pledged to bring about an all round development and social welfare was established and its activities spread out rapidly over the whole area. Remarkable changes have taken place since then. Money is now earned by the local people through their association with government services, development projects, industrial and commercial enterprises and other productive activities. The economic progress that has been achieved has brought about a better living standard and created conditions favourable for savings and investment leading to growth of banking.

Since 1970 when there was only one bank opened by the State Bank of India at Naharlagun in the Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh, banking facilities have been extended to all the district and sub-divisional headquarters and also to some other important interior places of the Pradesh. There had been over some years past a rapid expansion of banking activities in this Union Territory. By the month of March 1984, the State Bank of India had opened a number of branches in the districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang. The particulars of these banks are as follows:¹

Particulars	East Kameng	West Kameng and Tawang
Number of Banks	1	7
Bank Deposits (Rs in lakh)	66	374
Bank Advances/ Loan Granted (Rs in lakh)	4	32

The volume of deposits and advances has increased considerably in the recent years. Loans and advances granted by the State Bank of India comprise various sectors of economy, such as agriculture, road and water transport, retail trade and small business and professional or self employees. In May 1985, the State Bank of India has opened a new branch at Jang in the Tawang District.

During 1990-91 there were seven branches of State Bank of India in West Kameng, two in East Kameng and three in Tawang district respectively²

Besides the banks, the post offices provide savings facilities for small savings. In the year 1983-84, there were forty post offices in these three districts. With the increasing number of post offices, the amount of postal saving deposits and postal remittances has risen.

1. Source : Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh, 1983-84.

2. Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1991.

It may be noted that the progressive trend of deposits is indicative of a gradual awareness of the people about the benefits of small savings.

Early Trade Relations

There were trade and caravan routes suitable for pack-animals, which linked the present West Kameng and Tawang districts with Tibet as well as the plains of Assam. In early times, a regular trade was carried on along these trans-Himalayan routes. Loads of goods were brought annually by the traders of Assam and Tibet to some established marts. The goods from Assam were rice, coarse silk, iron, lac, skins, buffalo horns, pearls, and corals (first imported from Bengal). The imports from Tibet were, among other things, woollens, gold dust, salt, musk, horses *chowries* and Chinese silks. In 1809, the trade amounted in value to two lakhs of rupees, despite the fact that Assam was then in a state of turmoil. The continued disturbances and disorder in Assam in the early nineteenth century had eventually affected the trade, but even in the year before the Burmese invasion of Assam (1816-24), the merchants from Lhasa were said to have brought down gold amounting in value to Rs. 70,000. The annual fair came to a stop for a time due to the Burmese occupation.

In 1833, a successful attempt was made by Lt. Rutherford, who was then in charge of Darrang in Assam, to revive the trade. The principal channel of this trade was the Keriapara *duar* or pass. An annual fair was then held at Udalguri in the Darrang District, where traders from Lhasa and all other parts of Tibet used to come in large numbers with their ponies carrying goods.

In the past, the Monpas had a flourishing trade with Tibet. Along the trans-Himalayan trade routes, religious and cultural elements of Tibet percolated into Tawang and West Kameng inhabited by the Monpas. The influence of Tibet and Bhutan is clearly noticeable in the Monpa textiles and ornaments, architecture and iconography.

The Monpas of Tawang are keen traders. Apart from Tibet, they also traded with Bhutan and the Dirang region of West Kameng. They attend the annual Udalguri fair, and some of them even go, it is said, as far as Calcutta to sell their goods consisting of musk, blankets, walnut etc., and purchase clothes, umbrella, aluminium utensils and other essential articles of daily use.

The Monpas of Dirang traded with their neighbours, the Tawang Monpas to the north, the Mijis to the east, the Sherdukpens to the south and the Bhutias to the west. They had also a barter trade with Assam. They exchanged with the plains people their cows, horses, goats, blankets and chillies for metal-utensils eri-cloth, thread etc.

The Akas purchased from Bhutan clothes, warm blankets, *daos*, swords and silver ornaments. Rupees they earned by selling rubber in the plains of Assam were given in exchange.

The Akas and Sherdukpens have, for generations, traded with the plains of Assam. The Akas procured from Assam iron, salt, cotton and silk. "In their trade with the people in the plains, they have to deal essentially in cash. The occasions for the latter kind of trade arise only when they go down to the plains and when they take the local produce, in which fowls figure prominently, for sale there. With the money they get in return for their commodities, they usually purchase things of their necessity like cloth, silver ornaments and utensils. Their trade with the plains has introduced good deal of currency among them.

1. Raghuvir Sinha, The Akas, (Shillong, 1962), pp.48-49/c

It has, however, neither affected their inter-village trade nor their indigenous barter¹. The Akas exchanged goods by barter in their inter-village trade and also in trading with the neighbouring Bangnis. For the purpose of trade with Assam, the Akas have been traditionally following the common route from their village Jamiri to Bhalukpong which is connected by road with Charduar.

"In the old days the Sherdukpens played an important role in the trade between Tibet and Assam, but recent political events have deprived them of their role as middle-men in this trade, though they continue to have some trading relations with both Tawang and Assam. In Assam they sell chillies, oilseeds and radishes, and buy rice and cloth. They sometimes sell ponies to Monpas of Tawang and maintain a cattle trade with Bhutan. They buy crossbreeds between mithan and ordinary cattle from the Bangnis of the Seppa area and sell some of these to Bhutan¹.

The Sherdukpens are good businessmen. Like the Monpas, they have a tradition of continued involvement in long distance trade. They come down to Doimara in the foothills every winter to trade with the plains. The commodities they sell are cattle, poultry, chillies, dried radish, the *jabran* spice, *daos* and woven bags. From the markets there they buy *endi* silk, mill-made cloth, salt, rice, beads bangles and cooking utensils made of metal.

"With the Hrussos (Akas), they exchange cows for mithuns which they sell to the Monpas and the Bhutanese at a good profit. With the Buguns (Khawas) they exchange cloth, salt, betel-nut and pine-resin. From the Monpas, they get butter, coats, shoes, carpets, saddle bags, blankets, masks and yak caps in exchange for horses, cows *endi* cloth and animal skins.

Trade is partly by barter and partly in cash, the main source of cash income being payments received from the Government for portorage and development works."²

The Sulungs are said to have had no idea of trade. But in the olden days they occasionally visited the Mago area in Tawang for obtaining salt from the Monpas in exchange for chillies, musk and hides which they offered. The Bangnis procured salt from them and bartered *daos* and rice. The Sulungs also used to go to Tibet for salt, spears, beads and other necessities.

Trade Centres

Udalguri, a railway station in the Darrang District of Assam, about 32 km north of Mangaldai, was a famous trade centre. During the 19th century, a grand fair was held annually at this place which was attended by traders from various tribal communities, namely the Monpas, Akas, Nishis and others for commercial transactions. Caravans of traders from even remote Tibet, as already stated, brought down yearly their valuable merchandise to the fair. The Bhutias also came to Udalguri in batches along the Doimara - Amtola - Bhairabkunda route. The imports from Bhutan were, among other things, cattle, sheep, ponies, musk, woollen blankets etc. Rubber was brought by the Akas and Nishis. In 1876 about 3,600 tribesmen were present at the Udalguri fair.

1. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), p.175.

2. R. R. P. Sharma, *The Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1961), pp.9-10.

Doimara in the foothill region of West Kameng District near the plains of Assam hums with a lot of activities in the winter when the Sherdukpens migrate to this place for several months every year and do a brisk trade. A large quantity of goods, as described earlier, are purchased and sold between them and the plains people of Assam.

Amartola or Amtola in the lower region of West Kameng District adjacent to Assam is another such trade centre where the Monpas from the Kalaktang area come down every winter for trade with the plains.

With the extension of administrative activities and development of road communications and transport, new markets have now been established in the interior of the districts. There are busy and flourishing markets with a good number of permanent shops at Bomdila, Tawang, Rupa and Seppa. Small marts have also sprung up at the sub-divisional headquarters and other places. These new markets provide facilities for sale and purchase of indigenous products as well as imported articles. Market facilities are being gradually extended to cover wide areas.

Development of Trade

Every tribe has a territory of its own, which is geographically demarcated and traditionally recognised. A variety of tribes have been living neighbourly in this region. In early times, they were more or less confined to their respective territorial limits, which they crossed only occasionally for the purpose of bartering their goods or for other emergent reasons. Customary restrictions on journeys for trade imposed sometimes by the tribes on outsiders were also a limiting factor. Movement in these hills was further restricted due to difficult terrain and lack of roads. The absence of money as medium of exchange and fixed barter rates commonly acceptable to all the tribes and other groups of people might also have impaired the trade relations. The prevailing conditions offered little scope for expansion and development of trade beyond bartering the bare necessities of life.

According to the barter system, price of an article exchange was usually determined by its immediate necessity rather than value. An article of higher value was at times exchanged for that of lower value. Questions of profit and loss were often ignored in barter transactions. The economic inter-dependence between one group of people and the other provided the incentive to exchange their articles at some conventional barter rates, but these rates were not all worth the values of articles.

The monetisation of tribal economy has of late brought about important changes and developments in trade relations. The tribal people had hitherto no clear idea of prices of commodities when they were in monetary ratings. It was difficult to market indigenous articles in the absence of fixed prices. The people are now well acquainted with monetary transactions, and have opportunities for investments of money for commercial and productive purposes. The trade divides have ended with the coming up of roads linking the interior parts of this region. Facilities for marketing and transportation of goods are now available. The introduction of metric system of weights and measures has also greatly facilitated trade and commercial relations.

The Government has taken various welfare and economic measures to raise the living standard of the tribal people and meet their essential needs. Licences and permits are issued to the local enterprising tribal businessmen. Loans and other assistance are also provided to them liberally. They do not have to face hard business competitions from outside. Enough protections have been given them under the provisions of the Regulation I of 1873. The

Inner Line restrictions enforced under this Regulation are to the effect that commercial investments in Arunachal Pradesh by traders from outside are not normally permissible except on a very limited scale. The intention of these restriction is to protect the tribal people from exploitation.

Trade and Business Establishments

In the 1971 Census, 327 trade or business establishments in the erstwhile Kameng district comprising the present East and West Kameng and Tawang districts were enumerated. "An establishment was defined as a place where goods were produced or manufactured not solely for domestic consumption, or where servicing and/or repairing was done as a factory, workshop or household industry, or a place where retail or wholesale business was carried on or commercial services were rendered, or an office, public or private, or a place of entertainment or where educational, religious, social or entertainment services were rendered. It was necessary that in all these places one or more persons were actually working. Thus, an establishment would cover manufacturing, trade and other establishments where people worked."¹

The following tables show the number and type of establishments in the erstwhile Kameng district.²

	Number	Percentage
Government or quasi-Government	362	42.9
Private	470	55.6
Co-operative	13	1.5
Total	845	100.0

	Manufacturing, Processing or Servicing Establishments	Trade or Business Establishment	Other Establishments	Total
Government or quasi-Government	12	25	325	362
Private	81	289	100	470
Co-operative	—	13	—	13
Total	93	327	425	845

The 'trade or business establishments' were categorised as follows

	Wholesale	Retail	Other	Total	Percentage
Government or quasi-Government	—	12	13	25	7.6
Private	—	241	48	289	88.4
Co-operative	—	13	—	13	4.0
Total	—	266	61	327	100.0

1. Census of India, 1971, Arunachal Pradesh, Part III, p.3.

2. Ibid, pp.11,12,52.

The above table shows that out of the total number of 327 'trade or business establishments' there was no wholesale business and 266 establishments were concerned with retail trade. The retail traders usually procure goods from the wholesale markets in Assam and through other trading agencies. The shops at various administrative headquarters get most of their food as well as non-food items from the nearby markets in Assam. Retail trade is carried on through these shops, which are mainly of the following types :

(i) grocery and stationery shops selling, among other things, rice, wheat and other cereals, pulses, mustard oil, kerosene, sugar, salt, spices, ghee, tea, beverages, tin-food, perfumes, cosmetics, utensils, torchlight, paper, ink, pen, pencil etc. Some shops keep footwears and leather goods as well;

(ii) cloth and hosiery shops storing all kinds of textiles-cotton and woollen;

(iii) *pan-biri* and cigarette shops, which are generally oneman establishments selling *pan* (betel-leaf), betel-nuts, biri, cigarettes, match box etc.;

(iv) fruit and vegetable shops;

(v) restaurant;

(vi) bakery and

(vii) medical stores.

Public Distribution System

A public distribution system has been working in Arunachal Pradesh for regular supply of essential commodities to all administrative centres by road and air transport. The commodities are procured through the Food Corporation of India and sold to the public at fair and reasonable prices. A number of fair price shops have been opened at various places, which are connected by road, for distribution of essential commodities. These shops are run either by the co-operative societies or private businessmen. The places having a fair price shop in these districts are Bomdila, Tawang, Dirang, Kalaktang, Nafra, Shergaon, Rupa, Jamiri, Sinchong, Bhalukpong, Seppa, Seijosa and some others.

To the remote and inaccessible areas having no road link for transportation, essential foodstuffs and other necessities are supplied by airdropping and distributed to the public through Central Purchase Organisation (C.P.O.) which is a government undertaking. The C.P.O. also supplies ration items to labourers engaged in construction and developmental works. The C.P.O. centres in these districts are Chayangtajo, Khenewa, Bameng, Pipu-Dipu, Pakke-Kessang, Lumla and some others.

Co-operation

Co-operation is the essence of tribal social relations. Tribes are generally organised in cohesive society based on kinship, where collective efforts are essential for survival and progress. Mutual help in primary needs, which is largely absent in urban societies, is a moral obligation for them. The corporate village life of the tribes of these districts is an expression of the principles of co-operation. Their *jhunn* cultivation is very much of a co-operative enterprise. Their house building, hunting and fishing expeditions are co-operative endeavours. Their socio-political institutions are democratic in the real sense of the term.

The co-operative movement in this region has made an appreciable progress since the seventies. Indeed, the co-operative spirit of the tribal people is an important factor of the success of this movement. They have come forward to associate themselves with the co-operative societies working in various fields of development so that urgent needs which cannot be satisfied by their individual efforts can be met through the co-operatives.

The co-operative movement in this region has a vital role to play in improving the socio-economic conditions. Its primary aim in the beginning was supply of consumer goods at cheaper rates and thus help the consumers. Consumer co-operative societies were at first established at different administrative centres. Since then the movement has spread out to cover other fields, such as transport, service, farming, labour, school, 'LAMP' and multipurpose etc. The 'LAMP' and multipurpose co-operative societies procure surplus agricultural produce from farmers on payment for marketing. These societies have successfully secured people's participation in the government endeavours to promote economic growth and commercial developments.

The type of the co-operative societies functioning in these districts as on March 31, 1982 were as follows:¹

Types	West Kameng including Tawang	East Kameng
1. Consumer Co-operative	8	2
2. 'LAMP' Co-operative	4	1
3. Multipurpose Co-operative	2	-
4. Transport Co-operative	1	-
5. Service Co-operative	1	-
6. Farming Co-operative	1	-
7. School Co-operative	2	-
8. Labour Co-operative	1	-
Total	20	3

Total number of various types of co-operative societies functioning in Tawang, West Kameng and East Kameng districts as on 31st March, 1991 are 4, 28 and 5 respectively.² The following table indicates the particulars of the co-operative societies functioning in the year 1983-84:³

Particulars	West Kameng Including Tawang	East Kameng	Total
1. Number of societies	21	4	25
2. Members	2,555	466	3,021
3. Working Capital (Rupees in thousand)	19,021	2,088	21,109
4. Share capital (Rupees in thousand)	936	133	1,069
5. Loans / Advance (Rupees in thousand)	1,419	239	1,658

1. Source : Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1981-82.

2. Source : Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1991.

3. Source : Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh, 1983-1984.

Weights and Measures

Old time practice: Formerly, business transactions in this area were carried out through barter or exchange of articles according to the needs of the people, as described earlier in detail, and for this purpose there were some conventional barter rates. The trade relations remained virtually unchanged until about 1947. After independence a wind of change began to blow over the whole area leading to many-sided developments and monetisation of tribal economy. The barter rates were gradually replaced by standard values in terms of money. The tribal people living near the plains were generally familiar with the systems of weights and measures followed in Assam. But the situation was different in the interior areas, where barter trade was carried on until recently, and may be in some remote isolated pockets and (in inter-village) trade it is still being practised.

Metric System: The metric system of weights and measures has been introduced in India in accordance with the standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1956. By this Act the old, diverse and bewildering methods and practices of weights and measures, which were in vogue, were sought to be replaced by a legal metrology to maintain uniformity and discipline in business and economic relations. In 1964, an unit of Weights and Measures was created in the Industries Department for implementation of the metric system in this territory as provided in the Act of 1956. On March 18, 1975 this unit became a full fledged department. In 1976, another Act was enforced to extend the application of the standards of weights and measures to cover a wider range of economic activities so as to regulate the inter-state trade and commerce as well as sale or distribution of goods by weights, measures or numbers; or any matter connected therewith or incidental thereto. The Packaged Commodities Rules of 1977 have also been brought into force in Arunachal Pradesh.

In pursuance of the Arunachal Pradesh Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act, 1979 and the Rules framed under the provisions of this Act, the Weights and Measures Department was renamed as the Department of Legal Metrology on September 21, 1982.

The enforcement of the metric system in the districts has been successful and beneficial in many ways. It has not only simplified the business transactions and facilitated fixation of the prices of commodities, but also secured consumers' protection to a great extent.

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNICATIONS

Old-time Trade Routes

Crossing the high hills and dense forests hordes of tribes came in waves to the area now known as Kameng and Tawang. They moved on until they eventually settled. This process of migration and movement continued over a long period of early history. The tracks opened by the forerunners in course of their movement were followed by successive generations. With the passage of time, the tribes established trade relations between themselves and also with the neighbouring Tibet, Bhutan and the plains of Assam. The traders, who themselves were pathfinders, must have used the old tracks as trade routes. No detailed account of these routes is available, but some of them are clearly traceable even to this day. In retrospect, the ventures of these traders appear to us to be as great as those of great explorers. The long-distance journeys undertaken by them against many hazards and without aids of regular road communications and other facilities are admirable indeed. Their trading ventures also paved the way for cultural intercourse between different groups of people.

The Monpas had a close trade relations with Tibet. Across the Himalayan trade routes used by the Monpas as well as the Tibetans from early times a brisk trade continued to flourish until the transborder movement was stopped in 1962. The annual trading caravans of the Tibetan merchants from Lhasa passed through the present Tawang and West Kameng districts on their way to Assam. On this trade route there was a place called 'Chouna,' two month's journey from Lhasa, where a mart was established. A similar corresponding mart in Assam was known as 'Geegunshur,' four miles away from 'Chouna.' "An annual caravan repairs from Lassa to Chouna, conducted by about 20 persons, conveying silver bullion to the amount of about one lakh of rupees, and a considerable quantity of rock salt for sale to the Assam merchants at Geegunshur, to which place the latter bring rice, which is imported into Thibet from Assam in large quantities..."¹ An account of this trade has been given in the preceding chapter. The annual Udalguri fair held during the last century was attended by traders from all parts of Tibet. By the Lhasa-Udalguri trade route they came in large numbers, many of them with families. They brought their goods on hundreds of sturdy ponies. The fair was also attended by the Bhutias, who came by the Doimara-Amtola-Bhairabkunda route.

There were a number of mountain *duars* or passes to the north of the present Darrang District of Assam, which led to Bhutan and the interior parts of West Kameng District. The trade between Assam and Tibet was channelised through these passes of which the Kuriapara *duar* was the principal channel.

The trade route to Assam, which the Akas have been following for a long time, is from their village Jamiri to Bhalukpong at the foothills—a point linked with Charduar in Darrang by road.

1. Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, (Reprinted, 1979), p.15.

This description of the trade given by Hamilton was reproduced by Mackenzie in his *History of the North-East Frontier of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1884).

The Sherdukpens living mainly in the two villages of Rupa and Shergaon in the Bomdila Sub-division undertake a winter voyage every year to Doimara at the foothills as already mentioned in the preceding chapter. There they stay for several months to trade with the plains people.

Communication in the British Days

Except for the old paths and beaten tracks there was no regular road communications in the region when the British annexed Assam in the first half of the nineteenth century. The existing routes were used by the people for inter-village or inter-tribal communications, trade and hunting or fishing expeditions. Many of these routes were mule paths or porter tracks, mostly seasonal.

These paths and tracks were followed by the British Officers in course of their tours, promenades and expeditions into the deep interior areas. They sometimes discovered unknown paths and some daring explorers among them seem to have even opened new paths. The British records contain valuable accounts of the early explorers and writers, who collected a wealth of information about the country and the people as well as the mode of transport and communications of those days. Indeed, their endeavours paved the way for future explorations and developments.

We find in Reverend C.H.Hesselmeyer's account (1868) the following description of some old routes leading to the Aka hills:

"Three to four days' climbing over thickly wooded hills, nearly pathless, stumbling up the dry bed of the Buruli and other less important watercourses, thickly strewn with large boulders, clambering up the steep faces of rocks, holding on by a cane-rope, bring the traveller to the small settlement of the Akas. The Miri elephant-hunters follow up the bed of the Buruli river, taking a small light boat along with them, which they lift over the waterfalls, and so reach the Aka country. There is, however, a better road but somewhat circuitous. This road takes the traveller first to Butan to the settlement of the Sat Rajas due north, after a march of about four days, and then goes on to the Aka country due east which you reach in another two days. This is a road which the Aka women and children, and their ponies travel.¹"

C.R.Macgregor wrote in 1884 about the bridges built by the Akas as follows:

"Bridges—These are of two kinds, viz., the cane cradle suspension and the *hako*. The former, which is used when the river is very deep and rapid, is formed by one or more long and strong canes, which are stretched from bank; they are attached at either end to a kind of scaffolding of bamboos, which is kept securely in position by the aid of large stones piled round it. If there is a convenient tree, one end of the cane is attached to it. Round the thick cane three or four thin cane loops are attached, and to this is fastened another cane, which is used as a pulley; the voyager seats himself in the cane loops, throws his head well back, grasps the cane above him, throws his legs over the cane, and allows himself to slide down the cane. Up to his arrival at the centre the work is easy, after that he has to haul himself uphill, using his hands and feet, his body being supported in the small cane loops. This is a very fatiguing process, and a severe strain on the muscles. When women and children are obliged to use the cradle bridge (and all must use it in the rains), they are hauled across by means of the pulley, and in this

1. Verrier Elwin, *India's North-East Frontier in Nineteenth Century*, (London, 1962), pp.437-438.

way nearly all the stores for the advanced party were crossed over the Maj-Bhoroli. A cradle basket capable of holding two maunds was constructed by one of the Survey Officers, and in this provisions and baggage were pulled across. The width of the River Maj-Bhoroli where the Aka cradle bridge is constructed is about 65 yards, and the water rushes below in a regular torrent. The other description of bridge is called by the Assamese a *hako* bridge; it is somewhat like a trestle bridge; the roadway is made of bamboos, and the whole structure, which is rather infirm, is tied together by cane lashings and creepers."¹

There was hardly any development of the existing communications or construction of new roads during the British rule. As the government endeavours were mainly directed towards exercising a political control over the area, the questions of law and order engaged most of their attention. But, the later British records dating particularly from the second decade of the present century are indicative of a closer contact with the tribal people, a better appreciation of their problems, the need for development of road communications and medical aids. The Chief Commissioner of Assam, it may be noted, wrote in 1914 that 'this frontier awaited a more advanced form of government for proper development'. In his Annual Administration Reports for 1924-25 and 1927-28, Captain Nevill, Political Officer, stressed the need for construction of the road in the Aka Hills and stated, "Good roads exist from Jamiri to Rupa and Shergaon, easy for ponies... The road to Jamiri is now under construction."²

Development of Communications

There was no motorable road in the three districts of East and West Kameng and Tawang before independence. Porter tracks, mule paths and cane or bamboo bridges were the only means of communications as well as transport. The economic backwardness of this region and the isolation of its people were evidently due mainly to the absence of regular road communications suitable for vehicular traffic. After 1947, it was keenly felt that no all-round development of this tribal area was possible without constructing a network of trunk and lateral roads and bridges to connect the deep interior parts of the districts. Such roads were also essential for an effective and efficient administration. With the expansion of administrative activities, the need for transportation of goods to the interior areas also assumed a great importance. The magnitude of the problems of supply and transport in a mountainous terrain where great distances were traversed on foot can well be imagined. To meet these problems, food and other necessities were supplied to the government servants by means of air-drops. A system of portage and animal transport for carrying of load and provisions was also introduced. But, it was not possible to meet the growing requirements of the administration and develop the area without road communications. Airdropping of supplies besides being extremely expensive had its limitations. It was, therefore, obvious that the problems could be solved only by constructing roads, a fact which received increasing emphasis under the development programmes taken up by the government in different phases since independence. As a matter of fact, high priority has been laid on roads in all the Five Year Plans of the territory since 1951.

But construction of roads in this rugged mountainous terrain having primeval forests, torrential rivers and heavy rainfall was not an easy task. It posed a great challenge to the engineers. The available man power and material resources were far from being sufficient for the purpose. Initial endeavours were, therefore, directed towards construction of bridle-paths and porter tracks.

1. Verrier Elwin, op.cit. pp. 452-453.

2. Sir Robert Reid, History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), pp.291-293.

As indicated earlier, there was no major road connections between the three districts and between them and the plains of Assam. Indeed, it was extremely difficult to construct roads through the formidable hills and mountains and make bridges over turbulent rivers. The rugged terrain shut this region from the outside world. The existing tracks and bridges were often effaced during the monsoon when the rivers rise in spate and river-banks are eroded in areas where the soil is soft and unstable.

An infrastructure of communications is vital for development of any area. Therefore, despite great difficulties and natural obstacles, the task of road building was undertaken in the fifties with great zeal and determination. A remarkable network of bridle-paths and foot-tracks over an wide area of the interior was constructed. Considerable progress was also achieved in building of major roads. At this time Dr Elwin made an observation that the road to Bomdila, the headquarters of the present West Kameng District, at a height of 9,000 feet, would, when complete, be one of the great roads of India, a marvel of engineering skill.

Late D. Ering, the then Union Deputy Minister, who was from Siang, wrote on this phase of road construction in the erstwhile NEFA as follows :

“Road building in NEFA has made commendable progress in the last six years. All the five district headquarters are connected by black-top roads, so also three sub-divisional headquarters. One is connected presently by a rail-cum-road link with Assam on the north bank of Brahmaputra. A number of lateral roads have been completed and more are under construction. A lion's share of this contribution to NEFA is of the Border Roads Organisation. The CPWD too with their small resources has contributed to the development of roads. They have very rightly given priority to road building over building construction in their plan of work in NEFA. Communication with the rest of the country will go a long way in the development of this strategic border area, where the pace of development in the present situation has to be fast enough.”¹

A major break-through in the work for connecting the remote interior areas by construction of good road was achieved after 1962. This has been due to the sustained efforts of the Border Road Development Board (BRDB).

Besides the headquarters of the three districts at Bomdila, Tawang and Seppa, which are all connected by major roads, most of the sub-divisional and circle headquarters, namely Kalaktang, Dirang, Bhalukpong, Nafra, Thrizino, Mukto, Lumla, Seijosa and Bameng as well as the important villages of Jamiri and Rupa have been linked by a network of regular roads. A number of major bridges have also been constructed. All parts of this region have now a road linkage with the rest of India.

The position of roads in Kameng comprising the East and West Kameng and Tawang as on March 31, 1979 was indicated as follows :²

Type of Roads	Length in (Km.) as on 31.3.1979
CPWD Roads	489.10
Black-topped	14.00
Gravelled	42.00
Kutchha	433.10
Station Colony	12.00
Total	990.20

1. D. Ering, The North-East Frontier Agency, published in Tribal Situation in India edited by K. Suresh Singh, (Simla, 1972), pp.67-68.

2. Source : Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1978-79.

The total length of roads constructed by BRTF as on 31st March, 1991 is as follows¹:

- Tawang — 528.99 (km)
- West Kameng — 262.65 (km)
- East Kameng — 138.30 (km)

The total length of roads constructed by APPWD as on 31st March, 1991 is as follows²:

- Tawang — 129.74 (km)
- West Kameng — 826.08 (km)
- East Kameng — 451.84 (km)

According to an enumeration, 40 villages (38 in West Kameng including Tawang and 2 in East Kameng) are linked by metalled roads, and 75 villages (70 in West Kameng including Tawang and 5 in East Kameng) are within a distance of 1 to 10 km from the metalled roads.²

Although there is no railway in these districts so far, a project for extension of railway up to Bhalukpong at the foothills is under way.

Vehicles and Conveyances

Most of the vehicles belong to the government. The Arunachal Pradesh State Transport Corporation, formed in 1975, runs regular bus services on the following routes.

1. Itanagar — Bomdila
2. Bomdila — Tezpur (Assam)
3. Bomdila — Tawang
4. Bomdila — Kalaktang
5. Seppa — Tezpur
6. Kalaktang — Tezpur

The Transport Co-operative Society, Bomdila has also been rendering passenger services.

Air Transport

Supply of essential commodities to some interior places having no road communications is made by air. For this purpose, there are specified air-fed stations. The supply is dropped from air to some dropping zones. Besides this, there are a few landing grounds.

Travel Facilities

The whole of Arunachal Pradesh lies beyond the Inner Line. Under the Regulation I of 1873 as revised from time to time, entry into this territory without an Inner Line pass is not permissible. One can, however, obtain the pass from the government on application.

Most of the important places in the districts of East and West Kameng and Tawang can now be reached by road. Bus services are available on some specified routes. Travel from one place to another in this region is now not as difficult as it was before.

The circuit houses and inspection bungalows at Bomdila, Tawang and Seppa provide ideal accommodation facilities to touring officers and visitors. There are inspection bungalows also at the sub-divisional headquarters and some other important places, where one can stay comfortably for a few days. Besides these, a number of rest houses or staging huts placed along the foot-tracks can also be used as shelters during journeys. Porters are available for travelling on foot.

The tract extending over high hills and mountains from Bomdila to Tawang through Dirang, Sela Pass and Jang is most alluring to the tourists for its superb scenic beauties and for the great Buddhist monastery at Tawang. There are tourist lodges for them at Bomdila and Dirang.

1. Source: Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh 1991.

2. Source: Economic Review, 1981, p.70, by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh.

Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones

Postal services in Arunachal Pradesh, first inducted in the early fifties, have extended rapidly to all parts of the territory. In 1971, there were only three post offices with telegraph facilities, one each at Bomdila, Tawang and Seppa, and seven post offices without telegraph facilities, of which five were in the Bomdila sub-division and one each in Tawang and Seppa. By the month of March 1979, there were thirty six post offices, of which the above mentioned three post offices at Bomdila, Tawang and Seppa continued to provide telegraph facilities. The number of post offices increased to forty till the month of March 1984 as follows:¹

Post Offices	West Kameng including Tawang	East	Total
With telegraph facilities	5	1	6
Without telegraph facilities	22	12	34
Total	27	13	40

A list of post offices is appended to this chapter. There are telephone exchanges at Tawang, Dirang, Bomdila, Rupa, Tenga and Seppa. A wireless transmission system functioning from before the introduction of postal services into this territory is still operating for the purpose of government communications. The number of Post Offices as on 31st March, 1991 in Tawang West Kameng and East Kameng districts, were 10, 18 and 14 respectively.²

POST OFFICES IN WEST KAMENG, TAWANG AND EAST KAMENG DISTRICTS
(as on March 31, 1979)

Type of Post Office	Location	Location	Location
Sub-Post Office with telegraph facilities	1. Bomdila 2. Tawang 3. Seppa		
Branch Post Office without telegraph facilities	1. Dirang 2. Seijosa 3. Tengavalley 4. Kalaktang 5. Thrizino 6. Rupa 7. Bhalukpung 8. Nafra 9. Khelong 10. Shergaon 11. Tengamarket	12. Tengingaon 13. Rahung 14. Khellong 15. Sangti 16. Lish 17. Dirang Basti 18. Dikalmukh 19. Lumla 20. Mukto 21. Thingbu 22. Zemithang	23. Lhou 24. Lemberdung 25. Kitpi 26. Jang 27. Pampoli 28. Bameng 29. Chayangtajo 30. Khenewa 31. Pipu-Dipu 32. Pakke-Kessang 33. Bana

1. Source : Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh, 1983-84.

2. Source : Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1991.

Source : Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1978-79.

CHAPTER VIII

MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

Livelihood Pattern

Almost the whole of Kameng region comprising the three districts of East and West Kameng and Tawang is rural and mountainous. According to the 1981 Census over 96 per cent of its population lives in villages perched on the slant of hills and valleys. The cultivators constitute 35.68 per cent of the total population and 70.14 per cent of the total number of workers engaged in different economically productive activities. Agriculture is evidently the main occupation of the people, the other occupations being subsidiary to it. The type of agriculture practised by most of the cultivators is an archaic form of tillage known as *jhum* or shifting cultivation as described in detail in Chapter IV. The local economy in greater part of Kameng is essentially based on the prevalent *jhum* cultivation, which determines the socio-economic relations of the tribes and their living standard. Their social organisation, cultural life, religious beliefs and practices are interwoven with agricultural practices.

Besides agriculture, the important subsidiary occupations are cottage industries including basketry of cane and bamboo, carpet-making, weaving, wood-carving and smithery, animal husbandry, trade, hunting and fishing etc. These occupations have been related in some detail under relevant chapter-heads of this volume. The livelihood pattern is a reflex of the economic activities of the people engaged in these different occupations.

The pattern of life is changing slowly and gradually. In the recent decades considerable progress has been achieved towards development of agriculture by improved and scientific methods. Land has been brought under more productive methods of permanent cultivation mainly on irrigated terraces. The progressive tribal farmers are now using modern agricultural implements, even machines and fertilisers. This and developments in other sectors, such as animal husbandry, fishery, forestry, industries, communications, trade and commerce, rural electrification, education, public health etc. have brought about a remarkable change in the life of the people.

Animal husbandry is an important economic activity of the tribes who are usually stockbreeders. "The breeding of cattle forms an integral part of the Monpa farming economy. In the lower regions, such as Dirang and Kalaktang, mithan and cattle are kept in large numbers, and in the former there are also owners of yak who keep these animals on high pastures. Mithan are bought from Bangnis and are crossed with Indian cattle, the resultant hybrids being used for traction and also traded to Bhutan.... Sheep are kept for the sake of their meat rather than as a source of wool, though in recent years there have been government-sponsored attempts to introduce merino sheep and to interbreed them with the local variety in order to improve the quality of the wool. A large scientifically managed sheep-farm in Sangti has achieved some promising results, but the conservatism of the Monpas stands still in the way of a general switch from meat to wool production."¹

The livestock of the Sherdukpens consists mainly of cows, bullocks, goats and ponies. They milk the cow. They also keep poultry. But fowls and eggs are used by them for

1. Christoph Von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), pp.155-156.

trade, not as food. The livestock raised by the Sulungs are goats for meat, pigs and fowls. They exchange their wild sago, paddy and millet for pigs, goats and cows by barter with the Bangnis and Mijis.

A tribe is not normally constituted by exclusive occupational groups. The members of a tribal society usually make their living by collective efforts. Apart from their agricultural pursuits, hunting and fishing activities common to most of the tribes in Arunachal provide an example of such collectivism. As a supplementary means of livelihood, these group activities in which sometimes a whole village participates are important from the viewpoint of tribal economy in that the people derive a part or make up the deficiency of their food by hunting and fishing.

Barring the Dirang and Tawang area where the type of agriculture is mainly sedentary, the major part of the agricultural land in other areas is under *jhum* which is practised with the aid of primitive or simple tools. Jhumming by shifting method is a subsistence cultivation and productivity of *jhum* land per hectare is comparatively low. The cultivators by and large are still attached to their traditional system of shifting cultivation and this system evolved through centuries in relation to the ecological factors is not easily changeable or replaceable. Under the prevailing system of agriculture the tribal economy remained changelessly localised and backward. But, while the rural population is still rooted in their traditional past and maintaining a low living standard the impact of material and cultural developments which have come about since independence has created conditions for gradual transformation of tribal economy and society.

An important result of this change is the emergence of a new generation of progressive young people, educated and modern in outlook. Although the number of highly educated persons is still not large, the literacy percentage of the total population of East Kameng and West Kameng including Tawang being a low 6.94 and 21.32 respectively compared to all-India rate (excluding Assam) of 36.23 per cent, the literacy rate has been growing steadily.

It is the avowed policy of the government to open employment avenues for the trained and educated local tribal youths and induct them into various cadres of administrative and technical services. They are now to be found in all categories of government services, holding responsible positions. In the co-operative and private sectors, there are a number of enterprising tribal businessmen and entrepreneurs who are recognised as retail traders or owners of small industrial units. They have also taken up the jobs of contractors, dealers, agencyholders, drivers, technician, mechanic etc. Learned and distinguished professions like doctors, engineers and lawyers are yet to get prominence.

A tribal society organised on the basis of small social groupings, such as phratry, clan or village is generally characterised by a low level of technical development and lack of economic specialisation. The society does not normally admit of any hereditary occupations or rigid craft or trade exclusiveness. They eke out their living usually by collective and co-operative efforts as already stated. It may be noted in this context that there may be class but not caste, nor any exclusive professional group like barber, washermen, cobbler, weaver etc., the only probable exception being blacksmithy which is an hereditary craft.

Price of Commodities

There is practically no wholesale market in Arunachal Pradesh. Essential food items are procured from the neighbouring State of Assam. Rise in prices of commodities in the

wholesale market in Assam affects the retail prices of goods sold in Arunachal Pradesh. The index of wholesale prices of food and non-food items in Assam is shown in the following table.¹

(Base Year 1953 = 100)

Articles	1976	1977	1975	
			January	February
Food	384.4	438.8	407.5	411.7
Non-food	296.3	350.1	373.2	364.0
All articles	355.3	409.3	396.1	395.8

The table indicates that there was an increasing trend of price-rise over 1976. The rise in retail prices of food items in the market is somewhat checked in Arunachal Pradesh by public distribution of essential commodities through the Central Purchase Organisation, fair price shops and consumer co-operative societies at subsidised rates. The following table² shows the average retail price of some essential commodities at all centres of Arunachal Pradesh during the years 1977 to 1980.

Sl No.	Commodity	Unit	Annual Average Price in Rupees				Percentage increase or decrease in 1980 over		
			1977	1978	1979	1980			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1.	Rice (Coarse)	kg	1.88	1.98	2.13	2.45	(+)	30.32	+ 15.02
2.	Rice (local)	"	1.79	1.99	2.12	2.49	+	39.11	+ 17.45
3.	Atta	"	1.71	1.71	1.90	2.27	+	32.75	+ 19.47
4.	Maize	"	1.08	1.27	1.94	1.80	+	66.67	- 7.22
5.	Flour (milled)	"	2.20	2.27	2.33	2.98	+	35.45	+ 27.89
6.	Masur Dal	"	3.53	4.41	4.03	4.45	+	26.06	+ 10.42
7.	Moong Dal	"	3.40	4.37	5.22	5.92	+	74.12	+ 13.40
8.	Sugar	"	3.60	3.25	3.43	5.28	+	46.67	+ 53.93
9.	Salt	"	0.54	0.74	0.80	1.05	+	94.44	+ 31.25
10.	Mustard oil	ltr	11.31	10.87	10.58	13.36	+	18.13	+ 26.27
11.	Vanaspati	kg	12.40	11.69	11.63	14.37	+	15.89	+ 23.56
12.	Potato	"	1.75	1.67	1.54	2.09	+	19.43	+ 35.71
13.	Fish (common)	"	10.91	10.47	13.05	15.52	+	42.25	+ 18.92
14.	Meat (goat)	"	12.19	12.98	13.89	16.34	+	34.04	+ 17.63
15.	Milk	ltr	1.93	1.84	2.04	2.17	+	12.44	+ 6.37
16.	Tea leaf	kg	20.66	18.84	16.96	19.95	+	3.44	+ 17.62
17.	Kerosine	ltr	1.55	1.57	1.68	1.78	+	14.84	+ 5.95
18.	Match box	50	0.15	0.15	0.18	0.23	+	53.03	+ 27.77
19.	Long-cloth	stick							
		mtr	5.07	4.69	4.91	5.30	+	4.54	+ 7.94
20.	Banjan (ganji)	each	4.34	4.67	5.29	5.56	+	28.11	+ 5.10

1. Source : Economic Review 1979-80 by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, p.39.

2. Source : Economic Review 1981 by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, pp.49-50.

The table is clearly indicative of an upward trend of prices corresponding to all-India price-level. As a result, the cost of living has been rising. The public distribution system, as mentioned earlier, has come to be of some relief to the common people. There are a number of C.P.O. centres and fair price shops in these districts besides ten consumer co-operative stores which are all sponsored by the government. The activities of these organisations are co-ordinated by the Civil Supply Department for procurement and supply of food and other necessities.

The retail price of some essential commodities at Bomdila, Tawang and Seppa during the month of July 1985 is indicated as in the following table.¹

Sl. No.	Commodity	Unit	Average retail price in rupees		
			Bomdila	Tawang	Seppa
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Rice (Mota)	Kg	3.20	2.40	3.10
2.	Rice (lahi)	"	4.75	5.35	2.68
3.	Wheat	"	2.58	2.38	2.55
4.	Moong Dal	"	8.13	9.00	8.45
5.	Masur Dal	"	5.60	7.38	6.35
6.	Mustard Oil	ltr	14.63	18.35	13.75
7.	Milk	"	3.00	4.00	4.00
8.	Meat (goat)	kg	25.00	25.00	24.00
9.	Fowl	"	25.00	—	35.00
10.	Egg	pair	2.00	2.00	2.00
11.	Salt	kg	1.15	2.35	0.95
12.	Potato	"	1.50	2.00	3.00
13.	Tea leaf	"	36.60	42.50	38.50
14.	Sugar	"	5.57	5.70	6.70
15.	Kerosine	ltr	1.96	3.10	4.00
16.	Match	box	0.25	0.30	0.25

Wages

By an order of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh² coming into effect from September 1, 1986 the rates of wages for workers have been revised. According to the terms of this order, no worker is required to work for more than nine hours a day with a break of one hour, but if he is engaged for more than five hours and less than nine hours he shall be deemed to have worked for a full day. A paid day of rest every week, overtime wages and paid holidays have also been provided.

1. Source : Monthly Retail Price Bulletin of Arunachal Pradesh July 1985 by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

2. Vide Government of Arunachal Pradesh Order No. LAB-49/83 dated 28.9.86.

For the purpose of various rates of wages payable to different categories of workers including agricultural labourers, three areas have been defined as follows.

Area I — the places outside Arunachal Pradesh where workers are employed under the Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

Area II — the places in Arunachal Pradesh where special compensatory allowance at 25% is payable.

Area III — the places in Arunachal Pradesh where special compensatory allowance at 35% is admissible.

The revised rates of wages are indicated in the following table.

(in rupees)

Category of workers	Area I		Area II		Area III	
	Daily	Monthly	Daily	Monthly	Daily	Monthly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unskilled	15.00	450.00	16.00	480.00	18.00	540.00
Semi-skilled	21.00	630.00	22.00	660.00	24.00	720.00
Skilled	24.00	720.00	25.00	750.00	27.00	810.00

The rates of minimum wages of different categories of workers have been revised again with effect from 1.1.94 are indicated in the following table.¹

(in rupees)

Category of workers	Area I		Area II		Area III	
	Daily	Monthly	Daily	Monthly	Daily	Monthly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unskilled	21.00	630.00	22.00	660.00	24.00	720.00
Semi-skilled	27.00	810.00	28.00	840.00	30.00	900.00
Skilled	30.00	900.00	31.00	930.00	33.00	990.00

Employment in Different Occupations

In the census enumerations of 1981, the population has been classified into two broad divisions, workers and non-workers. Work in this context is defined as participation in any economically productive activity. A person participating in such work either physically or mentally is termed as a worker. The workers, are further divided into main workers, marginal workers and main workers having secondary work. A marginal worker is one who has worked for less than 183 days during the year preceding the date of enumeration.

1. Source: Vide Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Order No. LAB (MW)/122/93 dt. 31.1.94.

According to the 1981 Census, the workers engaged in various economic activities are indicated in the following categories and numbers.

West Kameng including Tawang

	Persons	Male	Female
Main Workers	31,128	19,533	11,595
Marginal Workers	2,022	752	1,270
Non-Workers	29,796	13,367	16,429

Categories of Main Workers

1. Cultivators	18,442	8,918	9,524
2. Agricultural labourers	626	379	247
3. Household industry manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs	243	110	133
4. Other Workers	11,817	10,126	1,691
Total	31,128	19,533	11,595

East Kameng

	Persons	Male	Female
Main Workers	23,688	13,821	9,867
Marginal Workers	1,116	225	891
Non-Workers	17,918	7,936	9,982

Categories of Main Workers

1. Cultivators	19,397	10,029	9,368
2. Agricultural labourers	199	108	91
3. Household industry, manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs	13	12	1
4. Other Workers	4,079	3,672	407
Total	23,688	13,821	9,867

The 1981 Census brings out clearly the fact that agriculture is the mainstay of the people. The majority of the workers are cultivators and they constitute 59.24% and 81.04% of the total number of main workers in West Kameng including Tawang and East Kameng districts respectively. A notable feature of the occupational pattern is that the number of female cultivators in West Kameng including Tawang is more than that of male. In East Kameng they are almost evenly matched. The same is also true of agricultural labourers, who, however, form a very small section of the workers. Apparently, a section of the *jhum* cultivators, who are engaged in the field for a part of the year, take to other works

as subsidiary occupations. Various occupations of the people have been described in detail in the preceding chapters on agriculture, industries and trade and commerce. It needs to be mentioned in passing that the role of women as a working force in this region is of utmost importance. They are not only one half of the total number of cultivators, but are also engaged in other productive activities of which weaving and carpet-making may be specially mentioned.

According to the 1991 Census, the workers engaged in various economic activities are indicated in the following categories and numbers.¹

(a) **Tawang District**

	<u>Persons</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Main Workers	14,814	8,484	6,330
Marginal Workers	218	148	70

Categories of Main Workers

1. Cultivators	9,406	5,071	4,335
2. Agricultural labourers	1,548	507	1,041
3. Household Industry, manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs.	106	86	20
4. Other Workers	3,754	2,820	934

(b) **West Kameng District**

Main Workers	24,410	17,172	7,238
Marginal Workers	626	120	506

Categories of Main Workers

1. Cultivators	10,438	5,478	4,960
2. Agricultural labourers	961	568	393
3. Household Industry, manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs.	108	85	23
4. Other Workers	12,903	11,041	1,862

(c) **East Kameng District**

Main Workers	25,025	13,653	11,371
Marginal Workers	890	103	787

Categories of Main Workers

1. Cultivators	19,357	8,747	10,610
2. Agricultural labourers	356	225	131

1. Source : Census of India Series-3, Arunachal Pradesh, Paper-1 of 1991, Supplement.

3. Household Industry, manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs.	91	66	25
4. Other Workers	5221	4615	606

According to an economic census conducted in 1980, the number of enterprises and persons working in different enterprises are as shown in the following table.¹ An enterprise in this context is defined as an undertaking engaged in production and/or distribution of goods and/or services not for the sole purpose of own consumption. An agricultural enterprise is defined as one engaged in livestock production, agricultural services, hunting, trapping and game propagation, forestry and logging and fishing. Enterprises engaged in activities pertaining to agricultural production and plantation were, however, not covered in the census. Enterprises concerning all other activities are termed as non-agricultural enterprises.

District	Number of Enterprises		Persons usually working	
	Agricultural	Non-Agricultural	Agricultural Enterprises	Non-Agricultural Enterprises
West Kameng including Tawang	366	1533	560	4923
East Kameng	8	438	24	1352

TREND OF CHANGES IN ECONOMY

A change in the tribal economy, it may be said, began with the attainment of independence in 1947. Before the forties of the present century this region had no motorable road, no town or permanent market centre, no departmental organisation—bank or financial institution to assist the farmers for improvement of agriculture, no forestry development, no industry other than household crafts and hardly any school or health centre. Indeed, the economic development of the region was started from the scratch. This point is important for an assessment of the economic changes that have taken place.

The people of Arunachal Pradesh lived more or less isolatedly in the confines of their hills for a long period of time. The isolation was due mainly to geographical barriers formed by hills and mountains, which shut out the region from the outside world and did not allow an easy access. The British Government was primarily concerned with the maintenance of law and order in this frontier and was generally indifferent towards economic development of the area and welfare of the people. As a result, the people continued to live in a state of seclusion, negligence and poverty throughout the British rule in India. No human society, much less a backward economy, can promote itself in complete isolation and lack of cultural intercourse. And, therefore, the life of the people in Kameng moved on in its old form veering round a stagnant economy based essentially on *jhum* cultivation.

Source: Economic Census - 1980 by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

The economic activities of the people before 1947 were limited to production through elementary methods. Agriculture was of subsistence nature. There was no organised system of trade and commerce, nor any regular organised market. The internal and external trade were localised, and they were based on barter. Price of a commodity under the barter system was determined by its immediate necessity instead of value. Commodities of higher value were sometimes exchanged for lower ones. The barter was, therefore, detrimental to the growth of economy. Interplay of the factors of demand and supply exerted very little influence on the tribal economy. No wonder, the living standard of the people under these conditions would be miserably low.

With the attainment of independence came a wave of changes and developments in all spheres of life of the tribal people. The barriers were crossed, and the isolation and stagnation broken. Good things of the modern world were carried to the hitherto neglected people in order to help them develop according to their own genius. Initial cautions were, however, taken to ensure that development programmes were carried out 'in carefully measured phases' so as not to upset the tribal ways of life and the tribal institutions. This apart, it was hardly possible to implement development projects in the hills as speedily as in the plains. The difficult terrain, dearth of man power and absence of road communications were some of the major impediments.

Planning

Arunachal Pradesh is gifted with an abundance of natural resources—forests, mineral and hydel power. But what it lacked was an infrastructure, the prerequisite for a long term development to be achieved through scientific exploration and utilisation of the resources. In fact, planning and developmental activities in Arunachal Pradesh were started from the scratch and executed under phased programmes keeping in view the peculiar problems, immediate needs and available resources. The measures taken at the initial stage were aimed at improving the existing methods of production for attainment of a higher standard of living, and also bringing about progressive changes in the backward economy through monetisation and mobility of supply and demand so as to organise production and consumption on a broader basis by breaking their localisation.

The development programme at the second stage commencing from before 1960 envisaged the following :

- (1) A shift from indigenous methods where they had reached their maximum efficiency to new and more productive system through a transition from primitive agricultural practices to wet-rice and terrace-rice cultivations, from loin loom to Assam loom etc.
- (2) The extension of external market facilities to local producers and consumers for creation of new demands openings for local products.
- (3) Building up of new industries larger than indigenous cottage crafts.
- (4) Training of the people in the operation of the modern commercial system through direct involvement.
- (5) Introduction of a monetary system and establishment of commercial enterprise.

The pace of development gathered a tremendous momentum in the following years. Improvement of economy through development of agriculture and communications received increasingly greater emphasis in the Five Year Plans. During the Second, Third and Fourth Plans, priorities were laid on agriculture for increased production. Highest priorities were

given to construction of roads and buildings followed by social service including education and medical. Agriculture was raised to second priority level in the Fourth Plan.

In an appreciation of the fact that economy of this tribal area could be promoted to a better productive system only through the development of agriculture, being the mainstay of the people, persistent efforts were made to introduce improved and scientific methods in crop cultivation. The old system of agricultural production by means of jhumming or shifting method cultivation with the aid of antiquated tools is most elementary and not conducive to more productivity and economic growth. And since this old agricultural system pursued through the ages still continues to be the basic factor of tribal economy, there had been no amelioration of the economic conditions. As a result, the pattern and standard of living of the people remained at the poverty level without any basic change. The *jhum* cultivation by which almost the entire population subsisted can hardly meet the present growing needs for more food. The productivity of *jhum* fields, used for repeated and intensive cultivations, may diminish to a point below the subsistence level of a growing population, and this probability may in turn return the growth of economy unless agriculture is developed on scientific lines. It is the method of production that determines the stage of social development. We have seen in the chapter on agriculture that jhumming, a practical form of agriculture practised in the hills, cannot be wholly replaced by any type of sedentary or permanent cultivation, wet-rice or terrace-rice. What is needed is scientific development of agriculture for more food production. With the extension of the area brought under permanent cultivation and introduction of improved devices in agriculture, the method of *jhum* cultivation may undergo a progressive change. The stagnation in agricultural production has been one of the main constraints on the local economy and removal of the constraint is essential for raising the standard of living of the people and their social progress. Although pressure on land in this area does not pose serious threat as yet, the population density per square km being a low 7 in West Kameng including Tawang and 10 in East Kameng, the diminishing return of the limited arable *jhum*-lands in the hills may manifest itself in course of time. It is, therefore, imperative that the methods of cultivation are improved for more food production, above the subsistence level, and hence the need for a gradual change from shifting (*jhum*) to settled cultivation, wherever possible and suitable to local conditions, is emphasised for agricultural development.

Keeping in view the national objectives and the special features of Arunachal Pradesh's economy, the following broad objectives were laid down for this territory's Fifth Plan :

- (a) to maximise food production through intensive cultivation;
- (b) to develop the means of communications as an infrastructure — the road coverage of 5.6 km per 100 sq. km achieved at the end of the Fourth Plan is the lowest in the country;
- (c) to harness and develop power resources as a necessary infra-structure;
- (d) to initiate industrialisation of the area by introduction of large, medium and small-scale industries;
- (e) to provide minimum educational and health facilities and
- (f) to ensure that the cultivators, small entrepreneurs and job seekers get a fair share in the fruits of planned development.

During the Fifth Plan period (1974-75 to 1978-79), the important sectors of development, among others, were roads and bridges, agriculture and forests, social services, irrigation and power, co-operation and community development, and industries and mining. The top priority was laid on transport and communications followed by agriculture including forests, and this pattern of priorities continued under the Annual Plan for 1979-80 and the Sixth Plan (1980-81 to 1984-85).

Results and Achievements

The welfare and developmental schemes executed under the Plans with the support of a growing infrastructure have had a considerable resultant effect on tribal economy. With the construction of a network of roads, scientific progress of agriculture and irrigations, generation of hydel power and extension of rural electrification, establishment of industries, spread of modern education to remote villages and achievements in other sectors, a process of change towards an all-round progress and a better standard of living of the tribal people has been set in motion. The change is too obvious to be ignored when compared to the conditions obtaining prior to 1947. Under the impact of material and cultural developments, the tribal societies have been undergoing a phase of socio-economic transformation from small and secluded village groups to formation of larger and advanced communities, from a backward economy based on elementary methods of production and a barter system towards a modern economic system. The oldtime barriers have disappeared, and the needs of life, ever growing under the impact of developments, have created new values.

The participation of the people in the developmental activities is most encouraging. They have shown remarkable adaptability to the fast-changing socio-economic conditions. The sphere of economic activities of the people is far more wider today than ever before. The whole area has been brought under the economic system of the country. Money, seldom used earlier in economic transactions, is now the accepted medium of exchange. The monetisation of local economy has paved the way for trade and commerce, savings and productive investments. It may also be noted that money income of the people has brought about a relative change in the consumption pattern due to rise of wants and the living standard. Money is a necessary precondition for economic growth and the monetised economy has given rise to a group of tribal people who have been earning money through their association with the administrative and developmental activities as traders, suppliers and also as private owners of land, business enterprises and small industrial units.

The Monpas, for example, are one of the best cultivators of Arunachal Pradesh. 'Farming is the traditional basis of Monpa economy. Their 'plough and bullock' cultivation in irrigated fields is itself a distinctive feature of their cultural and economic advancement. The Monpas, particularly of Tawang, make use of the agricultural fields as well as the woods and forests with such loving care that hardly any strip of land goes waste. On some aspects of the village economy of the Tawang Monpas, Smti Neeru Nanda formerly the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tawang observed thus :

"How does cash enter the village economy? The established avenues have been portage, unskilled or semi-skilled labour with the border roads and Central Public Works Department, petty contractor or shop business, supply of firewood or timber, in almost that order of importance. After 1974 the government accelerated the cultivation of cash crops (both short-term and long-term) with excellent results. Kufri Jyoti potato brought as a sample from Simla in 1973 shot into the economy by 1976 with a dramatic suddenness that startled even the most sceptical observers. Since September 1977 Tawang has become a regular supplier of seed potato to West Bengal and production levels exceeded all expectations...

"The main influx of cash comes into the economy through the *ghorawallas* (yak and pony carriage contractors) who, in a way, form a subsidiary community amongst themselves. They carry all government loads and rations to the outposts earning an average gross income of Rs 14 a day per animal. (In difficult terrain this could go upto Rs. 20.)..."¹

1. Neeru Nanda, Tawang — The Land of Mon, (New Delhi, 1982), pp.30-32.

The importance of yak to the Monpas of Tawang and Dirang is many-sided. They make *churpi* (cheese), ghee, cream etc. from yak's milk. Useful articles are made from yak's hair and tail-stump. In the Dirang region yak owners graze their animals for several months in high pastures. Most of them employ hardsmen on an annual salary of Rs 200-300 or payment of 60 kg of unhusked rice in lieu of cash. Food, beer and clothes are also provided to them. These herdsmen come either from Tawang or Bhutan and they stay in the pastures in tents or stone-huts. "In the Tawang region where some villages lie at altitudes of roughly 10,000 feet yak are far more important. There most yak owners possess stone-huts (*bro-brang*) on their yak-pastures, and keep their herds there for the four or five warmest months when the grass is most plentiful. Here too yak are crossed with ordinary cattle, and the resultant hybrids (*dzo and dzomu*) are greatly valued. In 1980 the price of a big yak was Rs 100 and that of a good *dzomu* between Rs 2000 and Rs 3000. *Dzo* are used for ploughing and for the carrying of loads, and *dzomu* are kept mainly for the sake of their milk. In contrast to most other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh Monpas drink milk and also make butter."¹

It was observed that a good part of the money thus earned by the Tawang Monpas was invested in purchasing potato seeds and fertilisers, apple plants and opening new orchards. They also spent some of their money for better and modern dress, improvement and extension of house, opening of shops and so on. The wealthy among them sent their sons to renowned educational institutions inside and outside the territory.²

Obviously, a section of the Monpas has become rich and their living standard has improved remarkably. The accumulation of money in the hands of farm-owners, traders, contractors, shopkeepers and stockbreeders is likely to be invested in agricultural, industrial and other productive enterprises. In fact, 138 small-scale industrial units-69 in West Kameng, 29 in Tawang and 40 in East Kameng, under private ownership were registered till the month of February 1985. There are clear indications that formation of private capital may give rise to a new class of business entrepreneurs.

The Inner Line restrictions enforced under the Regulation of 1873 prohibiting commercial investments in Arunachal Pradesh by businessmen from outside except on a very limited scale are intended to protect the indigenous tribal people from exploitation. The tribal interests are well protected and the economic activities at local levels are virtually free from outside competitions. The economic development of the area, however, depends basically on government assistance and public investments.

The progress achieved in various sectors of development have been discussed at length under the appropriate chapter-heads of this volume. These may be summed up as follows.

The three district headquarters, all sub-divisional headquarters except Chayangtajo and most of the circle headquarters have road-links. The total length of roads constructed till the month of March 1979 is 990.20 km. These roads form the much needed infrastructure of a communication system which is essential for any development of this region.

A remarkable progress towards development of agriculture on scientific lines has been achieved. In order to attain self-sufficiency in food efforts have been intensified to being

1. Chrisoph Von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh* (New Delhi, 1982), pp.156.

2. See Nehru Nanda, *Tawang — The Land of Mon* (New Delhi, 1982), pp.34-36 for details.

under permanent cultivation as much land as possible and augment food production by modern methods and techniques of agriculture. The total annual coverage of area under permanent cultivation and irrigation facilities is extending. The progressive farmers have taken to modern agricultural tools and implements for which financial assistance is provided to them. They are also given aids in the form of government subsidies for purchasing improved seeds or high-yielding varieties of seeds and fertilisers. Development of horticulture and fishery are likewise sponsored by the government. Besides these, the State Bank of India grants loans and advances to the farmers.

A large amount of revenue is earned from the vast forest resources of the territory. The three districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang comprise a total estimated forest area of 7,000 sq. km of which an area of about 3,000 sq. km. has been brought under scientific management and planned development. A number of small industries set up in these districts are forest-based. Scientific exploitation of the forests and the role of the recently formed anchal Forest Reserves for rural development would no doubt go a long way in improving the living conditions of the people and promoting agricultural and industrial developments. In fact, economic prosperity in this area is vitally interlinked with the development of forestry.

Craft centres and weaving units have been established in different parts of territory to preserve and develop the indigenous cottage industries. Many small-scale industries, as mentioned earlier, have also come up. District Industries Centres opened at Bomdila, Tawang and Seppa to extend help and assistance to village and small industries. The Arunachal Pradesh Industrial Development and Financial Corporation Ltd., Itanagar provides industrial loans to the small-scale industries and centrally procures raw materials for them. It also offers various incentives to industrial enterprises. In 1980, there were 1,971 non-agricultural enterprises, 1,533 in West Kameng including Tawang and 438 in East Kameng, engaged in production and distribution of goods and services.

Power generation is under way. The total installed capacity of the micro-hydel projects and the diesel generating sets combined together was 4,022 kw in March 1983. By that time 142 villages were electrified. However, as on 31st March 1990, 281 villages were electrified.

Social services have shown encouraging results. In the month of March 1984, the total number of educational institutions was 219 with 12,932 students on their roll. The total number of hospitals, dispensaries and health units in the same March 1984 was 24 and the authorised beds in them was 234. Besides these, there were two medical teams and four family welfare clinics.

Community Development

Community development is an important component of the programmes for rural development. Early in the fifties the National Extension Service Scheme was undertaken at the block level. The Community Development Programme introduced in the Kameng region in 1957-58 is in the process of implementation through ten blocks comprising 471 villages with a population of 84,000 souls as indicated in the appendix to this chapter. The schemes taken up under this programme are mainly land development for permanent cultivation, minor irrigation, distribution of improved seeds, seedlings, fruit grafts, fertilisers, poultry birds and cattle construction of village roads and bridges etc. Participation of people on self-help basis in the endeavour for village upliftment is an essential aspect of this programme.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS
(as on March 31, 1982)

Sl No.	Name of Blocks	Block head quarters	Year of opening	Number of villages covered	Population (in thousand)	Type of blocks	Phase
West Kameng							
1.	Dirang CD Block	Dirang	1957-58	19	11	A	Post Stage II
2.	Nafra-Buragaon CD Block	Thrizino	1962-63	49	7	A	do
3.	Kalaktang CD Block	Kalaktang	1962-63	34	5	B	do
Tawang							
4.	Lumla CD Block	Lumla	1964-65	29	6	A	do
5.	Tawang CD Block	Tawang	1957-58	84	12	A	do
6.	Thingbu-Mukto CD Block	Mukto	1977-78	21	5	A	Stage I
East Kameng							
7.	Seppa CD Block	Seppa	1960-61	85	17	A	Post Stage II
8.	Bameng CD Block	Bameng	1964-65	51	8	A	do
9.	Chayangtajo CD Block	Chayang-tajo	1964-65	57	8	A	do
10.	Pakke-Kessang CD Block	Pakke-Kessang	1977-78	42	5	A	Stage I
Total				471	84		

N.B. (1) Blocks having a population above 5,000 are categorised as type A and those with a population of 5,000 or below as type B

(2) Block phases : Stage I-5 years, Stage II-5 years, Post Stage II -to continue indefinitely.

Source: Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh 1981-82.

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL AND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Set-up of the Government

Under the provisions of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act of 1971 the erstwhile North-East Frontier Agency administered by the Governor of Assam as the agent of the President of India was reconstituted as an Union Territory on January 21, 1972, the date from which the Agency came to be known as Arunachal Pradesh. The Union Territory was administered by the Chief Commissioner for the period from January 21, 1972 to August 14, 1975. With the coming into force of the government of Union Territories Act, 1963 (20 of 1963) in Arunachal Pradesh from August 15, 1975, the Administrator of Arunachal Pradesh has been designated as Lieutenant Governor appointed by the President of India under Clause (i) of Article 239 of the Constitution of India. The Constitution - 37th Amendment Act 1975 providing for a Legislative Assembly with a Council of Ministers for the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh has also come into effect from the Independence Day on the 15 August, 1975.

The Chief Minister and the other Ministers of his cabinet are in charge of the various Government departments assigned to them, and they are required under Section 44 of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 (20 of 1963) to aid and advise the Administrator in the exercise of his functions.

The Arunachal Pradesh Secretariat is headed by the Chief Secretary who, in the discharge of his duties and responsibilities, is assisted by a number of Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries and Under Secretaries, who are in charge of various secretariat departments and branches respectively.

The administration of Arunachal Pradesh is organised in the pattern of what is called the 'Single Line Administration' which also known as 'Single Chain Administration'. According to this pattern, power descends vertically from the head of the administration to the lowest executive officers. The technical officers at each level and place are directly responsible to the respective local executive heads at that location. This pattern of administration aims at successful co-ordination of the activities of the various departments for all round development and welfare of the area.

At the secretariat level various departments, directorates and other offices are under the direct supervision and control of the Secretaries or Deputy Secretaries as the case may be. All cases for the administrative approval and sanction are, therefore, submitted by the heads of these departments to the respective controlling officers in the Secretariat. No double set of files concerning the directorates and other department is, however, maintained in the Secretariat.

The Deputy Commissioner, as the head of a district, is in overall charge of the district establishment of various departments. He supervises and controls all aspects of administrative and developmental activities that are carried on by the departments in the district under his administrative jurisdiction. The development departments in the district are in fact the integral parts of the office of the Deputy Commissioner. The important departmental heads who are under the administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner at the district level

are, among others, the District Agriculture Officer, the District Veterinary Officer, the District Medical Officer, the District Industries Officer, the Deputy Conservator of Forests, the District Education Officer, the District Research Officer, the District Rural Development Officer and also the Executive Engineers belonging to the Central Public Works Department and Rural Works Department. These officers are responsible to the Deputy Commissioner for all developmental works done and implementation of schemes, and also to the respective heads of departments for technical matters. They work under the guidance of their respective heads of departments. The Deputy Commissioner is responsible for planning and execution of various developmental schemes in the district, and in order to discharge this responsibility, he functions in unison with the district heads of the development departments.

The geographical importance of Arunachal Pradesh bounded by international borders can hardly be emphasised. The territory is inhabited by a large number of scheduled tribes who are at a low level of economic development. The whole area is ruggedly mountainous where communication difficulties are a veritable problem. All these factors call for well-coordinated administrative set-up flexible enough to take quick decision in all important and emergent matters. The 'Single Line Administration' aiming at concerted activities of various government organs is a device to suit the peculiar conditions obtaining in this territory. This pattern of administration has been drawn up with a view to creating a feeling of *esprit de corps* between the various government organs working for a common purpose of development and welfare.

"The functions of the Circle Officers, Extra Assistant Commissioners etc. embrace a multi-purpose list in that they acted as local heads for all subjects affecting their jurisdictions such as development work, maintenance of law and order, revenue work, community development schemes, socio-cultural affairs of the people and the exercise of authority over the various installations and schemes of various technical departments such as schools, hospitals, roads, agriculture and so on. This last function enables the executive functionaries to maintain an overall integrated outlook in their jurisdictions in various spheres. It also suits the convenience of the people in that they can appeal to a single authority on any subject. The prime position accorded to the Circle Officers, Extra Assistant Commissioners etc., in respect of their jurisdictions has come to be known as the Single Line Administration. This pattern has been in existence for a number of years and it has proved suitable both for the people and the Administration. It enables the simple folk to take their complaints and difficulties to the highest authority in their area in an attitude of trust and inner certitude that they would be heard. From the Administration point of view, the overall head provides a single authority to help resolve inter-departmental differences, to co-ordinate inter-departmental plans for the area and generally to develop an overall integrated approach in each administrative jurisdiction."¹

For administrative purposes, each of the districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang are divided into sub-divisions which are again divided into a number of circles as shown in the following table.²

1. P.N. Luthra, Constitutional and Administrative Growth of the North-East Frontier Agency, (Shillong, 1971), pp. 21-22.

2. Also see Chapter-I Sub-division and Circles.

District	District Head- quarters	Sub- division	Sub-divisional Head- quarters	Circle
1	2	3	4	5
East Kameng	Seppa	1. Seppa	Seppa	(1) Seppa (2) Pakke- Kessang (3) Pipu (4) Lada (5) Seijosa
		2. Chayangtajo	Chayangtajo	(1) Chayangtajo (2) Bameng (3) Khenewa (4) Sawa
		1. Bomdila	Bomdila	(1) Bomdila (2) Kalaktang (3) Dirang
		2. Nafra- Buragaon	Thrizino	(1) Nafra (2) Thrizino (3) Rupa
Tawang	Tawang	1. Tawang	Tawang	(1) Tawang (2) Mukto (3) Thingbu
		2. Lumla	Lumla	(1) Lumla (2) Zemithang

Local Self Government

The tribal councils, described elaborately in Chapters X and XII, function at the village level as self-governing institutions. Constituted by village elders, these councils exercise considerable authority in judicial, administrative and developmental matters. All these councils work within the general framework of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945, but they are different from statutory village authorities, as defined in that regulation. The tribal councils derive their authority from customs and traditions of the people. The Gaon Burah or the village elder, who is also normally by virtue of his position the head of the village council, acts as a representative of the administration at the village level. Besides the Gaon Burah, a team of political interpreters are employed by the administration for maintaining intimate relations with the village people. The Gaon Burah and the interpreters assist the government officials to perform their duties and to implement government decisions. They render valuable services in settling of disputes, forwarding of villagers' appeal to

the Law Courts and petitions to the Government, in arresting of offenders and transaction of government business at the village level. The Regulation of 1945 also confers powers on the statutory 'village authorities' in civil and criminal matters.

Panchayat Raj

In consistence with the democratic self-governing traditions of the tribal people as manifested in the village and the inter-village councils, 'panchayat' system of local self government has been introduced in the district under the provisions of the North-East Frontier Agency, Panchayat Raj Regulation, 1967 (Regulation 3 of 1967) as amended by the North-East Frontier Agency (Administration) Supplementary Regulation, 1971. The Regulation 3 of 1967 envisages for the districts a three tier structure of self-governing bodies namely Gram Panchayat at the village level, Anchal Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level. These bodies have been duly empowered to formulate and execute minor development plans and to implement various welfare schemes. The 1967 Regulation also provided for constitution of an Agency Council in the erstwhile North-East Frontier Agency.¹

Revenue Administration

Most of the revenue is earned from forests. Other important sources of revenue are state excise, sales tax, stamps and registration, various licence fees, public works, agriculture and minor irrigation, animal husbandry, industries, power, road and water transport, taxes on vehicles interest receipts etc. A small amount of land revenue is also collected.

Land

An insight into the problems of land in this tribal area would reveal the truth of what was observed by Verrier Elwin as follows:

"The tribal people are bound to their land by many and intimate ties. Their feeling for it is something more than mere possessiveness. It is connected with their sense of history, for their legends tell of the great journeys they made over the wild and lonely hills and of the heroic pioneers who made the first clearings in the forest. It is part of their reverence of the dead, whose spirits still haunt the countryside. The land is the mother who provides for them in response to the labours of their hands and who, when supplies run short, feeds them with a hundred natural gifts. It is the setting of adventure, in love, in hunting and in war, which can never be forgotten. The land is the foundation of a sense of security and freedom from fear; its assured possession is a lasting road to peace."¹ The members of a tribal society usually make their living by collective efforts with the aid of primitive or simple tools. This is illustrated by jhuming or shifting cultivation in the hill slopes, which is the most common form of agriculture practised by the people collectively. They have also been doing settled cultivation on a limited scale in the level areas. Corresponding to the nature of terrain and methods of cultivation, land is generally held by the people under three broad categories of ownership, namely village or community, clan and individual. The right of ownership implies use and management of land.

Under the provisions of the Balipara Frontier Tract Jhum Land Regulation, 1947 (Regulation 4 of 1947), the customary right of any member or members of a village or a community to cultivate *jhum* land is respected, and individual ownership over land under permanent or semi-permanent cultivation and land attached to a dwelling house is recognised.

1. The Panchayat Raj has been described in detail in Chapter XII

The Regulation 4 of 1947 defines the *jhum* land as follows :

“Jhum Land means and includes all land which any member or members of a village or a community have a customary right to cultivate by means of shifting cultivation or utilise by clearing jungle or grazing livestock, provided that such village or community is in a permanent location, but does not include:

- (i) Any land which has been or is under process or being terraced for the purpose of a permanent or semi-permanent cultivation whether by means of irrigation or not, or
- (ii) any land attached or appurtenant to a dwelling house and used for the purpose of permanent cultivation, or
- (iii) any land which in the opinion of the Political Officer is subject to permanent cultivation.

Explanations: (1) Any land which is otherwise *jhum* land according to the above definition shall be deemed to be so notwithstanding the fact that a part or the whole thereof may have been planted with fruit trees, bamboos or tung, or reserved for growing firewood. (2) A village or community shall be held to be in permanent location if it always remains within a specific area, although a part of the whole of such village or community may migrate from time to time to different localities within that area.

‘Community’ includes the residents of a village as a whole, the clan, sub-clan, phratry or kindred”.

It may be noted that shifting cultivation does not usually mean shifting homesteads, for many villages are old and permanent settlements.

In regard to accrual of customary rights, the Regulation lays down the following :

(1) “A customary right to *jhum* land shall be deemed to be established in favour of a village or a community when such village or community has enjoyed the right to cultivate or utilize such *jhum* land for not less than 5 years prior to the making of this Regulation.

(2) A customary right to *jhum* land shall be deemed to be established in favour of an individual cultivator

- (a) if he has inherited the land in accordance with a local custom or
- (b) if he has purchased the land prior to the making of this Regulation and such purchase was not contrary to local custom, or
- (c) if he has purchased the land at any date subsequent to the making of the Regulation, provided such purchase was not contrary to any local custom or any of the provisions of this Regulation, or
- (d) if, being a resident of a permanent village, he has brought the land under cultivation, and the land has not been cultivated at any time within 30 years preceding his bringing the same into cultivation, provided that such land is within cultivable reach of his own village.

In actual application of the Regulation, local customs and traditions are, however, respected and given due recognition.

The Regulation also provides, "The Government may acquire any *jhum* land required for a public purpose. No formal acquisition proceedings shall be necessary but an opportunity shall be given to those having rights in the land to show cause against such acquisition. Reasonable compensation shall be paid for all land acquired under this section. Land so acquired shall, if relinquished by the Government at any time, be returned to the village, community or individual from whom it was acquired on refund, if any, of such compensation to the Government as the latter may decide."

Ownership of land varies from tribe to tribe but as stated earlier, it can be broadly classified under three common categories of village-land, clan-land and individual-land. Although in early times, village-land in different parts of Arunachal Pradesh was usually co-extensive with the settlement of a single clan, there are more than one clan living in large villages at present.

Each family has a right over plots of village-land, which it has cleared or reclaimed for cultivation. The right descends through the male line, all sons sharing the landed property of the father. Land is not rented out, nor is hired labour usually engaged. A landowner having no son can transfer his right to any male member of his relative within the village, on whom he may depend in his old age. Individual right of possession and cultivation of land is thus recognised and adjusted within the framework of village or communal land. The individual right stands good through all the phases of agricultural operation, and remains suspended only during fallow periods. Cases of land-disputes, which are rare, are submitted to the village council for decision. The system of individual possession of land, where communal ownership is the rule, may also vary from tribe to tribe according to their customs and traditions.

If a person belonging to another clan comes to a village for settlement, he may be allowed by the village council to cultivate a plot of land as allotted to him. "There is a sense in which all subsequent settlers, especially those of other clans and in the smaller villages, are tenants, though in practice they act as full members of the village community. What usually happens is that when a member of another clan is given permission by the council to settle in a village, he is allowed to clear and reclaim a tract of forest which has never been used or has fallen into disuse, or he may borrow land from a family which has more than it wants. Such unutilized land is the property of the village which gives a right of ownership to the family which clears it. Where land is borrowed, however, and particularly when the new settler is not of the founder-clan, he is entitled only use the land so long as he resides on the spot; he cannot transfer his holding even to his own descendants without the permission of the council; and should he go elsewhere his land reverts to the village as a whole."¹

It should be mentioned in this context that in the absence of land legislation, except the Jhum Land Regulation of 1947, the land tenure system followed by different tribal groups is based on their different customary laws. No cadastral survey of the agricultural land in Arunachal Pradesh has been carried out. Land records prepared on the basis of such survey are necessary for collection of any land revenue. The general pattern of land

1. Verrier Elwin, A Philosophy for NEFA, (Shillong, 1964), p.64

tenures, however, is that the *jhum* land 'which any member or members of a village or a community have a customary right to cultivate' is divided into plots for allotment to families, while land under permanent or sedentary cultivation is usually held under individual or private ownership. It may be noted in this context that agriculture in this tribal area is still comparatively free from the problems of land ceilings, landless labour and rural indebtedness.

Jhuming is very much of a co-operative farming. Pertinently, Dr Elwin made an important observation on the tribal idea of land tenure thus : "... the system of *jhum* cultivation provides an excellent foundation for the cooperative communal farming towards which many parts of the world are moving. The introduction of permanent cultivation, however, is turning the minds of the people more and more to the idea of private ownership. We should be on our guard that the new individualism does not lead ultimately to fragmentation and litigation about land. It might be possible to develop wet rice cultivation and terracing on a communal basis through the tribal councils."¹

Jhum Land for public purposes is acquired by negotiation with those having rights in the land on payment of reasonable compensation wherever necessary. Procedures laid down in the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (1 of 1894) are also followed in respect of lands to be acquired by the Government for public purposes. Transfer or sale of land is strictly restricted, admissible to the indigenous tribal people only. The whole area is beyond the 'Inner Line' where outsiders are not normally permitted to settle or make commercial investments, and where no tribesman can sell his land to a non tribesman. The tribal land in this area is well-protected from exploitation by outsiders.

The Jhum Land Regulation enjoins that all customary rights in *jhum* shall be subject to the payment by the person entitled thereto of such rent, taxes and any other dues as may be lawfully imposed from time to time by competent authority.

The net cultivated area comprising the three districts of East and West Kameng and Tawang was estimated at a total 18,085 hectares.² Collection of land revenue is, however, nominal.

Dr Furer-Haimendorf observed that the Monpa system of land tenure differs fundamentally from that of most other peoples of Arunachal Pradesh. The major territorial unit is called *tso*, and a *tso* consists of several villages. Smaller units of *tso* are called *mang*. Both *tso* and *mang* comprise communal land known as *tso-sa* and *mang-sa* respectively.

"Such common land includes cultivable land, pasture and forest. Firewood can be taken freely from such a common forest and timber for buildings can be purchased at a reasonable price from *tso* or *mang* as the case may be. Most grazing land is common and can be utilized by all members of the *tso* or *mang* but there are also some privately owned pastures. Cultivable common land can be tilled by members of the *tso* or *mang* on payment of a modest tax collected by those in charge of the *tso* or *mang* funds. Parts of the common land can also be purchased, not only by *tso* members but also by people belonging to another *tso*. The price has to equal the market price for comparable land in private hands, and the trustees of the *tso* or *mang* funds can refuse to agree to such a purchase.

1. Verrier Elwin, A Philosophy for NEFA (Shillong, 1964), pp.86-87.

2. Source : State Report on Agricultural Census, 1976-77 by the Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Part I, p. 59.

“There is no land-revenue payable to government, but those who purchased common land must pay to the *tso* or *mang* a tax as long as they use the land for cultivation, and such an annual cess amounts to about Rs 5 per acre. Land of this description reverts to the *tso* as soon as the occupier ceases to use it for cultivation. On inherited land no tax has to be paid to the *tso* fund.

“The Tawang monastery also owns land, and this land is leased out to local farmers who pay for the right to till it.”

“The system of leasing land from *tso* or *mang* has the advantage that progressive farmers who do not own sufficient land for experimentation can hire land and improve it by terracing or irrigation. The tax they pay for such land benefits the village community and is often used for social or ritual purposes.

“The greater part of the cultivable land is either privately owned or, though *tso* or *mang* property, held on lease by individuals. Stretches of land in private hands include forests and pasture land, particularly at high altitude where yak-owners have their permanent stone-huts and spend part of the summer.”¹

House Tax

Under the North-East Frontier Agency (Abolition of Poll Tax and Levy of House Tax) Regulation, 1959, which came into force with effect from January 1, 1965, House Tax was levied from the erstwhile Kameng District excluding eastern Kameng at the rate of Rs 2/- per house per annum. House Tax has been collected from this area in pursuance of a decision that the House Tax should not be introduced in the areas where neither House Tax nor Poll Tax was in force at the time of the promulgation of the aforesaid regulation.

Under the provisions of this Regulation, ‘house’ includes an outhouse, a stable, latrine, shed, hut and any other such structure whether of masonry, bricks, wood, leaves, grass, thatch or any other material whatsoever, but does not include any portable shelter.

It has also been provided in the Regulation that the House Tax shall, subject to the prior payment of land revenue, if any, due to the Government in respect of the site of the house, be a first charge upon the house and upon the movable property, if any, found within or upon the same and belonging to the person liable to such tax.

“House Tax shall be levied in the manner hereinafter specified :

- (a) on every house in areas, other than urban areas, belonging to such family units as are pursuing the vocation of agriculture @ Rs 2/- per annum per house;
- (b) on every house in urban areas-
 - (i) in trade site, @ Rs 120/- per annum per bigha in area,
 - (ii) in other site, @ Rs 60/-per annum per bigha in area”²

1. C. von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 156-157.

2. Government Notification No:REV-2/59/141 dated 17.5.1972.

Forest

It was envisaged in an official directive on forest policy issued in April 1958 that the policy in regard to the question of forest rules and the payment of forest royalties in the erstwhile NEFA should be at least not less liberal than that operating in the Autonomous Hill Districts of Assam.¹ It was further declared that it 'must be conditioned by the direct interests of the people and not by our desire to increase revenue by launching upon a policy of exploitation of forests identical with that in other parts of the country.'² The Government policy regarding tribal rights in forests has been formulated in the Jhum Land Regulations of 1947. Besides these, the basic principles of the National Forest Policy of 1952, with some minor modification to suit the local conditions, are followed for the purpose of utilisation and management of the forest resources. Various forest codes, regulations and rules operating in Assam are also applicable.³ Moreover, relevant Central Rules are abided by.

The Balipara Frontier Tract Jhum Land Regulation, 1947 provides that "Subject to any orders that may be made under this Regulation, persons having customary rights to any *jhum* land shall be entitled to forest produce from such land for their own use or for the use of members of their own village or community but shall not, without the permission of the Land Conservator, be entitled to sell or transfer otherwise such produce to any other person." The Regulation further stipulates that "Where a Tribal Council approved by the Governor in this behalf has been set up in any area, any or all of the powers granted to the Land Conservator under the provisions of this Regulation may be vested by the Governor in that Tribal Council in respect of such area and the Land Conservator shall not exercise any powers so vested."

According to the North-East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Regulation, 1967 (Regulation 3 of 1967), any Anchal Samiti is concerned with preservation of forests within its jurisdiction. Under the provisions of the Arunachal Pradesh Anchal Forest Reserve (Constitution and Maintenance) Act, 1975. (Act No. 1 of 1976) as amended Act No.3 of 1981,⁴ an Anchal forest Reserve constituted with an area of an Anchal Samiti shall be managed by the State Government for the purpose of improving the quality of timber by raising valuable plantations so as to bring progressively increasing returns from the forest produce for welfare of the local people. The State Government shall retain every year fifty per cent of the net revenue of the year derived from the Anchal Forest Reserve, and the other fifty per cent of the net revenue of the year in equal share be transferred to the concerned Anchal Samiti and Village ('village' as defined under clause (XII) of Section 2 of the NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation, 1967) every year after annual recovery of ten per cent of the capital expenditure borne initially by the State Government until it is fully recovered. The Anchal Samiti shall utilise fifty per cent of their share of revenue for the developmental activities of the village concerned.

1. Dr. Verrier Elwin, B. Shastri and I. Simon (ed.), Important Directives on Administration of NEFA, (Shillong, 1967), p.14.

2. Verrier Elwin, A Philosophy for NEFA, (Shillong, 1964), pp. 67-68

3. Vide the Assam Gazette Notification No. For 4/48/7 of May 1, 1948.

4. Vide the Arunachal Pradesh Gazette, Extraordinary Issue No.161 dated September 28, 1981 and No.168 dated November 23, 1981.

The forest revenue collected from the districts for the last three years is as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Districts</u>	<u>Revenue (Rs. in thousand)</u>
1982-83	East Kameng	254.39
	West Kameng and Tawang	3181.68
1983-84	East Kameng	302.54
	West Kameng and Tawang	6505.52
1984-85	East Kameng	418.78
	West Kameng and Tawang	7037.51

The gross revenue earned by the Forest Department during 1990-91 is as follows¹ :—

<u>Year</u>	<u>Districts</u>	<u>Revenue (Rs. in lakh)</u>
1990-91	Tawang	6.89
	West Kameng	333.86
	East Kameng	333.86

1. Source : Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1991.

CHAPTER X

LAW AND ORDER AND JUSTICE

Administration of Justice

Under the provisions of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Regulation 1 of 1945) and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Act 2 of 1974), the criminal and civil justice are administered by the Deputy Commissioners, Assistant commissioners and the village authorities. The Deputy Commissioners also exercise powers analogous to those of a Session Judge. The Assistant Commissioners are vested with powers not exceeding those of a Judicial Magistrate of First Class as defined in the Code of Criminal Procedure. The Extra Assistant Commissioners and the Circle Officers are appointed as Ex-officio Assistant commissioners for the purposes of administration of civil and criminal justice only and are invested with powers of a Judicial Magistrate of the First Class or the Second Class.

Chapters VIII, X and XI of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 have been brought into force in the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh together with the provisions of Section 2,3,5,20 to 23 (both inclusive), 373 and Chapter V so much of this chapter as applies to the arrest of any person belonging to one or more categories of persons specified in Sections 109 or 110 (with certain modifications) with effect from the 1st April, 1974. Subsequently Chapters IV, V and XII of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 have also been extended by the Administrator of Arunachal Pradesh in exercise of the powers conferred by the Government of India under Notification No. U-11030/1/78-UTL dated 8-11-1979. These Chapters have not been extended to the whole of the state of Arunachal Pradesh, but only to certain areas within a radial distance of 5 km from the district headquarters and 500 yds on both sides of the roads leading from Assam to the district headquarters. In other procedural matters the spirits of the Code of Criminal Procedure are the guiding principles. While administering civil and criminal justice the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 is not applicable but the authorities administering justice are to be guided by the general principles of the Indian Evidence Act. Judiciary and the Executive have not been separated. In accordance with sub-section (1) of Section 20 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 various officers were appointed as Executive Magistrates and also under sub-section (2) of Section 20 of the same code, the Deputy Commissioners are appointed as District Magistrates. Some of the Executive Magistrates are also appointed as ex-officio Assistant Commissioners for the purposes of administration of civil and criminal justice only, and are invested with the powers of a Judicial Magistrate of either First Class or Second Class as the case may be in accordance with the provisions of Section 18 of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Regulation 1 of 1945) and Section 3 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974). The District Magistrates and Executive Magistrates are also empowered to hold inquest in accordance with Section 174(4) of the new code of Criminal Procedure.

The regulation 1 of 1945 provides conferment of powers on village authorities to try any case involving any of the undermentioned criminal offences in which the person or persons accused is or are resident within their jurisdiction :

Theft, including theft in a building.

Mischief, not being mischief by fire or any explosive substance.

Simple hurt.

Criminal trespass or house trespass.

Assault or using criminal force.

The statutory village authorities have also powers to impose a fine for any offence which they are competent to try and may also award payment in restitution or compensation to the extent of the injury sustained. Vested also with powers in civil matters, the village authorities can try all suits in which both the parties are indigenous to the state and live within their jurisdiction. The cases which are beyond the legal powers of the village authorities are tried by the civil officials empowered for the purpose.

The statutory village authorities are different from the customary or traditional tribal or village councils in their composition and legal jurisdiction.

The tribal councils can still exercise powers to settle disputes arising in the village. In fact, they try most of the civil cases and very minor criminal offences.

Incidence of Crime

The incidence of crimes as reported to the police stations and registered in a period of three years from 1982 to 1984 is remarkably low in all the three districts, particularly in Tawang and East Kameng. This is indicative of the fact that the law and order situation in this region was peaceful.

The nature and number of crimes recorded by the police are as follows :

Nature of Crimes	Number of crimes			
	1982		1983	
	East Kameng	West Kameng including Tawang	East Kameng	West Kameng including Tawang
1	2	3	4	5
Murder	1	4	2	4
Culpable homicide	1	1	—	—
Rape	1	1	—	1
Kidnapping	—	1	—	4
Dacoity	—	—	—	—
Robbery	1	2	—	1
Riot	—	—	—	2
Burglary	13	16	6	22
Theft	5	30	5	24
Criminal breach of trust	4	1	1	1
Explosive Substance Act	2	—	—	—
Other IPC offences	14	66	17	79
Arms Act	—	1	—	1
Total	42	123	31	129

(in number)

District	Murder	Dacoity	Burglary	Theft	Robbery	Kidna- pping	Riots	Culpable Homi- cide	Counter- ties coining	Miscell- aneous	Total Crimes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1984											
Tawang	2	—	2	6	—	—	—	3	—	12	25
West Kameng	3	—	12	23	5	1	2	—	—	65	111
East Kameng	1	—	14	7	—	—	—	—	—	16	38
1985											
Tawang	—	—	4	5	—	—	—	—	—	14	23
West Kameng	7	—	20	25	3	1	1	—	—	44	101
East Kameng	4	—	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	20	28
1986											
Tawang	2	—	5	8	—	—	1	—	—	15	31
West Kameng	—	—	12	23	2	1	—	—	—	70	108
East Kameng	6	1	7	12	1	—	—	—	—	34	61
1987-88											
Tawang	1	—	4	9	1	—	—	—	—	32	47
West Kameng	6	—	7	39	1	2	1	—	—	97	153
East Kameng	1	1	5	13	2	2	—	—	—	41	65
1988											
Tawang	3	—	19	9	—	2	—	—	—	35	68
West Kameng	1	1	17	39	3	4	—	—	—	89	154
East Kameng	5	—	18	10	2	2	2	—	—	54	93
1989											
Tawang	1	—	10	7	—	—	—	—	—	26	44
West Kameng	—	2	22	23	3	4	2	—	—	91	147
East Kameng	4	1	21	15	1	1	1	—	—	59	103
1991											
Tawang	—	—	—	13	—	—	—	—	—	23	36
West Kameng	2	2	19	28	5	3	—	—	—	93	152
East Kameng	—	—	20	15	3	2	1	—	—	71	112

Source : Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1986 to 1991.

Organisation of Police Force

The Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Regulation 1 of 1945) which extends to the frontier tracts now known as Arunachal Pradesh provides the following for police:

“The ordinary duties of police in respect of crime shall be discharged by the village authorities. They shall maintain peace and order within their jurisdiction.

“The village authorities shall not be deemed to be police officers for purposes of section 25 and section 26 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 or the section 162 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (since repealed by Act II of 1974).

“The village authorities shall watch and report on any vagrant, or any bad or suspicious character found within their jurisdiction, and may apprehend any such person if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that he has committed or is about to commit an offence, and shall hand over any person so apprehended to the Deputy Commissioner or an Assistant Commissioner.

“Every Civil Police Station shall be under the control of the Deputy Commissioner, but its administration with regard to the pay, allowances, clothing, transfer and discipline of the staff shall be vested in the Superintendent of Police of the District which furnished the staff or such other Police Officer as the Government may appoint in this behalf, provided that transfer shall be made in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner.”¹

There was no regular civil police force in Arunachal Pradesh before 1971-72. The duties of police were performed by the Central Reserve Police Force and other reserved police forces, and also by the Assam Rifles. With the enforcement of the Police Act, 1861 in Arunachal Pradesh from 1972, the Police Department of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh has been set up for organisation of the police force. The department is headed by an Inspector General of Police with his headquarters at Itanagar. He is assisted at the headquarters by two Assistant Inspector General of Police.

The district organisation of the civil police force is headed by the District Superintendent of Police.

The Superintendent of Police (S.B) and telecommunication also have their office at Itanagar and they assist the Inspector General of Police in their specialised fields.

The following table indicates the details of the police organisations in the three districts as in the year 1985.

Particulars	East Kameng	West Kameng	Tawang
Police Station	1	4	2
Police Outpost/ Check Post	1	—	1
District Superintendent of Police	1	1	1
Inspector	1	2	1
Sub-Inspector	5	11	3
Assistant Sub-Inspector	2	3	1
Head Constable	11	22	4
Constable	50	116	52

1. The A.P. Code, Vol I, (Itanagar, 1982), pp. 55-56.

The following table indicates the details of the police organisations in the three districts as on 30.6.94¹.

Particulars	East Kameng	West Kameng	Tawang
Police Station	3	6	3
Police Outpost	1	—	N.A.
Check Post	3	1	N.A.
Rankwise deployment of Police Personnel.			
1. District Superintendent of Police	—	1	N.A.
2. Deputy Superintendent of Police	1	1	N.A.
3. Inspectors	2	2	N.A.
4. Sub-Inspector	8	21	N.A.
5. Assistant Sub-Inspector	8	14	N.A.
6. Head Constable	19	39	N.A.
7. Constable	86	121	N.A.

The location of the police stations and outposts/check post is as follows:

District	Police Station	Outpost	Check Post
East Kameng	Seppa	Seijosa	—
West Kameng	Bomdila, Rupa Kalaktang and Dirang	—	—
Tawang	Tawang and Lumla	—	Dongsingma

The location of the Police Station, Police Outpost and Check Post as on 30-6-94 as follows.²

District	Police Station with location	Out post with location	Check post
East Kameng	Seppa Sijusa Chayangtojo	Bana	3
West Kameng	Bomdila Dirang Rupa Kalaktang Nafra Bhalukpung	Nil	1
Tawang	Tawang Lumla Jang	Nil	Nil

1. Source: DISPOL Bomdila, S.P. Tawang and S.P. Seppa.

The Police Stations have very limited jurisdiction. They can take cognizance of all crimes within 5 km radial from its location and 500 metres on either side of the roads leading to district headquarters from Assam. Investigation of a case beyond this area is done by the Police Department only under specific instruction of the Magistrate.

Jails and Lock-ups

There is no jail in any district. Lock-ups are parts of the police stations wherever they exist, but all stations do not have the lock-ups. The police stations at Seppa, Bomdila, Rupa and Kalaktang have a lock-up each.

Organisation of Civil and Criminal Courts

There are no regularly constituted civil or criminal courts in Arunachal Pradesh. Under the provisions of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Regulation 1 of 1945), the executive officers empowered for the purpose are vested with judicial powers and they are competent to try civil and criminal cases including major and heinous criminal offences. The Regulation 1 to 1945 confers wide criminal and civil powers on the Deputy Commissioners. As regards the trial of cases including civil cases, the Regulation 1 of 1945 is still the law of procedure in Arunachal Pradesh.

Legal Profession and Bar Association

At present, lawyers drawn from the neighbouring district bars of Assam assist in conducting the cases. A panel of lawyers approved by the Government is prepared for this purpose. There is no Bar Association in the districts. A few lawyers from the tribal people of the State have entered the legal profession.

Customary Law and Justice in Tribal Societies

After the establishment of regular administration over the whole area covering East and West Kameng and Tawang Districts, the serious crimes are now dealt with by the competent civil authorities themselves according to the law of the Government instead of tribal customary laws.

Apart from the Government, justice is also administered by the village or inter-village councils of various tribal groups in accordance with their traditional practices and customary laws. These councils have been described in detail in Chapter XII relating to Local Self-Government. A system of compensation or restitution is commonly followed by the councils for settlement of disputes and award of punishments. In pursuance of the tribal customs and traditions, serious crimes, even a case of murder, as already stated, can be compromised by payment of suitable compensation or fine instead of inflicting corporal punishment.

The following is an account based on research works indicating how justice is administered by various tribal councils of this region according to their tradition and customary laws.

Monpa

In the Monpa society, a tsorgen, whose powers and functions have been delineated in Chapter XII, exercise administrative jurisdiction over a large village or a cluster of small villages. He is also vested with judicial powers enabling him to try civil and criminal cases. In the changed circumstances today, he now exercises this power only in minor criminal cases, while major offences, such as murder, are tried by the competent government authorities. A tsorgen is chosen by the villagers in an informal election, and his office

continues to exist even after the introduction of Panchayat Raj in 1967. He is assisted by the village council in discharging his duties.

"... An appeal lies from the tsorgen to the General Assembly and from the General Assembly to the local administrative officer. While leave of the tsorgen has to be taken to appeal against his decision to the General Assembly, such permission is a pure formality and is never denied. The General Assembly may, at its discretion, refuse to take cognizance of the appeal and may refer the case back to the tsorgen or to the higher court of the administrative officer. The General Assembly is in theory competent to reverse a decision of the tsorgen though such a reversal never takes place unless accompanied by an expression of lack of confidence in him which usually leads to his resignation.

"In all petty civil and criminal cases, the first report is laid with the tsorgen who generally takes cognizance of it and rarely refers it back to the tsobla or thumi. The complainant (dondepa) is required to pay a court fee or shyosum khatha to the tsorgen in all major cases. This fee consists of a scarf and a rupee in cash and need not be credited to the village fund. In petty cases, the court fee consists of sumten, a fee which includes a scarf, a quantity of rice-beer and provisions such as eggs etc. No cash payment is made. If the case is taken cognizance of by the tsorgen, the court fee is retained, returning the fee being tantamount to refusing to take cognizance of the case. Where the tsorgen agrees to deal with a complaint, he summons the defendant by the despatch of a dopche, which is a stone with his seal upon it, by the hand of the gomin or thumi. It is the duty of all the hamlets located on the route between the tsorgens's headquarters and the place where the defendant is staying, to pass on the dopche from one hamlet to the next. On receipt in the defendant's hamlet the gomin or thumi of the place is required to leave immediately for the tsorgen, obtain the details of the case from him and arrange to produce the donda kaptuepa (defendant) on the date fixed by him. The gomin or thumi normally conveys the message to the defendant through the tsobla. The defendant presents himself before the tsorgen on the date fixed and explains his version of the facts of the case, after depositing the customary fee of shyosum khata or sumten. After recording the defendant's statement, the tsorgen summons both parties to the dispute to appear before him for the actual trial. The first part of the trial is the summing up by the tsorgen of the statements made before him earlier. This summing-up is known as shyolep and is followed by the judgement, unless either of the two parties has fresh evidence to put forward. The tsorgen may invite members of his council or other elders to aid him in assessing the evidence. The judgement is known as tsama and any fine imposed, as khangye. Copies of the shyolep and tsama with the tsorgen's seal are handed over to the parties to the dispute and a copy is retained by the tsorgen for the village archives (yiktsong). The two parties to the dispute are required to sign this copy in the presence of witnesses (khakyas). Where judgement includes the payment of a fine, this paid in the presence of the tsorgen, along with a khata, and is known as khardong-drotang. The limit up to which a tsorgen can impose a fine is nowadays twelve rupees, though till about ten years ago, various villages permitted the tsorgen to levy fines up to thirty-two rupees. After this is done the two parties to the dispute have to pay an additional court fee called singshu to the tsorgen. This consists normally of a scarf and four rupees by each party. Where both parties to the dispute are found guilty and fined, the amounts realized may be retained by the tsorgen or credited at his discretion to the village fund. The amounts may also be used by the

tsorgen for entertaining the council members or other elders whom he may have called in as assessors.

"The tsorgen may nominate any villager under his jurisdiction to adjudicate in any dispute which has come to his notice, and which he does not propose to try formally. The mediator, who is known as *dumpa*, is not entitled to any payment from the tsorgen or the village council. If he has satisfactorily adjudicated in the dispute, the parties may, at their discretion, pay him a *lekhsu*. This normally consists of gifts in kind and is intended to recompense the *dumpa* for time spent by him in solving the dispute. Petty cases which do not have to be referred to the tsorgen at all are disposed of by the *tsobla*. Unlike the tsorgen, the *tsobla* cannot try cases by himself and must assemble a *mangma* (panel or jurors or assessors). The composition of the panel, including the number of persons called, depends on the *tsobla*'s discretion. *Gomins* and *thumis* are required to attend the meeting but cannot participate in the discussion. After listening to the various pleas put forward the *mangma* or the jury advises the *tsobla* on the judgement which can be given. The *mangma*'s advice is normally regarded as binding on the *tsobla*"¹

After about two decades of the publication of the quoted passage above, Dr. Furer-Haimendorf observed:

Most disputes concern rights to land and usually involve putting forward conflicting claims to inherited private holdings. Other disputes arise from divorce cases or other quarrels over women, or result from drunken brawls. In Tawang I was told that such minor disputes are usually settled by the *gaonbura* of the village or *mang*, and are not brought before the *tsorgen* and *tso* council.

"In recent years the authority system has been somewhat complicated by the appointment of *gaonbura* whose authority is ultimately derived from government even though they follow the traditional methods of settling disputes. In the Gyangar *mang* of the Sher-tso, for instance, there was until 1978 one *tsorgen*, but because of internal disputes government was asked to appoint *gaonbura*, one for Gyangar and two hamlets, and one for the remaining hamlets.

"Similarly the system of *gram panchayat* has been superimposed on the traditional village government. Thus in Tawang sub-division there were in 1980 altogether 32 *gram panchayat* with 146 members as well as two *anchal samithi* with 24 members. So far no conflicts seem to have arisen from these innovations, and the traditional *tsorgen* have usually been elected to the new bodies."²

Aka

"The laws followed by the *mele* (the village council) are largely based on customs and conventions. In a case of theft, a meeting of the village council is convened when it receives a report to this effect. The council then calls an explanation from the suspect. If he admits the charge, yet asserts the righteousness of his act (which is not uncommon in such cases), saying that he had to commit the offence in retaliation or reparation of some earlier injury caused to him by the person concerned, the village council finds itself indeed in a fix. It has then to weigh both the issues in the light of circumstantial evidence before giving its final verdict. Where the culprit admits the fault but fails to assign any sound reason for its commitment, he has to pay some compensation to the person whom

1. Verrier Elwin, *Democracy in NEFA*, (Shillong 1965), pp. 63-66.

2. C. von Furer Haimendorf, *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh*, (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 158-159.

he may have caused harm or discomfort. If he fails to do so, he may be left at the mercy of the person to whom he stands a culprit. He may also be required to take a pledge before the council for not committing the act in future...

"Dispensation of justice to all is the primary concern of the administrative machinery of the Akas. Murder being a highly anti-social act arouses strong sentiment of anger towards the murderer and pity towards the victim; it leads to an attitude of antipathy on the part of the community towards the criminals. 'No one has a right to take the life of any person unless it may be inevitable in some way,' is the common maxim and the basic principle of justice known to the Aka people. This may mean more or less that to take one's life is permissible only under the canons of justice. This principle is complemented by a second one which requires that 'no one inciting or responsible for such a heinous crime would go unpunished'.

"Cases of murder, which generally warrant capital punishment, are weighed on these two maxims. In the meantime, full opportunity is given to the culprit to argue his case and convince the members of the council, if possible, either of his innocence in the matter or of the justification of his act. The justification of the offence is usually sought to be established by accounting some previous offence caused to the criminal, in retribution of which only he had to resort to the criminal act on his part. If the criminal succeeds in convincing the council in his favour, no punishment may be meted out to him.

"Even when the indictment against an assassin is established on evidence, he may be required, *at worst*, to pay some penalty of the victim's family who has sustained a loss by his action. The amount to penalty that may be imposed, as such, varies according to the rank and status of the victim. If he happens to be a man of prominence in his community whose loss may not be a loss only to his family but a loss to the society as well, the price that may be demanded in reparation of the crime is nothing less than fifteen or twenty mithuns. Besides this penalty, the culprit has also to give a feast to the whole village community, to soothe the antagonism between the two parties in dispute.

"If the culprit fails to pay the penalty demanded, or if he is intransigent, he may be handed over to the family of the victim which may then keep him as a captive till he agrees to pay the penalty. His life may then naturally be in the hands of his victim's people. This is supposed to be the practicable method to ensure proper retribution and to guarantee full justice under such circumstances. Normally, the loss of a person is always considered to be compensated by remunerative penalties. To the Aka mind, probably, there seems to be no such crime as may not admit of some compensation or the other. Capital punishment, though not wholly unknown to the Akas, is enforced only in the last resort."¹

Sherdukpen

"Important villages have separate buildings where the proceedings of the council are conducted. First, the plaintiff makes a complaint to the Gaonbura. The village council then assembles to hear both sides. The case is discussed at the meeting and the opinion of the majority usually prevails. The award is given by the Gaonbura and is final, subject, however, to certain limitations.

"If the dispute cannot be settled by discussion, it is solved by oath or ordeal. If, however, even this is not acceptable, the aggrieved party can appeal to the local administrative officer...

1. Raghuvir Sinha, *The Akas*, (Shillong, 1962), pp.102-106.

"Oaths and ordeals, through which the aid of supernatural agencies is invoked, are resorted to when the ordinary methods of ensuring justice fail. They are essentially a class of evidence by themselves and are practised to affix responsibility or to determine the true culprit for a particular offence. After the truth is established, fine is imposed upon the guilty."¹

Sulung

The Sulungs do not have any code of law of their own for administration of justice. They are by and large traditionally subservient to their powerful neighbours—the Bangnis and the Mijis, who are virtually their masters. It is these masters who decide all major criminal cases and settle serious disputes that may arise among the Sulungs or involve the Sulungs. The masters try such cases in consultation with the elders of their respective villages. The Sulungs can for themselves deal with only minor offences. In case of a trivial dispute, the village elders are invited by the plaintiff to assemble at a place in the village for a hearing. The judgement of the elders is regarded as decisive and binding by the plaintiff as well as defendant, and honoured as such by the villagers. This procedure is followed by the Sulungs irrespective of all disputes, whether inter-village or intra-village.

Cases of theft are decided by imposition of fine, which the offender is to pay immediately failing which he is to suffer corporal punishment. The amount of fine is usually higher than the value of the thing stolen.

Murder cases are adjudicated by the masters of the Sulungs. The usual punishment is that the master of the accused Sulung is to pay a fine of two mithuns, one cow and one bead called *moje* as compensation to the master of the murdered Sulung.

In former times, if the accused in a case of murder of a Sulung happened to be his own master, no fine was normally imposed on the murderer as the master had unrestricted right over his Sulung serfs, whom he could even sell out.

Today, the Sulungs of Dache, Pari and Kopik villages enjoy the right to decide their cases by themselves, whereas the Sulungs of other villages are yet to get that right².

Bangni

In the old days serious crimes even cases of murder were tried and settled through the Bangni *yallung*. Today, petty disputes in a village are settled in the *yallung* (local arbitration council) with the help of mediators, village headman and elders, and major criminal offences are adjudicated by the government. In fact, the villagers now rely on the government for settlement of all major cases, civil and criminal, for they have come to know that verdict of a government law court gives them legal protection against injustice and ensures safety and security. When in a case the disputing parties are not satisfied with the settlement made at the village level, they approach the government for judgement. The government, if the case is taken up, sends its Political Interpreter with necessary *parawanas* in the name of both the parties. A gist of the proceedings and the decision taken in a prolonged sitting of the two parties in which the Political Interpreter remains present is submitted to the judicial magistrate, who examines it thoroughly and gives his verdict. Executed under his seal and signature the document of verdict is also signed or attested by thumb impressions by the parties concerned.

1. R.R.P. Sharma, *The Sherdukpens*, (Shillong, 1961), pp. 70-71.

2. See R.K. Deuri, *The Sulungs*, (Shillong, 1982), pp. 70-72, for details.

CHAPTER XI

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Deputy Commissioner is the administrative head of a district. He has the controlling and superintending responsibilities for all works done in the district-administrative as well as developmental. The district administration and the developmental works are carried out in close co-ordination with each other, with the Deputy Commissioner functioning as the co-ordinating authority. The technical officers of the development departments are under the general administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner at the district level. In accordance with the 'Single Line Pattern of Administration', the technical officers at different levels are responsible to the executive officers concerned for the developmental works in the district, and to the departmental heads concerned for technical matters, such as formulation of plans, schemes, and their implementation. The Deputy Commissioner is assisted by the subordinate executive officers on the administrative side and by the technical officers on the development side.

The organic set-up of the government departments in the districts has been shown in some detail in Chapters I and IX. Besides the establishments of the Deputy Commissioner, Extra Assistant Commissioners and Circle Officers, the following development and technical departments are functioning in the districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang.

Agriculture Department

The Agriculture Department is headed by a Director at the State level. He is assisted at the headquarters by Joint Directors, Deputy Directors and other subordinate officers.

The district organisations of this department in East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang are each in charge of a District Agriculture Officer with their headquarters at Seppa, Bomdila and Tawang respectively. They are key functionaries of the department for all developmental activities within their jurisdiction. The District Agriculture Officers are assisted by Agriculture Inspectors stationed at various places, Farm Managers, Statistical Inspectors, Agricultural Census Inspectors and also Village Level Workers at the village level. A District Horticulture Officer assisted by Horticulture Inspectors has been stationed at Bomdila.

The Agriculture Department in the districts is responsible for implementation of development programmes and plan schemes concerning development of agriculture including horticulture by improved and scientific methods, extension of permanent cultivation, multiple cropping, irrigation by diversion channels, supply of fertilisers, modern agricultural implements and machinery and seeds including high yielding varieties, plant protection, training and demonstrations, agricultural census etc.

Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary consists of a Director, a Joint Director and Deputy Directors besides others at the headquarters at Itanagar. The department at the district level is in charge of a District Veterinary Officer, who is assisted by a number of Veterinary Assistant Surgeons, Supervisory Veterinary Field Assistants and Assistant Farm Managers deployed at different places.

The activities of the department relate to upgrading of cattle, sheep and pigs, protection of livestock and poultry against diseases, establishment and management of veterinary dispensaries

and aid centres and mobile veterinary dispensaries for treatment of sick animals and birds, dairy farming and milk supply.

Co-operative Department

The Co-operative Department is headed at the State level by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies who is assisted at the headquarters by a Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies and an Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies. The Registrar being the departmental head guides and directs the co-operative activities in the districts.

The district organisation of the department in West Kameng and Tawang is each under the charge of an Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies and in East Kameng presently under a Sub-Inspector of Co-operative Societies, who all work under the administrative control of the concerned Deputy Commissioner. They are assisted by auditors, accountants and Inspectors in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

The object of the department is to promote co-operative enterprises in order to meet the essential needs of the people and contribute to the growth of economy and commerce through savings and investment. Quite a number of co-operative societies have been functioning in these districts in various sectors of development, such as consumer, transport, farming, labour etc.

Education Department

The departmental head of the Education Department at the State level is the Director of Public Instruction, who is assisted at the headquarters by Joint Directors and Deputy Directors.

A District Education Officer is in charge of the department in each district with headquarters at Bomdila, Tawang and Seppa. Acting under the guidance and direction of the Director of Public Instruction, he is responsible for promotion of education and proper functioning of the schools under his jurisdiction. The primary, middle and secondary schools are supervised by him with the assistance of Assistant District Education Officers, who are posted to district and sub-divisional headquarters. The secondary schools are looked after by the Headmasters. The higher secondary schools are headed by the Principals who are concerned with their management.

Economics and Statistics Department

The activities of the department of Economics and Statistics are guided by a Director at the State level. He is assisted at the headquarters by Deputy Director, Research Officers and Statistical Officers.

The district set-up of the department in East Kameng and West Kameng is each under the charge of a District Statistical Officer, while in Tawang it is under an Inspector of Statistics. They are respectively assisted by Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of Statistics and Field Investigators.

The district organisation of the department has been engaged in collection, analysis and compilation of basic statistical data, publication of district and sub-divisional statistical handbooks and abstracts, matters relating to economic and statistical surveys and studies, economic census, manpower, planning etc. The reports sent by them to the directorate are evaluated and compiled for bringing out various statistical publications in consolidated form.

The district heads of the department also act as technical advisers to the Deputy Commissioners in economic and statistical matters.

Engineering Department

The Public Works Department of Arunachal Pradesh is headed by a Chief Engineer at the State level. He is assisted at the headquarters by a number of Engineers Surveyor of Works. There are five engineering circles with one Superintending Engineer in charge of each circle. Besides them, the department has one more Superintending Engineer for electrical works and one Senior Architect. A planning division is attached to each circle.

At present there are two Chief Engineers in the charge of Zone-I and Zone-II respectively with their headquarters at Itanagar.

Besides, there is one Chief Engineer in the charge of power is also stationed at Itanagar.

At the district level, the circles are divided into a number of divisions, each under the charge of an Executive Engineer, who is assisted at different levels by Assistant Executive Engineers, Assistant Engineers and other technical staff. Rupa PWD Circle with headquarters at Rupa in West Kameng is concerned with the engineering activities in this region.

Functioning under the technical guidance of the Chief Engineer and the Superintending Engineer of the circle, the district organisation of the department is responsible for execution of the development programmes relating to construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and buildings as well as electrical works, rural electrification, medium irrigation and other engineering works.

Fishery Department

Headed by a Chief Fishery Officer, at the State level, the Department of Fishery has a Fishery Biologist at the headquarters at Itanagar and a number of Superintendents of Fishery posted in different districts of Arunachal Pradesh.

The activities and achievements of this department have been described in detail in Chapter IV under the sub-head Fishery.

Forest Department

The Forest Department is headed at the State level by a Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, who is also ex-officio Secretary (Forests). He is assisted at the headquarters at Itanagar by an Additional Chief Conservator of Forests, a Chief Wild Life Warden, Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests for administration and planning respectively, Conservator of Forests for working plan, resources and survey and a Forest Utilisation Officer for industry, commercial supply of timber etc.

For the purpose of administration, the State is divided into three territorial circles of forest, namely Eastern Circle, Central Circle and Western Circle with their headquarters at Tezu, Pasighat and Banderdewa respectively.

Under the jurisdiction of the Conservator of Forests, Western Circle, there are in the East and West Kameng and Tawang districts eight forests divisions, which are each in charge of a Divisional Forest Officer designated as Deputy Conservator of Forests. The forest divisions are further divided into a number of forest ranges and beats.

The forest Department has been striving for scientific development and management of forests through execution of various plan schemes, such as artificial plantation, afforestation, aided natural regeneration, social forestry etc. Besides these, special efforts are made by the department for preservation of wild life and management of sanctuary for birds and animals.

Industries Department

Headed by a Director at the State level the Industries Department has its organisational set-up in each district under the charge of either an Assistant Director or a Deputy Director. The Director is assisted at the headquarters by a Deputy Director, a number of Assistant Directors of whom one is for sericulture and some other subordinate officers. The district heads of the department are assisted by Extension Officers, Instructors, Demonstrators, Supervisors of Crafts etc.

The activities of the Industries Department at the district level comprise establishment and development of modern industries, upliftment of cottage industries development and management of craft centres to promote indigenous tribal arts and crafts and sericulture. The department is also concerned with industrial subsidies and loans provided to small-scale and medium industrial units by the Arunachal Pradesh Industrial Development and Financial Corporation Ltd. With the growth of a large number of small industries, gradual industrial development in these districts is under way.

Information and Public Relations Department

The district organisation of the department in East Kameng and West Kameng is headed by a District Information and Public Relations Officer. Under the control of the Deputy Commissioner concerned and the technical guidance of the Director of Information and Public Relations, who is the head of department at the State level, he deals with matters relating to dissemination of information, government publicity and mass communication with the assistance of a staff of Radio Mechanic, Operator of film projection units and others. For the purpose of tourism, a staff including a Receptionist and a Tourist Information Assistant have been posted in the West Kameng District. A Radio Mechanic and an Operator have been working in the Tawang District.

Health Department

The Director of Health Services is the head of the Health Department at the State level. He is assisted at the headquarters by Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors and a State Family Welfare Officer. Besides them, there are a State T. B. Officer and a Zonal Leprosy Officer at the headquarters. The district organisation of the department is headed by a District Medical Officer. A Senior Medical Officer is in charge of the department in Tawang working under the guidance and direction of the Director, the District Medical Officer assisted by the subordinate Medical Officers in his jurisdiction is responsible for execution of all health schemes taken up by the department for providing medical care to the people and extension of medical facilities to wider areas. He also supervises the management of hospitals, dispensaries and health units. Moreover, he acts as a technical adviser to the Deputy Commissioner in all matters relating to medical and public health comprising curative, preventive and promotive services. The organisation chart of the department is shown in Chapter XIV. Various medical teams connected with NSEP, NMEP etc. work under the general guidance of the District Medical Officer. The department is also concerned with sanitation and vital statistics.

Research Department

The Research Department headed by a Director at the State level consists of cultural, historical, philological, archive, registration and publication sections. The district set-up of the department in the West Kameng District is headed by a District Research Officer with

his headquarters at Bomdila, who is assisted by a Language Officer for philological research, an Assistant Research Officer for cultural research and a Keeper for the District Museum and the District Library. The area of studies and research work in different fields done by them covers the other two districts of East Kameng and Tawang as well. A research unit for archival works concerning mainly the Buddhist monasteries has been functioning at Tawang.

Research officers belonging to different disciplines are at work in the districts under the general guidance and direction of the Director of Research, who is the head of the department at the State level. They are mainly devoted to researches in social and cultural anthropology, archaeology and history, philology and preservation and promotion of the material culture of various tribes living in this region.

The district heads of the department also act as adviser to the Deputy Commissioners concerned on the questions of tribal welfare and culture.

Rural Development Department

The Department of Rural Development has been formed with a Director as its head at the State level. He is assisted at the headquarters by a Joint Director, a Research Officer, a Programme Officer and an Economic Investigator.

A District Rural Development Officer holds the charge of the department in each district. He discharges his duties and responsibilities with the assistance of Assistant Project Officers, and a staff of other subordinate officials.

The main emphasis of the activities of the department is on implementation of the programmes for eradication of poverty and generation of employment for the rural poor. The programmes of rural development are as follows:

- (1) Integrated Rural Development Programme,
- (2) National Rural Employment Programme,
- (3) Assistance to small and marginal farmers,
- (4) Integrated Child Development Services,
- (5) Functional Literacy for adult women,
- (6) Community Development Programme,
- (7) Special Nutrition Programme and
- (8) Social Welfare.

Of the above programmes the first five are centrally sponsored. The Special Nutrition Programme is a component of Minimum Needs Programme for improving the nutrition status of the rural people. The provision under Social Welfare is utilised for providing infrastructural support to the welfare services rendered by the Social Welfare Advisory Board.

With a view to strengthening the organisational set-up and the administration machinery for proper planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the various poverty alleviation programmes of the department, a District Rural Development Agency with the Deputy Commissioner of the district concerned as Chairman and the District Rural Development Officer as Member-Secretary has been established in each district. All the heads of technical and development departments as well as public representatives, namely the Members of Legislative Assembly, the Vice-Chairman of Zilla Parishad and others are also included as members of the agency. These agencies are registered societies constituted as autonomous bodies for the purpose of effective and speedy implementation of various programmes. These

agencies started functioning formally from October 1983.

Rural Works Department

Headed by a Chief Engineer at the State level, the Rural Works Department has the following organisational set-up in the three districts under the jurisdiction of the Rural Works Circle II under a Superintending Engineer.

District	Division	Rural Works Sub-division
East Kameng	Seppa	(1) Seppa (2) Khenewa (3) Seijosa
West Kameng	Bomdila	(1) Bomdila (2) Kalaktang
Tawang	Bomdila	(1) Tawang (2) Lumla

The Tawang District is presently under the Rural Works Division headquartered at Bomdila.

The Chief Engineer is assisted at the headquarters by Surveyor of Works, Engineering Officer, one Executive Engineer (Mechanical) and one Accounts Officer. There are Assistant Engineers under each Surveyor of Works.

A rural works division is under the charge of an Executive Engineer, while a sub-division is under an Assistant Engineer. They are assisted at their respective levels by Assistant Surveyor of Works, Junior Engineers, Technical Assistants and other staff.

The Rural Works Department has been functioning in the districts for implementation of various developmental schemes comprising land development and minor irrigation, rural water supply, soil and water conservation, watershed management, *jhum* control, as well as matters relating to fishery and various other schemes under grants-in-aid. The department also undertakes construction of rural link roads and houses.

CHAPTER XII

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

History of Local Self-Government

The traditional village or tribal councils of the people constitute a system of local self-government in Arunachal Pradesh. These councils may vary from tribe to tribe in composition, powers and privileges, but they have certain features in common. They are all time-honoured political institutions deriving their authority from the age-old traditions of the people. They function as village governments, and they are the expression of the will and power of the whole people. They are supported by social and religious sanctions. The councils are informal in character except for the Monpa councils (or the Adi Bangos in Siang) which seem to be more highly organised. The people composing the councils are elderly influential and respected persons, who are the accepted leaders of a village. Normally, any villager can take part in the deliberations of the council, though there may be certain restrictions on women to do so in some tribal societies. The tribal village council is a democratic institution in the modern sense, where all vital problems concerning a village are freely and publicly discussed and solved, criminal cases adjudicated, decisions taken on social and agricultural matters. No formal vote is necessary for a decision. Discussions continue until a general consensus is reached. Each village selects its headman or gaon burah, who is the chief or 'gam' responsible for the welfare of the village.

The functions of the village council are three-fold judicial, administrative and developmental. On the judicial side which is in effect the most important function, the councils settle all disputes arising in the village, and give verdicts on even serious crimes committed against the tribal society (but not against the government).

The legal procedure of the council is not burdened with cumbersome formalities, and does not entail any amount of expenses. It is 'free of cost' for everybody, and therefore, nobody is denied justice for his inability to bear the cost as is otherwise necessary for such proceedings. The council allows both the defendant and the complainant to plead for themselves, and it gives its judgement in accordance with the customary law after a careful consideration of the divergent statements.

The administrative jurisdiction of the council extends to the maintenance of paths and bridges, supervision of water supply and sanitation of the village, fixation of the dates of communal hunting and fishing, taking of decisions as to when the main agricultural operations should take place and when the festivals should be held, and on problems of land, admission of new settlers etc.

The function of the council on the developmental side is a new aspect of work and it depends largely upon the calibre of the leaders and the local officials, upon their efforts and initiative, for development at the village level.

Self-Governing Tribal Institutions

The Bangni Yallung

The Bangnis appear to be individualistic in character and temperament. A Bangni, as it were, thinks of himself as a freeman and does not like that others should interfere in his affairs or impose a decision upon him or command him. He takes pride in himself. The houses they live in are usually long and occupied by a number of related families having separate hearths. In former times, feuds between houses had compelled individual

families to shift their homes to other locations, a fact which was detrimental to the growth and development of villages. The Bangnis were loyal to the house rather than to the village and this naturally acted against any move to unite into a village community. In the absence of chiefs or any centralised local authorities, the Bangnis have hardly any well-established village council except for some semblance of it in some areas. A state of anarchy that often ensues from such a lack of authority has been averted by the Bangnis through their institution of intermediaries. They have a strong sense of kinship and common ethnic and cultural heritage. In fact, the Bangnis adhere to certain traditional norms of behaviour in their social and inter-clan relationships. Incidentally, it is also important to note that the Bangnis have been undergoing a process of change and the outcome of this change in social and cultural spheres is yet to be seen.

The need for arbitration in disputes is common to all societies not excepting that of the Bangnis. Although they have no formally constituted self-governing village institution to administer justice according to their customs and traditions, they have a sort of arbitration council to settle disputes arising in a village. Settlement of cases, civil and criminal, through this council, which is informal and *ad hoc* in character, is popularly known as *yallung*. It is like the *gingdungs* of the Nishis of Subansiri.¹ When a dispute arises between two parties or when a party demands compensations for punishment for a crime committed against it, they need to go to a third party, a mediator or go-between called *chene* for a settlement. The *chene* is the Bangni counterpart of the Nishi *gingdung*, whose services, persuasions and mediation for deciding a case between two disputing parties are generally recognised and accepted. The *chene* is regarded as the custodian of the customary laws of the tribe. He is respected in the society for his knowledge, wisdom, integrity and impartiality. He has no political or judicial power to exercise over the disputing parties or upon the guilty, nor can he compel anyone to submit to his decision, but his judgement are not usually disregarded.

The word *yallung* actually means a case calling for a long discussion for a decision or judgement. The parties involved in a *yallung*, their aiders, the *chenes* or go-betweens and also the *gaon burah* or village headman sit in a place to decide a case. This sitting together for settling a case is called *nye*. There is no fixed place for this purpose. They may sit in the house of the complainant or any where else. Each party may invite some of his co-villagers who are well-conversant with the customary laws and social norms. The parties bear all expenses for food and drink provided to the go-betweens for their services.

In the *yallung* each attending villager has a right to speak. Wealth, power or status does not entitle one to dictate terms. Although the *gaon burah* or village headman occupies an important position, he does not enjoy any special privilege in the *yallung*. Due to the individualistic nature of the Bangnis, no man, rich or poor, feels obliged to agree to anything against his own wishes. The go-between try their best to convince the disputing parties of the justness of a point in question by citing example, precedents and the age-old custom of the tribe. Sometimes a *yallung* continues with long deliberations and wranglings for a number of days until a dispute is settled. The settlement thus reached is ceremonially observed with exchange of drinks or occasionally sacrifice of mithuns. This ceremony is called *paffe*. After the *paffe* ceremony is over, a case is treated as finally closed.

1. See Gazetteer of India, Arunachal Pradesh, Subansiri District (Shillong, 1981) pp.283-285, for details about the Nishi.

The Monpa Tsorgens

The Monpas of West Kameng and Tawang have well-developed village councils or self-governing institutions, which are said to be in existence for about one thousand years. The democratic nature of these councils and the power exercised by them resemble those of the *kebangs* of the *Adis* of Siang.

The first reliable evidence of the self-governing village councils among the Monpas can be traced back to the 11th century, when the socio-political organisation dominated by the ruling class called the *Khyes* was changed into a system of democratically elected village chiefs. Each settlement was to elect a leader designated as *tsobla* who was to be directly responsible to the people and to the *khyes*. 'The institution of *tsoblas* continued till a few centuries ago, when their task was taken over by local officials called *tsorgens*. Each *tsorgen* came to be in charge of either a very large village or a group of small villages, while the *tsobla* having a smaller jurisdiction was normally concerned with only a single hamlet or settlement.'

The change-over from the system of *tsoblas* to that of *tsorgens* probably took place during the 16th century. A *tsorgen* is informally elected by the villagers of the *tso* or *cho* (an unit consisting of several villages) for a period of three years. But he may be removed for inefficiency or wrong action, 'Charges against a *tsorgen*, once elected, can be discussed only in the general assembly. Disobedience of the *tsorgens* orders by any individual householder on the ground that some particular action of his is illegal or improper is generally regarded as sufficient reason for summoning a general assembly which may be requested to discuss the orders'.

The duties and responsibilities of the *tsorgen* include administration and welfare of the village, supervision of religious ceremonies, organisation of festivals etc. 'All civil and criminal disputes must be referred to him for judgement, and in the discharge of his duties he may summon any inhabitant of the village or any group of such inhabitants at any time to appear before him.'

The *tsorgen's* local representative in a hamlet under his jurisdiction is the *tsobla*. The *tsorgen* is aided by a number of *gomins* or messengers. He may authorise a *tsobla* to deal with a case. The *tsobla* is also empowered to settle all matters which are within his own jurisdiction without reference to the *tsorgen*.

The *tsorgen* is the executive authority in a village or group of villages. His decisions can be overruled only by the general assembly consisting of all heads of families. The function of the village council constituted by the *tsorgen*, the *tsoblas*, *gomins* and *thumis* (the *thumi's* function are identical to those of the *gomin*) is to assist and advise the *tsorgen* rather than to administer the area under his jurisdiction. The council, next to the general assembly, is the highest authority in an areas over which a *tsorgen* presides. The *tsorgen* is competent to decide all civil and criminal cases according to the customary law of the tribe.¹

Among the Tawang Monpas, 'gaon burahs or village headmen are chosen periodically, partly by election and partly by nomination.' The headman is selected by the villagers and formally appointed by the government. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 provides for government appointment

1. See Democracy in NEFA, (Shillong, 1965), pp.56-66, by Vernier Elwin for details.

of village authorities. The jurisdiction and powers of the village authorities have been described in Chapter X of this volume.

“The main function of the *gaon budha*,” writes Smti Neeru Nanda, the then Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tawang, “are organisation of portage and settlement of minor disputes. They are also required to act as a sort of a jury in major disputes which are referred to the administration. Mobilisation of community labour for any village task or services requisitioned by the government is his chief responsibility, in addition to the reception of all government officers visiting the village.”¹

The supreme body of the village community of the Tawang Monpas is the *mangma* or village assembly. The *mangma* is a self-governing institution and its power ‘is something more than the mere arithmetical total of all the village households.’ The *mangma* may be defined as the embodiment of ‘general will’—the will of the community in their collective capacity. The institution of *mangma*, is democratic in the true sense.

“How does the power of the *mangma* manifest itself? Not so much by actual activity as by a series of acts which are done in the name of and in the cause of the *mangma*. Graziers’ tax for example is *mangma* tax which is collected and handed over to the village assembly (represented by the *gomi*) for apportionment and utilisation. Similarly, all fines are collected against the *mangma* account to be equally distributed. The *mangma* is also a land-owner because considerable stretches of village forest, barren open grazing land adjoining the village, as also certain cultivated fields are owned by the village in common. These are utilised in different ways. The *mangma* forests are always open to each villager and there is no tax. Similar is the case with grazing land adjoining the villages. Cultivable land however is a different matter and is leased out on an annual basis to individuals who may approach the *mangma* with a *khada*, a bottle of *chang* and some token annual tax. The *mangma* may agree to lease out common village land for cultivation, but it will always reserve to itself the right to take it back whenever the *mangma* pleases. Sometimes, though very rarely, the *mangma* jointly cultivates the common land.

“...The *gaon budha* along with other village elders is usually the first to be approached for the settlement of a dispute. If he fails, the village elders may involve the *gaon budha* of their particular *cho* after which the three *tsorgens* (in Choksum) or the four *tsorgens* (as in Pangchen) can be asked to sit together to resolve the case...”²

The Miji Mimiyaŋ

The village council of the Mijis is known as *mimiyaŋ* which is an assembly of the members of a village community headed by one or two *gaon burah* or the village chief. It has some functionaries, such as *saudar* or assistant to the *gaon burah*, *gobo* or messenger and *guin chon* or announcer. The Mijis have also an inter-village council called *chubang-wobang*. The *mimiyaŋ* meets at a permanent venue called *phung brang*, and every Miji village has such a venue. The *gibi* or the village priest has also an important role to play in village administration. His help is sought in criminal matters, for it is believed that he can detect a culprit by means of his ritualistic performances or divination.

When a case is referred to the *gaon burah*, he convenes a meeting of the *mimiyaŋ* for a settlement. The case is freely debated and discussed in the *mimiyaŋ* where every

1. Neeru Nanda, Tawang-The Land of Mon, (New Delhi, 1982), p.12.

2. Neeru Nanda, op.cit, pp.14,16.

member has a right to take part in the deliberations. A dispute is normally settled by imposition of a fine to be paid by the culprit in kind, such as a mithun or pigs. In the case of theft, the culprit is bound to return the stolen articles in addition to the fine.

The Aka Mele

The following passages are taken from the book 'The Akas' by Raghuvir Sinha, formerly the Divisional Research Officer, Kameng Frontier Division, who made a careful study of the Aka village councils.

"The political organization of a tribal community is the traditional way in which the society recognizes the exercise of authority. This authority may be vested in single individual acting as the headman of the village, or it may be entrusted to a few chosen representatives of the village forming a council of elders as among the Adi groups and acting on behalf of the whole village community whose confidence they may command, or in the third alternative, the village community may keep the authority to itself. While the first seems to be an autocratic set-up, the latter two are more popular among those societies where the democratic ideas have a special value. The political organization of the Akas belongs to the third and the last type. The unit of political organization in Aka society is the village community as a whole acting in the form of a 'village council.'

"The village council or *mele*, more commonly known by the Assamese word *raiz* among the Akas, consisting of the *gaon burah* (the chief of the village), his two juniors, the *borah* and the *gibba*, and the members of the village community. It is a convention for all the members of the village to participate in the meetings of the council, particularly when some important subject has to be discussed. In practice, however, many of the proceedings of such meetings concern only a few of the members present—those who have a knowledge of the subject under consideration or those who are well versed with the intricacies of the tribal laws. Thus the experts play their part while others only sit and listen. However, resort to their votes has to be taken whenever a decision is made. In matters of judgement, in fact, it is the consent of the village community in its corporate capacity that largely counts.

"The persons of importance in the village council are the *gaon burah*, the *borah*, and the *gibba*, who command an influence in their village by virtue of their position. Besides them, the elder people of the community have also a say in the matter. Respect is usually given to age. The Akas regard youths as immature; 'they have yet to have the experience of life,' 'they are often short-tempered since their blood is hot.' They believe that the handling of the important affairs of the village requires not an intemperate but a cool and experienced head which is often associated with grey hair. Importance is thus attached not so much to wealth or property as to age. Importance is also given to rank since the community recognizes these vested interests.

"There is no fixed place for holding the meetings of the village council. Generally they prefer to meet in the open ground. In Jamiri village, there is a village-platform in front of the Rani's house where the meetings of the local council are held. A few stones are laid there to serve the purpose of seats for the village members; a few benches of bamboo have also been fixed on the ground by the side of stone seats. The platform is considered to be a piece of antiquity and is, as such, regarded sacred; the people believe that they, as well as their ancestors, have held numberless meetings and taken decisions on many important issues on this platform. The seats of stone too are regarded sacred

and any attempt to unearth or to displace them would naturally hurt the sentiment of the people since it would mean a definite 'bad omen' to them.

"The village council or the *raiz* is the supreme administrative agency of the village. Its jurisdiction, as such, is very large. It extends from ordinary house-to-house disputes to inter-village conflicts. The cases of theft (which are in fact rare), quarrel or fight, elopement and adultery, murder and vengeance as well as sorcery or witchcraft all fall within its province.

"Apart from the meetings of the village council which have to deal with only the local affairs, meetings of the representatives from all the neighbouring Aka villages are also convened periodically. They usually meet every sixth or seventh year, but in cases of emergency they can be summoned as necessary. A number of things affecting the Aka villages in common, or the general policy to ensure peace and harmony between the different villages, are on the general agenda of such meetings. The decisions taken in the meeting in common agreement of the representatives, become consequently binding upon their villages. The purpose of such inter-village councils is, in main, to promote cordiality and goodwill among the neighbouring villages."¹

The Sherdukpen Jung

The village council of the Sherdukpens is called *jung*, and it consists of the *thik akhao* (*gaon burah* or the village headman) the *jung me* (the ordinary members of the council), a *kachung* or courier and a chowkidar. There is such a council in each important Sherdukpen village for internal village administration. The *gaon burah* presides over the village council which settles all petty cases, such as local quarrels, thefts, boundary disputes, disputes about division of property and adultery. The council decides cases by general agreement, but the final decision rests with the *gaon burah* who invariably respects the consensus of public opinion. If there are more than one *gaon burah* in a village, the ultimate responsibility devolves on the senior *gaon burah*.

The *gaon burah* is chosen by the villagers at a general meeting. His office is not hereditary, but his son or younger brother has a good chance of getting the post. As a rule, once chosen, a *gaon burah* holds office for life unless he becomes infirm. He can, however, be removed from his office at any time if he loses the confidence of the villagers.

"The head of every household is expected to participate in the proceedings of the village council. There may be two or more Kachungs in a village to help the Gaonbura in the discharge of his daily duties. The Kachungs are usually elected every one or two years. Their duty is primarily to inform each household of the next sitting of the village council. They also act as messengers in all other important village affairs.

"The Chowkidar patrols the village at night and generally assists the Gaonbura. He also looks after the village water supply, sanitation and hygiene, the staging-hut and helps Government officials on tour...

"Arrangements regarding construction of proper paths, bridges and buildings, fixation of dates for communal hunting and fishing, organisation and celebration of festivals, helping the poor, sick and invalid all these also fall within the purview of the village councils...

1. Raghuvir Sinha, *The Akas*, (Shillong, 1962), pp.100-102, 108.

"The village councils are popular as they provide speedy justice. They also enjoy and often restore goodwill between the opposing parties. Even when the parties cannot be persuaded to come to a compromise, the awards of the village council are in consonance with the traditions and conventions of the people."¹

Bugun Council

The Buguns are a small tribal group. They have a village headman called *pokhan* in each village with a traditional village council known as *meli*.

Verrier Elwin's book 'Democracy in NEFA' contains reproduction of an article describing a Bugun council as it was functioning in the village of Sinchong, not far from Bomdila. The following extracts have been taken from his book.

"The political structure of the Bugun village community has its epicentre in the village council, which functions both as a political assembly and as an administrative agency for the local village with the village chief at its head. It is the forum of public opinion...

"The village council in Sinchong consists of the three chiefs or *gaon burahs* and representatives of the clans, one each from the three main clans and two village watchmen, each from a different clan. Besides these members, there are four attendants at hand to assist them for service.

"The village council can meet, in cases of necessity, with one chief, one clan representative and one watchman which is the minimum quorum for a meeting.

"The whole village community may be summoned for a meeting on important occasions, such as to discuss some socio-religious observance or some such measure as may have a significant bearing on the life of the community.

"In its normal work the village council deals with day-to-day disputes and cases of law and order... The working of the Bugun council is governed by convention and tradition."²

The council exercises a political authority over the village community, of which the chief is the leader. The chief may also represent his village to the government.

The Sulung Council

The Sulungs do not have any traditional village or tribal council like that of other Arunachal tribes nor do they have any village chief. R.K. Deuri, District Research Officer notes the following:

"... The Sulungs have had neither council of elders nor well organised village council to decide any dispute or such other allied matters. I was told that till recently there were no village headman in most of the villages, although there were what may be called village Sardar in all the villages where these had been appointed by the Government. Most of their petty cases are decided by themselves through casual village meeting (Moloure) in which all the villagers can attend. On the other hand, however, there are village headman in some of the villages but like other neighbouring tribesman they can not help the Government directly in the maintenance of law and order of the village as their respective Bangni and Miji masters are responsible for such affairs and their decisions are binding on the parties concerned and treated as final.

1. R.R.P.Sharma, The Sherdukpens, (Shillong, 1961), pp.70,72.

2. Verrier Elwin, Democracy in NEFA (Shillong, 1965), pp.77-79.

It was told by the Sulungs of Dache, Pari and Kopok villages that their masters are inclined to be liberal to them in making decision in cases involving Sulungs only. In other cases in which the Bangnis are also involved this concession is absent. But the Sulungs of other villages do not enjoy similar facilities. Now-a-days, most of the cases are brought to the notice of Government official with the aim of getting unbiased and unprejudicial judgements."¹

Panchayat Raj

The village or tribal councils, as have seen, are self-governing institutions in character and functions, and they are recognised by the Government accordingly. The North-East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Regulation, 1967 (Regulation 3 of 1967) as amended by the North-East Frontier Agency (Administration) Supplementary Regulation, 1971 (Regulation 4 of 1971) defines that "Gram Panchayat means a body of persons elected according to the tribal customary methods by the residents of any village or a group of villages as the Deputy Commissioner may specify". The Regulation 3 of 1967 aims at establishing the panchayat system of local self-government and investing the various bodies constituted under the provisions of the Regulation with such powers and authorities as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. It offers opportunities to the people to take effective part in administration and development. The 1967 Regulation provides for a three tier structure of self-governing bodies, namely Gram Panchayat, Anchal Samiti and Zilla Parishad. As said before, the Gram Panchayat is the unit of the panchayat system of self-government at the village level, the Anchal Samiti at the block level and the Zilla Parishad at the district level. Under the provisions of the North-East Frontier Agency (Administration) Supplementary Regulation, 1971, a Pradesh Council was constituted in place of the Agency Council (mentioned in Chapter IX) which was functioning immediately before the commencement of this Regulation. But with the enforcement of the Constitution-37th Amendment Act, 1975 and the Government of Union Territories (amendment) Act, 1975, the Pradesh Council has been replaced by the Legislative Assembly functioning in the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh from August 15, 1975.

The introduction of the Panchayat Raj was based on the report of the Ering Committee appointed by the Government of India. The Committee was headed by late Daying Ering, formerly Union Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture, whose contributions and special efforts for implementation of panchayat system in Arunachal Pradesh merit particular mention in this context.

The following table shows the number of gram panchayats in these districts as in March 1984.

District	Gram Panchayat	Anchal Samiti	Zilla Parishad
East Kameng	73	4	1
West Kameng including Tawang	82	5	1
Total	155	9	2

1. R.K.Deuri, The Sulungs, (Shillong, 1982), pp.76-77.

The implementation of the Panchayat Raj in this area is an important step towards realisation of the principles of self-government and democracy.

Anchal Samiti

Constitution and Composition: The Anchal Samiti is constituted for such contiguous areas in a district as are termed a block. It is an unit of self-government at the block level. An Anchal Samiti consists of the following members:

- (1) One representative elected by the members of each Gram Panchayat falling within its jurisdiction in a block. An Anchal Samiti comprises about twenty five Gram Panchayats;
- (2) One representative from the co-operative societies situated within the block, as ex-officio member;
- (3) Not more than five persons nominated by the Deputy Commissioner from the members of the unrepresented tribal communities;
- (4) The Sub-divisional Officer of the sub-division in which the block is situated, as ex-officio member.

Besides the above members, the Deputy Commissioner may appoint such Officers as ex-officio members of an Anchal Samiti as may be deemed necessary provided that they shall not be entitled to vote.

The Sub-divisional Officer who is a member of an Anchal Samiti acts as its President. The Vice-President is elected from amongst the members of an Anchal Samiti.

Powers and Functions: The Anchal Samiti, the jurisdiction of which is coterminous with the area of a block, is an important unit of planning and development. In fact, it is the organ through which various developmental and welfare activities are channelised at the inter-village level. It has an effective part to play for promotion of education, improvement of agricultural methods and increased production, and also in the sphere of administration. The North-East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Regulation of 1967 has vested the Anchal Samitis with specific powers and functions for the following matters:

- (1) Improvement of sanitation and public health including:
 - (a) Supply of water for drinking and domestic use;
 - (b) Provision of medical relief as well as establishment and maintenance of hospital and dispensaries;
 - (c) Maternity and child welfare;
 - (d) Encouragement of vaccination in human beings and animals, and
 - (e) Taking of anti-malarial and anti-kala-azar measures.
- (2) Public works including:
 - (a) Construction, maintenance and repair of buildings, waterways, public roads, drains, embankments, bunds and bridges, and
 - (b) Construction and maintenance of minor irrigation works.
- (3) Education and culture relating, *inter alia*, to
 - (a) Establishment and maintenance of library reading room, club or other places

- of recreation and games, and
- (b) Spread of education to Middle English and Middle Vernacular standards, and also above those standards.
- (4) Self-defence and village defence.
- (5) Administration which includes :
 - (a) Maintenance of records relating to agricultural produce, census of village industries, population census, cattle census, spinning wheels and weaving machine census, census of unemployed persons or persons having no economic holding or such other statistics as may be necessary,
 - (b) Registration of births, deaths, marriage and maintenance of registers for the purpose,
 - (c) Drawing up of programmes for increasing the output of agricultural and non-agricultural produce in the village,
 - (d) Preparation of a statement showing the requirements of the supplies and finance needed for carrying out rural development schemes;
 - (e) Preparation of plans for the development of the village, and
 - (f) Acting as agent of the Government for developmental works within the area where funds for specific purposes are provided.
- (6) Welfare of the people which includes :
 - (a) Organisation of welfare activities among women and children and among illiterate sections of the community,
 - (b) Organising voluntary labour for community works and works for the uplift of the village, and
 - (c) Relief to people affected by floods, drought and other natural calamities.
- (7) Agriculture and preservation of forests comprising :
 - (a) Improvement and development of agriculture and horticulture,
 - (b) Production and use of improved seeds and
 - (c) Promotion of co-operative farming.
- (8) Breeding and protecting cattle.
- (9) Promotion, improvement and encouragement of cottage and village industries.

An Anchal Samiti may assign to any Gram Panchayat falling within its jurisdiction some of its specified functions.

Financial Resources: The Panchayat Raj Regulation of 1967 provides for a fund for each Anchal Samiti for discharging its functions. The Regulation lays down that the following shall be credited to and form part of the Anchal Samiti Fund, namely:

- (i) the proceeds of any tax, fees, licence fees, cess and surcharge levied under this Regulation;
- (ii) the collection charge of tax or revenue due to the Government;
- (iii) any grants and contributions made by the Governor or any local authority or other persons;
- (iv) all sums received by way of loan or gifts;

- (v) The income from, or the sale proceeds of, any property of the Anchal Samiti;
- (vi) the sale proceeds of all dust, dirt, dung or refuse collected by the employees of the Anchal Samiti;
- (vii) all sums received in aid of, or for expenditure on any institution or service, maintained, managed or financed by the Anchal Samiti;
- (viii) any other sums paid to the Anchal Samiti.

Zilla Parishad

Constitution and Composition: The North-East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Regulation of 1967 provides for a Zilla Parishad for each of the districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The Zilla Parishad is the highest unit of local self-government at the district level and it consists of the following members:

- (1) The Vice-Presidents of all the Anchal Samitis in the district as ex-officio members;
- (2) One representative of every Anchal Samiti in the district who is elected by the members from amongst themselves;
- (3) Not more than six persons to be nominated by the Governor from out of the tribes which have not secured representation of the Zilla Parishad;
- (4) The Deputy Commissioner in charge of the district, ex-officio. The Deputy Commissioner of the district is the President of the Zilla Parishad. The Vice-President is elected by the members of the Zilla Parishad from amongst themselves for a period of three years.

Powers and Functions: The Zilla Parishad is an advisory as well as co-ordinating body. It advises the Governor on a matters concerning the activities of the Gram Panchayats and Anchal Samitis situated within the district. It makes recommendations to the Governor in respect of:

- (1) the budget estimates of the Anchal Samitis;
- (2) the distribution and allocation of funds and grant to the Anchal Samitis;
- (3) the co-ordination and consolidation of the plan proposed by the Anchal Samitis and drawing up of the District Plan;
- (4) the co-ordination of the work of the Gram Panchayat and Anchal Samitis; and
- (5) land settlement and raising of revenues for the Anchal Samitis.

The Zilla Parishad also makes a review of the working of the Anchal Samitis from time to time, and advises on such other matters as may be referred to it by the Governor.

CHAPTER XIII

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Historical Background

Barring the Monpas, the other indigenous tribes of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts had no script. The Monpas are Buddhist of the Mahayana School, and their language belongs to the Bodic speech-family. They have a Tibetan script which seems to have been introduced to their area along with Buddhism.

The Tawang Monastery of the Monpas, founded some 350 years ago, has been a great seat of Buddhist learning and enlightenment. It is also an institution of monastic education. The monastery resembled Oxford in many ways, remarked Verrier Elwin. 'The Monpa Lamas are not perhaps very learned, but they have an infinite reverence for literature', he observed. The library of the monastery is a treasure-house of old scriptures. It contains about 850 books, of which some are lettered in gold. Besides the religious texts, there are in the library, books on grammar, logic, theory of poetry, mathematics, chronology, astrology and medicine.

The Tawang monastery is a residential institution for the lamas, and it has the capacity of accommodating 500 of them, but the actual number of resident lamas at a time may be less. Although this institution is regarded as an educational centre, it was mainly the lamas who had the privilege of learning at this monastery or rather lamasery, while the laity had little access to its treasure of knowledge.

In fact, prior to independence there was no educational institution in this region except for, it may be mentioned, a few centres of monastic training. The people by and large were plunged in ignorance and illiteracy. The Monpas and Sherdukpens in particular were comparatively enlightened due to the influence of Buddhist teachings on them. Besides the Tawang Monastery, the Buddhist educational centres were at Dirang, Rupa and Kalaklang.

During the British rule, the people lived in a state of isolation and abject poverty. Maintenance of law and order was the primary concern of the British Government. They preferred to leave the tribes more or less to themselves. Their policy had very little to do with welfare of the people, let alone opening of schools. They were indifferent to social and cultural developments of the tribal societies. As a result, the widespread illiteracy persisted for a long time. A few families only could send children to Charduar in Assam for education.

The attainment of independence in 1947 brought about a fundamental change in the government policy. The National Government extended its helping hand to the tribal people. Article 46 of the Constitution is indicative of this change, which directs, "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation". There is, therefore, no longer any question of leaving the tribes in a state of isolation and distress in a free welfare state. The problems facing the new administration to introduce modern education in this region were, however, manifold. The people, in general, were at first reluctant to accept the ideas and concepts of modern education. They were quite new and unintelligible to them. They hesitated to send their children to schools. There was also a general aversion

to female education. Most of the villagers were poor and ignorant, and the living standard was very low. At the initial stage, therefore, the people were to be convinced of the value and importance of education, and for that matter a good deal of persuasions and campaigns were carried out to attract them to educational institutions. These apart, there were other problems to be tackled. It was a hard life in the deep interior areas, which were not easily accessible due mainly to lack of regular road communications. Administrative centres were yet to be opened in many places. Moreover, there was a dearth of competent teachers ready to go to the remote and difficult areas and offer their services.

In the month of September 1947, the department of education was constituted under the charge of an Education Officer with headquarters at Sadiya Frontier Tract. Mrs. Indira Miri was appointed as the first Education Officer and it was she who started the pioneering work in the field of education. The supervision as well as administration of the educational activities was carried from Sadiya, where a Teachers' Training Institute was also established in the month of December 1947 for training of teachers and for spread of education in the interior areas. The trained teachers from this institute were sent for opening of new schools. The flood of 1952 came in the wake of the great earthquake of 1950 caused serious damages to the town of Sadiya with the result that the Education Department and the Teachers' Training Institute were shifted to Margherita in Assam in 1952 and the latter was finally shifted to Changlang in the Tirap District in 1957. The Teachers' Training Institute was later renamed as Buniadi Siksha Bhavan.

Educational Institutions

In the period March 1949 to April 1950 seven Lower Primary Schools were opened in different parts of these districts as follows :

Location of Schools	Year of opening	Average number of Students
1. Loh (Monpa area)	March 1949	29
2. Yiwang (Monpa area)	March 1949	18
3. Derangzong (Monpa area)	March 1949	20
4. But (Monpa and Miji area)	March 1949	38
5. Rupa (Sherdukpen area)	March 1949	23
6. Jamiri (Aka area)	March 1949	31
7. Shergaon (Sherdukpen area)	March 1950	23

A primary school was opened at Seppa in 1952 which was followed by another such school at Bameng. More schools came up in course of time as a result of the intensive efforts made by the government to open as many new schools as possible in the interior areas. As the initial aversion of the tribal people to school education was gradually disappearing with the passage of time, the number of students attending schools increased slowly but progressively.

The following table shows the number of educational institutions and students in this Kameng region comprising the three districts of East, Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang during the year 1971-75 to 1981-82¹ : [Also see Appendix-I and II at the end of the Chapter].

1. Source : Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh.

Number of Educational Institutions					Number of students			
Year	Higher Secondary School/ Secondary School	Middle School	Junior Basic/ Primary School	Nursery/ Pre- Primary School	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1974-1975	3	10	83	1	97	5358	1124	6482
1975-1976	3	12	101	4	120	3259	1524	4783
1976-1977	3	12	121	4	140	3863	1664	5527
1977-1978	4	14	133	4	155	4398	1978	6376
1978-1979	4	15	149	7	175	5269	2445	7714
1979-1980	4	18	156	13	191	5511	2601	8112
1980-1981	4	19	157	13	193	6655	3488	10143
1981-1982	5	18	163	13	199	7594	3631	11225

The number of students and teachers in the schools in 1983-84 was as follows :

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Teachers</u>
West Kameng including Tawang	8,888	358
East Kameng	4,044	155
Total	12,932	513

[Also see Appendix-II at the end of the Chapter]

Considering the immensity of problems peculiar to this tribal area, its uneven developments, difficult terrain, the scattered and remote villages, the backward economy, poverty and ignorance, lack of adequate road communications particularly in the East Kameng District and so on, the educational progress so far achieved is quite remarkable. Indeed, it has been the constant endeavour of the government to establish more schools so that education spreads to the widest possible extent.

Organisation and Management

In 1956, a Director of Education was appointed for efficient management of the increasing work of the Education Department and execution of the expansion programmes. The newly formed directorate was stationed at Shillong under close supervision of the then Adviser to the Governor of Assam. The post of Director of Education was later converted into that of Director of Public Instruction, and appointment to the new post was made in 1977. From then on, the Director of Public Instruction guides and directs the activities of the Directorate of Education under the administrative control of a Secretary (Education). The Education Department in the districts is placed under the control of the concerned Deputy Commissioners, who in their respective jurisdictions are assisted by a District Education Officer and Principals for management of the educational institutions and implementations of schemes and programmes to promote education among the tribal people.

The schools in the districts are organised on the models of Central Schools and the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi. The duration of school education is from Class I to Class XII. Some of the schools are having pre-school centres for children of 3 to 5 years age-group. The stages of school education are as follows:

Pre-Primary	—	One year for the age-group 3 to 5
Primary	—	Classes I to V
Middle	—	Classes VI to VIII
Secondary	—	Classes IX and X
Higher Secondary	—	Classes XI and XII

The District Education Officers of the districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang having their headquarters at Seppa, Bomdila and Tawang respectively are in charge of all Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools in their jurisdictions. They are assisted by the Assistant District Education Officer, Project Officer and Supervisor posted to district and sub-divisional headquarters. The Secondary Schools are looked after by Headmasters. The Higher Secondary Schools are in charge of the Principals acting under the control of the Deputy Commissioner concerned and guidance of the Director of Public Instruction. The Assistant District Education Officers stationed at various places are concerned with inspection and supervision of the educational institutions.

All educational institutions in the districts, except a few run by the social service organisations, are managed and financed by the government. School education for Arunachal Pradesh tribal students is free. Various facilities are given to them as follows:

1. Text books and exercise books are supplied free of cost up to Class VIII stage, and only 25% of the total cost of such books is borne by them from Class IX to Class XII.
2. Mid-day meal is provided to children of primary section.
3. Stipends in lieu of food are given to the boarders at all stages of school education.
4. Free supply of uniform to the students is being made from the year 1982-83.
5. Merit scholarship is awarded to the deserving students at the secondary and higher secondary stages of school education.

Stipends are also awarded to the Arunachal Pradesh tribal students studying in colleges and universities. The stipendiaries also get grants for books.

Special care is taken to see that the educational institutions in this territory are run in the best interest of the tribal people and facilities are provided to the students to the fullest extent possible in order to promote education among them.

Literacy and Educational Standards

According to the 1971 Census Reports, the percentage and growth of literacy in the erstwhile Kameng District comprising the present three districts were as follows:

Population	Number of Persons		Number of Literate and Educated Persons		Literacy Percentage		Growth Rate of Literacy Percentage	
	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971
Total population	69913	86001	6107	8263	8.74	9.61	(+)	9.95
Scheduled Tribe population	55777	67877	1104	2211	1.98	3.24	(+)	63.63

The following table shows the literacy rates according to the Census of 1981:

District	Total Population			Scheduled Tribe Population		
	Persons	Literate Persons	Literacy Percentage	Persons	Literate Persons	Literacy Percentage
West Kameng including Tawang	63302	13501	21.32	41963	5293	12.61
East Kameng	42736	2967	6.94	37286	1430	3.83

The male and female literacy rates in relation to their total population as enumerated in the 1981 Census are as follows:

District	Number of Literate Persons		Literacy Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
West Kameng including Tawang	9673	3828	28.74	13.07
East Kameng	2452	515	11.15	2.48

Total literates in West Kameng, East Kameng and Tawang Districts as per 1991 Census.
(Provisional Figures)¹

District	Total	Population		Literate	Population	
	Persons	Males	Females		Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
West Kameng	56,402	30,942	25,460	20,348	13,646	6,702
East Kameng	50,238	25,553	24,685	10,260	7,573	2,687
Tawang	27,574	15,292	12,282	6,860	5,017	1,843

Note:-* Literates exclude children in the age group 0-6, who were treated as illiterate in 1991 Census.

The following table is indicative of the male and female literacy rates in the Scheduled Tribe population according to the 1981 Census:

District	Schedule Tribe Population		Number of Literate Persons		Literacy Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
West Kameng including Tawang	20900	21063	3836	1457	18.35	6.91
East Kameng	18410	18876	1238	192	6.72	1.01

The Census of 1981 gives out that the literacy percentage in respect of the West Kameng District including Tawang and the East Kameng District are 21.32 and 6.94 respectively compared to Arunachal Pradesh rate of 20.09 per cent and the all-India rate (excluding Assam) of 36.23 per cent. The East Kameng District has a rather low literacy rate, particularly of female literacy.

There is no college in these districts. Arunachal Pradesh has only two government colleges, one at Pasighat in the East Siang District and the other at the capital, Itanagar. There were in March 1984 altogether 219 educational institutions with 12,932 students as earlier indicated. Stipends are awarded to the students who are sent to colleges and outside universities for higher studies.

Growth of female literacy over the past two decades in undivided Kameng comprising the present three districts is remarkable as the following table bears out.

Female Literacy Rate in Total Population			Female Literacy Rate in Scheduled Tribe Population		
1961	1971	1981	1961	1971	1981
1.38	2.80	7.77	0.54	1.31	3.96

The growth rates of female literacy from 1961 to 1981 are 463.04 per cent and 633.33 per cent among the total population and Scheduled Tribe population respectively.

1. Source : Census of India, 1991-Series-3- Paper-I-Supplement-Provisional Population.

GENERAL EDUCATION

Basic and Primary Education

The primary education consists in Class I to Class V. The Primary Schools are under the charge and supervision of the District Education Officers. These schools are co-educational institutions. Examinations at the primary stage are conducted by the Arunachal Pradesh Examination Board.

The following directive was issued in November 1955 by the NEFA Administration for introduction of Basic Education in NEFA:

"The educational system which developed in India during the last century was intended mainly to supply the manpower needed for a vast and complex administrative machinery. It was never designed to meet the needs of the vast majority of the nation who live in villages. The necessity for replacing it by a truly national system has been keenly felt for some time and Basic Schools at present existing in India are the fruit of an educational experiment inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and directed by a group of experienced and able teachers. It is considered that the Basic Education programmes, using the medium of productive activity and correlating it to academic needs through craft and social environments will, when fully developed, go a long way to satisfy the educational needs of India in the light of conditions in our country.

"The objectives of the Basic pattern of Education to be introduced in the schools of NEFA are as follows:

- (a) The children of NEFA should grow along with the children of the rest of India as citizens of a new social order based on the principles of a socialistic pattern of life and with an understanding of their rights, responsibilities and obligation in such a society.
- (b) Every individual child should have full opportunity for complete personality development.
- (c) The tribal children should develop, as a result of the educational process, a sense of pride and a deep love for whatever is good in their own culture: in all that is beautiful in the dress, folk dances, songs and in their handicrafts; in their own youth organizations and in their institutions of village self-government. It has to be kept in view that the tribal people have essentially a basic mode of life inasmuch as they depend the least on the outside world for meeting their fundamental human needs of food, cloth and shelter, and a sound educational system for them must reflect all those healthy features of their life. The Basic Education Programme in NEFA will centre round the following activities:
 - (i) The practice of clean and healthy living
 - (ii) The practice of self-reliance
 - (iii) The practice of productive basic crafts
 - (iv) The practice of citizenship in a community and
 - (v) The practice of recreational and cultural activities

"Cleanliness and health have been given the first place as these problems are of the greatest importance in the life of the tribal people living in NEFA."¹

1. Dr. Verrier Elwin, B. Shastri and I. Simon (ed), Important Directives on Administration NEFA, of (Shillong, 1967), pp.132-133.

Towards the end of the First Five Year Plan (1951-1956) it was, therefore, envisaged that the Primary Schools should be organised on the pattern of Basic Education. For this purpose, batches of education officers and teachers were deputed to the Titabar Basic Training Centre, Assam, Hindustani Tamili Sangh, Sevagram, the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi and also to the Buniadi Siksha Bhavan, Changlang for training in the Basic system of education. A number of Lower Primary Schools were converted into Junior Basic Schools in course of time. The lower primary sections of the Middle and High Schools were also similarly converted.

The curriculum of the Junior Basic Schools includes crafts and agriculture as important subjects for teaching. Generally a school has an agricultural garden attached to it, where seasonal vegetables are grown by the students. The training in the improved methods of agriculture and other arts and crafts is imparted in order to keep up the interest of the educated Arunachal boys and girls in their agricultural economy and in the development of their indigenous crafts. Besides these, physical exercise, social work, indigenous and modern games are also important items of teaching in the schools. Particular care is taken to develop among the students qualities of self-reliance, mutual help, respect and reverence for elders and superiors and willing co-operation with others. The object of Basic Education in Arunachal Pradesh is to provide such opportunities to the children as are conducive to their intellectual and moral growth so that they can contribute in future their best to the development of their society and to the nation as a whole.

Secondary Education

The secondary education is imparted through classes in two sections — the Middle School section consisting of Classes from VI to VIII and the Secondary section from IX to XII. All the High Schools in the district have been upgraded to Higher Secondary Schools. A system of co-education is followed in all these schools, for no separate institution exists for the girl. However, separate classes are held on household crafts, such as cooking, weaving etc. for the girl students. There are hostels for the girls attached to different educational institutions. Boarding facilities with free food and clothing are extended to the students of distant villages reading in the Middle and Higher Secondary Schools. Text-books are also supplied free of cost to all the tribal students of these schools. The Middle School examination is conducted by the Arunachal Pradesh Examination Board. Higher Secondary Schools are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi.

All the Higher Secondary Schools are residential for Arunachal tribal students living beyond 6 km distance from the school.

Higher Education

The Jawaharlal Nehru College at Pasighat, the headquarters of East Siang District, which was established in 1965 for higher education up to degree standard, was the only college in Arunachal Pradesh till 1979-80 when another degree college was set up at Itanagar. Students from various districts of this state, who are willing to prosecute post-matric studies, are admitted in these colleges. Those meritorious among them get stipends. A number of students are also sent for higher studies in different colleges and universities outside Arunachal Pradesh.

Technical Education

There is no institution specially for technical education in these districts. The Industrial

Training Institute at Roing in the Dibang Valley District of Arunachal Pradesh offers opportunities to the Arunachali students to undergo training in some technical courses, such as electrical, motor mechanics, carpentry etc. Selected students are sent to reputable institutions in different parts of the country for higher studies in engineering, medical, agriculture, veterinary, forestry etc. Stipends are granted to meritorious students.

The Cottage Industry Training-cum-Production Centre at Bomdila imparts training to the local boys and girls in wood-carving, carpet-making, carpentry etc. Some crafts, such as knitting, embroidery, carpentry etc., are also taught in the Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools.

Medium of Instruction

A vexed problem facing the Education Department for a long time is the question of medium of instruction to be introduced in school education. The districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang are inhabited by a number of tribal groups speaking in different dialects. None of them has a script of their own, but generally they have a conversational knowledge of the Assamese language. During the initial phase of the spread of education in these areas, text books written in Assamese and used in the schools in Assam were prescribed for the tribal students, for they had no text books written in their own dialects. Assamese was initially adopted as the medium of instruction in the school. It was later decided to teach the students at the Primary stage through their mother-tongue, i.e. the tribal languages. For this purpose, text books in local dialects in Devanagari script were written by some selected dialect-knowing teachers. Meanwhile, Hindi was introduced as the medium of instruction in Primary, Middle and High Schools. Science and mathematics were, however, taught in English from Class VII to Class X. English was subsequently taken up as the medium in the Higher Secondary Schools for Classes VIII to XI.

As for the Border Area Schools, the following media of instruction was prescribed:

- (a) The mother-tongue of the children (tribal language written in Devanagari script) as the medium of instruction throughout the Primary stage;
- (b) Hindi as a compulsory subject from Class I onwards (i.e. third schooling year);
- (c) After the students have appeared in the Lower Primary examination through Hindi medium (till such time as Hindi is replaced by the tribal language text books), they should be brought to a school being run through the Hindi medium.

There were, therefore, various media of instruction-tribal languages, Hindi and English, adopted for different educational stages and standards of schools. The system of education thus introduced was not only complex in itself, but it also became burdensome for the students. The question of medium was important, and a simplification of the multi-media system was necessary. Eventually, after long deliberations English has been accepted as the medium of instruction at all stages of school education since 1972. Besides English, Hindi is taught as the second language from Class I to Class X and Assamese or Sanskrit as the third language from Class VI to Class VIII.

Adult Education

The National Adult Education Programme was first introduced in Arunachal Pradesh in 1966-67. The programme is being implemented in two sectors, namely Central Sector and State Sector.

Implementation of the programme gained momentum since 1976. In the following years, Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP) and State Adult Education Project (SAEP) centres were opened. The number of adult literates marked an increase every year. In the West Kameng District, 64 adult education centres were functioning in the year 1984-85, of which 34 centres were under RFLP and 30 under SAEP.

Teachers' Training

As early as 1947 a Teachers' Training Institute was established, which was, as already mentioned, reamed as Buniadi Siksha Bhavan. In fact, teachers' training forms an integral part of educational activities in this territory. The Buniadi Siksha Bhavan, situated at Changlang in the Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh, provides training facilities to matric teachers, who are sent there annually. Refresher course are also held in this institutions for the teachers. Matric teachers are also deputed for senior basic training at Titabar in Assam. A few arts graduate teachers and arts senior teachers are deputed every year to the Gauhati University for a course in Bachelor of Teaching (B.T.). The science graduate teachers and science senior teachers are deputed annually to Bhubaneswar in Orissa for training in the course of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed).

'The Teachers' Training Programme of the Buniadi Siksha Bhavan is so designed that the teachers are trained up as multi-purpose workers in the interior villages. Thus, on completion of training, when they are posted in the interior, they function not only as teachers, but also as agricultural demonstrators and emergency doctors. Training in social education is a part of the training course in the Buniadi Siksha Bhavan and the teachers are fully equipped to organize social education activities in the interior villages.

In the Buniadi Siksha Bhavan the training is imparted with special emphasis on agriculture, cane and bamboo work, social services and development of tribal culture including songs and dances. The Bhavan has produced a number of batches of trained under-Matric tribal teachers and there are many trained teachers working in various educational institutions in Arunachal Pradesh. The Junior Basic and Senior Basic are the two main training courses in the Buniadi Siksha Bhavan and it also provides for an orientation course of about three months for teachers who have qualified in basic education from places outside the territory.

In the West Kameng District, 29 teachers received training in 1982-83, 34 in 1983-84 and 20 in 1984-85.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities are considered to be a part of education and these activities among the students are encouraged in various ways. In all the Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools, the National Cadet Corps (N.C.C.) training and scouts and guides programmes are organised. To uphold the principles of self-help and dignity of labour, vocational training in agriculture, horticulture and allied subjects is held in the schools. The arts of drawing and painting are also taught. Special care is taken to ensure that the school children grow healthy in body and mind. Amenities for modern sports and games, such as football, volley ball, cricket, table tennis, badminton etc. are provided to the students. School and inter-school tournaments are organised. Dance and music, which are essential features of the cultural life of the tribal people, are given due importance in school education. Dramatic performances are also staged.

"In order to inculcate the spirit of discipline and also to broaden the mental outlook, the students should be engaged in healthy activities, such as participation in tournaments, dramatics, debating, scouting, excursions, cooperation in the community life of the village

etc. These should be considered to be normal features of the school, as essential as other subject of the school curriculum. Such character-building activities should therefore be considered as co-curricular activities of schools."¹ This directive contains the guiding principles which are followed.

Libraries

The library movement is gradually gaining popularity. There are three public libraries, one at each of the districts headquarters at Bomdila, Tawang and Seppa, Library facilities have been extended to sub-divisional headquarters. Attempts are also being made to set up libraries at the circle level.

The stock of books in the libraries is as follows as on March 31, 1982.²

District	Number of Books					
	English	Hindi	Bengali	Assamese	Malayalam	Total
West Kameng	5483	3382	2675	4350	486	16376
Tawang	5318	2936	2803	4327	—	15384
East Kameng	5275	2983	2811	4209	—	15278

Museums

Museum movement in Arunachal Pradesh dates from early fifties. In 1956, seven ethnographic museums were established at different places, of which one was at Bomdila, for careful preservation of the valuable specimens of tribal arts and crafts and projection of their rich material culture. The artefacts exhibited in these museums reflect vividly the cultural milieu and heritage of various tribes.

The museum at Bomdila had 654 specimens in the year 1981-82. The specimens are displayed in the geo-ethnic pattern with a brief description of each. They are of different types according to the material used in making them as follows:

Type of Specimens	Number
wood	75
cane	29
skin	32
metal	151
bamboo	113
clay	51
cotton	108
silk	16
beads	13
other specimens	66
Total	654

1. Dr Verrier Elwin, B. Shastri and I. Simon (ed), Important Directives on Administration of NEFA, (Shillong, 1967) p.132.

2. Source: Statistical Hand Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1981-82.

APPENDIX I

Number of Educational institutions in East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts during the period form 1983-84 to 1990-91.

(In number)

Year and District	Number of Educational Institution		Primary/Pre-Primary Junior Basic Schools	Total number of Schools.
	High/Higher Secondary Schools	Middle/Senior Basic Schools		
1	2	3	4	5
<u>1983-84</u>				
West Kameng	7	11	140	158
East Kameng	1	8	79	88
<u>1984-85</u>				
West Kameng	6	6	96	108
East Kameng	1	8	87	96
<u>1985-86</u>				
West Kameng	6	7	97	110
East Kameng	2	9	91	102
<u>1986-87</u>				
Tawang	3	8	57	68
West Kameng	6	9	95	110
East Kameng	3	11	103	117
<u>1987-88</u>				
Tawang	3	10	58	71
West Kameng	7	12	94	113
East Kameng	4	13	109	127
<u>1988-89</u>				
Tawang	3	11	59	73
West Kameng	7	12	99	118
East Kameng	4	16	113	133
<u>1989-90</u>				
Tawang	3	11	62	76
West Kameng	8	13	104	125
East Kameng	4	16	116	136
<u>1990-91</u>				
Tawang	3	12	63	78
West Kameng	9	14	105	128
East Kameng	4	18	115	137

Source: i) Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1984 to 1986 & 1991.

ii) Statistical Pocket Book of Arunachal Pradesh, 1988 to 1990.

APPENDIX II

Number of Students by Department in West Kameng, East Kameng and Tawang Districts.

(In number)

Year & District.	Primary/ Pre-Primary Basic	Middle/Senior Basic Dept./Stage	High/Higher Secondary Multipurpose/ Post Basic Dept.	Graduation	Post Graduation	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1985-86						
West Kameng	3546	536	2437	—	—	6519
East Kameng	4104	407	449	—	—	4960
Tawang	1766	521	390	—	—	2677
1990-91						
West Kameng	7684	1197	887	97	—	9865
East Kameng	6435	999	744	—	—	8178
Tawang	3575	433	260	—	—	4268

Source: Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1986 and 1991

CHAPTER XIV

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

Survey of Public Health and Medical Facilities in Early Times

In Arunachal Pradesh before independence medical relief was available only in a few administrative centres. The medical facilities that were provided were, however, minimal. The people in the interior villages suffered from unknown diseases or epidemics and died without being attended by doctors. The only opportunity for the people at large to get some medical aids were the occasions when doctors went to the interior areas as members of expeditionary parties or with the Political Officers on their column tours. The lack of medical facilities in the past has meant that there have been hundreds, thousands, of unrecorded tragedies, the sick living out their days in pain and misery, unnoticed in their little huts, I think of the children with sore and inflamed eyes, their little limbs distorted by rickets, their stomachs grossly swollen with enlarged spleens. I have seen many people shockingly disfigured by untreated burns...''¹

Before 1947, the administration in this area was primarily concerned with the questions of law and order. In fact, during the British rule the people lived in a state of isolation and neglect. The British policy had very little to do with social service and welfare. As a result, the people had not had the benefits of medical care and treatment. This apart, dearth of doctors, lack of road communications, absence of regular administration and so on were other distressing conditions. Another major problem faced especially in the beginning is that the tribal people were somewhat averse to modern method of medical treatment. They had no idea of medical science and they doubted the efficacy of new medicines. Indeed, the tribes have a system of diagnosis and cure of their own. The age-old belief among them is that disease is caused by evil spirits, the ghosts of the dead or the breach of some taboo. 'What is spiritually caused, therefore, must be spiritually cured'. They try to find out remedies by divination, exorcism and appeasement of hostile spirits which they believe are responsible for various diseases. And, for that matter they prefer to seek the help of their priests or medicine-men and perform propitiative sacrifices.

Although, the British Government was generally inclined to leave the tribes more or less to look after themselves, yet the British records dating from 1911 are indicative of an willingness to ameliorate the living conditions of the tribal people and extend medical services to them. Captain Nevill, Political Officer wrote in 1914 thus:

"A very great want in all parts of the Tawang country and even throughout the whole of the North-East Frontier is treatment for the sick. Everywhere I went a great cry was for the doctor and medicine. Whilst among Monbas, Captain Kennedy was constantly surrounded by people suffering from real and often imaginary diseases and clamouring for medicines. I am very sure the establishment of dispensaries will form a very large factor in gaining the confidence of the people and a peaceful settlement of the country."²

Nevill's administration report for the year 1924-25 further gives out that in February 1925 he visited the Akas, who put in a petition to government for establishment of a dispensary, and he strongly recommended that a dispensary with a good competent Sub-Assistant Surgeon be established.

1. Verrier Elwin, *A Philosophy for NEFA*, (Shillong, 1964), p.90

2. Sir Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam*, (Delhi, Reprinted 1983), p.289

The first dispensary in Kameng was opened at Rupa in 1943. More health units, came up in course of time. But no survey on public health could be undertaken. Steps were taken after independence to extend medical facilities to as many villages as possible. Till 1951, only curative medical services were provided. Curative and preventive sources worked separately in the following five years until they were integrated in 1956.

During the British rule, the medical services in this frontier area were under the overall control and supervision of the Inspector General of Civil Hospital, Assam, who was later redesignated as Director of Health Services, Assam. Working under him, the Civil Surgeon at Sadiya guided and directed all medical activities in the territory now known as Arunachal Pradesh. In 1951, a separate medical department for the territory was set up with a Chief Medical Officer as its head, who had his headquarters at Pasighat and then at Shillong. The Chief Medical Officer became the Director of Health Services in 1956.

A large part of the interior region of Kameng comprising the three districts gradually brought under medical coverage. In 1946, an Assistant Civil Surgeon (I) was posted at Charduar, the headquarters of the erstwhile Balipara Frontier Tract. This post was later redesignated as District Medical Officer and his headquarters were shifted to Bomdila in 1955. The work for extension of medical facilities, implementation of public health programmes and popularisation of modern medicines among the tribal people continued unabated. The task of the medical staff was not only to extend medical relief and facilities to the villagers, but also to educate them in the elementary principles of hygiene and sanitation and adopt persuasive means to convince the people about the necessity and benefit of the scientific methods of medical treatment. The initial reluctance of the people to come to the dispensaries and health units and use new medicines disappeared with the passage of time. They gradually learnt from their own experiences the necessity and value of medical facilities provided to them and showed increasing eagerness to have more such facilities.

With the shifting of headquarters of the District Medical Officer from Charduar to Bomdila, the activities for extension of medical services to a wider area gathered momentum. During the period from 1943 to 1957, a number of health units as shown in the following table were opened.

Sl. No.	Location of Health Units	Year of opening	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Rupa	1943	
2.	Dirangdzong	1944	
3.	Foothills	1948	Foothills Health Unit closed down in 1957
4.	But	1949	
5.	Tawang	1951	
6.	Charduar	1952	
7.	Bomdila	1952	
8.	Seppa	1952	Mobile Health Unit of

9.	Bameng	1952	Seppa and Bameng were amalgamated with the respective health unit in 1955.
10.	Buragaon	1952	The ayurvedic dispensary at Buragaon was converted into a health unit in 1958
11.	Kalaktang	1953	
12.	Tawang	1953	Hansen disease sanatorium
13.	Chako	1957	
14.	Lumla	1957	Mobile Health Unit of Lumla became a regular health unit in 1957

An ayurvedic dispensary was opened at Buragaon in the Aka area in 1951-52 on experimental basis. A variety of medicinal herbs were used by the local people before the introduction of modern medicines and establishment of health units. They came for ayurvedic medicines provided by the dispensary, which was at first run by an ayurvedic doctor. It was later managed by an ayurvedic compounder. As the people gradually turned to allopathic medicines, the dispensary was converted into a health unit in 1958.

The tribal people, as already mentioned, have their own indigenous methods of diagnosis and cure in treating various diseases. Roots and herbs are used for their medicinal efficacy. Some of the common herbal remedies are as follows.

1. Baye — It is a kind of ginger root chewed up by patients suffering from dysentery, diarrhoea and flatulence. The Monpas, Sherdukpens and Khowas, in particular, use this root as a cure.
2. Dusumuke — The skin of the herb is taken with water for treatment of diarrhoea and dysentery.
3. Chikchari — A root used in cases of diarrhoea and is taken twice a day.
4. Kongkling or Aribo — The bark of these trees is taken with water for cough.
5. Phalalu — This is used by the Mijis for cough.
6. Sengmure — The bark is powdered into a paste for application over painful sprain, fracture or in any kind of inflammation.
7. Changmo — The Khowas use it with warm ghee as an analgesic for sprain and joint-pain.
8. Shai — The skin of this plant, cut into pieces and soaked in water, is applied externally to get relief from abdominal pain. This is a practice of the Khowas.

9. Nye — Leaves of this herb are rubbed and put inside the nostrils to stop nose-bleeding.
10. Taksung — The Akas use the bark of this plant against cut, wound etc.
11. Moman — Leaves and roots of this plant are ground into a paste and rubbed on fractured limbs as an ointment.
12. Sharing — The juice of this herb is used by the Sherdukpens for treatment of eye troubles. It is applied to the eye-pit.
13. Yarsa
Gombu — This is used for oral treatment of venereal disease.
14. Bhagma
Karpo — This is used by the Monpas of Tawang for treatment of intestinal diseases.

Vital Statistics

No old record of births and deaths is available. In facts, collection of vital statistics concerning births and deaths is a new activity started in this region only after the formation of the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh in 1972. The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 (No. 18 of 1969) has come into force in Arunachal Pradesh from the month of October 1973.

In the beginning, attempts were made to collect data of birth and death rates through medical staff, school teachers, Village Level Workers and *Gaon Burahs* (village elders), who were engaged in this work. This could not go a long way for lack of response.

In 1975, the *Gaon Burahs* of each village and the Members of Gram Panchayats were appointed as Informants and Notifiers respectively of births and deaths. The *Gaon Burahs* have been entrusted with the task of giving information of births and deaths in their own villages, while the Members of Gram Panchayats have been assigned the job of notifying births and deaths and also certifying cause of deaths. In 1977, the nurses of the Medical Department were appointed also as Notifiers of Births and Deaths. For the purpose of registering births and deaths, Village Level Workers and primary school teachers are working as Sub-Registrars, Circle Officers and Extra Assistant Commissioners as Registrars, Medical Officers in charge of Medical institutions as Registrars and District Statistical Officers as Additional District Registrars. The Deputy Commissioners are the District Registrars.

According to the provisions of the said Act of 1969, each head of family or his nearest relative has a legal duty to notify the births and deaths occurring in the household to the concerned Registrar within a specified period. But, it was reported that in Arunachal Pradesh most of the villagers were not aware of the implications of this Act, and the vital events of births and deaths were not reported and registered as they ought to have been done. Till 1983 only less than half of the total number of circles in Arunachal Pradesh was covered by the reporting system of vital statistics. As a result the actual birth and death rates during a given period of time cannot be ascertained accurately from the official records. It may, therefore, be noted that the vital statistics as recorded so far are incomplete.

The Census of 1981 indicates a decadal (1971-81) growth of 23.30 per cent of the total population of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts combined together. The corresponding decadal growth of the Scheduled Tribe population is 16.75%. The growth of population according to the census evidently implies a decrease in the mortality rate.

The following Table indicates the birth and death rates in East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts during the period from 1986 to 1989.

(In number)

District	R U R A L			U R B A N		
	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Infant Death Rate	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Infant Death Rate
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>1986</u>						
(January to December)						
West Kameng	15.6	3.5	3.9	26.2	26.1	59.7
East Kameng	6.2	4.1	8.9	—	—	—
Tawang	10.8	2.3	17.3	—	—	—
<u>1987</u>						
West Kameng	19.8	5.4	30.07	17.4	5.6	13.33
East Kameng	7.7	5.3	100.50	—	—	—
Tawang	16.2	5.6	62.14	—	—	—
<u>1988 (January to December)</u>						
West Kameng	7.0	3.6	108.8	110.9	35.2	35.2
East Kameng	12.6	5.4	76.2	—	—	—
Tawang	24.9	2.5	18.2	—	—	—
<u>1989</u>						
West Kameng	14.80	3.41	37.18	29.85	10.47	44.78
East Kameng	20.63	5.84	51.06	—	—	—
Tawang	27.35	6.38	13.33	—	—	—

Source : Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1987 to 1991.

Common Diseases

The most common diseases which afflict a large number of the local people are diarrhoea and dysentery, respiratory diseases, stomach and intestinal diseases, scabies, skin diseases and tuberculosis. The endemic goitre was common in the recent past, but it has now been considerably checked. The official records are indicative of a gradual decrease of goitre cases. Malaria is no longer a menacing disease in this region even though many people suffer from it. The number of T.B. patients treated in hospitals, dispensaries and health centres indicate that hundreds of people fall victim to various types of tuberculosis. The reported cases of leprosy are few in number. Scabies and skin diseases are of wide occurrence.

Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Stomach and Intestinal Diseases : Thousands of people are infected by these diseases every year due probably to lack of nutritious food and use of stagnant, polluted water for drinking and cooking and also unhygienic conditions of living in some villages.

Respiratory Diseases : The occurrence of respiratory diseases is also alarmingly high, particularly in the East Kameng District. Bronchitis, broncho-pneumonia and influenza are common diseases. These ailments are attributable, among other things, to the lack of fresh air inside the typical house of some tribes, which have no proper ventilation. They are congested and smoky due to the constantly burning fireplaces in the rooms. The condition is aggravated by the severe cold in the winter in higher regions, which the inhabitants are often exposed to.

Skin Diseases : Dense forests, insect-infested jungles, use of water from stagnant pools, low living standard, poor and unhygienic living conditions, lack of sanitation and nutrition seem to be some of the factors responsible for the high occurrence of skin diseases, such as scabies, ringworm or tinea and eczema in this region. Adequate measures have been taken for remedial treatment of these diseases.

Tuberculosis : The number of T. B. patients in Kameng comprising the three districts was 579 in 1979-80 and 322 in 1980-81. The records of these years show a slight fall in the number of cases. Besides the campaign for BCG vaccination and other preventive measures that are taken, curative treatment is also provided. The number of beds in hospitals and health units authorised for T. B. patients was twelve in 1983-84.

Goitre : An extensive survey carried out in 1958 revealed that there was a fairly high incidence of goitre throughout the erstwhile North-East Frontier Agency. The number of person attacked by this disease ranged from 15 to 65 per cent of the population in different villages. Results of investigations pointed to a link between goitre and cretinism, deaf-mutism and mental retardation.

The endemic goitre is caused by deficiency of iodine in water. Iodised salt is an antidote to goitre. Production and distribution of iodised salt in this territory were first started at Pasighat in East Siang district in 1955-56. It was later arranged with the Salt Commissioner, India that iodised salt would be supplied from the production centre in the Sambhar Lake in Rajasthan.

The Monpas are reported to be more affected by goitre than the Bangnis, Akas, Mijis and Khowas. The incidence of goitre among the younger generation is reported to be on

the decline.

Leprosy : Occurrence of leprosy appears to be well under control. In 1977-78, the number of lepers under medical treatment was two as compared to nine in 1979-80 and nil in 1980-81. There is one H.D. Sanatorium in Tawang.

Venereal Diseases : A considerable number of cases of venereal diseases in different parts of this region were recorded. It is related that these diseases were once prevalent in the Tawang district which was allegedly due to contact with the Tibetans. Most of the cases of patients afflicted by these diseases were reported from the Lumla Sub-division.

The following table shows the number of patients who were under medical treatment for various diseases in some years past.¹

Sl. No.	Name of disease	Number of patients treated			
		1977-78	1979-80	1980-81	
		Kameng	Kameng	West Kameng including Tawang	East Kameng
1.	Diarrhoea/Dysentery	21770	15974	2478	18468
2.	Stomach and intestinal diseases	12949	7989	1592	4485
3.	Respiratory diseases	20033	11248	1968	8575
4.	Malaria	475	509	—	246
5.	Syphilis and Gonorrhoea	154	243	205	111
6.	Scabies	3449	3920	522	5771
7.	Other skin diseases	5353	8422	1949	5026
8.	Goitre	144	837	—	27
9.	Tuberculosis	440	579	55	267
10.	Leprosy	2	9	—	—
11.	Typhoid	—	109	—	—

1. Source : Statistical Hand Books of Arunachal Pradesh, 1978-79 to 1981-82.

**The number of cases treated (Indoor and Out door patients)
during the period from 1983-84 to 1990-91**

Districts	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Indoor Patients								
West Kameng	5725	2530	1728	4928	4930	431	4632	4631
East Kameng	2866	—	8309	4090	4970	5080	5281	5690
Outdoor Patients								
West Kameng	79690	88609	90084	29435	28435	27431	27342	29179
East Kameng	160972	—	121161	28815	29170	28150	28178	29161
Total :-	249253	91139	221282	67268	67505	61092	65433	68661

Epidemics

No incident of any serious epidemic in recent years is known. Sporadic cases of small-pox, bacillary dysentery and typhoid are, however, reported earlier. Outbreak of some diseases like diarrhoea or dysentery might have affected a number of interior villages in the past. In 1961, whooping cough, which broke out epidemic form in some villages of West Kameng, took a toll about 108 lives.

Effective measures are taken to check a contagious or infectious disease. Apart from medical reliefs given, medicines are sometimes distributed liberally to the people affected by such diseases. The tribal custom prohibiting visits from one village to another during an epidemic also proves to be very helpful as a preventive measure. With the extension of medical services throughout the region, immediate steps can now be taken to prevent a serious disease from spreading out.

Health Organisation

The Health Department at the district level is headed by a District Medical Officer, while the Deputy Commissioner, who is the district head exercises a general administrative control over the activities of the department. Assisted by a number medical officers and staff, the District Medical Officer supervises all Government medical institutions of the district. The Director of Health Services is the highest medical authority in Arunachal Pradesh. The medical department works under his guidance and direction. The organisation of the Health Department in the district is shown in the following chart:

District Medical Officer Medical Officers		
Curative Services	Preventive Services	Promotive Services
1) Hospitals	Communicable Disease Control	1) Sanitation and Nutrition Programmes
Dispensaries and Health Units		2) Maternity and Child Health
Medical Teams		3) Health Education
		4) Family Planning
N.M.E.P.		N.S.E.P.

Source : Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1984 to 1991

Hospitals and Dispensaries

The first health unit, a dispensary, in Kameng, as already mentioned, was established at Rupa in the Sherdukpen area in 1943. Altogether 14 health units were opened in different parts of Kameng till 1957 as indicated earlier. In the month of March 1984 there were in this region two district hospitals and 22 dispensaries and health units besides two medical teams, a hansen disease sanatorium and four family welfare clinics. The total authorised beds for indoor patients were 234.

In the year 1952, two district hospitals one at Bomdila and the other at Seppa, were established. These hospitals provide modern medical facilities for both indoor and outdoor treatment of patients.

The following table indicates the particulars of achievements made in setting up hospital, and dispensaries till the end of March 1984.¹

<u>Particulars</u>	<u>Number</u>	
	West Kameng including Tawang	East Kameng
1. District Hospital	1	1
2. Dispensary	9	5
3. Health Unit	6	2
4. Medical Team	1	1
5. Hansen Disease Sanatorium	1	—
6. Doctors	17	9
7. Staff Nurse/Matron	3	2
8. Auxiliary Nurse/Midwife	14	7
9. Authorised bed in hospitals, dispensaries and health units		
(a) General bed	138	64
(b) T.B. bed	6	6
(c) Hansen Disease bed	20	—
10. Family Welfare Clinic	3	1

1. Source : Basic Statistics of Arunachal Pradesh, 1983-84.

The total number of Medical Institutions and the total number of beds in hospitals, Public Health Centre, Health Units and dispensaries etc. in West Kameng, East Kameng and Tawang districts as on 31st March of each year is as follows.

District	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Midical Institutions								
West Kameng	18	18	17	11	16	15	16	16
East Kameng	9	9	9	9	16	16	16	16
Tawang	—	—	—	7	9	10	10	10
Number of Beds								
West Kameng	138	162	162	104	122	122	122	122
East Kameng	71	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Tawang	—	—	—	58	62	72	72	72

Mobile Medical Cover

Two medical teams, one in West Kameng and the other in East Kameng, undertake extensive tours to provide medical relief to the people at large. The preventive aspects of health services, such as improvement of environmental sanitation with special emphasis on the principles of hygiene, cleanliness, use of fresh water and so on, are stressed by these teams. They also render services in the event of epidemics or outbreak of any widespread contagious disease.

Maternity and Child Welfare

Maternity and child welfare services are rendered with special care in the hospitals, dispensaries and health units. Serious cases are referred to the district hospital or other hospitals inside or outside the Union Territory, which provide specialised treatment.

The Family Planning Programme has been introduced in Arunachal Pradesh on a limited scale. There are four family welfare clinics, three in West Kameng including Tawang and one in East Kameng.

School Health Programme

School health is an important aspect of health services. Ignorance of the rules of personal and community hygiene is the primal cause of many maladies, which the people particularly the children, suffer from. The practice of clean and healthy living is, therefore, greatly emphasised in the school health and educational programmes.

In a development directive issued by the former NEFA administration for a systematic check of the health of school of children by Medical Officers, the following items of the School Health Services were specified:

- (a) The school buildings and the surroundings should be inspected to assess if they conform to the hygienic standards of ventilation, lighting, floor space, sanitation etc.
- (b) There should be a routine physical check-up of all the students.
- (c) The spleen-rate of the children should be recorded.
- (d) The Medical Officer should make a note of the personal hygiene of the children and find out from the teacher how far regular bath, wearing of clean clothes etc. are in practice.
- (e) All nutritional deficiencies should be detected and rectified.
- (f) Arrangements for physical education should be reported.
- (g) Immunization against small-pox, typhoid, diphtheria, and whooping-cough should be carried out.
- (h) The condition of the teeth of the children should be examined.
- (i) Orthopedic deformities should be recognized and step should be taken to correct them.
- (j) The number of children suffering from endemic goitre should be recorded and distribution of Lugol's iodine or potassium iodide tablets in appropriate doses should be arranged.¹

Medical check-up of school students is carried out occasionally. Apart from the hygienic teachings included in the school curriculum, the general well-being of the students is looked after. Drills, physical training, games, sports and tournaments are conducted to help them grow healthy. Medical aids are also given them as and when needed.

National Small-Pox Eradication Programme (NSEP)

Six NSEP teams, five in West Kameng including Tawang and one in East Kameng, have been working to implement the National Small-Pox Eradication Programme, Small-Pox vaccinations given annually by these teams for some years past are indicated in the following table.²

(in number)

Year	Primary Vaccination (PV) given	Re-Vaccination (RV) given	Total
1978-79	1141	1448	2589
1979-80	1499	1531	3030
1980-81	2832	1050	3882

No recent case of small-pox has been reported from this region. Small-pox is obviously under effective control.

Source: 1. Dr Verrier Elwin, B. Shastri and I. Simon (ed), Important Directives on Administration of NEFA, (Shillong, 1967), p. 158.

2. Source: Statistical Hand Books of Arunachal Pradesh 1978-79 to 1980-81.

National Malaria Eradication Programme (NMEP)

A few decades ago malaria was a veritable deadly disease in this region, particularly in the foothill areas. Many people died of malaria every year.

The year 1952 marked the beginning of a series of measure taken against malaria. Initially, larvicides besides D.D.T. (Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane) were used. The anti-malaria activities were thoroughly re-organised and strengthened with the introduction of National Malaria Eradication Programme.

In 1952 an anti-malaria unit with a Malaria Sub-Inspector was opened at Charduar, which was then the headquarters of the District Medical Officer in charge of the Kameng region. The unit worked in the malaria infested areas of the foothills. In 1953, two more anti-malaria units, one at Rupa and the other at Dirangdzong, were opened. More such units were set up in the following year at Seppa and Buragaon. The fifth unit was established at Bameng in 1956.

Arunachal Pradesh is now divided into four zones for implementation of the NMEP. The districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang are in the West NMEP Zone. A Zonal Malaria Officer is in charge of each zone. Assisted by a number of Unit Officers, Entomologists, Malaria Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors, he carries out the anti-malarial programme in the area under his jurisdiction. The programme includes active surveillance and D.D.T. spray.

Active surveillance is exercised by Domicillary House Visitors (D.H.V.). Each visitor is allotted a number of villages ranging from five to twelve according to the dispersion of houses in the villages. The D.H.V. visits each house at regular intervals to find out possible malarial cases. Collection of blood slides and presumptive treatment are done by the D.H.V. and the cases of positive slides are referred to hospital or treated radically.

The most common malarial parasites found in this area are plasmodium vivak and plasmodium falciperum. Among the vector species of mosquitoes carrying malaria germs are Anopheles minimus, Anopheles anularis, Anopheles sconitus and Anopheles maculatus, which have been identified in this region. Of these species, the chief vector is Anopheles minimus.

Of all the regions of Arunachal Pradesh today, Kameng appears to be least affected by malaria. The number of malaria cases in Kameng is far below that of the other regions as borne out by the official records for the years 1977-78 to 1980-81. The number of malaria patients in Kameng who were treated in 1979-80 was 509 which came down to 246 in 1980-81.

The performances under the NMEP in Kameng are as follows :

(in number)

Year	Blood slides collected	Blood slides examined	Blood slides found malaria positive					Cases radically treated
			P.v.	P.f.	P.m.	Mixed	Total	
1978-79	9002	9002	1435	184	—	3	1622	1311
1979-80	10280	10280	1980	208	—	5	2193	1295
1980-81	8863	8863	1644	275	—	8	1927	1193

N.B. : P.V. = Plasmodium vivak, p.f.= Plasmodium falciperum,
P.m. = Plasmodium malariae.

Sanitation

The whole of Kameng comprising the three districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang is rural barring the town of Bomdila which according to the Census of 1981 has a population of 3,806 persons and considered to be an urban area. Situated at an altitude of 2,484 metres Bomdila enjoys the benefit of some natural drainage like other hill stations. Sanitation and water supply in the town is looked after by the Public Works Department. There is, however, no municipal or civic administration.

Sanitary teams, each consisting of a number of health assistants, were organised some years ago. These teams were deployed in each district and sub-divisional headquarters of Arunachal Pradesh for the purpose of maintaining cleanliness and regular spraying on drains and public lavatories with deodorants, bleaching powder, phenyle etc.

But, sanitation in the rural area extending over a difficult mountainous terrain is a problem indeed. The villages except the Monpas and Sherdukpens live in pile-dwellings. A village may be a jumble of such houses. Most of the villagers are illiterate, and they are generally indifferent to sanitation and hygiene. The dwelling houses are stuffy and dark inside. Smoke emitted from fireplaces in the rooms having no proper ventilation as already stated, makes conditions more worse. The household conditions are largely responsible for eye and respiratory diseases.

But, however deplorable these conditions may appear to be, the ecological circumstances under which the tribal people live must not be forgotten. Life in the hills is a perpetual struggle for adaptation to environment. It is extremely cold at high altitudes. Many villages are situated above 1500 metre. The environmental factors have certainly influenced the construction of house types they have designed for themselves as shelters against the extremities of nature.

The living standard of the people is low and most of the villagers are poor. They cannot afford to have permanent house drains or a sewerage system in their villages. Dirty water and garbages are sometimes seen making filthy pools or lying in heaps in house premises. In fact, the lack of sanitation is often the cause of various diseases which the villagers suffer from. Supply of fresh water to the rural areas is a matter of utmost importance. In the absence of water reservoir of any kind at many villages, the people fetch water for drinking and domestic purposes from stagnant pools or streams running down the slopes. Water is also carried to villages through bamboo pipes from distant springs. At times, the villagers are compelled to fetch water from any nearby source however polluted it may be. In the level areas, water is drawn from streams and rivers. The high incidence of diarrhoea and dysentery, stomach and intestinal diseases is due mainly to the scarcity of drinking water.

A comprehensive programme taken up by the Government to tackle the sanitary problems and promote public health is under way. Although the Medical Officers in the districts are primarily concerned with sanitation, which is an important subject of the promotive services of the Medical Department, the programme involves a number of other departments for its successful implementation. In fact, concerted efforts are being made by the field officers of various Government departments namely, Medical, Rural Works, Rural Development, Education and Agriculture for execution of public health and rural development schemes

concerning maintenance and improvement of environmental sanitation, water supply, protection of the sources of drinking water from pollution etc. In order to fulfil the minimum needs a number of Rural Water Supply Schemes have been implemented. In 1983-84, villages numbering 99 were provided with water supply to the benefit of thousands of people. Of these villages, 50 are in West Kameng including Tawang and 49 in East Kameng. Health education laying particular stress on improvement of sanitary conditions is imparted to the villagers by audio-visual means, display of posters in hospitals, health units, public places etc. Hygiene is specially taught in schools and care is taken to see that the students. The Village Level Workers of the Agriculture Department undertake periodical campaigns for maintenance of sanitation. Besides these, intensive measures, both curative and preventive, to check communicable and other diseases are taken through execution of public health programmes, such as NMEP, NSEP, T.B. and goitre control programmes leprosy eradication programme etc. as stated earlier.

Nutrition

The Kameng region of Arunachal Pradesh is inhabited by a galaxy of tribes, district and diverse in their ethnic origin and cultural heritage. This diversity is reflected in their way of living and food habit as well. The Monpas and Sherdukpens are Buddhists. Among the non-Buddhist tribes, the Bangnis are akin to the Nishis of Subansiri, while their neighbours the Akas seem to have more close proximity with the Sherdukpens. The agricultural practices of the Monpas vary according to the altitude and area they live in. The Monpas of Tawang grow mainly wheat in the higher region and cultivate rice only in the lower parts of the valleys. The Dirang Monpas grow rice on irrigated fields. Wheat is also grown by them. According to the crop cultivation the food habit of the different tribal groups somewhat, differs from one another. For example, the staple food of the Monpas of Upper Tawang is wheat, while that of the Bangnis of East Kameng is rice. The principal crops raised by the Akas and Sherdukpens are maize and millets which are the main cereals of their diet. But, contrarily the staple food of the Sulungs is wild sago and rice.

The basic diet of the people, however, consists generally of either rice or wheat or maize and millets supplemented with pulses, potatoes (sweet and ordinary varieties), edible tubers, a variety of beans and other vegetables, chillies, mustard etc. They are also usually fond of meat with certain reservations, particularly among the Buddhist tribes. The Sherdukpens, for instance, do not take beef, pork, fowl or goat-meat, but meat of non-domestic animals, such as deer or some kinds of birds, is not a taboo for them. Like most of the other tribes they have a liking for fish.

Except for the Monpas and Sherdukpens the other tribes are not normally used to drink milk. Remarkably, the Monpas are in the habit of milking cows in the early morning. They and the Sherdukpens make butter and ghee from milk. The Akas also take milk but seldom. Of late, milk is becoming popular among the advanced and educated sections of the people, who have taken to tea with milk.

An important drink which supplements the diet with nutritious elements is beer which is brewed from rice or maize and millets. In the tribal societies, it is held in high esteem for delicacy and food-value. The rice-beer is rich in protein and minerals. The indigenous beer is not merely an alcoholic drink, it is indeed an essential item of food taken by the people regularly for nourishment especially during socio-cultural and ritual functions and festivals.

Although no report of any detailed dietary survey in the Kameng region is available, the medical records suggest that the food taken is not essentially devoid of the necessary ingredients of a balanced diet of nutrition value. The main dietary problem is that there may not be enough food for all seasons. Malnutrition is caused due to scarcity of food during the lean months, when the people in some remote interior areas may have to live on jungle roots, leaves of wild plants and trees.

Nutrition is an important aspect of promotive services rendered by the Health Department for public health development. The Rural Development Department has undertaken a centrally sponsored Special Nutrition Programme. A scheme for providing nutritious food supplement to children as well as pregnant and lactating mothers was also taken up.

CHAPTER XV

PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

Representation of the Districts in the State and the Union Legislatures.

Under the provisions of the North-East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Regulation, 1967 as amended by the North-East Frontier Agency (Administration) Supplementary Regulation, 1971, a Pradesh Council was constituted in place of the Agency Council for the erstwhile North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA). The Pradesh Council consisted of:

- (a) the member of the House of the People representing the North-East Frontier Agency,
- (b) the Vice-Presidents of all the Zilla Parishads, operating at the district level,
- (c) three representatives from each of the Zilla Parishads elected by the members thereof from amongst themselves, and
- (d) three persons nominated by the Administrator to provide representation for such tribes or communities as have not obtained any representation in the Council.

The Pradesh Council had, *inter alia*, the function of discussion and making recommendation to the Administrator on proposals for undertaking legislation for the North-East Frontier Agency with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the State List or in the Concurrent List in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution.

With the promulgation of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971, the North-East Frontier Agency has been constituted as an Union Territory and renamed as Arunachal Pradesh on and from January 21, 1972. The Pradesh Council continued to function till the enforcement of the Constitution 37th Amendment Act, 1975 from the 15th August 1975 which provides for a Legislative Assembly with a Council of Ministers for the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh with 30 elected members. The Pradesh Council was dissolved and replaced by the Legislative Assembly, which started functioning from the 15th August, 1975 with the existing members of the Pradesh Council. The Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 (20 of 1963) as amended by the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Act, 1975 (29 of 1975) both coming into force in Arunachal Pradesh also from the 15th August, 1975 provides two parliamentary seats in the House of the People, i.e. Lok Sabha for Arunachal Pradesh.

According to the provisions of the said Acts and the Order of the Election Commission regarding the delimitation of assembly and parliament constituencies, the districts of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang are represented in the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly by altogether six members who are elected from the following single member territorial constituencies:¹

<u>District</u>	<u>Name of Assembly Constituency</u>	<u>Extent of Constituency</u>
Tawang	1. Tawang - I	Lumla and Zemithang circles in the Lumla Sub-division and Mukto circle in the Tawang Sub-division.
	2. Tawang - II	Tawang and Thingbu circles in the Tawang Sub-division.
West Kameng	1. Dirang-Kalaktang	Dirang and Kalaktang circles in the Bomdila Sub-division.

1. Vide the Arunachal Pradesh Gazette, Extraordinary Issue No. 42, Itanagar, dated 5 November, 1975.

	2. Bomdila	Bomdila and Bhalukpong circles in the Bomdila Sub-division, and Nafra and Buragaon (Thrizino) circles in the Nafra-Buragaon Sub-division.
East Kameng	1. Seppa	Seppa, Pakke-Kessang, Pipu-Dipu and Seijosa circles in the Seppa Sub-division.
	2. Chayangtajo	Chayangtajo, Bameng and Khenewa circles in the Chayangtajo Sub-division.

The two territorial parliamentary constituencies into which the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh has been divided for the purpose of elections to the House of the People or Lok Sabha are (1) Arunachal West and (2) Arunachal East. The Arunachal West Parliamentary constituency comprises all the above-mentioned six assembly constituencies.

Political Parties

The results of the foregoing general elections reveal that the political parties which have had considerable influence over the people of this area at different periods of time are mainly the two national parties—the Indian National Congress (I) and the Janata Party as also the strong regional party called the People's Party of Arunachal (later renamed for an interim period as United People's Party of Arunachal or UPPA).

In the first ever General Election held in Arunachal Pradesh in the month of March 1977 for constituting the sixth Lok Sabha, Shri Rinchin Khandu Khrame, a Congress candidate, was declared elected uncontested from the Arunachal West Parliamentary constituency.¹

In the first ever General Election to the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly held in the month of February 1978, there were in the erstwhile Kameng District two political parties in the field, namely the Janata Party and the People's Party of Arunachal (PPA). The Janata Party contested for all the six seats and won four seats, while the PPA fielded their candidates for two seats. The two parties were in a straight contest for the Chayangtajo seat. Shri Prem Khandu Thungo, a Janata Party candidate who became the first Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, was returned uncontested from the Dirang-Kalaktang constituency. The results of the Assembly Election were as follows:²

Parties	Number of Seats Won	Name of Candidates Elected	Name of Constituency
Janata Party	4	Shri Prem Khandu Thungo Shri Rinchin Kharu Shri Donglo Sonam Shri Kameng Dolo	Dirang-Kalaktang Bomdila Seppa Chayangtajo
Independent	2	Shri Karma Wangchu Shri Tashi Khandu	Tawang-I Tawang-II

1. Arunachal News (Shillong, March 1977), Vol. 5 No. 10. pp 5-7

2. (a) The Arunachal Pradesh Gazette, Extraordinary Issue No. 59 and No. 61, Itanagar, dated February 6, 1978 and March 9, 1978 respectively.

(b) Arunachal News (Shillong, February-March 1978) Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 1-2.

Excluding the Dirang-Kalaktang constituency, which returned a candidate unopposed, the total number of voters in the other five constituencies was 35,091 and the total number of votes polled was 24,063, the percentage of poll being 68.57.

The rapidly changing political scene of the country in 1979 and the large-scale defection of the members of Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly led to the dissolution of the Janata Ministry of Arunachal Pradesh. The Chief Minister, Shri Prem Khandu Thungon, resigned on September 6, 1979. A new ministry formed by the United People's Party of Arunachal under the Chief Ministership of Shri Tomo Riba was sworn in on September 18, 1979. But it was short-lived. After about one and a half months it stepped down following a change of party positions in the Assembly due to defection of the legislators. As a result, the Assembly was dissolved and the President's rule was imposed in Arunachal Pradesh on November 3, 1979.

The mid-term General Election to the Legislative Assembly held on January 3, 1980 was a contest mainly between two political parties—the Indian National Congress (I) and the United People's Party of Arunachal (UPPA) and they were in straight contest in the Tawang-I constituency.

The UPPA won four out of the total six seats, and the Congress (I) and an independent candidate got one seat each. The following are the details of the election results:¹

Parties	Number of Seats Won	Name of Candidates Elected	Name of Constituency
Indian National Congress (I)	1	Shri Nima Tsering	Dirang-Kalaktang
United People's Party of Arunachal	4	Shri Karma Wangchu Shri Tsering Tashi Shri Dususow Shri Nyari Welli	Tawang-I Tawang-II Bomdila Seppa
Independent	1	Shri Kameng Dolo	Chayangtajo

In the General Election for constitution of the seventh Lok Sabha held in Arunachal Pradesh simultaneously with the Assembly Election on January 3, 1980, Shri Prem Khandu Thungon, the Congress (I) candidate, was elected from the Arunachal West parliamentary constituency, which included all the above-mentioned six assembly constituencies. In a five cornered contest, he defeated his nearest UPPA candidate by a margin of over four thousand votes. The total number of voters in this constituency was 1,51,450 and the percentage of poll was 69. Shri Thungon was taken in the Union Ministry as a Deputy Minister.

The next General Election for constituting a new Legislative Assembly as well as the eighth Lok Sabha was held in Arunachal Pradesh on December 24, 1984. In the Assembly Election, two political parties—the Indian National Congress (I) and the People's Party of Arunachal were in the election fray in East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts. The Congress (I) contested for all the six assembly seats, while the PPA had put up candidates for four seats. The two parties were in straight contest in two constituencies, namely Tawang-I and Tawang-II

1. Arunachal News, Republic Day Issue 1980, Vol. 8 No. 9, pp. 9-10.

The results of the Assembly Election are as follows: ¹

Parties	Number of Seats Won	Name of Candidates Elected	Name of Constituency
Indian National Congress (I)	4	Shri Karma Wanchu Shri Tsering Tashi Shri Nayari Welli Shri Kameng Dolo	Tawang-I Tawang-II Seppa Chayangtajo
People's Party of Arunachal Independent	1	Shri Japu Deru	Bondila
	1	Shri R. K. Khrimy	Dirang-Kalaktang

The six assembly constituencies had a total of 55, 082 voters and the total votes polled were 44,029, the percentage of poll being a high 79.93,

In the Lok Sabha Election held in 1984, three political parties, namely the Indian National Congress (I), the People's Party of Arunachal and the Janata Party, besides an independent candidate contested for the Arunachal West Parliamentary seat. In the four cornered contest, the Congress (I) candidate, Shri Prem Khandu Thungon was declared elected for a second term. He defeated his nearest PPA rival Shri Tomo Riba by a margin of 461 votes. The constituency had an electorate of 1,83,170 voters and the percentage of votes polled was 76.71.

In the General Election for Constitution of the Ninth Lok Sabha held in Arunachal Pradesh on November 22, 1989; Shri Prem Khandu Thungon, the Congress (I) Candidate, was elected from the Arunachal West Parliamentary Constituency. He defeated his nearest P.P.A. candidate by margin of 7746 votes. The total number of voters in this Constituency was 2,82,496 and the percentage of poll was 55%. Shri Thungon was taken in the Union Ministry as a Deputy Minister.

The 1990 General Election to the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly was held on February 27, 1990. In the Assembly Election two political parties-the Indian National Congress (I) and the Janata Dal were in the election fray in East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts. The Congress (I) contested for all the twelve seats, while the Janata Dal put up candidates for nine seats. Independent candidates also contested for six seats. Out of twelve the Congress (I) won eight seats while the Janata Dal won one and Independent candidate won three seats.

The following are the details of the election results.

Name of Parties	Number of Seats Won	Name of Candidates Elected	Name of Constituency	Remarks
Indian National Congress (I)	8	1. Shri Karma Wanchu	Lumla	
		2. Shri Thupten Tempa	Tawang	Uncontested
		3. Shri Dorjee Khandu	Mukto	Uncontested

1. (a) The Arunachal Pradesh Gazette, Extraordinary, No. 395, Vol. II dated December 14, 1984.

(b) The Arunachal Pradesh Gazette, Extraordinary, Part III, No. 401, Vol. II dated January 2, 1985.

		4. Shri Rinchin Khandu Khrimey	Kalaklang
		5. Shri Sinam Dasusow	Thrizino-Buragaon
		6. Shri Japu Deru	Bamdila
		7. Shri Kameng Dolo	Chayangtajo
		8. Shri Dera Natung	Pakke-Kessang
Janata Dal	1	1. Shri Mepe Dada	Seppa East
Independent	3	1. Shri Lobsang Tsering	Dirang
		2. Shri Domglo Sonam	Bameng
		3. Shri Hari Natung	Seppa West

In Tawang District out of three constituencies election was conducted only in Lumla (ST) Constituency. In other two constituencies namely Tawang and Mukto, candidates were declared elected uncontested. Out of total number of 17,089 electorates votes polled 4,567 and the percentage of votes polled was 81.21%. In West Kameng out of four constituencies, number of electorate was 28,192 total votes polled 21,487 and the percentage of votes polled was 76.22%. In East Kameng out of five constituencies, number of electorate was 34,955, total votes polled 26,893 and the percentage of votes polled was 76.94%.¹

In this election also the Congress (I) was voted to power in Arunachal Pradesh. Shri Gegong Apang was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh for the third time.

The high percentage of voting in all the general election held in Arunachal Pradesh so far signifies the political consciousness of the tribal people. Their faith in democracy and their integration with the Indian body-politic. The people of Arunachal Pradesh exercised their franchise in 1977 for the first time. It was a late start for them compared to the electorate of the rest of the country. Their quick adaptability to the modern methods and concepts of election and active participation for formation of representative governments are remarkable indeed.

VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATION

A number of voluntary social service organisations have been working in this region for welfare of the people, preservation and development of their traditional culture and for social progress. These organisations are mainly of three categories—(1) Social welfare organisation for women and children, (2) social and cultural development organisations and (3) organisations for tribal welfare. All these organisations are given grants-in-aid by the government.

Social Welfare Organisation for Women and Children Arunachal Pradesh Social Welfare Advisory Board:

The Arunachal Pradesh Social Welfare Advisory Board, formed in 1963, has been executing various welfare programmes for women and children through Welfare Extension Project Centres (WEPC) under the Border Area Projects known as Project Implementing Committees. There are two such committees working in this region, one at Tawang in the Tawang

1. Source: The Chief Electoral Officer, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.

District and the other at Bomdila in the West Kameng District. Each of these committees has a Chairman or a Vice-Chairman, who are women social workers rendering voluntary services. The work of a committee is supervised by a *Mukhya Sevika*, who is paid for her services. Under these two committees, there were in 1984-85 seven WEPC located at Lhou, Soru and Lumla in Tawang; and Sera, Dirang, Nafra and Tenzingaon in West Kameng. Each of the centres has a trained *Gramsevika*, a *Dai* and a helper, who are all paid for their services. The accounts of the centres are maintained by accounts clerks paid a consolidated salary. The Board gets aids from the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and the Central Social Welfare Board, New Delhi to defray its expenses.

The welfare programmes undertaken for implementation by the WEPC are, among other things, as follows:

(1) **Balwadis (Pre-Basic Schools) for Children:** The Balwadies provides elementary education to children through recitation of nursery rhymes and English alphabet, demonstration of toys and numerical blocks etc. The balwadi also gives nutritious food to the children once a day. Special care is taken by the *Gramsevikas* for the well-being of children. They also look after the bathing, cleaning and clothing of the children.

The Balwadis of the seven WEPC had altogether 253 children on their rolls during 1981-82.

(2) **Nutrition Programme:** The Supplementary Nutrition Programme sponsored by the Central Social Welfare Board and the Union Territory Government has been extended to the balwadis attached to the WEPC.

(3) **Free Medical Aid to the Villagers:** Medicines are distributed freely by the trained *Dais* to patients in villages and W.E.P. Centres. Maternity services, pre-natal and post-natal, are also rendered by the *Dais*.

(4) **Social Education:** It is the duty of the *Gramsevikas* to deliver lectures to the villagers in a regular manner on personal hygiene, child-care, sanitation etc. Dramas of educative value are organised and staged.

(5) **Adult Education:** The *Gramsevikas* hold evening classes for education of adult women.

(6) **Craft Classes:** Various arts and crafts, such as weaving, sewing, tailoring, knitting etc. are taught to the village women by the *Gramsevikas*. Besides these, the women are also given instructions in culinary and household matters concerning preparation of nutritious food, preservation of food, kitchen gardening, flower gardening etc.

(7) **Cultural and Recreational Activities:** The W.E.P. Centres pay due attention to the cultural and recreational activities. Folk music and dance, sports and games are organised by the *Gramsevikas*. Besides these, important occasions, such as Republic Day, Independence Day, Children's Day and Vanamahotsava are celebrated in the centres.

(8) **Training Programme:** Under the training programme, the Board sends local girls to the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, Sarania, Gauhati for training in one year *Gramsevika* course. A course of training at the Health Training and Research Centre, Pasighat for the job of *Dai* is also sponsored by the Board.

(9) **Immunisation Programme:** The children in the balwadis are covered by this programme. The immunisation comprises T.A.B.C., B.C.G., polio vaccine and other primary medical cares.

The State Board follows the rules and procedures laid down by the Central Social Welfare Board in regard to schemes, projects and programmes.

Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh

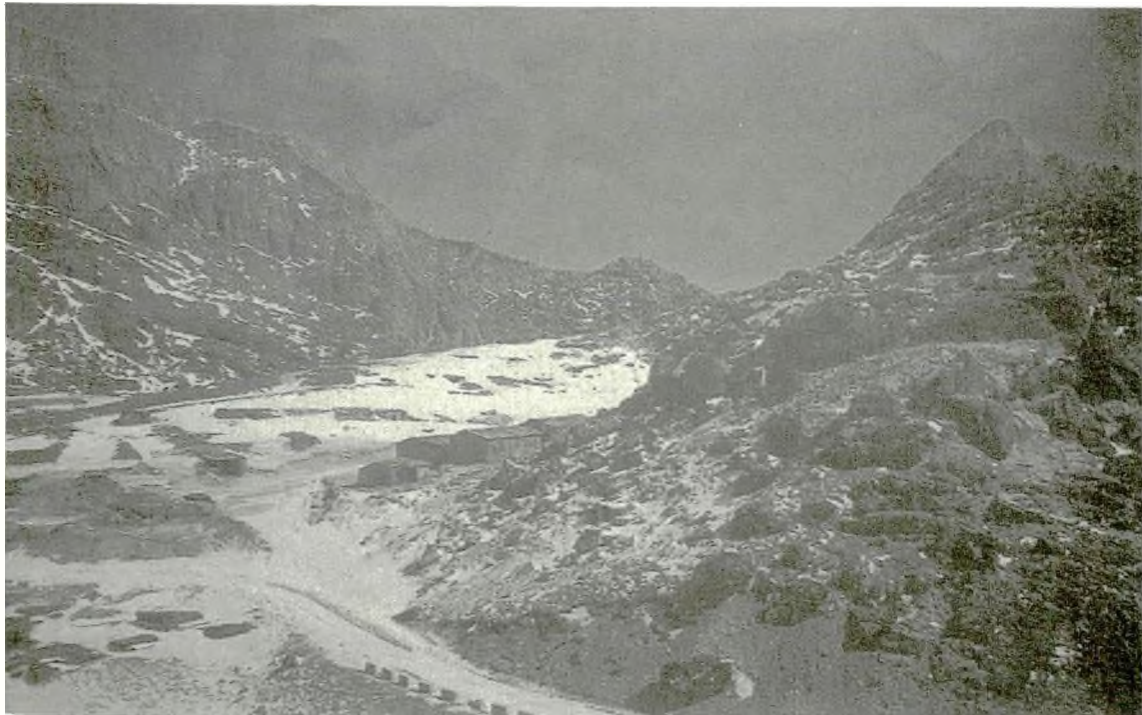
The Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, New Delhi is an old institution working for the welfare of the tribal people in India. The Rajendra Ashram at Rupa in the Sherdukpen area of the West Kameng District is a branch of this institution. The ashram extends its services to the tribal people in various fields of occupation, such as agriculture, poultry farming, cattle breeding, fishery, gardening etc, for their economic upliftment. Besides these, it also looks after their general education. The ashram has two training centres, a destitute home and a kindergarden school at Rupa.

The Rajendra Ashram gets government grants for the training centres, destitute home and the school run by it.

Tawang Monastery School

The Tawang Monastery School was established in the year 1977 with the help and co-operation of the village elders, panchayat members and the Lamas of the monastery. The Tawang Monastery had been a centre of Buddhist education. The purpose of establishing this school is to preserve the age-old religious scriptures and valuable books of the monastery, and also to provide modern education.

The Government of Arunachal Pradesh gives grants-in-aid for maintenance of about 100 students studying in the school.



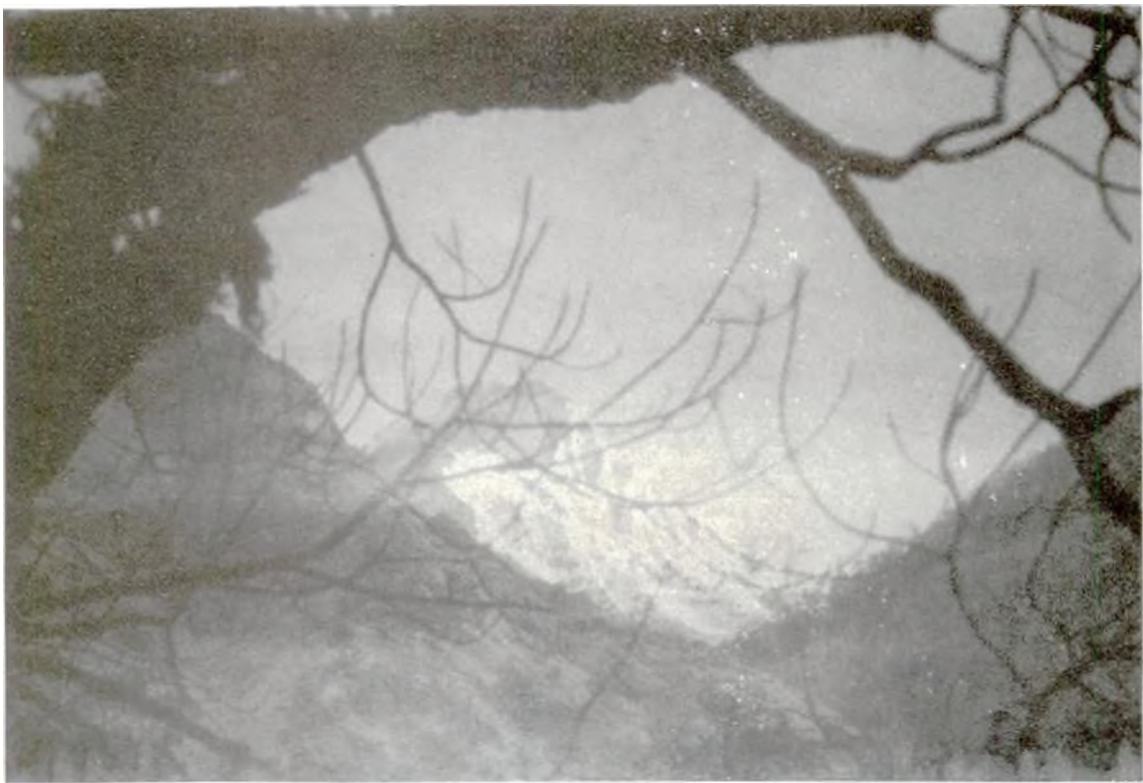
Sela Pass



Paradise lake near Sela



A view of Kameng river



Highest Peak, Gourichen



Orchids in bloom



An apple orchard in Dirang



Tawang Monastery, Tawang



A high altitude road



Lion and Peacock dance, Tawang



The yak dance of Monpas



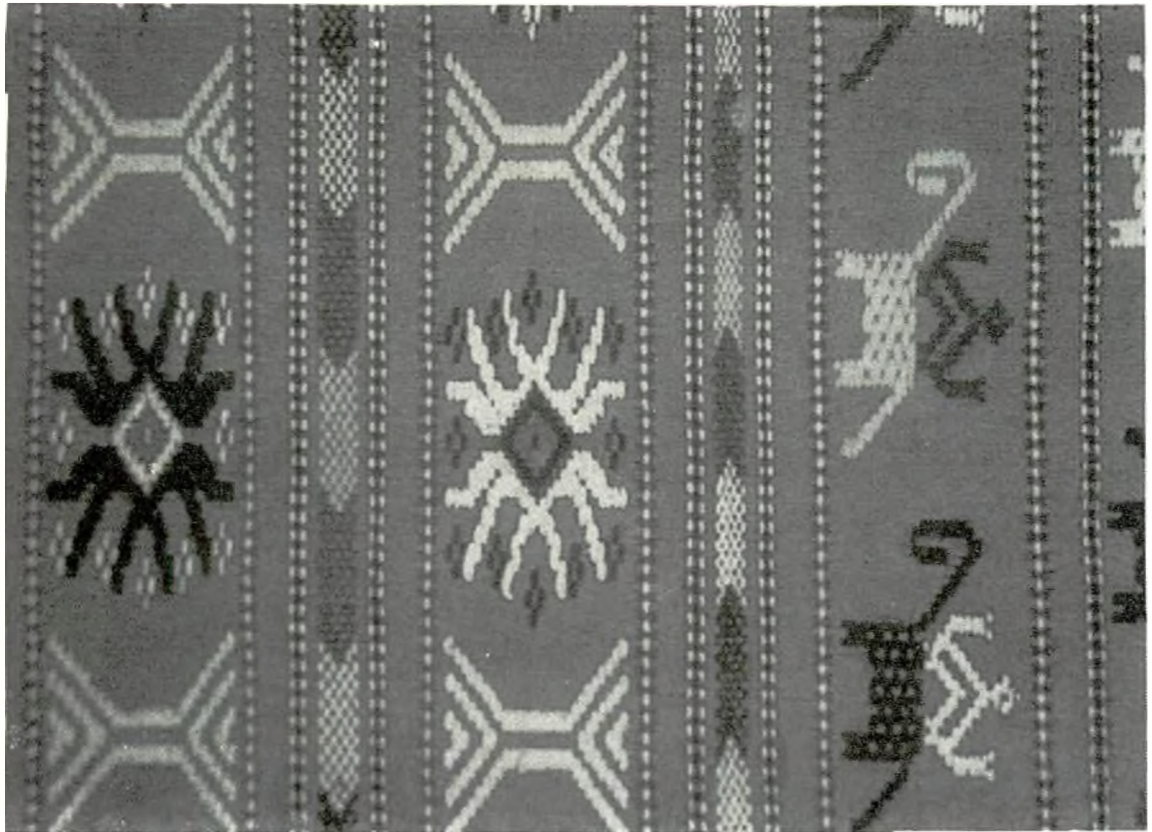
A troupe of Aka girls



Village elders discuss a dispute - Seppa



A dorning a young Lama



A hand woven design used in female jackets



A Monpa belle at her loom

Chapter XVI

PLACES OF INTEREST

Introductory

In the multi-faceted scenario of Arunachal Pradesh, Kameng is distinctly unique and enchanting. It is a region of many splendours in both its natural and human aspects. It is the homeland of diverse tribes belonging to different ethnic and cultural traditions. Here, we come across the Monpas and Sherdukpens, the two attractive Buddhist tribes—mild, cheerful, friendly and polite, who have cultural affinities with each other. The Monpas, in particular, are distinguished for their advanced terraced cultivation, their carpet-making, house type and their love of horses, yaks and sheep. Travelling in West Kameng and Tawang gives an impression of following the trail blazed by the torch-bearers of Buddhism and pioneering explorers who passed through the Monpa and Sherdukpen areas in early times. It is the caravan route of the traders who traversed great distances from Tibet to Assam in the old days. Here, the hills and mountains, dressed in pine and rhododendron, the beautiful pastoral scenes, the magnificence of the snow clad peaks and high passes—the serenity and loveliness of nature are sublime. The Buddhist shrines and gompas (monasteries) in this land appear like beacon lights to show you the 'noble path', and the blissful and solacious influence of Lord Buddha, the enlightened and merciful, pervading the country and on the minds of men is palpable and it evokes in retrospect a deep feeling of joy and reverence. It is indeed a pilgrimage to the abode of peace.

Situated at a formidable altitude of 4,267 metres (about 14,000 ft), the grand Se-La Pass on the way from Bomdila to Tawang is majestic for its superb scenic beauties. It has been aptly said that 'if heaven exists anywhere, it is here, it is here and it is here.'

"To go on pilgrimage to Tawang, the great lamasery of the west, lying in an angle between Bhutan and Tibet, is a wonderful experience. There is first the beauty of the countryside—the distant mountains white with snow, the nearer hills dressed in pine, oak and fir; the smell of the pines; the waterfalls and streams; the banks carpeted with wild strawberries; the great displays of rhododendrons and a score of other multi-coloured blossoms. The journey over the Se-La Pass from Sengedzong to Jang is unforgettable; haunted, mysterious, remote, the great Pass gives the authentic thrill—distance and height are forgotten in wonder. And as you descend, there are the flowers. If there is a Paradise in NEFA, this is it, this is it, this is it."¹

We are also amazed to see the milieu of tribes when we turn to the expanse of hills and dales lived by the energetic Akas and Mijis, the two allied tribes of the eastern part of West Kameng district, and the powerful Bangnis of East Kameng district, who all figured prominently in early historical records for their prowess. The Akas and Mijis as also the Buguns of the Bomdila region, who are in close contact with the Monpas and Sherdukpens, have come under some influence of their culture and of Buddhism. Despite the diversities, a mingling of various cultural traits among them is evident. The Bangnis, who were once turbulent and divided amongst themselves are now undergoing a process of progressive change. The Sulungs of the remote north-eastern corner of East Kameng district, who had been under the dominance of the Bangnis, are coming up. They are 'food gatherers' as well as *jhum* cultivators at the same time.

1. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, (Shillong, 1959), p. 67

Visiting a hill tribal area like Kameng is an adventure in itself. It is also a matter of interest and curiosity to see there how things are changing. The Kameng region where there was no motorable road before independence is now open to vehicular traffic. The district headquarters and most of the sub-divisional and circle headquarters are now connected by good roads. Tourist lodges have been set up at Bomdila, Dirang and Tawang. Under the impact of all round developmental activities, remarkable changes have taken place in all spheres of life. Education has been spread to the distant villages. Although Kameng is entirely a rural area barring the town of Bomdila, some small townships with modern facilities and a number of flourishing market centres have sprung up in different parts of this region. A large number of places are now having electric lights and many modern industries have been established. In short, a socio-economic transformation for a better and prosperous life is under way.

A brief account of some of the important places is as follows:

Places of Historical and Tourist Interest and Pilgrim Centres

Bhalukpung

Bhalukpung, a Circle headquarters in the West Kameng district, is situated near Assam-Arunachal border along the main road leading to Bomdila.

A place of historical fame, Bhalukpung is associated with the tradition of the legendary King Bhaluka, who is said to have built his capital here. The place was littered with ruins of a fortress standing on a hillock. The ruins, which were seen even in early seventies of the present century, have now disappeared.

A detailed description of the place has been given in Chapter II of this volume.

Naksaparnbat

Naksaparnbat, a place of archaeological interest, is situated on a hillock at the foothills of the Seijosa circle of East Kameng district. The site is about 36 km by a motorable road from Biswanath Charali in the Dafrang district of Assam.

Ramnants of an old settlement with traces of rampart and houses, fallen pillars, wells, relics probably of a chaitya (Buddhist shrine) etc. have been excavated at this place.

Chapter II of this volume contains a detailed account of Naksaparnbat.

Tawang Monastery

About 3 km away from the district headquarters of Tawang stands high a great Buddhist monastery at an altitude of little over 3,050 metres above the sea level. Founded by Mera Lama, a contemporary of the Fifth Dalai Lama (A.D. 1617-1682), the monastery was constructed around the middle of the seventeenth century and is now about 350 years old. It is the largest Buddhist monastery in India, and probably the oldest as such existing in Asia.

The great monastery is the heart of Monpa life and culture. Fifteen miles away you can see it standing like a fort on its hillside. The approach is like something from another world. As you go along, fires are made of aromatic leaves and branches and the smoke rises to purify the atmosphere. You pass through gate after village gate, the roofs of which are finely painted by local artists with scenes from the life of the Lord Buddha. At each village on the way, the people come out to greet you, often with the village band of men blowing great trumpets and beating drums. A little tent is put up and adorned with flowers and you are made to sit down on decorative carpets and you are offered walnuts

and Tibetan tea made with salt and butter and served in silver or china cups of real beauty.¹

The Tawang Monastery is actually a huge complex of residential buildings for the lamas, a great library of rare volumes and other institutions adorned with colourful paintings, beautiful images and statuettes.

The famous monastery has been a sacred centre of religion for the Buddhists—the Monpas, Sherdukpens and other devotees. It is today a place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, a great academy for the scholars and researchers.

The historical and religious background and other important features of the monastery have been described at length in Chapter II of this volume.

Other Important Places

Bomdila

Situated amidst high hills at an altitude of 2484 metres (8148 ft), Bomdila is the headquarters of West Kameng district. It has a mixed population of 3,860 persons, the local people being mainly Monpas and Sherdukpens. The climate is cool and salubrious, pleasant during the summer but intensely cold in the winter months from December to March when it experiences snow-fall. It is connected by roads with Tezpur in Assam and different parts of the districts of West and East Kameng as well as Tawang.

Bomdila is a developing town with all modern amenities of life. Besides electric, post-telegraph—telephone and banking facilities, it has a district hospital, a public library, and a museum, a higher secondary school, a craft centre, a hall for cinema and cultural performances and a flourishing market. A network of finely metalled roads connects different sectors of the town.

Bomdila is also attractive for its beautiful surroundings. It draws a large number of visitors every year, for whom there is an inspection bungalow, a circuit house, a tourist lodge and hotels.

Chayangtajo

Chayangtajo, a sub-divisional as well as circle headquarters, lies in the far interior part of the East Kameng district inhabited by the Bangnis. Situated at quite a high altitude of 1906 metres, Chayangtajo is about 82 km from Seppa by a road through Bameng. The climate is cool and pleasant. It has a health unit, a veterinary dispensary, a craft centre, a school and a post office.

Besides the Bangnis, the Chayangtajo area is also inhabited by the Sulungs and Bangros. A journey to this place from Seppa offers vividly a close view of the facets of life of the Bangnis.

Dirang

Dirang, a circle headquarters in the Bomdila sub-division, is situated at an altitude of 1497 metres along the road from Bomdila to Tawang. The road meanders through the Dirang valley which with its undulated wooded hills and beautiful groves of pine is charming and picturesque. Dirang is also known as Dirang Dzong, for the Monpas are said to have built a *dzong* or fort here long ago for defence. The confluence of two streams Tamapu

1. Verrier Elwin, A Philosophy for NEFA, (Shillong, 1964), p. 11.

chu and Sangti chu meeting near Dirang flows nearby. The local people are the Monpas who are also called Dirang Monpa or Central Monpa.

Dirang enjoys a pleasant climate and it has all the requisites of a beautiful hill resort. In view of its importance as a place of tourist interests, it has a tourist lodge. The other attractive features of Dirang are its apple orchards and the cool quietude of stream-sides. It is an electrified township with a high school, a health unit and a post office.

Kalaktang

Situated on the bank of a rivulet and connected with Bomdila by road through Rupa, Kalaktang is a circle headquarters in the Bomdila sub-division. It is a beautiful place surrounded by high hills and forested slopes descending down to the river valley. The climate is moderate as the altitude is 1113 metres. The local Monpas, who are also known as Kalaktang Monpa or Southern Monpa, constitute the main segment of the population.

With electric lights, a health unit, a school, a craft centre, a post office and a market, Kalaktang is an attractive hill station.

Lumla

Lumla, a sub-divisional as well as circle headquarters in the Tawang district, is situated at a high altitude of 2460 metres. The climate is extremely cold in the winter. Lumla is connected with Tawang, the district headquarters, by road. Its population is almost entirely Monpa.

The Lumla sub-division is adjoining Bhutan and in its Zemithang circle to the extreme north-west lies the famous tri-junction point of India, Bhutan and Tibet. Near Zemithang there is a great *chorten*, a Buddhist *stupa*, at Gorham, which is the largest such Stupa in Arunachal Pradesh. A detailed account of the *Stupa* has been given in Chapter II of this volume.

Lumla is an electrified place and has a school, a health unit and a post office.

Rupa

A famous village of the Sherdukpens in the Kalaktang circle of Bomdila Sub-division, Rupa lies by the side of a small river fringed by lofty hills. Rupa is ideally situated at an altitude of 1408 metres, and its climate is very pleasant and salubrious. Shergaon, another important village of the Sherdukpens, is located at a much higher altitude of 1989 metres, but in the same Kalaktang circle not far from Rupa.

Both the two old villages of Rupa and Shergaon are renowned for, among other things, the monumental *gompas* which are adorned with the images of Lord Buddha, decorative paintings and gates. The *gompa* at Rupa is the largest and oldest Buddhist temple in the Sherdukpen area, which was built about 190 years ago.

Connected with Bomdila and Kalaktang by road, Rupa is indeed developing as a township with all facilities of modern life. It has an inspection bungalow-cum-circuit house, a good market centre with shops, hotel, restaurants etc., a higher secondary school and a post office. Electricity has already been extended to this place.

Seppa

Fringed by ranges of high hills, Seppa (previously known as Sepla) lies at the heart of East Kameng district, of which it is the headquarters. Seppa township on the bank of river Kameng (Bhareli) extends on a low level ground, the altitude being only 363 metres. The climate is hot and humid in the summer and pleasantly moderate during the winter. Its small mixed population is constituted mainly by the local Bangnis.

Seppa is a beautiful electrified township, linked by road with Bomdila and the plains of Assam. Various sectors of the township are also well connected by a network of roads. Among its other notable features are a public library, a district hospital, a craft centre, a higher secondary school, a hall for cinema and other cultural performances and a well organised market. These apart, Seppa has post, telegraph, telephone and banking facilities, an inspection bungalow and circuit house as well as hotels.

Tawang

To the north-west of the West Kameng district lies the Tawang district inhabited by the Monpas who are called Tawang Monpa or Northern Monpa. The area is also known as monyul or the lower land as it lies wedged between the towering Himalayan ranges of Tibet and Bhutan soaring to snowy heights. Amidst the natural grandeur of the Eastern Himalaya, Tawang, the district headquarters, stands at a very high altitude of 2947 metres (9666 ft). It experiences an extremely cold climate and snowfall in the winter. Tawang is connected with Bomdila by a good road which winds through Dirang and then through an almost alpine landscape rising on to the great height of Se La pass and eventually descends down. There is a lovely natural lake situated amidst lofty mountains and a beautiful trout hatchery at Nuranang just below the Se La pass on the way to Tawang.

Indeed, Tawang is a place worth visiting. The great Buddhist monastery situated nearby is its glory. For the benefit of visitors and tourists, there is an inspection bungalow, a circuit house and a tourist lodge.

Tawang is a developing township with electric light and post, telegraph and banking facilities. It has, among other things, a public library, a cultural centre, a higher secondary school, a craft centre, a health unit and a flourishing market.

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