

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE MONPAS OF DIRANG CIRCLE IN WEST KAMENG DISTRICT, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

A Dissertation

Submitted to Saint Claret College in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for Bachelor Degree
in

ANTHROPOLOGY

(Under the School of Human & Environmental Sciences)

Submitted By:

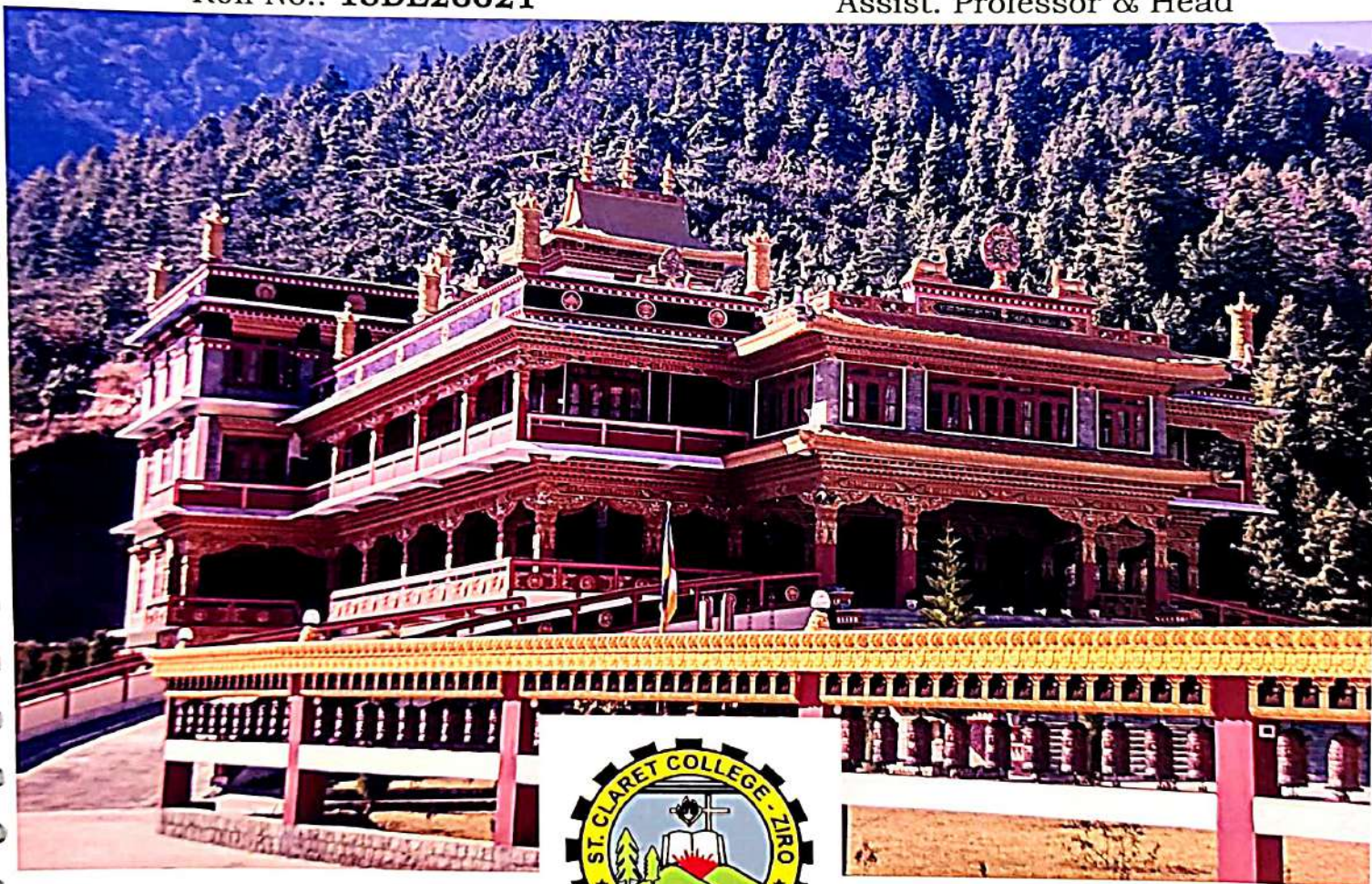
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Roll No.: 15DE26021

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SAINT CLARET COLLEGE, ZIRO – 791 120
LOWER SUBANSIRI DISTRICT, ARUNACHAL PRADESH (INDIA)
MAY 2018**

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SAINT CLARET COLLEGE, ZIRO

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Dated, Ziro the 25th April 2018

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**An Anthropological Understanding of the Monpas of Dirang Circle in West Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh**" submitted by **TANA PICHA**, bearing Roll No. **15DE26021** to the Department of Anthropology under School of Human & Environmental Sciences, Saint Claret College, Ziro in partial fulfilment of the requirement for Bachelor Degree under Rajiv Gandhi University is an outcome of a bonafide research work carried out by her, under my guidance and supervision. This is an original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for obtaining any other degree. The dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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Place: Ziro

Date: 25/04/2018



Tana Picha

B.A. VI Semester (Anthropology)

Saint Claret College, Ziro.

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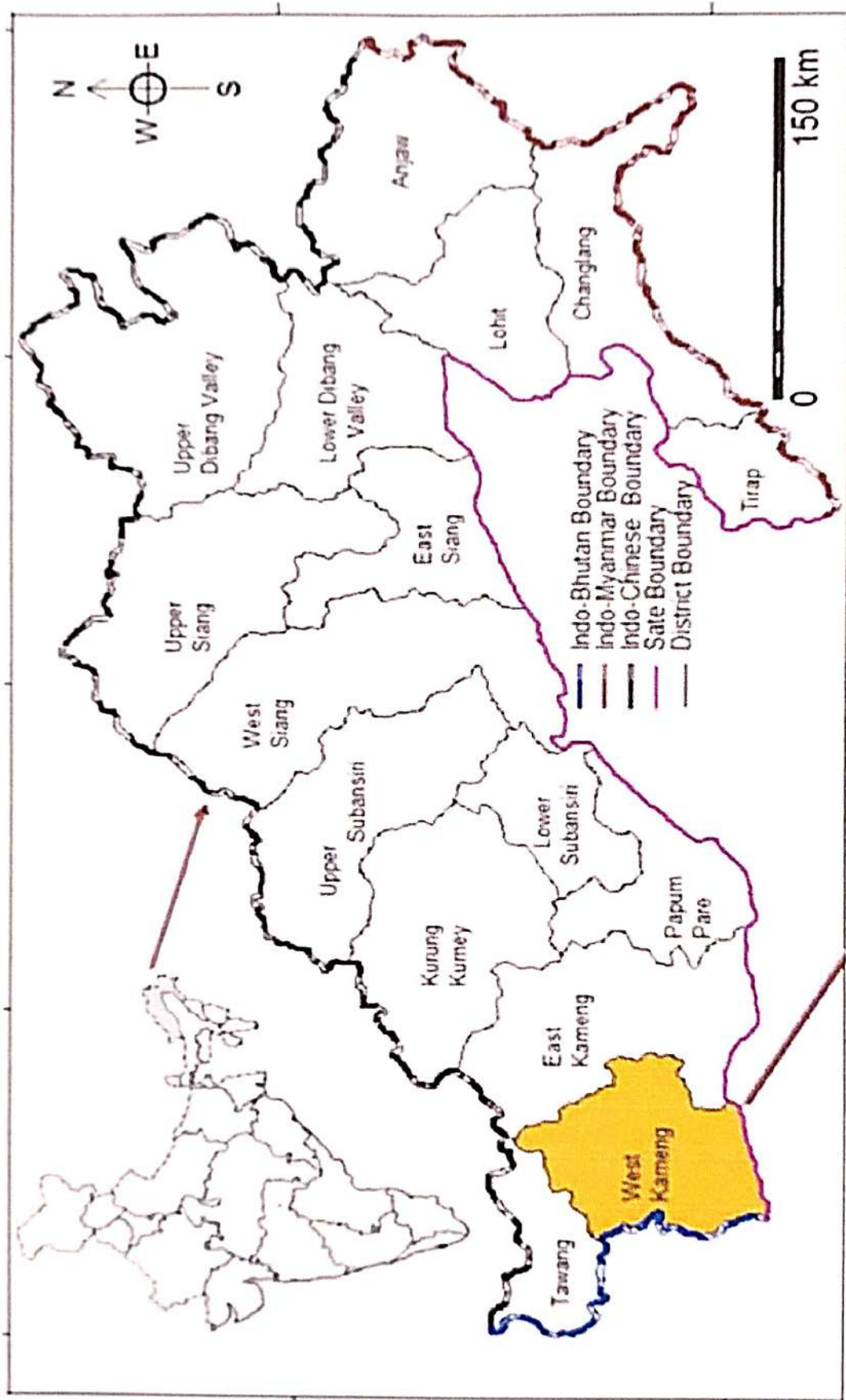
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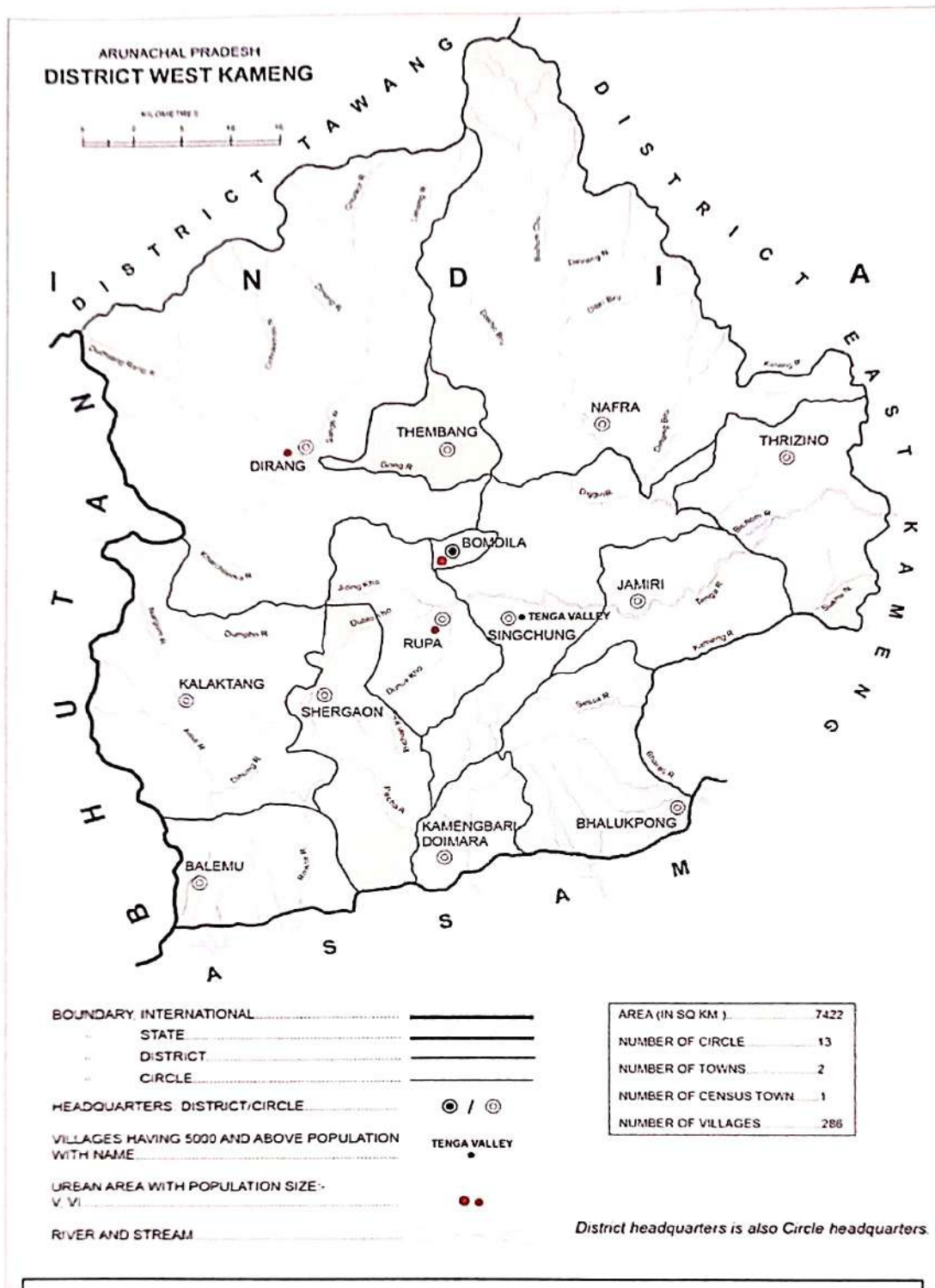
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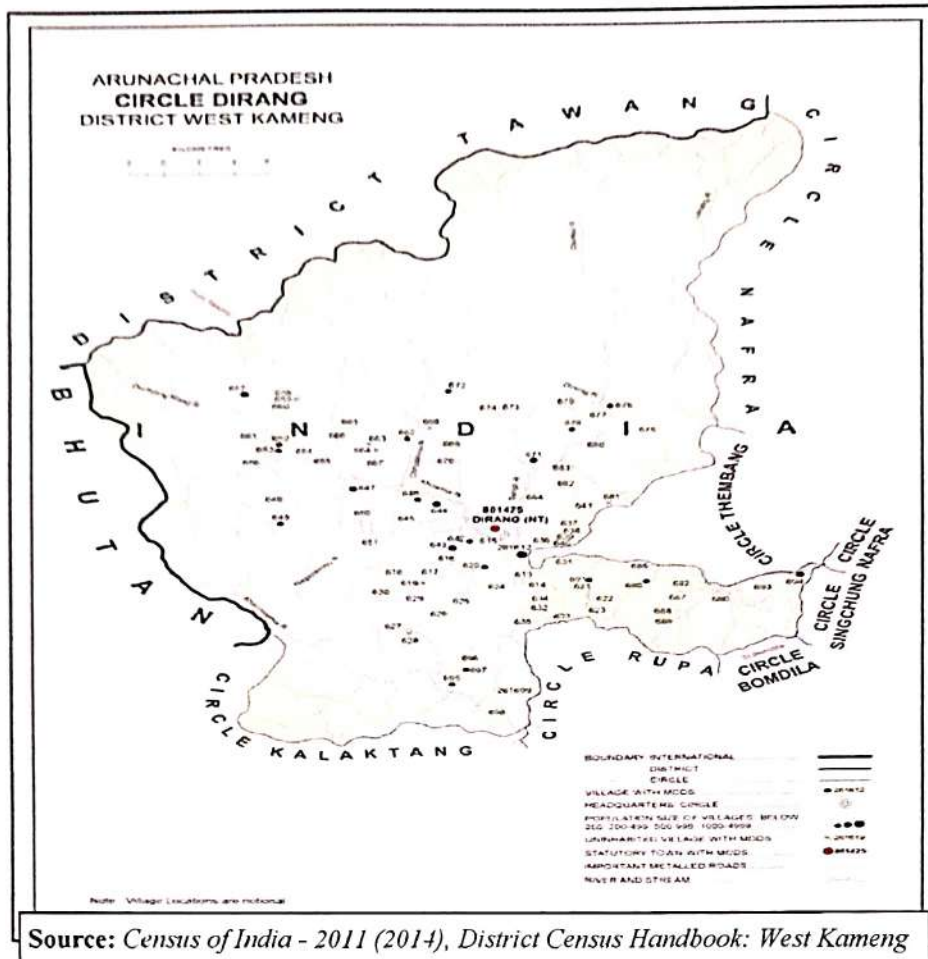
Map 1: Map of Arunachal Pradesh Showing West Kameng District.





Source: Census of India - 2011 (2014), District Census Handbook: West Kameng

Map 2: Map of West Kameng District.



Map 3: Map of Dirang Circle.

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/>



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Stating the Research Problem

The Monpa is one of the major tribes in the Northeast Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The community mainly inhabits the western part of West Kameng and Tawang districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The people belong to Tibeto-Mongoloid stock practicing Mahayana Buddhism. Their dresses and languages are similar to those of the people of Eastern Bhutan and Tibet. Though Monpa is recognized as a single tribe, there are noticeable variations in their lifestyle and on the basis of this variation; they are divided into three territorial divisions: Tawang Monpa, Kalaktang Monpa, and Dirang Monpa. Tawang Monpa is also called the Northern Monpa, Dirang Monpa as central Monpa, and Kalaktang Monpa as Southern Monpa. The name Monpa has been originally coined by the Tibetans to address the inhabitants of the region, south of Tibet.

The Monpa people inhabit the Tawang and West Kameng districts of Arunachal Pradesh. These people follow the *Gelugpa* sect of Tibetan Buddhism and speak the Tibeto-Burman language. The Monpa people are spread across Arunachal Pradesh in India, Bhutan, and Tibet. Their numbers are highest in Tawang, where they made up 97% of the district population, which is considerably large in a state with numerous tribes and ethnic groups. Out of the 45,000 Monpa living in Arunachal Pradesh, around 20,000 Monpa are centred in the Tawang district. Considerably fewer Monpa still live in Tibet and are featured among the 56 ethnic groups recognized by the Chinese Government. The Monpa geographical alienation and demarcation can be termed as a political decision. From 500 B.C. to 600 A.D., the Monpa lived autonomously as a small kingdom and it was only in 1914, under British Colonisation that their kingdom was torn between the two countries by the McMahon Line. There are around 25,000 and 3000 Monpa in Tibet and Bhutan respectively. Tibetan Buddhist

culture had seeped deep into their life. By the time a Monpa boy became a Dalai Lama in the 17th century, they had totally incorporated themselves into the Buddhist culture. Today most of their life and culture are centred on the Tawang Monastery and Buddhism. Their festivals like *Choskar*, *Losar*, *Torgya*, etc. are celebrated at the Tawang Monastery. People from all parts of Tawang District and beyond travelled to this monastery to be part of the celebration. It is also a place where most of the Monpa children are sent to become monks. Apart from skilful wood carvers, the Monpa are also known for their artistry in *Thangka* painting and weaving carpets and clothes. They dress colourfully with thick blankets and jackets. Most of their clothing is made from coarse, red material made from yaks' hair. Living at such an altitude, the Monpa culture, food, and clothing are, in many ways, dependent on yaks. Women and men flaunt headgear made of yaks' hair and tails.

The Monpa tribe is one of the most populous tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and is considered as one of the major tribal communities in the entire region. Monpas are the inhabitants of the high altitude Tawang district and the mountain passes in West Kameng district. Historically, the Tibetan word *Monpa* referred to all the indigenous tribes of southern Tibet and Bhutan, who were considered barbaric by the highly civilized Tibetan Buddhists. Mera Lama of Tibet spread Buddhism in southern Tibet and converted these Monpas into *Gelugpa* faiths of Tibetan Buddhism. As a result, the inhabitants of Tawang came under the religious and cultural influence of Tibet and Tawang was administered by the Dalai Lama from Lhasa.

The Monpas were later separated from their Tibetan connection when the British colonists drew the McMahon Line between India and China and the Monpas remained in the Indian Territory.

Society

Monpas speak *Tshangla*, a language which is also understood by the Bhutanese and Tibetans with whom they share a similar origin. The Monpas are however categorized into six clans depending on the variations of their dialect

and the location of their villages. These groups were not in frequent contact with one another as Monpas lived in isolation.

The traditional Monpa society was administered by their *Trukdri* council which consists of six ministers. The *Kempo*, or high priest of Tawang monastery, was also included. The *Lamas* also hold a respectable position and two monks known as *Nyctangs*, were also part of the council. Two others were *Dzongpens*, or fort administrators.

The Monpa society is patriarchal; the man is the head of the family and is the one who takes all decisions. In his absence, his wife takes over all responsibilities. When a child is born, they have no strict preference for a boy or a girl. However, some prefer a daughter for she stays in the house of her parents once she is married. Her husband is the one who moves to the house of his parents-in-law.

Economy

Being skilled craftsmen, the Monpas traditionally engaged themselves in weaving and preparing bamboo products. Though many Monpas were initially practicing hunting and foraging in the mountains, they started shifting cultivation and recently switched to terraced farming agriculture. Barley, rice, maize, chilli, and beans are among their major crops. They also rear domestic animals like yaks, pigs, and sheep.

Since the end of their isolation culture, the Monpas have greatly participated in trade with other tribes of Arunachal, people of the plains and also the tourist visitors in to their region.

Religion

The Monpas, like most other autochthons of the eastern Himalayas, believed in the native animistic *Bon* religion before their conversion into Tibetan Buddhism. But unlike the other tribes, the Monpas were fully absorbed into their new religion leaving behind only a few elements of their old religion. Many Monpa families also send their children as *Lamas* to join the monasteries. The Buddhist influence increased with the growing importance of Tawang when a Monpa from this region was chosen as the Dalai Lama.

Festivals

Losar, the Tibetan New Year, is the main festival for even the Monpas. Crowds gather at the monastery and the *Lamas* preside over the ceremonies. *Choskar*, or the harvest festival, is unique to the Monpa community. Though a non-Tibetan festival, it also has religious elements in the festivities as people travel to Tawang for pilgrimage and Buddhist *Lamas* would read religious scriptures in the *Gompas* for a few days during *Choskar*.

Due to the growth of tourism in the scenic Monpa territory, the Monpas have come out of their seclusion and have also emerged as a friendly community to outsiders. Their youth have also progressed in urban commerce and education and are finding good and resourceful jobs.

Significance of the Study

The study is based on the cultural and traditional aspect of the tribal society. The study of tribe life specifically the Monpa tribe is undoubtedly a significant one in order to understand their cultural value and religious practice of Monpa community. The study encompasses the socio-economic, religious, marriage system, beliefs, and other practices. The study reveals the contemporary reality of Monpa people living in the Dirang circle about their lifestyle, ideology, and various traditional and religious practices that is still prevailing in present day Monpa society.

The study mainly focuses on the different aspects of socio-economic and cultural life of the Dirang Monpas in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Review of Literature

The literature review has been described as a report of primary scholarship and an interpretation and synthesis of published work. As such the review of literature serves two key purposes: to show awareness of the present state of knowledge of a particular field and to provide a foundation for the author's research. In tune with the preceding statements, we too, have reviewed

the following available literature on Monpas in general and Dirang Monpas in particular.

Sarkar (1980) in his book *Buddhism among the Monpas and Sherdukpens* has given a very systematic outlook of Monpa and Sherdukpen religions. In particular, he described life-cycle of the Monpa people.

Norbu (1997) tries to portray the position of Monpa of Arunachal Pradesh on the basis of different terms. Drema (2004) describe the sacred places of Monpa tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. She discusses in detail the monasteries *chotens* of the Monpas. Deki (2004) discuss about life in Sangti village of Dirang, mainly the life around Gompas. Gupta (1968) has done an excellent job by writing the grammar, vocabulary, and sentences of the Monpas.

Dhar's work *Arunachal Pradesh: The Monpas of Tawang in Transition* (2005) is a pioneering contribution to the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the Tawang Monpas which focus on the transition period. Dutta and Tripathy in their works *Buddhism in North-East India* (2006) and *Buddhism in Arunachal Pradesh* (2008) focused on religious issues of the Monpas.

Duarah's work *The Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh* (1990) is also an important work to get an insight into the Monpa society. Being an anthropologist, his focus has been basically on the physical features especially on the size of the fingers, growth of hair, etc. of the Monpa boys.

Objectives of the Study

For thorough understanding of the Monpas in general and Dirang Monpas in particular through anthropological perspective, following objectives for the study has been framed:

- i. To understand, anthropologically, the socio-cultural life of the Monpas in general and Dirang Monpas in particular;
- ii. To get insight into their religious and political life; and
- iii. To examine the various sources of peoples' livelihood.

Methods of the Study

The present study is empirical in nature and conventional anthropological methods have been used to collect the relevant data in relation to the research theme. The data for the present study is collected mainly from primary sources as secondary sources are very limited. Extensive interview has been taken from cross-section of Dirang Monpa population keeping in mind the gender and age dimension to understand wider aspects of change taken place in Monpa society. The research strategy, which the study used during the process of data collection, is observation (participant and non-participant), case study, and interview (individual and group). Detailed case studies are being taken for collection of data in the ways of celebration, on food items, on songs, on rites and rituals and so on. For these case studies, in depth interviews with open-ended questions are conducted that provided respondents that have expressed their views and aspirations of the people without any restraints. Key informant interviews have been proven to be useful in understanding the change and continuity in the socio-cultural life of the Dirang Monpas.

Limitations of the Study

The first and foremost hurdle during the fieldwork was paucity of time. It is nearly impossible to understand any society like Monpas within a very limited time. This lack of time for carrying out fieldwork, in some way or the other, limited our understanding of the Monpa society.

The second problem we encountered was the language barrier between us and the informants or respondents. To accommodate ourselves with the villagers, we employed interpreters who work as mediators between the researchers and the people. This problem also somehow restricted us to jolt down the points made by respondents in a comprehensive manner.

Organisation of the Study

On the basis of framed objectives, the present study is organised into following chapters for in-depth understanding of the Monpa society and its myriad aspects.

In the **introductory chapter**, basic introduction on Monpa society in general, significance of study, review of literature, objectives of the study, methodologies of the study, universe of the study, limitations of the study, and the chapterizations of study has been underlined.

In the **second chapter**, the emphasised has been made on the basic characteristics of the Dirang Monpa culture such as custom, geographical distribution, and histories of the origin and migration of the Monpas.

Third chapter has been stressed to understand the socio-cultural life of the Monpas in general and Dirang Monpas in particular. It gives a picture of the existing socio-cultural settings which enables to understand the analysis of different social and cultural aspects of the people.

In **chapter four**, the basis of Monpa religion in terms of traditional religious beliefs and ritual practices has been described along with the changes in religious pattern with reference to the process of modernisation, Christianisation, and such factors.

In the next (**chapter five**), the political life of the Monpas in the form of village administration and execution of customary laws are discussed.

The **sixth chapter** focus on the economic life of the villagers through various livelihood patterns. The basis of Monpa economic life in relation to subsistence activities, seasonal activity, division of labour, daily routine, and principle of economic cooperation and obligation, etc. has been provides in this chapter.

In the **concluding chapter**, focused is on the major observations and findings on the different aspects of the Monpas.



Photo No. 1.1: Researchers during Interview.

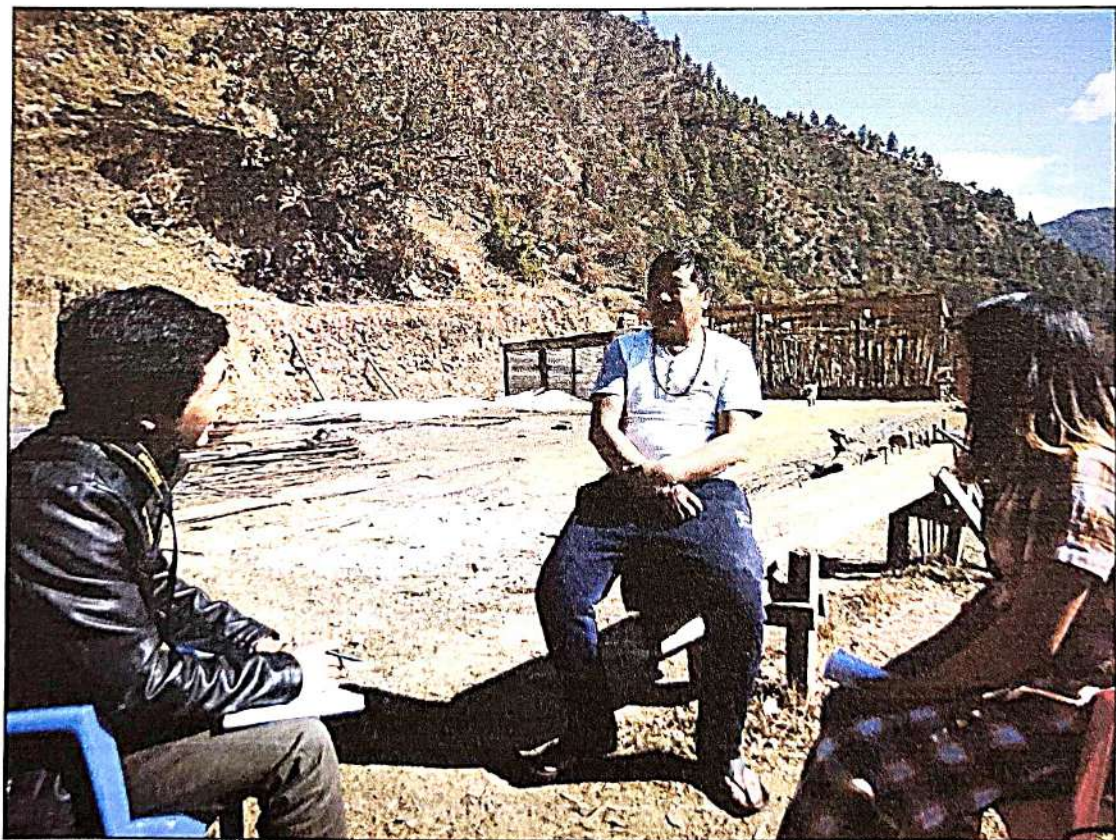


Photo No. 1.2: Interview with *Tsorgen*.



Photo No. 1.3: Researchers Collecting Data during Fieldwork.



Photo No. 1.4: Researchers with the Monk of *Thupsung Dhargyeling* Monastery, Dirang.

CHAPTER 2

LAND AND PEOPLE

West Kameng District: An Outline

A Brief History

West Kameng is an administrative district of Arunachal Pradesh with its Headquarter at Bomdila. The district derives its name from the river Kameng, a tributary of river Brahmaputra that flows through the district. The district is bounded by Tawang district in the North, Bhutan in the West, East Kameng in the East and Assam in the South.

Upon the arrival of the British, the entire area became a part of what was known as the North-East Frontier Agency. Till 1914, the district was a part of Darrang district of Assam, by a Govt. of India Notification of 1914, the area covered by this district became a part of the "Western Section" of the North East Frontier Tract for which the entry of British subject was regulated by Inner Line Permit. In 1919, this area was renamed as 'Balipara Frontier Tract' with its headquarters at Charduar in Assam. In 1946, the area covered by Balipara Frontier tract was divided into Sela Sub-Agency and the Subansiri Area. The area covered by the present West Kameng district falls under the Sela Sub-Agency with its headquarters continued to be in Charduar of Assam but later on it was shifted to Bomdila.

Following the independence of India, the Sela Sub-Agency was renamed as the Kameng Frontier Division in 1954 with its Headquarters at Bomdila. Again in 1965, Kameng Frontier Division was renamed as Kameng District. In 1980 (May) the district was bifurcated into two parts, namely, East Kameng District (erstwhile Seppa Sub-division) and West Kameng district (erstwhile Bomdila sub-division). Lately on 6th June, 1980, the district of West Kameng was again divided into two parts curving out the area of Tawang Sub-division which

became Tawang district and the rest of the area remained as West Kameng district.

In 1971 Census, the area covered by the district formed a part of North Eastern Frontier Agency, which was then constitutionally formed a part of the State of Assam. The Agency was directly administered by the President of India through the Governor of Assam as his agent. In 1972, the Agency was made a separate Union Territory which was named as Arunachal Pradesh and was placed under a Chief Commissioner as the administrator of new Union Territory. In 1974, the headquarters of the Union Territory was shifted from Shillong to newly built capital at Itanagar in Subansiri district. On the 15th day of August, 1975 legislative Assembly was constituted in Arunachal Pradesh, a Union Territory with the Chief Minister and 4 Cabinet Ministers to assist the Lt. Governor appointed on the same day as the administrator. The 1st General Election to the 30-member Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly was held in 1978 constituting a landmark in the political evolution territory. On the 20th February, 1987 Arunachal Pradesh had attained the Statehood and simultaneously the Lt. Governor of the Territory was re-designated as the Governor of the State and number of seats in the Legislative Assembly has also increased to 60 accordingly. At present there are 4 (four) Assembly Constituencies in the district viz. Dirang, Kalaktang, Thrizino-Buragaon, and Bomdila. All of these are part of Arunachal West Lok Sabha Constituency.

Location and Size

West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh is lying approximately between 91° 30' to 91° 40' East longitudes and 26° 54' to 28° 01' North latitudes. It is one of the districts which lie in the westernmost part of the state. The area of the West Kameng district is 9,594 km². The district is bounded by Tawang district in the north, in the east by East Kameng district, in the south by Sonitpur and Darrang districts of Assam, and in the west by the Kingdom of Bhutan. The district is the 3rd largest in the State in terms of area which accounting for 8.9 percent of the total area of the state.

Physiography and Drainage

The topography of the district is mostly mountainous. A greater part of the district falls within the higher mountain zone consisting of a mass tangled peaks and valleys. There are three major mountain ranges - a part of Sela range, Bomdila range, and foot hills range.

The Sela range consists of a series of mountains arranged in the form of big line from Tibet in the north to Bhutan in the West and thus forming a tough terrain to pass through it. The altitude of Sela range varies from 14000 to 15000 feet and Sela pass is 13714 feet high. The Bomdila range having an average height of 9000 feet is separated by 4500 feet high valley of river *Dirang Chu*, a tributary of Kameng River. South to the Bomdila range lies the area of the Foothills range which is full of tropical forest with trees of great economic values. The district is divided into five regions based on its physiography, geology, soils, and forest.

Bichom River Valley: It is a 'V' shaped valley and the catchment of river *Bichom* stretches between the snow-capped mountains and the lower Himalayan range with an elevation ranging from 1000 metres to 5500 metres. The valley is situated in the north eastern part of the district. The region spreads over Nafra Circle and a part of Thrizino Circle. The northern part of the valley is seasonal snow-covered area, not fit for human habitation. The southern portion is however, suitable for human settlement. The Bomdila and the *Tenga* groups of geology is found in this area with high base status soils of humid region, shallow-black brown, and recently formed alluvial soil. It is covered by dense moist temperate forests.

Tammaphu River Basin: The basin is a part of middle Himalaya. The region mainly occupies Dirang Circle and parts of Bomdila, Nafra, and Thrizino Circles. The Bomdila group of geology is found in the southern portion of the region. The soils of the area are recently formed ones, shallow-black, brown and alluvial soils, and high base status soils of humid region. The area is fully covered by East Himalayan moist temperate forests. This region is badly dissected by the tributaries of the river *Tammaphu* River which is a tributary of *Bichom* River.

Tenga Valley: It is also a deep 'V' shaped valley situated in the Siwalik ranges which merges with the Kameng River near Bomdila town. The valley is an ill-defined 'Dun' type valley which lies in the southern portion of the districts. The region extends parts of Kalaktang, Bomdila, Thrizino, and Dirang circles. The valley has Bomdila and *Tenga* groups of geology. The region has high base status soils of humid region and shallow black, brown and alluvial soils of northern regions. The area is covered by sub-tropical wet hill forest. The *Tenga* River is an important tributary of the Kameng River.

Bhairabkund River Valley: It is also a 'V' shaped longitudinal valley in the Siwalik ranges flows through the centre of the valley from North to South. The valley is a part of the lower Siwalik and is situated in the south-west portion of the district. The region spreads over the part of Kalaktang Circle. The Bomdila group, *Tenga* group, Bichom continental Gondwana, and lower Siwalik groups of geological formation are found in the area. Recently formed soils and shallow black, brown and alluvial soils of northern region are found in the region. The valley is covered by the tropical semi-evergreen forest.

Foothills of the District: The foothills area is dissected by many small rivers and gullies. The area as a whole receives heavy or orographic rainfall during rainy season. This region lies in the extreme southern portion of the district. The region spread over Bhalukpong circle, part of Kalaktang circle, and a small portion of Bomdila and Thrizino circles. The region being crossed with thick and dense tropical semi-evergreen forests, the area is sparsely populated and the population is found only in the areas of the plains bordering Assam. The geology of the area is the lower Siwaliks, Disang/Rengging formation, continental Gondwana, Jamiri and Rupa formation, Bichom and Miri formation. The soils are high base status soil and shallow black, brown and alluvial soils of northern region.

Climate

The district is situated within the temperate zone and remote from Sea. The Sea has thus no influence on its climate and the distance from equator is immaterial owing to influence of the snow-clad mountain. The only factor that determines the climate is the direction and height of mountains. Although the district lies close to the tropic, it furnishes every gradation of climate from the salty suffocating tropical heat of foothills area to the arctic cold of snow clad peaks. The climate is not humid up to 4000 feet in Southern area, temperate up to 7000 feet and cold beyond it. Humidity is generally high throughout the year. Snow fall occurs from mid-November to February.

Forest

The forest of the district can be classified into as under.

- i) Reserve forests
- ii) Protected forests
- iii) Anchal Reserve forests
- iv) Unclassified forests

The Reserve forest and protected forests areas of the district have provision of Assam Forest Regulation, 1891. The total reserve forest and Anchal reserve forest area of West Kameng District is 25527 hectares and 455 hectares respectively. The forest division has undertaken afforestation activities in the district.

The local tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh are given special privileges for collection of forest products like fuel wood, wood for constructing dwelling houses and other minor forest produces free or royalty but not for sale or barter or trade. The people also do enjoy privileges of hunting, fishing, etc. but there is limitation on imposition of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The local people are allowed 7.5% concession in the settlement of forest coups mahal. They are also allowed 50% concession for the security deposits in any construction for the purpose of settlement of forest coups/mahals, etc. The timber permit for extraction of wood are only issued to the local people of Arunachal Pradesh.

Most of the forest area of Arunachal Pradesh do not have any legal status and are utilized, for all practical purposes. These types of lands are known as community land under which the different communities can exercise their traditional customary right. However, different communities or the people of a community holding the forest cannot destroy these forests unnecessary except for the purpose of *Jhumming*.

Licenses for setting up of industries is only granted to the local people with a view to encourage them in this line. The movement of unfinished timber products outside Arunachal Pradesh was banned. At present harvesting of timber is done only in *Tenga* Reserve forest under Bomdila forest division and therefore, only two saw mills i.e. M/s Palizi saw mill, Palizi and Nafra saw mill at Tippi are functional.

Bomdila Forest Division extends to an area of 4264.95 km² and out of which 4046.40 km² is unclassified state forest and 196.6 Sq.km is reserved forest namely *Tenga* Reserved forest. The Bomdila forest division has four Forest ranges namely, Bomdila forest range, Khupi forest range, Dirang forest range and Nafra forest range. The type of forest vegetation available in this forest division are subtropical wet hill forest, East Himalayan wet hill forest, East Himalayan dry temperate coniferous forest, East Himalayan sub-alpine forest and Moist Alpine Scrub. The main objective of the forest division is to protect the forest from any encroachment and illegal activities. Forest check gate are also manned to check any smuggling of forest produce. The forest department also implements nationally sponsored schemes like National Afforestation Programme, National Bamboo Mission, and Compensatory Afforestation.

Minerals and Mining

West Kameng district is the westernmost district of Arunachal Pradesh adjoining Bhutan from where rocks of the Himalayan Thrust sheets enter the territory. All the rocks belonging to different tectonic units are stacked here as southerly inclined packet. The low-grade rock assemblage belonging to the Buxa Pocket is an economically important assemblage exposed in this district.

Around Rupa, assessment of the dolomite deposit has been made. A total reserve of 143 million tonnes has been estimated down to a vertical depth of 100 metres. The material analysis shows that it comprises of Co_o (29.82%), Mg_o (20.61%), Acid insoluble (0.35%), and R (2030.86%). The dolomite can be used as flux in steel industries.

Before dolomite, small pockets of clay of moderate to good plastic are associated with Siwalik Sandstone, exposed in the foothill belt bordering the Brahmaputra flood Plain.

Coal occurrence in the district are also of academic interest with the bands being narrow and their strike extension proved only up to very limited distances.

During the last few years promising incidence of lead zinc mineralization has been found in Shergaon area. Supilematic exploration work is in progress in order to assess the economic potential of this occurrence.

Geological Survey of India has also devoted to planning developmental activities in the district. Feasibility studies for several hydroelectric projects at Tenga, Nangram, Papu, and Sessa have been made. All the projects aim at augmenting power generation in the district by utilizing the terrain and its natural streams.

Electricity and Power

West Kameng district is the store house of power and electricity. Many remarkable rivers like *Bichom* River, *Tammaphlu* River, *Tenga* River, *Bhairabkund* River, etc. are flowing in the district which is the main sources of Power generation in the district. There are good number of micro hydel power project been set-up in the district viz. Dirang micro hydel, Sessa micro hydel, Rahung micro hydel, and Rupa micro hydel. Apart from these, Kameng Hydro Electric Project, which involved the development of 600 MW hydro powers, is under execution. The project utilized the water of *Bichom* and *Tenga* Rivers. The district is consisting of 283 village among them 192 village has already been electrified. The department of Power looks after the development activities and maintenance of assets created in power sectors.

Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture is trying to build a strong development of agricultural products in the district. The topography of the district is mostly mountainous. A greater part of it falls within the higher mountainous zone consisting of mass longhead peak and valleys. The high terrain and topography of the district limit the scope of agriculture products. Like other district of Arunachal Pradesh, *Jhum* cultivation is practice among the tribes of the district. The only other choice left is to increase the intensity of cultivation by adopting multiple cropping sequences and replacing the traditional cropping system with the use of HYV and Hybrid Seeds. Accordingly, the production of season vegetables like tomato, potato, cabbage, green peas etc. plays the vital role in uplifting the economy of the farmers. The table below depicts the areas and production of different crop in the district.

Horticulture

The District has vast potential for development of plantation and horticulture crops. There has been significant growth of horticulture crops in the district during the period 2001 to 2010. Most of the Horticulture crops are cultivated in traditional ways. Therefore, the yield and quality of the crops are not up to the commercial grades available in the market. Government report reveals that there are about 19300 hectares of additional area which can be brought under horticulture with minimum effort.

Panchayati Raj

The Panchayati Raj has been introduced in the district with the North East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Act, 1967. Under this regulation, the Gram Panchayat exist at the village level; the Anchal Samiti at the Anchal level; and Zilla Panchayat operates at the district level.

Main function of the Gram Panchayats are general function like preparation of annual budget, plan and programmed for the development of the village, maintenance of essential statistics of the village, Agriculture including Agricultural extension, Animal Husbandry, development of fisheries in the

villages, social and farm forestry, Khadi and Cottage industries, Housing, Drinking water, village roads, Rural electrification, Education including Adult and non-formal, cultural activities, Rural sanitations, Public health, Women and Child development, Public distribution system etc. Apart from that all issues/activities relating to the development of the village are handling by the gram panchayat.

However, the Panchayat bodies in the state have been raising their voices against the state govt. for not giving their due powers and authority as provided in 73rd Amendment Act, 1992.

Dirang: The Study Area

Dirang, a small hill station in West Kameng district has rich tourism potential with high surrounding snow-clad mountains, numerous turbulent streams, roaring rivers and deep gorges, endless variety of flora and fauna, and places of scenic beauty. Being conscious of the importance of tourism as a vehicle of economic development the small and homely town has recognized tourism as a thrust area and has opened up a number of tourist circuits including the Tawang monastery on the Indo-China border.

Dirang is situated 42 kms and 142 kms from the district headquarters Bomdila and Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and is at a much lower altitude of 1497 metres/4911 foot as compared to Bomdila located at 2700 metres/8858 feet and Tawang at 3048/10000 feet. This makes the weather of Dirang much placid, breezy along the river valley making it a very comfortable and pleasing hill station to stay. The entire township flourishes along the river Dirang (*Dirang Chu* in local dialect) running parallel to the highway, viewing the small and cosy villages scattered around the hills, the cultivated fields, terraces, pine trees and the kiwi gardens. Bathed in the quintessential halo of Buddhism and the warmth of the local Monpa tribe helps any tourist to ward off the *Bone*-numbing breeze of the Himalayas especially during winter. Dirang tenders some of the most exciting spots which a tourist or traveller can explore. Some of the local attractions amid Dirang are the National Research Centre on Yak near Yewang

Basti, the Regional Apple Nursery and Progeny Orchard at Rungkung, Orchid centre at Jyotinagar, Kalachakra, and *Palyul Changchub Dhargyeling Nyingma* Monasteries.

To witness the other spots of interest, a tourist must travel some distance by a vehicle. The exiting places are the Dirang *Dzong* or Fort established in the 17th century situated at Dirang Basti which represents the authority of the monastic rule through which the Monpas carried out their public administration during the past. This fort is reasonably located at a hill-top which comprises a four storied fortified stone slabs supported with wooden logs in which the entire village could take refuge at the time of war. The entrance is provided by a wooden gate which is decorated with local architectural designs. The other famed tourist spot is the Hot Water Spring located before reaching Rama Camp where tourist and locals take bath with a believed to have curative possessions. At a distance of 8 kms beyond Dirang is the famed Sangti Valley which is dotted with numerous picturesque spots ideal for holidaymakers. Some of the prime attractions are the paddy fields which attracts the migratory Black neck crane every year. Government organizations such as Regional Sheep Breeding Farm under Department of Veterinary and the upcoming Krishi Vigyan Kendra under Department of Agriculture, also add to the essence to the valley. The road further takes to Khaso steel bridge which is one of the most ideal places for hangouts and picnics. Every New Year of the English and Buddhist calendar welcomes hundreds of people to throng themselves to make merry, sing and dance with harmony and peace.

The kiwi gardens and the apple orchards can be witnessed on the way back from Sangti village at Namthung and Zimthung villages. Namthung can be an ideal place for promoting angling and rafting if taken on a positive note. Zimthung situated at one of the highest peaks in the hills surrounding Dirang town is bestowed with numerous apple trees and kiwi plantations owned by private entrepreneurs. The best season to experience the taste of the fruits is August for apple and November for kiwi.

Dirang can also be ecologist's delight as the town may act as a base camp for trekking and bird watching at villages Thembang, Namshu, Mandala Phudung, Morshing, Lubrang, Nyukmadung, etc. These places are situated on mountain ridges high up with sparse houses strung far apart with surrounding virgin forests.

As per the Population Census 2011, there are total 338 families residing in the village Dirang Village. The total population of Dirang Village is 2,317 out of which 1,584 are males and 733 are females thus the Average Sex Ratio of Dirang Village is 463.

The population of Children of age 0-6 years in Dirang Village village is 218 which are 9% of the total population. There are 109 male children and 109 female children between the ages 0-6 years. Thus as per the Census 2011 the Child Sex Ratio of Dirang Village is 1,000 which is greater than Average Sex Ratio (463) of Dirang Village.

As per the Census 2011, the literacy rate of Dirang Village is 76.2%. Thus Dirang Village has higher literacy rate compared to 57.8% of West Kameng district. The male literacy rate is 84.81% and the female literacy rate is 55.77% in Dirang Village.

Table 2.1: Dirang Data

Particulars	Total	Male	Female
Total No. of Houses	338	-	-
Population	2,317	1,584	733
Child (0-6)	218	109	109
Schedule Tribe	1,097	536	561
Literacy	76.18 %	84.81 %	55.77 %
Total Workers	1,648	1,281	367
Main Worker	1,397	5,252	0
Marginal Worker	251	134	117

Source: Census of India, 2011.

Places of Tourist Interests in Dirang

Situated at an altitude of 4910 ft above the sea level, Dirang a beautiful hill station comprises of Tribal Mahayana Monpas sharing their traditions and heritage which are similar to Western Bhutan. Dirang is located on a picturesque valley in between Bomdila and Tawang and due to its lower altitude than Bomdila the weather is much milder & comfortable; a constant wind blows along the river valley making it a very pleasant place to stay. The spectacular natural view of Dirang surely makes the visitors spellbound. The visitors find numerous beautiful natural objects of nature to pick from. Tourists are always free to squeeze the abundant beauty of nature. The high peaks and mountains of Dirang are irresistible for mountaineers and trekkers. They give maximum pleasure to the adventurous tourists.

Dirang is a Sub-divisional headquarters in the West Kameng District and well known for its Hot Water Spring and Apple Orchards apart from its mesmerizing natural beauty. It is also used as a base camp for trekking and bird watching at Mandla or Madla Phudong, which is situated at a distance about 28 km from Dirang. Dirang features unique flora and fauna, numerous medicinal plants have their habitat in this area.

Some of the other tourist destinations while visiting Dirang are:

1. National Research Centre on Yak
2. Dirang Dzong
3. Hot Water Spring
4. Sangti Valley
5. Kalachakra Gompa

1. National Research Centre on Yak

The National Research Centre on Yak is located above the main town. The centre also has a yak farm at Nyukmandung about 31 km from Dirang. The centre conducts research on genetic resources, problems associated with production. It also undertakes research on improvement of yak and its products through selection and breeding with exotic frozen semen. The research centre can

be visited with permission by tourists. The National Research Centre on Yak is located amidst the Eastern Himalayan ranges. Founded by Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the centre is responsible for conserving Indian Yak. The yak farm belonging to this centre is located 31 km away from Dirang. Researches on genetic resources and problems associated with yak production are conducted here. Improving yak and yak products are part of an agenda of the centre. National Research Centre on Yak is open for tourists' visits on permission.

2. Dirang Dzong

Dirang Dzong or the locally known as "JONG"- the fort at Dirang was built in 1831 represent the authority of the King/Chief and also an important centre of Public Administration is an important historical monument for the Monpas of Dirang circle. It was also the centre of Military and Judicial activities concerning the entire population within its jurisdiction. It is at a strategically located hill top and comprises of an array of four storied fortified stone buildings in which the entire village could take refuge at the time of war. It is the only one of its kind in the entire area.

Dirang Dzong, which is a tribal area, is on the shores of Dirang River. The architecture of the tribal colony is stunning. Some of the houses are over 500 years old. The houses were built to sustain the hostile weather in the region. The foundation of these houses is of stone and the walls and roof are built of wood. Dzong, as the fort is referred to comprise this settlement and it inspires you with its architecture, which is an influence of Buddhist kingdoms. Though the fort is now in ruins, the ruins are proof of architectural excellence of the olden days. Views from Dirang Dzong are spectacular.

3. Hot Water Spring

The other famed tourist spot is the Hot Water Spring, which is also the main attraction for locals, who supposedly take bath in the Hot Springs as its water is said to possess curative properties. Flowing from nearby hills, the Hot Water Spring falls into River Dirang. Rich in sulphur content and praised for its

curative powers, Hot Water Spring attracts people in great numbers. The bath is particularly refreshing when you visit this place in winter.

4. Sangti Valley

Sangti Valley, located at 7 km from Dirang is one of the seasonal homes of the majestic creature called the black-necked crane that flies across from China and perhaps Leh, right into its laps. Locally termed as *tungtung ka uk* by the people. According to locals, the black-necked cranes, migrate in the valley during November and December, feeding and breeding during the winter months and then revert back to their original homes along with their young ones during the months of April and May every year.

5. Kalachakra Gompa

Kalachakra Gompa, which refers to a monastery, is located above Kalachakra, a village in Dirang. This monastery is over 500 years old. It is frequented by those who follow Buddhism as well as others who love the serene atmosphere.

Other attractions in Dirang include Regional Apple Nursery, Progeny Orchard and Kiwi Farms. If you travel further while on your stay at Dirang, you may visit Bomdila, which is a famous tourist destination. Tourist places in Dirang are not only picturesque but it also offers scope for trekking and bird watching.

Dirang Monpas: The Sample of the Study

The Dirang Monpas are identified as the major division of the greater Monpa Tribe belonging to Tibeto-Burman language family. These tribal people are Tibetan Buddhist and inhabit the north eastern area of India. The Dirang Monpa tribe has been granted the scheduled tribe status in India. During the 1981 census, their total population was 3599, which crossed 5000 in one decade's time.

The other name used commonly for the Dirang Monpa tribe is *Tshangla*, which suggests that these people are maybe in some aspect, related to *Tshangla* tribes of Bhutan, China and India, which numbers more than 250,000 people. But

when it comes to the language spoken, the difference is vast. A research has been taking place in order to determine the relationship between the two ancient tribes.

History

In India, for the most part, the Dirang Monpa people inhabit the Dirang circle which happens to be located in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh. The tribal people claim that they are the very first people who inhabited the area which takes their origin to a thousand years back. Some of their elders reveal that their forefathers originated primarily in Bhutan and they moved to India later when their native land was constantly being bombarded by the outside invasions.

Customs

To perform the marriage rituals, a *Lama* gets hired in order to consult the horoscopes and determine the most auspicious time and day for the marriage to take place. On the day of marriage, the family of the bride moves to groom's house. The marriage is considered as a simple procedure where a *Lama* simply places a white scarf called *Katha* around the necks of the bride and groom, showers blessings on the couple and in no time, the marriage formalities are completed. A huge feast is held after marriage at which all the people, including children, often become indulge in consuming copious amounts of strong rice whisky.

Lamas play many other roles as well. When a woman gives birth to a child, she is considered to be in a state of spiritual and physical pollution and nobody is allowed to visit her. On the third day, a *Lama* is invited to name the child and prepare a horoscope for the baby. The *Lamas* are not only present at birth, but they also carry out the funerals. When there is a death in this tribe family, 'the body is carried to a nearby river and thrown into the water after being cut into 108 pieces as Tibetan Buddhists consider 108 to be an auspicious number. The *Lamas* recite a prayer and on the seventh day, a tree gets erected in front of the house of the deceased to satisfy the soul.

Religion

Tibetan Buddhism has the greatest influence on the Dirang Monpa tribes. At the time of the 1981 census, 99.69 per cent of the Dirang Monpa expressed their belief in Buddhism. The previous Indian census, in 1971, had returned 100 per cent of the Dirang Monpa as Buddhists.

Occupation

Agriculture is the chief occupation. The people practice both *Jhum* (shifting cultivation) and settled cultivation and also domesticate yaks, cows, sheep, pigs, etc. The cattle and yak are reared for milk and meat, while the sheep is credited for producing wool and meat.

Food and Traditional Cuisines

When it comes to cuisines, the Monpa people survive majorly on cereals, fish, vegetables, chuung, rice, maize, and wheat. Maize happens to be their staple item food. When it comes to meat, they are known to consume everything from beef, pork, mutton, yaks, mithuns, and deers in some areas, there are tribal people who eat snake as well. Bananas, apples and peaches are the fruits most consumed by them.

Conclusion

Northeast India boasts of incredible linguistic and cultural diversity out of which the Monpa tribes make up for five percent of the total population of tribal communities spanning the whole Arunachal Pradesh. These tribes are known for their own and unique system of the practices. The tribes are also famous for their artistic creations that include beautiful *Thangka* painting, carpet making, weaving, and wood carving.

Table 2.2: Sample Population by Age, Sex, and Marital Status

Marital Status by Age Group	Male (%)	Female (%)
<u>< 25 years</u>		
Married	7 (5.98)	17 (14.78)
Unmarried	103 (88.03)	102 (91.89)
DSW*	0	0
<u>25-29 years</u>		
Married	25 (21.37)	31 (26.96)
Unmarried	11 (9.40)	8 (7.21)
DSW*	1 (25.0)	1 (9.09)
<u>30-34 years</u>		
Married	20 (17.09)	19 (16.52)
Unmarried	3 (2.56)	1 (0.90)
DSW*	0	2
<u>≥35 years</u>		
Married	65 (55.56)	48 (18.18)
Unmarried	0	0
DSW*	3 (75.0)	8 (72.73)
<u>All age groups</u>		
Married	117	115
Unmarried	117	111
DSW*	4	11

*DSW: Divorced, separated, and widowed
 Figures within parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field Survey.

Table 2.3: House Types of the Monpas of Dirang

House Type	Number of Houses	Percentage (%)
RCC	27	26.5%
Assam Type	29	28.4%
Kacha	7	6.9%
Sp type	7	6.9%
Traditional	32	31.4%
Total	102	100.0%

Table 2.4: Types of Toilet

Type of Toilet	Number of Households	Percentage (%)
Own flush	26	25.5%
Own pit	66	64.7%
Public flush	1	1.0%
Public pit	9	8.8
Total	102	100.0%

Table 2.5: Sources of Drinking Water

Source	Number of Households	Percentage (%)
Piped	93	91.2%
Public tap	8	7.8%
Stream	1	1.0%
Total	102	100.0%

Table 2.6: Population by Education in Dirang

Illiterate		Primary		Middle Schooling		Secondary Matriculate		Higher Secondary		Graduation		Post-Graduation and Above		Total	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
60 (12.6)	70 (14.7)	71 (14.9)	41 (8.6)	38 (8.0)	30 (6.3)	29 (6.1)	33 (6.9)	26 (5.5)	30 (6.3)	13 (2.7)	26 (5.5)	1 (2.0)	7 (1.5)	238 (50.1)	237 (49.9)
130 (27.4)		112 (23.6)		68 (14.3)		62 (13.1)		56 (11.8)		39 (8.2)		8 (1.7)		475 (100.0)	

Table 2.7: Number of Households by Monthly Income

Category	No. of Household	Percentage (%)
Low IG	34	44.7%
Middle IG	24	31.6%
High IG	18	24.7%
Total	76	100.0%

Table 2.8: Population by Occupation in Dirang

Occupation	Male	Percentage (%)	Female	Total (%)
Primary	15	10.8%	54 (45.0)	67 (55.8)
Secondary	12	10.0%	9 (7.5)	21 (17.5)
Tertiary	31	25.8%	1 (0.8)	32 (26.7)
Total	56	46.7%	64 (53.3)	120 (100.0)

Table 2.9: Number of Households by Fuel for Cooking

Source	Number of households	Percentage (%)
LPG or bio-gas	86	84.3%
Firewood	6	5.9%
LPG and firewood	10	9.8%
Total	102	100.0%



Photo No. 2.1: Monpa Woman in Traditional Dress.



Photo No. 2.2: Monpa Men Playing Traditional Game.

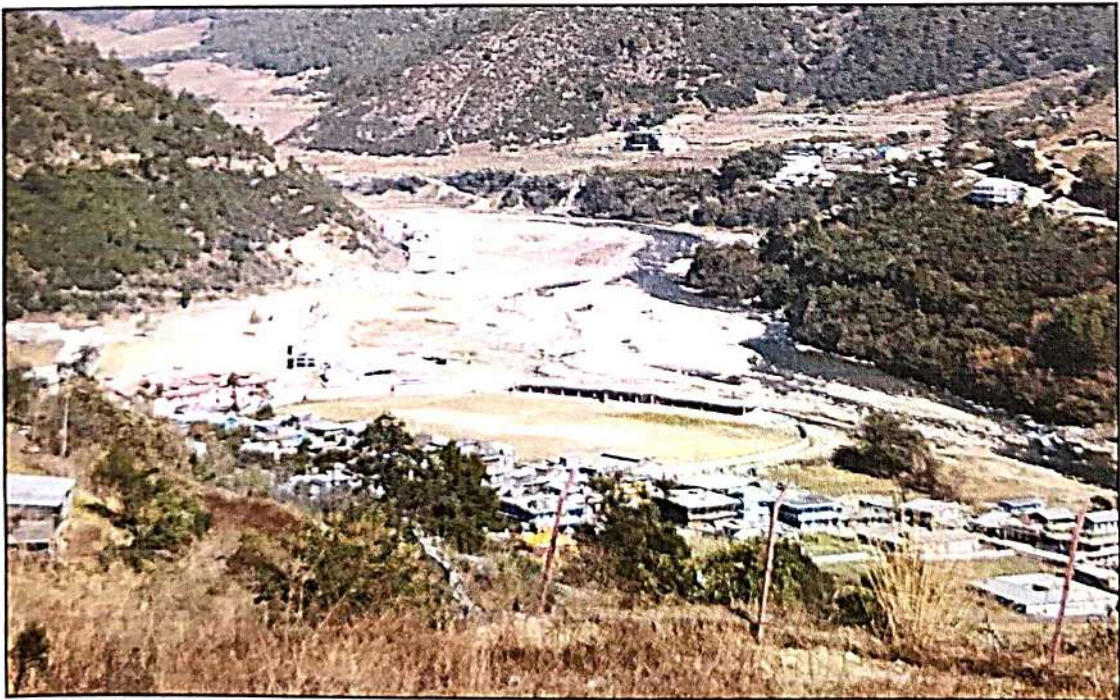
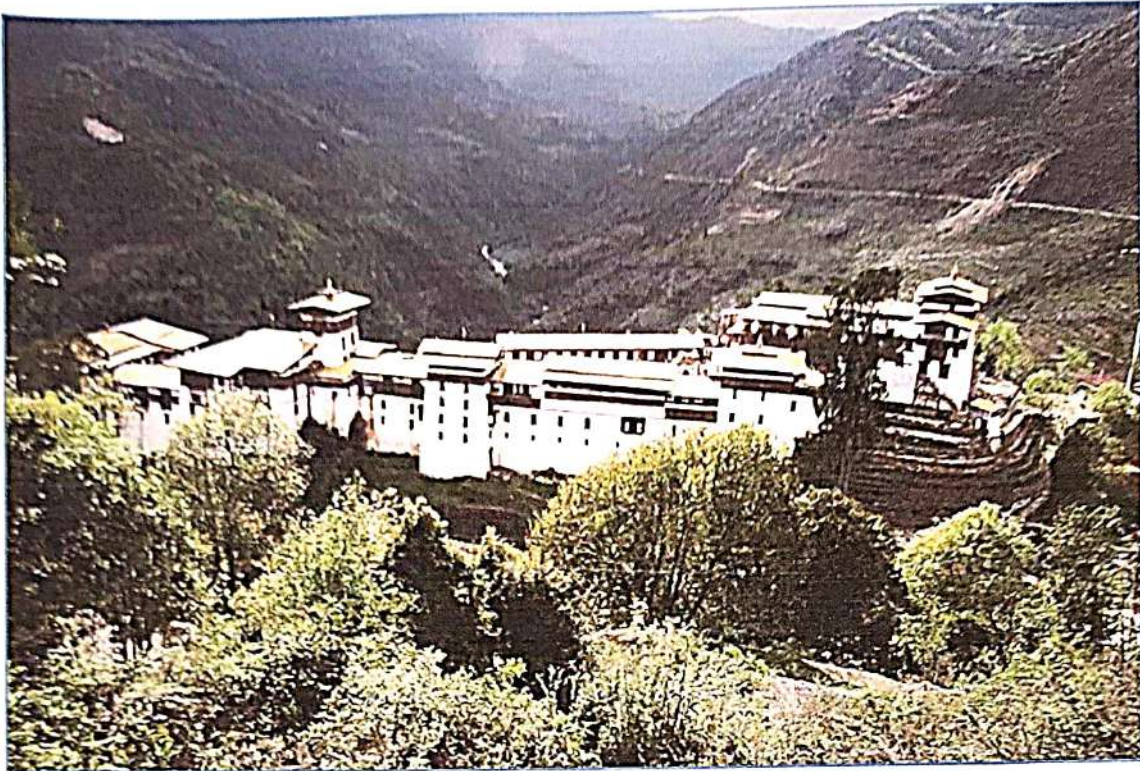


Photo No. 2.3: View of Dirang Town.

Photo No. 2.4: Some Places of Tourist Interests in Dirang.



Dirang Dzong



Kalachakra Gumpa

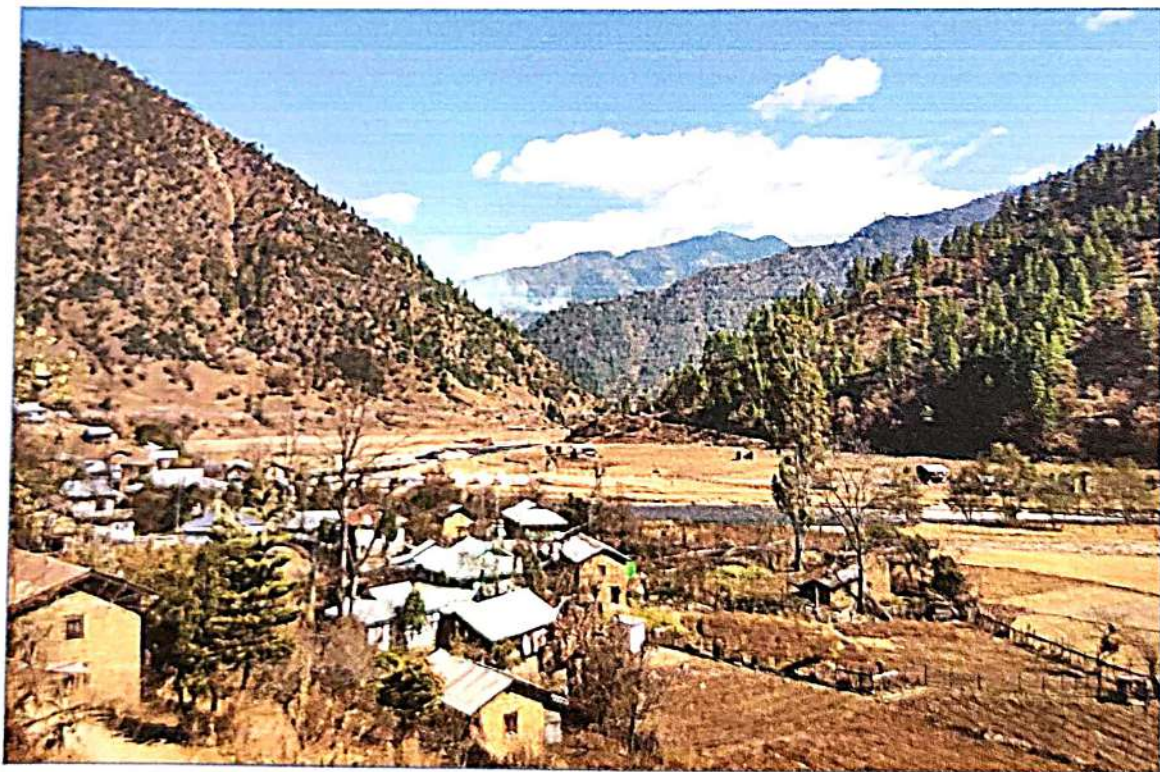
Photo No. 2.4: Some Places of Tourist Interests in Dirang.



National Research Centre on Yak



Hot Water Spring



Sangti Valley

CHAPTER 3

SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE

Society reflects the customs, traditions, beliefs, and practices of every community. Besides it also forms the basis of the political constituent of the state. Even the economic aspects or the economic activities undertaken by a particular community depend on the social structure and values and customs of the people residing in the particular society. The social activities of the Monpas revolved centring the villages.

A Monpa village is generally a cluster of agricultural and pastoral families. A village is known as *yui* by the Tawang Monpas and *dung* by the West Kameng Monpas. One village consists of 20 to 200 households or so. In certain areas, a village with a single house can also be seen which is termed as *gongchikpa* (single house) by them. Villages are generally situated on high ridges, although certain villages are found on the slopes of hills. The settlements of the Monpa villages are usually permanent in nature. The villages have clearly demarcated boundaries with distinct administrative functionaries. Mostly the villages are based on its geographical locations divided into three sections - *toeth* or *toe* (upper), *bar* or *zhop* (middle) and *meth* or *barga* (lower). However, smaller villages are divided into upper and lower units- *toth* or *toe* and *meth* or *barga*. In every Monpa village, people live close to each other and are as such on familiar terms. They share a common social environment and participate in social gatherings.

Clan

There are several clans among the Monpas, each clan is supposed to be descendents from a common ancestor and hence share a common surname. However, the writing of surname is not practised by the Monpas of Tawang, people bearing a single name or two names can be noticed in the region. Only, the Monpas of West Kameng bear a surname like *Bapu*, *Dirkipa*, *Tokshipa* and so

on. People of different clans live in the same village but persons belonging to same clan do not marry. Always marriage relationship takes place between two different clans. The members of same clan are cohesive to co-operate among themselves in various religious and marriage events.

The clans found among the Monpas of West Kameng are *Phaijilupa*, *Bargipa*, *Sung kharpa*, *Gonpapa*, *Dung Karpa*, *Jham Chenpa*, *Serthipa*, *Dirkipa*, *Tokshipa*, *Kharna*, *Shongmu*, *Kochi*, *Namsa*, *Brela*, *Komo*, *Bapu* (males), *Aya* (females), *Tlhrang Pather*.

In the pre-Buddhist period, it is believed that people belonging to different clans like *key*, *Rhomo*, *Ngonchin*, *Bapu*, etc. were considered as higher status in the society and the people belonging to lower clans were not treated equally. But later, when they became followers of Buddhism, they began to understand its teachings related to compassion and sin. Gradually, the difference between higher and lower clans began to end. Today, there is hardly any clan differentiation noticed between them.

Family

The family structure in the Monpa society is generally nuclear in nature, with wife, husband and their unmarried children living together. Children in a family stay together with their parents till their marriage, after marriage they set up their independent household. However, even after establishing independent household they maintain close relationship with their family.

The Monpas maintain a well-knit family with the father as the head, while the decisions of mother in family matters are also highly valued. The mother usually looks after her children besides managing her household duties. Both the mother and father take up the responsibility of raising the family and providing their needs. The family, as a whole, work together to make a living and production of food is the responsibility of every adult individual. The little children help their elders to do household chores like fetching water, collecting firewood and looking after their little brothers and sisters. Till recent times, they also helped their parents in tending yaks and sheep.

Kinship

Kinship also plays a significant role in the Monpa society and it is the most important social bond between them. The primary organisation of the Monpa kinship is kindred relationship by either blood or by marriage bound by patrilineage and matrilineage. According to their range of kinship, it can be divided into three categories such as primary kinship, secondary kinship and tertiary kinship. Primary kin are those which include parents and their children such as wife, husband, father, mother and their children. Secondary kinship includes those kinsmen that are related to the primary kin of an individual like brother-in-law, sister-in-law, etc. Tertiary kinship includes the primary kin of secondary kin such as grand-son, grand-daughter. The Monpas use both classificatory kinship terms and descriptive kinship terms while referring different kinship.

In classificatory system different kinsmen are included in one category and one term is used to refer different persons. As such they do not have much terms of relationship, and same terms are commonly used to designate different relationships. Among the Dirang Monpas, for example, *ayang* is use for mother's brother, father-in-law, father's sister's husband; *meme* or *atta* for grandfather and also for an elderly person; *aibe* for grandmother and for an elderly woman; *Khotkon* for mother's brother's son, father's sister's son, sister's husband, husband's brother, wife's brother and *mathang* for father's sisters daughter, mother's brother daughter, brother's wife, husband's sisters, wife's sister.

In the descriptive type of kinship one term is particularly referred to one kin at a time. The terms like *yungfa* for wife and *nyizi* for husband are descriptive terms use by the West Kameng Monpas respectively. Though they use these terms of references but while addressing each other they often call upon their names. Some of the kinship terms used by Dirang Monpas are given below (Table 3.1):

Table 3.1: Kinship Terminologies of the Dirang Monpas

Kinship Relations	Kinship Terms of Dirang Monpas	Kinship Relations	Kinship Terms of Dirang Monpas
F	Achi/ Aapa	So	Za
F.F	Atta	Da-in-law	Chiming
F.M	Abi	So.So	Tso
F.B(e)	Aapa tangpu	So.D	Tsomin
F.B(y)	Aku	D	Zamin
F.B.W(e)	Ama-chulu/tangpu	So-in-law	Makpa
F.B.W(y)	Atung	D.So	Tso
F.B.so(e)	Au	D.D	Tsomin
F.B.So(y)	Au	B(e)	Au
F.B.D(y)	Ana	B(y)	Boying
F. B. D(e)	Ana	B.w(e/y)	Mathang
F.Si(e)	Angi tangpu	B.So	Za
F.Si(y)	Angi zimshok	B. D	Zamin
F.Si.H(e/y)	Ayang	Si(e)	Ana
F.Si.(e/y)So	Khoikon	Si(y)	Naying/zi
F.Si. (e/y)D	Mathang	Si.H(e/y)	Khoikon/ajang
M	Aama	Si.So	Nunu
M.M	Abi	Si.D	Nunu
M. F	Ata	H	Yungfa
M. B.(e/y)	Ayang	W	Nyizi
M.B.Wi(e/y)	Anni	Co-wife	Chungma
M.Si(e)	Ataung tangpu	H./W.F	Ayang
M. Si(y)	Atung zimshuk	H./W.M	Anyi
M.Si. h (e)	Aku	H.B(e)	Khoikon
M.Si. h (y)	Aku	H.B(y)	Khoikon
M.Si.So(e)	Au	W.B(e)	Zangchan
M.Si.So(y)	Yungze	W.B(y)	Zangchan
M.Si.D(e)	Ana	H.S(e)	Mathang
M.Si. D(y)	Naying	H.S(y)	Mathang
M. B.So	Khotkon	W.S(e)	Mathang
M.B.D	Mathang	W.S(y)	Mathang

Source: Field Survey.

Abbreviations: F=Father, M=Mother, So=Son, D=Daughter, B=Brother, Si=Sister, H=Husband, W=Wife, E=Elder, Y=Younger

Social Norms

The Monpa society follows a number of traditional rites and rituals which shows the uniqueness of their cultural heritage. There are several social norms related to birth, marriage and death of a person which have been discussed in details below:

Birth

Birth of a baby is of utmost importance in the family. A pregnant woman is cared by the family members. The first delivery of a baby usually takes place in the mother's maiden house. Soon after the birth, the umbilical cord of the child is cut with the help of a sickle by a woman of a "good character" as they believe that the baby would imbibe the good character of the lady, and then a thread is tied above two inches from the child's naval. Then the child is bathed with lukewarm water and wrapped by a warm and soft cloth. The young mother is fed with liquor and nutritious food. She is restricted to eat vegetables like potatoes, brinjals, pumpkins, etc. as it may cause itching and swelling.

Naming ceremony is observed on the third day after the birth of a child, till then the child is kept inside the house. On the third day the relatives and friends congregate to observe the naming ceremony. They carry bottles of homemade liquor along with religious thread called *hrungma* and gifts for the new born baby. It is customary for the mother-in-law to present the mother with a *lamba* (rectangle shape woollen cloth) to cover the child and a long cloth made of *eri* called *busma* to carry baby on their back. The greeters give a name to the baby and enjoy the whole day. However, the well-to-do-families invite a *lama* to give a name to the child and also to cast the horoscope called *keskar*. The *lama* consults with his book *kartsi* and cast the horoscope calculating the time, day, month and year of birth of the child. The *lama* also looks for a suitable name for the child.

For longer life, the hair of a child is not cut till he or she attains one year of age. After a year, the hair of the baby is cut for the first time by the maternal uncle or the nearest maternal male relative. They do not observe any grand ceremony or feast. Mention may also be made that the hair is not shaved but only a small portion is cut. For this purpose the child is carried near the lavatory and as a customary rite a match light is struck near the hair of the child. It is believed that the performance of this ritual develops the speaking capacity of the child. The well-off parents go to a highly renowned incarnate *lama* called *Rimpoche* to get hair cut from him. This process is known as *tapche*.

Marriage

Marriage is always regarded as a sacred institution by the Monpa people, which have to be nurtured by love, loyalty, and care between the two partners. The Monpa marriage system is generally monogamous but at the same time, two forms of polygamy i.e., polygyny and polyandry also prevail. However, monogamy is usually practiced and considered as most respected and accepted form of marriage among the Monpas. In polyandrous marriage normally one woman marries two brothers of the same family. However, this is a rare occurrence and is done mainly to prevent division of property among the brothers and further cohesion between them. Polyandry is mostly noticed amongst the semi-nomads who rear herd of yaks or flock of sheep. When one capable male member of the family stays away from home for several months with their flock of animals, the other brother resides at home and takes care of the family and household affairs. On the other hand, polygyny is generally found among the aristocratic class who considers marrying more than one woman a status symbol in the society. However, barrenness of a woman also sometimes leads to the husband marrying another girl. In this case the husband usually takes consent of his first wife.

Marriage within the community and village is highly preferred by the family and elders of the village. Earlier, if a person of the community wants to marry another person belonging to other community other than his or her own, it was strongly resented not only by the kith and kin but also by the entire community of his or her village. However, with the passage of time, the attitudes of the people have undergone some changes and now-a-days marriage outside the community is seen to be taking place.

Marriage among cousins is not only very common but also a widely accepted form of marriage. However, there are certain limitations: parallel cousin marriage i.e. the children's of two brothers and those of two sisters of the same parents are not allowed to marry. A person in the Monpa society is free to marry with the desired girl either from mother's brothers' daughters or from father's sisters' daughters. Hence, both patrilateral and matrilateral cross-cousin

marriages occur. However, a Monpa girl and a boy enjoy a great measure of freedom for choice in marriages. If they are involved, they let their parents know and in a majority of cases get their consent for the marriage. Nevertheless, the most acceptable form of marriage among the Monpas is the marriage arranged by negotiation by the parents.

Very often, the boy's parents engage a person called *barmi* or *barasong-na* that places the marriage proposal for consideration at the girl's house with bottles of liquor which is called *tsang-tam/plionshi* by Dirang Monpas. The acceptance of the liquor is symbolic representation of the marriage proposal being accepted. However, the girl may refuse to accept the liquor indicating refusal of the proposal. After the acceptance, the boy's parents accompanied by their close relatives, formally make a visit to the girl's house on an auspicious day with bottles of liquor known as *zer-chang* to formally ask her to be their daughter-in-law. From then onwards, the boy deserves the right to visit his would be bride. Again after a few days, weeks or months, the boy's parents with their close kinsmen visits on an auspicious day to the bride's house with more bottles of locally made liquor. This ceremony is known as *padar-chang* where the parents and relatives of the boy offer ceremonial clothes to the bride and her parents. On this occasion, the bride's family invite their close relatives. After that both the boy's and girl's parents consult with the village *lama*, *Jambeyang* for fixing a suitable day for marriage. *Jambeyang* consults his book *litho* and as per the *lopta* (zodiac sign) of both boy and girl fixes a date for marriage, the time for bridegroom's party to enter the bride's house, and, the time for bride to move from her house and entry into her in-laws house.

Marriage, in Monpa society, can also take place in the absence of the bridegroom. In the Monpa society, it is a customary practice to marry a girl in the absence of the groom. However, the marriage ceremony takes place with a married or unmarried boy as the substitute of the groom. This practice arose as the men folk usually left the village to tend to sheep and yaks. It was usually the womenfolk who looked after the fields and did household chores. And due to difficulty in transportation, the men could not very often attend their own

marriage at the time scheduled by the priests. This system of marriage evolved to cater to this difficult situation and is a socially accepted phenomenon.

Bride Price

It is customary that on the marriage day, the boy has to pay bride price to the bride's family both in cash and kind such as traditional cloths, money, grains, cattle, etc. The boy's family has to offer traditional dress to both father and mother. Father's gift, termed as *fascum* includes an unstitched woollen cloth for making a *chuba* (coat). Gift to the mother consists of an unstitched *shingka* (gown) and is termed as *mascum*. Earlier, the boy's family had to pay silver coins called *beitang* to each and every family members and close relatives of the bride. Such money payment is termed as *nga-chan*. Today, silver coins are replaced by five to ten rupees note of Indian currency.

The bride price offered by the bridegroom usually depends upon the social standing of the boy's family and it varies from village to village. In certain villages, like in the village of Jang, boy's clan or kinsmen have to contribute certain amount of grains as bride price. For example, when a boy belonging to *Plumpar* clan gets married, each household belonging to his clan have to contribute 20 *bres* of millet to the bridegroom who pay these as bride price. However, if a bride refuses to marry after accepting the marriage proposal or immediately after her marriage, she has to pay back double of the bride price given to her by her in-laws.

Widow Re-marriage

Widow re-marriage is also prevalent in the Monpa society. There are also instances of a widow re-marrying the brother of her deceased husband with the consent of the family concerned. In most of the cases, marriage between a widow and a widower are seen taking place and after marriage, the widow assumes the responsibility of taking care of the widower's children as a mother along with her own children, if any. In the same way, the widower also assumes the responsibility of a father of the widow's children.

Divorce

After marriage both the husband and wife are expected to be faithful and loyal to each other. As devout Buddhists, they believe that the act of extra-marital relation is sinful. Adultery is considered as a punishable offence and so, persons found involved in illegitimate relationship, are punished by the village community. They impose a certain amount of money as fine in accordance with the existing rule or customary law of the village. But here too, gender biasness comes to play because if the husband involves in such extra-marital relation, it is taken lightly by the society. However, adultery committed by the wives is seriously viewed but those committed by the husbands are generally overlooked.

There are no specific set of rules regulating divorce in the community. Although divorces are quite rare among them, they are not altogether absent. Both husband and wife are free to seek divorce to the village community and compensation has to be paid accordingly. The village council consisting of *tsorgens*, *thumis* and other village elders would decide who is at fault. If the husband is found guilty, he has to pay a certain amount of money to his divorced wife, besides returning all her belongings. However, if the woman is at fault, she has to move out of her in-laws house empty handed, leaving all her belongings including those articles she had brought with her from home during her marriage. If she happens to be the mother of a male child, the boy is to be handed over to the father, and in case the male child is an infant, then they may enter into a contract under which the mother may be allowed to nurse the baby boy for some years, after the expiry of which, the child would be handed over to his father. However, in case if the offspring is a girl child, the norms are just opposite. She also has to leave her house with her mother and she is left in the care of her mother alone, the father abstains from taking any responsibility towards her.

Laws of Inheritance

The rules of inheritance among the Monpas slightly vary from place to place. The society being patriarchal, major portion of the parental property is

passed on to the male heir and also the rule of primogeniture is not strictly followed all over the Monpa land. In some places, it is either the eldest or the youngest son who inherits major share of the family property including the parental house while in some other villages; the property is equally divided among all the sons. In the absence of male heir in the family, (as females are not given any share of parental property), the property goes to the father's male relatives. In certain cases, if the mother herself possesses property like land, dress and ornament of her own, then the daughters have the claim on the share of mother's property and these are distributed among them. Unmarried daughters enjoy parental property till they are married but once married these privileges are foregone.

The Monpa widow, in the absence of a male issue forfeits every property owned by her husband after his death. She, if not married to her brother-in-law, has to move out of her own house along with her unmarried daughters since all property, even the house, goes to her husband's relatives. In this case, the Monpa widow could only settle down in the community land provided for the purpose.

A childless couple has every right to adopt a male child. However, as per the customary laws an adopted son could not inherit the paternal property. But in case, a childless couple adopts the male child of the brother of the husband, then the child may inherit the property.

Traditional Healthcare System

The Monpas practice the traditional way of curing diseases. As the region is situated in the Himalayas, a number of medicinal plants and herbs are found. The Monpas are well versed in identifying these plants and very often also have the knowledge of the importance of these medicinal plants and herbs. They apply their own unique methods of preparing medicine from roots, creepers, shoots, barks, leaves, etc. of these plants and herbs. For example- the leaves of *Artemisia nilagerica* (*nyulum*) are boiled in water and wrapped in a piece of cloth and is applied in bone fracture, muscle pain, cuts and eye infection; root of *picrorrhiza kurroa* (*khonglen*) is use for cold, cough, dysentery, stomach ache; root of

aconitum heterophylloides (*chando*) is taken during body pain, stomach ache and head ache; leaves of *taxus bacca* (*tesheng*) is use for its anti-cancer properties; rhizome of *aconitum hetrophyllum* (*bongna karmo*), root of *acorus calamus* (*shuta*) is taken with lots of water during diarrhoea.

The traditional method of curing the diseases has played a vital role in healthcare of the region and still the Monpa people have deep faith in it. Despite the extension of medical service in the region, the use of traditional herbal medicine has not been totally discarded. The Monpas also prefer the incantations made by the priest for cure of their disease. Most of the times, even if they suffer from a severe disease; before consulting with a physician, they try to know from a priest or an astrologer whether medical treatment would be favourable or not. Accordingly, they go for medical treatment.

Normally, for any kind of diseases or accidents the simple natured Monpa people suspect the spirits surrounding them for this. Therefore, they always consult with priests who are expert in this field and seek remedies accordingly. When a sick person is in a critical condition, the friends and relatives, especially male members come to stay at night to guard the sick. They believe that this is a way of guarding the sick person from spirits from any further harm and at the same time, accompanying the family of the sick person. The door of a sick person is always closed as they fear that the evil spirits may enter the house through it. Outside the house incense and cow dung are burnt to drive away the evil spirits. Any person paying a visit to a sick person's house never directly enters the house of the sick person as they believe that the spirits waiting outside the house may enter with them. Therefore, they wait for some time in the courtyard. Some of the different traditional methods of curing diseases of a sick person are listed below:

Haah (A drink for longer life of a sick person):

When a person suffers from severe disease, the family members invite the villagers, especially the elders, relatives and friends to their house. The invitees carry with them homemade alcoholic liquor and a *hrungma* (religious thread) for the sick person. The guests present are offered alcoholic liquor or tea in a cup

which they drink little and the rest is left for the sick person to drink. It is believed that if the sick person drinks the remaining liquor or tea left by the others then he will enjoy greater longevity and become healthy again. Likewise, if he drinks the remaining drinks of older persons, then his life will also be longer like them. The women of other villages who are married in the village of the sick person are also invited and the sick person is allowed to drink from their cup, with the belief that the guardian deities of their village would also give protection to the sick person concerned. This is a way of assuring a longer life to a sick person.

Meh nga (Healing the patients by heated iron rod):

There are some expert persons who work as orthopaedic and cure the diseases of the spine, bones, joints, muscles etc., by the process of *meh nga* (*meh* means fire, *nga* means *mantras*). They use an iron rod to apply on the affected areas, hence, *meh nga* means healing the patients by a small heated iron rod with *mantras*. In this process of curing patients, a small iron rod is heated in the fire till it turns into red and then applied onto bone fractures or back pain by continuous recitation of *mantras*.

Ngamar (Sacred ghee):

When the people suffer from wounds and pains they approach a priest with *ghee* in small container to make it *ngamar*, (*nga* means *mantra* and *mar* means *ghee*). It is a kind of balm that contains *mantras* to apply on wounds and pains. The priest blows *mantras* regularly for some days letting the *ghee* become *ngamar*.

Presently, the modern medical facilities have expanded with better infrastructure and expert medical staff, who are providing tremendous service to the region. Almost in every village at least a primary health centre has been set up by the government. Presently, a number of medical institutions with allopathic medicine and registered medical and Paramedical personnel in Tawang and West Kameng districts are found.

Material Culture

The construction of Monpa house is a speciality in its own. The house is known as *phci* by the Dirang Monpas. Before constructing the house, they consult with the village *lama*, *Jambeyang*, for an auspicious day. The village *lama* after testing the soil fixes an auspicious day for laying the foundation stone for the construction of the house. Then on the day fixed, the owner installs prayer flags in four directions (*cho ziti*) i.e., *Jang* (north), *Shar* (east), *Nup* (west) and *Lho* (South) in the name of four deities who are said to rule in the four directions. They believe that in northern side *Jang Doindup* a green colour deity rules. In the same way, in the east a white colour deity named *Sher Dorjee Shamba* rules, in the west, a red colour deity named *Nup Nagothaia* and in the south, a yellow colour deity- *Rinchin Jungne* rules. Therefore, they install prayer flags of green colour towards north, white colour towards east, red colour towards west and yellow colour towards south respectively. Hoisting of prayer flags is followed by digging of soil from four corners. After this, they can start the construction of house at any day according to their convenience and for the purpose invite the builder.

The Monpas have the tradition of presenting bottles of homemade alcoholic liquor and ceremonial *khada* to a builder of their locality while inviting him to construct their house. The house builders are known as *zopa* by the Dirang Monpas and his assistant as *zo-rok*. While the builders are constructing the house they are provided with three meals in a day i.e., in the morning breakfast, mid-day lunch and in the evening before they leave, dinner by the owner of the house.

It is a tradition of the Monpas that whenever a family build a house, the villagers join in for manual labour and such help is called *khablan*. Sometimes, the *khablanpas* (people who come to help) walk many miles along difficult terrain to collect stone and bamboos for house construction. These *khablanpas* usually carry baskets full of stones on their backs which they laboriously collect from the hills and the river banks. The *khablanpas* are sometimes provided food even by the villagers in order to provide relief to the house owner. After constructing the

base and the walls, for roofing of the house, a day is fixed by consulting with the *lama*. Blue colour is dedicated to sky deities, white to the supreme deity, red to the mountain god (*tseu*) and yellow to the serpent deities (*lu*). As a mark of celebration, on the roof itself, they throw flour towards sky by pronouncing aloud *ki ki solo lu solo* thrice and apply flour on each other's face. The villagers then visit the newly constructed house with bottles of alcoholic liquor.

The most common traditional houses among the Monpas are stone houses known as *khar pheu* or *chikpa khem* which are of double storey with four to five rooms and a wooden roof. Inner room of the first floor is considered as main room which is used both for kitchen and bed room. The outer room is mostly used by adult children and its room of upper storey is used as prayer hall and the remaining room as store room. These types of houses are constructed with stone slabs on side walls plastered by mud. *Chuskar* is another type of house which is constructed with stone blocks from its three sides and rest with wooden planks. *Pangkhang* is another structure of a traditional house. As the name suggests (*pang* means wooden slabs), it is constructed by wood on all sides except the plinth area. *Brang* means bamboo house or hut. *Brang* is normally constructed in the vicinity of an agricultural field for resting before the harvesting period for protecting their crops from animals. The traditional houses are now rarely found in any village. Most of the houses today have tin roofs instead of wooden planks. Modern architectural styles are followed in building houses these days.

Food and Dress Habits

The Monpa prepare a variety of ethnic fermented and boiled food from various crops, plants, forest products, and meat of wild and domestic animals besides preparation of beverages, peculiar to the tribe. The staple food of the Monpas comprises of rice and finger millet, other food includes maize, barley, wheat, etc. Besides they also consume varieties of leafy vegetables, mushroom, several wild vegetables and edible fruits. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian people can be found among them. They generally prefer dried and roasted meat. The meat of dead cows, yaks, and sheep are cut in strips and dried under sun for

future consumption. The mode of cooking is simple which is bestowed solely upon the females.

Ghee and churpi forms an integral part of the food items of the Monpas. *Churpi* is used for enhancing flavour for cooking vegetables. They prepare two types of *churpi* - one made of yak milk and other made of soya bean called *grebchurpi*. The way of making *ghee* and *churpi* from milk includes simple technology but is very laborious. The *Brokpas*, yak herders, milk their yaks sitting on the *zhoteh*, a small wooden tool which is suspended from their waist. The milk is put daily in a *zob* (pot) and to it is added a little amount of previous day's milk to turn it a little sour. Then it is poured into a long cylindrical churner called *yojob*. When the process of churning is over, *ghee* pellets appear on the surface. This *ghee* pellets are shifted by a wooden ladle called *chur-kyo* and kept separately. Then the remaining milk is poured from the *yojob* in a big pot called *tow*. It is then put over a simmering flame mostly on the coal fire to clot. Afterwards it is strained with a bamboo strainer called *chur-tza*. This completes the preparation of *ghee* and *churpi*. The *ghee* and *churpi* are then kept safely in animal skin bags for future use. The *churpi* kept in the animal hide is called *churtang* while the *ghee* kept in the animal skin is termed as *martang*.

To prepare soya bean *churpi*, beans are boiled and spread over a bamboo mat to drain the water. Then a pinch of salt is added. After that, it is transferred to a bamboo basket and covered by banana leaves. Then the whole bamboo basket is rapped by clothes properly and kept near the fire to absorb heat. It is rotated towards the fire side till it smells and becomes sticky. Generally, it takes more than a week. The fermented soya bean is then crushed in a mortar and dried under the sun. It is again crushed for further refinement after two-three days and then dried. The repetition continues for four to five times, at the end of which it is kept in a cane or wooden container for regular use.

There are also a variety of other ethnic dishes cooked such as *zan*, *momo*, *thukpa*, *gyapa-khazi*, *puta*, *bresi*, *khura*, *sanchang*, *tsizin kyola*, *khazi*. *Zan* is prepared by the flour of finger millet or by maize flour. On the boiling water flour is added

and stirred by a wooden spatula till the water is soaked by the paste. It is then taken with any vegetable curry or *chutney*.

Tse chin kyola is made from the flour of buckwheat. The process of making it is the same as the preparation of *zan*. However, in this case more water is added resulting in the paste getting a more liquid form.

To prepare *momo*, flour is made into dough and after making small balls, minced meat is stuffed into it, moulding them in small dumplings. For those who are vegetarians, small chopped vegetables are stuffed instead of meat. These are then steamed for half an hour in a two-three tiered steamer utensil.

Another traditional dish is the *thukpa*. Monpas prepare a variety of *thukpas* like *oshum thukpa* and *koh thukpa*. *Oshum thukpa* is prepared from skinned maize grains by adding animal bones, beans, salt, *churpi*, *ghee* and chillies and then is cooked for several hours by adding hot water simultaneously. *Kho thukpa* is prepared from barley. The process of cooking is same with *oshum thukpa* but it requires less time to cook. The *thukpas* of noodles are also cooked in boiling salted water and let to drain. It is then fried in a pan with mustard oil by adding onions, minced meat, garlic, ginger, and chillies.

Another dish is the *Gyapa-khazi* which is prepared by mixing rice, *churpi*, dry fishes, ginger, chillies, and *ghee* together in a utensil and then cooked. It is served directly. The Monpas also prepare a noodle like dish called *puta* made from the flour of buck wheat. Water is boiled in a utensil where little *ghee* is added. The flour is made into a paste and made into noodles with the help of an indigenous wooden instrument, especially designed for the purpose. The instrument contains a small hole where dough is put and pressed by a person sitting on the top, resulting in the emergence of noodle shaped dough. These noodles are then boiled in the water till it is cooked and comes to the surface of the utensil. Then it is taken out and drained and served with onion curry.

Khura is a dish made from the flour of buckwheat and golden wheat. Water is added on the flour and stirred well till it becomes light paste. A little amount of beer made of rice is added so that mixture ferments and kept

overnight near fireplace. Then on the next day, on a flat greased pan, the required amount of the paste is poured spreading it in a round shape and fried.

In making *klurangpa* maize grains are crushed into small pieces. It is then soaked in water for few hours and made into paste and cooked slowly in low flame. The *klurangpa* is then served with chutney.

Bresi is prepared during religious ceremonies. Cooked rice is transferred in a vessel and mixed with butter and sugar which turns into *bresi*.

To prepare *khazi* cooked rice is mixed with chutney and chopped raw vegetables like cabbage and other leafy vegetables. For taste, salt is also added and is usually served as lunch.

Most common form of drink in the Monpa society is salted butter tea. To prepare it, firstly water is boiled with tea leaf. In a cane cylinder, milk, salt, and a dab of *ghee* are added and then the boiled tea is poured. It is then churned by a piston slowly downwards and with great force upwards. After churning continuously for some time it becomes ready to serve.

Other than salt tea, consuming alcoholic beverage is very common among the Monpa tribe. Homemade alcoholic liquor called *yu* by Dirang Monpas is prepared mostly from mixing rice, barley, finger millet, and wheat, with *phov* (yeast tablet) or from a single ingredient like wheat or rice. On every occasion, viz. marriage, birth, death, festivals and religious ceremonies and even at the time of completion of building houses local alcoholic liquor is a necessity. They have the tradition of carrying one or two bottles of alcoholic liquor to each other's house during festivals. The serving of the homemade alcoholic liquor, which is the traditional way of celebrating festivals and religious ceremonies are exclusively prepared by the womenfolk.

The Monpas have the tradition of drinking alcohol and beer collectively which is called *dunchang*. During leisure, generally, after completion of agricultural work, they visit each other's house for *dunchang* where the old and the young sit together and enjoy liquor. Sometimes a dab of local *ghee* and eggs are added to the drink. *Dunchang* is one of the customs of enjoying drinks with friends and relatives during festivals and festive moods. Various types of other

alcoholic beverages such as *themcha* also known as *singchang*, *ara* and *bangchang* are prepared by them.

Themcha or *singchang* is considered as one of the best beverage, prepared by boiling finger millet and barley in a big aluminium vessel. It is then spread over a bamboo mat and after some time two or three pieces of yeast tablets are mixed and let to cool. Then it is put on a long wooden container called *zang-zom* and covered with banana leaves or fern and the whole container is made airtight. The container *zang-zom* also contains a small pipe at the base which is also sealed by the leaves and then *gliee* is applied on the corner of pipes to stop its out let. It is then kept untouched for one to three months. After three months the seal is opened and then the liquor is enjoyed as drink and also sometimes as medicine for curing various diseases like body and muscle pain, stomach ache, dysentery, itching, etc.

Bangchang or *laopani* is another alcoholic beverage which is prepared from rice, barley, finger millet and wheat. It can be prepared by any of these crops separately or by a mixture of two or more crops. The method of preparing it is almost the same. A requisite quantity of crops are boiled in a big vessel and spread over a mat and mixed it by adding two-three pieces of yeast tablets. When it becomes cool it is transferred into another big vessel and wrapped by a thick woollen cloth for fermentation. It is to remain untouched for four to five days or till it gives a strong alcoholic smell. Then the clothes are separated and it becomes ready to be used as *laopani* or *bangchang*. It is then taken by pouring the liquid into a wooden or aluminium utensil with the help of a bamboo sieve for filtering and then enjoyed during festive occasions. Sometimes instead of extracting *laopani* from the fermented paste, *ara* popularly known as *rakshi* is also prepared.

However, for preparing *ara* or *rakshi* the fermented paste is kept for another twenty to thirty days in a airtight container.

Ara or *rakshi* is very strong and intoxicating. To prepare it, a huge pot is taken and is half-filled with the fermented paste. A small tri-pod is also introduced into the pot upon which rests a small mud pot filled half with water. On the top a brass vessel is inserted filled with water. The mouth of the pot is

then sealed tightly by cloth and then fire is set from below. The water in the mud pot continues to boil, the steam of which mixes with the paste and falls down as droplets of *rakshii* in the mud pot again. The water in the brass pot of above has to be changed continuously for six to seven times so as to complete the preparation of this alcoholic liquor.

Dress and Dressing Patterns

The Monpas have their own traditional dresses which are very vibrant in colour and pattern. These clothes are worn with little variations from place to place, due to the difference of the prevalent weather or climatic condition. However, today the Monpas are seen rarely wearing traditional dresses. It is only on festive occasions and marriage ceremonies that it is usually worn. Otherwise they wear both Indian (*saalwar kurta*) and western dresses (jeans-shirt) available in the market.

Depending on the climate, male members of Dirang Monpas wear half trouser of raw-silk called *tane*. They wear different varieties of *chola* as coat by a girdled sash at their waist called *chudang*. The colours of *chola* vary according to the material used in making it, for woollen *chola* black colour is used and for *eri chola* the colour red is used. It is stitched with a collar and three buttons on the right side. *Chuba* or *chola* is dyed in red colour which is tied round the waist by a sash. The people who engage in agricultural and animal herding, generally wear un-dyed *chuba* or *chola* of black and white colour tied at the waist by a sash. They also wear sleeveless coat of goral hides called *pak-tza* which is also tied at the waist by a sash. They also hang a *dou* which is suspended at the rear of the waist.

The traditional dress amongst the womenfolk is popularly known as *shingka*. It is a knee length sleeveless gown of light red colour with white stripes. The design of a *shingka* is unique in its own. But before the introduction of cotton yarn or *eri*-cloth, they wore thick woollen *shingka* popularly known as *ngou shingka*. It is girdled at the waist by a sash called *khichen* or *chudang*. A flat rectangular piece of red or black woollen cloth called *marpaloma* is worn at the rear of the waist. The upper garment consists of *eri*-shirt called *eling tho-tung*

along with a lavishly embroidered *eri*-shirt with opening in the front called *kyanchen tho-tung*. They also wear a woollen coat called *bei thotung* and a woollen half shirt which is dyed in back colour called *therko tho-tung*. The elderly womenfolk put a woollen cloth called *lamba* which hangs at the back up to the hips to protect them from cold and rain. A leather strip holds both the ends of the *lamba*. The Monpa women wear *di-nga* during marriage and festivals, which is woven in silk and colourful stripes.

Caps made of yak's fur with five edgy points are worn by both males and females. *Goichienzom* is another colourful and embroidered hat worn by young girls on festive occasions.

The traditional dress is accessorized by shoes known as *bidar* by Dirang Monpas. The shoes are made in intricate designs. It is worn during special occasions, like marriages, cultural dances during festivals.

They also carry a colourful side-bag called *dangna*. The farmers and herders use a bag called *fachung* which is made of goat's hair or yak's fur. The Shepherds are always seen carrying a leather bag on their shoulder which is decorated with small conch shell. The bag used by the shepherds is known as *lakchekoau* or *bechadangna*.

The Monpa women like to decorate themselves with different ornaments. The ornaments are mostly made of silver as gold is rarely found in the region. The ornaments symbolize the wealth and prosperity of the lady who adorns herself. Earlier, they got their ornaments from the Tibetan and Bhutanese traders. Of the ornaments, necklace of precious stone, *Kaykor*, forms the most valued ornaments. Every woman wears a *kaykor* which is generally handed down from the mother to her daughters. Beside *kaykor*, *nayu*, a green stone is used for ear rings and as necklace. The women also adorn themselves with *so-lup* or finger ring, besides wearing different types of silver bangles studded with red and green stones called *grogan nyan-dup* and *dorji-groga*. *Gaou*, a square shaped silver locket studded with small green stones are also worn by them.

Traditional Games and Sports

During festivals and leisurely hours, the Monpas spend their time in enjoying games and sports. Archery called *dimin choo/gha na* by Dirang Monpas is the most common game practised. During *Losar* festival, the men folk engage themselves in archery by keeping some amount of bet.

Lemgor or *kolok-pa* is another game played by throwing a stone to a target, and whoever hits the target first wins the game.

Phak-pa is a game participated by two players. Here each player ties up a cloth around their belly. The two players then try to pull out each other's cloths, trying to save their own cloth at the same time. A line is drawn between the two players and whoever is able to drag his opponent towards his side is declared as winner.

Garang-wakan, is a kind of game where a player holds his opponent's wrist tightly with full strength. The opponent puts full energy to set his wrist free. If the player is able to free himself from the grip of his opponent, then he is declared as winner.

Aye ma is a game which is played by young girls in groups. They draw a table with two columns and five rows. They have to pass a stone throughout each row of the columns by jumping with one leg, starting from one corner till they reach the other end. If the stone strikes any of the lines of the rows, they have to forego their chance of winning. The one who scores most is declared as winner.

Skipping called *shole* in the local term is a game of girls which is played by cutting thin strips of bamboo. They also amuse themselves by playing *punggor* (shot-put), *sho* (dice), *mah-jong* (dominoes and dice), and *thegpa tenghri* or *lan jangpa na* (tug of war). Nowadays, these traditional games apart, boys and girls play other games like cricket, volleyball, football, kabaddi, etc.

Musical instruments

The Monpas use a number of musical instruments during religious ceremonies as well as festive occasions which they make of either metal or bamboo or wood. There are certain musical instruments especially designed for

religious purposes such as drum, *dung* (low blowing pipe), *dungkar* (conch shell), *dribu* (bell), *dombuling* (*domburu*), *bupcha* (cymbals), whistles and *gyelling*.

Instruments like flute, *peep*, *piwang* and *damgyin* are used by the people to play individually as well as in group during festivals. In recent times, musical instruments like harmonium, guitar, etc. are in vogue among them.

Festivals

The Monpa people celebrate a number of festivals. However, except *Losar* all other festivals are of religious nature. *Losar* is the main festival of the Monpas. New Year of the Monpas begins with this festival, *lo* means year and *sar* means new. It is observed in the first month of the lunar calendar, *Dawa Dangpo*, of a year which generally falls by the end of January or in the early February. *Losar* is a festival which continues for fifteen days. Before the commencement of *Losar*, the Monpas clean their houses and their surroundings. They prepare varieties of snacks and sweets known as *khapse* of various shapes and design with flour and buy new dresses for the festival. The first day is known as *tse-thi*, which means day one and on this day, barring the closest relatives, visits to other households is generally not done. From the second day onwards, they visit each other's houses with bottles full of liquor, beer, snacks and sweets. The married couples mostly visit their parental houses with their children or their close relatives with the spirit of oneness and merry-making. Prayer flags are also strung on the roof of the houses on the third or fifth or eighth day of *Losar*. They also observe these days by visiting the monasteries and mountain ridges for picnic and to hoist prayer flags. During this festival, drinks are enjoyed by both the males and females and merry-making is accompanied by songs and dances.

Dances

The Monpas perform a number of dance dramas depicting some legendary stories or events on important social occasions, which helps to reconstruct the history of the Monpa people. The *Ajilamu* also known as *Ai Lham* dance, Yak dance, Deer dance, Peacock and Lion dance etc., showcases the social and religious beliefs and practices of the Monpa people.

Aji Lhamu (Ai Lham) Dance

One of the most important Monpa dance is the *Aji Lhamu* or *Ai Lham* dance which depicts a very interesting story associated with mythological characters. The characters are - Gyali (Choige Norjang- a king), Yumchin Aan (mother of Choige Norjang), Yapchen Aapa (father of Choige Norjang), Nyapa (Tongdan Ngombu who is also known as Panglejenba, who guarded the lake Tso-chin-pema-lamo), Nyaro (Ngakpa Hule Member), two female characters- Ito Jemo and her younger sister Thongrong Jemo, Gap Tamgu Chen (father of Ito Jemo).

If this dance is performed in details covering all the characters, it may continue for a week. *Aji Lhamu* dance depicts the tragedy of love lost and the happy re-union of the couple. Love has been a potent theme for folksongs and dances for people of all cultures and the Monpas were no exception to that.

Yak Dance

The *Yak* dance relates in a simple way how the Monpa people got the yak. Yak formed the basis of the economic subsistence of the Monpa society. The yak is very important for the Monpas as the milk is used for preparing *churpi*, the fur is used for making woollen caps and bags while the meat is consumed as food. The yak is therefore vividly represented in the Monpa folklores and is a major object of its dance form.

Kiengpa Dance

During *Choskar*, a religious procession takes place which is accompanied by two *kiengpa* dancers in monkey masks. The *kangpa* dancers are almost naked who holds a ceremonial scarf-*khada*. On the way while dancing in the procession, they wrap it round the neck of the people, who come to witness the dance. They in return have to pay a certain amount of money while returning back the *khada* to the dancers. This ceremony is performed to drive away the evil spirits who otherwise could cause harm to the standing crops as well as the villagers.

Lion Dance

According to legends, in the mount Gangri-Karpo a saint named Tenteling was performing meditation. Two snow lions who lived in that mountain witnessed this pious saint performing meditation, and being impressed by the saint's religiosity, the lions offered milk for the sustenance of the saint and they became good friends. This dance depicts this story. It is a belief that prosperity comes when there is complete harmony, love and co-operation amongst all the living beings.

Status of Women in Monpa Society

The Monpa women are adjusted with various duties, which she has been performing from the past. A woman is prescribed with the specific role of serving as a loving wife, a good mother and an efficient housekeeper. As a wife, she aids her husband and helps him in managing the day-to-day family affairs. In religious ceremonies, the participation of woman is considered necessary along with her husband. In social gatherings and festivals, women together with men drink, dance, sing, and serve together without any restrictions. In matters of family, mother's opinions are also valued while practically it is the father's decision which prevails. She, however, has little or no place in the village administration and other community work. In the traditional social structure, the village council enjoyed the highest power and only in rare cases, minor works are assigned to women who do not carry much power and authority. As such, in the truest sense of the term, the Monpa women never realized the necessity of her active participation in the important affairs of the society. She is generally confined to the household activities while the male members of the society generally took decision relating to the village or the community. This is exclusively because of the patriarchal mindset which have long before pervaded into the social setup.

The Monpa girls at a very young age willingly go to the nunneries to become nuns. However, the status of the *anis* or the nuns is not at par with the monks of the monastery. While the monks are provided with all the facilities

required to acquire academic degrees by engaging in higher education besides studying the regular religious scriptures and are also sent to distant lands for the purpose; the nuns, on the contrary, are not provided with any such facilities. Most of the nuns are uneducated and are familiar only with the *Bhoti* script of the religious texts. Being denied any formal education, they are also forfeited of the opportunity to teach the *Bhoti* scripts in the government schools while their male counterparts, the monks are teaching the *Bhoti* scripts to the students of Government schools. The nuns mostly depended on charity in the earlier days but today they earn mostly by reading religious texts in the houses of the villagers, performing *pujas* as and when called for the purpose by the people in the villages.

In the traditional Monpa society, women practically had no knowledge of their political rights and duties. Only few women used to participate actively in the proceedings of the village council and that too, when the cases were related to them.

Political equality provided to all by the Indian constitution is a new phenomenon for them and a radical departure from their traditional political ideas and practices. In this regard, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act proposed that not less than one third of total numbers of seats are to be reserved for women at each level of the Panchayat. These provisions materialized in Arunachal Pradesh with the enactment of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act 1997. Now, Monpa women began to get exposure in politics and even began to assert their political rights. Increasing women's interest in Panchayat Raj institutions are an indication of the improvement of their socio-economic status and awareness about their political rights. The Monpa women today, also understand her duty as a citizen and actively take part in exercising her franchise.

Nevertheless, the representation of Monpa women in the state politics is very negligible. No women from the Monpa community are seen getting elected as members of the State Assembly. Though various legislations provide her with freedom to be elected as a member of various political institutions, she hardly

takes advantage of it, partly due to her own empathy and partly due to male chauvinism.

However, things have been changing now. With more and more women now receiving education, their perceptions and views towards their society have gained a broader outlook. Today there are many women organizations such as Jangpa Women Association, Women Welfare Association of Dirang, etc. that fight against social evils in the society. They have also made significant contribution towards social upliftment of the Monpa people in general and of the Monpa women in particular. These women associations very often settle cases involving petty disputes arising between the husband and wife. If the husband involves in extramarital affairs, the women associations may even impose fine for his infidelity. These associations have also raised their voice for providing compulsory education to one and all, stopping child labour, providing equal wage without discrimination of sex, educating mothers of medical and health benefits and also making the women aware of their social position in the society. Today they have learnt to be independent and have developed a tendency to earn and contribute to their family (Dhar, 2005).

The women have now become socially conscious of their status in the society and many new schemes have been implemented for the welfare of women, both by the government and by the women associations. At the same time they are still bound by the customary laws of the society. To some extent the Monpa women have received economic independence, which is very essential to elevate the position of women in the society. However, the property and inheritance rights have made the position of the women vulnerable in the society.



Photo No. 3.1: Hand-Woven Blanket Made of Sheep Fur.

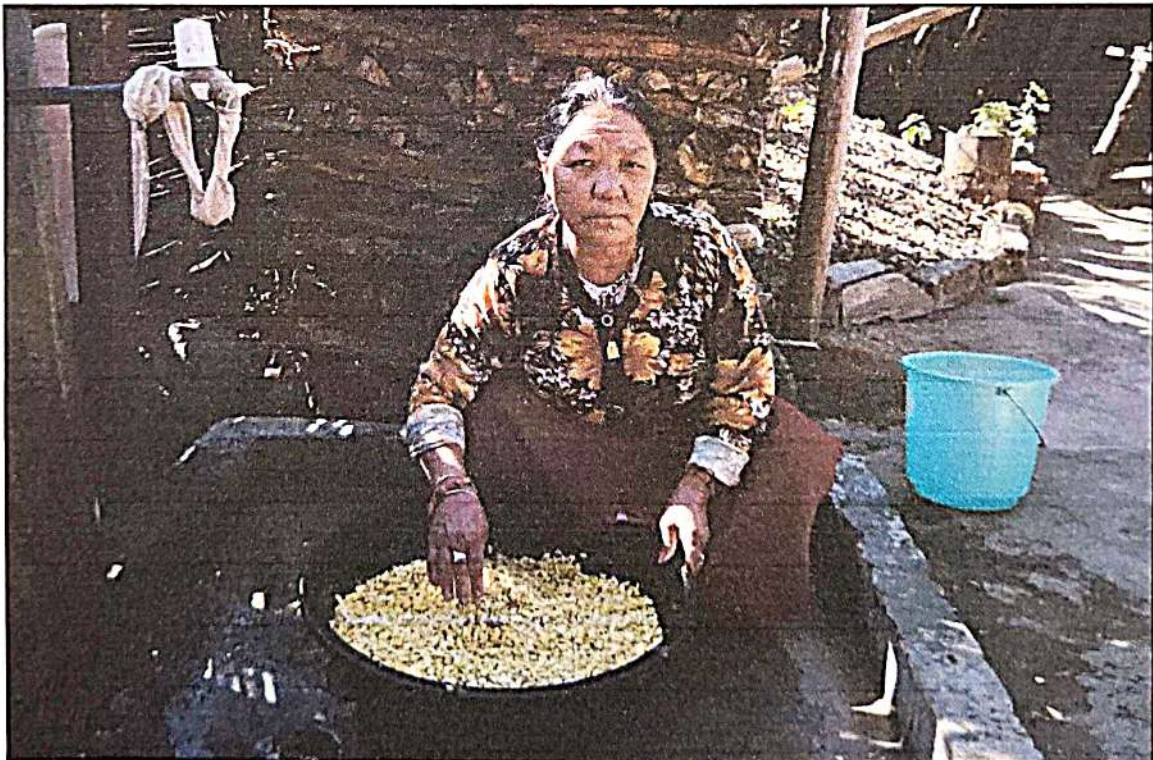


Photo No. 3.2: Monpa Woman Preparing *Churpi* (Fermented Peas).



Photo No. 3.3: Traditional Monpa (Male and Female) Blazers.



Photo No. 3.4: *Bokpe* (Traditional Monpa Noodles).

CHAPTER 4

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Religion acts as a solace to those who feel crushed by the tyranny of mundane life which is often highlighted at the expense of its revolutionary content. Religion, as we know, is an ideology, a reflection of the real, material world; but it does not mirror this world in a passive, mechanical manner. It has with reality a dynamic, dialectical relationship which acts and reacts on each other finding for the fulfilment in its attempt to change the face of reality itself. According to Marx, "religion is not only the sigh of the oppressed creature or the heart of a heartless world; it is also the spirit of the spiritless; religious distress is not only the expression of real distress; it is at the same time a protest against real distress" (cf. Zinn, 2010).

Bon and Buddhism

Bon was the indigenous religion of Tibet existed before the introduction of Buddhism in the 7th century A.D. It is a system of shamanistic and animistic practices performed by priests. Tibetan Monpa believed and follows the *Bon* faith, but this indigenous faith suppressed by some inhabitants, they giving up their old traditional belief after the arrival of Buddhism in their region.

Historical evidence indicates that the *Bon* tradition only developed as a self-conscious religious system under the influence of Buddhism. When Buddhism entered, the practitioners of indigenous religions recognized the differences between *Bon* and Buddhism. As the indigenous faith so called *Bon* is contrast to Buddhism, which mainly concerned with creation of the universe among the Tibetan people and often involved sacrificing of animals such as yaks, horses, sheep, etc., making offerings of food and drink, burying the dead with precious jewels, the benefits of which were apparently transferred to them in the afterlife through shamanistic rituals. Every region has its own native

supernatural beings. In order to stay in a good health and wellbeing in their grace, they give offerings and perform rituals to propitiate them.

However, *Bon* did not disappear altogether the traditions of *Bon* was somehow preserved in certain family lineages. In present, old *Bon* religion exist in Monpa community in a very negligible. But the main religion followed by Monpas is Buddhism.

Religious Practices among Dirang Monpas

Though Buddhism was popular in Tawang area at least from 11th century A.D., the arrival of Buddhism among the Monpas of Dirang was comparatively late. After accepted the Buddhist faith, the Buddhist *Lamas* could subdue the malevolent spirits, and the people who used to sacrifices their domestic animals and poultry stopped. As a result, the Dirang people decided to adopt the new faith and for this, they sent and influential members of their village to the Ranchen Rimpoche of *Tashilhunpo* monastery in Tibet to request him to visit their village to rescue them from tyranny of the evil spirits. The Panchen Rimpoche directed the messenger to meet one Droang Rimpoche, a *Karmapa Lama*; who would solve their problems. Droang Rimpoche accepted the invitation and said to have visited the Dirang area, subjugated the spirits, abolished the old rituals and animal sacrifices and was successful in establishing Buddhism in the Dirang area. But Buddhism is the most common religion followed by the Monpas all over the world. Buddhism can be viewed in two broad senses i.e. Mahayana and Hinayana. Hinayana is followed by tribes such as Khamtis, Singphos, Tikhak Tangsas, etc. while the Monpas, the Sherdukpens, the Nahs, the Membas, the Khambas, and the Meyors follow the Mahayana Buddhism. Buddhism was brought to them in the 8th century by *Padmasambhav*, the Buddhist Guru who helped the Tibetans to establish the creed in Tibet.

Role of Lamas/Monks in Monpa Religious Life

Lamas or Monks are religious priests. *Lamas* play an important role in social and religion life of Monpa. When it comes to social life; *Lama* is consult in marriage ceremony, where *Lama* simply placed white scarf called *Khada* around

neck of bride and groom, showers of blessing on the couple that way marriage formalities are completed.

In temple which is known as *Gompa*, in specific dates such as 8, 10, 15, the followers of Lord Buddha come to worship there, *Lama* recite the holy book of Buddhism and pray for the villagers/follower for prosperity and good health. Even sometimes incarnated *Lama* is invited to witness the functions as *Losar*, for it is religious as well as merry-making one.

The Monpas, besides taking blessing of Lord Buddha in *Gompa* from time to time, they invite *Lama* to perform rites related to cure sick person. *Lamas* consult appropriate formula of text for disease. *Lama* performed some associated service offering of rituals to please the spirit which is response for disease. In the life of Monpas, the *Lama* engage to perform rites at the time of selection of land for construction of house or cultivation at the disposal dead body, marriage purpose, etc. when it comes to land, *Lama* make the rites free from the malevolent sight of the spirits. The purposed house is constructed only after getting clearance from the *Lama*.

Lama also consults specific text to choose the auspicious date and time for marriages. Likewise, the service of *Lama* is required at disposal of dead body. Some prayer flags are seen in front of Monpa houses, which symbolises ritual performances for different purposes for the welfare of the family concerned. The Monpa people observed direction given by *Lama* or Monk.

Death Rituals

At the news of the death of a person, all the villagers assembles in the deceased person's house with bottles of homemade alcoholic liquor and a *khada* (scarf). Tradition has that, if a person dies outside the house due to accident or otherwise, the body is not brought inside the house. In such cases the body is kept near the house in a tent. People pay homage by offering the body with a *khada*. They also place some amount of money (Rs. 10 to Rs. 100) above the head of the dead body. After the disposal of the body, a portion of this money is spent

by the family members on incense and *ghee* to light candles and the rest of the amount is distributed among the monks.

Sometimes the body is kept for three to four days according to the astrological calculations made by a priest. During this period at the courtyard of the deceased house, a big fire is lighted and candles are lighted near the body throughout day and night. The villagers stay awake the whole night reciting *mantras* in front of the fire. They usually accompany the family members till the body is disposed. However, in certain villages, the dead bodies are not kept for a long time. They carry the body for disposal immediately after the death of a person. As soon as the body is taken away, the house is thoroughly cleaned and water is sparkled all over the house. After the disposal of the body all those, who took part in the cremation wash their hands and feet at the house of the deceased, in lukewarm water in which juniper twigs are also added to make the water holy. During this period, sweets and toffees are also distributed among the people with the belief that the more people eat the sweets, the more negative *karma* of the deceased will be reduced.

Disposal of the Dead Body

The Monpas follow different methods of disposal of the dead body such as chopping and disposing in the river, burial and cremation. During the performance of the last rites of a person, except if the body is cremated, no one is allowed to witness it and it is done by seven or ten men of the village.

The most common practice of disposal of the dead body among the Monpas is by cutting the body of the dead and throwing it in the river. The process of chopping body is known as *tharm* and the person who does it are known as *thrampa*. A group of seven or ten males carry the body of the deceased near the river where it is to cut into 108 pieces. The pieces are then immersed into the river one by one to feed the fish and other river animals. The belief goes that the soul is indestructible and as such moves on even after death but the body is temporary and it is left behind. The Monpas believe that the body should be of use even after death and therefore should fulfil the practical purpose of becoming

the meal of the earthly creatures like the fishes, which are also the creation of God. If the dead person is male then the body is turned on his back while chopping the body into pieces. In case of a female deceased, the body is placed normally while chopping. Traditionally, the body was wrapped in white *eri*-cloth in a seated position and it is carried by a *thrampa*, on his back while the other *trampas* followed him in line. But now in most of the villages, a white colour *eri*-cloth is put on the dead body and is carried on vehicles by the *thrampas*.

In case, a person dies, attacked by communicable disease, mostly leprosy, then the body is buried beneath a cave or in the forest areas, but not near any water sources. The rivers keeps on flowing from the hills to the plains and chopping the body affected by the communicable disease may be dangerous as the rivers may carry the disease of the affected person. However, the body of a child and aged persons are kept on high mountains in a coffin box.

Cremation is generally done for high and learned monks in the presence of villagers and the monk fraternity. The wealthy families also sometimes opt for cremation, but it is usually a rare sight. In the cremation ground, the body of the deceased is placed in the funeral pyre. The monks recite religious scriptures while the people attending the funeral accompany the monks by reciting *mantras*. The fire to the pyre is lighted by a monk. At the death of a revered monk who earns great respect during life-time, his body is not disposed off immediately like in the case of others. His body is preserved in a specially constructed coffin to be cremated after several months later with great religious sentiments. *Prasadas* in the form of puffed rice, popcorn, *torma*, etc. are offered near him. Candles are lighted and incenses are burnt near the coffin. After the cremation, the bones are collected and put inside a stone wall *mane* or stupas to honour him.

Influences of Other Religions on Buddhism

The data we gathered has not seen much significant change in their traditional religion. But with the interaction of native households we came to know that, two women have completely converted to Christianity.



Photo No. 4.1: *Thupsung Dhargyeling Monastery, Dirang.*



Photo No. 4.2: Series of *Mani* outside the Monastery.

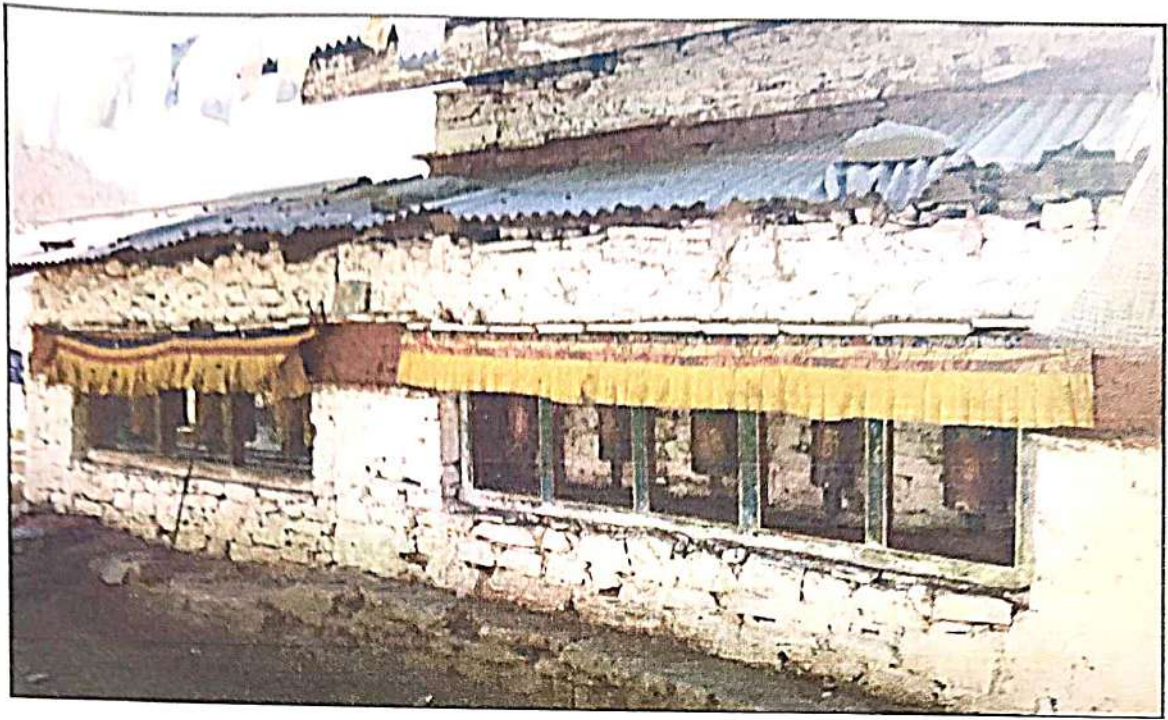


Photo No. 4.3: Mani Standing by the Road Side in Sangti.

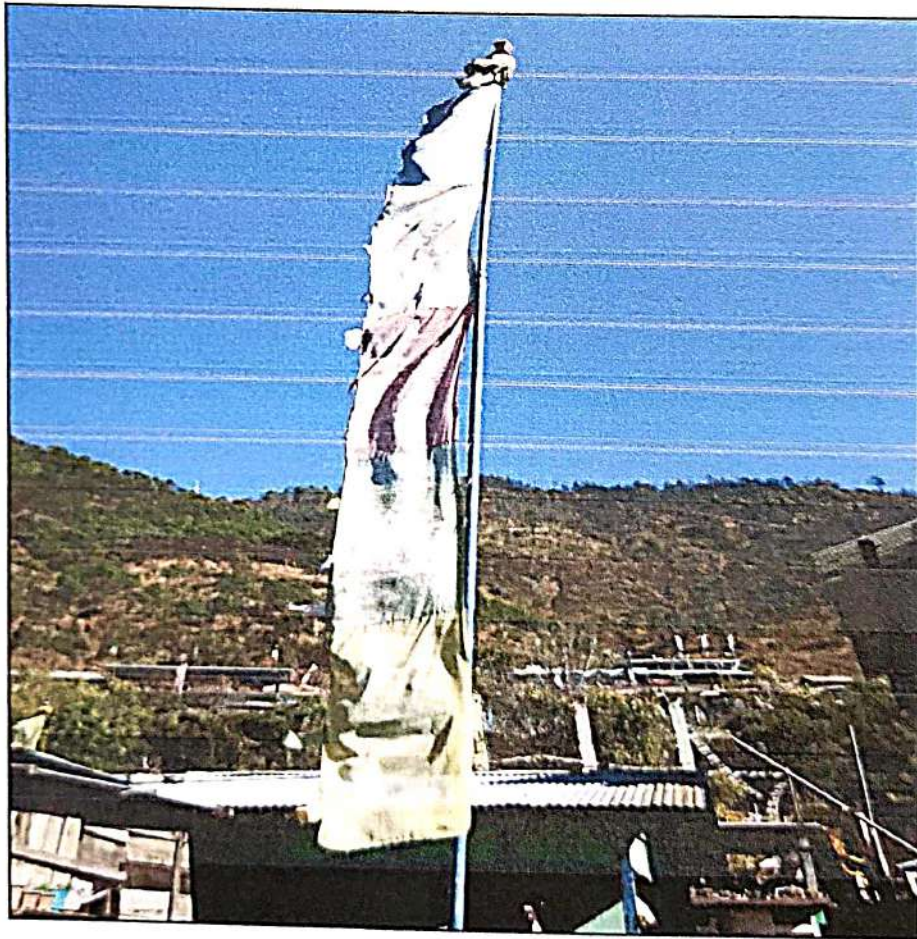


Photo No. 4.4: Fann (Religious Flag).

CHAPTER 5

POLITICAL LIFE

The Monpas have evolved traditional system and institution of governance determined by their socio-economic and cultural fabric and nature of their habitat. In order to maintain cohesion and unity in the society, they maintain law and order, and carry out social, religious and economic activities smoothly. The Monpas have well developed form of village council with democratic system. The traditional village council of the Monpas is called *Mangma* or *Mangmazomsa*. The term *Mangma* signifies mass or totality of the village community and *Zomsa* means assemble or gathering. Thus, *Mangmazomsa* literally means assembly or gathering of the village community. The *Tsorgen* (headman) or *Yui-Tsorgen*, village headman is the head of the *Mangma*. The term *Tsor* means main or chief and *Gen* means responsibility. Thus, the term *Tsorgen* signifies the main man or chief who shoulders the responsibilities of the *Tso*. A group of the Monpa villages constitutes a 'Tso' and its assembly is called *Tsopa* or *Tso-Tsangzom*. The *Tsopa* or *Tso-Tsangzom* is headed by the *Tso-Tsorgen*. The *Thumis* (representatives), *Tsoblehs*, or *Gomis/Gopdulangpa* (messengers) further assist the *Tsorgen* or *Tso-Tsorgen* in the day-to-day activities. The powers and functions of both *Tsorgen* and *Tso-Tsorgen* are vested with judicio-administrative and developmental functions.

The traditional Monpa society was administered by their *trukdri* council which consist of six ministers. The *Lamas* also hold a respectable position and two monks known as *Nyetsangs*, were also part of their council, two others were *Dzongpens*, or fort administrators.

The Monpa society is patriarchal: the man is the head of the family and is the one who takes all decisions. In his absence, his wife takes over all responsibilities. When a child is born, they have no strict preference for a boy or a

girl. However, some prefer a daughter for the stays in the house of her parent; once she is married her husband is the one who moves to the house of the girl.

Each village has an assembly known as *mangma* which is headed by a *tsorgen* (village headman). Every individual of the villages are the members of the *mangma*. Traditionally, each region (*tso*) was headed by a *tso-tsorgen*, *tsor* meaning chief, and *gen*, meaning responsibility. Hence, *tso-tsorgen* was the tribal chief whose responsibility was to look after the well being of the region. It was the duty of the *tso-tsorgens* to inform about the day today village administration to the council. The council with six members was another important village institution, the head of which was known as *trukdi*, the abbot of Tawang monastery. The other five members were a high *lama* (of position), two senior monks known as *nyiertsangs* (supervisor) and two *dzongpons* (revenue officers who also looked after magistracy). This council with the *trukdi* as the head appointed the *tso-tsorgens* of the villages. *Tso* was further sub-divided into several units called *kachung* which were generally small villages, consisting of only a few houses that were represented by a *gomi* or *goptalangpo*. It was their duty to report concerning the day to day *kachung* administration to the *tso-tsorgen*.

With the establishment of Indian administration, Government of India has appointed a number of *yui tsorgen* or *dung tsorgen* in almost all the villages. The village headman is appointed by the government partly by the process of nomination and partly by election by the villagers. In the villages comprising of a bigger area, sometimes two *tsorgens* are appointed for the purpose. Besides the *tsorgens*, the village assembly consists of the members called the *thumis* whose main duty is to assist the *tsorgens*. The number of *thumis* in a village assembly varies with the size of the village. However, in most of the villages, four *thumis* are appointed. *Tsorgens* and *thumis* are selected or elected by the villagers, generally, for a term of three years.

The main duty of a *tsorgen* is to settle disputes arising within the village and look after the proper functioning of the village. *Tsorgen* being the head and the decision maker of the village is expected to always remain neutral and sincere in his duties and work for the benefit of the villagers. There is strict vigilance by

the villagers and every activity of the *tsorgen* is scrutinised by the people themselves. Whenever the *mangma* feels that the *tsorgen* is corrupted or neglecting his duty, a meeting of the entire village is convened for the selection of a new *tsorgen* before the end of the three years tenure. The village assembly also consist of two other officials called *gomi* (Tawang/Dirang) or *goptalangpo* (Kalaktang) and *zecha* (Tawang) or *kyupon* (West Kameng). The duty of a *gomi* or *goptalangpo* is to provide all sorts of information to each and every household about the meetings, religious functions and other activities to be held in the villages. For the purpose the *zecha* or *kyupon* provides a helping hand to the *gomi* or *goptalangpo*. From each unit, i.e., *toeth/toe*, *bar/zhop* and *meth/barga*, two *gomis* or *goptalangpos* and two *zechas* or *kyupons* are appointed every year. These *gomis* or *goptalangpos* and *zechas* are appointed usually through lottery for a period of one year. It is mandatory for a member from each household of a village to become a *gomi* or *goptalangpo* one day or the other. They alter annually according to a meticulous system of changing according to the turn of a person.

Customary Laws

The Monpa society follows a number of traditional rites and ritual which shows the uniqueness of their cultural heritage. There are several social norms related to birth, marriage and death.

Crime and punishment

Mostly, the Monpas were and still are a peace loving community; as such crime and violence were rare in the village or within the society. Nevertheless, crime did occur and in such cases, the criminals were severely punished. The punishment is termed as *thrim*. Traditionally, most often the criminal were inflicted with corporal punishment by the village council headed by the village headmen or by the *Lamas* and only major cases were lodged to the *dzongpons*. The lower room of the *dzong* and *gompas* (monastery) were used as prisons for the criminal. In case of murder, the murderer had to pay the equivalent price called *meitong* of the crime in terms of silver coins. Sometimes, the murderer was also awarded life sentence. In case of injury the offender had to pay compensation

called *Mamrin* which means the cost of medical treatment. Thieves are known as *kunma* and the most notorious one is known as *Kunma Nakchin* or *Kunma Rindorz* for the crimes like false allegation, theft, and murder the offender may be met with corporal punishment along with fine.

Corporal punishment

Traditionally, *thecha* or a whip made of leather was used to beat up the criminal. The village headman or the *Lama* of monastery who was in charge of the village *gompa* announces the punishment and it was the duty of the *gomis/goptalangpa* (messenger) to deliver the punishment. In case the *gomis/goptalangpa* was incapable to perform then they had to find out the most energetic or strongest person of the village to punish the culprit. The *gomis/goptalangpa* or in their absence, the most strongest person of the village stand in opposite direction and hit the guilty in rhythm for almost 100 times. The body of the offender is turned on his back while getting beaten by *thecha*. Sometimes the criminal were also beaten up with a *kyukpa*, a thin wooden stick. Here too, the mode of punishment was same like that of *thecha*. When the criminal is awarded imprisonment they are taken to the prison by tying both their palms in the long wooden stick with their arms stretched wide open. This punishment was known as *phurshing*.

Sometimes, the cheek were puffed up and beaten with a leather hammer. This sort of punishment known as *kha khopcha* was given to such person who cried foul or tried to cheat. For the person committing the same crime as stated above, sometimes the punishment involved hitting the puffed cheeks of the offender by a pointed bamboo stick known as *kha ngyukcha*.

However, today the above said punishments have been totally banned in the Monpa society. The *Lamas* are confined only with religious activities. The village council settles only minor cases and imposes certain amount of fine called *gyong* to the offenders. The amount of fine varies from case to case and also from village to village.

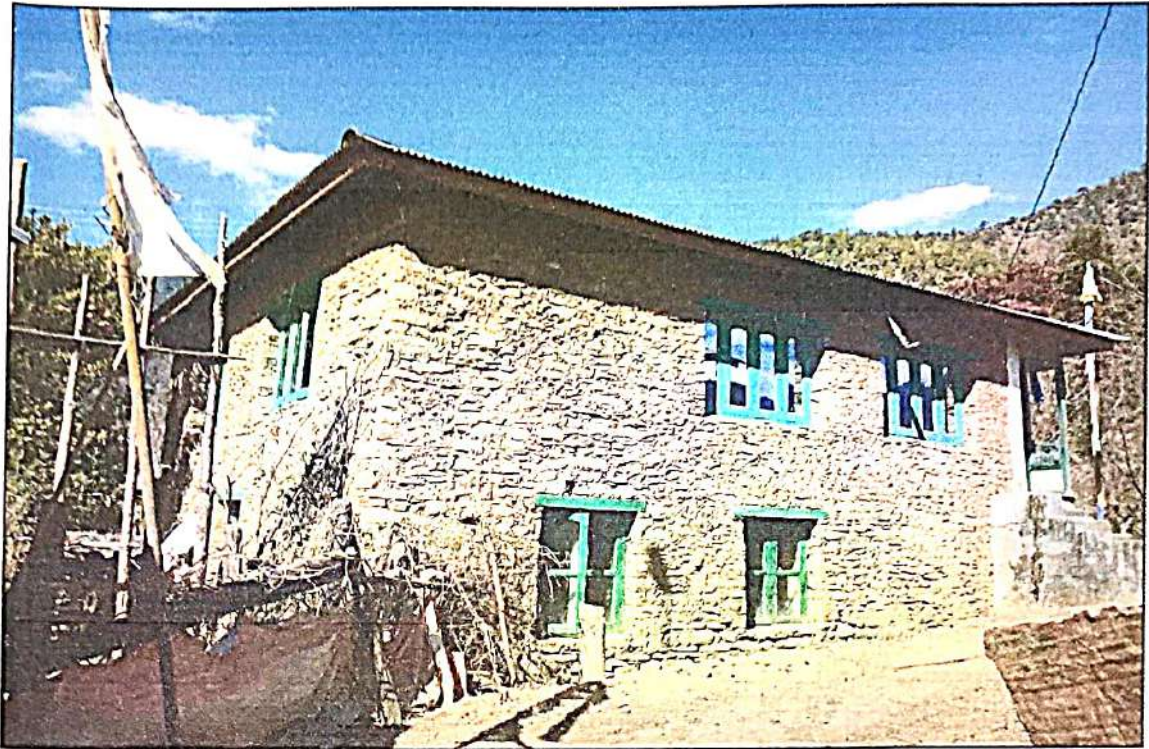


Photo No. 5.1: Traditional Houses of the Monpas.



Photo No. 5.2: Local Hearth inside the Monpa House.

CHAPTER 6

ECONOMIC LIFE

The Monpas in general and the Dirang Monpas in particular, lead a vigorous economic life. From the remote past, their economy depended on agriculture, animal husbandry, internal and external trade activities with Tibet, Bhutan, and neighbouring Assam. As such, they also became familiar with the custom, food, and dress habits of their neighbouring areas. In addition to the barter economy, the trade with Assam was characterised by the use of the Tibetan silver coins called *beitang*.

The ecological adaption among the Monpas of Dirang is very prominent. They do indulge in many economic practices like, transhumance based on yaks where they lead a semi-nomadic or transhumance life where population moves from one ecological zone to another. They also practice other economic aspects such as sheep herding without agriculture, horse rearing with marginal agricultural practices, Sedentary farming with limited livestock and so on.

Agriculture

Like other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, agriculture is their prime mode of economic subsistence through which they grow a large number of crops such as maize, wheat, barley, millet, paddy etc. The cultivator's choice of crops depends largely on the altitude of village. The Monpas are remarkably good cultivator growing crops in irrigated terraces. They also practice shifting cultivation, locally known as *Kya/lang* though not on a large scale compare to that of other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. In context to their agriculture practice, Nanda (1982) describes the Monpa are by far are the best and most sophisticated cultivators in Arunachal Pradesh matched perhaps only by the Apatanis. A number of advanced agriculture practices being recommended these days by agricultural scientist have been in vogue in Monpa areas since beginning.

Most of the cultivators of Dirang area grow rice on irrigated fields. They grow a number of vegetables such as radish, turnip, ginger, garlic, onion, pea, bean, chillies, potato, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, and many other leafy vegetables. They are aware of the importance of manure and have their indigenous method of manure in field. They use *soibo*, fallen leaves of oak trees collected from forest for controlling weeds and the fertilized the soil. The main agricultural tools used by them are machete, spade, hoe, sickle, rake, axe, and plough. The prevalence of varied agro-climatic condition of the Dirang provides congenial environment for development of horticulture as well as where they produce oranges, lemon, kiwi, apple, pears, and walnut.

Animal Husbandry

Though agriculture is the main stay of their economy, animal husbandry also plays a significant role in their socio-economic life. Though they are expert agriculturist but due to lack of suitable land they have developed subsidiary occupation in the form of animal husbandry. They rear cows, yaks and its allied species sheep, horses, pigs, mithun, goat, donkey, etc. for dairy products such as butter, cheese, meat. These dairy products are used for commercial as well as for their daily consumption. The rearing of horses, ponies are essential as these animals are used as packed animal for mountainous tracts. Goats, pigs are reared for meat while sheep are reared for wool and meat. Yak plays most significant role as it provides milk, meat, wool and for transportation. Yak's hair is used for making saddle bag, shoe soles, trunk cover and many other things.

Cottage Industries

The cottage industry forms a significant subsidiary activity of Monpa society. They have a glorious heritage of arts, crafts and expert in weaving, bamboo works, wood works, painting, paper making, pottery tailoring, etc. Mask making is another important aspect of wood carving locally known as *bah-khogam*. Traditionally masks are associated with religious ceremonial dances but now it is also used for decoration.

Bamboo is used for construction of houses and other beautiful article of daily use. Different types of basket, vessel and other items are prepared from bamboo. Weaving in Monpa society is done almost extensively by women. The art of weaving is learned from senior expert and thus it is handed down from one generation to the other. They weave cloths, blanket, tent, bag from yak hair. Among articles woven by the Monpa women, wool carpet is the most demanded and famous article with design of dragon, birds, flowers. Monpas are the only tribe of Arunachal who know the art of paper making. The paper is made from the bark of the shrub locally called *shugu-sheng*.

Like all Buddhist tribe of trans-Himalayan region, the Monpas owes a great deal of painting artistic heritage of Tibet. Most of the printing are religious in nature. They believed that painting image of deities and other religious themes earns merits, therefore found on wall, ceiling, gate of various Monasteries and religious places.

Trade

Trade is one of the most important components of economic activities in addition to agriculture and animal husbandry. The Monpa have a tradition of undertaking long distance trade. During the olden days they traded with their neighbouring regions like Tibet, Bhutan, and Assam. Some traders even used to go as far as Lhasa, the capital of Tibet and Calcutta (now Kolkata) on business trip. Business was mainly done through barter system where goods were exchanged according to the necessity rather than value. The Monpa had a flourishing trade with Tibet till the political upheavals in Tibet. They went for trade with items like wooden cups, chillies, medicines herbs, rice, paper, mushroom, fruits, animal product, etc. and from Tibet they brought wooden cloth, dry meat, black salt, cheese, sword, jewelleryes, ritual objects, etc.

In the earlier days, Dirang Monpas also practice barter trade with the people residing in Tawang, Kalaktang, Bhutan, and Thembang. The trade items were hat, woollen clothes, earthen pots, kettles, incense, dry vegetables; all these

are exchange with those of dried chillies, food grains and other items of daily use. A significant number of people are still today engaged with trade and commerce.

Other Economic activities of the Dirang Monpas

The Dirang Monpas have a rich culture which gets reflected in the innumerable articles produced in the cottage industries of the region. Weaving, pottery making, paper making and leather works are a wonderful sight of Monpa craftsmanship and skill. It is however very difficult to trace out when the earliest cottage industries came up in the Monpa land. Nowadays, the production of these articles is done at organized production centres. The most dynamic of these industries were that of pottery and paper. Presently carpet produced in these craft centres has gained its popularity not only among the Monpas but also amongst the people from outside the region.

Weaving

Weaving in the Monpa society has been done exclusively by the women from the earliest times. The Monpa women engage themselves in weaving of garments, carpets and handlooms in which they show their exceptional weaving skills. These products help them to earn some extra income for their family. In the past, the basic raw materials used for weaving was wool and fur. However, after coming into contact with the plains of Assam, apart from weaving woollen clothes, they also started weaving cotton and *eri*-clothes. They imported cotton and *eri*-yarn from the plains of Assam.

The traditional dress of the Monpas is very colourful and they have an excellent sense of colour combination. They use natural dye *azadirachta indica* (*makshing lama*), *rubia cordifolia* (*tsot*), etc., extracted from creepers, shrubs and herbs of nearby areas or synthetic dyes available at market.

The craft of carpet weaving deserves special mention. The carpets are beautifully designed with sceneries, flowers, dragons, etc. depicting some legendry stories. The articles required for weaving carpet are coloured woollen yarn, wool, cotton, twisted yarn, cotton thread and a wooden loom with other

essential devices and equipments. Goat hair is considered as the basic raw-material for carpet as carpets are woven by goat hair.

Wooden Crafts

The Monpa men folk are skilled in wood carving and the person who deals in this art are known as *trukpa*. They turn out beautiful wooden utensils of different sizes and shapes such as wooden bowls, trays, cups, spoons and many other objects. Some of the wooden articles are - *Jandong*, *Tokchi*, *Tong*, *Gum*, *Zaikang*, etc. *Jandong* is made of wood in the shape of a long cylinder with a piston. It is meant for preparing salted tea. *Tokchi* means mortar, generally made of hard wood for grinding spices. *Tong*, Wooden hammer, is made of hard wood. It is used while making basket objects. *Gum* is a long wooden box with a cover for storing grains. *Zaikang* is a small box with a tight cover designed particularly for storing *ghee* and *churpi*.

Another important aspect of wood carving is mask-making. They carve masks representing human beings, birds, animals, deities, demons and other mythological figures coloured. Dances are performed depicting legendary story with these wooden masks. For example, in yak dance, face of *lhamo*- a devi, *Apa* old father, *Mlengchung* achey-elder brother, *Mlengscheung shyekpe*-younger brother, *Brokpa* ba-, *Niva-ba* face of yak keeper, *Naba* face of Buddha, *Shyah-ba* face of bird, the dancers wear wooden masks. These mask help the audience to understand easily the theme of dance or whatever the relevant meaning thereof. Today, the mask are also being purchased by tourists coming from outside for decorative purposes.

Bamboo Crafts

Besides wood carving, the Dirang Monpas also turn out beautiful articles of daily use from bamboo. Various kinds of bamboo baskets are used for various purposes and every house has requisite types of baskets. Their works in basketry is of high craftsmanship. Some of the articles made from bamboo are- bowls, baskets, boxes, cup, etc. Big box for storing grains is called *Bren*. *Zong* and *phazong* are baskets used during cultivation and also for carrying woods. *Shang-*

gor is a bamboo tray used for husking grains. *Blo* is a mat made of bamboo stripes used during preparation of *laopani*. *Kom* is a small bamboo box used for keeping ornaments and also for carrying *prasadas* during religious ceremonies. *Bang chung* also known as *tanglep* is used for carrying food stuffs during cultivation and or for some other purposes.

Thangka Painting

Thangka means scroll painting of an object of worship painted on a piece of cloth. It is a religious painting or scroll to depict the Buddha image or images of goddess related to the Buddha dharma. A rectangular or square piece of white cloth after stitching its borders is tied to remain like a paper in a wooden frame by means of thread. The frame is made by fitting four stripes of wood. The ends of the strips are fixed on rectangular or square shaped frame called *gya gshing*. Different sizes of frame are needed for different sizes of scroll painting. A thin coat of glue prepared from animal skin, a small quantity of enamel paint and water is applied on the surface of the cloth and allowed to dry.

Pottery Making

Pots and utensils of mud were used on a wide scale by the people. Before the invention of iron, the Monpas used only mud to produce articles for domestic uses. Mud pots were used widely for cooking and to preserve goods for future use. Although the finished products are dried under the sunlight, the buyers nevertheless, dry the pot over fire to prevent its damage by water and also to make it more durable. Winter season is generally considered the most suitable season for pottery making.

Paper Making

Papers are made by the Monpas only for local uses, and are a forest-based industry. The papers are of various qualities and are used for religious purposes like writing religious texts, making of religious flags, etc. For religious purpose, paper is cut into various sizes and instil on mountain ridges for warding off evil spirits and for longer life. Other than religious use, the paper is also used for the

administrative and other civil activities. In the past paper was not only in good demand by the Monastic Order but also by the common people of Tibet and the Buddhists of Arunachal Pradesh. When the Monpas were under the Tibetans, the paper manufacturers had to pay tax to the Tibetan government and monastery officials. The taxes were paid by the manufacturers to the Monastic Order in the form of sheets of paper. Paper is made from the bark of a small tree called *Daphne botanica* locally known as *shuk-sheng* (*shuk* means paper and *sheng* means tree). The material is then exposed in the sunlight to dry and when the net is removed, it becomes paper. The paper is generally made during the sunny days of September and October. It is said that during pre-colonial period, paper making was a major industry of the Monpas.

Incense Making

The incense is made from the leaves and the stems of juniper tree, along with other herbs locally known as *baleh*, *solu*, *atung-karpo* (*artemisia vulgaris*), *sholekarpo*, etc. Juniper stem is soaked in water for about one or two days. Then it is attached to a wooden propeller driven out by the force of stream current for grinding it into a paste. Then incense sticks are made out of it. The juniper stems are used as incense stick in its raw form too during various religious rites and rituals.

Shoe Making

The Monpa men are also expert in indigenous shoe making. They manufacture the sole of the shoes out of the skin of animals like yak, goat, sheep, and deer. The region, having a large cattle population, has a fairly large availability of animal skins and hides. The portion between the knees to ankle is beautifully designed with black colour woollen cloth for female and red colour woollen cloth for men. To manufacture the shoe, they soak the skin of animals into the water for about a week to soften it. Then the hair is razed from the skin. The leather is again soaked in the water for a few days. Then the leather is tanned and squeezed by applying a yellowish vegetable *ghee* called *shengmar*. Then it is

cut according to the size of the wearer's feet and stitched with the cylindrical woollen piece of cloth.

This shoe is called *bilar* among Dirang Monpas. These days the elderly people are seen wearing *bilar*, and the younger generation wear these shoes while performing Monpa dances in cultural programmes. Another type of shoe is called *changsumlham* which is decorated from knee to ankle with beautifully embroidered woollen cloth which is quite popular among the youngsters. This shoe is stitched in the craft-centres or in handloom industries by the experts who are known as *zopons*. The sole of the shoe is made of jute. It is worn during marriage by bride and by young ladies during festive occasions.

Hat Making

The Monpas generally herders are expert in making hats. The Monpa hats are made of yaks' fur and are used by both male and female. The yaks' fur is soaked in hot water containing crepe apple juice for about an hour. Then it is moulded by hands for obtaining the required shape. This cap is known by different names in different villages like *nga-sha* in Mago-Thingbu, *dhueja* in Zemithang, *konglum shom*, *ngama-shom*, *tzithpa-shom* in Tsoksum area, and *tokchung zhamuk* in West Kameng.

Another colourful hat stitched in craft-centres or in handloom industries by the expert, *zopons* is the *Goichienzom*. This is made of black woollen cloth beautifully embroidered with colourful flowers. As its name suggests *goeichen* (silk), it is layered on all sides by silk with a slight opening on the front side. It costs around 3000 to 4000 rupees.

Metal

It is difficult to trace out the earliest use of iron and its products amongst the Monpas. It is believed that Thangston Gyalpo, founder of the Gelugpa sect among the Monpas- a *lama* from Tibet founded iron in the Monpa land. Legend has it that the *Lama Thangston Gyalpo* discovered iron between two small rocks and he pulled it out by draping it round the horns of a goat. Then he constructed the iron-chain suspension-bridges over the *Tawangchui* River connecting Mukto

and Tawang. It is believed that since then the people began familiar with the use of iron and its importance. Later, they used iron implements both for agricultural and other household articles like axe, hoe, sickle, hammer, etc. collected from the markets of Tibet. However, they do not extract iron from its ore nor do they mend any iron articles themselves.

In recent times, iron and other metals are brought in from other places and made use of it. Iron and such metals are used for constructing houses, business and other productive uses. However, no iron related industry exists in the Monpa area. They have to depend for the metals on other states.

Fishing

Fishing is done in some areas by the Monpas of Dirang. Generally, young boys are seen taking keen interest in fishing. Fishing is done mostly for family consumption and rarely sold in the market. They follow different methods of fishing such as fishing by net, fishing by weapons, etc. Net fishing is very common among them. They use hand operated nets which are conical in shape. It is generally round with a bamboo frame. They also use a long net with wooden floats at the upper ends and sinkers at the lower ends. Fishing is also done with the help of weapons like spear, arrow, etc. It is done by means of hooks and fish-gorges. The method is to draw a fish to shallow with the curved needle to which lure is tied. As soon as a fish consumes the lure in the hook, it gets tangled and misbalanced. At present Government has opened up many fisheries in the region.



Photo No. 6.1: Monpa Women Engaging in Business.



Photo No. 6.2: Monpa Women Engaging in Agriculture.



Photo No. 6.3: Monpa Women Selling Vegetables.



Photo No. 6.4: Monpa Men Feeding Yaks.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As it happens in all societies, the Monpas who live quietly in a corner of Arunachal Pradesh too have the answer to the questions of origin of mankind, the existence of the surrounding flora, fauna, etc. They further have a set of beliefs and practices that provide a semblance of stability so that the society can progress. Among the Monpas folklores are one of the reservoirs of such stories that give the answers of such perennial questions to this simple society.

The Monpa society is very traditional in its outlook and still follows the age-old norms and customs which are highly revered even today. Village is the most important structure of the society which is administered by the village head man with the co-operation of the villagers. The Monpa village is simple in nature; the family is the smallest unit. The Monpa family, being nuclear in nature, the children, after marriage, set up independent household. Hence in most of the cases the parents after their children's marriage stay alone in their own separate house.

Being situated in the mountainous zone, life is tough for the people and the whole family has to work to sustain themselves. In the Monpa society, the concept of dignity of labour is generally maintained and women work hand in hand with her male counterparts. Both the men and women work together in the fields, in building houses and practicing other economic pursuits and they do not find much difficulty in earning their livelihood.

However, although the Monpa society is to some extent egalitarian in nature, one can still find traits of gender discrimination in the society. The most prevalent form of biasness can be observed in the inheritance law practiced in the Monpa society. No form of paternal property can be inherited by the Monpa women, and in case a particular family do not have a male heir, the whole property will parcel out to the nearest male relative. The plight of a widow who

does not have a son is still worse as she along with her daughters have to move out to the community land provided for the purpose, leaving her husband's share of property to be enjoyed by her brothers-in-law or the closest male relative. Discrimination can also be noticed in the laws relating to the punishment of those having extra marital affairs. While a husband who is at fault is left with paying an amount of fine; the women committing adultery has the leave her husband's home empty handed without even getting the permission of taking her bridal gifts given to her from her mother's house. Till now the Monpa women are practicing the same order followed in the traditional structure of the Monpa society. Women practically do not take part in any authoritative and decision-making bodies. It is mainly the male population who take part in decision-making.

Nevertheless, some changing trends have been noticed from the twentieth century, which have promoted the living standard of the women folk. Today's Monpa women have been given access into the fields of education, economy, and socio-cultural activities. Education opened the new vistas of opportunities for the Monpas. Today women are also seen taking part in politics. However, not all Monpa women are literate and lack of education handicap them to pursue their rights and privileges. Economic independence of women, which is very essential to elevate the position of women in the society, can be brought about only by educating the women folk. This is still a distant dream. Without improving the position of women, it is hard to think of any satisfactory change and progress in the society since women consists of almost half the population in the state.

Another noticeable factor is the observance of the customary laws and rituals, regarding birth, marriage and death. In fact, religious beliefs and practices are deeply imbibed in the Monpa society. Religion and religious personnel like the *jambeyang*, *manpe Lama*, and other *Lamas* is an essential feature in all the ceremonies. Homemade liquor also forms the most essential part of their celebrations and religious ceremonies. Without liquor no customary rites and practices can take place and no celebration is regarded complete.

Unlike other traditional societies, marriage in the Monpa society can take place even in the absence of the bride groom. All rituals with the bride are observed by the substitute of the groom. This is a unique custom peculiar to the Monpa tribe. Similarly, the disposal of the dead is also another unique aspect of the Monpa society. The dead body is cut into pieces and dispersed into the flowing river. The Monpas believe in the utilization of the body after death and make it a custom to use the dead body for the good of other living creatures (the fishes and other creatures of the river). However, it is seen that a gradual change has come over with the advent of modernity in the life of the Monpas. Nowadays some of the customary laws are no longer in vogue and those that are still imbibed in the society are also sometimes subject to open criticism.

Religion and culture are inter-connected to each other. Religion is not simply metaphysics but it is the ethos of people that is the tone and character of people. A noticeable factor is the practises of the *Bon* faith and its intermingling with the Buddhist philosophy. People still follow rites and rituals of the *Bon* faith, although the Monpas have become Buddhist. They still believe that the spirits inhabit the mountains, rivers, forests, trees, caves, rocks, etc. In fact, it is believed that they could exist everywhere which shows the remnants of the *Bon* faith. Some of the rituals and religious ceremonies conducted are also the remnants of the *Bon* faith.

Serene and calm, this peace-loving community are ardent followers of Buddhism. However, at present, due to the influx of outsiders into the region for various economic purposes, inter-marriage is seen taking place between the Monpas and the people belonging to different parts of India, who may be following different religious practices like Hinduism, Christianity, Islamic faith, etc. As a result, the Monpas, mostly girls are seen departing from their earlier faith (Buddhism) and following the religion pursued by their husbands. The Monpas being followers of Buddhist faith, they generally disassociate themselves from violence, a concept ingrained into their thought and philosophy by the teachings of Buddhism. The whole social fabric of the Monpas such as marriage, birth and death ceremonies, celebrations of festivals, etc. are found to be based on

Buddhist religious beliefs and practices. The Buddhist religious ways have become almost synonymous with the cultural identity of the Monpas. A number of dance dramas are performed which forms one of the most important aspects of socio-religious life of the Monpas. During *Torgya* festival at Tawang monastery with the aim of driving away the evils well trained monks entertains people with their colourful dances.

Economy in the past was largely based on agriculture and animal rearing. Animals are both used for their flesh and milk products. In this respect the *Brokpas* and the *Yengtpas* or *Shisha-brokpas* play a major role in the Monpa economy. Improved methods of technology for agricultural purpose are yet to reach the hilly areas of Tawang; even today people depend on the age-old implements for agricultural purpose. Although fertilizers are used for higher yield, people still depend on manual labour for tilling their land.

The Monpas had a simple economy, mostly self-sufficient in nature with little trade relations outside the region. Trade has been another important component of the socio-economic life of the Monpas. The Monpas did engage in vigorous internal trade in the area and the active participation of the Monpas in the external trade with Assam, Tibet, and Bhutan is noteworthy. Basically, trade relationship took place through barter but the use of silver coins was also seen. In the contemporary period, the Monpas are engaged in many Government jobs, private business, and trade for their survival, besides the traditional practises. Barter exchange is still followed, but it has become rare. The impact of the economic change on the Monpas can be seen by the fact that the living standards have grown high. They have started to look for more opportunities and challenges in their lives.

With changing time, the Monpa society is also changing. Cultural contact with the rest of the country and inter marriage have led to new socio-economic and cultural dynamics whereby the Monpas are definitely leading a life for the better. The traditional taboos and restrictions are losing grounds, education of the masses is gaining popularity and advancement of women at par with men has now become a reality. Today people prefer to send their child to school rather

than sending them to monastery for becoming a *Lama* or an *ani*. Welfare schemes undertaken by the government have also started reaching the people, especially the poor. However, the Monpas have not lost their roots and are also strict about maintenance of their culture and tradition. They have started to adopt the new but not at the cost of losing their identity. Definitely this is a good sign and one can always hope for the best.

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APPENDICES

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
 BAIOT CLARET COLLEGE, ZIRO
 LOWER SUBANSIRI DISTRICT - 791 120
 ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA.

Schedule-1

(Information being collected through this questionnaire is strictly confidential and will be used for research purpose only)

I. HOUSEHOLD DATA

Name of the Household Head Date of Interview

Surname Name of the Village

Clan PS Circle:

Sub-Clan District

Lineage Community

Sl No	Names of Family Members	Relation with the Head	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Residence Before Marriage	Education	Occupation	Other Economic Activities	Religion	Remarks
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											

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II. LAND HOLDING, LAND MANAGEMENT, AND OTHER ISSUES

Schedule-2

Source of Irrigation: Source of Labours: Own Village/Other Village

Location of Land	Pattern of Ownership	Tot Area under Cultivation	Area under Self-Cultivation		Area given on lease or share crops basis		Waste Land	Source of Loan Govt. Agency, Bank, Money lender, etc.	No. of Livestock Type for Agriculture	No. of Agricultural Implements
			Irrig	Non-Irrig	Irrig	Non-Irrig				

III. SUBSISTENCE MANAGEMENT

Schedule-3

Prefering Cultivation? Yes/No (Reason)

Prefering Shifting Settled Cultivation? Yes/No (Reason)

Labourer Exchange? Yes/No

Payment of Labourer				Improved Inputs				Marketing of Surplus		Name of Crops Produced		Land used per Crop (Amount)
Cash		Kind		Seeds	Fertilisers	Pesticides	Tools	Cash	Kind	Own Consumption (Kg)	Commercial (Kg)	
M	F	M	F									

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GLOSSARY

- Ajilamu:* A kind of traditional dance performed during Losar festival.
- Bah- khogam:* The art of mask making using wood carving technique.
- Bon:* *Bon* was the indigenous religion of Tibet existed before the introduction of Buddhism in the 7th century A.D.
- Brokpas:* A sub-group of the Monpas who are basically Pastoralists.
- Choskar:* It is an agricultural festival performed after sowing of crops and before harvesting of crops as well.
- Chuung:* A kind of traditional Monpa dish.
- Dzong:* Fortress
- Dzongpens:* A governor or a fort administrator of the village council.
- Dzongpens:* The member of the council that is also a monk.
- Gelugpa:* A kind of the Tibetan Buddhism school.
- Gomis/Goptalangpa:* An executioner to deliver the punishment given by the village headmen.
- Gompa:* Buddhist Monastery
- Gyong:* The fine imposed by the village council during the minor case settlement to the offender.
- Jong:* The fort at Dirang was built in 1831.
- Kathia:* A white scarf placed around the neck of bride and groom.
- Kempo:* The high priest of a monastery and that is a member of administrative council.
- Kha khopcha:* The type of punishment where the cheek were puffed up and beaten with a leather hammer.
- Kha ngyukcha:* The punishment that involve hitting the puffed cheeks of the offender by a pointed bamboo stick.
- Khada:* White scarf wrap around neck of bride and groom during marriage ceremony by the *Lama*.

- Kunma:* Thieves
- KunmaNakchin or KunmaRindorz:* The most notorious criminal
- Kya/lang:* Practice of shifting cultivation in a small area.
- Kyukpa:* A thin wooden stick used for punishing the criminal.
- Losar:* 'Lo' means Year and 'sar' means New. The New Year festival celebrated by the Monpas.
- Manrin:* A compensation paid by the criminal for the medical treatment
- Marme:* It is a worship to have good life in the next birth.
- Meitong:* A fine or ransom paid by the criminal (murderer)
- Nyetsangs:* A monk that is a member of council
- Nyetsangs:* The monk that is also the member of the council.
- Padmasambhav:* It is also known as Guru Rinpoche, was an 8th- century Indian Buddhist master, nothing is known of him apart from helping the construction of the first Buddhist monastery.
- Sechang, Semer, Dadar:* These rituals are performed for longevity.
- Seje:* Like the Singhe it is performed for welfare of the entire village communities.
- Shugu-sheng:* The kind of shrub used for paper making.
- Singhe:* Performed for welfare of the entire village communities.
- Sojan:* Followed by the above rituals, the Sojan is worship meant to get together after Death.
- Thangka:* It is a Tibetan Buddhist painting on cotton, silk appliqué, usually depicting a Buddhist deity.
- Thecha:* A whip made of leather was used to beat up the criminal.
- Tongchin:* It is worshiped in the village monastery during the last part of January and the first part of February, it marks the starting of all Monpa festival.
- Torgya:* Festival that is celebrated in order to drive away evils and well trained monks entertains people with their colourful dances.

Torgya: It is Monastic (Monasteries) festival celebrated to drive off evil forces and to ward off any natural calamity so that people live a happy and prosperous life.

Trukdri: It is the traditional Administration council consisting of six members.

Trukdri: Administration council consisting of six ministers.

Tshangla: The language of the Monpas.

Tuntung ka uk: Black-necked crane.

Yengtpas/sisha-Brokpa: Shepherds.