

LUSHAI CUSTOM

# A MONOGRAPH ON LUSHAI CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES



BY

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**FIRMA KLM PRIVATE LIMITED**

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## A NOTE

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## INTRODUCTION.

In this pamphlet an attempt has been made to record the customs by which Lushais are governed in their daily lives and according to which cases are decided by the chiefs and the courts. When I first came to the district I found it extremely difficult in trying cases to ascertain the correct custom. The customs had never been recorded and it was very difficult to get unbiassed information. As far as can be ascertained the customs now recorded are correct. It is in the hope that it will be of use to officers and chiefs engaged in the administration of justice in the district that this record of the customs now in use has been compiled.

Many chiefs have been consulted and their names are given in a list after this introduction. The chiefs and others consulted agree that the customs described and the fines laid down for the breach thereof are those which are now generally in vogue and which are admitted to be fair and reasonable.

In the Lushai edition many of the explanations given in the English edition have been omitted as they are not required, otherwise the editions are the same.

My best thanks are due to Makthanga, Public Works Department clerk and Chhinga, personal chaprassi, for the great assistance they have given me in compiling these customs.

DATED AIJAL ;

*The 19th September 1927.*

N. E. PARRY,

*Superintendent, Lushai Hills.*



## LIST OF CHIEFS AND OTHERS CONSULTED.

## AIJAL SUBDIVISION.

o chiefs—

Hrangkunga, chief of Phaipui	...	} Vanhnuailiana's descendants.
Dolura, chief of Saichal	...	
Thawngliana, chief of Lenchim	...	
Dorawta, chief of Saitual	...	
Khawzadala, chief of Khawruhlian	...	
Lalthangkhuma, chief of Lailak	...	
Khawtinkaia, chief of Vankal	...	
Lalbuta, chief of Lungchhuan	...	} Vuta's descendants.
Zataia, chief of Khawhai	...	
Lalbika, chief of Khawbung	...	
Thangbura, chief of Lungdar	...	
Thangchhuanga, chief of Biate	...	
Hrangliana, chief of Chhingohlip	...	
Ialsailova, chief of Kelsih	...	
Laltawna, chief of Bungzung	...	} Manga's descendants.
Lalluaia, chief of Reiek	...	
Kamliana, chief of Tachhip	...	} Rolura's descendants.
Sangviala, chief of Sialhao	...	
Sairuma, chief of Sailam	...	
Hrangvunga, chief of Lungrang	...	
Hrangvunga, chief of Lamchhip	...	
Liansailova, chief of Thentlang	...	
Vaizakhama, chief of Chawngtleng	...	
Chawngmingliana, chief of Bawngchawm	...	} Lianlula's descendants.
Lunghnema, chief of Sialsuk	...	
Saibleia, chief of Samlukhaf	...	
Khamliana, chief of Lungleng	...	

Sailo chiefs—*concl'd.*—

Lalsanga, chief of Sertlang ...	...	} Laltuaka's descendants.
Thanglianga, chief of Tlangsam	...	
Zahula, chief of Zote ...	...	

## Zahao chiefs—

- Dokhama, chief of Tualte.
- Liannawla, chief of Lungdup.

## Hualngo chiefs—

- Vanhnuaikhuma, chief of Ruantlang.
- Thlathiaova, chief of Khuangleng.

## Fanai chiefs—

- Sangluaia, chief of Zaw!...

## CHIEFS IN LUNGLEH SUBDIVISION.

## Sailo chiefs—

- Zabiaka, chief of Rotlang.
- Thanzama, chief of Lungrang.
- Lalnghinglova, chief of Zote.
- Vanchheova, chief of Thuampui.
- Saihnuna, chief of Vanhne.
- Manchiaova, Zadeng chief of Lunglawn.
- Sairuma, chief of Thualthu.
- Hmingliana, chief of Hruipui.
- Saihranga, chief of Lungmawi.
- Vanbuanga, chief of Ropui.
- Robova, chief of Kawlhawk.
- Saipawla, chief of Sekhum.
- Liankaia, chief of Mualthuam.
- Nghinglova, chief of Bawmadarzo.
- Sena, chief of Ramlaitui.
- Saihnuna, chief of Denlung.

## Fanai chiefs —

Lalsailova, chief of Muallianpui.

Lalkhama chief of Darzo.

## Hnamchawm chiefs —

Dara, chief of Pukpui.

Paliana, Lushai clerk in charge of Thakthing.

Lusheia chief of Chhungte.



# A MONOGRAPH ON LUSHAI CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE CHIEF AND THE VILLAGE.

1. Each village is ruled over by its own chief. Most of the chiefs belong to the Sailo clan, which had established itself as the ruling family before the British took over the hills. In addition there are a certain number of chiefs, who do not belong to the ruling clan and who are known as *Hnamchawm* chiefs. These are mostly people who have been appointed as chiefs over vacant lands by Government, usually as a reward for services rendered in the Lushai wars. There are also a few *Hualngo* and *Pei* chiefs who formerly held sub-villages under Sailo chiefs and have since been recognised as independent chiefs. In Lungleh subdivision there are many *Poi* and *Lakher* chiefs whose forefathers have been chiefs for generations and who have never fallen under *Sailo* influence. There are also a few *Fanai* chiefs, most of whom follow *Sailo* custom. The chief is the father of his people, he helps them when they are in distress and if he falls into difficulties, they also help him in turn.

2. All matters of internal village government are decided by the chief assisted by his council of elders or *Upas*. Although all power is theoretically in the hands of the chief, practically speaking he will never try a case without consulting his *Upas* and as a rule three or four *Upas* try cases with the chief. These *Upas* are appointed by the chief and can be dismissed by him. Each village is allowed a certain percentage of exemptions from cooly labour to cover the *Upas* and the chief distributes these exemptions among the *Upas* as he likes. The amount of power exercised by the chief himself depends on his personal character. A strong chief will control practically everything while a weak chief will be almost entirely guided by his *Upas*. The chief deals with all cases between his villagers except certain grave cases such as murder and rape, which have to be reported to the Superintendent.

In dealing with cases the chief and *Upas* are guided entirely by Lushai custom. A chief who disregards custom and oppresses the villagers will speedily lose the bulk of his



subjects. Lushais are accustomed to migrate freely from village to village and this custom affords a very salutary check on too arbitrary a use of power.

3. In this pamphlet the amount of the fine shown is the usual customary fine. The maximum fine, in nearly all cases, is Rs. 40. This may seem small for certain offences but when the peculiar circumstances of the district and the scarcity of cash are taken into consideration Rs. 40 is quite enough.

4. When a fine is imposed a *salam* of Rs. 5 is always imposed also, thus a man who commits theft of paddy would be fined Rs. 40 and *salam* Rs. 5 or a pig. The fine is always paid as compensation to the person who wins the case and the *salam* is taken by the chief and *Upas* and expended on a feast. As a rule the chief has not much difficulty in realising a fine. *Palais* are sent to the person fined and a time by which he must pay is fixed and the fine is realised in cash or in kind. If a person fined refuses to pay, the chief attaches sufficient property to realise the fine. If, however, as occasionally happens, the person fined is recalcitrant, the chief applies to the Superintendent, who will enforce the chief's order. Chiefs are expected to keep a brief note of all cases decided by them and this is to be kept up by the village writer.

5. If a person habitually refuses to obey the Chief's orders or habitually commits petty thefts or in other ways makes a nuisance of himself in the village, the chief is entitled to turn him out. If a man is turned out between the cutting of the *jhums* and the ripening of the crop, the chief cannot claim *Fathang* from him. If the man is turned out after the crop is ripe or after the harvest the chief can claim *Fathang*.

Formerly chiefs used to seize all the property of a man who disobeyed their orders, this is known as *Ram*. *Ram* is not now allowed.

6. If a person who has been fined by a chief wishes to appeal to the Superintendent against the chief's order, he must do so within two months from the date of order or his appeal is time barred.

7. It is desirable that in the government of his village a chief should be interfered with as little as possible and that his orders should not be upset unless glaring



injustice is manifest. In this connection the rules for the administration of the Lushai Hills and the instructions for assistants to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, contained in the printed file of Standing Orders may be consulted. These orders are still in force. Unless the authority of the chiefs is maintained, it will be practically impossible to run the district except at a very great expense and with a very much larger staff than at present. Rule by the chiefs is the indigenous form of Government and has grown up with the people and suits their needs and the chiefs are looked up to and respected. It is desirable, therefore, that in the management of his village a chief shall be given as free a hand as possible.

8. Cases between people living in separate villages are tried by the courts in Aijal and Lungleh. If, when the case arose, the parties were living in the same village, they are ordered to take their case before the chief of that village.

9. *The chief's lands or RAM.*—The land is all held by the chiefs. Definite boundaries have been laid down for all chiefs and every chief holds a *Ramrilekha* or boundary paper. Their lands are hereditary and subject to the confirmation of the Superintendent when a chief dies his son succeeds to his land. Formerly the chiefs were few and held very large tracts of land, and the custom was for a chief to allot to each of his sons a tract of land and set him up with a village of his own as soon as he got married. The youngest son only remained with his father and succeeded to his father's village when the latter died. Owing to this custom the land has been so sub-divided that there are now hardly any chiefs whose lands are capable of subdivision so that practically speaking only one of a chief's sons can hope to succeed to a village and lands.

10. According to the old custom the eldest son always got a village first, so that now there is no question of the eldest son getting a village in his father's life time, he must be the heir and succeed to the village and lands on his father's death.

11. Many chiefs have not yet realised that their lands are not large enough to sub-divide and try to get permission to set up their sons in separate villages. As a rule it is



impossible to accord such permission as the lands now held by the different chiefs have been reduced to the smallest area capable of supporting a good sized village. A good village should consist of at least 80 or 100 houses and the larger it is the better. In all smaller villages the social life of the people cannot be complete and they are very inconvenient administratively.

If the sub-division of the land into small areas with villages of 20 and 30 houses were allowed, the whole social life of the people would be ruined, the chief would become a petty headman without any power and would lose the respect of the people and the difficulties of administration would be enormously enhanced. Any further sub-division of the land, therefore, is in most cases impossible.

12. When a chief dies his eldest son succeeds him, subject to the Superintendent's approval. If the eldest son is an obvious idiot or incompetent he is not allowed to succeed and the next son succeeds instead.

13. As chiefs usually have in addition to their real wife several concubines also their families run large. The children by the real wife are alone legitimate and are known as *Chhungpuifa*, the children by concubines are illegitimate and are known as *Hmeifa*, the name for a concubine being a *Hmei*. In addition to these children chiefs very often have one or two children as the result of more or less clandestine unions with girls in the village. These children are known as *Sawn* which means a bastard and are regarded as of a lower standing than the children by concubines.

14. If a chief has no legitimate sons, his eldest *Hmeifa* succeeds to his village. A *Sawn* even can succeed to a village and if a chief has neither *Chhungpuifa* nor *Hmeifa* but only *Sawn* the succession goes to the eldest or most competent bastard. There is really very little difference between a *Hmeifa* and a *Sawn*.

15. *Hamlets or KHAWPER*.—No chief is allowed to start a hamlet without the Superintendent's permission. This is a salutary rule and breaches of it are severely punished and the hamlet is broken up and its inhabitants made to rejoin the main village. The formation of hamlets is not allowed except in very exceptional cases as they always lead to trouble in the long run.



16. *Moving a village to a new site.*—Owing to the exigencies of cultivation, villages fairly frequently move to new sites. Before the move is made the chief must get the permission of the Superintendent or in Lungleh of the Subdivisional Officer. When a village moves to a new site it is exempted from cooly labour for three or four months to enable the people to build their houses. No chief is allowed to plant his village within one mile of his boundary as if he does so it always leads to disputes with his neighbour. Any chief moving or causing a boundary stone to be moved is heavily fined or otherwise punished.

17. *The water supply and water famines.*—A great many villages are very short of water and in the dry season it is very difficult to obtain enough. In ordinary times no cognizance is taken of squabbles between women at the water supply but during a water famine these squabbles get very acute and lead to petty assaults. As these quarrels become a perfect nuisance to the whole village, during a water famine women squabbling at the water supply are fined a *salam* Rs. 5.

All chiefs are bound to look after the village water supply carefully and must fence it and see that it is kept clean.

18. *Salt wells or CHIKHUR.*—Some chiefs have salt wells on their lands and salt is collected for use and for sale.

The chief is entitled to a due on all salt collected. When a party of men goes out to collect salt, as soon as they have got their salt they set aside half a seer which is the chief's due on the total amount of salt collected by the whole party and in addition to this each member of the party must pay the chief a due of half a seer of salt out of his share. Thus if ten people go out to collect salt the chief will get eleven shares of half a seer each. If the due is compounded in cash, it is four annas. Besides this the chief can collect as much as he likes himself. Villagers are not allowed to collect salt without the chief's permission.

19. A chief is entitled to the following dues from his villagers. *Fathang* a due of rice payable to the person who has cultivated his lands. *Sachhiak* a share of every animal shot or trapped by one of his villagers. *Chichhiak* a due on salt.



Whenever a case is tried by the chief and *Upas*, in addition to the fine a due known as *Salam* is realised from the party who loses the case. This due is generally a pig. If paid in cash it is Rs. 5. If the due is paid in the form of a pig, this is killed and eaten at once by the chief and *Upas*. If the fine is paid in cash they wait till a sufficient sum of money has been collected and then spend it all on a feast for the chief and *Upas*. The village writer has to keep a record of all *Salams* paid in cash and their subsequent expenditure.

The villagers have to build the chief's house for him free of cost. When the house is completed the chief usually gives the villagers a feast.

If the chief or his son goes on a journey some of the *Upas* and *Ramhuals* have to accompany him and carry his cloths without any payment. If this is during the cultivation season, other villagers are told off to look after the fields of the people who are accompanying the chief. No payment can be demanded for any of this work. A lot of mutual help is given in this way in a village and if a man is sick or is sent out on cooly work for Government, the chief and *Upas* generally arrange for his field to be looked after by other villagers. The people very often help to weed the chief's *ihum*; this however is voluntary the chief cannot demand it but the *Upas* and people often arrange for it.

20. *Village Officials*.—Besides the *Upas* there are some other village officials. The *Tlangau*, the *Thirdeng*, the *Pui-thiam* the *Ramhuals* and *Zalen*, the *Khawchhiar*.

21. The *TLANGAU* is the village crier. He goes round every night and proclaims the chief's orders, as to what village or other work is to be done next day. In some villages he gets a basket of paddy as *Fathang* in others he does not, the custom varies in different villages and is purely a matter of local arrangement. He is also exempted from cooly labour.

22. The *THIRDENG* is the village blacksmith. He has to repair the tools of the villagers and as remuneration gets a basket of rice from each house in the village after the harvest, as a rule. The *Thirdeng's* remuneration varies however somewhat in different villages according to the arrangement that was made when he was appointed. Sometimes he only gets a basket of paddy from each villager



whose tools he repairs, sometimes he gets a basket from each house in the village, this is also a matter of local arrangement. He is exempted from cooly labour. The *Thirdeng* can also claim a small share in every animal shot or trapped by a villager, this is known as the *Thirdeng Sa* and consists of the spine and three ribs. If this is not given he can claim Rs. 20 compensation. Villagers are not bound to get their tools repaired by the official village *Thirdeng*. They can go to a private *Thirdeng* if they like. The *Pamblawh* is payable to the *Thirdeng* who actually repairs the tools.

23. The *PUITHIAM* is the village priest. He is remunerated for his services in paddy. The system of remuneration varies in different villages and is again a matter of local arrangement. The *Puithiam* owing to the spread of Christianity is, however, no longer the important person he used to be and is getting slowly shorn of his privileges.

24. The *KHAWCHHIAR* is the village writer. He is appointed by the Superintendent and is really a Government official but he has been completely absorbed into the village system. He keeps the vital statistic registers, the village house list, the roster of people who are liable to be called on for coolie work and a list of all guns in the village. He also writes all letters and reports for the chief when the latter is illiterate. All *Khawchhiars* are exempted from cooly labour and house-tax.

25. The *RAMHUALS* are the people who advise where *jhums* should be cut each year and are allowed first choice of fields to cultivate. In consideration of their getting first choice of *jhums*, they have to pay heavier *Fathang* to the chief than ordinary villagers. People who are good cultivators are always selected as *Ramhuals* and the number of *Ramhuals* varies in different villages. The system of dividing up *jhums* is as follows. The *Ramhuals* select the slopes that they think will be the most suitable for *jhuming* for the year. The chief then gets first choice and selects the land he wants for his own *jhum*. After him the *Ramhuals* select their *jhums* in order and have to pay *Fathang* to the chief in proportion to the order in which they have chosen their *jhums*. Thus the first *Ramhuals* might have to pay ten baskets of paddy as *Fathang*, the second eight, the third six and the fourth four. In some villages all the *Ramhuals* pay at the same rate. A man who



is a *Ramhual* is considered to be a man of position in the village, hence there are plenty of candidates for the post although they have to pay heavier *Fathang*. The rates of *Fathang* payable by *Ramhuals* vary in different villages but the above is given as an example of how the system works.

26. The *ZALEN* is a person who is exempted from paying *Fathang* to the chief in consideration of his helping the chief if he runs short of paddy or falls into any kind of difficulty. When all these people have had their choice of *jhums* the common people are allowed to choose theirs. *Ramhuals* and *Zalen* are purely a village arrangement and are not exempted from cooly labour by Government. A certain number of *Upas* however are allowed exemption from cooly labour in each village, as they are the chief's assistants.

27. The chiefs have two other functionaries who ought to be mentioned here, the *Sadawt* and the *Tlahpawi*. The *Sadawt* is the chief's private priest, who conducts the chief's sacrifices, the *Puithiam* being only used by the common people. The *Tlahpawi* is a sort of assistant to the *Sadawt* and is usually a friend of the chief.

When the chief kills a mythan, the *Sadawt* performs incantations over it and while he is doing this, the *Tlahpawi* takes a bamboo and a piece of wood with three sides and with this triangular piece of wood scrapes the bamboo and files off shavings until he has made a kind of brush. Several of these brushes have to be made, one for the chief's father, one for his mother and one for each of his children. These brushes have to be perfectly made and if the *Sadawt* considers that one of them is not up to the standard it is thrown away and another is made to replace it. The brushes when completed are put on a plate and kept in the place in the chief's house where the household spirit or *Sakhua* is supposed to live.

28. The *ZAWLBUK*.—Every Lushai village possesses a *Zawlbuk* or bachelor's house. It is usually built near the chief's house in the middle of the village and all the young men and boys sleep there at night. The *Zawlbuk* is the centre of village life and is a most useful institution. The younger boys are under discipline in the same way as in a boarding house in a public school, the young men use it as a club and dormitory, travellers can put up in it for the night



and the chief uses it as a meeting place where he can make known his orders. As all the young men are concentrated there, they are always available for any unexpected emergency or for any urgent work. It is here that the boys learn wrestling and other games. Wrestling is compulsory for all the inmates and the smaller boys are first made to wrestle among themselves and no skrimshanking is allowed. If a leopard comes into the village and kills a pig or a wild cat comes and kills fowls all the inmates of the *Zawlbuk* rush out as soon as the hue and cry is raised and pursue the intruder. The existence of a *Zawlbuk* facilitates matters enormously if a grave has to be dug or a sick man carried to hospital, as the chief then knows exactly where the young men are to be found. Where there is no *Zawlbuk* and the young men are scattered all over the village, it is very difficult to get hold of them for these emergencies, not only because of the time it takes to find them but because when they are not under *Zawlbuk* discipline they are reluctant to respond when called upon to help. In villages where there are *Zawlbuks*, the people are better disciplined, more industrious and keener hunters than in villages where there are none. According to Lushai custom the most industrious young man and the best hunter among the young men in the *Zawlbuk* get a special cup of *Zu* as rewards. These rewards are known as the *Taima Zuno* and the *Huai Zuno* respectively and are given when *Sumdengzu* is distributed at the *Chawng*, *Sechhun* and *Khuangchawi* sacrifices and also when a party of hunters return home and drink *Zu* together.

- (a) The *Zawlbuk* has a regular system of self-government, very much in the same way as in a public school. The inhabitants are divided into two classes, the *Tlangvals* or young men and the *Thingfawm Naupang* or boys. The latter are the fags and have to carry wood for the *Zawlbuk* fire and do any odd jobs that the young men chose to give them, such as washing their shirts, going errands for them, etc. They also have to carry wood, bamboos and stones when a grave is being dug.
- (b) There is a curious system for deciding whether a *Thingfawm Naupang* has attained to the status of a *Tlangval* and acquired the freedom of the *Zawlbuk*. When a boy appears to be growing up and to have reached the age of puberty he is



examined by the *Tlangvals*, one of the hairs from round his private parts is pulled out and if it is long enough to go round the stem of a bamboo pipe the owner of the hair is thenceforth classed as a *Tlangval* or young man, if the hair is too short to go round the pipe stem its owner has to continue to work as a *Thingfawm Naupang*. If after two or three examinations a boy still fails to pass the test, he is generally given a grace pass when he is obviously too big to be classed as a *Thingfawm Naupang* any longer. The inhabitants of the *Zawlbuk* usually call upon boys to come and be examined but any boy who thinks that he is too big to work as a *Thingfawm Naupang* any longer can claim to be examined.

- (c) To control the *Thingfawm Naupang* and to maintain discipline in the *Zawlbuk*, monitors who are known as *Thingfawm Hotu*, are appointed from among the younger *Tlangval* (youths). There are usually about four monitors but the number varies with the size of the village and usually one is appointed for each of the village streets, so that there may be complete control over all the boys living in different parts of the village. The job of monitor is much sought after as the monitors do not have to do any of the ordinary *Zawlbuk* work and enjoy a good deal of power over the boys. These monitors have to see that the *Thingfawm Naupang* collect sufficient wood every day for the *Zawlbuk* fire. This involves a good deal of work, as a large fire is always kept up in the *Zawlbuk* for drying cloths, etc. Just after sunset between 6 and 7 P.M. the boys are all called up for a roll call and the monitors find out whether the boys have all carried out the tasks assigned to them. Skrimshankers who have failed to carry their quota of wood or water are punished by being given double tasks next day and if they continue to skrimshank are given treble or quadruple tasks. If certain boys are known to skrimshank habitually, a balance is rigged up in the *Zawlbuk* and the loads are tested and if they are found to be below the standard, the boys who have been shirking their duty are severely punished. In the cold weather when



constant fires are necessary, the *Tlangvals* also have to bring in big logs for the fire and if they fail to do so are made to do so by the *Tlangval Upas*.

- (d) Discipline is strictly enforced in the *Zawlbuk* and no interference from outside is tolerated. If a boy complains to his father that he has been ill-treated by a monitor and the irate parent in consequence beats or abuses the monitor, all the inmates of the *Zawlbuk* combine to punish the father of the sneak. They go off to the offender's house sit down on the floor, catch hold of the posts and away their bodies to and fro until the whole house sways with them and nearly falls down. After having thoroughly frightened the householder they go away. This punishment which is known as *Sawi* is intended to show the man they are punishing that they have no respect for him and do not care if he migrates to another village or not.
- (e) Among the young men, there are also certain leaders who are known as *Tlangval Upas*. They have to arrange for all work to be done by the young men such as digging graves, carrying sick people to hospital or any other work that may be necessary. Special arrangements are made for fetching water at night in case the inmates of the *Zawlbuk* get thirsty and boys are specially told off for this duty and are changed every week. These boys can claim water as of right from any of the houses near the *Zawlbuk*, the householder is not entitled to refuse to give water and if he does so is fined a *Salam* of Rs. 5.
- (f) Theft from the *Zawlbuk* is regarded as very disgraceful and the punishment is Rs. 40, regardless of the value of the article stolen, which also must be returned. If a boy overhears a conversation between two young men in the *Zawlbuk* and repeats it outside, he is fined Rs. 5 unless he is so small as to be considered incapable of knowing that he had committed an offence. According to Lushai custom only boys who are old enough to go and work in the fields are punished, no



matter what offence they may have committed. Boys who are able to go and work in the fields are known as *Tuhahum*. Boys who are not *Tuhahum* are not considered capable of knowing the difference between right and wrong and so are not formally punished for any offence. They are left to their parents to deal with. A boy generally starts working in his parents fields at the age of about seven or eight.

- (g) The only person who may throw a stone on to the *Zawlbuk* roof with impunity is the chief. If any other person throws a stone on the roof, because there is too much noise going on or for any other reason, he is fined. When a new *Zawlbuk* is being built the chief usually gives the villagers a feast as soon as it is completed. This, however, is optional on the chief's part and cannot be claimed by the villagers as a right.

29. *FATHANG*.—*Fathang* is the due payable to a chief by any of his own village or by any one from another village who cultivates his land. This due is payable in kind that is to say in paddy. If any one has not sufficient paddy to pay the due in kind he can pay Rs. 2 instead. When a man cultivates the land of a chief other than the chief in whose village he resides, his own chief cannot claim *Fathang* as it is payable only to the chief whose land is cultivated. If a man cultivates land in two chief's *Rams* he will have to pay *Fathang* to both chiefs. *Fathang* is not payable for vegetables and other miscellaneous crops if grown in the same chief's land as the main rice crop but if a man has a *kochu* or maize plot in another chief's land he will have to pay *Fathang* for it to the chief in whose land he has made the subsidiary cultivation. If two people share a *jhum*, even if they live in separate houses, they only pay *Fathang* for one *jhum*. One of them is regarded as the owner of the field and takes 10 loads of paddy out of which he pays all *Fathang* and the rest of the crop they divide equally.

The amount of paddy to be given as *Fathang* varies in different villages but the maximum amount that can be levied is six snowflake kerosine oil tins of unwinnowed *dhan* heaped up full. The rate at which *Fathang* is compounded is always the same, namely Rs. 2. Paddy given in



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If a man has shot an animal in the lands of another chief and the chief in whose land the animal was shot takes the *Sachhiah* instead of telling the man who shot the animal to give the *Sachhiah* to his own chief according to custom, he is liable to a fine of Rs. 40 which is payable to the chief who should have got the *Sachhiah*. The village *Thirdeng* is also entitled to the spine and three ribs of each animal killed. This due is known as *Thirdengsa* and failure to give it is punishable with a fine of Rs. 20.

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pull it down and use it for firewood or give it to somebody else. If a man is going to migrate to a village very near by and wants to pull down his house and re-erect it in his new village, he is generally allowed to do so. For Aijal station and Thakthing village, where there are many corrugated iron roofed houses, a special rule has been made to the effect that if a man who has a corrugated iron roofed house migrates he is allowed to pull his house down and remove the materials or with the Superintendent's sanction, he may sell it to an approved person. Gardens within a chief's *Ram* are not allowed to be sold in any circumstances. In Thakthing and within the Aijal reserve no garden may be sold without the Superintendent's permission, which is only given in every special circumstances. Any breach of this order is punishable with the confiscation of the garden and a fine of Rs. 40. When a Government servant residing in Thakthing village or the Aijal reserve dies, his heir may sell his garden to a person approved by the Superintendent. If a Government servant on retiring on pension or of his own free will not having been dismissed for misconduct or an *ex-Government* servant in the same circumstances wishes to leave Thakthing or the Aijal reserve and migrate elsewhere, he is usually allowed to sell his garden but must apply to the Superintendent beforehand.

- (a) When a man *pems* his chief on behalf of the village is entitled to keep half his paddy but he must pay for it at the village rate. This is known as *Hawltun*. The other half the man who migrates is entitled to take with him, or dispose of himself to the best advantage. As a matter of fact the paddy is practically always bought by poor people who have none and not by the chief himself, who only buys it on rare occasions. The village paddy rate is published every year in the Lushai newspaper. If a man who is going to migrate possesses a gun, he is not allowed to take it with him except with the permission of the Superintendent. Guns belong as much to the village as to the individual and when a man *pems* the chief is entitled to buy his gun for Rs. 100 unless the Superintendent, for special reasons, allows the migrant to take the gun with him. If a man is going to *pem* and his friends and relations volunteer to help him to carry his



examined by the *Tlangvals*, one of the hairs from round his private parts is pulled out and if it is long enough to go round the stem of a bamboo pipe the owner of the hair is thenceforth classed as a *Tlangval* or young man, if the hair is too short to go round the pipe stem its owner has to continue to work as a *Thingfawm Naupang*. If after two or three examinations a boy still fails to pass the test, he is generally given a grace pass when he is obviously too big to be classed as a *Thingfawm Naupang* any longer. The inhabitants of the *Zawlbuk* usually call upon boys to come and be examined but any boy who thinks that he is too big to work as a *Thingfawm Naupang* any longer can claim to be examined.

- (c) To control the *Thingfawm Naupang* and to maintain discipline in the *Zawlbuk*, monitors who are known as *Thingfawm Hotu*, are appointed from among the younger *Tlangval* (youths). There are usually about four monitors but the number varies with the size of the village and usually one is appointed for each of the village streets, so that there may be complete control over all the boys living in different parts of the village. The job of monitor is much sought after as the monitors do not have to do any of the ordinary *Zawlbuk* work and enjoy a good deal of power over the boys. These monitors have to see that the *Thingfawm Naupang* collect sufficient wood every day for the *Zawlbuk* fire. This involves a good deal of work, as a large fire is always kept up in the *Zawlbuk* for drying cloths, etc. Just after sunset between 6 and 7 P.M. the boys are all called up for a roll call and the monitors find out whether the boys have all carried out the tasks assigned to them. Skrimshankers who have failed to carry their quota of wood or water are punished by being given double tasks next day and if they continue to skrimshank are given treble or quadruple tasks. If certain boys are known to skrimshank habitually, a balance is rigged up in the *Zawlbuk* and the loads are tested and if they are found to be below the standard, the boys who have been shirking their duty are severely punished. In the cold weather when



constant fires are necessary, the *Tlangvals* also have to bring in big logs for the fire and if they fail to do so are made to do so by the *Tlangval Upas*.

- (d) Discipline is strictly enforced in the *Zawlbuk* and no interference from outside is tolerated. If a boy complains to his father that he has been ill-treated by a monitor and the irate parent in consequence beats or abuses the monitor, all the inmates of the *Zawlbuk* combine to punish the father of the sneak. They go off to the offender's house sit down on the floor, catch hold of the posts and away their bodies to and fro until the whole house sways with them and nearly falls down. After having thoroughly frightened the householder they go away. This punishment which is known as *Sawi* is intended to show the man they are punishing that they have no respect for him and do not care if he migrates to another village or not.
- (e) Among the young men, there are also certain leaders who are known as *Tlangval Upas*. They have to arrange for all work to be done by the young men such as digging graves, carrying sick people to hospital or any other work that may be necessary. Special arrangements are made for fetching water at night in case the inmates of the *Zawlbuk* get thirsty and boys are specially told off for this duty and are changed every week. These boys can claim water as of right from any of the houses near the *Zawlbuk*, the householder is not entitled to refuse to give water and if he does so is fined a *Salam* of Rs. 5.
- (f) Theft from the *Zawlbuk* is regarded as very disgraceful and the punishment is Rs. 40, regardless of the value of the article stolen, which also must be returned. If a boy overhears a conversation between two young men in the *Zawlbuk* and repeats it outside, he is fined Rs. 5 unless he is so small as to be considered incapable of knowing that he had committed an offence. According to Lushai custom only boys who are old enough to go and work in the fields are punished, no



matter what offence they may have committed. Boys who are able to go and work in the fields are known as *Tuhahum*. Boys who are not *Tuhahum* are not considered capable of knowing the difference between right and wrong and so are not formally punished for any offence. They are left to their parents to deal with. A boy generally starts working in his parents fields at the age of about seven or eight.

- (g) The only person who may throw a stone on to the *Zawlbuk* roof with impunity is the chief. If any other person throws a stone on the roof, because there is too much noise going or for any other reason, he is fined. When a new *Zawlbuk* is being built the chief usually gives the villagers a feast as soon as it is completed. This, however, is optional on the chief's part and cannot be claimed by the villagers as a right.

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pull it down and use it for firewood or give it to somebody else. If a man is going to migrate to a village very near by and wants to pull down his house and re-erect it in his new village, he is generally allowed to do so. For Aijal station and Thakthing village, where there are many corrugated iron roofed houses, a special rule has been made to the effect that if a man who has a corrugated iron roofed house migrates he is allowed to pull his house down and remove the materials or with the Superintendent's sanction, he may sell it to an approved person. Gardens within a chief's *Ram* are not allowed to be sold in any circumstances. In Thakthing and within the Aijal reserve no garden may be sold without the Superintendent's permission, which is only given in every special circumstances. Any breach of this order is punishable with the confiscation of the garden and a fine of Rs. 40. When a Government servant residing in Thakthing village or the Aijal reserve dies, his heir may sell his garden to a person approved by the Superintendent. If a Government servant on retiring on pension or of his own free will not having been dismissed for misconduct or an *ex-Government* servant in the same circumstances wishes to leave Thakthing or the Aijal reserve and migrate elsewhere, he is usually allowed to sell his garden but must apply to the Superintendent beforehand.

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effects to his new village the chief cannot interfere. If a man who is migrating possesses live stock he is supposed to take them with him. If he cannot take them at once, he must get the chief's permission to leave them. If after a reasonable period although ordered by the chief to remove them he has failed to do so, the chief can dispose of them.

(b) Migration generally take place at *Pawtlak*, that is after the harvest. If, however, a man migrates after sowing his field, he may dispose of his crop but must pay *Fathang* to the chief before he goes. If the emigrant does not pay *Fathang* the chief can take his crop. When a man migrates to a new village he generally puts up with a friend or acquaintance. If he knows nobody in the village, the chief arranges a house for him to put up in. As soon as he can, he builds a house and the villagers all contribute to give him rice to start him off with in his new house. After that he will have to buy paddy and the first time he buys it will usually only have to pay half the village rate. The man with whom the immigrant puts up till he has built his own house cannot claim *Chawmman* from him for having put him up. Sometimes a man is induced to migrate to another village by the chief of the village to which he proposes to migrate promising to make him an *Upa* or a *Thirdeng* or a *Khawchhiar*. If afterwards the man changes his mind and fails to migrate, the chief of the village to which he intended to migrate cannot bring any action for breach of contract. A chief is not allowed to go to another chief's village in order to induce persons to migrate to his own village and any chief who does so is fined at least Rs. 40.

(c) The practice of free migration acts as a very useful check on any chief who is inclined to be too arbitrary, as a chief knows that if he uses his powers oppressively his villagers will migrate to another village and he will be the loser. People who make a hobby of constantly migrating from village to village, however, are looked on with suspicion



and are generally undesirables. Formerly it was considered unlucky to migrate several times over big rivers.

36. *TLANGCHIL* and *SAWI*.—These two customs are very similar. They are practically extinct but are worth describing as an occasional case may crop up. In the old days *Tlangchil* was the usual way of punishing a man who behaved badly in the *Zawlbuk* or was unable to carry his drink properly and made a nuisance of himself in the drinking place or who made himself generally unpopular in any other way. The young men would wait for their chance till they got the man to be dealt with in the *Zawlbuk*, they put out the fire so that it was impossible for him to see who had attacked him and then seized him and beat and kicked him and finally probably pulled down his house. An attack of this sort by a number of people on a fellow villager is known as *Tlangchil*.

I have heard of a case of *Sawi* which took place about thirty years ago at Thenzawl. A young man had gone to court a girl taking with him a small boy as *Puarak*. The young man was courting the girl and the boy was lying on the ground near by when the girl's father came and found them and proceeded to trample on them and kick them all over the body. This was a gross breach of the custom allowing men to court girls freely, so the injured lover went off to the *Zawlbuk* collected all the young men of the village and took them to the house of the man who had committed the assault. They turned all the inmates out of the house and pulled it down. Next day, the man whose house had been pulled down *pemmed* to another village. The chiefs do not seem to have inflicted much if any punishment for *Tlangchil* or *Sawi* presumably because they thought that the man assaulted had only get his deserts. The man assaulted always found it advisable to remove himself to another village as soon as possible. *Tlangchil* is very similar to the ragging that might be inflicted on an unpopular person at school or in mess.

*Sawi* is less drastic than *Tlangchil*. If a man was to be *Sawi* for an offence, it was usual for all the youths in the *Zawlbuk* to go to his house, sit down and sway to and fro until the house was on the verge of falling. This would be "*Sawi*". They might also pull down his house but he would not be severely beaten.



37. *DAWI*.—*Dawi* is magic and a *Dawithiam* is a wizard. In the old days if a man had accused another of being a wizard, he would probably have been murdered by the person he accused. If a man could clearly be shown to be a wizard, no chief would allow him into his village and he would have had nowhere to live. If a man accuses another of being a wizard and cannot prove it he is liable to a fine of Rs. 40. Although the belief in magic is gradually dying out it still exists especially in the more backward villages and cases fairly frequently arise in which a man complains that some one has accused him of being a "*Dawithiam*". Letzakaia's village has a great reputation for containing wizards. *Dawi* is generally definite poison put into *Zu* or food.

38. *KHAWHRING* is also magic but of a less deadly nature than *Dawi* and is more frequently found among women than among men. If any one accuses a woman of being a *Khawhringnei* and is unable to prove it he is to be fined Rs. 40. A *Khawhringnei* is a person who is possessed of an evil eye, while a *Dawithiam* is an active wizard. In the old days chiefs were rather given to accusing well-to-do people of being *Dawithiam* or *Khawhringnei* as then they could turn them out of their villages and confiscate their property. Nowadays, most people are not afraid of "*Khawhringnei*" and do not worry about them but the belief still lingers on.

39. *TAWMKAILO*.—This term means a person who owing to physical, moral or mental defects is regarded as not being human. Such a person is regarded as not being responsible for his actions and consequently as not liable to punishment for his misdeeds.

The term *Tawmkailo* is also used in the reverse sense. If a man is a habitual criminal and has been in prison several times he is also known as *Tawmkailo* or not human and any one who beats him or is guilty of any other offence against him is not punished.

40 *Village Paths*.—Chiefs are bound to keep up all village paths within their *Rams*. Where village paths are not properly kept up the chief and village are punished.

41. *BEES*.—The large bees which make their nests in the rocks are regarded as the property of the chief on whose land their nests are found. The villagers with the chief's



permission can take the honey and wax but the chief is entitled to an equal share with each of the persons who took the honey and wax, when it is divided up. If honey and wax is taken without the chief's permission the persons taking it are liable to a fine of Rs. 40.

42. *T LAW MNGAIHNA*.—*Tlawmngaihna* is a word which has no exact equivalent in English. It really represents the Lushai's code of morals and good form. A person who possesses *Tlawmngaihna* must be courteous, considerate, unselfish, courageous and industrious, he must always be ready to help others even at considerable inconvenience to himself and must try to surpass others in doing his ordinary daily tasks efficiently. In theory *Tlawmngaihna* should enter into every branch of a Lushai's life. A man who practises the precepts of *Tlawmngaihna* is looked up to and respected. *Tlawmngaihna* can really only be explained by examples.

*Helping the sick*.—It is the custom in Lushai villages if a man is sick, for all the villagers to combine and carry him into hospital. Supposing some one from a far away village has to be carried into hospital, he is carried by his own villagers to the next village and thence by the inhabitants of that village to the next and so on until the hospital is reached. When any one has to be carried in this way, two young men who are known as *Zualko* are sent on to the next village to inform the villagers that a sick man is on the way. As soon as they get the news the villagers abandon whatever they are doing and go to meet the sick man. A village that possesses *Tlawmngaihna* will go to meet the convoy at the boundary of their lands and offer to carry the sick man from there. If the villagers who are already carrying are also keen on *Tlawmngaihna* they will refuse to hand over their burden and will insist on carrying it right up to the village. A village that does this is showing the right spirit and actually practising *Tlawmngaihna*. *Tlawmngaihna* can thus be practised by a village as a corporate body as well as by individuals.

If a man falls sick in the cultivating season, his fellow villagers are expected to weed his fields for him. The chief will probably call for volunteers for this work and if the rules of *Tlawmngaihna* are properly followed in the village there will be numerous volunteers who will vie with each other to get the work done.



*THLENIN DAN.*—According to custom all travellers in the hills are entitled to food and lodging free for a night. Some people churlishly refuse to give the hospitality required by custom but any one who follows the rules of *Tlawmngaihna* will never refuse hospitality to a stranger and the more strangers a man puts up the more *Tlawmngaihna* he is held to possess.

*When out hunting or shooting.*—A hunting expedition offers many opportunities for the exhibition of *Tlawmngaihna*. A man who possesses endurance and is able to go on all day with very little food, who is courageous in following up wounded wild beasts, who thinks of his friends before himself, takes less than his share of the food, is industrious in building the shelter for the night and in collecting wood for the fire is said to possess *Tlawmngaihna* and according to the dictates of good form the young men are supposed to vie with each other in these respects. If two men one of whom has a gun come up to an animal, the man with the gun, if he follows *Tlawmngaihna* will offer his friend first shot. If a man gets hurt by a wild animal, his companions must stay and look after him and must not continue the chase and leave him alone. If a man got caught by a wounded bear or other animal it would be a fearful disgrace if his companions ran away and left him to his fate, they are bound to stay and help him.

*On a journey.*—People who are travelling together must help each other. If one of the party gets ill and falls behind, his companions should wait for him, if they do not they are lacking in *Tlawmngaihna*. Water is scarce in the hills and during the hot weather people suffer severely from thirst, a man who goes a long distance down the hill side and fetches water for his companions is doing his duty and practising *Tlawmngaihna*.

*At feasts such as Secnhun and Khuangchawi.*—At feasts the young men and girls in the village help the giver of the feast in many ways by pounding rice, collecting materials, dancing and in other ways. They are expected to do these things as a matter of *Tlawmngaihna*. The giver of the feast for his part is expected to give them food and drink in the same way. The more and better food and drink he gives the more *Tlawmngaihna* he possesses.



*DAMAGE BY FIRE.*—If a whole village is burnt down, the neighbouring villages contribute food, clothing and household utensils to replace those that have been burnt and also help to rebuild it. This is due to *tlawmngaihna*. In the same way, if a man's house is burnt down and his property and paddy is destroyed, his fellow villagers help him with contributions of food and cloths and also help him to rebuild his house. Many other instances could be given of the operation of *tlawmngaihna* but the above are enough to show what it is. It is really a very good moral code enforced solely by public opinion. Unfortunately with the growth of enlightenment there is a tendency to neglect *tlawmngaihna*. Formerly there was great competition among the young men as to who possessed most *tlawmngaihna* and people were respected or otherwise according to the extent to which they practised *tlawmngaihna*. This rivalry has decreased a great deal and it is hard to say whether it will revive or not. At present far more *tlawmngaihna* is found in the more distant villages than in the centres which pride themselves on being enlightened and progressive. As yet however *tlawmngaihna* still exists and it is to be hoped that it will not die out as it is of great value in a country like the Lushai Hills, where it probably grew up in the beginning because in a wild country it is essential for people to help each other. *Tlawmngaihna* therefore deserves every encouragement, as if it were allowed to fall into desuetude it would be most detrimental to the whole of the tribe.