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(ANTHROPOLOGY)

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE
“LISHAW (LISU)” NATIONALS OF
HEIGH-PHUT VILLAGE, NAM-SAN TOWNSHIP,
LOI-LEM DISTRICT IN THE SOUTHERN SHAN STATE
UNION OF MYANMAR

Submitted by
Ma Le` Shwe Sin Myint
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DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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Foreword

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Ma Le' Shwe Sin Myint

Anth - 2

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Introduction

The Union of Myanmar is the home of many national tribes, each with its own traditional customs and culture, making it a huge human social structure in the world. These national tribes have existed from thousands of year ago and have brought along their own culture. Although these national tribes own culture and the arts may vary in appearance and the geographical region they live in, they are related to each other. These national tribes born in Myanmar are interrelated to each other in their historical background, racial roots, language and literature, in their way of dress, their arts and crafts and traditional customs, which are important factors building union solidarity.

The prestige of a national race is in its culture. Every national race has its own culture. They try to preserve their culture and love the traditional heritage they have inherited. They are afraid that if their traditional culture should disappear, their national race will also slowly become extinct. So they are taught to love their traditional culture which will make them love their national race and their country.

The event of history has shown that it essential for the (135) national tribes of Myanmar should be united and live in harmony. Our ancestors have built this Union of Myanmar by sacrificing their lives. The national spirit of the national tribes should be strong to safeguard the freedom and sovereignty of the state.

The national tribes being friendly and understanding each other can gain the unity of the national tribes. It helps to make relationships smooth when one national race learns to understand and respect another national's culture and traditions. It is with this aim that the researcher had gone on field trips to the regions where the **Lishaw Lisu national tribes** live. The researcher has done her utmost to get the true facts by asking questions of the Lishaw (Lisu) national tribes, and by discussions with the local authorities and compiled this thesis for the Master of Arts degree in Anthropology.

The researcher feels that it is the duty of students of Anthropology, to make known the traditional customs and life of the national tribes to other national tribes. The researcher has chosen to do research on the social structure of the Lisu (Lishaw) national tribes living in **Heigh-Phat village** tract, Nam San township, Loi-lem district, Southern Shan State, because many people believe that only the Shan nationals live there. But the researcher found by accident a book entailed Kachin tales from the Shan hills in the

Yangon University Central Library. Reading that book inspired me to do research on the Kachin national tribes living in the Shan state. The Lisu national tribes living there not only spoke their own language but have also learnt to speak the Shan language. The Shan State is also like my native state, so it encouraged me to do the research in the beautiful Shan State.

The researcher has used both the direct and indirect methods of research. At the time of the field trip, the Lishaw Lisu tribes were celebrating the New Year festival, offering of fruits and grain and weddings. The researcher was able to witness and participate personally in the celebrations. These celebrations showed that the Lishaw Lisu tribes are still carrying on their traditional customs and culture. The researcher also observed that nat worship is lessening among the Lishaw Lisu tribes. So as a student of Anthropology, the researcher tried to record the traditional nat worship rituals before they become extinct with the advance of modern education and alien missionary work.



Lishaw (Lisu) MAN and WOMAN

CHAPTER 1.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

(a) History of Nam San town

The town of Nam San is in Loi-lem district in the Southern Shan State, which is in the eastern part of Myanmar. To the East of Nam San is Kun-Heing and Kyaing-Ton, to the Southeast is Meing-Pan, Meing-Sut and to the South is Mone, Maut-Mei, Lin-Khay and to the West is Loi-lem, Pin-lon, Le'char, Meing-Pan. So Nam San town is at the meeting place of the roads leading in all directions of the Shan State.

The earth surface of Nam San town is wide plains with the Nam-Lat stream flowing through the town, which makes it a very pleasant place for people. The Nam-Lat stream is made up of three streams flowing down to join together at Nam San. The stream from Meing-Seit village in the South, the stream from Wohm-Pon in the west, and the stream from Loi-lem flowed into Nam-Lat stream near Nam San. This stream flowing through the town of Nam San has many bends and curves along. The mountain valleys so that its flow is rough and fast and noisy, so they called it Nam-Lat stream meaning the taking waters or stream.

The town of Nam San had been a camping site for soldiers, traders and travelers as early as 1600 years ago. It developed into a village by 1600 and today it Nam San town.

The Nam-Lat stream flows through the middle of the town. On the eastern bank of the Nam-Lat stream, a natural water hole appeared. The water from this natural water hole too flowed through the center of the village into the Nam-Lat stream. The water from this stream is different in Taste from the other streams. The taste of the spring water is high and people believed that it

has medicinal qualities of curing people with uvula defects such as people who stutter and stammer in speaking become more fluent in their speech. So people travelling past this spring or stream would take bottles of this water for medicinal use. So the village took its name from the spring water, Nam San meaning the village that has light tasting water.

Nam San village Kun-Heing and Kyaing-Taung regions in the east, which are rich in edible oil and forest products. On the south from Mone', Maut-Mei and Lin-Khay region. There is abundant water and rice and handicrafts. In the West, Loi-lem, Meing-Pan, and Taungyi have consumer goods. So Nam San village being the central place for cross of roads and exchange of goods become a flourishing big village. At that time, the Sawbwas ruled in Shan State, so Nam San was under the jurisdiction of Mone' Sawbwa. It had a village headman who was under the circle headman of Wohm-Pon U Nyut Kham. The chief nationals who lived there were Shans, Yin-nets, Yin-Kyas, La-hus and Lishaws. In 1941, when the Japanese invaded Myanmar, the region became restless and .The ravages of was destroyed Nam San village. In 1950,the travelling traders in carts rebuilt the village and become alive again. In 1956, after Myanmar gained independence the State made it a rehabilitation center for was veterans. It set up the Bayinthaung labor head quarters there and started 10 village, which today made up Nam San township. There are (5) quarters made up of (20) village tracts in Nam San township.

Besides there are:-

- One State High School
- One Agriculture High School
- One affiliated Middle School
- Three Middle School
- Ninety-one Primary School
- Upgrading the village to township status and making it a thriving town again

(b) The appearance of the surface of the land

Nam San town is on the average 3000 feet to 4000 feet above sea level. It has very few level plains. On the whole it has many valley plains and in some places full of hills and mountain ranges. On the whole it is hills and plains of red earth. Especially the townships northern region, the north-east the west and the south-west regions are surrounded by mountains 4000 feet to 5000 feet in height. There is a valley plain about 3200 feet in the middle of the township. The hill ranges in Nam San township run mostly north to south.

The Nam-Lat stream, which flows the middle of Nam San town, takes its source from the mountains to the west of Meing-Seit village. It flows through many bends and curves for (24) miles and appears (6) miles to the east of Nam San near the No. (2) village and flows in to the Nam-Thane stream which flows north to south from Le`-Char township to Nam San township. Then flowing north for (4) miles, it enters Mone` township from the east. Because it is a mountain stream and when it is full with water in the rains, the current is swift and only in the summer it flows a bit gently.

There are many natural lakes and ponds, of which the biggest lakes are 2 ½ miles west of Nam San town, on either side of motor-road. Their area is about 640 acres and acres. There is only one waterfall in Nam San. It is called Ho-Tunt waterfall in Wohm-Pon village tract is 75 feet in height.

Nam-San town is 302 miles as the crow flies, northeast of Yangon. But the car road is (530) miles long. It is (75) miles from Taungyi, the State capital and (22) miles away from historic Pin-Lon.

The townships bordering Nam San township are, on the east is Kun-Heing township, on the west is Loi-lem on the south are Mout-Mei and Mone` townships and in the north is Le`-Char township. The lengths of the borders touching Nam San township with Kun-Heing in (35) miles, with Loi-lem is (16) miles with Mouth-Mei is (13) miles, with Mone` is (78) miles and with Le-Char is (40) miles. The area of Nam San township is (1594.12) square miles or

(1020239) acres. It has rivers and stream and (7771) acres of underground water. Nam San township is (3166) feet above sea-level.

c. Natural Forests

Nam San is only 3000-4000 feet above sea level, so only a few pine and take trees grow there. The other woods are In, Ingyin, Htauk-Kyant, Thityar, Thityar, Chestnuts, Eastern gooseberry, Chebulic myrobalan, trees grow there. Big forests of Ingyin trees grow in the Northern part of Nam San. There are also dry hill forests. The whole townships forest area is (1547213.97) area. There is no forest reserve area as yet, but (40) square miles area has been proposed for forest reserve.

Among the dry hill forests, there are also in taing dry hill forest where in trees grow together with Ingyin and Thityar and bamboo groves like hmyin and Waphyu. Among the forest products in charcoal fuel made in Kyotada, apataw and Wohm-Pon apataw and sent to Nam San, Loi-lem and Pin-Lon.

The forests and natural forest are taken care of by forming two divisions. The people responsible for the care of these two divisions have to prevent problems concerning the forests. They have to carry out measures against waste of trees used for fuel. So substitute trees for fuel, like orisha, acacia panama laburnum, Pine, eucliptics trees are planted to provide firewood for the local people.

The State government made new laws with regard to preservation of natural forest on 3rd November 1992. They are also educating the people on the dangers of wasting valuable forests. In prevent wastage of forests, the nationals are told not to do the shifting taungyar system which destroys natural forest and in the end lead to weather changes. They usually set fire to the forest to get grazing land for the cattle. But forest fires kill the young plants and trees and destroy the natural forests. Baking charcoal and lime needs fuel, so the authorities have given specific areas for them to cut the firewood.

A country natural resources are water, land and natural forests and mountains ad valleys and climate. When the natural forests and hills are destroyed, the climate changes and the water dries up and the land is destroyed. So to prevent the effects of climatic change, the nationals are urged as duty to preserve the natural forests. They are also given knowledge of how to carry out the work of preservation. The national forests in Nam San area do not have medicinal plants. Only a few kinds of orchids grow there. Many varieties of birds inhabit the natural forests and the Shan nationals read signs and omens from the cry of the bride. The insects that destroy their crops are the stem bores, rice swarming caterpillar, and rice hispa beetle, rice grain ribbing caterpillar. The insects that eat the corn leaf, the corn cob, the corn seed, the insects that roll up the peanut leaf, fruit flies, mango leaf caterpillars, all kinds of butterflies, bee, beetles and winged termites are found there.

d. Climate

The Shan State is in the tropical latitude, but because it is a highland the temperatures are low and enjoy a temperate climate. In the coldest month of December, January, its monthly average temperature is below 64F apart from the lowlands. In these months, the temperature falls to freezing point in some areas. In the hottest months of April, May, June and July, because it is a mountain region the climate is very pleasant and the monthly temperature is between 70F and 80F Nam San towns average temperature is 75F and its highest temperature is 87F .

The rainfall in the Shan State depends on the height and nature of the land, so there different between regions. There is more rainfall on the western edge of the Shan plateau and on the mountain ravages than on the lower regions. The average rainfall for the whole of Nam San regions is (40) to (60) inches. The rainy season is from May to October. In these (6) months it gets 90% of the yearly rainfall. The months of June, July, August and September get the most rain and reach its highest point, and in July the rain comes from

the South wide. In August and September, it gets its rains from the storms of the east. Even in the dry season, the rain does not stop altogether but has slight showers. Nam San towns average rainfall for the year is 57.60 inches.

e. The national tribes living in the region and population

Nam San town in the Southern Shan State is the center for trade and commerce. Many national nationals are living in this area. The Shan, Yin-Net, Yin-Kya, La-Hu, Lishaw (Lisu) have settled down permanently here. You can also see a few kachins, Chins, Kayahs, Kayins, Pa-Os, Bama and Rakkhines too. According to the census taken in 1981-1982 the following is the population of Nam San township.

Male	-31355
Female	-30262
Total	-61617

All kinds of nationals live mixed together in the (5) quarters of Nam San township. In the quarter No.(4),90% of the national race living there are Lisu national. In the village tracts the Shans, Yin-Nets, Yin-Kyas, La-Hus, Lishaw(Lisu) each national group live closely according to their race. There are (2019) houses in Nam San. The 1998-99 census counted (63247) people.

No.	Quarter/ Village	Male	Female	Total
1.	5 Quarters	6856	7662	14518
2.	20 Village tracts	24801	23928	48729
Total		31657	31590	63247

The 1998-99 census also recorded foreigners living in Nam San. They are Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Chinese and Gurkhas (Nepalese) who number the most and their chief occupation is breeding cattle and agriculture.

f.Heigh-Phut village: History; Place; Area

The research paper on the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals for my M.A degree, was done in Heigh-Phut village tract, which is by the side of Nam San - Mone` motor road. Most of the Lishaw(Lisu) . Were by the side of the road, but some were three or four miles far then in away from the main road.

The village in the Heigh-Phut village tract are:-

- 1) E Phut (Heigh-Phut)
- 2) Wom-Khu
- 3) Wom-Lon
- 4) Wom-Kut
- 5) Naung-Ein
- 6) Wom-Mine
- 7) Naung-Meing
- 8) Kon-Poin-Ma

The national nationals living in these villages are Lishaw(Lisu), Shan, La-Hu nationals. The population of Heigh-Phut village tract is (1530) and the religions they profess are Buddhist, Christians, and Nat worship.

Population chart of Heigh-Phut village tract, Nam San Township

Village tract	village	House hold	male	female	Total
Heigh-Phut	Heigh-Phut		75	86	161
	Won Khu		51	70	121
	Won Lon		232	130	253
	Won Kut		20	18	38
	Naung Ein		135	139	274
	Won Mine		144	160	304
	Naung Meing		96	72	138
	Kon-Pon-Ma		130	111	241
		135	744	786	1530

Heigh-Phut village on the Nam San- Mone` car-road, (12) miles away from Nam San town. In the past Heigh-Phut village was known as E-Phut. A Christian missionary founded the village by the name of Mr. Willy. On his return from Meing-Pan after doing his missionary work, he arrived at this place and named it E-Phut meaning a good and bobble place. The village was founded in 1960 with about (10) household and it was under the jurisdiction of Mone` Saw-Bwas. After it had existed as E-Phut village, many people from neighboring villages moved to E-Phut and many houses increased in the village. It become known as Heigh-Phut later because the place provided good hunting animals for food. So the Shan nationals began to call it Heigh-Phut meaning a place full of meat for their food. Today people know it more as Heigh-Phut and have become a village tract of eight villages combined together, with an area of (18360) acres. The (8) villages in Heigh-Phut village tract are for from each other and the evilness that touch Heigh-Phut village borders are Naung-Ein, Wom-Mine and Zay-Kon.

g. Roads and Communication

The Shan States has three main ways of transport. They are the railway, the motor-road and the airplane. Nam San town is on the Union Highway between Taungyi-Kyaington and Techileck. It is (75) miles away from Taungyi the capital of Shan State. The car service pals between Taungyi and Nam San in small salon buses under the name of Kaythayazar. The fare was K 200/- per person in (1997). Now in (1998) the fare is K 250/-. These buses leave Taungyi at 7:30 Am and passing through the towns of Ho-Pon, Meing-Pon, Loi-lem reaches Nam San at 1:30 PM. It is a (6) hour ride. In the same way the bus from Nam San leaves at 7:30 AM for Taungyi, Reaching it at 11:00 AM. This bus service has 4:00 cars. The research paper I am doing is about the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals of Heigh-Phut village , which is (12) miles away from Nam San . So I had to continue my journey from Nam San. There is

the railway, the motor road, the factor, the bicycle and htawlagyi to get there. Very few people work the distance but use the htawlagyi most.

When we go by car to Heigh-Phut, it is usually a government department car, which is seldom available. There are buses playing between Taungyi and Mone`. But very few people travel by these buses. It takes about three hours if you travel by bicycle, but it is uphill work, so it is not easy to travel by bicycle.

There is also a railroad from Nam San to Mone`. It is an important road because all the nationals use this railroad to travel as well as for trade. The Nam San-Mone` railroad was opened by the government on 1-5-95 and it is (27.56) miles long. On the road from Nam San to Mone` you pass through the village No. (71) station, Nam-Kyoat, Haight-Phut, Wom-Yay, Pan-U, Nar-Khan and finally Mone`. The train fare from Nam San to Mone` is K 30/- and Nam San-Heigh-Phut is K 15/- in 1999 . The government servants can travel free of charge.

h. Language

The Lishaw(Lisu) language is the most difficult language spoken by the Kachin nationals. It has (6) different high and low tones and there are (250) sounds ending completely with. Vowels only i.e without any consonant endings. There are many Lishaw(Lisu) words similar to Myanmar language, so we may classify the Lishaw(Lisu) language as of Kachin language family group, Myanmar group. Beside the sentence structure is also very much alike. Some scholars have remarked that Lishaw(Lisu) language and Myanmar language have basically descended from parent group.

The Lishaws(Lisu) language spoken according to the region are so many that in some places. They cannot understand each other. The Lishaw(Lisu) living near the Myanmar-China border cannot understand the Lishaws(Lisu) living in eastern Yunnan province, so they speak Chinese to each other. In the Lishaw(Lisu) language 60% is the same and 40% varies according to

the region it is spoken. There are (3) kinds of Lishaw(Lisu) language in Kachin state.

- They are :-
- 1) - Lay-Wu (Lo-Wu) language
 - 2) Yee-Mu language
 - 3) Hu-cha-naw language...

Lo-Wu and Hu-cha-naw languages are spoken in Putao area and Yee-Mu language is spoken in Myitkyina, Bhamo and Mogok districts. In the Shan state the Lishaws(Lisu) spoken the Yee-Mu language.

It is very difficult to separate and divide. The national groups living in Myanmar just by the one language they speak. In the same way among the kachin national groups, the language of the Jainphaw, Maru, Lashe, Azi,Rawan, Lishaws (Lisu) ,have differences for three reasons.

- 1) They speak the same language uniformly to make the social standard of their race.
- 2) They speak as a mark of their race i.e. as peculiar to their group.
- 3) They speak the same language uniformly to mark the solidarity of their racial group.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Myanmar words</u>	<u>English words</u>	<u>Lishaw(Lisu)</u>
1.	(ခွေး) Khway	dog	(အားနာ)ahna
2.	(ဝက်) wet	pig	(အားဝက်)ahwet
3.	(ဆတ်) sart	deer	(ချေး(ရ်)chai
4.	(လူ) lu	man	(လာရှ်)lachol
5.	(ဆား) sar	salt	(ဆဗ်) savo.
6.	(မီး) mee	fire	(အားတိုး)ahtoe
7.	(ရေ) yay	water	(နီးဝျ) neeja
8.	(လေ) lai	air	(ဗိတ်(တီး))vehe
9.	(လက်) lct	hand	(လက်ဖယ်) lakaphc

i.Literature

The Lishaws(Lisu) like the Jainphaw and Rawan languages have invented the letters. In 1912 and 1914 a kayin missionary Says Ba-Thaw as advised by Zaw-Ja-Hla to adapt the Roman letters of the alphabet to Lishaw(Lisu) alphabet. He left it unfinished, so in 1916 Sayakyi Frazer took the responsibility and completed it. He work the Bible in Lishaw(Lisu) script and also produced the kindergartner reader. But it was not taught in schools, only the parents who learnt the script could teach their children at home.

The Lishaw(Lisu) do not have close access to education and knowledge, but on the whole 70% of the Lishaws(Lisus) are quite intelligent and they have invented their own writing. In the backward regions, they have to learn their own script. In the towns some go to a kind of Sunday schools run by the Christians. Such schools have no grades like the State schools.

The Lishaw(Lisu) alphabet is adapted from the English alphabet. Sayagyi Judson planted the seeds of Christianity and a good Christian religious organization came into exitance. At that time a Lishaw(Lisu) of Kaung family by the name of Gunadu came and studied under Mr.Judson and he succeeded in inventing the Lishaw(Lisu) writing.

Lisu language alphabet chart

Lisu alphabet letters	B	P	d	D	T
Alphabet sounds	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	G	K	X	J	C
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	L	C	Z	F	H
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	M	N	L	S	R
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	R	V	V	H	G
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	J	W	X	Y	A
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	V	E	F	I	O
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	U	U	L	D	B
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)



'Lishaw (Lisu)'MAN and WOMAN



Back of Lishaw(Lisu) Man and Woman

CHAPTER 2.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE LISU NATIONAL RACE AND THEIR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

a. How the Lishaw(Lisu) national race appeared

The (135) national nationals living in Myanmar are descended from the Mongoloid stock. They came into Myanmar in three waves.

(1)The Mon Khemer group.

(2)The Tibeto Myanmar group.

(3)The Thai-Chinese group.

The Lishaw(Lisu) national group came from the Tibeto Myanmar group. According to Lishaw(Lisu) tales, the Lishaw(Lisu) group like the Kachin national group lived on Majulawarkyi (Magyweshainya) Mountains. When the world was flooded, Two people, a brother and sister were left and they were one of the nationals born from them. Before coming into Myanmar, they lived first in a place where many rivers and streams meet. The region was known as Meeodi or Meesawpawtee. That place was full of hills and valleys and streams. It was about (1000) square miles in area and the weather was very cold and the soil very poor. They met with famine, so they started moving into Myanmar, through the “ Sipi and Mesi” gates(1000) years ago. They passed through the Chechel, Dali, Razi and Nwansi regions. They were the last group of Kachins to come into Myanmar. They came to live around Myitkyina region about (400) years ago. They have lived in the Bhamo district and Shan State since (1300) years ago. They were seen in the Hukong vally only (40) years ago.

(1)Lolo group

Lolo group are Lolo ,Liso(Lisu), Yaw-Yin , Lahu, Kwi, Kaw and the other varieties of nationals who live in the Southern region of Yunan Province-

Foreigners call them Lisu. They Lishaw(Lisu) are called "Yaw-Yin" in Putao area. The Lishaws(Lisu)are seen in both Kachin state and Shan state. The Lishaw (Yaw-Yin) living in Puta-O area are the national nationals that live furthest north in Myanmar. They not only live furthest north but have even spread into Tibet. The " Yaw-Yin" in Puta-O live in the villages where Malikha river begins and the (20) mile area to the East of Malikha river. Their dress is different from the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals living other regions. Among the (4) kinds of Lishaw(Lisu) nationals , only those in Puta-O called "Yaw-Yin" wear the gown.(Some Yaw-Yins live in Law-Khaung and Sein-Lon hill ranges.)

There are three other "Lishaw(Lisu)" nationals besides the "Yaw-Yin" "Lishaw(Lisu)" of Putao. They are "Kyaing-Ton Lishaw (Lisu)" national nationals who came down along the Thanlwin river. The "Loilen Lishaw(Lisu)" have spread from Kyaing Ton to Loilen and Mone`. The "Bhamo Lishaw(Lisu)" came from Northern Putao , and they are "Lishaw(Lisu),Yaw-Yin" descendents.

The Lolo group Lishaw(Lisu) national nationals came down along the Thanlwin river and settled in the North in Putao, in the South in Myitkyina, and Bhamo areas. Their traditions and customs and dress are quite different from Myanmar, but their Language is similar to Myanmar .So it is believed that the Lishaw(Lisu) national nationals like the Myanmar, are descended from the Tibeto-Myanmar group of nationals.

b. The places in Myanmar inhabited by the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals

The Union of Myanmar is inhabited by (135) national groups, of which the Kachin national nationals have (6) sub-groups. They are: -

- Jainphaw
- Maru
- Azi
- Lashi
- Rawan
- Lisu (Lishaw)

The Lishaw (Lisu) group is found in Puta-O district, Myitkyina district, Bhamo district and in Loi-lem district in Southern Shan States. They have even spread to the eastern bank of the Thanlwin river and Eastern Shan State.

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals in Loin-len district in Southern Shan State are living together with Shan, Pa-O, Palaung, Yin-Net, Yin-Kya, La-hu nationals, sporadically on the hill ravages and are estimated to number about (20000). The Lishaw(Lisu) national nationals living in different regions Myanmar are different from each other according to the region they settled down in. They are different to a small degree in their region and beliefs and thought.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals living the different regions have also affected their language. They do not use the same words i.e. their vocabulary is different according to the region they live in. The Lishaws(Lisus) living in the Northern borders of Myanmar have spread into Tibet and those living in Puta-O region have spread east to the source of Malikha river and a (20) mile area on the Eastern bank of the river . They have settled down in the villages there.

Lishaws(Lisus) nationals by nature like the cold climate of the mountains . So they in the mountain villages of Loi-lem district in Southern Shan State, in Kyauk Me` district and La-shio district in Northern Shan State, and Kyaing-Ton district in Eastern Shan State.

c. The Names of the national groups

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals living all over Myanmar have different names and words according to the region they reside in. Those living in Puta-O district of Kachin State call themselves "Yaw-Yin" Myanmar and Shans living in Shan State call them "Lishaws" but they call themselves "Lisu". The meaning of Lishaw(Lisu) is "Li" means they represent the four directions of the Earth and their life depends on the natural Earth and water and forests and hills . "Su" means they live together in the four directions of the Earth. So "Lisu" means: They represent the four directions of the Earth and live in the four directions of the Earth depending on the natural environment of Earth , water hills and forests.

There are two types of Lishaw(Lisu) living in Loi-lem district Southern Shan State . They are Kho-lon Lishaw and Lipha Lishaw. The Kho-lon Lishaws have only one tassal to their waist but the Lipha Lishaws have tassals to their waist string. Kho-lon Lishaws are believed to be descendents of the Chinese. In the past the Chinese kings and Myanmar kings used to send good will gifts. Once the Chinese king sent a beautiful girl as a gift is to the Myanmar king. Four Chinese ministers and followers carried the damsel to Myanmar from the Yunan Province of China. They came down along the eastern side of Thanlwin river. The four ministers were instructed to deliver the young girl to the Myanmar king. They were also forbidden to peep into the carrier. When the company of four ministers and followers reached Kutkhaing region. They rest at a village. Then the ministers and followers stole peeps into the carrier and to their surprise found a very old ugly woman. They could not stop laughing but they dared not deliver her to the Myanmar King. The four ministers and the followers and the old woman settled down at that place and founded a village. They have lived there till the present day, the tribe increasing and spreading slowly. "Kho-lon" means "extremely laughable" and their race started at the place they had laughed so much. So today they are known as "Kho-lon Lishaws".

In the past, the Lishaws who lived in Shan State were called "Lisaw" coming from an old tale "Lisi". It is a Chinese word and name of a fruit in Myanmar "Gonthi" (၇:၆:)(chestnuts). In Shan language it is called "Mutkut". In the place these people first settled there were many Lisi trees and the people living there lived by eating and selling this fruit. They came to be called people living in the village with many Lisi trees and as time passed they came to be known as Lisi nationals. Later when they spread to Shan State the word Lisi was mispronounced as Lisaw and now known as Lishaw national group.

d. Physical appearance and features

(1) Physical appearance

The physical appearance of the Lisu national nationals is not much different from the Kachin national groups. The Lisus have yellowish brown or brown skins. Their eyes are narrow and long with crease less eyelids. They have long nose with round tip, on the whole. They have prominent noses. Their jaws are square and a bit broad. Their eyes are brown, and their hair is straight, black and thick and rough. Their average height is 5' 2" to 5' 5". On the whole they have a strong body with good muscles. The lips are mostly slightly thick. There are few people with thin lips.

(2) The Nature

The Lisu people are pure natured, honest and simple. There are almost no cases of theft, cheating and violence. They want to have a peaceful life. They are also persevering, hard working and courageous. They are a very shy people.

The Lisu's chief belief and worship is traditional nat worship and drinking intoxicating drinks is just a tradition. In worship of their traditional nats intoxicating drinks must be offered. It is a necessity. The Lisu are not lazy.

Their mentality is to work hard and concentrate on their works. The other nationals say “The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals are like earthworms”, which is metaphorical praise, because the earthworm is always working, digging up the earth. The Lisu nationals have a spirit that does not stand nonsense, for example they have a saying which says “Don’t come and kick our rice pot, and we will not kick other people’s rice pot also”. It is evidence of Lisu nature. They never grudge even a stranger who may stay months in the house. They will feed him well and never boast about their generosity. So they are very hospitable to their own relations and national race. One good example of their saying is “Remember another person’s kindness, but forget your own kindness to another”. So the Lisu never boasts of his good works but is ever mindful of the gratitude he owes another.

(3)The Lisu national dress

The Lisu nationals, living in Nam San Township in Loi-lem district of Southern Shan State were their traditional style dress. They use to weave their own rough cotton cloth on their back strap looms. Nowadays, only a few does this. The Lisu women buy the cloth they need and stitch her dress herself. They still stitch by hand and a suit of clothes may take as long as a year to finish it. When they have a suit of clothes, they wear it till it is torn. They were their own suit of clothes for so long because they value it very much and it is not easy to make one suit of clothes.

-The Lisu man’s suit

First of all I will describe a Lisu man’s suit. The complete suit includes a gaungbaung(ခေါင်းစောင်း), a top jacket, a pair of pants, a waist band string, leg bands, a sward, a should bag. The gaungbaung is 12 to 20 cubits in length, red in color and made of silk cloth. It is made of silk cloth because it is light and easy to buy from the market. In the past too, men going out to battle or going on a hunt wear silk gaungbaungs because they are light and not heavy. The

way the Lisu male makes up his headgear is to sit down with his knees up. Then he takes the silk piece of cloth and winds it round his knees weaving it up and down and the end piece of cloth is dropped on the right side. Then he takes it of his knees and pulls it over his head.

The Lisu male wears a baggy top jacket like the Myanmar "taikpon"(တိုက်ပုံ) jacket. In front there are silver buttons or old silver coins or sewn beautifully with multi-colored thread. On the back of the jacket are buttons in the shape of a cross-bow are sewn as a sign of hunting. In the past they wear this jacket unbuttoned in the front. Today they wear a shirt underneath the top jacket.

The pants of the Lisu male have one peculiarity. The pants are from the waist to the middle of the calf and wide at the hem. The middle joint is below the knees and its width is 1/3 the width of the pants. The Lisu males wear a belt at the waist. It is different from the belts worn by other nationals. The basic color is red mixed with blue, white, black. The belt is made up of a piece of cloth about (5) cubits in length and about the size of the width of a man's hand in breadth. It is beautifully decorated. They wind it round the waist and tie it in front to form a V knot with the two ends falling in front. Then from the two ends door two long tassels reaching the edge of the parts made up of about 240 strands of multi colored thread each about 5 cm, in breadth. The ends of the belt and tassels are arranged neatly in front of the man.

Then he wears leggings. He warps around his legs, a piece of cloth, black or blue about our cubit in breadth, and tied at the top with a string. The lower edge of this legging is also decorated with multi colored thread designs. Owe peculiar custom of the Lishaw (Lisu) males in the past had to keep the hair on the front top of the head without cutting, from birth to old age. It is a symbol the power of men. Besides, when they go to fight in battle, they knot this hair and it is their marks that it would help them shoot the arrows. They also carry a sword about a cubit long made of silver. It is something every male

Lishaw must have with him always. Nowadays this custom is dying out and the silver sword is a rarity.

Another object that is part of the Lishaw males' attire is his shoulder bag. It is made of back strap woven material beautifully done up with multi colored thread work and pompoms. This bag is also something dear to the heart of the Lishaw.

-The Lishew(Lisu) woman's clothing

The Lishaw(Lisu) woman's clothing or suit includes a gaungbaway, a necklace, jacket and pants, belt and leggings. They buy a twelve cubit long black cloth to make their headgear. It has to cover the whole head.

In the past, they used to wear necklaces made up silver coins. Today, they are smaller coins of pays, quarters and halves and kyats. They bore holes on the coins and then stringed with multicolored threads and wear it rounds the neck. This neckband is usually worn by unmarried girls and on festive occasion. This is also a mark that differentiates a married woman from an unmarried woman in their social customs¹.

The Lishaw(Lisu) woman's top jacket reaches the knees. The top part has a chest flap that is richly embroidered with many colored threads and ornamented with coins along the border of the chest flap. The jacket neck and shoulder are one seam sloping to the upper part of the arm. The long sleeves are stitched separately and joined to the jacket on the upper part of the arm.

This joint is again beautifully decorated with colorful designs. In the same way the waist and the tip of the sleeves are embroidered with many colored threads. This jacket reaches the knees and is slit at the side's front the waist down ward. The Lishaw (Lisu) woman has to stitch by hand her whole attire, so it may take as long as a year to finish one set of clothes.

¹ Stratification of social level by ornament.

It may take more than a month if it is stitched by machine but still there are the decorations, which can only be done by hand. So they value their costumes very much as it takes so much time and labor to finish one suit of clothes. So if the clothes get a bit torn they mend and patch it and wear it till it is in tatters.

One item in the dress of the Lishaw (Lisu) woman of Nam San Township in Loi-lem District of Southern Shan State is the belt they wear at the waist. That belt is made up with 5 cubits of blue cotton cloth, 1 cubit of black, 9 inches of red and 9 inches of white. They stitch the belt beautifully and neatly.


The main belt is about (5) fingers breadth and about (8 ½) cubits long. The belt is (7) cubits and the tassels are over (1) cubit feet. Each string of the tassels is neatly and lightly stitched from pieces of colored cloth. The main belt is blue but the two ends are stitched with different colored cloths to make it pretty. When they wear the belt, they have to start winding from the back round their waist three times, then drop the two ends evenly at the back.


The one cubit long tassels are attached to the ends of the belt. The Lishaw (Lisu) woman put great value on their clothes and also has some tabus about it. Touching or pulling the tassels of their belt is considered a personal assault to their dignity and you can be punished with a fine for doing so. The fine in the past was K 60/- but today it is more the K 500/- or until the girl insulted is satisfied.

In the Lishaw(Lisu) woman's dress, she has pants like the Shan pants under her outer long jacket. The pants reach the knees and are shorter than the long jacket. The pants have no elastic band. So it has to be worn together with the top jacket belt. The pants are made of coarse black cotton cloth bought from the market and these under wear pants have no decorations. The women also wear leggings on their calf. But unlike the man, it is not put flat around the leg like the men. It is about nine long and pulled on like a pair of loose socks,

and tied at the top with a string. Its chief color is red and the bottom edge is decorated with colored cotton yarn.

-Meaning of their dress

The Lishaw(Lisu) national dress has certain marks which have traditional meaning. The white zig-zag mark  means the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals live in the forests and the hills and wherever they go they are accompanied by their hunting dog.

 The tip of the arrow (in black) is the sign that the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals use when they go hunting or in the past when they go out to fight a battle.



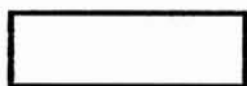
This mark is the tail end of the arrow.



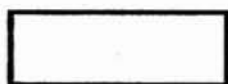
This mark showing the four corners mean the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals live in the four directions of the earth.



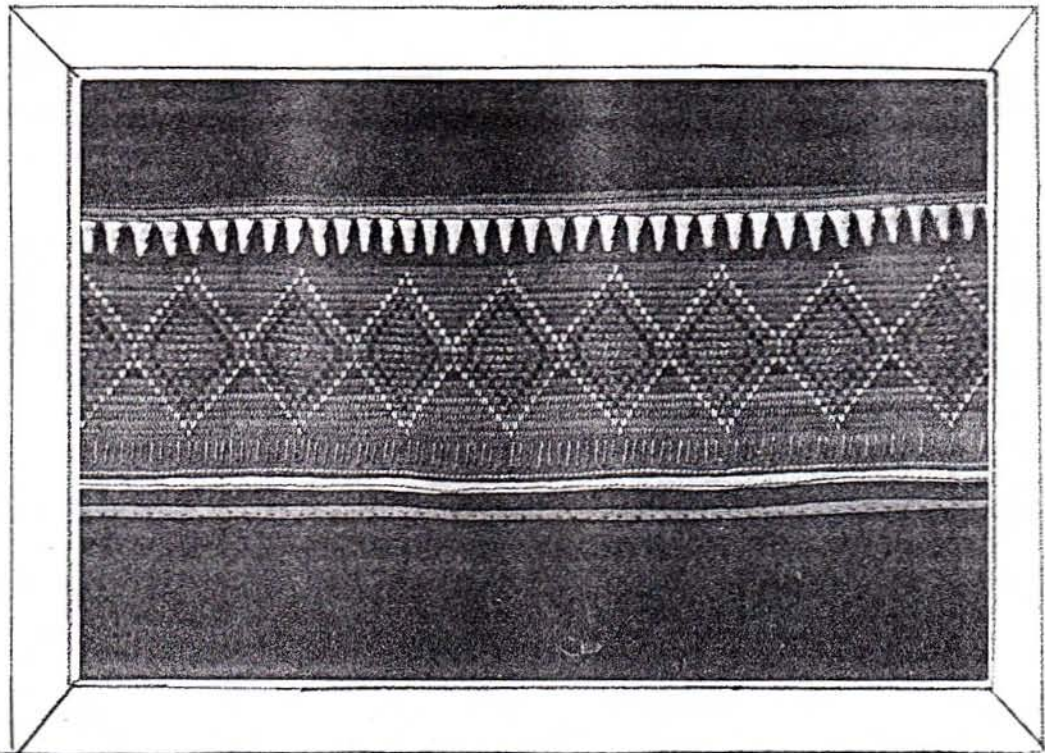
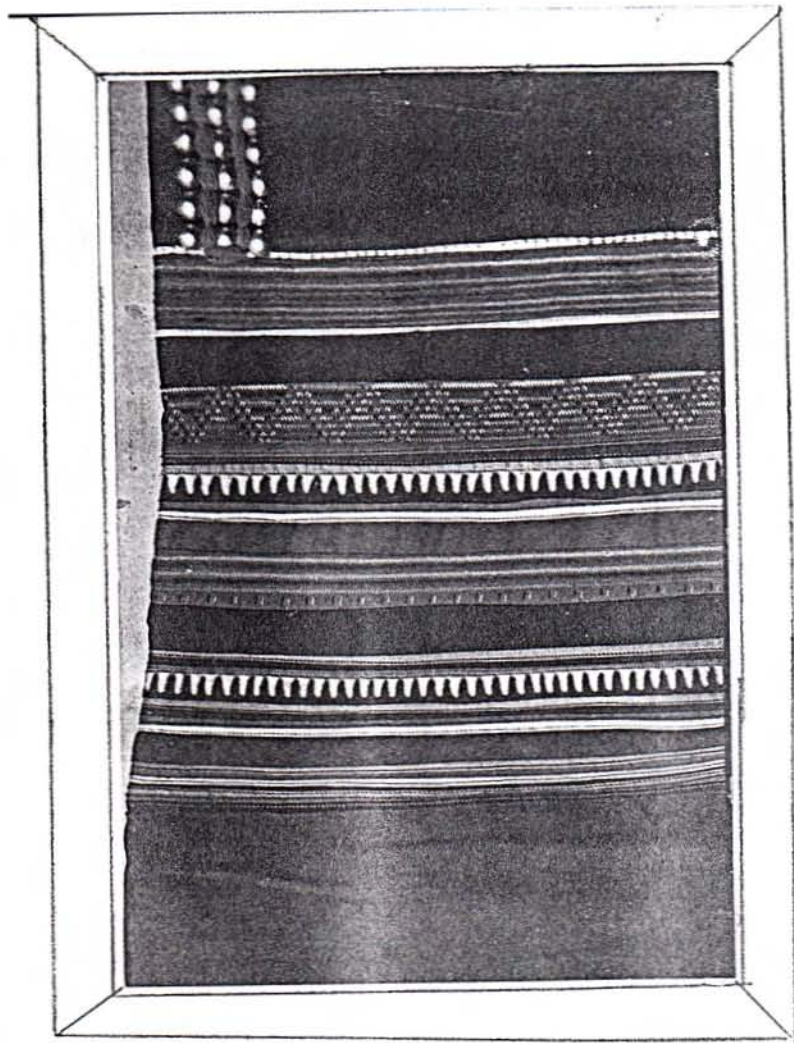
White color is the symbol of the purity of the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals mind.



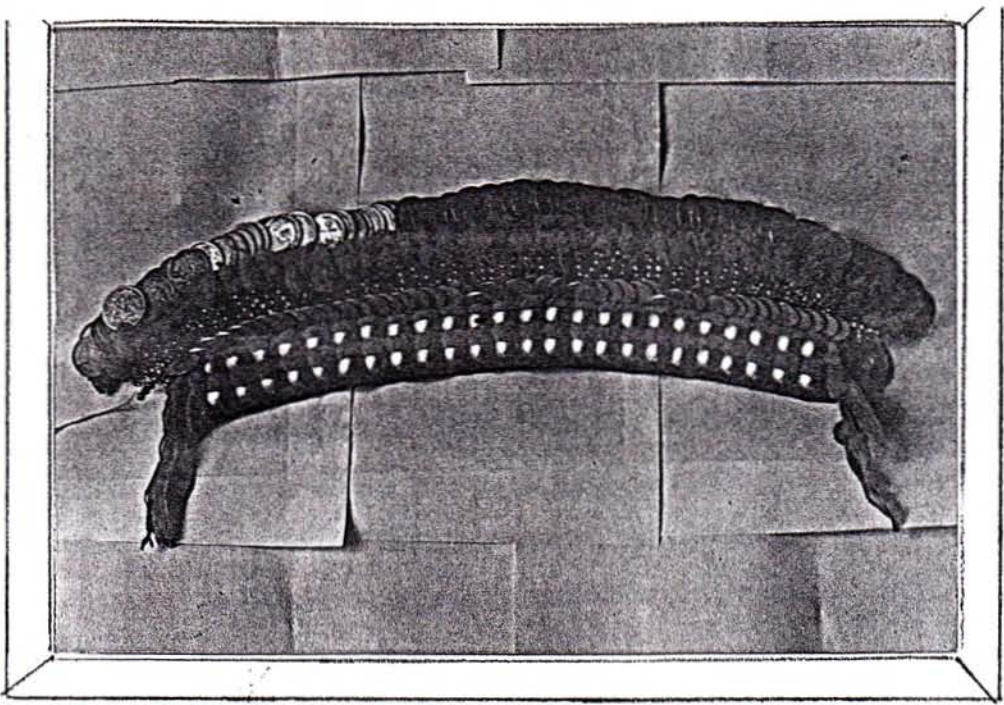
Blue is the color of the sky and it means peace and tranquility.



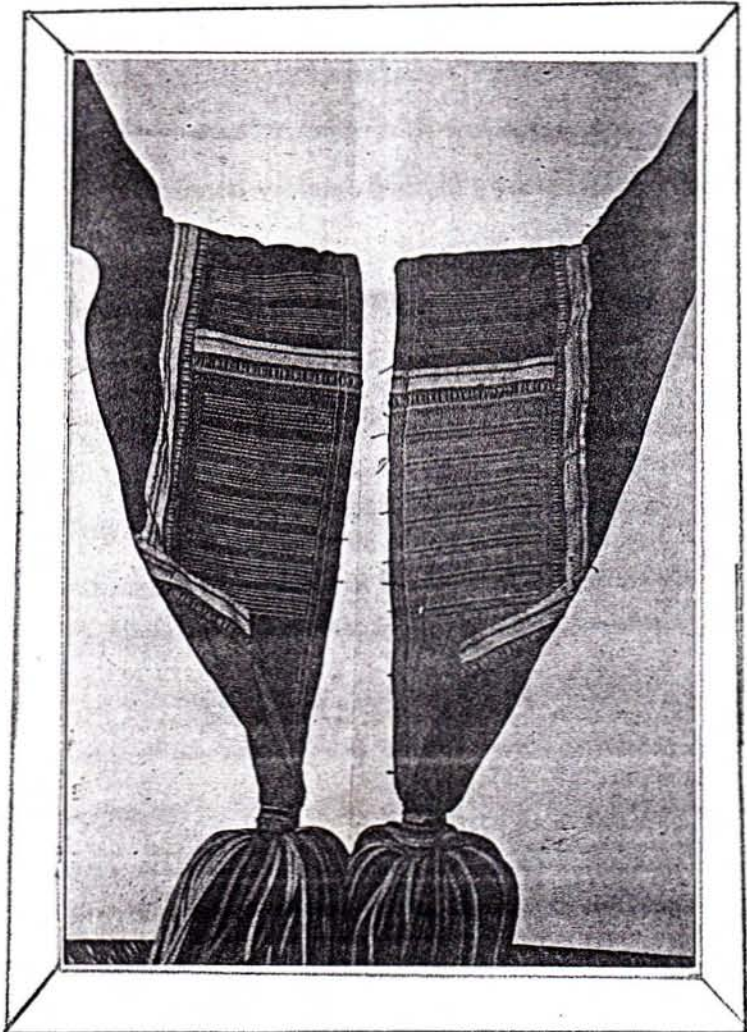
Red shows the bravery, courage and the persevering nature of the Lishaw(Lisu) people.



Designs of the Lishaw dress



necklace



Belt



Neither a star nor a five point figure is a pattern seen stitched on the back of the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals jacket. It means they live in the four directions of the world.

The inner pocket under the chest flap of the Lishaw woman is a secret pocket. She hides in this pocket all the love taken given to each other while they were courting. She hides them in this breast pocket unknown to her parents. The Lishaw woman dress with its many bright and multi-colors is to show the Lishaw national nationals spirit of unity and solidarity.

The other pieces of jewelry the Lishaw women use to wear in the past is broad, plain silver bangles weighing about 5 tickles. They make them at the Shan silver smiths. But today they do not wear silver. Instead they are wearing aluminum bangles. The little girls wear silver earrings.

Although there is no big differentiation between the unmarried and married, when once she is married, she does not think she needs beautiful things anymore and the married woman does not wear silver buttons on her dress anymore. Only the young unmarried girls wear silver buttons to beautify themselves. In the poorer homes with many people, the traditional complete dress is so expensive and rare that they save it for special occasions only and wear simple clothes only for everyday wear.

The above account is what I have seen of the way Lishaw nationals dress in Nam San Township of Loi-lem District, in Southern Shan State. Since the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals live spread out in other parts of Myanmar, there is a little difference according to the region they live in.

The Lishaw(Lisu)national_s living in Puta-O district wear hats with red and white beads stringed on them. They wear gowns of black, navy blue or white with black stripes on it. Then they a sash from the shoulder across the chest. The sash is strings of beads or silver coins. They also wear big earrings. These Puta-O Lisu nationals are different from other Lisu nationals living elsewhere in Myanmar. They only wear gowns.

The Lisu nationals from Bhamo district stitch on their jacket bars of green, red, yellow and blue. Their jewelry is silver bangles chains and beads. The Lisu nationals living in Shan State wear the same pattern of clothes. The difference is very slight depending on the region they live in.

(3) Food and Drink

The eating habits of the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals is the same as the other nationals of Myanmar. They eat rice three times a day. In the past they use to cook in earthen ware pots but now use aluminum pots. They eat rice early in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening.

They eat the long growing rice. The vegetables are what they grow on their farms. They are yams, taro, cassava, Tapioca pumpkins, marrow, cucumber, snake gourd, chilly, celery, ground and corn. The meats they eat are those they set from hunting. They usually hang the meat rubbed with a little salt on the smoke shelf to preserve it for long term use.

They grow sufficient rice for their own consumption and for seed to grow the next year. The paddy is stored in big baskets. The rice and meat for the early morning meal- breakfast, and the afternoon meal-lunch is cooked at home. Breakfast is eaten at home and lunch is packed in banana leaf or In leaves. The meat or vegetable curry is put in the middle of the rice and packed in the leaves and taken to the taungyar to be eaten when they rest in the afternoon. Th evening meal is cooked when they return from the taungyar in the evening.

Another traditional habit the people have is to chew betel leaf and betel nut with lime and catch. Old men and women have small earth or iron mortars to pound the betel nut quid for them. In places where betel leaf and nut are hard to get, they use the following substitutes.

<u>Lishaw(Lisu) name</u>	<u>Shan name</u>	<u>Myanmar name</u>
Yakamar(ရတမာ)	Mikyan(မိုက်ကျန်)	magnolia leaf(စတားဝါရွက်)
Simakya(စီမော့)	Mimahut(မိုက်မတ်)	Tawpainnai(တောင်နွဲ့ဝင်)

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals chew the betel quid to blacken their teeth because they have an old belief that to have white teeth is to resemble an ogre.

Fermented brews of rice and glutinous rice are a necessity in Lishaw(Lisu) society. They need these brews to celebrate their traditional festivals. Both men and women drink their local brews. There is the well-known “khaungye” and “alcoholic” drinks brewed from rice, and there are “kazaw” a drink brewed from glutinous rice and “hlawza”, which is fermented glutinous rice. It is called “gyiyu” in Lishaw(Lisu).

e. Founding a village

(1) Moving village and choosing a village site

The Lishaw(Lisu) national nationals do not have a permanent settled village. They like the cold climate and however steep the mountain may be to climb, they choose that cold place to live in. They depend on agriculture for their lives, so they also have to look for land where they can have their taungyar. So they have to move from place to place in search of a suitable land for their taungyar.

The Lishaw nationals move to a new taungyar site every three years on the average, so when they have to move to a new taungyar, they have to abandon their village and build a new village near their new taungyar. Sometimes it may happen that they had to move three times in a year, depending on the fertility of the soil.

When they have decided to move the village, the first things they have to do is to find a suitable place. The elders of the village have to lead and when they have found a suitable place, they have to perform rites to their traditional not to let them know whether the choice is good.

