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**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE**  
**(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**

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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

<b>Lisu alphabet letters</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Alphabet sounds</b>	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	<b>G</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>C</b>
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	<b>L</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>H</b>
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	<b>R</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>G</b>
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	<b>J</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	<b>V</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>O</b>
	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)	(ႃႃ)
	<b>U</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>B</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" (ဂုံဆီး)(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 customs<sup>1</sup>.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.



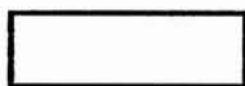
This mark is the tail end of the arrow.



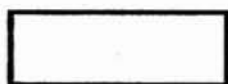
This mark showing the four corners mean the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals live in the four directions of the earth.



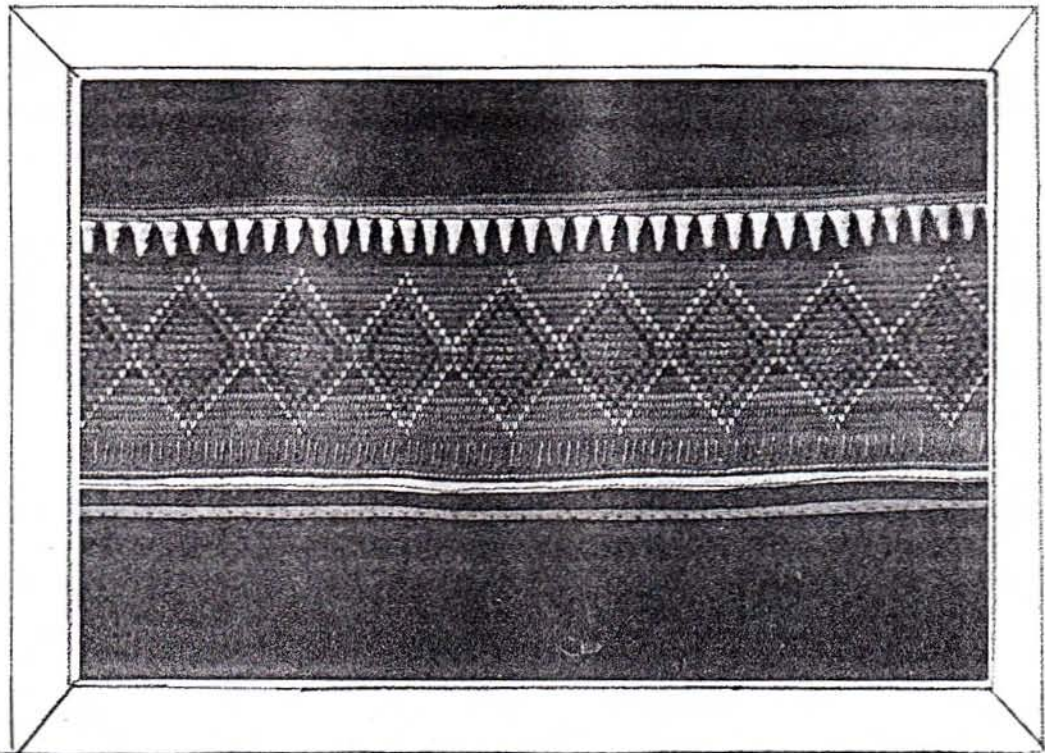
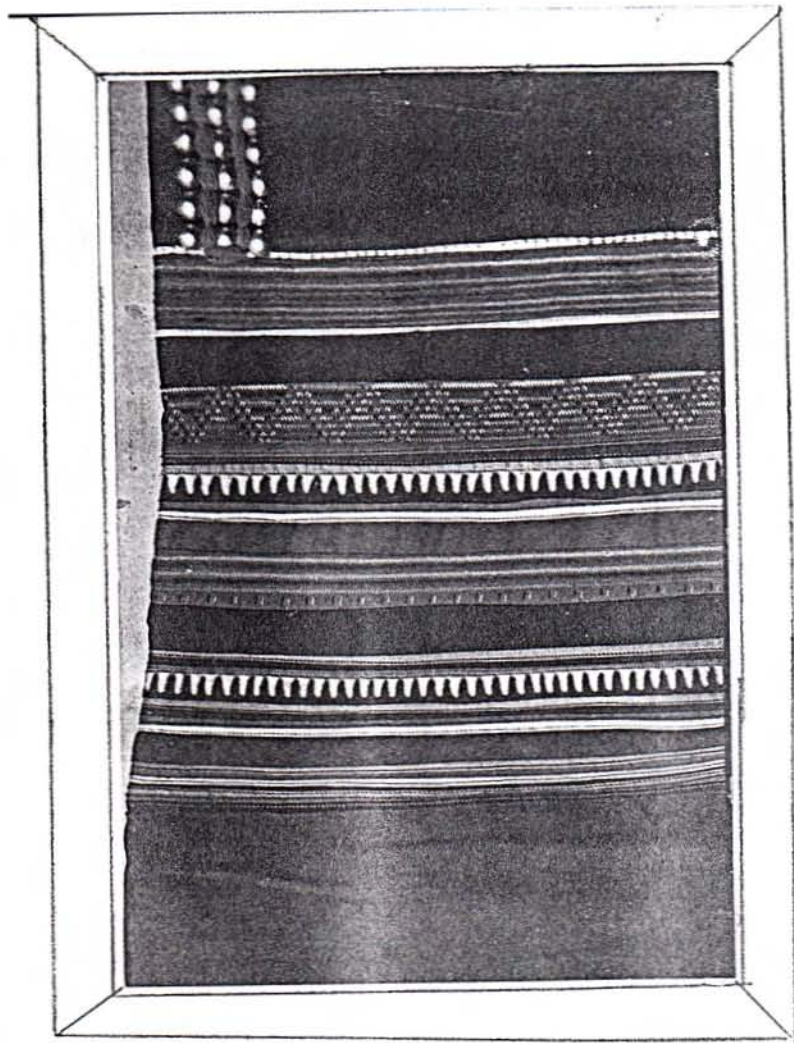
White color is the symbol of the purity of the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals mind.



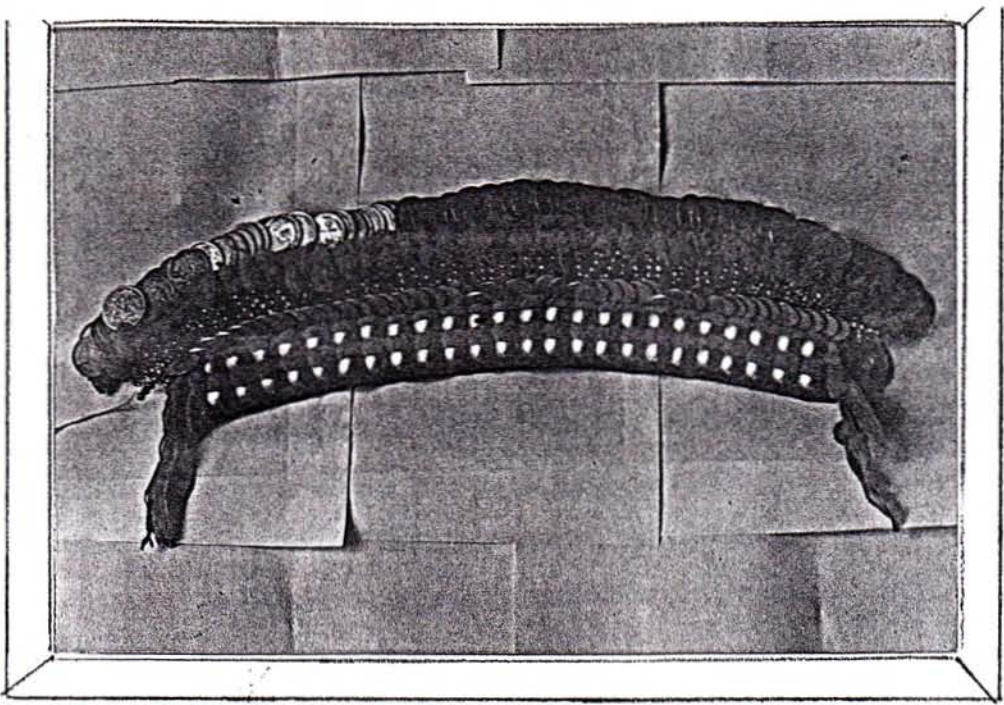
Blue is the color of the sky and it means peace and tranquility.



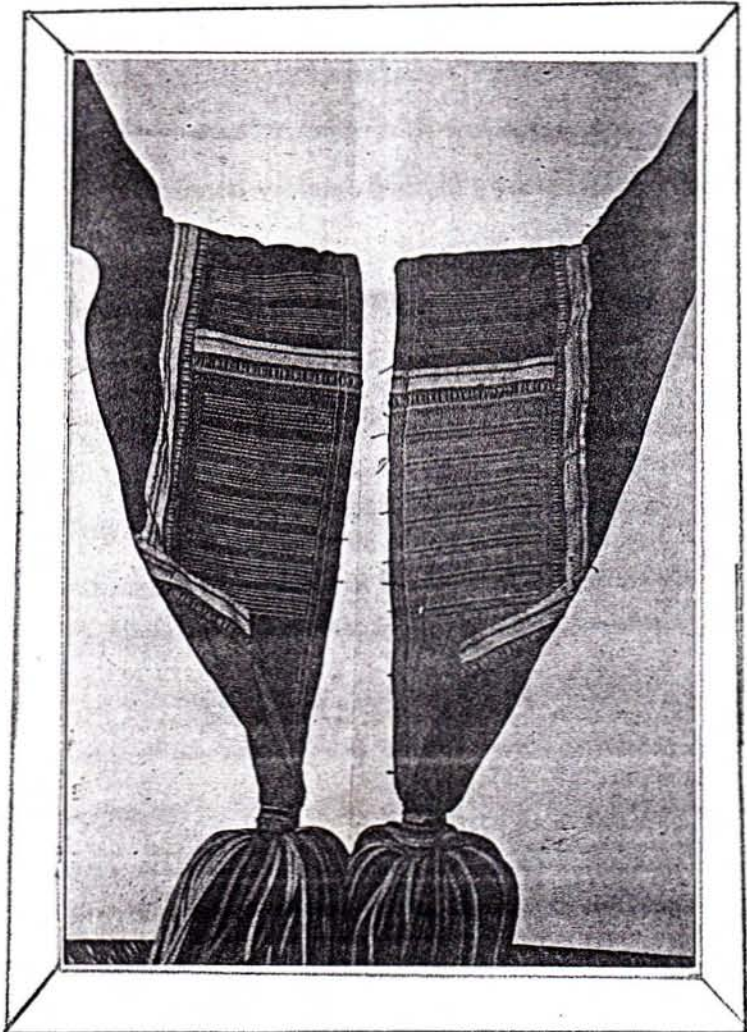
Red shows the bravery, courage and the persevering nature of the Lishaw(Lisu) people.



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<sub>s</sub> 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.

The procedure is for the knowledgeable elder or the shaman to make a small hole on the chosen ground by banging the earth places a piece of cotton wool in the hole. Two rows of (7) seeds of rice are put on the spread out cotton wool. One row of rice is to determine whether the place will be good or not to build a village and the other row of rice is to see whether the villages will be untied or not. They have to cover the place with a small bowl to prevent the nature destroyers around it. In the mean time the shaman has to propitiate the guardian spirits of the hills and forests, the earth and the waters to let them know if the place chosen is acceptable to the king of the nats and be free from harm and the five disasters and to give indication by the rice seeds being together or spread out. About a hour after the incantations, they uncover the hole and see the result. If the seeds of rice are as they have asked for them the place is declared suitable. But if the rice seeds have changed position or if there are insects such as ants, then they believe the place is not suitable or there are destructive elements, and they have to look for another place. The reason for placing a piece of wool is to know the weather conditions of the place. If the wool is damp, then it indicates that the place has good water. They usually choose a sloping land when they look for a village site.

### **(2)Traditional House**

The Lisu nationals have to do the same ritual for building their traditional house. After the village site has been chosen, then the families must build their houses. The head of the family or the shaman has to propitiate the guardian spirits in the same way to ask if the site is good to build the house and if the family will do well to live there. If read it as a bad omen and choose another place.

After they have chosen the right place, the house has to be build strictly according to tradition under the direction of a skilled traditional house builder or the shaman who has power over the four directions of the earth. They have to erect the auspicious pillar chosen by the shaman in the



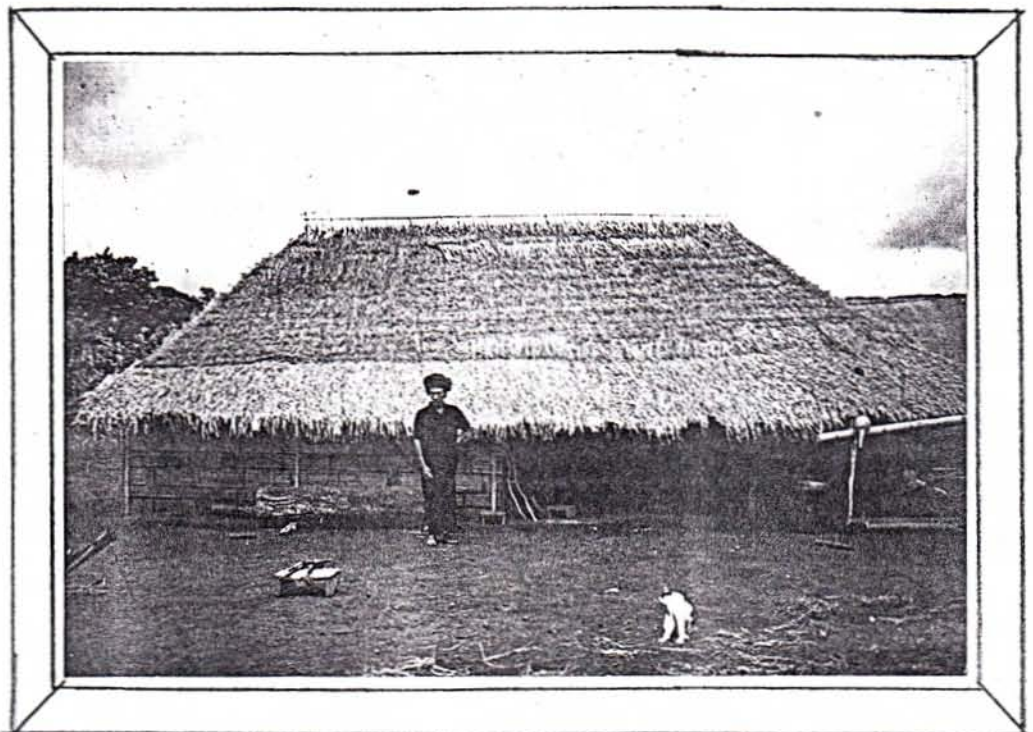
place chosen by him. On top of the auspicious pillar is tied a bamboo cross bow and arrow made of thatch stalks. It is to protect them from eclipses of the sun and the moon and earthquakes. It is also to prevent the harm and dangers from the eight directions of the earth. The rest of the pillars are erected after the auspicious pillar. Then the purlins have to be put up. They have to be sure the purlins are not higher than other people's house. If the purlins are higher than the neighbor's house, then it is bad luck to that house.

The Lisu nationals choose "dog's day" for moving the village and building the traditional house. The "dog's day" is considered the best day to do such things. The roof of the house is put on after the purlins have been put up. The thatch for the roof is cut and made up by them selves. Then the walls are put up by splitting the giant bamboo in half and beating it down into flat segments. This flattened bamboo is stuck to the house as walls. Since the Lisu houses are ground floor houses, the ground acts as the floor and they just have to keep the ground clean. But in the nat shrine opposite the main door of the house, they have put up four bamboo posts, and put on a floor of split bamboo.

Myanmar word	-	(ကုတီပျိတ်)	Kutpyit
Lisu word	-	(ꨀꨃꨄꨅꨆꨇꨈꨉꨊꨋꨌꨍꨎꨏꨐꨑꨒꨓꨔꨕꨖꨗꨘꨙꨚꨛꨜꨝꨞꨟꨠꨡꨢꨣꨤꨥꨦꨧꨨꨩꨪꨫꨬꨭꨮꨯꨰꨱꨲꨳꨴꨵꨶ꨷꨸꨹꨺꨻꨼꨽꨾꨿ꩀꩁꩂꩃꩄꩅꩆꩇꩈꩉꩊꩋꩌꩍ꩎꩏꩐꩑꩒꩓꩔꩕꩖꩗꩘꩙꩚꩛꩜꩝꩞꩟ꩠꩡꩢꩣꩤꩥꩦꩧꩨꩩꩪꩫꩬꩭꩮꩯꩰꩱꩲꩳꩴꩵꩶ꩷꩸꩹ꩺꩻꩼꩽꩾꩿꪀꪁꪂꪃꪄꪅꪆꪇꪈꪉꪊꪋꪌꪍꪎꪏꪐꪑꪒꪓꪔꪕꪖꪗꪘꪙꪚꪛꪜꪝꪞꪟꪠꪡꪢꪣꪤꪥꪦꪧꪨꪩꪪꪫꪬꪭꪮꪯꪰꪱꪴꪲꪳꪵꪶꪷꪸꪹꪺꪻꪼꪽꪾ꪿ꫀ꫁ꫂ꫃꫄꫅꫆꫇꫈꫉꫊꫋꫌꫍꫎꫏꫐꫑꫒꫓꫔꫕꫖꫗꫘꫙꫚ꫛꫜꫝ꫞꫟ꫠꫡꫢꫣꫤꫥꫦꫧꫨꫩꫪꫫꫬꫭꫮꫯ꫰꫱ꫲꫳꫴꫵ꫶꫷꫸꫹꫺꫻꫼꫽꫾꫿꬀ꬁꬂꬃꬄꬅꬆ꬇꬈ꬉꬊꬋꬌꬍꬎ꬏꬐ꬑꬒꬓꬔꬕꬖ꬗꬘꬙꬚꬛꬜꬝꬞꬟ꬠꬡꬢꬣꬤꬥꬦ꬧ꬨꬩꬪꬫꬬꬭꬮ꬯ꬰꬱꬲꬳꬴꬵꬶꬷꬸꬹꬺꬻꬼꬽꬾꬿꭀꭁꭂꭃꭄꭅꭆꭇꭈꭉꭊꭋꭌꭍꭎꭏꭐꭑꭒꭓꭔꭕꭖꭗꭘꭙꭚ꭛ꭜꭝꭞꭟꭠꭡꭢꭣꭤꭥꭦꭧꭨꭩ꭪꭫꭬꭭꭮꭯ꭰꭱꭲꭳꭴꭵꭶꭷꭸꭹꭺꭻꭼꭽꭾꭿꮀꮁꮂꮃꮄꮅꮆꮇꮈꮉꮊꮋꮌꮍꮎꮏꮐꮑꮒꮓꮔꮕꮖꮗꮘꮙꮚꮛꮜꮝꮞꮟꮠꮡꮢꮣꮤꮥꮦꮧꮨꮩꮪꮫꮬꮭꮮꮯꮰꮱꮲꮳꮴꮵꮶꮷꮸꮹꮺꮻꮼꮽꮾꮿꯀꯁꯂꯃꯄꯅꯆꯇꯈꯉꯊꯋꯌꯍꯎꯏꯐꯑꯒꯓꯔꯕꯖꯗꯘꯙꯚꯛꯜꯝꯞꯟꯠꯡꯢꯣꯤꯥꯦꯧꯨꯩꯪ꯫꯬꯭꯮꯯꯰꯱꯲꯳꯴꯵꯶꯷꯸꯹꯺꯻꯼꯽꯾꯿가각갂갃간갅갆갇갈갉갊갋갌갍갎갏감갑값갓갔강갖갗갘같갚갛개객갞갟갠갡갢갣갤갥갦갧갨갩갪갫갬갭갮갯갰갱갲갳갴갵갶갷갸갹갺갻갼갽갾갿걀걁걂걃걄걅걆걇걈걉걊걋걌걍걎걏걐걑걒걓걔걕걖걗걘걙걚걛걜걝걞걟걠걡걢걣걤걥걦걧걨걩걪걫걬걭걮걯거걱걲걳건걵걶걷걸걹걺걻걼걽걾걿검겁겂것겄겅겆겇겈겉겊겋게겍겎겏겐겑겒겓겔겕겖겗겘겙겚겛겜겝겞겟겠겡겢겣겤겥겦겧겨격겪겫견겭겮겯결겱겲겳겴겵겶겷겸겹겺겻겼경겾겿곀곁곂곃계곅곆곇곈곉곊곋곌곍곎곏곐곑곒곓곔곕곖곗곘곙곚곛곜곝곞곟고곡곢곣곤곥곦곧골곩곪곫곬곭곮곯곰곱곲곳곴공곶곷곸곹곺곻과곽곾곿관괁괂괃괄괅괆괇괈괉괊괋괌괍괎괏괐광괒괓괔괕괖괗괘괙괚괛괜괝괞괟괠괡괢괣괤괥괦괧괨괩괪괫괬괭괮괯괰괱괲괳괴괵괶괷괸괹괺괻괼괽괾괿굀굁굂굃굄굅굆굇굈굉굊굋굌굍굎굏교굑굒굓굔굕굖굗굘굙굚굛굜굝굞굟굠굡굢굣굤굥굦굧굨굩굪굫구국굮굯군굱굲굳굴굵굶굷굸굹굺굻굼굽굾굿궀궁궂궃궄궅궆궇궈궉궊궋권궍궎궏궐궑궒궓궔궕궖궗궘궙궚궛궜궝궞궟궠궡궢궣궤궥궦궧궨궩궪궫궬궭궮궯궰궱궲궳궴궵궶궷궸궹궺궻궼궽궾궿귀귁귂귃귄귅귆귇귈귉귊귋귌귍귎귏귐귑귒귓귔귕귖귗귘귙귚귛규귝귞귟균귡귢귣귤귥귦귧귨귩귪귫귬귭귮귯귰귱귲귳귴귵귶귷그극귺귻근귽귾귿글긁긂긃긄긅긆긇금급긊긋긌긍긎긏긐긑긒긓긔긕긖긗긘긙긚긛긜긝긞긟긠긡긢긣긤긥긦긧긨긩긪긫긬긭긮긯기긱긲긳긴긵긶긷길긹긺긻긼긽긾긿김깁깂깃깄깅깆깇깈깉깊깋까깍깎깏깐깑깒깓깔깕깖깗깘깙깚깛깜깝깞깟깠깡깢깣깤깥깦깧깨깩깪깫깬깭깮깯깰깱깲깳깴깵깶깷깸깹깺깻깼깽깾깿꺀꺁꺂꺃꺄꺅꺆꺇꺈꺉꺊꺋꺌꺍꺎꺏꺐꺑꺒꺓꺔꺕꺖꺗꺘꺙꺚꺛꺜꺝꺞꺟꺠꺡꺢꺣꺤꺥꺦꺧꺨꺩꺪꺫꺬꺭꺮꺯꺰꺱꺲꺳꺴꺵꺶꺷꺸꺹꺺꺻꺼꺽꺾꺿껀껁껂껃껄껅껆껇껈껉껊껋껌껍껎껏껐껑껒껓껔껕껖껗께껙껚껛껜껝껞껟껠껡껢껣껤껥껦껧껨껩껪껫껬껭껮껯껰껱껲껳껴껵껶껷껸껹껺껻껼껽껾껿꼀꼁꼂꼃꼄꼅꼆꼇꼈꼉꼊꼋꼌꼍꼎꼏꼐꼑꼒꼓꼔꼕꼖꼗꼘꼙꼚꼛꼜꼝꼞꼟꼠꼡꼢꼣꼤꼥꼦꼧꼨꼩꼪꼫꼬꼭꼮꼯꼰꼱꼲꼳꼴꼵꼶꼷꼸꼹꼺꼻꼼꼽꼾꼿꽀꽁꽂꽃꽄꽅꽆꽇꽈꽉꽊꽋꽌꽍꽎꽏꽐꽑꽒꽓꽔꽕꽖꽗꽘꽙꽚꽛꽜꽝꽞꽟꽠꽡꽢꽣꽤꽥꽦꽧꽨꽩꽪꽫꽬꽭꽮꽯꽰꽱꽲꽳꽴꽵꽶꽷꽸꽹꽺꽻꽼꽽꽾꽿꾀꾁꾂꾃꾄꾅꾆꾇꾈꾉꾊꾋꾌꾍꾎꾏꾐꾑꾒꾓꾔꾕꾖꾗꾘꾙꾚꾛꾜꾝꾞꾟꾠꾡꾢꾣꾤꾥꾦꾧꾨꾩꾪꾫꾬꾭꾮꾯꾰꾱꾲꾳꾴꾵꾶꾷꾸꾹꾺꾻꾼꾽꾾꾿꿀꿁꿂꿃꿄꿅꿆꿇꿈꿉꿊꿋꿌꿍꿎꿏꿐꿑꿒꿓꿔꿕꿖꿗꿘꿙꿚꿛꿜꿝꿞꿟꿠꿡꿢꿣꿤꿥꿦꿧꿨꿩꿪꿫꿬꿭꿮꿯꿰꿱꿲꿳꿴꿵꿶꿷꿸꿹꿺꿻꿼꿽꿾꿿	

The barn for storing paddy is to the left of the nat shrine. Next to the barn is the kitchen. Both are built on the ground. Of the right side of the nat shrine is a bedroom. If a son of the house should get married and stay on with the family they have to expend again this right side of the nat shrine. The left side of the nat shrine is expended of for the old grand-father or grand-mother.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals traditional house is a long house built on the ground and without any windows. There is only one door for going in



Lisu old man and traditional house



Thatching for the house by Lisu women

and out. The roof is high and the slope steep, the eaves reaching the hips the person standing on the ground. When you enter the house you have bowhead quite low and bend your waist. There is very little high and poorly ventilated.

### **(3)Occupying a new house, house-warming ceremony**

When the new house is completely finished, they have to choose a good auspicious day to occupy the house. They have to choose dogs day as a good day for building the house and to move into the new house on that day:-

1- small basket Rice

1- yellow water bottle

-a bit of salt

1- tin of paddy ( 4 gallon tin)

They are placed near the auspicious pillar of the house and kept for (7) days. The grandfather or grandmother or an elderly person then lights to stove praying at the same time. We are coming to stay in this house. Please pray for all of us that we will have good health and have no difficulty in searching for our food.

The nat shrine too is built on that day and pray that their ancestor clan nats will look after the whole family. First of all the head of the family puts -

1-live chicken

6-plain tea cups

6-sticks of incense on a tray

Then holding the tray in his hands and on bend knees, he offers it at the nat shrine, say we propitiate our ancestor nats today. Please guard and look after my whole family. We now offer you live chicken. May we succeed in our animal breeding work. May our business thrive, may all our work is smooth and easy, and the whole family pay obeisance on bend knees at the

shrine. Then the chicken is killed, and after plucking his feathers and taking out the entrails, it is boiled. Again they have to put the offering of –

1-plate of boiled chicken-

6-cups of alcoholic drink

2-plate of rice and

6- incense sticks

They pray again and the whole family has to pay obeisance again and now they can live in that new house.

## CHAPTER 3.

### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF LISU NATIONALS

The term social organization is used for human society, which is made up of the smaller unit based on age, sex, kinship, occupation, locality, property and ownership, rights and privileges and status.

The social organization of a group of people has a systematically set code of behavior, and traditions and customs based on age, sex, kinship and these groups communicate and relate to each other, obeying set rules, carrying out responsibilities and enjoying the privileges and rights.

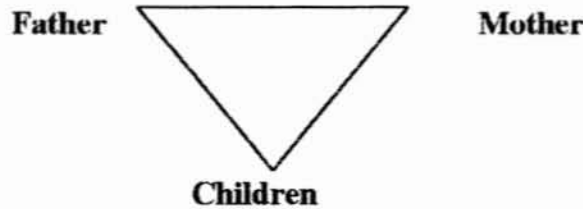
Human society thus means a group of human beings living in harmony by a systematically organized set of rules of conduct. According to Anthropology a group of people who abide by the set of laws, have the same goals and behave in the same way and live a systematic life is called a human social organization. This society is dependent on its culture. The traditions and customs and cultural practices this society has handed down to posterity as a legacy and thereby makes human society survive.

The Lishaw (Lisu) national group is one of the minor groups that belong to the larger Myanmar National groups. This minor national group is a self-contained unit, with men and women of all ages, living their lives of births, marriages and deaths, with rights to inheritance, to live in permanent houses or moving settlements and having close relationships with each other. In studying a particular national group, it is necessary to study the behavior of the basic family so as to know all about the whole group.

#### **(a) The family unit**

**(a)The family unit**

The family is basic unit of human society. The basic family of the Lisahw (Lisu) national is the father, the mother and their own sons and daughter or adopted sons and daughter. It is the basic social structure of the external triangle of the father, the mother and their children.



The world family groups as observed by Anthropologists are:-

- (1)The basic family<sup>1</sup>
- (2)The joint family<sup>2</sup>
- (3)The extended family<sup>3</sup>
- (4)The compound family<sup>4</sup>

The family structure of the Lisahw (Lisu) national nationals in Heigh-Phut village tract, in Nam San township are mostly the basic family and joint family types.

In the simple basic family unit of the Lisahw (Lisu) nationals the father, the mother and the children from the basic family. They live and work together as a happy family. This small family unit is not only an integral part of the larger social organization, but also contributes beneficial work towards it. From early historical times of communal land era to the

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<sup>1</sup>The basic family- အခြေခံမိသားစု

<sup>2</sup>Joint family - စိမ်စေတင်တွဲမိသားစု

<sup>3</sup>Extended family- ပိုမိုချဲ့မိသားစု

<sup>4</sup>Compound family- ထပ်တိုးမိသားစု

present day they have existed as a small basic organization, and will remain so for ever.

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals practice the **patrilineal system**<sup>1</sup> of kin-relationship and so we find in the basic family the **patriarchal system**<sup>2</sup> of the father as the head of the family. The father has the most authority in the house and he has to take the leadership in economic work of the family and affairs of the village.

We also see in the joint family, the father as the head of the family. When the son of the family marries and brings home his wife, they live together in the home of their parents. So in the Lisahw (Lisu) nationals joint family, we find the family of the parents and the family of the son. When this elder son's family moves out of the parent family house, the youngest son's family will still live with the parent family.

The father, who is the head of the family, is responsible for the religious offerings of the family and to lead the family in their livelihood. The whole family works together and eats from the same rice pot. Because the occupation that they do is a family concern, the house, the land are all jointly owned by the family. When the father dies in a joint family, the eldest son takes his father's places, and carries on the family business as the head of the house. When the eldest son family sets up a separate household, then the younger son left in the family has to take on the responsibility and leadership.

In the past the Lisahw (Lisu) nationals practice **polygyny**<sup>3</sup>. They have this custom because they want to have a male heir to inherit the family property. So to have a son, they may have another wife also if the wife cannot have children, they may have another wife. They also practice Levirate system,

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<sup>1</sup>patrilineal system= ဖခင်လိုက်ဆက်ခံရသည့်စနစ်

<sup>2</sup>patriarchal system= ဖခင်ဦးစီးဇာတိစနစ်

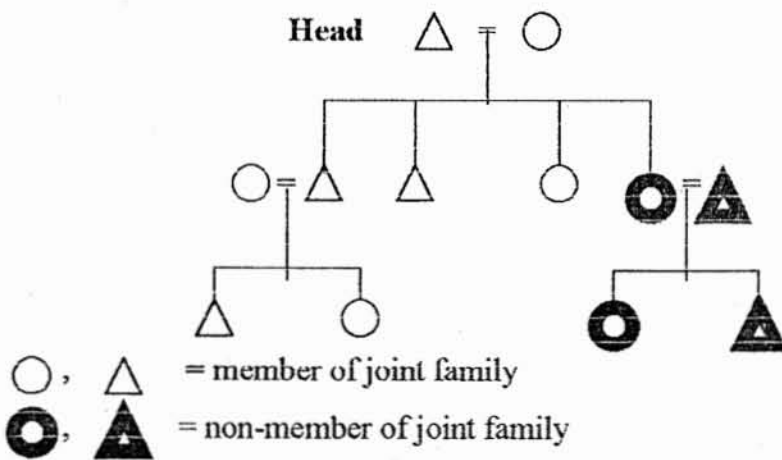
<sup>3</sup>polygyny =မယားစုများယူသောစနစ်

which permitted to marry the widow of their diseased elder or younger brother for this reason.

So many the Lisahw (Lisu) national nationals you find the head of the family with the compound family. The first wife usually the oldest has the most authority. They all live together in the same house. The first wife manages and divides the work of the house. If the younger wives do not want to obey her, they can have a separate set-up, but it is very rare. When the first wife gets old in age, the younger wife steps in and takes charge of the house and take care of the elder wife. But nowadays, the rule is more relaxed than post.

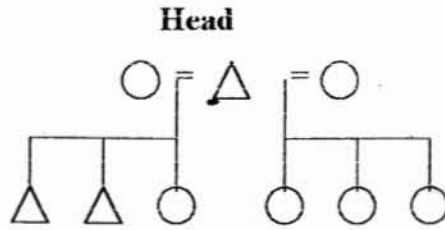
Lishaw (Lisu) nationals believe that it is good to have many children. Their aim is to prolong the survived of their family. Even the adopted children are regarded as their own flesh and blood. So they have at least (6) children and the most is (12). They do not complain of having too many children nor feel unhappy about it. They all live together happily, which also shows that they believe in the fertility cult.

**Figure of joint family**

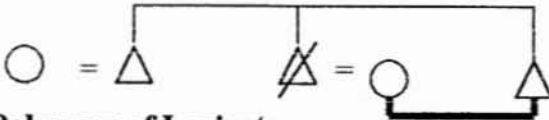




**Figure of compound family**



Polygyny of whose man's wife can not born a boy.



**Polygyny of Levirate**

**b. The Lisahw (Lisu) nationals clan diversity**

The Lisahw (Lisu) nationals living in Heigh-Phut village tract have many different **clans**. They can cross-own from one clan to another by adoption. People belonging to the same clan must not marry each other. Therefore, they system practice exogamy marriage. So a man from one clan must marry a woman from another clan. The husband cannot change over into wife's clan. The change from one clan to another can be done only in childhood by adoption. The racial clans are differentiated by name. There is no different in way of dress or in making offerings to the nats. Same racial clans believe in the nats of ancestors according to the father's said or the mother's said. Some families have the custom of making offering to the first person in the family who died a violent sudden death. They propitiate the spirit of this person of this person, to guard then and give them guidance in their family affairs, in this social and economic life.

**The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals clan diversity**

<b>Lishaw(Lisu) name</b>	<b>Myanmar name</b>	<b>English name</b>
1.Jwu	wel (ဝတ်)	pig
2.Li	htei (ထယ်)	plough
3.Chwan	lai (လေ)	air
4.Shu Shu	thet ke myat(သက်ကယ်မြတ်)	noble thatch
5.Ngwa	Nga (ငါး)	fish
6.Kyan	- (ညစ်ပတ်သောအနို့)dirty race	
7.Ko	oo jo (ဦးဗိုလ်)	horn
8.Zashall	htamin (ထမင်း)	rice
9.7ephashit	Myin (မြင်း)	horse
10.Char	laphechauk (လွတ်ခြောက်)	dried tealeaf
11.Bya	pya (ပျား)	bee
12.Byasibwe	thikhaungpya(သစ်ခေါင်းပျား)	tree hole bee
13.Byawuchi	tawkyauingpya(တောကြောင်ပျား)	wild cat bee
14.Sibobya	htinyupya (ထင်းရှုပျား)	pine bee
15.Byathubaibai	pyapadon (ပျားပိတုန်း)	bumble bee
16.Yan	seit (ဆိတ်)	goat
17.Lar	kya (ကျား)	tiger
18.Socpha (north)	htin,thit (ထင်း၊ သစ်)	firewood, wood
19.Ho	mee (မီး)	fire

**(1) Kinship and Terminology**

When one family is created, a relationship is set up between that family and other families. In the past when there was a lawless sexual relationship there were no exact kinship rules. Later when there was legal marriage, kinship rules were systematically formulated. These kinship rules are very important to human society because where kinship by blood is very close, these rules act as a deterrent to incest in the family.

Among the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals living in Heigh-Phut village tract, the kinship systems are :

- Kinship by blood<sup>1</sup>
- Kinship by marriage<sup>2</sup>
- Kinship by adoption<sup>3</sup>

According to Lishaw (Lisu) nationals kinship,

- Kinship of brother
- Kinship of parents-in-law
- Kinship of son-in-law
- Kinship of marrying sisters

The first one is consanguinity and the others are affinity. Kinship of brothers means brothers from the father's side. It is the kinship according to the father's lineage and it is consanguinity. We do not see any kinship from the mother's side.

The parent-in-law kinship is the relations from the mother's side. The relatives from the father's side call the relatives from the mother's side the parent-in-law relations and the relatives from the mother's side call the relatives from the father's side kinship of son-in-law. The kinship of

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<sup>1</sup> Kinship by blood - သွေးသားအားဖြင့်ဆွေမျိုးတော်စပ်ခြင်း

<sup>2</sup> Kinship by marriage - ယက်ယပ်မှုဖြင့်ဆွေမျိုးတော်စပ်ခြင်း

<sup>3</sup> Kinship by adoption - ဓမ္မစားခြင်းဖြင့်ဆွေမျိုးတော်စပ်ခြင်း

marrying sisters means the husbands of the sisters. So all these relationships arise out of marriage. Thus these are kinship by marriage.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals have the habit of adopting children both male and female. But they adopt male children more. These adopted children are treated like their own flesh blood and given their share of the legacy. Thus you have kinship by adoption.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals try to find kinship by one way or another, so they are always related to each other. So in the case of dividing the land, in setting up a village, in solving a problem of an incident, they always consider the relationship of the people involved. Once they know they are related to each other the tension is softened. So the Lishaw(Lisu) kinship practices help to solve the problems of their society.

### Kinship Terminology<sup>1</sup>

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals consider relatives from the father's side as consanguinity relatives<sup>2</sup>, that is as blood relations and the relatives from the mother's side are not considered as such. You can know whether the relative is from the father's side or the mother's side by their terms of address.

In Anthropology the terms for the relatives are,

- 1) Descriptive term<sup>3</sup> which is the exact term
- 2) Classificatory term<sup>4</sup> which is honorific term
  - (a)Hawaiian type
  - (b)Seneca type

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<sup>1</sup>Kinship Terminology -ဆွေမျိုးအခေါ်အဝေါ်

<sup>2</sup>Consanguinity relatives- သွေးရင်းဆွေမျိုး

<sup>3</sup>Descriptive term-ဟိတချာအခေါ်အဝေါ်

<sup>4</sup>Classificatory term-တင်စားအခေါ်အဝေါ်

When we observe the Lishaw(Lisu) national's relative terms, we find the type as like Seneca type of term among Classificatory terms. Both relatives from the father's side and the mother's side are mostly addressed in the descriptive terms.

**Relative terms:**

<u>Myanmar</u>	<u>Lishaw(Lisu)</u>	<u>English</u>
Ahmay(အဖေ)	marmar	mother
Ahphay(အမေ)	barba	father
Linmayar(လင်မယား)	hisiphahisimar	husband and wife
Yaukya(ယောက်ျား)	zopar	man
Mainma(မိန်းမ)	zamanza	woman
Lupyo(လူပျို)	zazoola	bachelor
Ahpyo(အပျို)	zamanlia	maid
Mayee	malat	sister-in-law
<b>(elder brother's wife)(မိန်းမ)</b>		
Yaukpha	kyepho	brother-in-law
<b>(elder sister's husband)(ယောက်ဖ)</b>		
Yaukpha	main shay	brother-in-law
<b>(younger sister's husband)(ယောက်ဖ)</b>		
Khema	heimar	sister-in-law
<b>(younger brother's wife) (မိန်းမ)</b>		
Mye(မြေး)	leapar	grandchild
Myema(မြေးမ)	leamar	grand-daughter
Myit(မြစ်)	le`par	great-grandchild
Myitma(မြစ်မ)	le`mar	great-grand-daughter
Thar(သား)	zar	son

Thamee(သမီး)	ahme	daughter
Chwayma(ဆွေမ)	sutchemar	daughter-in-law
Thamet(သမက်)	mail	son-in-law

**Myanmar**

**Lisu father's side**

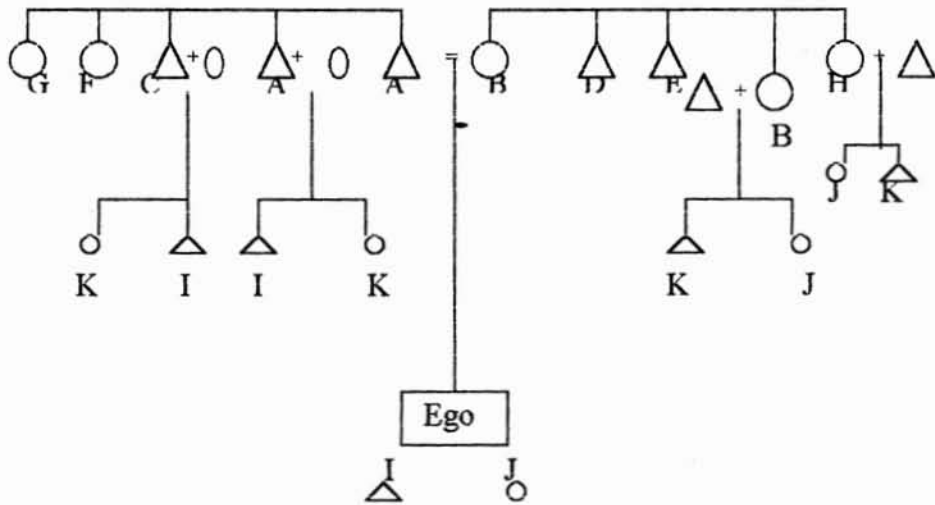
**Lisu mother's side**

Ahphwa(အဖွား)	ahzar	ahpho
Ahpho(အဖိုး)	ahpar	ahpar
Ahbay(အဘေး)	ahphipha	ahphipha
Ahbayma(အဘေးမ)	ahphima	ahphimar
Father's ahbay(အဘေး၏အဖေ)	ahlepha	ahleyar
Mother's ahbayma(အဘေး၏အမေ)	ahlemar	ahlemar
Ako(အင်ကို)	woepha	wuwn
Nyi(ညီ)	woewol(shalo)	wuwn(shalo)
ama(အမ်မ)	nyarnya(nyathama)	wumar
Nyima(ညီမ)	nyarnar	zowe-zoe

**Nieces and Nephews**

**Ahme**

Elder sister's son (အစ်မ၏သား)	Sarsa
Elder brother(အစ်ကို၏သား)	Zado
Elder sister's daughter(အစ်မ၏သမီး)	Sarmar
Elder brother's daughter(အစ်ကို၏သမီး)	Ahmido



**Ishaw(I.su) type of consanguine kinship terminology**

A=Father & the same level of father's elder brother

B=Mother & the same level of mother's sister

C=Father's younger brother

D=Mother's elder brother

E=Mother's younger brother

F=Father's elder's sister

G= Father's younger sister

H= Mother's younger sister

I=Brother & first cousin brother of ego in paternal level

J=Sister & first cousin sister of ego in maternal level

K=First cousin of different level

△ = husband of mother's sister

○ = wife of father's brother

## (2) Duties of the Relatives

The Lisu nationals form groups according to race and kinship. In times of sorrow, only the help of relatives is accepted. The relatives also feel it is their duty to help and this reciprocity of labor contribution is understood. Thus this kin relationship helps to strengthen a person's family spirit.

The Lisu nationals according to their racial group, to help to solve problems, big or small together. If anyone should do something to bring dishonour to their race, they consider it a crime that must be punished. In the past, such a crime is punished by death. But today it may be just driven away from the village.

If a racial group is celebrating a wedding or performing a funeral rites, then all the relatives of the racial groups from far and near must be informed. If they should fail to do so, then the family will be treated as outcasts and the kinship stopped. So we can see how impart the responsibilities of the relatives are in a kin group.

When a family of the same racial group should have a name giving ceremony of a newborn child, all the relatives of the kin group have to participate in the ceremony. In the same way if there should be a death in the family, all the relatives from far and near villages have to be informed. The funeral rites cannot be performed until all the relatives have arrived.

If a family should in difficulties for their food and clothing and shelter, then all the relatives of the same racial group are responsible to help this family as much as they can afford.

In celebrating traditional festivals, although no particular person is given to do certain jobs, all the relatives have to work together in unison. Again if the head of the house or a member of the family should die, clothing has to be buried with the dead person. So many relatives offer their clothes for the dead person's burial that sometimes. They have make a vow and cast lots with cowries whose clothes should be taken.



The use of cowries among the Lisu nationals is a custom peculiar to them. The cowries in Lisu is called “ahzeemar<sup>1</sup>” and used in many places and a necessity. Among the kin families, the affairs are decided by using the cowries.

### **(3) Hereditary succession and Inheritance**

According to anthropology racial inheritance is by the Rule of Descent, to inherit an office is by the Rule of Succession, and to inherit property is by the Rule of Inheritance.

The Lisu nationals continue their clan through the male line of the family. So the sons continue the family racial group or name. The daughters change into the clan of their husbands. For example the sons of the “Htei” family group will continue to be “Htei”(ထယ်အမိုးအနွယ်) clan. But the “Htei” family daughter, when she marries into the “chwan” family, her child will be “chwan” (သက်တယ်မြတ်အမိုးအနွယ်) clan.

The legacy is divided equally among the sons with the exception of the youngest. He is given the house and land, so that he need not set up a separate household when he marries. But the youngest son has the responsibility to live with his parents and work for the whole family. He has to continue looking after his mother and family after his father’s death for life. The youngest son also pays the greater shares of the funeral expenses of his parents.

The Lisu nationals do not have to give any inheritance to the daughters born to them. If they have no sons born to the husband and wife, or they have no children at all, their property is given the adopted son, if they have adopted any son. If there in no adopted son to inherit their property, it is given to the father’s elder or younger brother or their sons. The Lisu nationals don to leave

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<sup>1</sup>ahzeemar- Lisu Term(ခေတ္တံ)

any inheritance to the daughters, but they are given some property on their marriage, as a dowry according to the wealth of the parents.

According to the rule of succession, when the head of the family, the father dies, his place is succeeded by the eldest son. If there are no sons, then it can be succeeded by the father's brother. If the eldest son is worthless, then a younger son may succeed in his father's place. If all the sons of the family are worthless, even an adopted son may be given preference in succession.

When the leader or head of the community dies, his place is succeeded by the eldest person of that national who has the ability to manage the affairs of the community. The chosen person is recognized by all the villages as the leader of the region. He has the right to govern and to use his power in the affairs of their community. This leader of their community can accept the presents like fruit and meat offered to them by the village people from their farms or from their hunting.

Today in the village tract of Heigh-Phut, they can continue to inherit property and succession but the head of the various nationals governs now under the control of the president of the township. (Peace and Development Council)

#### **(4) Adopted sons and daughters**

The Lisu nationals can adopt whether they are of the same clan or not. There is also no stipulation of how old the person they adopt should be. They can adopt a child of any age and there is no special adoption ceremony. But the adopted child has equal rights as their own children and recognized as their own children. In adoption the two parties do not have to give anything in exchange.

Adopted children can believe in the traditional nat of the adopted father or still believe in their own father's traditional nat. They consider the adopted child as related to the family of his foster parents. So the adopted child cannot

marry the children of his foster parents. It is strictly forbidden and a strong action is taken if they did so, because there is no distinction between their own flesh and blood and the adopted child who is given equal privileges as their own.

The adopted sons have the same equal rights as their own sons in the division of property when the father dies. In life too if the adopted son wants to set up a home of his own, he is allowed to do so and given a manageable business of his own to set himself up. The adopted daughters like their own daughters are not given any inheritance, as it is their tradition.

### **C. Choosing a life partner and traditional customs**

#### **(1) Traditional customs in life as maiden and bachelor**

The Lisu nationals have traditional customs in choosing a life partner and setting up a family. In choosing a wife, she must have the following qualities:-

- (1)The girl must not be of the same clan.
- (2)She must know housework thoroughly.
- (3)She must be able to talk well.
- (4)She must not belong to the witchcraft family.

The young Lisu boy of fifteen, sixteen years is considered old enough to begin courting. The young girl is considered of age at fourteen years. In the past the young maiden and boy sing songs in courtship in the past. They talk about the weather conditions, the national environment in indirect terms using flowery language.

The young boys and girls do not have the freedom to talk to each in their relationship. The figurative girl's poular is the bench by the rice powder where the boys may visit while the girls are pounding rice. The boys have to visit stealthily and must not be seen by the father or brother who try to avoid this place. If the father should accidentally come upon a stranger and his daughter,

the stranger of visiting young boy has to leave at once. Otherwise the father may punish him by beating him off the place for not leaving the place on seeing the father's approach.

When the young boy and girl have reached mutual understanding, they may exchange gifts between them. The young boy usually gives silver coins in even numbers, such as 6 pieces 8 pieces or 10 pieces. They choose even numbers as they consider even numbers as lucky numbers. So they chose even numbers for other occasions too. The girl treasures these gifts for life as the most precious things in her life. These gifts given by the boy to the girl are never refused. The girl considers these gifts as her own personal property and preserves them till death. This custom of giving silver coins is also a sort of engagement between them.

There are cases of misconduct between the young couple before marriage. Some let the parents know and marry each other according to traditional custom. Some may purposely wrong the girl and refuse to marry. Then he has to pay compensation, as much as it is demanded by the girl's parents or until they are satisfied. The man who leaves the woman in this state and the child born is given the name of the man's race. This illegitimate child is called in Lisu "Tisar<sup>1</sup>". The person who is called by that name feels so miserable that he feels like committing suicide.

In a family the children are addressed according to age from the oldest to the youngest with a code prefix. So by knowing these terms we can know who is the eldest in the family.

- The first born eldest son is called ahhay.
- The second son is called ahhalay.
- The third son is called ahsar.
- The fourth son is called ahsi.
- The fifth son is called ahwu.

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<sup>1</sup>Tisar - Lisu Term(အမေမေမ်ဝဲပဲခွဲသောဘာဝ)

- The sixth son is called ahlu.
- The seventh son is called ahchi.
- The eighth son is called ahpar.
- The ninth son is called ahkyo.
- The tenth son is called ahshu.

If daughters are born:-

- The first born daughter is called ahmee.
- The second daughter is called ahlayma.
- The third daughter is called ahsama.
- The fourth daughter is called ahsima.
- The fifth daughter is called ahwuma.
- The sixth daughter is called ahluma.
- The seventh daughter is called ahchima.
- The eighth daughter is called ahparma.
- The ninth daughter is called ahkyoma.
- The tenth is called ahshuma.

Such are the name given in the family with code prefixes that denote the seniority of the children.

## **(2) Marriage customs**

### **-Marriage by elopement**

The Lisu nationals have a marriage custom that is different from other national's nationals. When a Lisu boy and girl are mutually in love, then whether the parents agree and not to the match, they can elope by mutual agreement. The next morning after the elopement, a shaman or an elderly relative of the boy has to go to the village nat shrine carrying in a tray –

- 1- plate of rice,      4- incense sticks
- boiled cock ,      -cups of alcohol.

He has to offer them to the nat and calling upon the boy's name has to pray for the couple. He informs the nat that this boy has stolen a girl. So to give the couple health and that they may live a long life together and to make their livelihood good and to recognize a new relative that had increased their race. The boy and girl must not go to the nat shrine as yet. But the elderly relative or shaman must not delay to make the offering and pray for the couple. It must be done the day after the elopement. Lisu people believe that if it is delayed the marriage will not last long.

The elderly people of the boy's side then have to go and apologize the girl's parents. They must try to avoid all the relatives of the girl. The boy's parents have to choose a person who can talk fluently as a-go-between for them. If they should and consult a member of the girl's family by not knowing the person is a relative, they have to apologize by paying a fine of kyats 7/-50. If it is not satisfactory, it may be raised to kyats 35/- to kyats 75/- and finally up to 750/-. On the first day of the discussions they have to take a bottle of alcohol only as a token of peace between the two families.

If the elopement was on the "dragon's" day, then the girl has to be surrendered to the parents and another day chosen for the second elopement. It is because they consider they consider the "dragon" day as inauspicious and so they must elope again on the "dog" day. The "dragon" day elopement is considered bad for the couple. Their business will fail and disease and illness will come and even death may happen. Then even the parents of the widowed girl will be affected with bad fortune.

On the day the person representing the boy's parents or the-go-between has to offer the apologizes and choose an auspicious day to return the girl to the parents. The Lisu nationals have two kinds of marriage ceremony i.e. the big wedding and the small wedding. Some people cannot afford to have a big wedding ceremony.

**-The small wedding:**

The relatives from another village have to be invited two or three days before the wedding either by going there personally or sending someone. On the chosen day, the wedding couple accompanied by the-go-between or the representative of the father, have to go to the girl's house. They have to take along.

1- plate of pork curry

8- kyats

2- bottles of alcohol of the same color

They have to cork the bottles with a cone shaped multi colored paper. All these have to be carried in a tray. When they arrive at the girl's house, in front of the gathered elders, the boy's representative has to say that they have come according to tradition, to return the girl to her parents that they do not disregard traditions. Then the parents take k 5/- as payment for the mother's milk and the representative gets k 3/-.

The go-between then leaves the house and pretends to consult with the boy's parents for a while and then comes back into the room. Then he says that the boy's parents are happy about today's occasion and also agree to the match. Then they put k 35/- in a packet and put it in the tray.

The girl's parents then say that there are only a few people in the family, so they want the boy to come and live with them. "We want a son-in-law too". Then they tell the boy to go and ask his parents if they will let him stay at the girl's house. The boy's go-between then leaves the house and pretends to ask his parents. A little while later, he returns and says 'that they have only this son, so if there is work they can call for his help and to share him'. Then they put k 15/- in a paper packet and put it in the tray.

The elders say 'they have said all there is to say and the place to go also is ended. Whatever has to be accepted'. Then they pack k50/- in paper and put it in the tray again. The money has now amounted to k 108/-. Then the go-

between picks up the tray and offers it to the girl's parents saying "we have come to return their daughter according to tradition". Then the go-between representing the boy's father tells the girl not to feel down hearted because she has become his daughter, and also tells the girl's parents not to feel sad because they had to give away their daughter. She will be treated as their daughter.

The meaning of the k 108/- is:-

-1<sup>st</sup> time of k 3/- is for the go-between to begin his speech.

-2<sup>nd</sup> time of k 5/- is the milk fee to the girl's mother.

-3<sup>rd</sup> time of k 15/- is to beg forgiveness for any wrong committed by word thought or deed.

-4<sup>th</sup> of k/- 35 to forgive them for not fore seeing the wrong to be contented with whatever they could afford to be satisfied. We have given in spite of our difficulties, so to accept what they have offered.

-5<sup>th</sup> time of k 50/- is since everything is concluded, to accept whatever there is to accept and it is the last contribution.

When everything has been spoken the girl's father opens the two bottles of alcohol and entertains the guests from both families with a little bit of pork curry each. After everybody has eaten, they all go away and the girl is also sent away with them. That very evening, they have to do the ceremony of being presented to relatives of both families.

First of all they have to go to the bride's family. There a friend of the bridegroom has to pour the alcohol and the bridegroom has to call the girl's parents as "father" and "mother" and offer the alcohol to them on bended knees. Then he has to pay obeisance to the other elders in the same way. Then they have to go back to the bridegroom's family and pay obeisance in the same way, first of all to the go-between who represented his father then grandparents, uncles and aunts, elder brothers and sisters and younger brothers and sisters according to seniority. The older people are served on bend knees but



the younger people are served ordinarily. In this way all the relatives are introduced and the wedding ceremony is concluded.

The above account is a description of the Lishaw (Lisu) national's traditional small wedding ceremony. Some well-to-do parents of the bridegroom may want to add more blessings by doing on that very day the "big wedding ceremony".

### -The "big wedding ceremony"

If the bridegroom's parents had made plans to have the "big wedding ceremony" people who can afford give wedding presents of money. They give in even number and so if k 20/- is given, then k 10/- is the bridegroom and k 10/- is for the bride. So if k 40/- is given each gets k 20/-. They are given in even numbers as it is considered lucky by Lisu nationals. They give with the right hand to the bridegroom and with the left hand to the bride at the same time wishing them health and happiness and that their fields may produce plenty.

Then the bride and bridegroom sit in the middle of the house, surrounded by the elders and relatives. First the parents of the bride give her words of advice "not to stay as she used to in her own home, that she must obey her husband and do his bidding, not to be lazy, not to go out without telling her husband or tell her mother-in-law if the husband is away. She must not do anything without their knowledge or permission. She must do anything in opposition to them.

Then the bride's parents tell the bridegroom that they have given words of advice to their daughter, to be patient with their daughter and to teach and guide her. Then in front of their ancestral nat shrine, -

1-plate of pork curry (head, hand, legs, entrails)

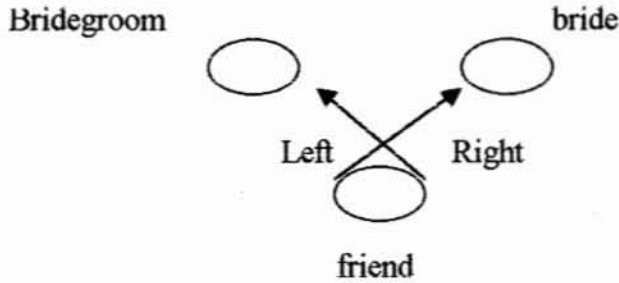
2-plates of rice

2-cups of alcohol

2-sticks of incense – are put in a tray, and the shaman offers them to their ancestral nats, praying that the nats will protect and guard the wife of the

boy. Then they sit together the bridegroom on the right and the bride on the left and pay obeisance on bend a need to the ancestral nats .

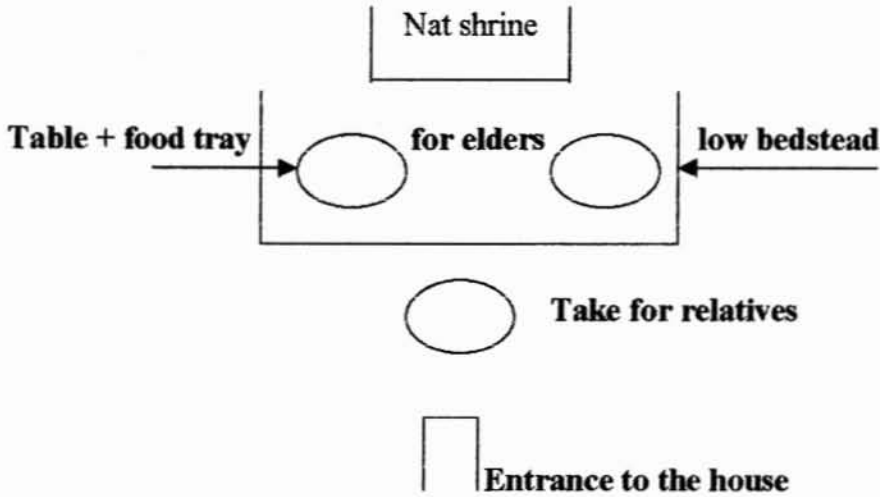
The friends of the bridegroom then brings two cup of alcohol and gives one cup to the bridegroom with his right hand and one cup to the bride with his left hand.



They have to prepare before hand to entertain the guest after the big wedding. The cups for the alcohol drink and chopsticks and bottles of the drink are kept ready to serve after the paying of respects ceremony is over. Depending upon the number of quests to be fed one or two pigs, about 100 viss to 200 viss of pork, four baskets of rice and 100 to 200 bottles of drinks are prepared for the wedding feast. Sometimes the whole village doesn't need to cook for that day.

After the guest have fed, then in front of the nat shrine, on a low bamboo bedstead, two takes are placed on it . Then a circular bamboo tray is put on each table. In tray are 1 bottle of alcohol, 2 plate of pork curry, 4 sets of chopsticks, and 4 cups.

The elders sit round the table and sing prayers for the property of the wedded couple. After each round of singing, they will drink and eat a bit and then continue the songs. The pork cure if has to be refilled from time to time. At the entrance to the house also there is a table laden with rice, curry and alcohol for the relatives to eat as much as they want.



When the elders are resting in-between songs, the bridegroom has to carry the bamboo tray with of alcohol in it and go around and after them to each elder. At the same time, her must with boood head ask the elders to forgive him if he had done any wrong.

This offering of drinks and singing prayers has to be done three times. Then they can sing any song they like after it. While this prayer singing is going on in the house, the males and bachelors have to dance in rows or circles in front of the house.

The hosts have to entertain endlessly with the singing and dancing going on in twins, it gets late into the night and they have to give another meal. Then if the bridegroom should request the guests not to go away as yet, but to continue singing the auspicious songs. They sing again and slowly down breads and only then the whole party stops and every one goes home, and the weeding ceremony is concluded.

### **(3)Married life**

Once the Lishaw (Lisu) man marries, whether he sets up separate houses or stays on with his parents, he has to carry the work of his family. He also helps his wife in the work of the house when the need arises.

In the past, the Lishaw (Lisu) man may keep two wives at the same time, it is rarely seen today. The women after the death of the husband may marry again with the permission of the mother-in-law.

### **(4)Divorce**

In the past, there were many cases of divorce. The chief reason for divorce is poor economic conditions and inability to get along with the mother-in-law. When such a divorce takes place, the increased property after marriage divided equally. The father may take away the daughters and the sons remain with the mother.

If the divorce is not by mutual agreement and the woman should run away of her own will, then that kind of woman is repair the road or made to pay back the expenses of the wedding as compensation.

### **d. Pregnancy and confinement customs**

The Lishaw (Lisu) man after marriage is responsible for the family and as head of the family carries on same from of livelihood. In the same way the housewife also must carry out her household duties and in addition see that her race continues to thrive. The Lishaw (Lisu) national nationals do not practice birth control and abortion. They believe in their traditional nat. She knows she's pregnant as soon as her menstruation stops after two or three months of marriage. Both parents are happy and welcome the next generation to come. The husband helps his wife in her household chores without shirking. The wife too continues to do the housework as mush as possible.

The Lishaw (Lisu) woman who is pregnant does not have to abstain certain foods or take medicines for the child to grow. They live their normal life, eating the usual food and doing their daily routine of gathering firewood and fetching water etc. The Lishaw (Lisu) pregnant woman must carry her baby or (8) months to (12) months. When it is about (7) months the husband must collect the ingredients for the medicine to be used at childbirth. They are stone bloods (ကျောက်သွေး), bitter roots, nutmeg, pepper and cloves are pounded and soaked in a bottle of liquor.

The taboos or the things the pregnant woman must not do, she must not go to the village nat shrine or take anything from the house, ever such in important things like candles and incense sticks to the village nat shrine. If she wants to offer them at the shrine she must borrow them from another house. In the same way the pregnant woman's family must not eat any food offered to the nat. If she did so, she will have a miscarriage. She must not also pass over the dung and reins of a horse. If she did so, she will have to carry the baby for (12) months. The husband of the pregnant woman does not need avoid anything special. He lives his normal life of working at his taungyar or goes hunting for meat, as he is the breadwinner responsible for the food -clothing and shelter of the family.

The Lishaw (Lisu) national nationals living on the mountain village tracts do not have any medical aid in giving birth. There is not even the rural midwife. The pregnant woman is helped by her husband in delivering the baby. If her husband should be away then she has to deliver it alone by herself. If she has great difficulty, she may scream for her neighbor relatives for help.

Some times even the relatives may not arrive in time or may be in labor for two or three days and just wait for the delivery of the child. Some times the child cannot be born and it dies.

The child may be unconscious at birth and it is revived by splashing water on it. The child is bathed with warm water as soon as it is born and kept clean. It is bathed twice a day with warm water for (7) days. Then it is bathed

only once a day. The mother of the child now in confinement drinks the medicine they had prepared twice a day regularly for (7) days. She also eats chicken and chicken egg everyday for (7) days. It is to give her warmth.

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals eat chicken with white legs only. They believed that eating chicken with yellow legs will make them safer from epilepsy, so they are forbidden to eat yellows legged chicken. The breast and thighs of the pepper and **saukaw**<sup>1</sup> Lisu medicine bought from the market. This medicine helps the mother to have a lot of milk.

The mother, for fear of getting fever must not eat the head, leg and wings of the chicken. She must also eat roasted salt instead of raw salt, to prevent caught and swelling of the baby. She must also avoid acid foods, as it does not agree with medicine. She must not eat soya bean for about one month after birth.

The child must be named on the 2nd day after birth. They also have to make a separate room for confinement. In the middle of that room is a fireplace which must be kept burning for a whole month. They use red-wood (သဲနီသီး) and gaw-wood (ခေါ်သီး) for firewood because they make good coal, has no smell and no sparks. The husband sleeps near the fireplace and has to keep it going for one month until the wife comes out of confinement.

The unbiblical cord has to be cut after the child had been cleaned. They put charcoal under the cord and cut it with a freshly cut strip of bamboo. Then the little stump left is tied up with twisted black thread. When the navel is dry and the unbiblical stump drops off, it is saved for medicinal use. It is used for illness of both men and women. This dried unbiblical cord of a baby is soaked in water and the water is given to women who get fits. The child's placenta is wrapped in a piece of cloth and buried in a hole dug near the fireplace immediately. They have to make sure that it is not buried upside-down. If they

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<sup>1</sup> saukaw- Lisu Term(ခေါ်သီး)

did so the child will vomit his milk. If the placenta a does not come down naturally, she has to force it down herself.

The mother has to take a steam bath three times, (15) days and a month after giving birth. In the same way the mother has to stay near the fireplace and warm herself the whole month. She must not go out to visit other people's houses, because she is considered unclean, and her luck is low and people may dislike her visiting them. Besides they are afraid she might catch a cold and so she has to keep herself warm by the fire.

The fireplace is lit the whole moth also to keep away evil spirits which afraid of the fire. The ingredients needed for the steam bath.

Myanmar

Lisu

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Scented wood leaf (တောင်နံကြီးရွက်)    | -                               |
| kwayephoat leaf (ခွေးအီးပုတ်ရွက်)      | -                               |
| lctchaungpon leaf (လက်ချောင်းပုံအရွက်) | sutphyalctmakwa(ရွတ်ဖြာလက်ကွေး) |
| medeedoke leaf (မဲဒီးပုတ်ရွက်)         | -yawswa(ရော့စာ)                 |
|  | -woenyiphya(ဝိုဏ်းဖြာ)          |
| Lay leaf (လေရွက်)                      | -meehiphya(မီးဖီးဖြာ)           |
| Bamboo leaf (ဝါးရွက်)                  | -                               |
| Kind of ginger herb (မိသလင်ရွက်)       | -                               |
| soo plant(ဆူးပင်)                      | -                               |

The above leaves have to be boiled and drunk by the mother three times on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and end of the month. She has to take a stream bath herself when the pot is boiling and later both she and the child use this water to bathe when it cools. The leaves have to be boiled with strong fire, until they are cooked and steaming .The mother has to wrap herself in a blanket, after the bath and stay near the fire.

The Lisu nationals have no special ceremony when they come out of confinement. Only on the 2ndday after birth, on the naming day, they invite the

person who helped her deliver the baby and her rice and curry and entertain her well as a token of gratitude.

People visit the house where a woman has given birth, during the day only. Visitors do not come at night because they believe that evil spirits may accompany the visitor.

The Lisu nationals believe that if twins are born, they must have done some wrong. If the child should be born with deformities, there will be fights in that house but it is supposed to be lucky, bringing them good business and good income because it is child bewitched by a nat.

If the pregnant woman should have a miscarriage, they do not have any misgivings, but she has to stay like a woman in confinement for (7) days near the fireplace and keep herself warm.

They do not have abortion infanticide. If a woman should be found guilty of such acts, she is given a very harsh sentence of even death. Sometimes, the first and the second child born to the may die and only the third child may survive. They put the child in a basket and weights it saying one viss child and then only they believe the child will survive. Some sell it to a dog or give it away to a stone or a tree. When the child grows up he has to look after that tree and see that nobody cuts it down.

In some families the child dies every time it is born. Then they have to make offerings at their house nat shrine. They place a table in front of the shrine with (4) cups and a bottle of dinner and (1) plate of pork curry, a pair of chopsticks are placed on each cup. The village elders are then invited to pray for the child who will be born later to this family. They pray that the child will be well and that his spirit whenever it is whether it is in the abode of the nats or living near the child. They sing and pray the whole night, so the child will be alive and call upon his spirit to live near the child. So they believe only after doing this, the children born to that family will be alive.

They wear the baby at (7) or (8) months old or as old as (2) or (3) years old. Then the mother rubs her breast with pig bile or Indian nightshade fruit.



**e. The naming ceremony**

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals consider the day they name their child as an auspicious day. The child is given a name on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day after birth. They invite as many relatives possible to come to the ceremony especially relatives of the father. According to tradition, they have to go to the village nat shrine with the offerings. They have to take the following in a tray.

- 1-boiled cook with its entrants removed
- 4-incense sticks
- 2-plates of rice
- 2-cups of liquor
- 4-candles-

The offering taken to the shrine by the father himself or the shaman or the village elder and propitiate the nat and say that this child has been broken to the family but this child cannot be owned by the nat or anybody and that only he owns himself. Please guerilla this child born to this family. Please protect him to be healthy and return home. They have to do the same thing in the house nat shrine too. Then they begin to choose a name for the child. The elders sit around a table on which is placed a tray with (4) cups of liquor and a plate of pork curry.

In choosing a name they give preference to the father's race. An elderly person first chooses the name. After the name has been chosen. They consult the nats whether it is suitable or not by casting the cowries. If the cowries are both face or up they take it as suitable, but if the cowries were not the same, then they have to choose another name. The cowries are cast three times for each name. When they have exhausted names from the father's side, they may choose names from the mother's side.

After they have chosen the name, the guests and the relatives drink from the four cups and given a meal of pork curry and rice. The child is bathed with Tayaw and soap acacia water pray that he may enjoy good health. They may

also use water in which and silver had been put in. Then the child's new clothes are worn on the housedog to cast away evil spirits and for the dog to look after the child. The guest gives gifts of money before they leave. The money is kept at the head of the child for (3) days. They believe the child will be healthier by doing this. Then they use the money to buy new cloths for the child.

If in spite of everything, the child should be often ill, they believe the child does not agree with his natural parents, so as a taken, he is sold to "second" parents and depending on the money, he has to change his name; for example if the second father is of "Li" race and bought him for a quarter kyat, they may call the child "Linanpya" (လိနပ်ပျာ) or same may call him "maung mut" (မောင်မုတ်) or if bought for nga-mu" or half kyat, he may be called "aitmu" (အိုက်မူ).

If the child's parents were well-to-do people, then for their child's good health, they would go to the family who is to buy the child with -

1-boiled cock

1-smallbasket of rice and incense sticks, and in the foster parents to be nat shrine, ask the foster parents to pray for the child's health. On that they, if they have invited relatives, they cook and entertain them with what the real parents brought. If there is a lot guest and the food is not enough, the foster parents have to supplement with more food. The child gave another name. But if in spite of it the child is still not well they have to take the child again to his foster parents and tie the spirit shrine. The foster parents have to twist an ordinary thread to make a chain round the child's neck. While lying the spirit string round the child's neck, he has to say to the spirit to come back whether he is far away or near them, and to stay near the child aid the parents and not to go wandering away. It is done so that child will be in good health and his spirits may not fly away but come back and stay with the child.

In this way the child is given the racial name of his foster or second parents. When this child grows up he has to pay obeisance to his foster parents as a token of gratitude. The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals celebrate their new year in

Tabodwe (တံ့. ဝံ့) and this is the time for pay obeisance. The grown up boy now pays obeisance to his foster parents with 1-bottle of liquor, 6-slices of boiled and pounded glutinous rice, in a container, a small amount of pork or as much as he could afford.

The foster parents treat him like their own child and gives back as much as they could afford. If he does this for three consecutive years, the foster parents regard him a grateful child and return his thought fullness with gifts of clothes etc.

## **f. Childhood Education and Health**

### **(1)Games**

The Lishaw (Lisu) children do not have any formal education. In the remote far away regions there are no schools. Their childhood is usually spent in paying and helping their parents at work. The little boy usually accompanies his father in his traditional work at the taungyar, and the girls help the mother in her household work, chop wood, fetch water and look the younger brother and sisters and thus grow up.

When the children play "Doe"( ဝံ့ ) ,they play in groups of at least(4) children. Both girls and boys can play this game together. The next game they play is "top" which is played out side the village, because when they throw the top with full force, they may accidentally hit some one nearby. The children get so immersed in the game that they may play the whole day and even forget their meals.

The top is spun by winding a jute string about 6' to 12' feet long around the nail and the wooden half of the top and thrown with force by hand. They make the top by themselves of hard wood. The nail is driver in at the conical apex and the nail tip is pointed or sharp. The top is about 5 inches long and has circumference of 2 ½ to 3 inches.

They usually play on pre-sab bath and sab bath days when the parents rest and not go to work in the taungyar. As it is natural for children to argue

and fight, sometimes the parents even have to come and settle their arguments. But is one of the game children enjoy and give them fun in their childhood.

Sometimes when there is less work and children gather together, they play with the sea bean seed, (ရံညင်းခိုး) or play with the "top" and have fun. The Lishaw (Lisu) children are not known for any juvenile delinquency or are fond parental control.

The girls usually play with their toys. It is with clay pots and pans, cooking and buying and selling. They cut up leaves as food and use leaves as money. Some girls make toys by tying two sticks to resemble a baby. Then they warp around a piece of cloth and tie a colorful piece at the top at the head. The girls play these games in the afternoons, when they have time to rest after helping their mothers with the household chores. They also play "htatesi-htoe" (ထုတ်ဆီးတိုး) and "doe" (ခိုး) from about eight years to teenage.

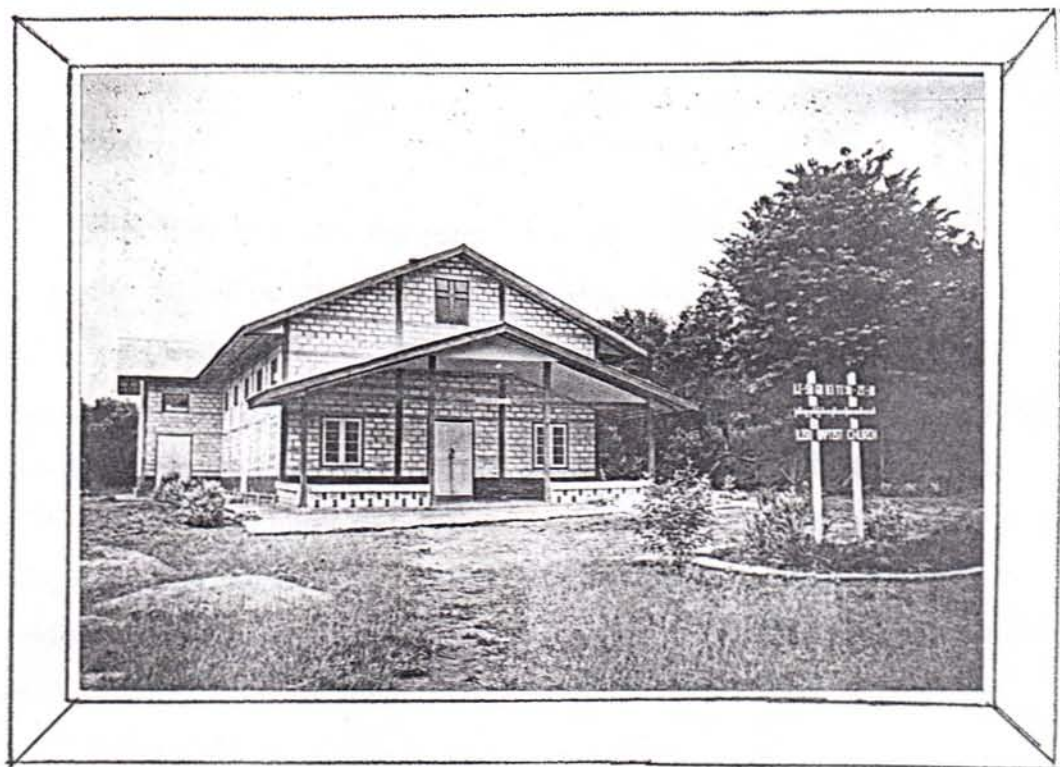
## (2) Education

The Lishaw (Lisu) parents teach their children from young to know their traditional customs and beliefs. They are made to observe the New Year festivals and the traditional custom of propitiating their traditional nats and later to carry on the tradition. The elders and parents teach their children the seasonal festivals and the custom of paying respects to the elders and how to make prayers and call upon the deities to or witness things.

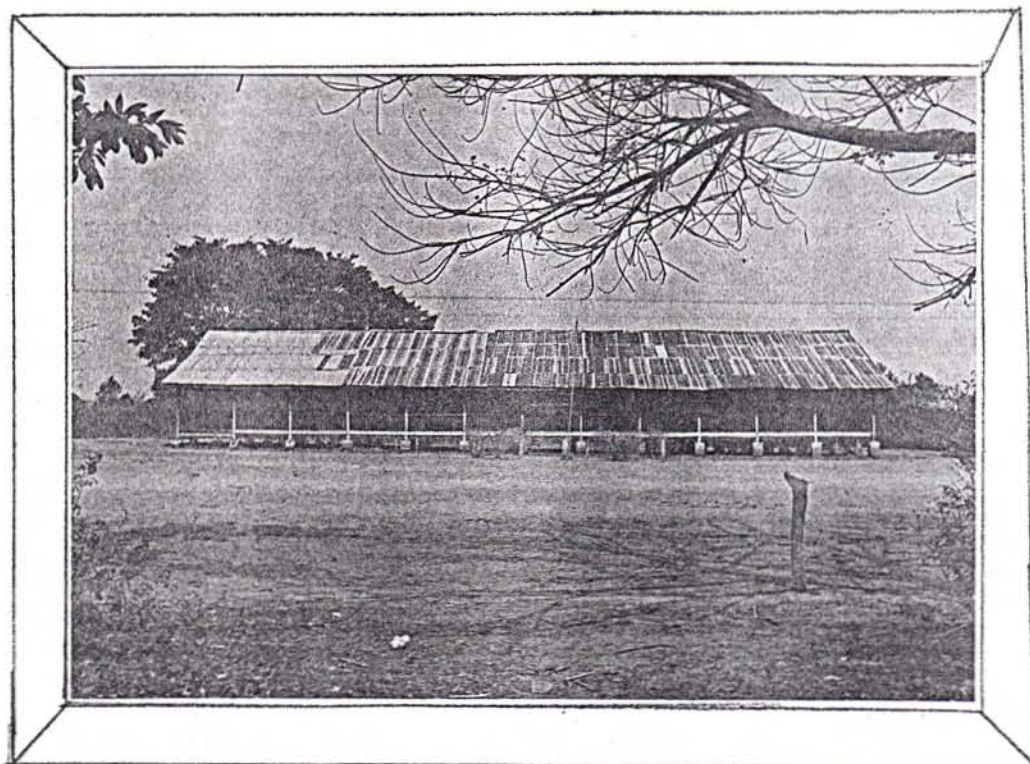
### **Educational conditions in High-Phut village**

Are these following in the village?

No.	Yes
Formal school	socialization
School building	playing games
Transportation	direct training by parents
Educational knowledge	



Lisu Baptist Church



primary school of Heigh-Phut village

### **(3)Health**

In matters of health, the parents take care of them with whatever they know of traditional practices and medicine. If a child suffers from stomachache they make a medicine of "meedeedoke leaf" (မဲဒီးဒုဝ်ရွာ်). If they have a headache or feel dizzy, then they inhale the scent of pine tree sap. When a child goes out in sun and has heat stroke and has nose bleeding, he is made to inhale crushed betel leaf or burnt hair. If just months old infant has to go out into the village, they have to take a piece of the thatch from the roof and put it on the child's hat or tie it round his neck. In this way they believe they are preventing the child's spirit from remaining at the house they visit or along the road.

Again when the child is taken to visit a relative's house in the village or in another village they have to take a bottle of water from the house. They are afraid the child might get sick by drinking water that place. When a child cries extremely, then they believe an evil nat has taken possession of it. The child's baby is smeared with his parent's or an elderly person's urine. As they smear the child with urine, they also have to drive out the evil nat by saying "we do not know what evil you are, but don't stay near the child, go back to where you have come from; if you stay you will smell of urine and facea, so go away, don't stay here".

### **(4)Ritual for catching soul**

They also have the practice of calling the child's soul to make a sick child will. They believe the child is disturbed by an evil nat; so they would make an offering to the nat. They put into a banana leaf cut into a square, the food cooked at home. They are: -

7-piles of rice

7-piles of curry

7-piles of chilly

1-piece of cloth

1-kyat.

Then they have to slit a bamboo with joints, about (1) cubit long. It is placed face up and in one joint to put some water and at the other end joint to put burnt chilly ash. The child is made to sit near the door the house. A few chillies are put into the fireplace. The parents then say, you evil nats, how many you are, we have fed you, eat your fill whether it is a little or a lot. Eat your fill and go away and don't take away the child's soul. The food in the leaf and the bamboo joint is also taken out of the village and thrown away at the back of the village. The evil nats are also told to follow the road and go out of the village. The child recovers from his illness after this offering.

They have to offer rice and curry, so that the evil nats can to their fill. The piece of cloth is as clothing for the nats to be and the taken money is for the nats to spend. The evil nats are afraid of chilly, so it is also put in to scare them away. Calling the spirit or soul of a person. Most children play in the hills and the forests. It is natural for children to use bad language and offend the nats. So when a child gets sick, when they believe the child has done something the nats dislike and his soul has left through fright. So the mother has to make a head roll of his gaungbaung(ခေါင်းခေါင်း) or shirt. Then she has to put a plate of uncooked rice. On the rice is put a chicken egg with a coil of thread on it. Then at about sunset, the mother has to hold them in her hand and go round the house left hand wise. As she walks round the house she has to repeat "my son, whatever dangers there may be in the eight directions of the earth, I want out my good will. The elders of village are longing for you. Everybody at home also is longing for you. The guardian nats of the sun and the moon also are longing for you. If you are on the hills and in the forest, come back or if you are in a cave too, come back. If you are far away too come home, and if you are quite near, come running home. There are tigers in the hills and forests, there is danger there. Come back to the village and when he hear the sounds of dogs and pigs and cats, do not be afraid, don't go anywhere, just come back and stay

at home". Then she has to place the things at the head of the child's bed and sleep.

The above ritual has to be done for (7) days for a person who is seriously ill, or for a person whose illness cannot be diagnosed, or for a chronically ill person.

In the morning at sunrise with the first cock's crow, the mother has to hold the coil of cloth with the plate of rice and an egg and go round the house three, right hand sidewise for (7) days. On the 8<sup>th</sup> day morning, it is repeated again and then the egg is boiled and the rice is mixed with more rice and cooked and the coil of thread tied round the neck of the child, whose soul they are recalling home. As all these are being done, the lips have to be repeating the words to come home all the time.

In the evening they have to call the spirit home again with cooked rice and boiled egg. Then the whole family is given a bit of rice to eat as a token that they are welcoming home the return of the child's soul. Then they peel the shell of egg and look at it. If there is the figure of human being on the shell, they are sure that the soul of the child had returned. Then they feed the child rice and the boiled egg to make it become well again.

If on peeling the shell from the egg, the human figure does not appear then they take it that the child's soul has not returned. If instead there should be strands of thread like this up that cannot be broken off, the child can die the next day.

Sometimes a child may come back from the forests and at night scream with fright. Then the above ritual is done and if the child is still having these fears after the first time. They will do it a second and third time until the child is better. If the child doesn't get well after the third time, then the father takes the child in front of the house nat shrine and breaks a raw egg over his head and lights an incense stick. Then the father has to call upon the nat to cure the child and that he would make an offering of a cock if the child gets well.



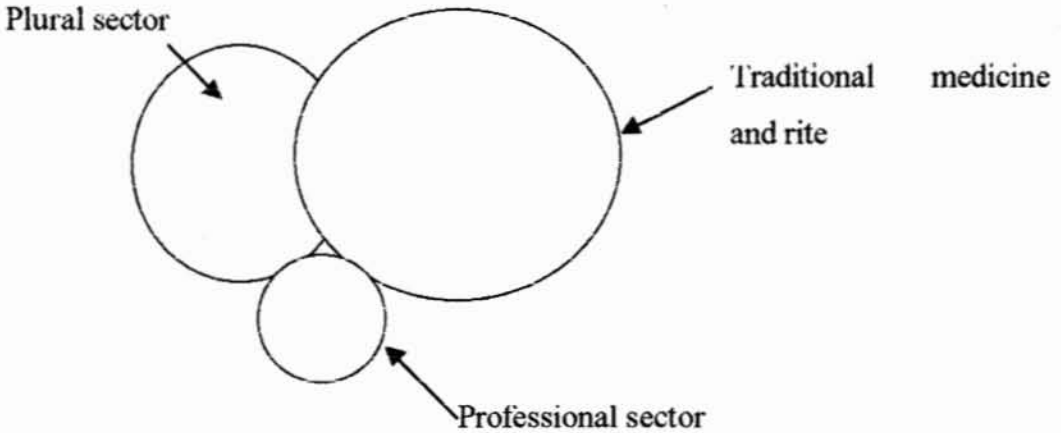


Prepared place of sacrifice for  
the catching soul of sick child



A shaman read chicken bone

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals believe strongly in their traditional nats and solve their health problems with their help.



### **g. Death and funeral rites**

#### **(1)Death**

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals think of death as due to sickness or because of something or the other happening to the person. When a person is about to die, they feel the pulse of the person by feeling his wrist. If the pulse is not normal and the finger tips and the toes become cold, they put (9) broken pieces of a silver coin, (9) pea seeds, and (9) grains of rice are mixed with water and poured down the dying man's mouth. If the dying person is a woman, then (7) broken pieces of a silver coin, (7) pea seeds and (7) grains of rice are poured down with water into her mouth. The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals believe this helps them breathe their last easily and the things they put in the dying person's mouth will provide them with the ferry fare into the next life and be able to live comfortably there.

## (2) Funeral rites

When the person dies in the house, they have to fire a shot with the percussion lock firearm. The whole village knows of the death. Some elders of the village arrive at the house and the first thing they have to do is to construct a stand for the corpse. That stand has to have its head towards the house nat shrine. It should be about (3) feet high, (3 ½) feet broad, and (6) feet long. It must be higher than the low bedstead in front of the nat shrine. The head should be higher than the foot. So it would be a bit sloping towards the foot. Two bamboo poles are placed lengthwise and across these two poles are put (9) bamboo poles for a man and (7) bamboo poles for a woman are placed on it. Then split bamboo slats are put lengthwise over the bamboo poles to form a sort of flooring. They use only bamboo strips to tie the stand.

The corpse is bathed with “meedeedoke leaves”(မဲဒီးဒုတ်ရွတ်များ) water anybody can bathe the corpse. After it has been bathed, it is dressed with new clothes. Then its two thumbs and two big toes are tied, so that the people left behind does not die like him. Then a white piece of cloth is stitched in (9) places if it is a man, and in (7) places if it is a woman. The spirit strings are cut off. The corpse is wrapped in this white cloth and tied in the neck, at waist, in the legs with jute string.

The bundled up corpse is now ready to be placed on the stand with his head towards the nat shrine. On his chest is placed a heavy iron piece to prevent the corpse from rising up. On this iron piece is placed a killed young chicken, to prevent the dead person's spirit from being startled. There is also oil light lit at the head of the corpse. It is to light the way the dead person must go. They have to cut from multicolored paper the figure of a human being and place it near the corpse. It is to prevent the dead person's spirit from wandering about. They have to place the meals at regular times on a table near the stand. It is a chicken or boiled chicken egg and liquor and rice and calls the person to

come and have his meals. If the dead person is an elderly person, the young people have to pay obeisance every time he is fed his meals.

Relatives and friends who come to the funeral house also help as much as they can afford. So they big or small baskets of rice to feed the visitors. Now they must make a coffin for the dead. There is no stipulation as to who should make the coffin anybody can make it. They usually make the coffin with "Let-Pan" (လတ်ပင်) wood. The size of the coffin depends upon the size of the dead person.

First of all they have to search for a tree that could be made into a coffin because it must be big enough to carve out a coffin, as no nails must be used. Even the cover is tied down to the coffin by boring in it through which the rope to tie down the coffin will pass through. When a suitable tree is found they have to offer a live chicken (cock or hen) to the tree before they cut it down. They must not use iron nails, as they believe in the next life after death. If they should use any iron, the person will be blind in the next life.

When the coffin is ready, the corpse is laid in it, with his face up. They have to put k 12/- near his head, another k 12/- near his waist and another k 12/- near his feet. Such money is put in so that he would have lots of money to spend in his next life.

The corpse is usually kept the house for (3) days unless they have to wait for the arrival of far-away relatives to arrive. To keep the corpse from decaying, they bathe the body with "meedeedoke leaf" (မေ့ထွေ) water, keep a vegetable marrow ground under it and paint the coffin with kerosene. Besides, the climate of the hill regions is very cold, so things do not decay easily.

On the third day, the day of the funeral, they have to look for the burial place. After having breakfast (4) men with a cock and hen and an egg and cooking pots and pans leave the village. Along the road they are walking they have to make a vow and asking the dead person which place he would like, that they like such a place and his dead grandparents too like that, and so saying they throw the raw egg and the place when the egg broke in the place to bury

the person. If the egg should break at the place where his grandparents had been buried, then he buried at their feet.

When the four men reach the place where the egg had fallen, they have to choose the first person to dig the grave. They split a piece of stick about an inch long. They throw this stick into bowl of water with a vow that the stick will fall on the side of the man who must start the digging. The first person digs nine times for a man and seven times for a woman. Then the first digger throws the chapping hoe lack wards, saying he is tired. Then the second person continues to dig and soon until the grave is (5) deep, (3) feet wide and (6) feet long.

The meaning of taking a cock and a hen is that the hen is exchange for the land and the cock is to the tree near his head, to look after the dead person. Both chickens are killed and cooked and eaten by them. They return home to tell them the grave is ready.

Then they put as many eggs as there are people in the house, incense sticks and thread (about a person's height) are put in a tray and the shaman has to say, the person who is dead, is dead, nobody's spirit must follow the spirit of the dead person. There is no need for anybody in the village to follow him also. Then they boil their eggs and ate them. They throw away the incense sticks and tie the read round their necks.

When the dead person is about to be buried the shaman or elderly person calls on the dead person by name at the house nat shrine. Then he says this person is dead and he must go away, we will build a new house for him. If that family killed a pig that day, they must offer the head and feet to the nat.

Then they put some water in a clay plate and place it over the coffin. They have to carry out the feet first and when they reach the front the door, they have to break the place. It is done so the dead person can go out well. When they have passed the door, then they have to shoot (8) arrows for man or (7) arrows for a woman into the air. The person who shot the arrows has to leave the bow backwards and come into the house for awhile. Then he picks up

the bow again when he goes out. When the coffin is being carried out to the burial ground, a person carrying burning old flooring leads the funeral cortege. He is supposed to give light so that the dead person could see his way. This torchbearer also has to carry a bag of roasted corn flour; various kinds of seeds (9) kinds for a man and (7) kinds for a woman, in a basket. The coffin is carried on (3) or (4) yokes tied to the coffin with bamboo strips twisted rope. There are (6) carries if there are (3) yokes and eight carriers if there are (4) yokes. The dead person's parents have to give each carrier a piece of white cloth and  $\frac{1}{4}$  kyat piece and a cup of liquor and speak respectfully to them.

The man whose wife is pregnant must not carry the coffin. They must be very carefully in carrying the coffin to the grave that they do not point the coffin towards the headroom or front of another person's house.

In carrying the coffin, they must not play with it along the way, because if they should get hurt accidentally, the wound will not heal soon. They must not also stop on the way, because if they did so, there will be another death in the village. When they reach the edge of a forest, they have to beat the coffin with thorn clans, and also beat the surroundings with thorn clans so that evil spirits will not follow them.

When they reach the cemetery, some grave-diggers who remained hidden in it throw stones at the people who shout that ghosts are coming. Then the people following the cortege will shout that they are hit and the stone throwers will then stop and come out of hiding.

When they reach the grave, they remove the covers for a while and the torchbearer throws some corn flour and seeds on the ground. Then he tells the dead person to look at the place he must stay and that he could work and live there. Then all the strings tied to the corpse are removed and the cover is put back on the coffin and it is lowered into the grave with the ropes tied to it. The family and relatives all put in "a handful of death earth", and it is buried.

After the earth has been dumped, in exchange for cemetery land, they have to feed the dead with the left over bowl of curry. Then they cut off about a

6-foot long pole from the bamboo poles used for carrying the coffin. They use this as a stick to beat the grave. If it is a man, they beat at the head side, five times on the right and four times on the left. If it is a woman, they beat four times on the right and three times on the left. Afterwards they walk round clockwise, throwing the seed around. Then he throws stones to the eight directions of the land, saying "where ever the stone falls is your place".

When everything is finished, the shaman has to call back all the spirits to come back and beg them not to remain in the cemetery. The yoke is stuck on the grave and the basket hung on it. All the bottles and cups for feeding the dead, the incense sticks, paper figure, all the things the dead person used are put in that basket.

The people left at home have to carry out other things they have to do while others have gone with the funeral. They have to level the ashes in the fireplace and put a plate of pork curry on it. They have to cover the pork curry with a basket. This is done especially for a person who died in the forest while he was out hunting there. They ask why he died and to show some signs by calling on the duties.

They have to burn the coffin stand, and all the things concerning the dead person in front of the house. There must be (9) fires for a man and (7) fires for a woman. They also have to keep the buckets of water ready.

After the burial at the cemetery, all those who returned from the funeral have to step over the bon fire and wash their feet and hands with the water in the buckets. When they reach the entrance to the house they have to wash again with the tayaw, soap acacia, meededoke leaf solution, their face, hands and feet, before entering the house. Then they look at the fireplace covered with a basket and they find footprints of an animal, they believe that the person died while hunting that animal. That ends the work of the funeral day.

The next morning after the funeral early in the morning about day break some relatives and villagers go to the cemetery with bowls and swords. There they peep furtively at the grave and shoot directly at the grave, shouting at the

evil spirits to go away. Then they clear the grave of all the rubbish and come away.

As soon as they get back, depending on the financial situation of the family of the deceased, they discuss how many people they would invite. Then they have to go round and invite relatives and villagers personally by words of mouth. Then the group that is to prepare the grave goes back to the grave to pile more earth, to built a fence round the grave and to leave a small hole open at the foot of the grave. They take along with them -

2-chicken (cock + hen)

-Liquor

-Pork curry (sufficient for all invited)

-Rice, pots + pans -which they put on the opening at the foot of the grave until the invited elders of the village arrive. Then every body helps to cook the meal at the cemetery. When they eat, rice is put in leaves and the curry is taken from the bowls they brought along.

While they are eating, they also have to feed the dead person and his friends at the cemetery and as a token throw some rice and curry about the place. When they are going back after eating, each one has to light an incense stick, pay their respects and stick the incense stick on the grave. The shaman is the last person to leave the cemetery because he must call home all the spirits of the people of the village.

When the villagers return to the village after eating at the cemetery, one person from the deceased family, throw water, smears soot or mud on them. It is done strangers both young and old. It is not done between relatives. It is done so that both the deceased and the remaining family will have a good future and will walk the silver and gold road. They also have to go to the cemetery in old clothes.

When they get home, they have to light (9) incense sticks for a man or (7) incense sticks for a woman at the house not shrine and pray that the



deceased person will arrive at a good abode. This day according to Lisu custom is called the completion of the week after death "soon-kywe".

Children, both girls and boys under 14 years of age must not follow the funeral to the cemetery and also go to the "soon-kywe" after wards. They are afraid the children's spirits will have a fright. If children or unmarried young man or young made should die, they do not have such funeral rites. They are rolled up in a torn mat and buried immediately. Nothing special is done and only a few who helped are fed some meals. They believe that if the young are giving a grand funeral, they will die young again in their next life.

If a visitor should die in the house, while died in their stead, so the head of the house takes charge and gives it a good burial.

If for some reason a person dies outside the village e.g in hunting, his body must not be brought back to the village and he is buried rolled in a mat outside the village even though he maybe from that village.

Death of a person abandoned by his parents and relatives, violent or sudden death, and those dying in **Thidingyut**<sup>1</sup> are not buried in the earth but cremated and the skeleton must be picked with spoiling the shape and is buried the next day in the place it was cremated. For the person who died in the month of Thidingyut, his skeleton is kept by carefully and buried only a month later. The reason is Thidingyut is the month, the earth must not be dug and to die in that month is to be so out of luck.

## **CHAPTER 4.**

### **ECONOMY**

The economy of the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals is based on agriculture and hunting. Living in the hilly regions where roads and communications are difficult, we see very little trade of buying and selling things. Their staple food rice produced from their taungyars is sufficient for the family. Besides the fruits and vegetables grown in their garden or farm, hunting for meat and fishing in the stream provide them with all their needs. In the past, they share among themselves the meats from the hunt and dry the surplus. Today we see a few of them selling the surplus from their fruits and vegetable farms, the meats from the hunt and the fish from the stream in the town markets. We also see a few people selling their handicrafts of bamboo baskets, brooms and thatch slats. As their economy is based on agriculture, besides rice, their other chief crop is corn or maize.

They are also interested in garden farming of growing fruits and vegetables for there own consumption and grow them as supplementary produce.

a. Agriculture

(1) Taungyar cultivation<sup>1</sup>

In the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals work of agriculture, we find taungyar cultivation and garden farming of growing fruits and vegetables. In taungyar cultivation, it is shifting cultivation system depending chiefly on rainwater. This system is different from other kinds of agriculture, because you can not continue to cultivate on the same place every year. The farmer has to be moving every year to a new taungyar and leave old taungyar fellow for atleast three years. This shifting of the taungyar constantly makes the family move further and further away from the village. In the end they cannot find any more land for a new taungyar near the old village. So they have to find land for their new taungyar and when they found land to their linking, the village also is moved to the new site and builds a new village.<sup>1</sup>

The land for their new taungyar must be a slope. It must not have deep forest. After the place had been chosen, they clear the side of trees and bushes. Then they have to leave it for about a year. Then in Tabaung of next year, they have to cut down completely new shoots and old stumps of the taungyar plot and burn it down alone by a family or two families helping each other. On the taungyar plot prepared to their satisfaction. They have to grow first early ripening "paddy". Before planting the paddy in the new taungyar, the earth has to be ploughed smooth three times. When the earth has been thoroughly ploughed the earth has to be leveled and plant the "early ripening paddy" in the month of **Tagu**<sup>2</sup>. In planting paddy, the man has to walk in front and pierce the ground with a sharp-pointed stick and the woman has to follow him, dropping seeds into the holes. If the rains are good at this time of planting, the seed will

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<sup>1</sup> Taungyar cultivation-တောင်ယာစိုက်ပျိုးရေး

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 2. (မကျေးရွာအပြားအရွယ်မြင်းဟည်မယာပ်မြင်း ဟွမ်ရှ)

<sup>3</sup> Tagu- တခုလ

sprout in (4) or (5) days. When the plants are about (9) inches they have to start weeding. A new taungyar needs only one weeding but an old taungyar may need three times. First you may need a small pickaxe but when new grass grows, they may be picked by hand.

In the past the taungyars on the hills regions had very fertile earth, there is no need for special fertilizers. The paddy ripens in (100) days after planting and in (4) months or (120) days, it is ready to be reaped. They used the sickle for reaping paddy, and the paddy plants are kept in bundles.

A plot of ground is cleared to thrash the paddy. A rough bamboo mat is spread on the place. Two posts with forks are erected on either side of this 12-foot wide space. A long bamboo pole is placed horizontally on the forks of the posts. The bundles of paddy are swung with force and thrashed on the bamboo pole. As a man thrashes another man stands by and fans the balling seeds with a bamboo tray blowing away the dust and chaff.

The paddy seeds are put into gunny bags and tied with rope like the bamboo basket (paline) they carry. The women carry these paddy bags on the back with the rope across their forehead. The men carry it on their shoulders. The paddy is stored in their barn, which is a big basket of bamboo, woven by them. After they have stored the paddy in this basket, to suffice for a year-

1-plate of rice

1-bowl of curry is offer to the guardian nat of the born, praying that they may get enough and more paddy next year too.

The long growing paddy is grown in 'Waso'. It is grown in the same way as early ripening paddy. From the seed to sprout and up to weeding each step has to be done in the same way. The long growing paddy ripens and (6) months or (180) days and is ready for reaping.

When the paddy is ripening, they have to guard against birds. They have to make a scarecrow out of old cloths and a post in the middle of the field. The children also help to keep the birds away, but if there are no children the old people themselves have to keep watch.

When the rains are good the yield per acre is (5) lans so (4) acres would yield (20) lans.

1 lan = 10 tins

1 tin = 6 pyis

1 tin paddy when pounded in a mortar yields (3) pyis of rice. The Lisu nationals also grow a little glutinous rice for making of offerings to the nats. A family would grow about  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of glutinous rice. It is grown at the same time as the long growing paddy, and can be reaped earlier in (5) months time or (150) days. The taungyar land is prepared in the same way as for growing paddy and the same process for planting is followed. If the rains are good the yield (2) lan per year i.e. 20 tins and if (2) tins are pounded, the yield is about (5)pyis.

The lisu nationals do not do agriculture on a business scale to make money. They grow just enough for their yearly need. They also practice reciprocal labor contribution system where one family helps another in the same way. They also borrow and lend paddy among them and when they pay back the next year, there is no need to give interest for it.

### **Big corn**

Big corn is grown in the taungyar. It is grown chiefly to feed the chicken and pigs reared in the house. In growing the big corn, the earth has to be prepared in the same way as growing of paddy. It is planted in Waso(ဝါဆို) and can be planted by one man. A bamboo stick about 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  feet is sharpened at one end. The planter makes holes with one hand and puts (3) or (4) corn seed in it. The holes are dug 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  feet apart and two pyis of are needed for (1) acre. The seeds sprout in about (5) days and when the plant is (9) inches high, you have start weeding. The corn can be plucked in (5) months or (150) days after planting. Each plant yields (2) cobs at the most and the corn is more than (18) inches long. They can plant corn again the next year. Some people grow pumpkins among the corn. The fruit matures in (4) months. After the corn has

been plucked, the stalks are cut from the ground and left in the fields as fertilizer.

### **Small corn**

The small corns are grown in their own vegetable garden. They plant it in Tagu(ᄒᄃᄆᄇᄃ) and it is ready to be plucked in (3) months or (90) days. It is planted just enough for family consumption. It is planted in the same way as big corn. They set aside seed for the next year and the rest is food for the family for the year.

### **Potato and Taro**

The plant potato and taro are cultivated in Tabaung. The sprouts appear only after one or two showers of rain after planting. The earth has to be prepared with a chopping-hoe. The holes are (18) inches apart and in each hole they put in (2) potatoes or(2) taros. If you plant (10) viss of potato or taro the yield is 100-200 viss. The potato field is good for planting core the next year. The potato fields do not need any fertilizers. The Lisu nationals plant only one fruit or grain a year.

### **b. Livestock breeding**

The Lishaw (Lisu) national rear chiefly pigs and poultry because they essential for their weeding ceremony and funeral rites. They are also needed for the traditional nat offering they make in their social, economic and health affairs. They breed poultry just enough for the family to manage and in rearing pigs the poor family rears about 5 to 10 and the well-to-do family may rears 30-40 pigs. They do not sell the pork when they kill a pig for meat but give to each other on a reciprocal basis.

In the past, the Lisu nationals use pork fat for cooking and they make it for use the whole year. The meat is preserved with just a little salt and hung on the fireplace beam for the family and entertaining the guests.

The pig and poultry reared are not in pens. They are just around the house in all seasons of rain, summer and winter. The animals are fed once in the morning and once at sunset in the evening. The food is big corn grown for them by themselves. The corn is mixed with water. Every Lisu has dogs, which are very useful in their hunting.

### **c. Hunting and Fishing**

The Lisu nationals due to the circumstances of the region they live in, must hunt for meat. So hunting is a skill that every man must learn and master. The boy from young learns the skill of hunting from his father. They are taught how to shoot the bow and arrow, how to hunt and how to trap the animals, by their fathers in their free time. As soon as they are grown up, they have to accompany their fathers on the hunting trips and it is alone in all seasons. Hunting is not done for trade but because they are fond of the sport, they hunt to get meat to celebrate festivals and to get food and shelter for the family. They may hunt alone or in a group.

When they go hunting in a group, it may take 4 or 5 days and they have to take along food, rice, salt, onions, oil and pots and pans. On the day they leave for the hunt, they have to pray on bent knees before the house nat shrine and in front of the house that they may be free from harm. Then at a big tree near their house, they have to light two incense sticks and pray to the guardian nat of the tree to guard them from harm on their hunting trip. When they get into the forest too, in a place where the group is to encamp for the night, one member of the group prays to the guardian nat of a big tree there, and tells how many nights they will sleep there and to permit them to rest there. They must not behave rudely to each other, otherwise they will have no kill. They must ask

the forest guardian nat to allow them to relieve themselves before they do it or they will have no kill.

When they cook food to eat, they have to cook a vegetable dish and offer to the forest nats, wrapped in a leaf. They also have to make an offering of rice and curry to the fireplace nat. They have to do all these things, so that they will not lose their way in the forest while on a hunt. If they get small animals like deer, rabbit and camber, they just cook and eat in the forest.

But if the kill is a big animal, then they have to take from a nearby tree, three clans with leaves and holding the three clans together, sweep over the body of the kill three times requesting the evil nats to leave and if they wish to eat the food, they are welcome to eat peacefully. After such propitiation's only the kill is cut up and shared and taken back to the village.

The instruments they take for hunting are the crossbows and arrows made of bamboo, the catapult, the knife and the basket. They do not use any poison of any kind. The hunt is planned for any time convenient for them. They do not have to choose any special day or time. The meat they bring back from the hunt is shared with their neighbors and offered at the house nat shrine. The offering is

2- plates of rice

2- cups of liquor

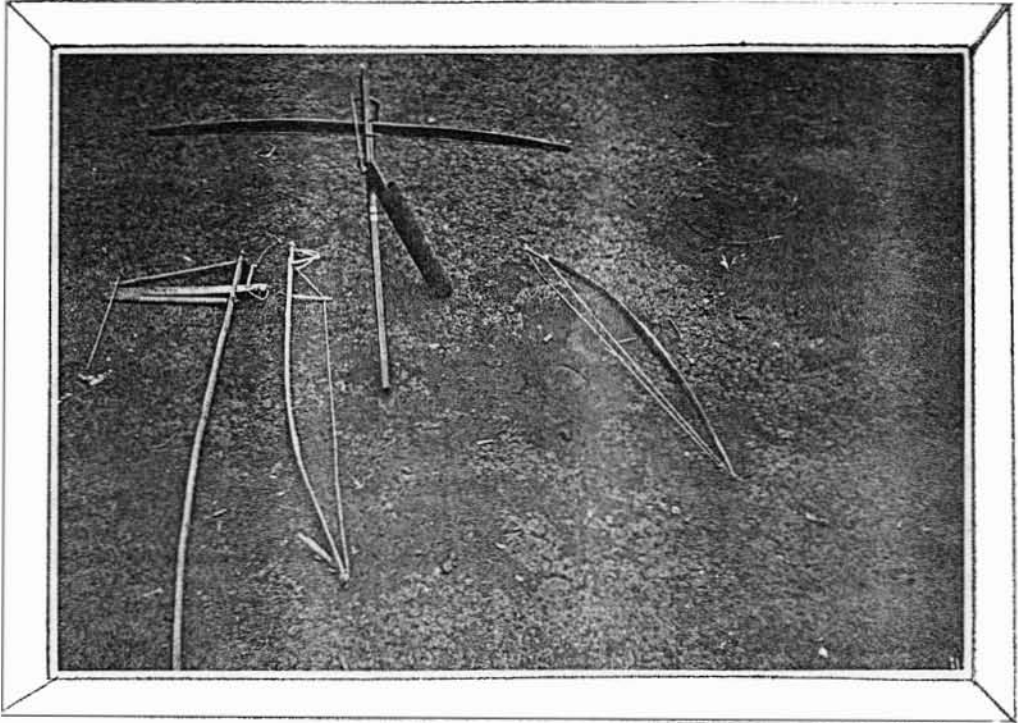
2- sticks of incense

1- plate of boiled meat.

The Lisu nationals do not sell the horns of the deer, somber and guar and the skins of the deer, leopard and tiger. They are kept as valuable souvenirs of their hunt. The three methods of hunting are: -

- (1) To make noise by beating bushes and frightening the animals out
- (2) Shoot the kill from hiding.





Hunting Tools

(3) By putting our snares.

The method of beating the bushes and frightening the game out is used when they hunt in groups of 10 to 20 people and stay in the forests to hunt for 10 to 20 people and stay in the forests to hunt for 10 to 15 days. They hunt for the joy of hunting and the kill they get is divided equally. Arguments have never arisen concerning the division of the game they got.

Lone hunters who hunt for their own livelihood use the method of shooting down the game from hiding. He uses the percussion lock fire arm, cross bow and arrows. The hunter who hunts alone is very skilled in the art of hunting. The method of using snares is done only on the outskirts of the forests near the village. We do not see many big snares. Rabbits, lizards squirrels, wild fowl, birds, pangolin, field mouse are caught with the noose snares and nets.

Fishing is done also in-groups and alone. There are no names for fish. They must not take rice with pork curry when they go fishing. If they did so, they will not get any fish. There are also taboos in going fishing like hunting. In making a fish trap, they must not mix the end and tip. They also catch the water animals with nets, iron traps and fishing rod. Sometimes they build a dam across the stream to catch fish. The catch is divided equally among the fishermen.

#### **d. Domestic Handicrafts**

The national nationals of Myanmar, living in the various regions of Myanmar have the same aims in making the domestic handicrafts they use in their work and in their homes. They depend on themselves to produce all their needs and so they make all the things needed by their family by themselves. The Lisu nationals living in Nam San township in Southern Shan State too are self sufficient. The Lisu women weave the cloth they need for their clothing. The baskets and trays they use in their taungyar are also woven by them. The mats in their homes are also the work of the women. Besides making traditional

medicines for their health needs also are made at home. So the main work done at home are: -

- (1) Weaving on the back-strap loom.**
- (2) Weaving of baskets and household articles with bamboo.**
- (3) Making traditional indigenous medicines.**
- (4) Brewing liquor.**
- (5) Wage earning jobs.**
- (6) Farming labor force.**

#### **(1) Weaving on the back-strap loom**

The Lisu nationals did not have this back-strap weaving industry before. They have to make up their own national by hand sewing in the past. They use to buy the cloth from the market and sew it by hand. Nowadays due to economic circumstances, having to work in the taungyars and other household duties, they cannot sew their clothes anymore. It uses to take as long as one year to sew their full set of the national dress. Nowadays the dress can be sown in one or two months.

The main things the Lisu women weave on their back-strap loom are the typical pieces of decorations they put on their national dress. They also weave the shoulder bags. The typical traditional decorations of their national dress is not woven the back-strap loom. They can buy the multi-colored yarns from the market. The back-strap loom is built on hard ground. They first erect (2) posts and on it put up the crossbeam. Then they wind the warp thread to the beam. The length and breadth depends on their needs. The other side of the loom is strapped to the back of the weaves. In this loom there is the cross beam, the warp thread hedge row, the middle axle, the heddle rod, back-strap, cloth beam,

belt and bobbin, a temple the (10) parts of the loom. Only one woman can weave at a time.

## (2) Weaving baskets with bamboo

Among the handicrafts of the Lisu nationals is the art of weaving baskets and trays with bamboo. They weave all the things needed for their taungyar, like baskets of all kinds to carry, to store and household use are all made of bamboo. The Lisu nationals are very skilled in handling bamboo, but they make them only for their use and sometimes only we may find a few sold in market. The bamboo can be cut down from the forests. The Lisu national craftsmanship in bamboo is fine and delicate, some can be used even to fetch water and some to carry firewood, so that they often take them on their travels. The baskets the women carry on their backs beautifully finished works of art. They use them for light as well as heavy work. They use kyainkahtan, meingkyu and giant bamboo. The strong baskets carry paddy from the taungyar and the delicately woven baskets contain the women's utilities and they carry them strapped to their forehead.

The house mat also is woven by them just as the flooring of bamboo is cut from the **forests**<sup>1</sup> by themselves. The thatch too is cut and threaded into slats by themselves. So the Lisu nationals are very independent and try their best to do everything they need on their own.

### **(3)Traditional medicine production**

The Lisu nationals use the natural roots, bulbs and barks of plants and trees and some from the animals. These things are collected when they go hunting in the forests. They began using them for their health at first by experiment. They use these natural medicines from the youngest child to the oldest person in the house. Sometimes, while out hunting they may get some very valuable medicinal roots of trees. They bring them home and are kept for the family use and never sold. I will present some of the medicines used by the Lisu nationals for the most common illnesses they suffer.

If the child does not talk when it is time for him to talk or if he stutters, or if the child flesh is hot and cold in turns, have fever or stomach ache, they take a handful of and squeeze the juice and drunk mixed with rice washed water. In three days the illness is completely cured, so effective is this medicine that they believe in it firmly. Another medicine for the same illnesses is juice mixed with water. If a child's nose should bleed due to playing in the sun, leaf is crushed in one's palms and made to inhale the smell.

If children or adults catch a cold by bathing at the wrong time, they take the ashes of burnt deer skin, cold rice burnt in the copper of a knife handle, burnt ash of a lacquered betel box, red fute string tied at the neck of a cattle burnt ash are mixed together and drunk with water as medicine. It is also used for food poisoning and loose bowels. For dizziness and headache they have to inhale the scent of fresh pine tree sap. For sore throat they drink the water in which a baked sea bean had been soaked. Another cure is to drink the water wrung from a wet towel. In the past, they even believed that pig droppings wrapped in a thin muslin cloth and soaked in water to have medicinal value.

If they should have an accident in the forest and get bone injuries broken or cracked, they have to wash it with man or women's urine. The pond sour and wild grapes bulls, and mixed with black glutinous boiled water, they make a

poultice over the injury. The patient feels better in three days and completely healed in ten days.

If a breast-feeding mother suffers from blocked breast and the milk doesn't flow, she has to eat burnt ash of porcupine quills and poke the nipple holes with the rough hair of the pig's neck.

#### **(4)Brewing liquor**

Since Lishaws are animists liquor is needed when they worship traditional spirits. According to the customs, liquor is drunk by everybody no matter whether adult or children, male or female at festivals. In the olden days Lishaws brewed liquor at home and sold at the towns' markets. Nowadays, the government does not allow selling liquor and Lishaws brew it only for family and festivals.

The process of brewing is as follows:

First of all, 0.07 bushel of mixed rice,(Shan rice, glutinous rice and corn) must be soaked in water for 3 days. After that the mixture must be crushed to powder, some pepper, 3 or 4 betel leaves and 4 red pepper must be mixed with pounded until they become powder. Then the powder must be mixed with pounded mixed rice and some water. It must be formed into balls and put orderly in the basket in which banana leaves are spread out and must be covered and leave them for 3 days.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day some cooked rice must be put on the mat. When it becomes cold must be mixed balls of thoroughly by with rice. Then they must be placed in the baskets, which is spread out banana leaves and must be covered. After leaving it for 3 days and when it becomes warm, put it into earthen pot, pour some water, without covering and placed it under the shadow for 2 days.

2 days later the pot is put upon the pot which is filled with water and it must be heated. On the upper most dried ground is put. At one side of the gourd, a hole must be made and a bamboo stick is inserted into it. The bamboo stick must pass through the cold water pot. At the end of the bamboo stick, one may get first distillate liquor which may be stronger 4 or 5 times than the normal liquor.

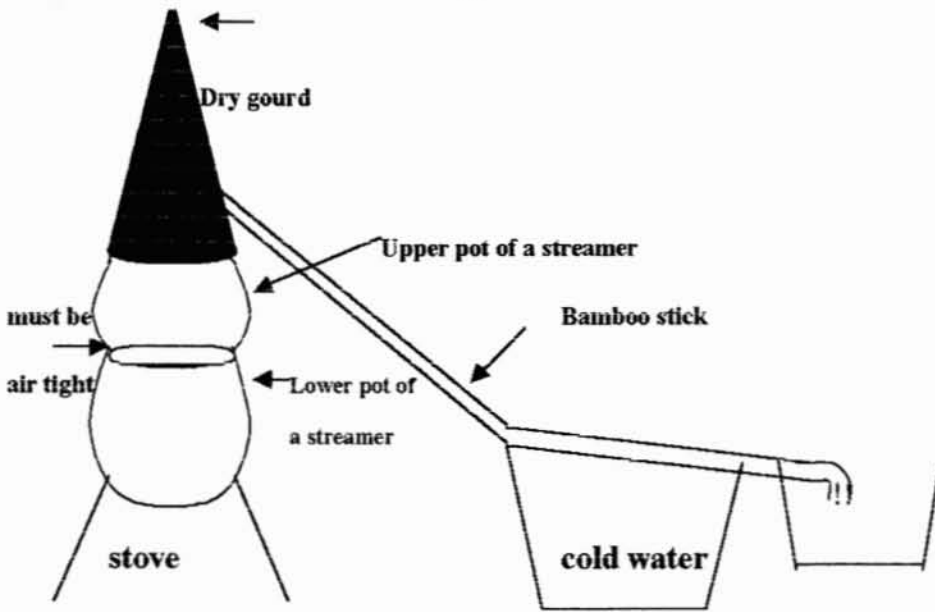
Lishaws do not appreciate the stranger's visit them while they are brewing liquor and intoxicating brew. They assume that the persons who are ill luck visit them, will get less liquor and intoxicating brew will be turned bad. But if the persons they respected visit them or the close friends come, the most offer them with liquor.

### **-Brewing intoxicating brew and Khaungyei**

Sticky rice must be washed many times as a first step. Then washed sticky rice must be drained and cooked accordingly. When it becomes cool, must be mixed with which can be bought from China. After that must be put into either in earthen pots in earthen pots or in baskets which are airtight by using banana leaves. One week later, one will get and intoxicating brew which is ready to have liquid gets from intoxicating brew is called Khaungyei and can be drunk of liquor. Mainly Lishaws cook intoxicating brew, egg, honey and **gadou**<sup>1</sup> together and taken them as tonic. When yeast cannot be bought easily, Lishaws use tubers and bulbs, which they can find in the forest. But intoxicating brew and Khaungyei cannot be brewed when it is raining and not sunny.

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<sup>1</sup> collective term for a group of five aromatic substances used in traditional pharmacology.



### e. Forming labor force

The Lishaw nationals have the custom of living among their national nationals in family groups. Wherever they go, they Enquirer after the relatives descended from their forefathers and would live near the closest relative circles. In having relations with the governing authorities, in associating with each other, they depend on the strong relative background that can support them. The combined strength of relatives is the focal point in social affairs.

How Lishaw nationals form labor forces:-

- (1) Combined work force.
- (2) Reciprocal labor
- (3) Wages or paid labor



### **(1) Combined labor forces**

In doing agricultural work, it is impossible without combined labor. In clearing a place for the taungyar, in cultivation of crops and harvesting, the labor of the whole village used. The owner of the taungyar gives the afternoon meal and entertains the workers with liquor and **khaungyei**<sup>1</sup> for their contribution of labor. Hunting and fishing is done in-groups and the meat and fish are equally divided among them. They are fed with both morning and evening meals and entertained with liquor and taungyar.

Nowadays, in the affairs of the village, making a road or building a bridge and social functions, people contribute their labor. In the same way, all participate in funerals and weddings as sharing of sorrows and joys. Such contribution of combined labor is seen among the Lisu nationals.

### **(2) Reciprocal Labour**

Reciprocal labor is found among private individual families. It is the practice of one family helping another family in turn. If a family should clear land for a taungyar or build a house, other families come and help them. They are fed the afternoon meal and entertained with liquor or khaungyei. This family in turn helps the families who came to help them when the need arises in their big or small affairs.

If for some reason he can not return the labor personally through sickness or been away on a journey, he can send someone in his stead, or send

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<sup>1</sup> Khaungyei= ခေါင်ရည်

food or lend the necessary implements need for the occasion.

We see one family helping another in funerals and weddings and celebration of eating the new harvest. In this kind of reciprocal labor it not mean just between two families. The family that is helped may be one family but the helpers may be from more than one family. This sort of reciprocal labor is seen among the related families.

### **(3)Wages of Paid Labour**

The increase in the number of people in one family or the death of the head of the house may make it impossible for that family to live on the produce of the farm. Then they have to look for other means of income to supplement the original income. The average income of a wage earner is kyats 150 - 200 . So the children may work as a government servant while still helping out with the taungyar work.

In the past, there are no such things as paid workers among the nat worshippers of the Lisu national nationals. In clearing land for a taungyar, in building a house, in cultivating a taungyar, in harvesting and setting fire to the taungyar, the system has always been reciprocal labor. These helpers have never been paid in money but in kind such as paddy and garden produce. It may be because they do not want money but may be they prefer to have paddy or something to eat than money.

Now we find a few people who work for money. Even children help by gathering firewood and fetching water for the family. The daily wage rate in ((1998-1999) is about K. 100/- K.150/-. We even find some Lisu nationals from Heigh-Phut village going to other regions for business, for example they have gone as far as the Thai border to earn money.

## **f. Trade Buying and Selling**

The Lisu nationals in Heigh Phut village tract do agriculture mainly for consumption of the family. The paddy and the garden produce with the poultry and pigs they rear provide them with their family's needs. Sometimes they supplement their food by hunting and fishing. The things they use in the house like pots and baskets, their clothes are all produced by their labor. They sell only the surplus, which is not much. So there is no big trade as buying and selling. It's more barter than trade. It is more exchange gable of what they have extra for what the other person has, which they want. So they are bartering for what each party wants from the other. To get what they want is more important than the money.

The Lisu nationals have some free time when the work on the taungyar is finished. Then they take their surplus grain and garden produce, and things from the forest they have got from hunting, and their handicrafts to the weekly market day declared in each village in turn. All the other villages also come to this village and barter for goods they want.

On market day the Lisu nationals bring their garden produce of chilies celery, lentils, corn, sessemun, vegetables and bananas, also honey, ginger, brooms and baskets of the forest and home fermented liquor and khaungyci to sell and to barter. Thus the Lisu national buys or barter the things the family need with their surplus things.

Trading business is done more by the women than the men who usually sell things from the forests like cane, firewood and medicinal herb and bulbs. the Lisu nationals in the past use to measure by hand e.g. handful, fingers span i.e. middle finger and thumb span, the length of both arms stretched out sideways, the length of a bamboo pole, the distance of a javelin throw. They do not have their traditional weights and scales. They use the scales used by the Shan nationals of their region.

**Number (1) to (10) in Lisu language**

<b>Myanmar</b>		<b>English</b>		<b>Lisu</b>
၀	tit	1	one	hteat(ထီ)
၂	hnit	2	two	nyeat(ညီ)
၃	thown	3	three	sa(ဆာ)
၄	lay	4	four	leat(လီ)
၅	nga <sup>*</sup>	5	five	nga(ငါ)
၆	chauk	6	six	soat(ဆီ)
၇	khunhit	7	seven	sheat(ရှီ)
၈	shit	8	eight	tet(တဲ)
၉	coh	9	nine	coo(ကူး)
၁၀	titsai	10	ten	seat(ဆီ)

**Weights**

<b>Myanmar</b>	<b>Lishaw(Lisu)</b>
Titpyi(တစ်ပြည်)	hteat phay(ထီဖေ)
Tit khware(တစ်ခွဲ)	hteat khware(ထီခွဲ)
Tit tin(တစ်တင်း)	nyi khware(ညီခွဲ)
Sai tin(ဆယ်တင်း)	hteat soe(ထီဆိုး)

**Measures**

<b><u>Myanmar</u></b>	<b><u>English</u></b>	<b><u>Lishaw(Lisu)</u></b>
letma(လက်မ)	one inch	hteat letma(ထိလက်မ)
timite (တစ်မိုက်)	six inches	hteat phay(ထိဖေ)
tinyo(တစ်ညှိ)	thumb to forefinger	hteat nyeat(ထိညှိ)
ti htwar(တစ်ထွာ)	nine inches/ ¼ yd.	Htee twee(ထီးတွီး)
taung soat(တောင်ဆုပ်)	elbow to close fist	dwee char(ဒွီချာ)
tidaung(တစ်တောင်)	18 inches/ ½ yd.	Htate char(ထိချာ)
nyit daung(နှစ်တောင်)	36 inches/ 1 yd.	Nyi char(ညှိချာ)

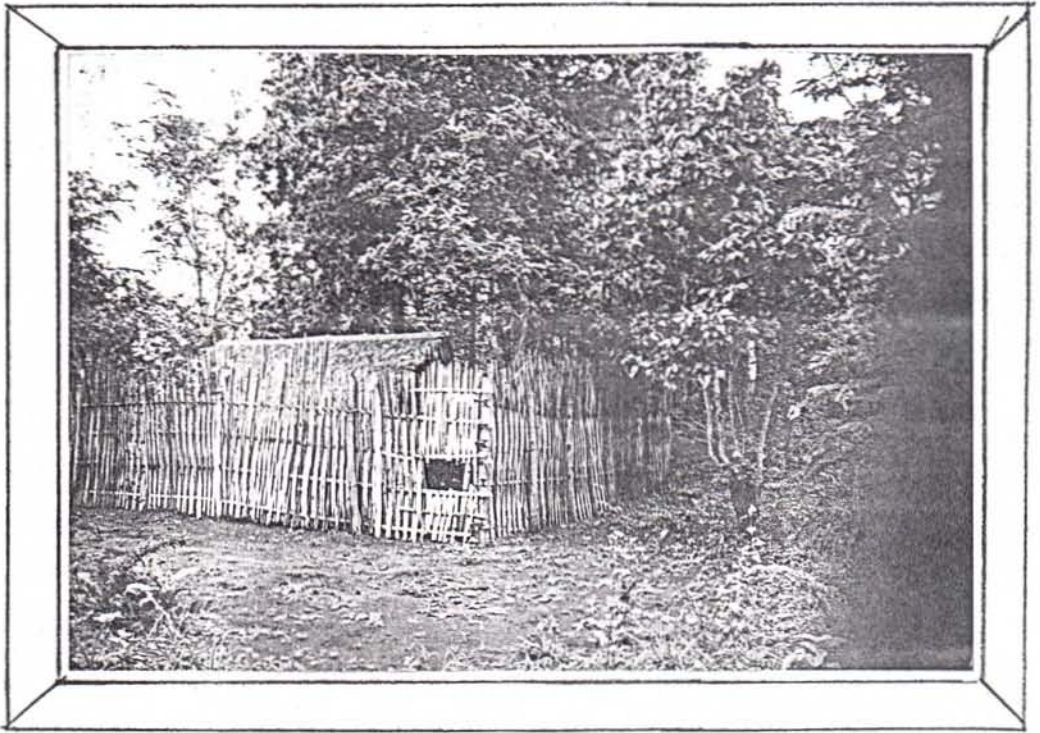
## CHAPTER 5. RELIGIOUS BELIEF

### **a. Specialization for each year and seasons**

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals have according to traditional beliefs specialize a living animal for each year e.g the year of the tiger, the year of the rabbit etc. The animals are: -

- 1.Tiger
- 2.Rabbit
- 3.Dragon
- 4.Snake
- 5.Horse
6. Sheep/ Goat
7. Monkey
- 8.Cock
9. Dog
- 10.Pig
11. Rat/ Squirrel
- 12.Cow

It changes every year, so the animal will have its turn again after (12) years. For example if in 1999, the traditional animal is the rabbit,  $1999 + 12 = 2011$ , in only the year 2011 the rabbit will come back.



Traditional shrine of Lisu



Inside of the shrine

In the same way the twelve months of the year have each an animal that influences their lives. So also each day of the week has an animal for that day.

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals believe that in the years of the Tiger and the Rabbit, they have less rain. They have strong winds and heavy rains in the years of the Dragon and the snake. The year of the horse brings abundant harvests.

In the year of the Goat, is the year when any business venture is successful. Forest fires, strong winds and heavy rains come in the years of the Monkey and the Cock. They get good harvests in the year of the Dog. It is also the year when it is good to move the village and set up a new village. The year of the Pig brings heavy rains causing landslides. There can be strong winds and heavy rains in the year of the Rat or the Squirrel. Red-colored things are scarce in the year of the Cow e.g. chilies and groundnuts.

According to Lishaw (Lisu) beliefs, the years of the Tiger and the Rabbit are the worst years, and the Dragon year and the Horse year are the best years. In the same way according to the animals of the month and the day, and the good and bad, influences they have, they have to do their work. For example, the Dog year is the best year and the Dog day is the best day; so they try to conduct all their important affairs in their life on the Dog day.

### **b. Traditional beliefs in Nat Worship or Animism**

The Lishaw (Lisu) national chief belief is in traditional nats. They believe that there are guardian spirits of the forests and hills, of the waters and the earth, in the rivers and lakes, and in the town villages and their houses. They believe that in their daily life of earning their livelihood and their social activities of giving alms, marriage and birth, the nats are responsible for the good and evil of a mans life.

The Lishaw (Lisu) national believe that when a person dies, this spirit or soul goes to join the souls of his ancestors. This depends on how far his



family is able to do all the necessary rites so that his spirit will surely reach its destination. So it is very important a Lishaw (Lisu) national to have a shaman who can transport his spirit to the abode of the spirits of his ancestors. It is also important to have relatives like his son or grandson or close relative who can afford to stand the expenses of this ritual after his death.

They believe that the spirit and the body must always be together in this life. Once the spirit leaves the body, the person dies at once. The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals depend on their traditional nat to help them to make their life secure their business flourish and keep them from harm and diseases. So from the time he is born to the time of his death, the Lishaw (Lisu) man is busy with all the offerings and rituals he must carry out according to his beliefs in nat worship.

The Shaman is the most important person in the religious life a Lishaw (Lisu). He not only respects but also fears the nats. According to their beliefs, there are two kinds of nats, i.e the good nats and the evil nats. When they speak of the nats, they are very careful not to speak in terms or act in a way that might offend the nats. The paraphernalia and the food items for the nat are offered to the nat at the marked time and place with out mistakes. The paraphernalia for the nat is changed at the right time and the food to be offered is done at the correct time. The chickens and pigs seared at the house are mainly for offerings to the nats and not so much for home consumption. These are eaten only after being offered to the nats. Then the family shares it with their neighbors. In addition to these animals, the nat worshippers have to brew liquor and khaungyei for sudden unexpected use.

### **(1)Types of nats**

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals believe in many kinds of nats. Among them are the family or ancestral nats. This ancestor nat worship means their worship of the ancestors from the father's side and their mother's side. It is mainly the parents from the father's side. So you see in very house a nat shrine made to

the fathers parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. Also included are nats of the family, who have died sudden and violent deaths. So this is really ancestor worship.

The health of the person also, they believe depends on the nat. So when a person is sick, they at once consult a shaman and makes offerings to that particular nat. Even a poor person will do it at the expense of running into debt by having to make the consultation and the offering.

The nat offering is also a necessity in their social affairs of marriage, giving birth and death. In the same way from the start of clearing the taungyar to the time of harvest, all the period of cultivation, they must not forest the offerings to be made. They must propitiate the nats for bountiful harvest, for the herds to increase, their business thrive and have many children. They must make these offerings so that they may live long, free from harm and illness.

These offerings are dedicated in cultivating time and harvesting time to the guardian spirits of the house and the village for success in their work. it is usually done at the village nat shrine.

## **(2)The Shaman**

The shaman is a very important person for the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals who believe entirely in nat worship. He must be a man of experience and mature age to be able to perform all the rituals the nats. He must know how to preach and pray for the people at the nat shrine. The shaman is important also in celebrating the traditional festivals. Only the shaman can make the offering of meedeedoke leaf and incense stick at the nat shrine on full moon and new moon days.

The shaman is not hereditary. It does not mean that just because the father is a shaman the son will be a shaman. The cult is neither taught nor learnt. The man becomes a shaman because he is interested in the work of a

shaman and parties may be it is his destiny to be a shaman. The shamans work is not only to look after the religion beliefs concerning not worship but also in the social affairs of the people of the village. He has to participate like any other villagers in celebrating the festivals, living and eating on equal terms. No special privilege is given to the shaman.

The shaman and the villagers equally share the expenses incurred for the nat shrine. Another knowledgeable person can replace the shaman if his work is not satisfactory. The shaman who does not know or do his work properly can cause harm to the village. So the shaman who does wrong will himself be condemned to hell, so the Lisu nationals believed. A man can be a shaman as long as he can work and only in his old age give over to another person.

### **(3) Lishaw (Lisu) nationals belief in Christianity**

In the past the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals living on the hill regions believed in many kinds of nats and worshipped and made offerings to them. But from 1890 onwards-Christian missionaries came to same parts of the Shan State and started their mission of converting them to Christianity. They learnt the Lishaw (Lisu) national language and observed the culture and customs of the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals. They recorded the history and takes of the people and helped them with their livelihood. The missionaries brought them better social conditions by giving them modern health cures and education. Thus the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals slowly abandoned their traditional beliefs and worship of the nats. Today there are still some Lishaws (Lisus) who worship nats, but some Lishaw (Lisu) living in Heigh-Phut village tract have been converted to Christianity.

The missionaries showed that their illnesses can be cured by the antibiotic medicines instantly. Thus try to destroy their belief in nats curing their illness. The Lishaws (Lisus) are taught the teachings of Jesus that the only way to gain the peace of heaven is by being a Christian and believing in Jesus.

They have invented the Roman letters for the Lishaw (Lisu) language and written the Bible in the Lishaw (Lisu) language, and distributed them among the people. So they have accepted the teachings of Christ and are Christians today. There are hundreds of sects in Christianity, and the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals belong to the sect they were converted to. The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals mostly are Baptist Christians and Roman Catholic Christians.

Nowadays there are classes for religious training. On Sundays they have Sunday school for the 7 to 13 years old children. They teach the children Christian hymns or religious songs, Bible stories, history of Christ, plays and the Bible. Anyone who has attended Sunday school can teach back to others. It is a way of gathering the children into Christian religion.

### **c. Traditional Festivals**

Myanmar month	English month	Traditional festivals
Tagu(တန်ခူး)	April	Repairing the grave of their ancestors
Wakhaung(ဝါခေါင်)	August	Offering of fruits and grain
Tazaungmone (တန်ဆောင်မုန်း)	November	Eating the new harvest in Tazaungmone
Tabodwe(တပို့တွဲ)	February	New Year celebration
Tabaung(တပေါင်း)	March	Cleaning of the nat shrine festival

### (1)The Lisu New Year Celebration

The Lisu nationals celebrate the new year day festival on the 1<sup>st</sup>waxing day of **Tabodwe**<sup>1</sup> but in the year BE 1360(1999) according to the Myanmar calendar it was a double **Waso**<sup>2</sup> and so the Lishaw (Lisu)nationals consider it a big year, so the new year was moved on one month later and celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup>waxing day of **Tabaung** (15.2.99).

The Lisu celebrate the New Year in three stages: \_

- Pounding khaw poat (ခေါပုတ်) (steam glutinous rice)
- Planting pine trees
- Celebrating the New Year festival.

In preparing khawpoat, on the waning 13<sup>th</sup> day of Tabodwe(13.2.99)night, the rice has to be soaked in water. On the morning of the 14th waning day of Tabodwe (14.2.99) the shaman has to see that the mortar is clean by washing it with water. The pestle has to be changed even when it is in good condition. Then they have to try and test whether the pestle and mortar fit each other by pounding it.

When the first sound of the test pounding is heard, an elderly person has to pray that in this New Year, may all evil things disappear all the evils have been pounded out.

At the same time, the soaked rice is into the steamer called 'manyee'(မန်ညှိး) in Lisu. It is carved out of hard wood. The amount of glutinous rice steamed depends on the family economic circumstances. If they intend to steam (16) pyis; (9) pyis for the old year and (7) pyis for the New Year. When the rice is cooked, they have to pound it first for the nat .One person called 'Cosu' has to help the pounder by

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<sup>1</sup> Tabowe-တပို့ပွဲလ

<sup>2</sup> Waso- ဝါဆိုလ

pushing the rice to the middle. To prevent the Cosu's hands getting scarred and getting sticky, she has to rub her hands with the flour. They have to pound until the rice is smooth and sticky. They must pound for the old year, 6 slabs of 4 layers=24 layers.

Secondly, they have to roast sessemum and pound it in the mortar. When it is finished, the khawpoat for the people is pounded in the same way. She also uses sessemum to protect her hands from being scalded or sticky.

In pounding the rice, the powder **Tisu**<sup>1</sup> and the helper **Cosu**<sup>2</sup> have to synchronize their work. The rice and fall of pestle, its speed is regulated by the call on timing of the Cosu. So the Tisus has to peddle the loom according to Cosu timing.

The pounded balls of glutinous rice are placed on banana leaves wilted in the sun. A ball of pounded rice is placed on the banana leaf and flattened. Another ball of rice is flattened on it. So this process of putting on layer after layers of rice and banana leaf are done alternately until there are at least four layers to twelve layers at the most.

On the first waxing day of **Tabaung**<sup>3</sup> (15.2.99) they have to pound rice dedicated to the New Year. They have to make for the nats (6) slabs of (4) layers=24 slab and for the people (6) slabs of (2) layers=12 slab.

On (14-2-99) the 14<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Tabodwe night, they have to cut pine trees to celebrate the pine tree planting ceremony. When they have got the pine tree, they choose a suitable place in front of the house. Then they dig a hole and plant the pine tree. Near the pine tree, they have to put up a piece of bamboo 1 ½ long horizontally, about (2) feet from the ground. It is to represent the bow they use in hunting. Again near the pine-tree, they must plant a bamboo pole higher than the pine tree and bending over it. The bamboo pole is

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<sup>1</sup> Tisu-Lisu term( Cosu ငါပြောဆိုမှုပေါ်မူတည်၍ခေါ်ပုတ်ထောင်းသူ)

<sup>2</sup> Cosu-Lisu term(ခေါ်ပုတ်ထောင်းရာတွင် အဆွေအဖွဲ့နိယာန်ချက်ညီစေအောင်ပြောသူ)

<sup>3</sup> Tabaung-တပေါင်းလ

the symbol of the flagpole of success. On the tip of the bamboo pole they hang colorful streamers.

When everything is ready they hang two slabs of raw khawpoat, our price of raw pork. On the branches of the bamboo pole also is hung a half-moon shaped slab of Khawpoat. It is an offering the guardian spirits of the sun and the moon.

On top of the bows is lit an incense stick. It is the symbol of the arrow. Then they have to ask the nat concerned if all the preparations they have made are complete and acceptable or not.

Then they have to make a vow that if all the preparations they have made is complete and acceptable, to show a band of smoke up above in the sky. If it is unacceptable, then let that smoke fill the surroundings or beat down upon the people or let there be a small of burning.

If the concerned nats showed signs of acceptance, then pine tree planting ceremony is ended and it is the symbol of a success.

On that night, after having dinner at their own house, they gather together at the shaman's house and danced. They must very careful not to spill any water till New Year day. If they spill water then their taungyar will be flooded with rain and there will also be ill health and disease.

On 16-2-99, the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals have to prepare for the New Year. On the 1st day of New Year, at the first cocks crow. They have to get up and go to a well or stream and make an offering to the guardian spirits of the water.

They have to offer -

1-slab of khawpoat

1-piece of pork and

1-stick of incense and pray that they will have plenty of water supply in the New Year.

Then they have to draw some water, say we have come to fetch gold and silver on this auspicious day. Then putting in whatever pieces of gold and silver one has is put into the bowl and takes the water from the river or well. When they get home everybody in the house prays, may everybody be healthy and wash their faces with the water.

Then with this water they have to boil one piece of pork and one cock, and they have to fry 6-slabs of khawpoat with pork fat. When everything is ready, the following are put in a tray and taken and offering at the village nat shrine.

- 1-piece of raw pork
- 1-piece of boiled pork
- 1-boiled cock
- 1-slab of fried khawpoat
- 1-slab of uncooked khawpoat
- 4-sticks of incense
- 4-candles
- 2-cups
- 1-bottle liquor

1-shet colored paper string of thread forever four in the family.

Only the men go to the village nat shrine. The women left at home have to prepare the offerings to be made to ancestor nats at the house nat shrine. The women at home have to make little balls of khawpoat like glutinous rice and jaggery dumplings. They have to make 12 balls and put them in 12 small cups and slick a small stick in each cup. They have to arrange these 12 cups of khawpoat balls in a row in front of the nat shrine. Next they put 12 cups of water in a row on the khawpoat. Four cups of water are put in a third row. Besides (2) slabs of khawpoat, (1) piece of raw pork and (1) piece of boiled pork and (6) sticks of incense are also offering to the ancestor nats of the father's side at the house nat shrine.



In another Corner of the house, the ancestor nats of the mothers side are offered (1) cup of liquor, (6) slabs of fried khawpoat, (6) slabs of ordinary khawpoat, (1) piece each of boiled and raw pork. They pray to the ancestor nats, to bless the whole family, this year with health and good economic conditions.

On that day, the women must not go to the village nat shrine. They must not also visit other houses. If they did so, it is considered bad luck for that house and everything they do that year would be unsuccessful. So they throw hog wash on the female visitor as a punishment.

Before the people who went to the village nat shrine returned, the family members who remained behind have to feed the animals at home with corn. They have to strip the seeds and call the birds and chicken and pigs to eat by broad casting the seeds and telling the animals to eat their fill so their herds too will increase this year. They must not be angry if animals from other houses come and eat their feed.

The first person that arrives at the village nat shrine with the tray complete with everything has to listen to the sound of an animal near the environs of the shrine. It is to read the omens for the weather conditions for that year and the state of the country for that year.

The other people of the village, bringing their offering trays arrive slowly and as they wait for the late comes, they dance in the compound outside the nat shrine. According to Lishaw (Lisu) custom, somebody leads by playing his flute and as they dance, they sing that New Year has come and may it bring, health and suspiciousness and economic well being.

When everybody has arrived, all the offering trays are arranged properly, and the people sit on their haunches in front and around the nat shrine. The shaman leads the propitiation by saying that the offerings on made on this auspicious good Newyear day, that each family and the whole village will be free from disease, have good economic conditions. May their fields flourish and their animals thrive and be successful in all their undertakings. The

villagers have to pour liquor into the cups and light the incense sticks in the trays. Afterwards they all pay obeisance to the shrine. Then each person takes from his tray a taken piece of meat and khawpoat and cup of liquor and throw it away as if feeding the unseen evils from the eight directions of the earth, not to disturb them. As they throw these bits of meat and khawpoat they say if you are a male nat receive it with your palms and if you are a female nat receive it with your jacket.

Then the villagers eat the food in-groups round about the nat shrine. Some ask the shaman to tie the thread round their necks to keep them well and some burn the colored paper as offering money for the nats to spend.

After they have eaten, they read their future with the chicken bone. There are holes in the chicken leg bone. They put little sticks into the holes the signs by the way the sticks turn in the holes. And predicts the families private affairs, economic situation, the good and the bad in that New Year.

Examples: -

If by adding the holes in the two legs, they get 3/4, it is considered a good omen. But if they should add up to (5) then the family has to make another offering at the nat shrine. If the two sticks are turned inwards, it is a good omen, and if the sticks are turned out wards, it is a bad omen stick illustration.

The shaman has to propitiate the nat again after everybody had eaten. Then everything is finished for that day and they return home.

The family remaining at home must greet the first two people returning home with

- 1 bottle of liquor
- 1-piece of cooked pork
- 1-piece of raw pork
- 6-slabs fried khawpoat

6-slabs raw khawpoat - as bring going home with them gold and silver. Their return marks the success of the occasion. As soon as these two enter the house, any body can visit the house now.

Some people visit in pairs of 2, 4, and 6, as they believe even numbers are lucky as sown means everything. Thus the person entering the house may of himself as here comes the big bull, here comes the big buffalo big' big' big and bringing gold and silver. The homeowner also welcomes them and entertains the visitors lavishly with khawpoat, meat and liquor as bringing prosperity to both parties from this time. After coming back from the village nat shrine, they have to put at the entrance to the house, a tray with -

1-bottle of liquor

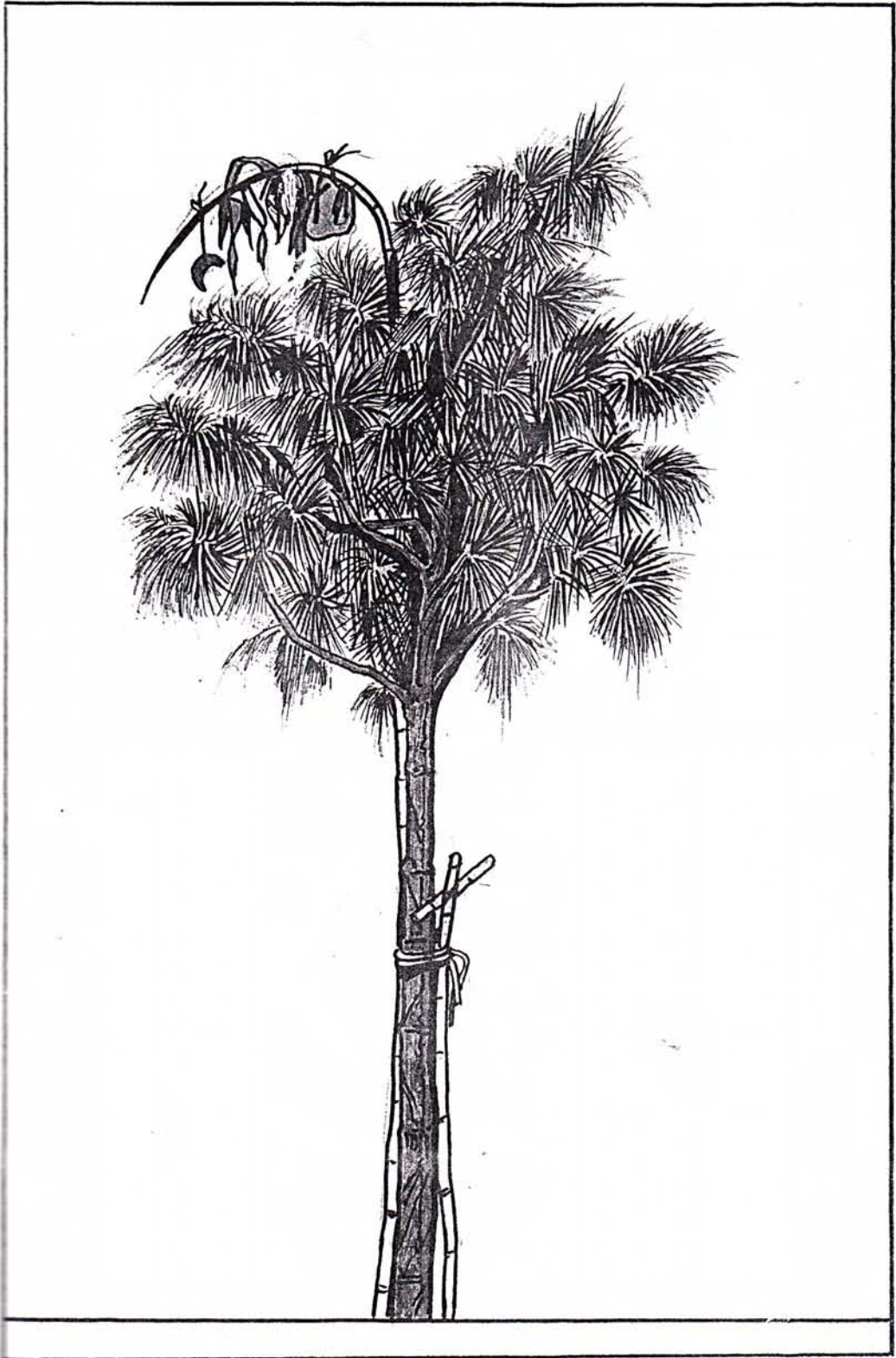
6-cups full with liquor

1-slab each of fried and raw khawpoat

6-sticks of incense and as much as person can afford, on a table and call upon the death of friends to come and eat and feed them. From this time the women can go visit other houses. This ends the morning session of the New Year celebrations.

In the evening after dinners, they gather at the shaman's house to go round dancing to other houses till the next morning. If there are (36) houses worshipping the nat, then will dance at (6) houses might for (6) days. When they start out from the houses they have to go to the right from the shamans house. At the last house they dance till the morning and that house entertains the entire quest with food. When they are about to go over to the next house, liquor is served to both boys and girls. It is a sign that dancing is finished in that house. They also have to prepare before the dance party arrives. Four incense sticks are light at the pine tree, six incense sticks are lighted at house nat shrine and one incense stick each on either side of the entrance to the house.

The light a strong king lamp at the pine trees. They dance round the pine going clockwise or in 2 or 3 rows. They have to sing a variety of auspicious



Preparing of pine-tree for New Year Celebration



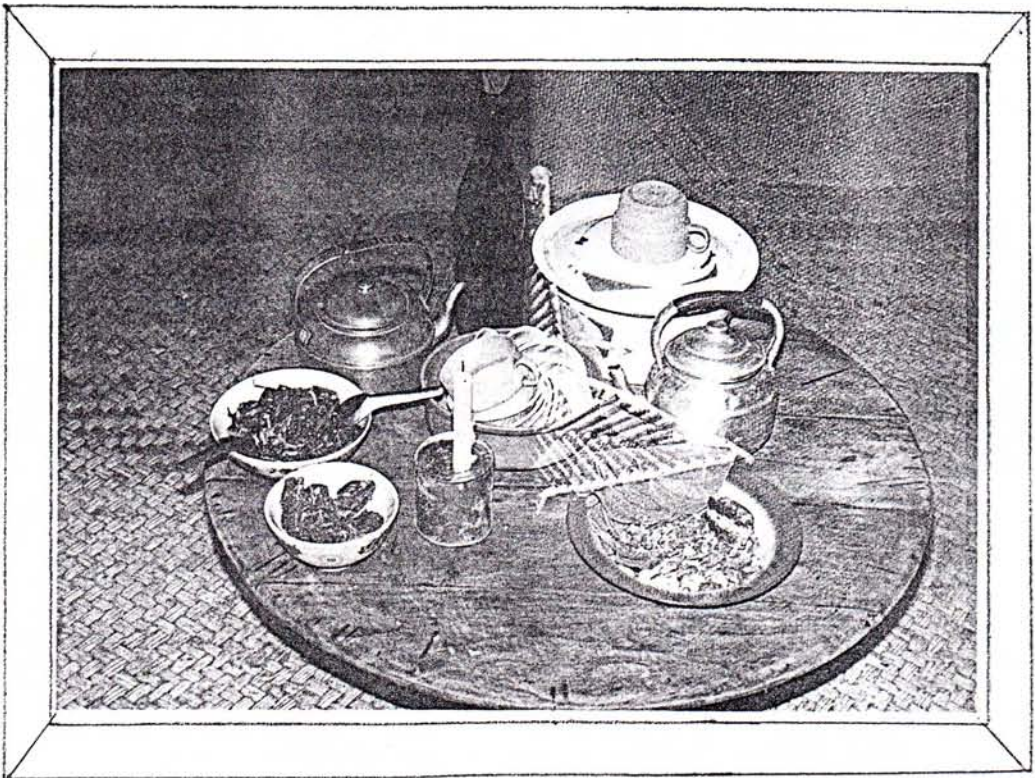
Praying at New Year festival  
leading by shaman



Praying to get leading by shaman  
in new Year festival



Preparation of steamed & pounded glutinous rice  
for New Year



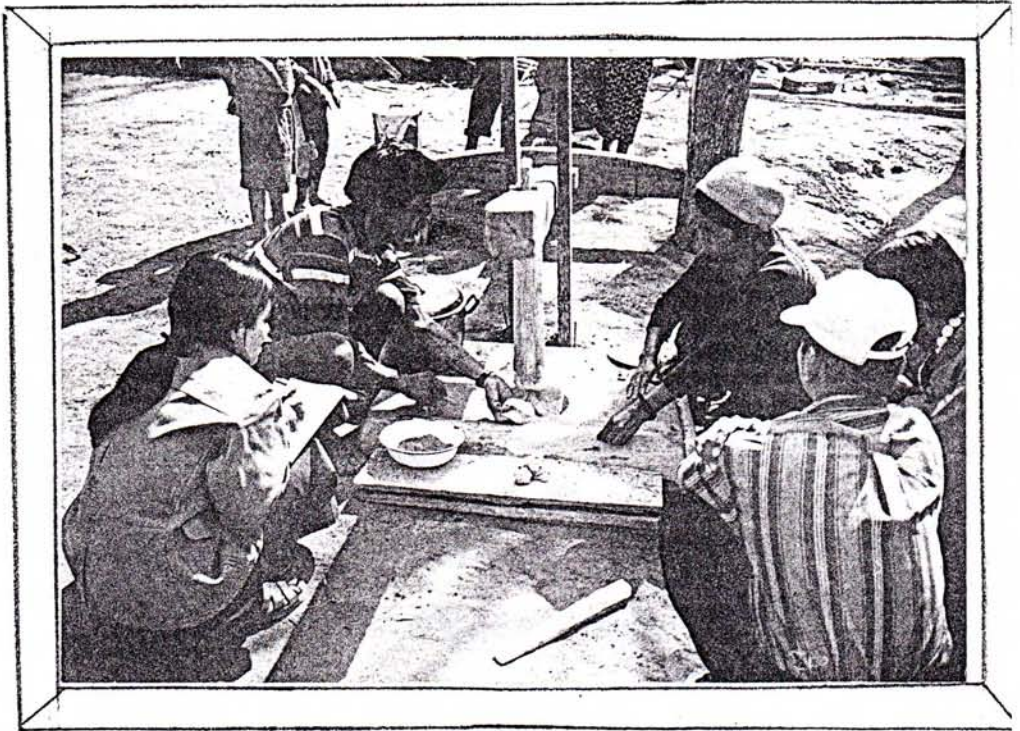
Meal for guests



**Ancient traditional pot used  
for steamed glutinous-rice**



A Set of Simple Wooden Device of Boom  
& Pestle for polishing rice



Preparing for the New Year festival



songs as they dance. The flute and banjo players lead them. They dance and sing joyously.

This dancing begins from the first day of New Year to 6 or 8 days. In some Lishaw (Lisu) villages it may stretch (15) days. The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals do not do any work from the day they plant the pine tree to the end of the New Year celebrations. Those who are away from the village also try to come back to the village to celebrate the New Year together with his family.

In the waxing month of Tabodwe or in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> waxing month of Tabaung in 1999, after having breakfast, they pay respects to their father and mother and grandparents with Khawpoat, pork and liquor and as many things as they can afford. Then they go round the village and pay respects to the elderly people with things they can afford. Then these elderly people too entertain them with food and drink if they can afford it. The least is warm water so liquor. The young people too as they pay obeisance to the elders, asks for forgiveness if they have by word or deed wronged them. The elders in return bless them with health and succession their work.

On the last day of celebrating the New Year for 6/8/15 days, they have to take down the pine tree. At the time they uprooted the tree, they have to pray we have uprooted the pine tree, and if there are any evils, let them be uprooted and be gone.

They have to collect all the uprooted pine trees and throw away in a clean place. The taking down of the pine tree also makes the end of the New Year celebrations.

## **(2) Cleaning of the nat shrine festival**

The Lisu nationals have to clean the village not shrines on the 7<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Tabaung. They believe that their village will be destroyed if they failed to do so.

The villagers have to come to village not shrine on that cleaning day. They have to bring with them,

5-chicken ( 3 cocks 2 hens)

1-pig (female)

24-incense sticks

24-candles

-Liquor

-Rice or cooked rice

They have to offer the (5) chickens as follows: -

1-cock + 1 hen for the village nat shrine

1-cock + 1 hen for the guardian nats of the forests and hills.

1-cock or hen for the road leading to the nat shrine.

### **1-pig:**

The pig is not for offering to the nats. But according to the situation, the pig's head and legs may be used instead of the chicken. It is mainly for the villagers to eat often the cleaning and offering has been done at the shrine.

24- incense sticks

8- incense sticks are for the road that leads to the nat shrine

8- incense sticks are for the village nat shrine

8- incense sticks are for the smaller shrine near the village nat shrine

### **24- candles**

The first (8) candles are lit on the road leading to the nat shrine, to prevent people from talking evil and to stop criticism. The second (8) candles are lit for the village guardian nat.(4) candles have to be lit before killing the cock for the offering. The third (8) candles are lit at the small nat shrine near the village nat shrine.

First of all to make the offering on the road to the nat shrine, a chicken has to be killed. They have to the blood of the chicken in a bowl as its throat is cut. Then the entrails have to be removed. The chicken blood and entrails are buried on the road. It is done to prevent people from criticizing and to ask the

nat to forgive the villagers who may have done wrong. So the apologies for any wrong done is recited as they bury the blood and entrails. The person who is cutting the throat of the chicken also has to be praying that there will be no harm in the family and in the village.

The shaman does the making of offerings. The villager can of course help the shaman in his work. They believe that any person who does the offerings without proper knowledge will go mad.

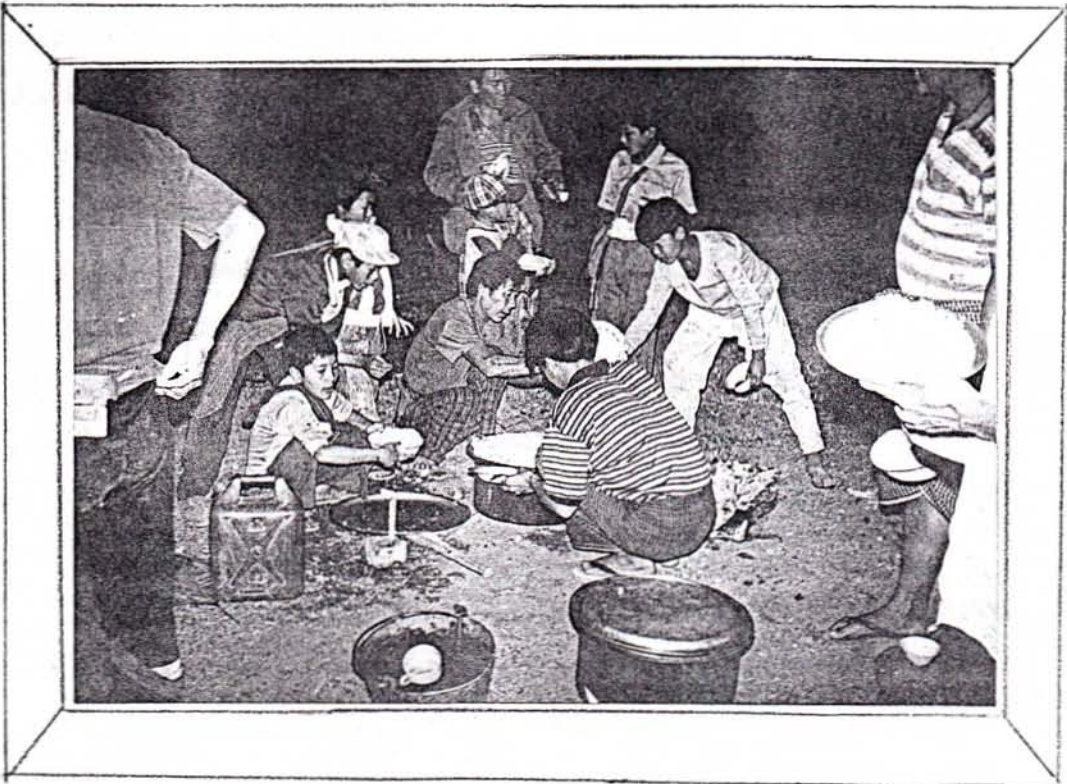
When the villagers clean the village nat shrine, if they find the thatch roof in a bad condition or the walls in bad shape, they have to repair it. They have to prepare the thatch roof, two or three days ahead. The villagers share the expense of repairing the nat shrine. On the day they repair the nat shrine, from the time they start burning it, no one must pound the rice, even if they have no rice to cook for that day. The people who go to work in their taungyar are asked to return home early, so as to avoid all harms.

The big tree in the nat shrine compound must not be cut down. Only the bushes and creepers are cleaned away. Cutting down the big trees would remove the shade they give, which keeps the shrine cool and peaceful.

The two chickens, a cock and a hen are offered alive at the village nat shrine. They are offered alive as a symbol of increasing the breed. So they say we offer these live chicken to your keeping, so that the breed will increase and give us a living. Then after killing the pair, it is boiled together with the chicken for the road offering. They have to be careful to the chickens do not get mixed up. So they make the chickens for the nat shrine by breaking the wings or the legs.

The boiled chicken again offered to the village nat. This time they ask the nat to show signs and omens at the leg bones of the chicken and also pray that the omens may be good omens and the people in the whole village and the animals reared be free from harm and be healthy.

The small nat shrine near the village nat shrine is for the guardian nats of the forests and hills. Here also, the chicken (cock + hen ) are offered alive



Cooking the meal after cleaning the shrine

first and then boiled and offered again pray in the same way as to the village nat.

The nat shrine is not cleaned with scented water. It is done after having breakfast. The shaman takes the responsibility to clean the nat shrine.

When the cleaning is finished, they cook the pork and the boiled chicken may be cooked again and the whole village enjoys the food with the rice brought from their houses.

### **(3) Repairing the grave of their ancestors**

In the month of Tagu when they celebrate their traditional festivals, they also have the festival of repairing the graves of their ancestors. They do it on the odd number days the waxing moon of Tagu, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> days. They chose the odd numbers because the ritual is done for the dead. The things needed for the offering are: -

2-chicken (cock, hen)

Incense sticks enough to go round the grave.

1-cup of liquor

1-plate of rice

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals do not have a permanent burial place. If two or three of the same national nationals are buried in one place, the offering is done in the same place. But if the family members are buried in different places, they have to be done on separate days.

On the day they go to the grave, they have to make sure everything necessary is taken there. First the live cock is placed on the grave. It is for the guardian nat of the dead person's spirits and the live hen is for the dead person to be able to do animals breeding. Then the cock and hen are killed and boiled at that place. When the meat is cooked they have to prepare -

1-plate of rice

1-cup of liquor

1-plate of boiled chicken

The incense sticks are lighted and stick round the grave. Then they have to call the dead person to come and eat alone and not to bring anyone else. When the spirit has finished he is told to go back alone and not to take the spirits of any of the family because the dead and the alive are separate and to look after the family.

The family and relative pay respects to the give their respects to the grave and clear it of weeds. Then they eat together and go home. The 'Nophashay' Lishaw (Lisu) nationals do not have such reparation and offerings made to the grave. Besides the 'Taw kyaung' Lishaw (Lisu) nationals do not use any incense sticks in any festival. When they die they put bamboo stakes in a cross design round the grave.

#### **(4)Offering of fruits and grains**

The offering of fruits and grain beings on the 12<sup>th</sup> waxing month of Wakhaung(ဝါခေါင်လ). It is done at the house not shrine as well as at the village nat shrine. The fruits from the family garden such as pineapple, bananas, eggplant, corn, pumpkin, cucumber, chilies, a variety of flowers, charcoal and matches are stringed and hung beautiful on and under the house nat shrine on 12th waxing day of **Wakhaung**<sup>1</sup> . They are offered to the ancestor nat of the husband's side.

By the side of the house nat shrine, at the corner of the house, they place a table full of all kinds of fruits and offer to the ancestors of the wife side. The offerings are discarded on the 14thwaxing day of Wakhaung. Those that can be eaten are eaten, those that have dried up throne away in a clean place. That month and season Wakhaung (July-August) is the rainiest months but according to Lishaw (Lisu) tradition they regard it as Thedingyut(သီတင်းကျွတ်).

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<sup>1</sup> Wakhaung= ဝါခေါင်လ

On the 12<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Wakhaung when they make offerings of fruits to their ancestor nats at home, they also put out a round table laden with all kinds of fruits in a tray at the entrance to the house. It is to entertain the relatives. When they arrive they have to pray that the family will be able to offer more in the next year and eat the fruits.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Wakhaung, they have to make the fruit offering at the village nat shrine. They either string the fruits or put them in a tray all the different kinds of fruits from their garden as well as some bought from the market. As they make the offering they have to pray that their plants may grow and give good fruits, that their business will be successful and that all his wishes may be fulfilled, they have made this offering in this season of Wakhaung month offerings. The fruits are left on the shrine and in the evening the children take down the fruits and eat whichever they want to eat.

When they come back to the house after making the offerings at the village nat shrine, they have to put in a bowl the food nobody has eaten as yet rice, meat and liquor all mixed. They throw this food in front of the house, saying We are feeding you before anyone has eaten, don't come and disturb us. Whether you have fallen from the mountain, drowned in the river or dragged away by a tiger, come and eat. If you are a man, catch it with your palms and if you are a woman, catch it with your jacket.

Lishaw (Lisu) nationals believe that if they do not feed the spirits of the dead in this way, they will suffer headaches and dizziness. This ritual is done in every Lishaw (Lisu) house that worships their traditional nats. They visit each others house, enjoy the food and pray for each other.

The 'Myauk' Lishaw (Lisu) nationals celebrate this festival on the 13<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Wakhaung. According to their belief they cannot find anything on the 12<sup>th</sup>, so they do it on 13<sup>th</sup> of Wakhaung.

**(5) Eating the new harvest in Tazaungmone(November).**

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals celebrate the eating of the new harvest in Tazaungmone because this is the time they harvest the crops grown in their taungyar. On the 10<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Tazaungmone(တန်ဆောင်မုန်း) they have to offer the paddy ears they have reaped to the village nat. Together with the paddy ears, they have to offer Sweet potato, taro, one plate of rice and as much pork as they can afford. After making the offering and praying, they have to leave them at the shrine and go home. Again when they reach home they have to offer the same things at the house ancestor nat shrine. They have to pray that just as they had good plentiful harvests in the next year.

The family prepares to eat together after the nat offerings. After they have eaten, they pay obeisance to the parents and relatives at home with presents. In the same way they go round paying obeisance to the elders of the village with presents. The elders too give blessings that in the next years they may have abundant paddy and are able to give more charity or alms.

The Nophashay Lishaw (Lisu) nationals do not have this festival of offering fruits and grain from their fields. The fruits offered are from their fields, but some may buy more from the market to make the offering more complete. The family who can afford will entertain the relatives and guests with pork curry, which is an essential for the Lishaw (Lisu) national traditional custom.

**d. Proverbs and Saying**

Each national race has his-own culture and language. In the same way, they have their own literature and sayings, riddles and folk tales.

Some national nationals living in the remote mountains may not have written literature. But the custom of telling their family history and sayings and riddles as they sit by the fireside after there evening meal. They work hard the



whole day in their taungyar and return home only when it is sunset. So this talk by the fireside is the time when they talk about their ancestors and learn their history. Sometimes the family may talk about their language and the meanings of their sayings and riddles. So in this region with no schools to attend, this fireside talk is like a school, the elders giving knowledge to the younger generation.

Proverbs or sayings of the national nationals of Myanmar are very interesting in their variations as they are based on their traditional culture, their environment, their characteristic way of thinking, the food they eat and social relationships. They have had made them wise in their own simple life without getting the formal modern education.

### Some Lishaw (Lisu) sayings

1. A dog's friendship is for life. A mans friendship is for a while.
2. Just as one should not eat the seed for planting even if you are striving, so you shouldn't eat the chicken for breeding.
3. The stranger comes when you are about to eat; the relative comes when you are about to meet trouble.
4. The goats horns are crooked, so is the mind of a wicked person.
5. If you are choosy about rice; your stomach will not be full, so if you are choosy about gold you will not be rich.
6. If you are shy to eat rice, you will be hungry; if you are shy to eat meat, your month will water.

7. The taste of rice, in when it sticks to the pot, the taste of meal is on the tongue.

8. Not everything white is silver, not everything yellow is gold.

9. You must learn to ride the goat when have no horse.

10. If old gold does not go out, new gold will not come in.

11. A mans worth is his character; a pigs worth is his flesh.

12. The person who buys and is a servant; the person who works is a master.

13. Remember another persons help and forget about the help you have given.

14. The rain comes when the firewood is finished; the guest comes when there is no rice.

15. They cannot drink the water although it is there; you cannot use the firewood although it is there.

Each saying is full of meaning and of great worth. They are interesting in the sense also that it reveals their social system or custom, their way of thinking and things that concern their work and life.

**e.Folk Tales**

**(1) Emergence of Ancestral worship**

Once there was a widow with a son. He was so short-tempered that he may occasionally beat his mother when he got angry. One day he told his mother to bring him food at mealtime, and he went to till the field. That day his mother was slightly late in bringing food to him. He scolded her for bring late and then beat her. The next day, his mother, not to be late, diligently got up early in the morning and took the food to him. This time his son scolded her for bringing the food too early and beat her again.

The next while he was resting for a moment from work, he saw a raven-nest in a tree near the field. While he was watching he saw a mother raven carrying food from afar and feeding the newly hatched raven. The widows son became very much interested in seeing this incident. After feeding her young the mother raven trained the little birds to fly by dropping them from the nest and catching them from below. He felt the mothers love from this scene. He greatly repented in his heart for having been ungrateful to and disrespecting his mother. He decided to respectfully deal and serve his mother.

That morning he had decided to greet his mother when he saw her bringing food to him. When the mother saw her son running hurriedly to her, she thought that her son came rushing to beat her for being late. She stepped backward and fell on a pointed snag and died. The son, then, felt great sorrow for his mother and gave a promise to offer food and curry to her every day despite her death. Accordingly, he went and gave offering to his mother at her grave. After a long time he invited his mothers spirit to his house, built a nat shrine at the front room, and worshipped the spirit. Since then, there is the religion of worshipping ancestral spirits resulted.

**(2) Why the Lisu people have no country**

In olden time God had called, divided and distributed to every people the land. God instructed them to precisely demarcate the land they had got. Lisu people accordingly made a demarcation of their land by making tufts of grass and putting them along the boarder demarcation line. Because of forest-fire all the tufts of grass were consumed by fire and the other people robbed all their land. For this reason it was told that the Lisu people have no land or country.

**f.Lishaw (Lisu) Rural dances**

The three names Lishaw, Lisu, Yaw-yin is the names for the same nationals depending on the location of their stay and the people who know them. People from the plains know them as Lishaw (Lisu), and in the northern border area in Puta-O region, they are known as 'Yaw-yin' and researchers and foreign writers call them Lishaw (Lisu).

We find the Lishaw (Lisu) national nationals in Loin-len district in Northern Shan State, in Sakwe region, Eastern district of (Kyaing-Ton), Northern district of Lashio region, in Kachin State Bhamo district (Momauk), Myitkyina, Sadon region and in the furthest north region in Puta-O area the villages where the Malikha river takes its source.

The Lishaw (Lisu) is divided into two groups, 'white Lisu' and 'black Lisu'. All the three named Lishaw, Lisu, Yaw-yin, belong to the 'Lo-Lo' national group of nationals. They lived by growing opium and cultivation of taungyar. They build their houses on hilltops because they take the cold weather. They are Christians in the Puta-O area and nat worshippers in the Northeast and southern part of Shan State.

The most extraordinary fact about the Lishaw(Lisu)nationals living in Puta-O, is that they are the only national race among the national nationals living in Myanmar, who wear grownups. No other national race has this custom except the Lishaws (Lisus) of Puta-O region.

The elders of the villages near the source of the Malikha river says, the Lishaws (Lisus) of Puta-O came down from 'Tibet' and 'Yu-nnan province of China. We also find in Kachin State on the northern edge near the Red-China border, three Lishaws (Lisus) wearing gowns as their dress.

In the Lishaw (Lisu) regions there are no wars fights for land, revolt against the government. They like to live peacefully, war king on the taungyars with their buffaloes and cattle as their friends living in the cold weather; their blood is cool and not blooded.

The Lishaw (Lisu) women also go and work in the taungyar. The men go on hunting trips. The members of the family meet each other only at night when they gather to take to each other. Like the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals free time is only in the short summer months of January and February. In Puta-O region, it rains the whole year except for these two months. So they begin to plough in April.

The Lishaw (Lisu) go round and pay respects to their parents and elders and teachers in the two months of summer. They also visit other villages. Naturally the young boys and girls meet in-groups and have dances and campfire celebrations.

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals have boy and girl couple dance and group dances. The girls may also have solo song and dance. If a girl signs alone, a boy who plays a native mandolin with horsetail hair strings accompanies her. The Lishaw (Lisu) maid dances on her toes with hands upraised, moves and sways. Sometimes she dances with her arms stretched out like a bird flying or flapping her wings as if she is imitating the birds in the skies. (We can see the

gestures) of the wings flapping and flying like in our Myanmar Kenner dance.) The young Lishaw (Lisu) maids sway and whirl in their gowns when they dance in a group. It is a gentle move and thighs in Western dance. The most they may show is just a bit of legs. Their dance is based on the eastern tradition and style.

The Puta-O Lishaw (Yaw-yin) nationals have a couple dance of flute called "paung". In the Law-Khaung mountain ranges area, the Yaw-yins dance to the tune of stringed instruments like the mandolin or lute.

The Lishaw (Lisu) maids have not only summer dances, but they also have 'campfire' dances in the winter. Both boys and girls dance round the fire. In this campfire dance, the Christian Lishaws (Lisus) drink a little, but the nat worshipping Lishaws drink Khaungyei as a tradition.

In the Lishaw (Lisu), music, there are the Chinese and Tibetan influences of the cymbals, gongs and drums. They also have the bamboo flute, the native mandolin made in the mountains and a kind of instrument called 'mo' which they blow by mouth.

The Lishaws (Lisus) sometimes dances in the 'manaw' dances celebrated by the Rawons nationals. Kachin villages surround the Lishaw (Lisu) and Rawon villages in the south and the west. The Kachin 'manow' dance is slowly infecting the Rawon and Lishaw (Lisu) nationals.

There is another kind of "Lishaw (Lisu)" in Bhamo and on the other bank of Myitkyina in Sidon region. They do not wear gowns like the Puta-O Lishaws (Lisus). These do not wear gowns like the Puta-O Lishaws (Lisus) wear the same traditional dress of black, gray, dark blue and red color cloth. The inner garment, pants and leggings top jacket and waistband, the fringe gaungbaung and beads necklace is all the same.

In the way of dance however there is a little difference between the

Lishaws (Lisus) of Myitkyina and Bhamo and the Lishaws (Lisus) of the Shan state. The Lishaws (Lisus) of Myitkyina and Bhamo dance in a long line with the person from the back holding the arm and shoulder of the person in front. The dance is guided by the first person in front that plays on the bamboo flute. The dancers in the line have to dance to the tune of the flute. The dancers in the line move their feet or step, away their bodies according to the movements and style of dance which tell what the dance is about. You can see these dances only in summer and winter when they are resting from their taungyar work. Every body, men, women, married or unmarried, rich and poor can joint the dance. When the whole village participates they enjoy the feeling of united happiness without any discriminations.

The dance of the Loi-lem district, Lishaw is also interesting in another way. They are celebrated in Tabodwe and Tabaung after the harvest. The Lishaw here are nat worshippers. So their dance is a sort of propitiation to their nats , When they dance, they are pay respects to the guardian nats of the forests and mountains, the taungyar guardian nat and the village and the house guardian nats.

The Lishaw (Lisu) also house New-Year festivals after paying respects to the nats and elders they dance happily in the evening. The New Year festival is celebrated from the 1<sup>st</sup> waxing day of Tabodwe to the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Tabodwe. Every house planted treeing front of their house and they dance round these trees at night. In the dance men and women join hands and step forward and backward, swaying their bodies. Their dance depends more on their dance depends more on their feet then hands. They jump once, twice and twice. They put both their feet down, take a step and charge their movements and style according to the dance they are portraying.

In the women's dance, each dancer has a shoulder bag and with hands on hips, they step and pump slowly like a chorus girls dance. The accompaniment music is provide by a flute with BI gave small bamboo pipes,

producing ten sounds and a stringed instrument made with a dried ground.

During the festival days they visit from one house to another dancing the whole night through. At dawn they are entertained with khaungyei and chicken and pork and sweet meals of white and red color and beans. They visit each others house in turn and are entertained with food. They also go round pay respects to the elders, parents and relatives with the sweetmeats.

The Lishaws (Lisus) believe that by baking these sweetmeats and going round paying respects with them makes them happy and keep away harm, gives them abundant crops and long life.

This tradition of making traditional sweet-meals in the new year and during and end of lent and propitiating the guardian nats of the forests and mountains, the earth and the waters, the house and the field, paying respects to is teachers and elders is practiced by the any Myanmar people too till to day.

### **g.Songs**

Lishaw (Lisu) people are singing people. They love to sing and to recite the poetic song. Lishaw (Lisu) traditional songs are portraying the life of Lishaw (Lisu) people. From the words of songs one can figure out all movements of life from the time of birth to death. It is quite an honor for Lishaw (Lisu) people to have good power of memory, which enable them to memorize and pass on many long songs. The words of songs are very fine and pleasant and poetical. There are usually two phrases to express a single meaning. Therefore, one can see many beautiful poems in songs. It is very suprising for Lishaw (Lisu) people who have no literature, no memoir, have always to move from place to place with simple life, and yet have the ability to sing such delicate, gentle and poetical songs. Songs are long that take days and nights to sing them out.



There are two groups of singers, usually the men group and women group who sing in reciprocal order. The songs are too long that only elderly people can memorize from the beginning to the end. In each group of singers, there is a song leader who assists in wording so that they can sing continuously.

Songs are sung only at special occasions, such as wedding ceremony, New Year festival, naming ceremony, the spirit-calling occasion and so on. But love songs are sung only outside the village. Except love songs, others are sung at the request of the host who has to provide liquor and meal for the guest.

Most prominent songs are: -

- (1) New Year song
- (2) Spirit-calling song
- (3) Naming song
- (4) Wedding song
- (5) Farewell song
- (6) Song of orphan
- (7) Friend meeting song
- (8) Song of elopement
- (9) Song of New-crops sacrifice
- (10) Guest- welcoming song
- (11) Hunting song

### **(1) New Year Song**

At the time of New Year villagers gather at shamans house. Then they start dancing, singing and playing music around New Year tree from house to house. They assume that by doing so bad spirits and unpropitious things can no longer stay and are drawn away. Besides, blessings are thought to bring to the house. The host pays respect to the guests by pouring home made liquor in the

cups. When urged by the hosts to sing the middle-aged guests so into the house, divided them into two groups sings for the host and the other for the guests reciprocally. The host requesting for singing has to provide meals for the singers.

The meaning of the song is: there are twelve months in a year and thirty days in a month; does not die and so has the privilege to continue and to arrive at New Year, which is very joyous. This is how and what are poetically composed in the song. Musical instruments to be played in New Year such as three-strings banjos and flutes are prepared, adorned and played, new clothes are worn; the whole village looks bright and gay. And the feeling of jubilation are pleasantly composed. How the host welcomes the guests, how the guests greet and say propitious words, enjoyment of the food offered by the hosts, and about dancing are composed in the song.

## **2) Sprit-Calling Song**

This song is sung at sprit-calling occasion. Lishaw (Lisu) nat-worshippers have the opinion that man's body and spirit can set apart differently. The spirit may depart away from body when the body is weak. The spirit may be captured by something like evil nats and wild beings. When one becomes ill or weak, it is assumed that the spirit has departed away and so they have the custom of calling back the spirit.

The elderly people are invited to the house of the sick and entertained with food. After that spirit-calling ceremony is made. A turban or jacket of a patient is spread on the floor of a small bridge outside the village. Food and other eatables are offered by putting them on both ends of the bridge. Then the elders, holing a small cotton thread brought from to go around the bridge for seven or nine times. And afterwards by placing that thread around the wrist or

neck of a patient is believed to restore the health and strength. After the end of the rituals, two groups sing the spirit-calling song.

In the beginning of singing a group of singers on the side of patient describes about weakness, bad dreams, sleeplessness, and inability to work. Then a group of singers on the side of shaman describes how shaman order a certain nat to bring back the sprit captured in hell, how shaman treats the patients. In the end of song the patient feel well in his life and receive word of blessings.

### **3) Naming Song**

The naming ceremony is done two days after birth of a child. This song is sung after the invited guests are entertained and served with food. The guests are grouped into two and a group sing on the side of the father of a child and the other on the side of shaman who gives a name to a child. They sing reciprocally.

The beginning of a song describes how a child is born and cleansed, and how he/she comes into the world and to his/her parents. An appeal is then made on the side of shaman to the care of, attend on and protect the spirit of a child, after which the child is delivered to the parents. The shaman also prays for a child to be free from illness, bad people, evil spirits and all bad things. Good wishes and prayers too are made for a child to have long life lasting and firm strength like tree and rock, and abundance of goodness.

#### **4) Wedding Song**

In Lishaw(Lisu) wedding ceremonies, after the performance of usual ceremonial custom and entertainment with food, the elder people gather together and sing a wedding song.

At the beginning the song is commenced with depiction of how a child is born and grown up. The song further describes how parents are incited to urge their son to look for the bride after seeing the marriage of sons of other people. Then how the son goes about in search of a bride in all places, how a bride is found and brought home and how a wedding ceremony celebrated are sung in a song. Preparation for entertainment and serving of food is described.

Finally a speech of blessing is addressed to both the bride and the bridegroom to be true to each other for lasting marriage life, to have firm and happy together and oneness in the future, and to enjoy every kinds of goodness and good luck at home.

#### **5) Song of Visitation to Friends**

In summer times when cultivation work is rested, Lishaw(Lisu) people usually pay visit to relatives and friends. Such kind of visitation is called in Lishaw(Lisu) language as "aswan". This word is not used for visitation to strange places. It is used among those who are very acquired with and caring for one another. This word is used in such a visit when one remembers and longs to know about friends. From this song one can understand how much the Lishaw(Lisu) people value friendliness.

The choosing of the good day and bad day in traveling is practiced in Lisu people. The beginning of the song describes the killing of a chicken, the

reading of good and bad omens and preparation made for the journey. The encounter on the journey with severe storm, heavy rain, river flooding and the payment of ferry fare to cross are also described. Finally he arrived at the house of a friend he wants to meet. Then the two friends speak to each other. The song is also sung with the style of a young bachelor visiting a young damsel and also with the style of an elder brother, sister and relatives visiting one another.

#### **h. Musical Instruments:**

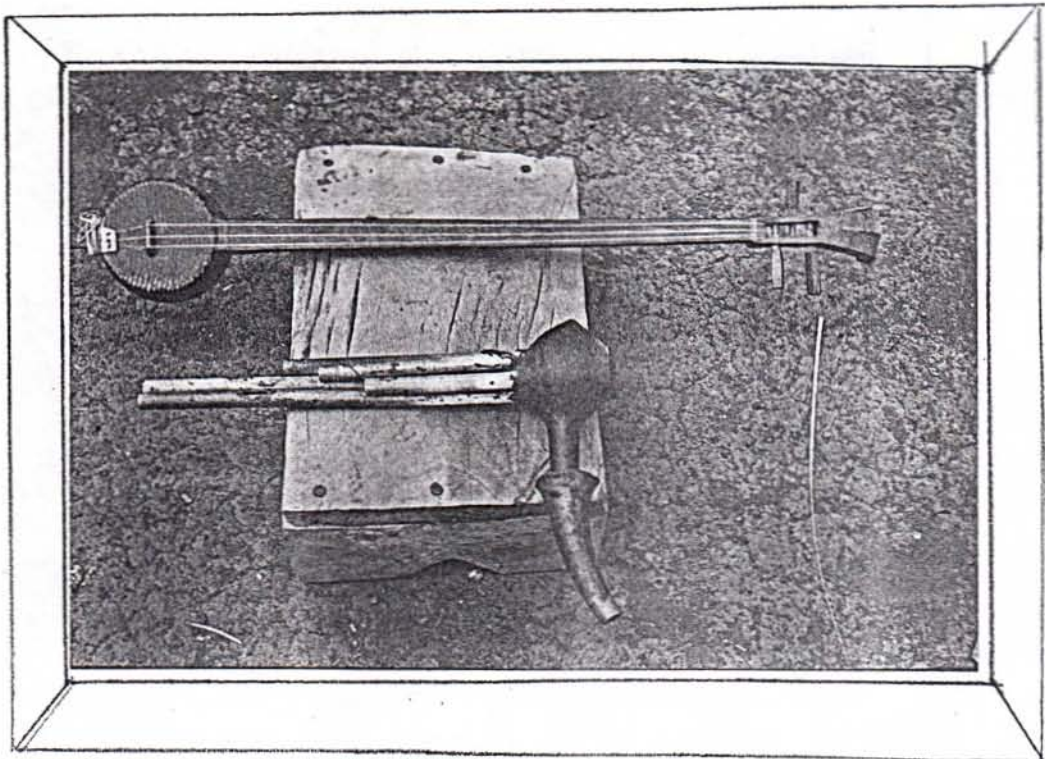
Lishaw (Lisu) people have great interest in playing musical instrument. The main musical instruments are three string banjo and ground flute, which are played at New Year dancing.

##### **(1) Banjo**

Lishaw (Lisu) people made this three-string banjo with their own hand. The body part of banjo is made of clog- wood by scooping out the wood to make a hollow in it. The strings are number one guitar string bought. Some bind and every banjo body with lizard skin. It is played with forefinger enclosed in a wooden cup. Youths, adults and even elders enjoy playing them. However only those who are very skilful play them in New Year festival. Players of banjo and gourd flute lead and dance through out the dancing.

##### **(2) Big gourd flute**

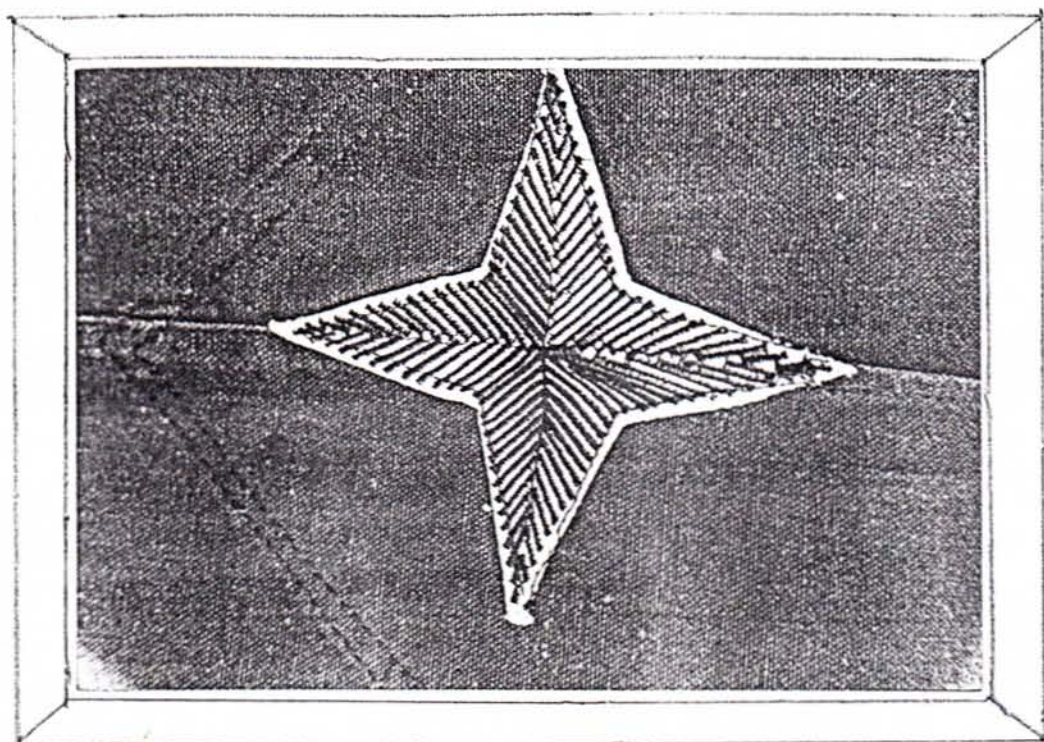
It is made of dried big gourd and hollowed bamboo poles mended with bee-wax. Big gourd flute produces a deep and powerful bass sound. It is bigger and longer than small flute. It is played only during New Year festival when there is mass dancing.



Traditional Musical Instruments



Dancing with happy at the night of New Year  
festival



Symbol of 4 directions for modern dress



Lishaw old man with Binjo  
sitting inside the room

### **(3) Small flute**

This kind of flute is made in a similar way but with small gourd with hollowed bamboo poles. It has a small, thin and high-pitched sound. It is small and light carried by young people and played when they go cultivation site and when they are courting damsels. It can be played in an accompaniment with banjo in traditional dance. It is made of various lengths of hollowed bamboo poles so that it can produce various tones in sounding.

#### **i. Reading Signs and Omens**

The Bamas, Shans, Kayins, Kayahs, Kachins and Chins have the custom of reading signs and omens. They all believe in these signs and omens and observe the taboos to avoid harm and ill luck. There are two kinds of interpreting these signs and omens. The first is what they actually see and the second is what they dream of.

If a person on a journey should have his path crossed by a deer or muntjac or a jackal, it is considered unlucky and he would not continue his journey but return home. If he should be going on trading business, the snake should cross his path from the left to right, his business will be bad, but if the snake should cross from the right to the left, then his business will be good, and money will come in.

They also read signs and omens concerning their cultivation of crops. If a banana tree planted in their garden should bear two bunches of bananas, it is a sign of bad luck. They at once make an offering of a chicken at the village nat shrine and pray. But if they should see a person in new clothes passing by while he is winnowing paddy, they will forcefully invite that person and feed him with rice and meat and pray for abundant harvest like this year.

If the birds of the forests like doves and parrots come and rest on the



house, they believe there will be scarcity of paddy and water. If the land animals should go and stay near the water, they believe it is a sign of drought. If spiders make webs in their taungyar, it is a sign that they are late in their planting season.

Signs and omens are read in the family too. If the fire in the fireplace should light up without being stoked, it is a sign of a visitor coming to the house. But if a mound should appear near the fireplace, it is a sign of bad luck for that house. If a visitor should die in that house, while on a visit, they believe that the visitor had died in their stead and they would give a good burial to that person. But a snake coming to the house brings illness to the house.

### **j. Taboos and Mana**

All the naturals living in Myanmar believe in signs and omens and have customs, which they practice to avoid harm. So also in the religion they profess, in their social affairs and in their business in life, there are things to avoid i.e taboos and things to keep i.e charms and emulates. The Myanmar nationals preserve their traditional customs without fail and avoid the things they must avoid and keep the things they must keep with due respect.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals believe that if you keep the mineral deposit of a thunderbolt, his house will not catch fire. The solid tusk of a hog, and bird egg(ငှက်အမြှေးကော့) is supposed to make them immune to gunshot, sword and spear wounds, so they believe in these charms or emulates most dwotedly. The dried umbilical core of a child at birth is also of medicinal value, as it is used when that child is sick. The water in which this dried umbilical chord is soaked is given to the sick child and he records. So it is kept by very preciously by the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals .

Signs and omens are read in their dreams too. If they dream of a dead person, it is good luck and if he is out on a hunting trip, it means that he will get many kills. Seeing water in dream means ill health. A young relative will get sick if he breaks his lower teeth and an older relative will sick if he breaks his upper tooth. To dream of fire burning meanings a death among his relatives. There will be many diseases if he dreams of a dog. If he sees sparks of fire under the rice and curry pots, his business will prosper.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals have many taboos concerning their religion. They respect fully and obediently avoid the things forbidden by their religion. As they are nat worshippers, they will not say or act in anyway to offend the nat. They are especially afraid that their traditional nat would punish them for any wrongdoing.

Children must not whistle at home, because the nat does not like it and will twist their lips painfully. Evil spirits will possess the person who combs his hair in front of house in the evening. They must not carry about raw meat from one place to another in the evening for fear of evil spirits. If they happen to do it, then a small piece of the meal must be thrown and fed is the evil spirits. Otherwise people who eat that cooked meat will vomit or become dizzy. The children must not play outside in the evening for fear the nat will hide them and so all there are strictly forbidden.

The pregnant woman does not eat fruit that is a twin, because they are afraid they might give birth to twins, which is a great responsibility. She must not put stoups to bottles also. If she did so the child born will be hard of hearing. The village nat shrine is built at the back of the village facing east. The house is also build with the entrance facing east. The entrance to the house and the village nat shrine must never be face to face. It is strictly forbidden. Otherwise the whole family will suffer poor health.

They must not use wood burnt by a house fire. If they happen to use it,

then it will bring harm to the house. Bamboo and banana plants must not be grown in early time of marriage. If they did so they will meet with difficulties when the young children are born. The housewife who goes into the forest to pick vegetables must not look for firewood also. If she did so other intentions for other business will fail. So when they go into the forest with one intention only that intended work must be done and nothing else.

There are things to avoid concerning animals too. The Lishaw(Lisu) consider dogs as their friends when they go hunting, and they owe gratitude to the dog. So when a dog comes up to the house the Lishaw(Lisu) women must never kick the dog. There are also taboos for visitors. When they visit other houses, it must be in even numbers of two four or six. They avoid odd numbers according to traditional Lishaw(Lisu) custom, they use even numbers only if possible.

## CHAPTER 6.

### ADMINISTRATION AND LEGAL SYATEM

#### a. Administration

In ancient times the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals were under the jurisdiction of the 'Mone' Sawbwa', who was one of the important Sawbwas among the nine Sawbwa Shan States owing allegiance to the Myanmar kings. These Sawbwas or governors of the nine Shan States were honored by the Myanmar Kings and were given permission to use all the insignia of office due to a king. They could build their 'Haw' or Residence with a tiered roof and keep a throne, a white parasol, and wear all the five accoutrements of a royal king. They may give the title of "maha divi" to the chief consort of a swab. The eldest son, who will inherit the sawbwa's office is called "Sao-oom" or "Kya meing tha kin lay". The Sawbwa in Shan is "Sao-pha". The Lishaw(Lisu)s say "Sao-phar" or "Kyaw-hwa". "Soa" means powerful king and 'pha' means the sky-meaning person worthy to be adored.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals pay obeisance to the Sawbwa by placing their palms on the stomach. When they pay obeisance to their parents, they place their palms on the chest. The meaning of this gesture is to show their love from the heart. But when they pay obeisance to a monk or the

Buddha, they place their palms on the forehead because they are considered sacred. It is their custom and tradition. The Sawbwa has four officers directly responsible to him. They are (1) San-twa-sant, (2) Khun-amat, (3) Shwe-lan-bo, (4) Taya-thugyi. Then they have "bu-heing" and under "bu-heing" is "bu-kant" and under "bu-kant" is "bu-kyai" and under him is "ywa-saw".

**San-taw-sant** is the advisory officer and also the secretary of the Sawbwa. He has to give notices of the Sawbwa's commands and of things necessary to be carried out.

**Khun-amat** is the tax officer. He has to collect the taxes due to the state.

**Shwe-lan-bo** is like the police officer. He has to seize hold of the criminals.

**Taya-thugyi** is the judge, who has to try the cases and sentence them according to their crime, like money fine, imprisonment or death sentence.

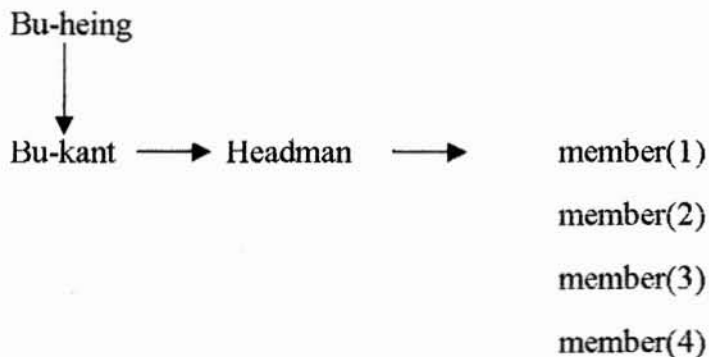
### **Bu-heing**

Buheing is the officer under the four chief officers of the Sawbwa. Heing means one thousand and he is called 'Heing' because he has to give one thousand armed soldiers to the king or Sawbwa. Bu-heing is directly appointed by the Sawbwa. He must be a man of knowledge, of good moral character and integrity. He must also be shrewd and tactful. You can buy this office for 1000 pieces of silver. But only the person who fulfils the above qualities is appointed. The Bu-heing is in charge of the administrative units and the clerks from these units work for the Bu-heing. The villagers cannot dismiss the Bu-heing they

dislike. Only the Sawbwa can dismiss him from his service or punish him. A good Bu-heing can remain in office all his life. He is not succeeded by his son. The office is given to a person who has the required qualifications.

### Bu-Kant

'Bu-Kant' is the Shan language for 'Thugyi' or Head-man. The Lishaw(Lisu) name is 'Tha ket'. The Headman is under the Bu-heing. The Headman is appointed by the Bu heing who usually appoints a man liked by the villagers. But the Headman must be liked as well as be a man of authority among the villagers. The villagers can ask the Headman to be dismissed. Then the Bu-heing will present the case to the Sawbwa and have him punished for the crime he is guilty of. But there had never been any case of punishment or change of Headman.



### Bu-kyai(Ten house head)

Bu-kyai also is a Shan term. Bu-kyai is chosen to charge ten houses and is responsible for the welfare of the houses under his control. He has to present the state of affairs to the **Bu-kyai**.

### Ywa Saw

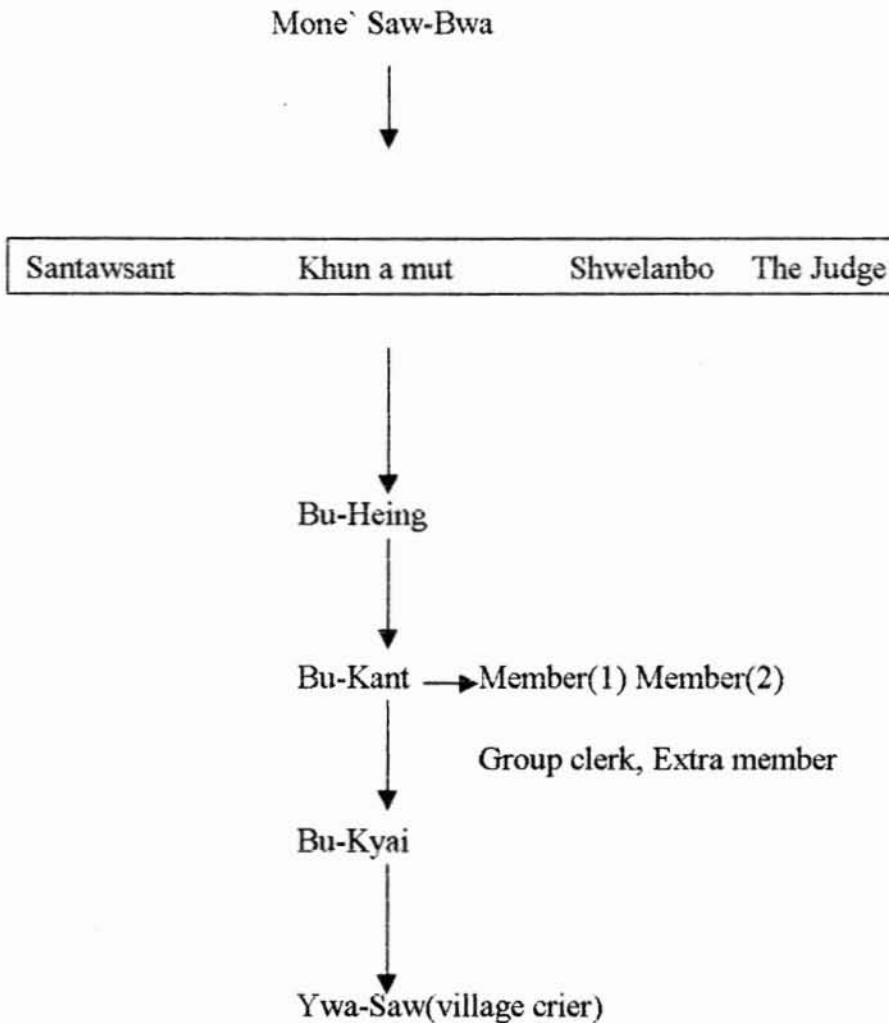
The 'Ywa-Saw' is appointed by the Headman and works under the Headman. He has to carry out the orders of the Headman. The 'Ywa-Saw' has to go round and look into the affairs of the village. He in turn has to talk to the villagers, and make them carry out their duties. The 'Ywa-Saw' is also a man of authority.

The Buheing through the Headman collects the taxes from the villagers and it is sent through many stages to the Sawbwa. The people can also go to the Sawbwa and out of good will present the fruits and produce of their land to the Sawbwa.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals villagers were administered by the Mone Sawbwa up to the time before the Sawbwa relinquished his power. When the Sawbwas relinquished thier power in (1959) the Buheings still carried on their duties with a temporary district administration officer. There were armed revolts at that time, but the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals refused to take part. Although they were given arms, they would not take them. They did not want to harm anybody and nobody harmed them. Later the Revolutionary Government came into power and the people's councils were elected. Then the State Law and Order Restoration Council governed the country. Now it is under the Administration of the State Peace and Development Council.

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals living in Heigh-Phut village tract in Southern Shan state lived under the Mone' Saw-Bwa, before they relinquished their power. Although the Saw-Bwa's gave up their power in (1959) the Bu-Heing still continued to control the villages. Above him was a temporary

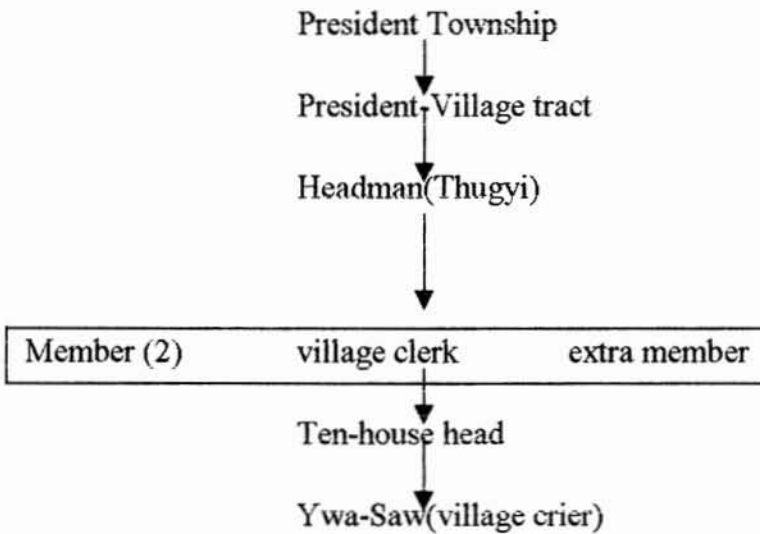
divisional officer. Although there were armed fighting, the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals did not take part in it. They were too involved in struggling for their daily like of getting food and shelter. Then The State Law and Order Restoration Council took on the responsibility and later the state Peace and Dwell opmeet council came into office, the Saw-Bwa administration system.





**b. The present day administration and Legal system**

In the State Peace and Development council time the following chart shows the administration.



The village headman is chosen by the villagers because a headman they do not like can be dismissed by them. The headman's duties are to carry out the social affairs of joy and sorrow in the village.

The village tract president is elected by the township president and the headmen of the villages. His duties are to see to the affairs of the villages together with the headmen. He also has to help solve the problems of crime.

The fine is 5000 kyats in addition to labor at the village bridge for fighting. This fine is so big for the villagers that they dare not have fights. The tax for slaughtering a cow for meat is one viss of beef to the village headman and 400 kyats to the village tract president. If they slaughter a pig for sale, then the tax is 50 ticals of pork to the headman and 250 kyats to the village tract president. If they sell a cow, they have

to pay the village headman 150 kyats. Taxes are also collected for seasonal festivals and it is kept as entertainment fund for visitors. So far, there have been no cases or problems to be settled.

### **c. The Legal System**

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals living in Heigh-Phat village tract, Nam-san township Southern Shan State, have not committed big crimes from the time of the Saw-Bwa's to the present day. In observing the wrongs the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals are guilty of, we find the following categories.

1. To do wrong to a person.
2. To do wrong to the race.
3. To do wrong on a holiday.
4. To do wrong in front of brothers and sisters.

The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals try to avoid doing wrong on holy days such as 'dog' day. Their main livelihood is rearing animals, so they try to avoid doing wrong on these days. If they did wrong in these days, the elders of the town get together and discuss the case and depending on the seriousness of the offense, they give the judgement.

If a boy should insult or cause shame to a girl in front of brothers and sisters he has to go personally to the girl's house with Tayaw and soap acacia solution and apologize to her. Besides about (20) relatives from the village will come and discuss the case and give him punishment, such as repairing the road for (45) days.

To do wrong to the race means, if two people of the same racial group should marry then both the culprits are fed with the garbage tin and attaching brooms at the waist, they are called 'dogs'. Besides, depending on the nature of

the wrong done, they are made to repair the road, put in the sun or in the snow.

Cases of thief, beating up people, fighting with people from another village, quarrel over land or orchard, are usually punished by labor of 45 to 70 days repairing the village road.

In a quarrel between husband and wife, the wife may leave the house and go and stay in another house. If the husband in going and calling back his wife, should insult the house owner by speaking rudely to then the headman and elders of the village can make him repair the village road for (7) days. Besides the house owner feels their quarrel have made the house inauspicious, especially since the main pillar of the house had been erected on an auspicious day, when they built the house. The husband and wife must personally apologize to the guardian nat of the house by offering (4) chicken (cock + hen) at the Four Corners of the house and (1) chicken at the fireplace. May I present one example of Lishaw (Lisu) nationals traditional law in one case I witnessed on my field trip there. It is the Lishaw (Lisu) custom to elope when a boy and girl are in love and plan to marry. In this case the younger sister of the girl was worried about her elder sister, so she accompanied the eloping couple. The younger sister did not return to the village, neither did she go along with the couple. The parents of the girls were angry and accused the boy of stealing both the sisters and were reported the village elders.

The truth was the young long left the younger sister in the care of relatives in another village. But the girl's parents would not be appeased. So the village elders decided the boy had done wrong. He was made to build a bridge and give (3) 'ahlu' or hospitality. First he had to give the 'ahlu' or hospitality.

**(1)The Big alhu**

The boy had to bring (3) chicken, (2) for the girl's house and (1) for the guardian nat of the forests and hills. First (4) incense sticks are lighted at the nat shrine. The younger sister had to offer an alive cock at the nat shrine, because they thought her spirit, through fright may have been left behind in the forests. So they must tell this spirit to come back. The girl then cooks rice and curry and feeds the relatives who had come there. At night they start to call back the spirit by singing and driving away the evil spirits in turn. The expenses of this ritual had to be paid by the boy.

**(2)The medium alhu**

The boy has to build a small bridge across a stream on the road. As soon as the bridge has been built, he has to ask (9) male elders and (7) female elders to walk across the bridge. He has to place as offering-

5- bottles of liquor, 5- chicken

1-packet of incense slicks , 3-small baskets of rice

Then the elders of the village have to be fed and entertained.

**(3)A little alhu**

The boy has to draw the design of a bridge on the ground. Then he has to offer 2-chicken (cock + hen) and 1-bottle of liquor and apologize to the girl's parents until they are satisfied. The above facts show that the Lishaw (Lisu) nationals try to solve the problems of their village by themselves. Even if the problem is very big, they try to get together and solve it without taking it outside the village to the higher authorities in town. It reveals the close racial ties and by the spirit of give and take and consul tation surmounts all their difficulties.



The researcher and the Lisu nationals



Interviewing among Lisu Nationals

ကျမ်းတိုးစာရင်း

၁။	ပါတီ၊မြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီ	တိုင်းရင်းသားရိုးရာ ယဉ်ကျေးမှုလေ့ထုံးစံများ(ကချင်)	စာအုပ်ထုတ်ဝေရေး ကော်ပို.ရေးရှင်း(၁၉၆၀)
၂။	ပါတီ၊မြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီ	တိုင်းရင်းသားတို့၏တူညီသော ရိုးရာလေ့ထုံးစံများ	စာအုပ်ထုတ်ဝေရေး ကော်ပို.ရေးရှင်း(၁၉၇၅)
၃။	ခင်ခင်စုဒေါ် နွဲ့နွဲ့ ၊ ဒေါ် ကြင်ကြင်ဒေါ်	မနုဿဗေဒနိဒါန်း	တက္ကသိုလ်များစာအုပ် ထုတ်ဝေရေးကော်မတီ (၁၉၇၀)
၄။	မင်းနိုင်ဦး	ပို့သွေးပို့သားတိုင်းရင်းသား	ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန (၁၉၆၀)
၅။	မင်းနိုင်ဦး	တိုင်းရင်းသားစကားပုံများ	ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန (၁၉၆၀)
၆။	မင်းနိုင်ဦး	တိုင်းရင်းသားယဉ်ကျေးမှုနိဒါန်းနှင့် နှင့်အခြေစိုက်မေးခွန်းများ	ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ် စာကြည့်တိုက်။
၇။	မင်းနိုင်ဦး	ပြည်ထောင်စုအကပဒေသာ	ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန (၁၉၆၀)
၈။	နမ့်စန်မြို့ပိုင်ရုံးနမ့်စန်မြို့	တိုင်းရင်းသားယဉ်ကျေးမှုနိဒါန်း နှင့်အခြေစိုက်မေးခွန်းများ၏အဖြေ	ရှမ်းပြည်နယ် ယဉ်ကျေးမှုပြတိုက် တောင်ကြီး။
၉။	မိုးညို	လူသားမျိုးနွယ်များ	ခိုးဖြူပုံနှိပ်တိုက်(၁၄၇)။ မြန်မာ့ဂုဏ်ရည်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။
၁၀။	ဘိုးလှဦး	ရှမ်းကုန်းပြင်မြင့်မှကချင်အပုံပြင်များ	စာအုပ်ထုတ်ဝေရေး ကော်ပို.ရေးရှင်း
၁၁။	ဖိုးလတ်၊ ဦး	မြန်မာအစ	ပညာနန္ဒပုံနှိပ်တိုက် (၁၉၆၀)

Social Organization of the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals

၁၂။	တိုင်းရင်းသားလူမျိုးများအရေးနှင့် ပတ်သက်၍တော်လှန်ရေးကောင်စီ၏ အမြင်နှင့်ခံယူချက်		စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက် (၁၉၆၅)
၁၃။	ပါတီမြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီ	တိုင်းရင်းသားတို့၏ ရိုးရာဓလေ့ထုံးစံများ	စာအုပ်ထုတ်ဝေရေး ကော်ပို.ရေးရှင်း
၁၄။	လွိုင်လင်ခရိုင်မဂ္ဂဇင်း(၁၉၉၉)		ပြန်ကြားရေးနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ ဆက်ဆံရေး၊လွိုင်လင်မြို့။
၁၅။	နမ်.စန်မြို့ပိုင်ရုံး	နမ်စန်မြို့နယ်မှတ်တမ်း	ပြန်ကြားရေးနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ ဆက်ဆံရေး၊ နမ်.စန်မြို့။
၁၆။	နမ်လတ်စာစောင်	အမှတ်(၁)အတွဲ(၄) ၁၉၉၆ ဇက်တင်ဘာလ။	ပြန်ကြားရေးနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ ဆက်ဆံရေး၊ နမ်.စန်မြို့။
၁၇။	နမ်လတ်စာစောင်	အမှတ်(၁)အတွဲ(၅) ၁၉၉၇ ဒီဇင်ဘာလ။	ပြန်ကြားရေးနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ ဆက်ဆံရေး၊ နမ်.စန်မြို့။
၁၈။	မြန်မာ့စွယ်စုံကျမ်း၊ တွဲ(၁၁)		
၁၉။	သန်းထွန်း ၊ ဒေါက်တာ	ခေတ်ဟောင်းမြန်မာရာဇဝင်	ကာယသုခပုံနှိပ်တိုက် ၇၂ရေတာရှည်လမ်း ဟောင်း ၊ ရန်ကုန်။

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တွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းခဲ့သူများစာရင်း

စဉ်	အမည်	အသက်	နေရပ်	အလုပ်အကိုင်
၁	ဦးအာလေး(လီယောရှု)	၃၉	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး၊တိုင်းရင်းဆေးကု
၂	ဒေါ်နန်းဆိုင်	၅၉	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၃	ကိုရွှေဘ	၂၅	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	ကုန်ရောင်းကုန်ဝယ်
၄	ဆရာမလီအက်စတာ	၂၆	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	လီဆူးဓမ္မဟတ္ထသိုလ်ဆရာမ
၅	စာကြာဘေးဘေး	၅၅	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၆	ဦးငွေစာ	၆၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၇	ဦးအာလေး	၅၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၈	ဒေါ်အာလူးမေ	၆၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၉	ဒေါ်အာမေးစာမ	၅၉	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၀	ဒေါ်အာစာမ	၅၈	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၁	ဦးလောအိုက်	၅၅	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၂	ဦးရောသ	၄၆	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၃	ဦးအာဆာဖါ	၅၂	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၄	ဦးစာအာလူး	၄၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၅	ဦးဗျာကြေပို	၃၉	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၆	ဦးဟိုကြာစစ	၄၅	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၇	ဦးနန္ဒ	၅၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	ရွာအိမ်မှူး
၁၈	ဦးတင်ဦး	၅၅	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	ရွာစာရေး
၁၉	မရွှန်စီမေး	၂၆	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	ကျောင်းသူ

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၂၀	ဒေါ်နန်းမြ	၅၆	နမ့်စန်မြို့အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	ဗိုဗို
၂၁	မောင်လောငု	၃၄	ခူနန်းရွာ	တောင်ယာ ခိုက်ပိုးရေး
၂၂	ဦးပြတ်သား	၆၀	ဝမ်မိုင်ရွာ	တောင်ယာ ခိုက်ပိုးရေး
၂၃	ဦးလောက်ဆံ	၄၅	ဝမ်မိုင်ရွာ	ခါတ်ပုံကျွမ်းကျင် အဆင်(၂)
၂၄	ကိုကျော်ဝင်း	၃၀	နမ့်စန်မြို့နယ်အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	
၂၅	နမ့်စန်မြို့နယ်အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက် မှ လီဆူးတိုင်းရင်းသားများ			
၂၆	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာမှ လီဆူးတိုင်းရင်းသားများ			
၂၇	ဝမ်မိုင်ရွာမှ လီဆူးတိုင်းရင်းသားများ			

## Conclusion

The researcher believes that to be research on a national race, it is impart to know its historical background. So, the researcher had traveled to the home of the Lishaw (Lisu) national tribes. It was worth while trip because I have gained a lot of general knowledge. I had anticipated a rough journey but the road was surprisingly good, though they need many more buses. I also realized how important, good roads and transportation are for the development of a region.

The historical background of the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals that they belong to the “Lo-Lo hunter” group. The national tribes came in Myanmar in three groups, the ‘Mon Khmer’ group, Tibeto-Myanmar group and Thai-Chinese group. The Lishaw( Lisu) and Kachin tribes arrived in Myanmar with the Tibeto-Myanmar group.

We also learn that they move their village often due to their traditional customs and due to their livelihood of working the taungyar system. They have to leave the taungyar after using it once and

leave it fallow for three years to regain its fertility. Then in choosing a land site to settle a village, in building a house and choosing a site for it, the traditional customs are practiced rigidly till today.

The Lishaw(Lisu) national's family has many peculiarities in analyzing lineage and relative terminology, which are very surprising. The sons of the family are completely under the authority of the father. They have to work in the father's business even when they have married. It is a patriarchal society and the sons carry on the name of the family.

The relative terms for the father's side and the mother's side are also different. The daughter takes on their husband's racial family name and traditions. This is the reason why sons are given preferences in the Lishaw(Lisu) family as carrying on the traditions of the paternal side and are given more privileges than the daughters. The adopted children also are given the same privileges as their own children.

The customs for the unmarried boy and girl are, there must be no misbehavior, and when they are in love, they must elope with the knowledge of the parents, according to their traditional. The marriage ceremony following the elopement shows the strength the

relatives. In any ceremonial occasion the Lishaw (Lisu) tribes rally round the leader untidily, which is an example to envy.

The role of the relatives is important in giving birth and in giving a name to the child. The way they solve their problems is also admirable. In any difficulty, big or small, the relatives help to make it small or disappear altogether.

Their economic activities show that the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals are contented with their lives and free from greed. They live by the shifting taungyar system and grow just enough for the year's needs. They are happy if they have enough paddy and corn for themselves and the animals they breed. The chicken and pigs are reared not so much for their consumption as more for the offerings to the nats, as they are nat worshippers or animist.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals chiefly believe in their traditional nats. They are animists, so they are very afraid they might do something wrong and so take care to do things properly. If they should happen to have done any wrong to offend the nats, they would propitiate at the village nat shrine to the entire satisfaction of their traditional nat. They also remember without fail the seasons and times for propitiation of their traditional nats.

In the time of celebrating the festivals, they obey and carry out the instructions of the elders exactly. The researcher shall never forget her experiences of participating in their New Year festival. We came to understand the depth and breadth of meaning in a national race's celebration of a festival. The times for the celebrations of the festivals are quite close. We learn also the 'dos and don'ts' of a national race in observing their festivals.

The Lishaw(Lisu) nationals accept the decisions of the elders of the village. They listen to the words of the elders and obey their decisions or judgements. This is the reason why we do find big criminal cases. But the wrong doer is always given punishment, according to the laws set down by traditional law codes. If some one harms another to the detriment of that person, then the culprit is made to do reparation to the satisfaction of the person or the victim. The Lishaw (Lisu) nationals, young and old drink as a national custom at festivals. But they never drink to excess and have had no problems.

The above facts illustrate that all the national tribes, including the Lishaw(Lisu) nationals have lived in the Union of Myanmar according to laws set down by the State Government. The researcher is happy and satisfied to have had the opportunity to observe them.



The researcher and the Lisu nationals



Interviewing among Lisu Nationals

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ကျမ်းတိုးစာရင်း

၁။	ပါတီမြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီ	တိုင်းရင်းသားရိုးရာ ယဉ်ကျေးမှုလေ့ထုံးစံများ(ကချင်)	စာအုပ်ထုတ်ဝေရေး ကော်ပိုရေးရှင်း(၁၉၆၁)
၂။	ပါတီမြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီ	တိုင်းရင်းသားတို့၏တူညီသော ရိုးရာလေ့ထုံးစံများ	စာအုပ်ထုတ်ဝေရေး ကော်ပိုရေးရှင်း(၁၉၇၅)
၃။	ခင်ခင်ဇင်ဇင် နွဲ့နွဲ့ ၊ ဒေါ် ကြင်ကြင်၊ဒေါ်	မနုဿဗေဒနိဒါန်း	တက္ကသိုလ်များစာအုပ် ထုတ်ဝေရေးကော်မတီ (၁၉၇၀)
၄။	မင်းနိုင်ဦး	ဒို့သွေးဒို့သားတိုင်းရင်းဘွား	ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန (၁၉၆၀)
၅။	မင်းနိုင်ဦး	တိုင်းရင်းသားစကားပုံများ	ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန (၁၉၆၀)
၆။	မင်းနိုင်ဦး	တိုင်းရင်းသားယဉ်ကျေးမှုနိဒါန်းနှင့် နှင့်အခြေစိုက်မေးခွန်းများ	ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ် စာကြည့်တိုက်။
၇။	မင်းနိုင်ဦး	ပြည်ထောင်စုအကဝဒေသာ	ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန (၁၉၆၀)
၈။	နမ့်စန်မြို့ပိုင်ရုံးနမ့်စန်မြို့	တိုင်းရင်းသားယဉ်ကျေးမှုနိဒါန်း နှင့်အခြေစိုက်မေးခွန်းများ၏အဖြေ	ရှမ်းပြည်နယ် ယဉ်ကျေးမှုပြတိုက် တောင်ကြီး။
၉။	မိုးညို	လူသားမျိုးနွယ်များ	ချီးဖြူပုံနှိပ်တိုက်(၁၄၇)၊ မြန်မာ့ဂုဏ်ရည်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။
၁၀။	ဘိုးလှဦး	ရှမ်းကုန်းပြင်မြင့်မှတချင်အပုံပြင်များ	စာအုပ်ထုတ်ဝေရေး ကော်ပိုရေးရှင်း
၁၁။	မိုးလတ်၊ ဦး	မြန်မာအစ	ပညာနန္ဒပုံနှိပ်တိုက် (၁၉၆၀)
၁၂။	တိုင်းရင်းသားလူမျိုးများအရေးနှင့် ပတ်သက်၍တော်လှန်ရေးကောင်စီ၏ အပြင်နှင့်ခံယူချက်		စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက် (၁၉၆၅)
၁၃။	ပါတီမြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီ	တိုင်းရင်းသားတို့၏ ရိုးရာလေ့ထုံးစံများ	စာအုပ်ထုတ်ဝေရေး ကော်ပိုရေးရှင်း
၁၄။	လွိုင်လင်ခရိုင်မဂ္ဂဇင်း(၁၉၉၉)		ပြန်ကြားရေးနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ ဆက်ဆံရေး၊လွိုင်လင်မြို့။

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၁၅။	နမ်.စန်မြို့ပိုင်ရုံး	နမ်စန်မြို့နယ်မှတ်တမ်း	ပြန်ကြားရေးဇုန်ပြည်သူ့ဆက်ဆံရေး၊ နမ်.စန်မြို့။
၁၆။	နမ်လတ်စာစောင်	အမှတ်(၁)အတွဲ(၄) ၁၉၉၆ စက်တင်ဘာလ။	ပြန်ကြားရေးဇုန်ပြည်သူ့ဆက်ဆံရေး၊ နမ်.စန်မြို့။
၁၇။	နမ်လတ်စာစောင်	အမှတ်(၁)အတွဲ(၅) ၁၉၉၇ ဒီဇင်ဘာလ။	ပြန်ကြားရေးဇုန်ပြည်သူ့ဆက်ဆံရေး၊ နမ်.စန်မြို့။
၁၈။	မြန်မာ့စွယ်စုံကျမ်း၊အတွဲ(၁၁)		
၁၉။	သန်းထွန်း ၊ ဒေါက်တာ	ခေတ်ဟောင်းမြန်မာရာဇဝင်	ကာယသုခပုံနှိပ်တိုက် ၇၂ရေတာရှည်လမ်း ဟောင်း ၊ ရန်ကင်း။

တွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းခဲ့သူများစာရင်း

စဉ်	အမည်	အသက်	နေရပ်	အလုပ်အကိုင်
၀	ဦးအာလေး(လီယောရှ)	၃၉	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး၊တိုင်းရင်းဆေးကု
၂	ဒေါ်နန်းဆိုင်	၅၉	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၃	ကိုရွှေဘ	၂၅	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	ကုန်ရောင်းကုန်ဝယ်
၄	ဆရာမလီအက်စတာ	၂၆	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	လီဆူးဓမ္မတက္ကသိုလ်ဆရာမ
၅	စာကြာဘေးဘေး	၅၅	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၆	ဦးငွေစာ	၆၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၇	ဦးအာလေး	၅၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၈	ဒေါ်အာဝူးမေ	၆၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၉	ဒေါ်အာမေးစာမ	၅၉	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၀	ဒေါ်အာစာမ	၅၈	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၁	ဦးလောအိုက်	၅၅	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၂	ဦးရောသ	၄၆	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၃	ဦးအာဆာဖါ	၅၂	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၄	ဦးစာအားလူး	၄၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၅	ဦးဗျာကြေပို	၃၉	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၆	ဦးတို့ကြာစစ	၄၅	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၁၇	ဦးနန္ဒ	၅၀	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	ရွာအိမ်ဖွေး
၁၈	ဦးတင်ဦး	၅၅	ဟိုက်ဖတ်ကျေးရွာ	ရွာစာရေး
၁၉	ပဒ္မန်စီပေး	၂၆	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	ကျောင်းသူ
၂၀	ဒေါ်နန်းမြ	၅၆	နမ့်စန်မြို့၊အမှတ်(၄)ရပ်ကွက်	မိခို
၂၁	မောင်လောငု	၃၄	ခူဇန်းရွာ	တောင်ယာ စိုက်ပျိုးရေး
၂၂	ဦးပြတ်သား	၆၀	ဝမ်မိုင်ရွာ	တောင်ယာ စိုက်ပျိုးရေး