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Author(s): J. Shakespear

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THE KUKI-LUSHAI CLANS.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL J. SHAKESPEAR, C.I.E., D.S.O.

THE home of the clans with which I propose to deal lies in the tumbled mass of hills separating the plains of Burmah from those of Bengal and extending from the valley of the Brahmaputra to the sea. In 1777 the East India Company's official styled "The Chief of Chittagong" wrote to Warren Hastings, who was the Governor-General, reporting that a disaffecting mountaineer had called to his aid "large numbers of Kuki men who live far in the interior of the hills, who have not the use of fire-arms and whose bodies go unclothed." Lieutenant Stewart in his *Notes on Northern Cachar*, dated 1855, states that the "Old Kukis emigrated from the Jungles of Tipperah, the hilly country south of Cachar, some fifty or sixty years ago," that is about 1800. In 1848 another eruption of Kukis into Cachar took place. These later arrivals were called the New Kukis, and differed in many respects from the old, and strange to say both linguistically and ethnographically the Old Kukis are more closely allied to the Lushais far off to the south, than to the New Kukis, who followed them into Cachar, and with whom we should have expected them to be closely connected.

These Kuki clans are now scattered over a very wide area, being found in the Chittagong Hill tracts, Tipperah, South Sylhet, Lushai Hills, Cachar Naga Hills and Manipur, and the unadministered tracts beyond. Before attempting to describe the people I propose to give a brief history of this dispersion. The term Kuki, like Naga, Shendu, Chin, and many others, is not recognised by the people to whom we apply it, and I cannot give its derivation, but it has come to have a definite meaning, and we understand by it certain closely allied clans, with well-marked common characteristics, belonging to Tibeto-Burman stock. It may be safely said that their ancestors lived for a long time in the strip of country between the Kaladan or Koladyne and the Chindwin rivers, which is almost universally claimed as their place of origin, traditions which are corroborated in several ways.

All these clans practise *jhum* cultivation, that is, they fell a piece of jungle and, when sufficiently dry, burn it and then dibble in the seed, and seldom cultivate the same piece of land for more than two years in succession. They therefore need much room, and the desire for new land, coupled with the fear of stronger clans, has led to the whole race adopting a more or less vagabond mode of

life, which has been made fatally easy by the wide-spread growth of the bamboo, which makes house building, of a certain kind, very simple.

Space will not admit of my giving even an outline of the facts on which I base my conclusions, but after protracted inquiries lasting over fifteen years, I have constructed what I believe to be a fairly accurate history of the Lushais, and believe that the ancestors of all these clans originally lived in small consanguineous communities each under a patriarch or headman. In some of these communities individuals by their skill in war and the chase came to the front and attracted members of other families to their hamlets and became the founders of lines of chiefs.

In other cases the communities remained democratic, in fact the whole race is very democratic, and now that fear of their enemies no longer compels them to live in large villages, they show a great tendency to revert to the ancient system of consanguineous hamlets. At the close of the seventeenth century, what is now the northern part of the Lushai Hills and the southern part of Manipur was occupied by the Thado and Vuite clans under powerful chiefs, while to the south the clans still retained their patriarchal organisation. One of these clans was named Lushei and was destined to supply the motive force which drove hordes of savages into British territory in the eighteenth century. All the Lushei chiefs trace their pedigrees back to Thangura, who is said to have been the son of Burman by a Vuite woman. All these clans set much store by their genealogies, and that of the Lushei chiefs is fairly well established. Thangura is said to have had his first village at Tlangkua, north of Falam. From him sprang six lines of chiefs, Rokum, Zadeng, Rivung, Thangluah, Pallian and Sailo, each of whom has risen to importance in the hills. To the north, east and south were well-organised clans, therefore when the Thangur chiefs required more land for their increasing followers, they naturally moved westwards. There is not space to give even an outline of the movement. It was very slow and proceeded on no prearranged plan, each community when it exhausted the land within reach moving to some other suitable spot, each son of a chief as he grew up taking a few households and setting out to seek his fortune. The Rokum have passed away leaving no traces, the Zadeng, Thangluah and Pallian are now only represented by two or three chiefs ruling wretched hamlets which, but for our protection, would ere this have ceased to exist. Rivung chiefs are still found in Tipperah, and it is almost certain that the Kookie men mentioned by the chief of Chittagong in 1777 were followers of the Rivung, for an account of them written by Rennell, of which a French translation published in Leipsic in 1800 is quoted by Colonel Lewin in his book on the Chittagong Hill tracts, might, with but few alterations, be taken for one of the Lushais of the present day. The Sailo family came to the front last; they trace their descent from Sailova, a great grandson of Thangura, and have crushed all their rivals, developing such a talent for governing that they now hold undisputed sway over representatives of all sorts of clans throughout the greater part of the Lushai Hills.

Now what was the result of this intrusion of the Lushais, under the Thangur chiefs, into the territory already occupied by other clans? A large number of these, probably those most closely allied to the intruders, speedily joined the Thangurs, some no doubt under compulsion, others simply because food was always plentiful and property fairly secure under the rule of these prosperous newcomers. The descendants of these now form the bulk of the subjects of the Thangur chiefs and may collectively be spoken of as Lushais—the term Lushei being used only for the actual Lushei clan.

Some clans known as the Khawtlang and Khawchhak, that is western and eastern villages, refused to join the Thangurs. Their old village sites are still known by their names, and monoliths commemorating their heroes are still pointed out to the curious. The majority of them fled, one party going round the flank of the Thado villages, or passing between them into Cachar, where they were named the Old Kukis, another becoming tributary to certain chiefs of Thado extraction situated on the southern borders of Manipur, where their descendants are still to be found. Nearly all of these clans, however, left a certain number of people behind them who have become merged in the Lushais. By the middle of the nineteenth century the northern Sailo chiefs had become strong enough to try conclusions with the Thados. The Sailos triumphed and hence the second incursion of Kukis into Cachar in 1848. Another wing of the fugitives entered Manipur territory and were settled on the western border by the Political Agent, Colonel McCulloch, a third party flying from the northern Chins after a sojourn in the Kubaw valley appeared on the eastern border of Manipur, and caused much trouble up to quite a recent date. The impetus given by the Lusheis has not even now expended its force, for just before coming on leave I was inquiring into a series of raids committed by several communities under chiefs of the Thado clan, which after many wanderings are penetrating the unadministrated tracts east of the Naga Hills and Manipur and appearing on the Upper Chindwin.

I have now shown how the Old Kukis come to be more closely allied to the Lushais, having originally been their near neighbours, but in Manipur we find several other clans, Chiru, Kom, Kawlhreng, Purum and Tikhup, which have been settled there for a very long time, and the Aimol and Vaiphei, whose advent synchronises with the incursion of the Old Kukis into Cachar. All these are evidently closely allied to the Lushais and Old Kukis. What the disturbing cause was which set these clans in motion, we shall probably never know; it may have been simply a desire for fresh land, but once commenced such a movement would naturally go on till the clan came in contact with a more stable government, which could protect them from their more powerful neighbours; this they found in Manipur. All these clans assert that their forefathers lived far away to the south, some claim kinship with clans still found among the Lushais, for instance, the Chiru claim descent from Chongthu, who gave his name to a clan still found among the Lushais, and this same Chongthu figures in the Thado pedigree, which is fairly well established, and by it Chongthu would appear to have flourished about four hundred

years ago. The first mention of the Chiru in the Manipur Chronicle is in A.D. 1545, which is rather a curious coincidence.

Every clan is divided into families, some of which are again subdivided into branches. The clan names and many of the family and branch names are clearly eponyms, and though in some cases the name seems to be taken from a village site, inquiry will often show that the site was first named after some famous chief, or community.

The Old Kuki clans are generally democratic, but even among them there are certain posts which are either hereditary or which can only be held by members of certain clans. Among the Khâlhreng, the post of headman is not hereditary, but on election the new headman has to sacrifice a pig; may this not be to avert the ill-luck which is expected to follow a deviation from established custom? Among the Chiru the headman has many of the privileges, though none of the prestige of the Lushai chief. In fact, though these clans are really democratic they have in them the germs of a monarchical system; a Lushai chief before our occupation was an autocrat, from whose orders there was no appeal, but if he exceeded the limits set by custom, or was uniformly cruel and unjust, his followers soon deserted him for more tactful rulers. The chiefs of the Thado clan are reputed to have been more despotic, but nowadays we often find that, though their subjects admit their liability to pay certain dues, they live in small consanguineous hamlets, apart from their chief. A Lushai Chief receives two baskets of rice from each household in his village, and also a hind leg of every animal killed in the chase. He appoints some elderly men, styled Upa, to aid him in administering justice and in the management of the village. All cases are settled by this board, in petty matters a small fine is inflicted and retained by the judges, a custom found to prevent undue leniency. In the case of the theft of certain articles such as rice, cloths, guns, brass pots, domestic animals and wild animals, which have been trapped or snared, there is in nearly every clan a fixed fine, which must be paid irrespective of the value of the article taken. Offences against the body were left to be punished by the sufferer or his relatives, but the delinquent among the Lushais could seek safety by entering the chief's house and becoming his *Boi* or slave. Orphans or destitute people could also join the chief's household, getting food, shelter and protection in return for their labour; these could purchase their freedom by the payment of one *mithan*, that is a tame bison.

The Thado clans recognised slavery by purchase, which is unknown among the Lushais. Captives taken in war are called *Sal*; these were the absolute property of their captor.

In all clans it is customary for boys on attaining puberty to cease sleeping in their parents' houses. Among the Lushais and the Kom, Chiru and Ti-khup in Manipur, there are special barn-like buildings in which the young men sleep, and which are also the guest-houses of the village. Women are generally prohibited from entering these. Among the other clans the usual custom is for a few well-to-do persons to provide in their houses sleeping places for a certain number of young

men, who in return assist their hosts and are given by them an annual feast. The Purum have a curious custom, that if a man has a son and a daughter the son must go and sleep in the house of some one who has an unmarried daughter; my informant tells me, "That though they sleep thus they are very careful about their characters." If they are, they are exceptional, for among most of these tribes much freedom is accorded to unmarried girls, as success in the courts of Venus is a sure passport to the Lushai heaven.

The Lushais carried on war by raiding the villages of their enemies; to ambush cultivators was considered unsporting, for as a chief said to me "How can people live if cultivation is impossible?" Head-hunting was never a Lushai pastime; heads of enemies killed in raids were taken, but parties did not go out simply to take a head as among the Thados and Chins. As regards religion, there is a wonderful unanimity of belief in Pathian the creator, who, however, is generally thought to take but little interest in mankind. The Lushais also speak of Khuavang, sometimes as identical with Pathian, sometimes as inferior, but more concerned with men; this deity is probably the Lushai form of Kazang or Kozing, the Chin equivalent of Pathian. Far more important, however, are the spirits of the hills woods and rivers, called by the Lushais *Ram-Huai*, land demons, and *Tui-Huai* water demons, by the Thado-speaking tribes *Tihla* and by others *Rampu*. These are all bad spirits and every misfortune and sickness is due to them, and in appeasing them much of the hillman's time and money is spent.

The Chiru seem to be promoting some of these demons into local divinities. The Thados have two spirits unknown to other clans, *Zomi*, a female ghost, the sight of which is followed by awful misfortunes, unless averted by the immediate sacrifice of a dog, and *Nuaijing mang*, a spirit which lives underground.

Besides these spirits the Lushais believe in the *Lashi*, peculiar beings residing in precipices and controlling wild animals. A Lushai legend tells how a young man out shooting spent the whole day courting a Lashi maiden whom he found weaving at the foot of the precipice, but fortunately retained sufficient control over his feelings to refuse her request to roll up her weaving and follow her into the rock. The maiden, however, bore him no ill will, and at his request summoned an elephant which he shot without difficulty. Among the Vaiphei, Lashi is a one-legged god, almost on a par with Pathian; among the Aimol, he is the tribal god; in both cases the idea of control over the wild animals is preserved and the Vuite sacrificial chant when sacrificing to the domestic god is a prayer for success in the chase. Every clan, except the Ti-khup, who are strict monotheists, believes in a special guardian spirit, to whose sacrifices none but the household must be admitted. The method of performing this sacrifice and the chant used varies in each clan, and the test whether two families belong to the same clan, is whether their customs are identical in these respects. The Lushais call this spirit *Sakhua*, but I have not been able to ascertain what a Lushai's idea of *Sakhua* is. Perhaps from the following chant used on occasion of the *Sakhua* sacrifice among the Lushai, it may be possible to arrive at some conclusion. Each line begins with a

long drawn out A—h and ends with A—w, and after each is repeated the refrain, "Accept our sacrifice."

- Ah—h. Arise from the village. Aw—w.
 And accept our sacrifice.
- Ah—h. Arise from the open spaces in the village. Aw—w.
 And accept our sacrifice.
- Ah—h. Arise from your dwelling places. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from the paths. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from the gathering mists. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from the yam plots. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from Bualchuan hill. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from Khãokãok hill. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from Buhmãm hill. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from above the road. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from below the road. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from Vahlit hill. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from Muchhip hill. Aw—w.
 The spirits of three more hills are invoked.
- Ah—h. Arise from the new village site. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from the shelf over the hearth. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from the village. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from the floor. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Arise from the earth. Aw—w.
- Ah—h. Spirits prayed to by our ancestors,
 Accept our sacrifice.

Bless Luta's spirit (the householder's name).
 Bless us with sons, Bless us with daughters,
 Bless us while in bed, Bless us while round the hearth.
 Make us to flourish like a sago palm,
 Make us to flourish like the *hai* tree.
 Bless us while the sun shines,
 Bless us while the moon shines,
 May those above us bless us, may those below bless us,
 Guard us from our enemies, Guard us from death,
 Favour us with flesh (may we have success in the chase).
 Favour us with the produce of the jungle.
 For ten, for a hundred years bless us.
 Bless us in killing men, Bless us in shooting animals,
 Bless us in cultivating our *jhums*, Bless us in cultivating the beans,
 Guard us in the presence of men, Guard us in the presence of animals, Bless us
 in our old age,
 Bless us when our heads are bowed down.
 Guard us from the spear, Guard us from the *dao*.
 Those whom our grandmothers worshipped guard us.
 Those whom our grandfathers worshipped guard us.
 Bless us in spite of the faults in this our chant.
 Bless us in spite of the faults in this our worship.

Bualchuam Hill is the hill in which the first men built their first village; Buhmām, the hill on which the first bird's nest was built by a crow. The other hills mentioned give a clue to the village sites of the first Lushei chiefs. The omission of a prayer to be preserved from the danger of gunshots, shows that the chant has remained unaltered in spite of the gun having superseded the *dao* and the spear. The mention of beans is a survival of the time when the clan lived on them, and left home where rice would not grow.

The Ram-huai are in some way connected with Sakhua, as the following story shows. It is translated from the original Lushai.

“A man called Dailova, who may be alive now, did not know that it was time for him to perform his Sakhua sacrifice. He and his son went down to fetch rice from the *jhum* house, and slept there among the straw; in the night the boy, feeling cold, went into the *jhum* house and slept among the rice, but Dailova covered himself up in the straw and kept warm. Towards morning two Huais came along, one of whom was called Lianthaonga, and the other Ram-huai called to him, ‘Where are you going to, Lianthaonga?’ and he replied, ‘I am going to Lungzawl.’ Then Dailova, from under the straw called out, ‘Where are you going to, Lianthaonga?’ Then the Ram-huai came into the straw and wrestled with Dailova. When they had finished wrestling it was daylight, so they ate their rice and came home and Ram-huai followed them and wrestled with Dailova. Sometimes the Ram-huai appear as a tiger and sometimes as a man. Dailova kept on saying, ‘I will wrestle again with him,’ and at last he called out ‘I have conquered.’ Then the Ram-huai told him that his Sakhua sacrifice was overdue and he performed it at once.”

The following account of the doings of one of these Huai was given me by Suakhnuna, one of the most intelligent of the Lushei chiefs:—

“A Ram-huai named Chongpuithanga used to live near the ford over the Sonai; he said he was the servant of the king of the Huai, and was always on the look-out for men along the banks of the river. He spoke through a girl called Ziki, who was often ill, and used to go into trances. He demanded a pig and professed to have caused the deaths of ten persons of the village.” The following is another story which the teller fully believed:—“About six years ago, Hminga, of Lalbuta's village, was looking at a *ngoi* (fishing weir) and saw some Ram-huai; these wore the *chawndawl* (head-dress worn by slayers of men) and round these were strings of babies' skulls. On his return home he got very ill and all his family kept on asking him what was the matter, but when he was going to tell them the Ram-huai would seize him by the throat so that he could not tell them. If he managed to say a few words he got a pain in his head. He did not die, but recovered.” Again: “A woman of Lalbuta's village went out of her house at night for purposes of nature. Her name was Mangpāmi; she was enceinte. The Huai of the Tuitlin precipice caught her, and forced out the immature child and then carried her off down the rocks. The young men of the village went to search for her, and found her naked in the jungle at the foot of the

precipice, where the Ram-huai had left her. She knew nothing about it. She recovered.”

After a sacrifice those concerned in it are prohibited from working for a certain period and sometimes have to remain within a certain area, either in the village or the house; this period is called in Lushai *hrilh* and closely corresponds to the Naga *genna*. Portions of every animal sacrificed are reserved as offering to the Huai; generally these are the extremities and internal organs, but they vary in different sacrifices. They are called *sherh* in Lushai.

The responsibility for deciding what sacrifice is necessary, rests with the wise-man, called variously *Puithiam*, Great knower, *Thempu* or *Khulpu*, who after feeling the sick person's pulse, announces what class of Huai is troubling him and what particular victim is required. There are sacrifices to meet every possible contingency, *Khal*, which are to appease the Huai frequenting the village and houses. This series is only performed by the Lushais. There are five varieties, three of which should be performed after marriage. The kind of *Khal* required is sometimes shown by dreams; thus if a person dreams of a beautiful stranger of the opposite sex who laughs constantly, the sacrifice of a piglet, *Vawkte-Khal*, is needed; should the dream be repeated, *Ar-Khal*, sacrifice of a fowl, must follow; should a person dream that a tiger bites him, *Kel-Khal*, sacrifice of a goat, must be performed at once or death will ensue.

Dai-bawl, these are to appease the Huai of the jungle and rivers. They are performed by all the clans in very similar ways. The following is a specimen; it is called *Bawl-pui*, or great bawl, and is only performed when others have been performed in vain.

Two small clay figures are made, one to represent a man and the other a woman. These are called *Ram-chaom*. The female figure has a petticoat of *Hnahtial* (a plant which has tough leaves used for wrapping up food to be taken on a journey), and is made to bite the pig's liver.

The male figure is provided with a pipe and a necklace of the liver of the pig which is sacrificed. A small bamboo platform is made, and on it is put a clay model of a gong and other household utensils and sometimes of *mithan*.

The pig's throat is cut and the blood allowed to flow over the platform, etc.

The pig's flesh is cooked on the spot. To take it into the house would bring misfortune. Many persons come and eat it with the *Puithiam*. If the patient does not die during the performance of the sacrifice or during the subsequent feast he will undoubtedly recover.

An important sacrifice, the knowledge of the charms for which is restricted to members of certain Old Kuki clans, who travel about in search of patients, is called the *Kangpuizam*, and the fee for performing it is about £3.

In front of the house a sort of arbour is made of grass and boughs supported on four sticks; all round this are hung little balls made of split cane rolled up tight. This split cane is said to be much liked by the devils. All round the house

strands of cane are stretched, the ends being tied to the arbour. The devils are supposed to be unable to pass these canes, but travel along them so that the sorcerer has no fear of the devils who are already inside the house being assisted by recruits from the outside. Drinking of beer and reciting of charms goes on during the day, and after dark the sorcerer and his assistants get up on the roof of the sick man's house and commence marching up and down reciting charms and ordering the devils to leave the man, and offering them asylum in the bodies of a goat, pig, and dog which they carry with them. After some shouting and firing of a gun the party sit down on the roof over the front entrance to the house, and the sorcerer commences a long incantation over each of the animals in turn, beating them and stamping on them. Then some of the party come down and the rest retire to the back of the house and each of the animals is brought in turn from the far end of the house, being made to walk on its hind legs to the front and then is thrown down on to the entrance platform; lastly, a big bough is carried from the back of the house, along the roof and fixed through the roof over the entrance. From this bough a cane is stretched to the arbour. Then all the rest of the party came down and after many incantations and much shouting the animals are sacrificed and eaten by the sorcerer and his assistants, the usual useless portions being hung up in the arbour, for the devils, who are supposed to have been driven either into the animal or along the cane into the arbour.

I have not space to describe the sacrifices to cure barrenness, or the *Naohri*, a series that should be performed once in every person's life in a particular order, or the sacrifices connected with cultivation or those connected with hunting, but must return to general religious beliefs. Besides the spirits already mentioned there are the *Mi-vengtu*, watchers of men, two spirits, one good, constantly guarding each person from harm, and the other bad, ever seeking opportunity to sell him to the *Huai*. Every person is supposed to have two souls, a wise and a foolish soul, and the struggles between these two account for the unreliability of men. If a man stumbles his wise soul has slumbered and his foolish one has triumphed. The belief in *Mi-thi-khua*, the dead-men's village, is universal, but that in *Pial-ral*, beyond the *Pial* River, an abode of unlimited food and drink and no worry, is not found among the *Thado* and many of the Old *Kuki* clans. Every clan believes in some being or beings which guard the road to *Mi-thi-khua* and trouble the spirits of the departed. *Mi-thi-khua* is generally said to be a place like this world, only existence there is more troublesome. The following is the *Lushai* belief.

The first man is said to have been *Pupaola*, then he died before all those born after him, and shoots at those who have died after him with a very big pellet bow; but at some he cannot shoot; *Hlamzuwh* he cannot shoot at, *Thangchhua* he may not shoot at. Then he may not shoot at a young man who has enjoyed three virgins, nor at one who has enjoyed seven different young women even if they were not virgins; but women, whoever they may be, he always shoots at.

They say that there is a road between the *Mi-thi-khua* and the *Rih* Lake. To

go there, they say, there are seven roads, but Pupaola has built his house where the seven roads meet. Then after Pupaola has shot them there is a hill called Hringlang Hill, and then there is the Lunglo River (heartless, feelingless, which removes feelings), the water of which is clear and transparent, and the *hawilopar* (look-back-no-more flowers) flourish there. The dead pluck *hawilo* flowers and place them behind their ears and drink of the Lunglo water and have no more desire for the land of the living.

Some clans believe that the souls of the dead are reincarnated in the form of hornets, some say in the form of dew, which if it falls on a person is reborn in his or her child. Hlamzuih, whom Pupaola may not shoot, are the souls of firstborn children who die within a year of their birth. The proud title of Thangchhuah, which carries with it much honour in this world as well as the right to admission to Pial-ral after death, can only be obtained by killing a man and each of the following animals:—elephant, bear, *sambhur*, barking deer, wild boar, wild *metna*, and by giving the feasts enumerated below; but it is well also to have killed a species of snake called *rulngan*, a bird called *vahluk* and a species of eagle called *mu-van-lai* (hawk in the middle of the sky). A Lushai gave me the following account of the journey of Thangchhuah to Pial-ral.

“After death the dead man holds the horns of the *sambhur* while sitting on its head, the *rulngan* will wind itself round him and the horns, the *Mu-van-lai* will try to seize the *rulngan*, but the Thangchhuah can drive them off. That is why they always fly screaming so high in the sky. The *vahluk* shades him by flying above him and also hide him from Pupawla, and thus the Thangchhuah is carried to Pial-ral.”

After a death some animal must be sacrificed, apparently as a peace offering to the Huai, otherwise the soul of the departed cannot go to Mi-thi-khua. This idea has led to the custom known as *Ai*. If a man kills an enemy or a wild animal, and does not perform the *Ai* ceremony, the ghost of the dead man or beast will haunt him and he will go mad, if he performs the *Ai* he will own the soul of the deceased man or beast in the other world. The *Ai* of a man requires the sacrifice of a *mithan* and a small pig. The *Ai* of a tiger is an interesting ceremony. The following description was written for me by a Lushai.

Thangbānga shot a tiger and performed the *Ai* ceremony. The night before he must not sleep. A young man cut its tail off, he also must keep awake all night. The next day he performed the *Ai* ceremony, sacrificing a *mithan*. Thangbānga, who was performing the *Ai*, dressed himself up as a woman, smoked a woman's pipe, wore a woman's petticoat and cloth, carried a small basket, span a cotton spindle, wore ivory earrings, let his hair down and wrapped a mottled cloth, which was said to be of an ancient pattern, round his head as a turban. A crowd watched him and yelled with laughter, but it would have been unlucky for him to laugh. Presently he took off his turban and carried it in the basket. Then he took off his woman's disguise and dressed again as a man and strapped on a fighting *dao* and carried a gun. He also took *sailungvār* (white flints) and put them into the tiger's

mouth, while he ate eggs. "You eat the *sailungvar*," he said; "who will swallow them the quicker? I have outswallowed you, you have not swallowed yours. I have swallowed mine. You go by the lower road, I will go by the upper. You will be like the lower southern hill, I shall be like the high northern ones. You are the brave man of the south, I am the brave man of the north," he said, and cut the tiger's head three times with his *dao*. Then the men buried the body of the tiger outside the village. If the tiger has killed men its eyes are gouged out with skewers or needles and thrown away. It is unlucky for the performer to laugh, so he holds a porcupine in his arms; if he laughs by accident they say, "The porcupine laughed." The idea of the performer disguising himself as a woman is that the spirit of the dead tiger may be humbled, thinking that it has been shot by a woman.

Marriage among nearly all the clans, with the exception of those belonging to the Lushai confederacy, is endogamous, as regards the clan, but exogamous as regards the family. When the method of formation of the Lushai confederacy under the Thangur chiefs is considered, it will be seen at once that any restrictions on marriage would seriously have interfered with the fusion of clans which was so necessary for the establishment of their power; therefore we find among the Lushais and clans much under their influence that a man may marry any woman, except his sisters, mother and grandmother; maternal first cousins marry freely, but there is a certain prejudice against paternal first cousins marrying. Among some clans marriage is not strictly endogamous, being allowed with members of some other closely allied clan; among the Chiru and Chawte, another old Kuki clan, the particular family of the clan out of which a young man must choose his bride is decreed by custom, and any young couples that transgress this rule are refused admittance to the family meals.

Marriage in all cases is by purchase. Among the Lushais not only the nearest male relative of the bride but also her aunt, her elder sister, her maternal uncle, a special chosen male and female guardian, all have to be paid certain sums, and traces of this custom are found among many other clans. Should a wife be led astray the Lushai custom decrees that all these various sums are to be repaid to the husband, the co-respondent getting off scot free; among other clans the co-respondent compensates the husband and takes the lady. The former system is found in practice to be more conducive to morality, as under it a woman feels that her fault will bring shame and loss on her relatives and friends, whereas under the latter she becomes a mere chattel, and a husband is often a consenting party.

In nearly all clans the marriage ceremony involves the sacrifice of a cock by the Puithiam, and the binding of the feathers on the young couple. Survivals of marriage by capture are also common, the bridal party being pelted with mud as they go to the bridegroom's house.

After the birth of a child, it is generally the custom that the mother must not leave the house for some days, and among the Lushais neither parent must work for seven days lest the soul of the child, which is supposed to be hovering around

them should be hurt. Among other clans a ceremony called the summoning of the soul is performed within a few days of the birth. On these occasions a fowl is generally sacrificed. The naming of the infant is also usually the occasion for killing a fowl. The name is usually chosen by the maternal uncle, but sometimes omens are consulted. The Chawte drop three grains of rice into a cup of water and if they sink another name must be chosen.

I know of no ceremonies connected with attaining the age of puberty. The ceremonies connected with death and disposal of the dead are various and yet a family resemblance is traceable in them all. Immediately a Rangte has breathed his last all present seize weapons and slash the walls, floor, and roof of the house shouting, "You have killed him, whoever you may be we will cut you in pieces." A party of young men goes off into the jungle and returns with whatever birds and beasts they can kill, which are hung up over the grave.

As a rule Old Kuki clans bury their dead in special cemeteries outside the village, while the others make the grave as near the house as possible. The corpse of a chief, among the Lushais, is enclosed in a hollowed-out log and kept in his house for three months, with a fire burning beside it and his widow is expected to quit it as little as possible. A bamboo tube leads from the inside of the coffin through the floor into the ground, all other openings being plastered up with mud. When nothing but the bones remain, the skull and some of the larger bones are placed in a special basket and kept as long as possible, the remainder being buried. Similar customs are found among several other clans, the coffin generally being placed in a specially prepared house at some distance from the dwelling house. Some clans carry the corpses of chiefs and famous men round the village; the corpse of a Thado chief is carried in and out of his house seven times. The Vuite dry the corpse in some way and keep up the funeral ceremonies for months, drinking round the corpse and pouring *zu* down its throat. Food, drink, and personal requisites are generally buried with the corpse. In some clans after the interment is completed, the Thempu places a stick in the path a short way from the graveyard and conjures the spirit of the departed not to pass it. In many clans there is an annual feast in honour of those who have died within the year.

The Khawlhreng on this occasion exhume the bones, clean them and replace them after wrapping them in cloths. Every clan places offerings of food and drink over the grave, and kills some animal in honour of the deceased and as a ransom for his soul. Offerings of the first fruits are made to their forefathers by almost every clan.

There are a great variety of festivals, some annual and connected with the crops, others performed for the glorification of the giver of the feast and to ensure his soul obtaining admission into the realms of bliss. Among the Lushais these have been very much systematised. An aspirant for the honour of Thangchhuah must give five feasts in a specified order, the most interesting of which is the *Mi-thi-rarw-p-lām*, dance of the drying of the corpse.

Three months before the date fixed for the feast, all the young men and girls

of the village start cutting firewood, for cooking the flesh of the animal to be killed. A cane is stretched along from tree to tree beside one of the main approaches to the village for some 500 yards, and against this, on alternate sides, are rested the billets, so that they be thoroughly dry by the time they are needed. As a reward the young people receive a he-goat and a sow which they consume with much merry-making, the skulls being placed on posts at each end of the line of billets. The actual feast lasts four days. On the principal day, besides the slaying and eating of a *mithan*, effigies supposed to represent their deceased relatives are made and attired in the finest cloths and adorned with the best necklaces. These are strapped on a square bamboo frame-work in the centre of which, on a tall pole, is an effigy supposed to represent the progenitor of the clan. The oldest living member of the clan then comes slowly from his house bringing with him a gourd of *zu*, and gives each effigy in turn a little *zu*, muttering a charm as he does so; he arranges his tour so as to reach his own father's effigy last, and when he has muttered his charm and given it the *zu*, he dashes the gourd down on the ground, and, bursting into tears, rushes into his house, whence he must not emerge for a month.

The effigies are then carried about the village by elderly persons, with much shouting and merriment. This is supposed to please the spirits of the departed.

Nearly every clan, while denying that its members have any knowledge of witchcraft, is firmly persuaded that its neighbours practice the black arts.

There are several ways of bewitching your enemy. Colonel Lewin has a tale in which the wizard takes up the impression of a person's foot in the mud and puts it to dry over the hearth, thereby causing the owner to waste away. Clay figures, into which bamboo spikes are thrust, also figure in all cases in which a person is accused of this offence. To cut off a piece of a person's hair and put it in a spring, is certain, unless the hair is speedily removed, to cause his death.

The following translation of a Lushai's account of how mankind first learned the black art is interesting.

“*Dawi* (witchcraft) was known to Pathian. Vahrika also was something like Pathian. Vahrika had a separate water supply and Pathian's daughter was always disturbing it. Vahrika said, ‘What can it be?’ and lay in ambush. Pathian's daughter came and he caught her and was going to kill her, but she said, ‘Don't kill me, I will teach you magic.’ So she taught him, and Vahrika taught it all to Keichalla, Lalruanga and Hrang-sai-puia. Then Lalruanga went to court Zangkaki, and Zangkaki, who was a friend of Pathian's daughter, bewitched Lalruanga, who had forgotten his *Dawi bur* (magic gourd), and he said to Chaichim (the mouse), ‘Go and fetch my *Dawi bur* which I put in my basket.’ So the mouse went to fetch the *Dawi bur* and got it, but the Tuiruang (Barak) river rose very high. The mouse took the *Dawi bur* in his mouth and started to swim over the river. The *Dawi bur* was washed away by the river till it stuck in the fish trap of the Thlangom tribe, who said, ‘What is this?’ The *Dawi bur* was singing like anything. The Thlangoms broke it open. No sooner had they opened it than they

each acquired knowledge of music. Then the Thlangoms were chanting the magic song. Some Mizo natives of these hills, who were passing through the village, also heard the song of those who knew magic. The Mizo saw a man eating rice, 'May you be bewitched,' they said. They bewitched him in his rice eating, and for a year after, whenever he ate cooked rice, it changed into dry uncooked rice, and it swelled inside him till his stomach could not hold it and he died. Thus the Mizo learnt about magic. Now-a-days also there is magic, but those who know it won't teach it without payment."

The only cure I know for a bewitched person is to eat the liver of the person who has bewitched him.

The Lushais believe that certain persons, both males and females, but more generally females, have the power of putting themselves into a trance and are in a state of communication with Khuavang. This power is called *zawl* and persons who possess it are called *Zawlnei*. The method of interrogating a *Zawlnei* is called *Thumvor*, and is as follows:—

The *Zawlnei* being in a trance is given a shallow basket containing rice which he or she holds in one hand while an egg is placed in the palm of the other hand. When the *Zawlnei* reverses this hand, the egg does not fall. The basket of rice is shaken backwards and forwards, and there appears among the rice the footprint of the animal which it is necessary to sacrifice to ensure the patient's recovery.

The belief in a species of demoniacal possession is very common. Among the Lushais it is called *Khawhring*, and the belief is that *Khawhring* lives in certain women, whence it issues forth from time to time and takes possession of other women, who falling into a trance speak with the voice of the original hostess of the *Khawhring*. The following is a translation of a Lushais' account of the origin of *Khawhring*.

"Wild boars have *Khawhring*. Once a man shot a wild boar while out hunting. On his return home they cooked the flesh, some of the fat got on to the hand of his sister, who rubbed her head and the wild boar's *Khawhring* just passed into her. On the next day without any provocation she entered another girl. She took entire possession of her. People said to her, 'Where are you going to?' She replied, 'It is the wild boar my brother shot.' 'Well, what do you want?' they said. 'If you will give me eggs I will go away,' she replied. They gave her eggs and she went. Presently all those who borrowed the *hnam* (a plaited cane band for carrying loads) of the girl with the *Khawhring* also got possessed. If one with a *Khawhring* has a daughter, the child is always possessed, so no one wants to marry a person with a *Khawhring*. Those possessed of *Khawhring* are most disgusting people, and before the foreigners came they were always killed."

The folk tales of these clans are very numerous; they have a legend of the king of the Tui-Huai or water-demons falling in love with a girl and pursuing her and thus causing a flood; of the sun being swallowed by a mythical being called an *awk*, which caused general darkness and the death of many human beings, the remainder being changed into animals, after which the world was re-peopled out of a

hole in the ground. My Lushai friend tells me : " The place whence all people sprang is called Chhinglung. All the clans came out of that place. Then two Ralte came out together and began at once chattering, and this made Pathian think there were too many men and so he shut down the stone. After a short time Thlandropa was going to hold a feast, and told them to call together all the people of the world, and when this had been done he held his feast. They said to the sun, ' Do not shine, because we want our leader the Sa-huai (Loris) to lead us in the dance,' and the sun said, ' All right.' At that time the Sa-huai and all the animals could talk. The bamboo rat beat the drum and they all danced, and in the middle of their fun the sun said, ' Oh, how I do want to look!' and shone out, and all the animals got hot and could not dance any more, so the Sa-huai got angry and quarrelled with the sun and won't even look at it nowadays. There was a great feast of flesh, but Buka the old owl got no meat, so he got angry and went and sat on the bough of a tree, and Zuhrei, the big rat, chaffed him and said, ' Buka has eaten his fill.' Then the owl, being still hungry, got angry and bit Zuhrei. Since that day they have been at war, and if the owl sees Zuhrei he bites him without fail." The point of the allusion to the Ralte is that this clan is famed throughout the hills for the loquacity of its members.

Among the Old Kuki clans in Manipur eclipses are generally ascribed to the sun and the moon being either caught by, or hiding from, Pathian's dog, which was set on to them, because they stole his master's tobacco, or scattered his rice. Lightning is Pathian's axe which he hurls at the lizard which shouts defiance at him from the top of a high tree. The Lushais say that Thlandropa, who gave the feast, married Khuavang's daughter, and gave his gun as her price and the reports of this weapon are what we call thunder. I will conclude with a tale which might almost have come from Uncle Remus's collection.

The tale of Grand-Daddy Bear and the Monkey.

The monkey made a swing and was always swinging in it. One day grand-daddy bear saw him and said, " Oh, monkey, let me have a swing ? " The monkey replied, " Wait a minute till I have hung it more securely." Then he climbed up and bit the cane nearly through and jumped down again crying out, " Come on grand-daddy bear, have a swing." The bear got in and began to swing ; the cane broke and he fell down. The monkey, intending to eat him, had gone and fetched some cooked rice (to eat with the bear's flesh). But though grand-daddy bear fell down he was not killed. The monkey being terribly afraid said, " Oh, grand-daddy bear, hearing you had fallen I brought some rice for you," and gave him all he had brought.