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FOLK-SONGS OF
KABUI (RONGMEI)

Collected and compiled
By
RAGONGNING GANGMEI

THE DIRECTORATE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF
TRIBALS AND BACKWARD CLASSES,
MANIPUR

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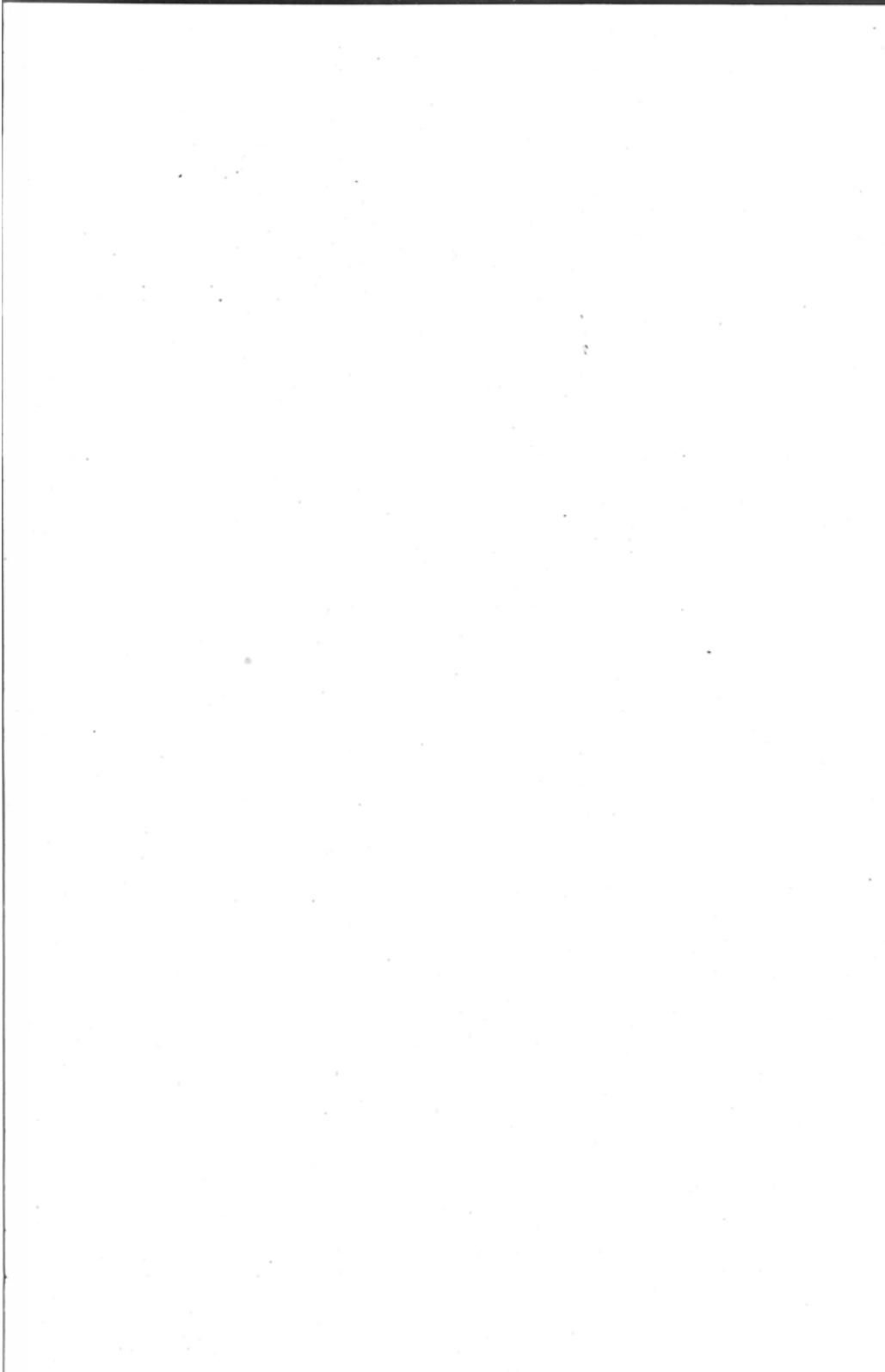
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TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE
AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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KABUI (RONGMEI)

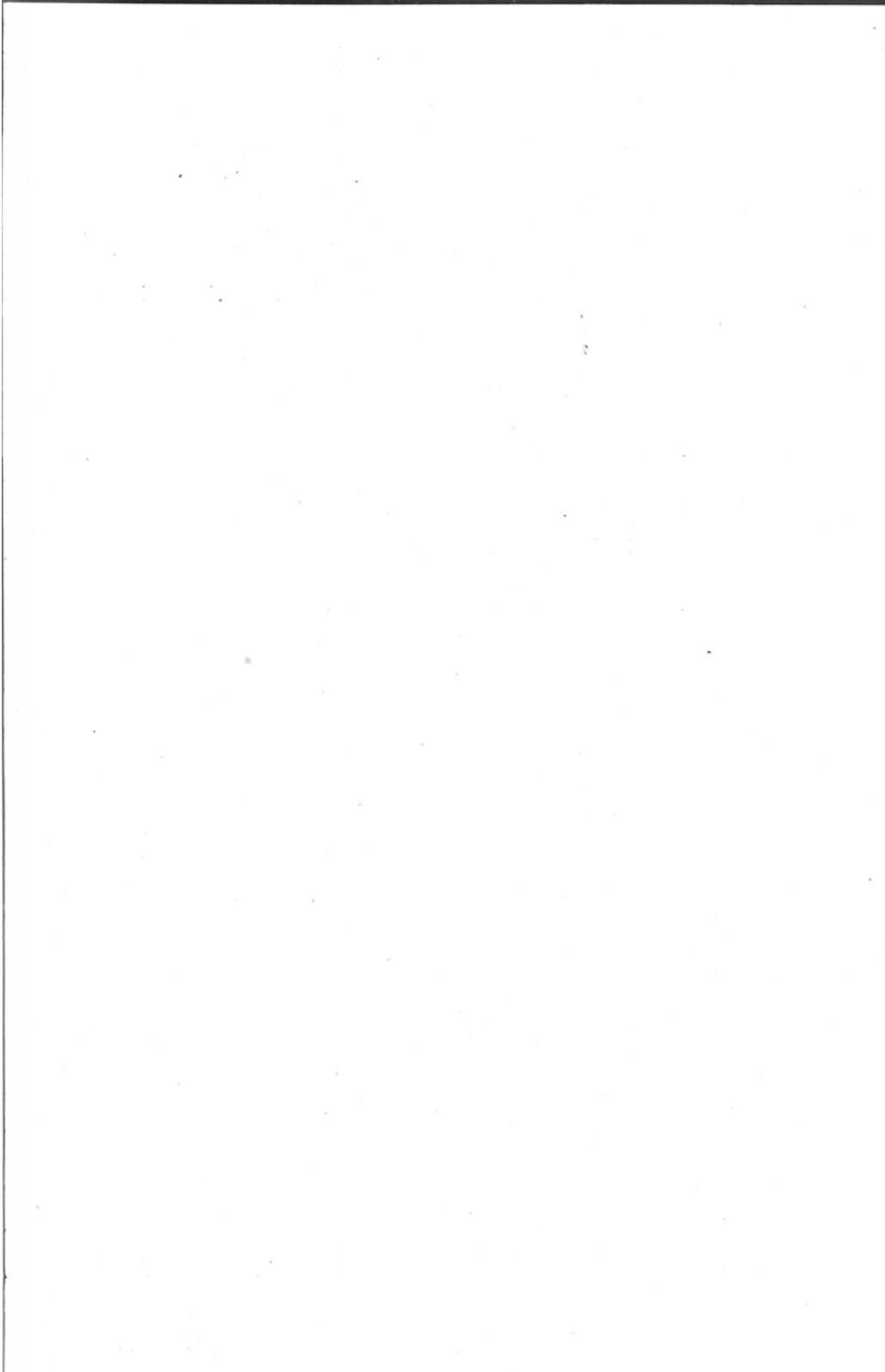
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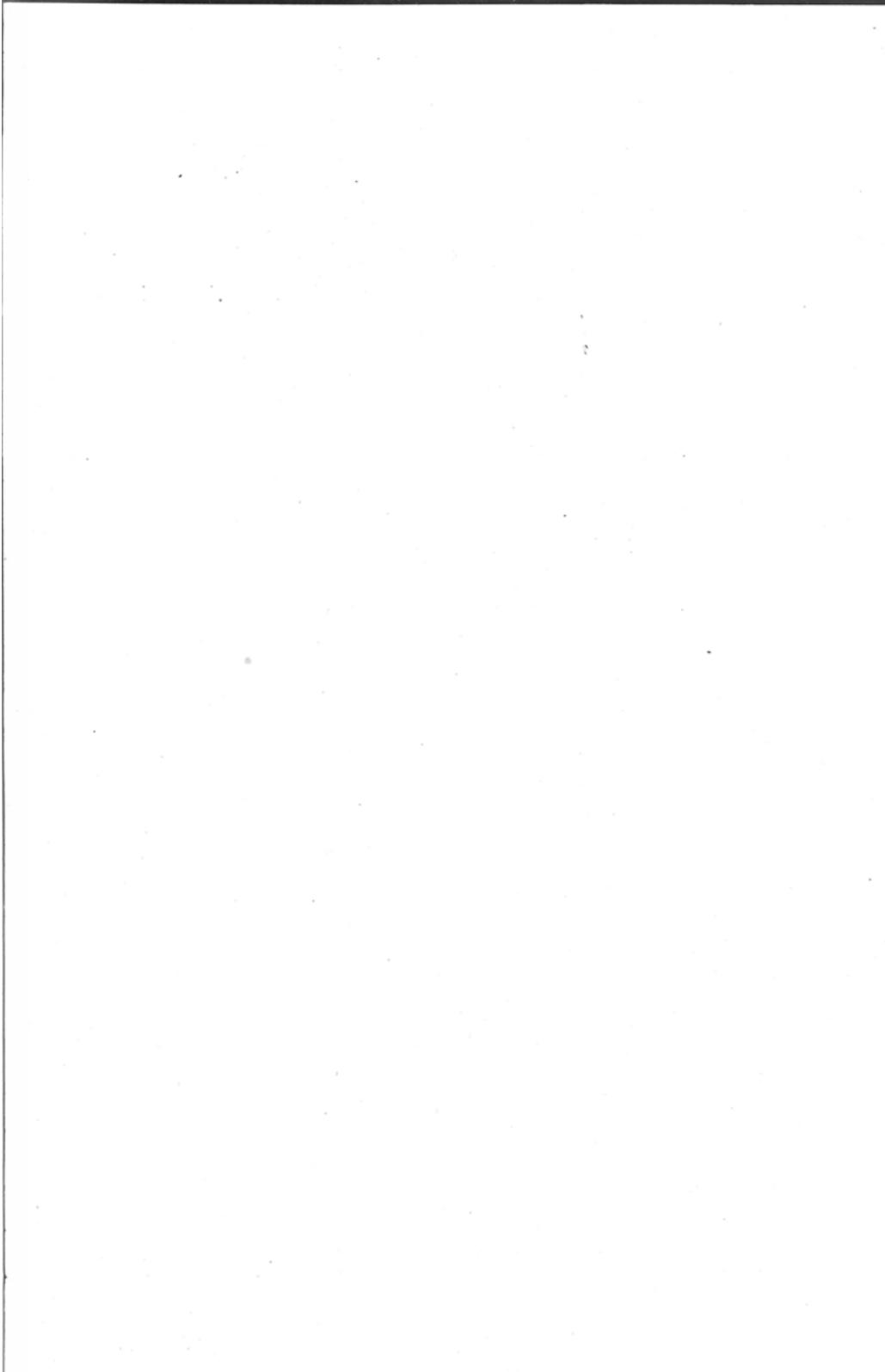
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I do sincerely acknowledge my gratefulness to the NEC and the T.D. Department, Government of Manipur, particularly to Dr. H.Kamkhenthang, Senior Research Officer(TD) who offered me the opportunity to document the typical folk-songs of the Kabui (Rongmei) Naga and allowed me to do the job taking my own time.

I must also offer my thankfulness to the elders of Nungba area, and especially, to Mr.K. Damchuilung of Nungba, Mr.G. Meinganlung of Rongdai, Mr. K.Niamdai of Nungba and my mother Chunguiliu of Bonrong now at Rongdai for making their services available singing the songs for my recording as frequently as I needed them. Indeed, I am indebted to them for their contribution towards making this compilation see the light of the day.

Nungba,
7 August, 1991

Ragongning Gangmei



KHIAMNIYANG PANMEI, MCS
Deputy Director (FCS),
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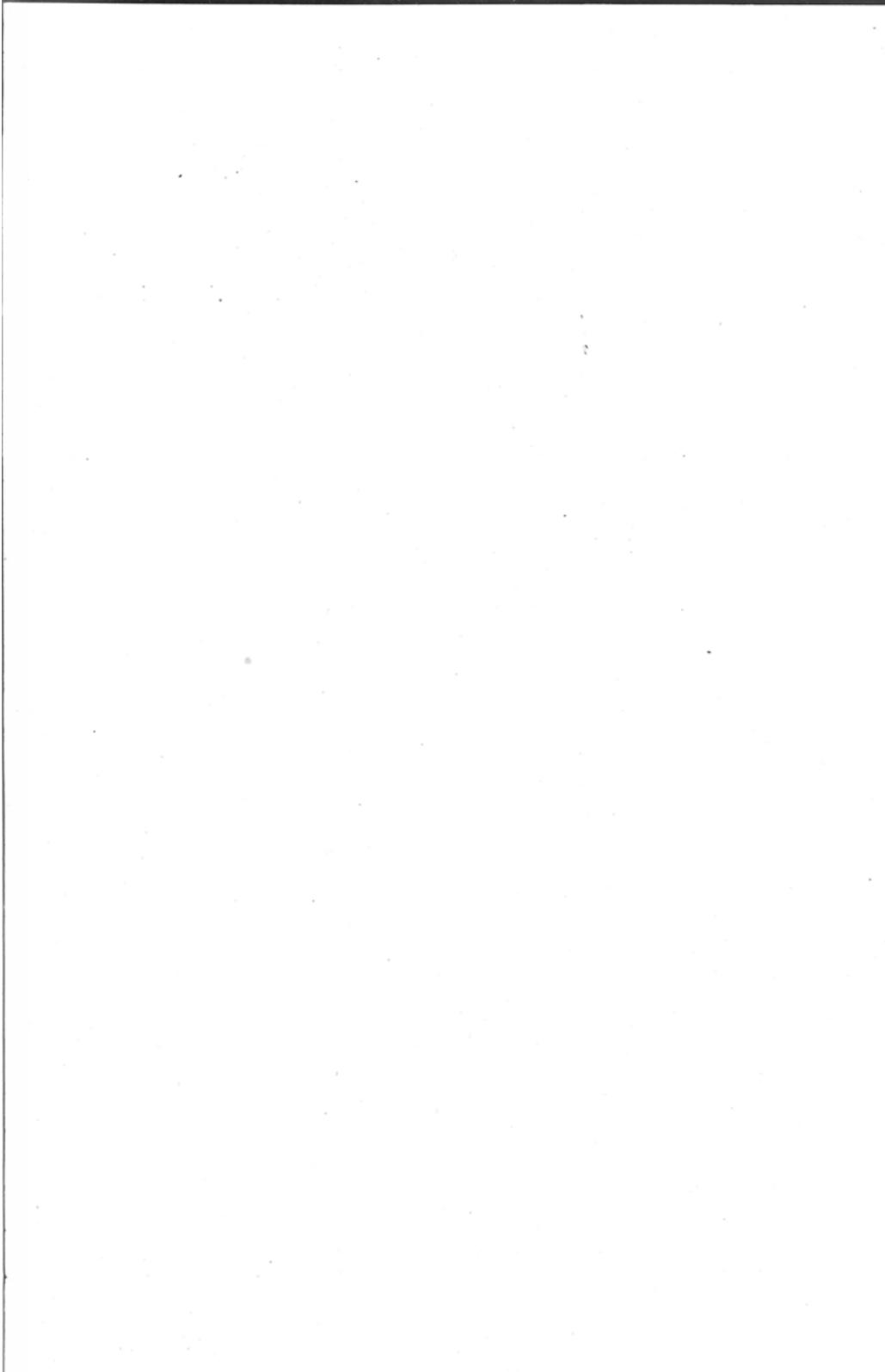
Imphal, 9 August 1991

F O R E W O R D

I have gone through the compilation—"The Folk-Songs of Kabui (Rongmei)" thoroughly with deep interest. The compilation represents 23 types of common folk-songs current among the Kabuis (Rongmei). The introductions which precede each type of the song are excellent and the manner of singing and use of drum, gong, cymbal etc. described therein are in conformity with the traditional practices and usages. The compiler has done a yeoman's job towards the preservation and upholding of the folk tradition of the Kabui (Rongmei) tribe.

The sincere and commendable efforts and deep interest of the compiler in bringing out the book deserve deep appreciation.

Khamniyang Panmei



PREFACE

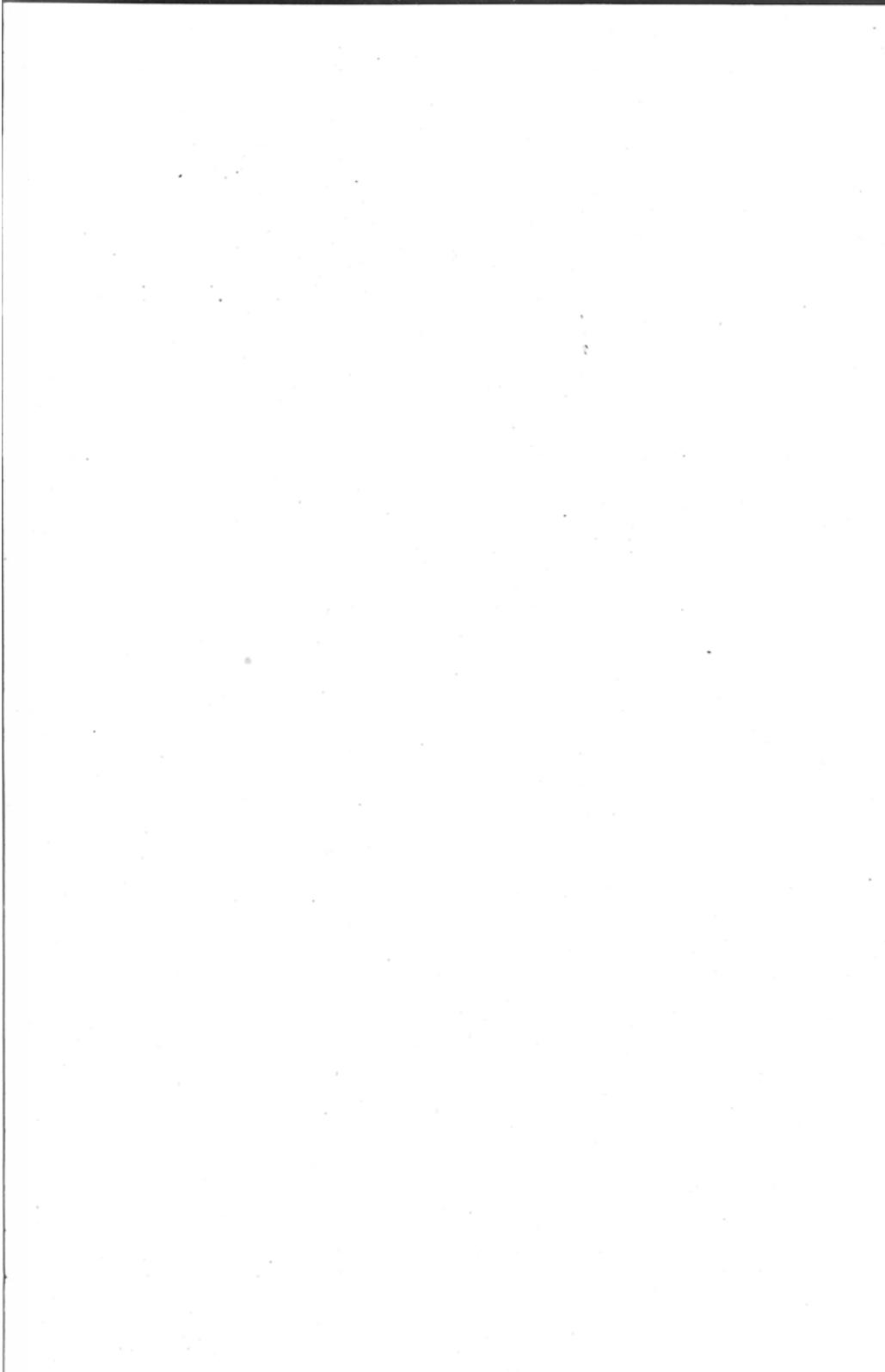
The Kabuis (Rongmeis) are known for their rich cultural heritages, of which, the folk-songs occupy the topmost slot covering the widest areas of human life and activities. If one is keen to know the life and culture of the Kabui (Rongmei), one must, among others, take the folk-songs and go through them thoroughly at the first place, because, the songs are the main sources of history, philosophy and records of the Kabui tribe. Moreover, the songs attach traditional importance and literary values of high quality. Therefore, with in-depth study of the songs one can get the reality of different aspects of the Kabui's life and culture and is sure to understand them well.

However, there are some unfortunate facts, one—the songs are not recorded in written form; two—with the advent of the modern age, the folk songs are vanishing rapidly; and, three—not many people know the folk-songs and the elders who know them are passing away very soon. Therefore, the tasks of collection and documentation of the folk-songs and preserving the folk culture for the posterity are the assignment of top urgency for the younger generation of today.

In this regard, the effort of the T.D. Department, Manipur for documentation of the typical folk-songs of some major tribes of Manipur is truly laudable and deserves special appreciation from all. Indeed it is a right step taken to preserve and uphold the rich cultural heritages of the tribal people of Manipur and thereby enriching the cultural tradition of our great Country-India.

It has been my sincere effort to present this collection in a very simple but true to the original form of the songs. In this endeavour, I tried with utmost care to eliminate unnecessary exercises, and exaggerations. I hope this compilation represents all the typical common folk-songs of the Kabuis (Rongmei).

Compiler



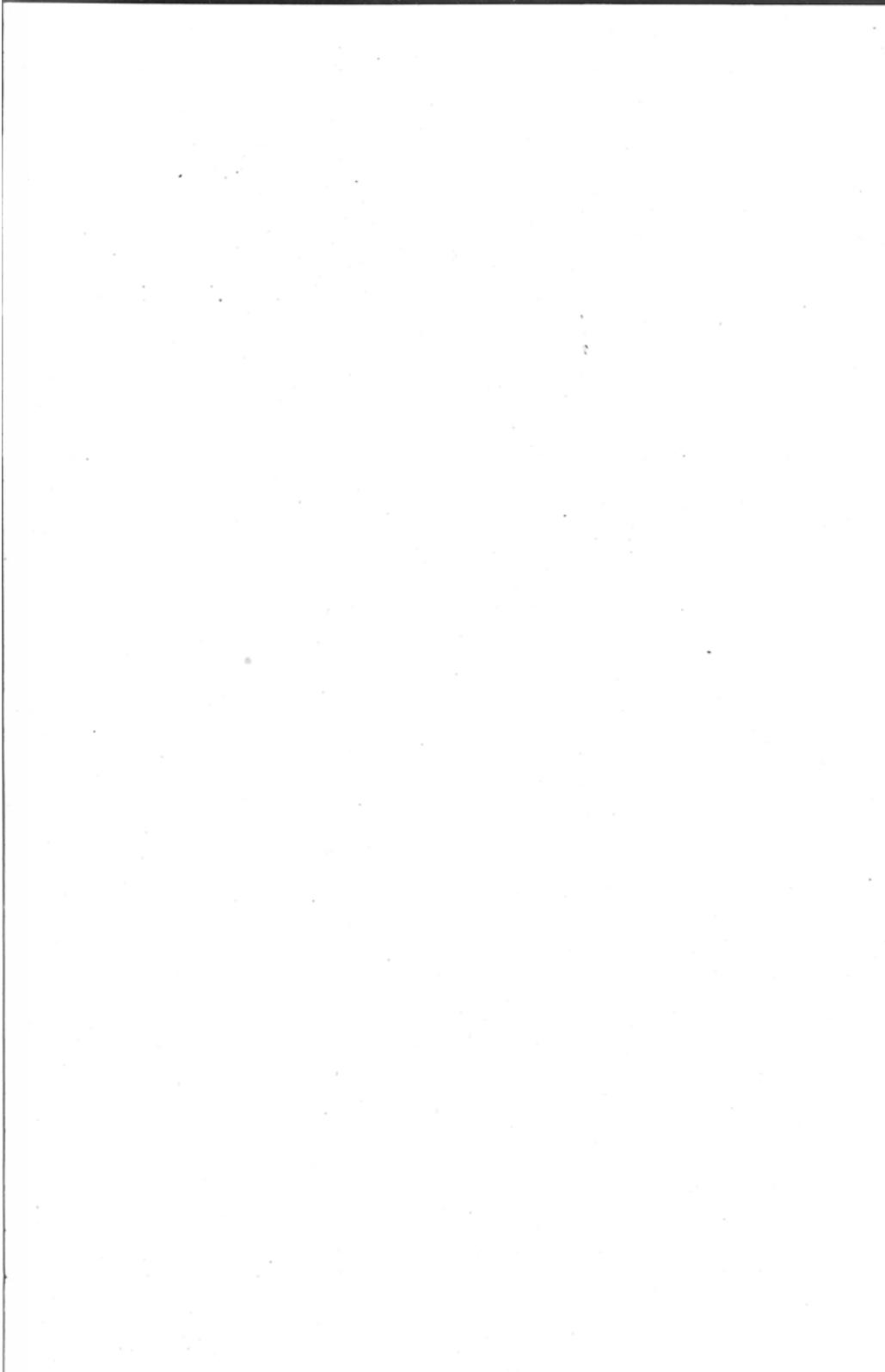
I N T R O D U C T I O N

Collection, compilation and tape recording for songs of the Kabui is financed by the North Eastern Council, Shillong under the Scheme of Documentation of Tribal Culture through the Directorate for Development of Tribals and Backward Classes, Manipur. This compilation aims at collecting specimen of each type and kind of folk-songs current in the tribe. There are many folk-songs in each tribe, but all the songs cannot be collected and compiled. A representative verse of each type and kind of the folk-songs with their free rendering in English is given for easy understanding of the songs. Tape recording of the songs is done with the help of Prof. Shyam Sharma, Managing Director of Manipur Film Development Council.

The traditional tunes of the folk-songs are fast disappearing and forgotten now-a-days. In order to preserve the tune of the songs as given in the text, the booklet is to be accompanied with tape recorded cassette. In the first phase, attempts had been made to cover five major tribes like Thadou, Thangkul, Paite, Mao and Kabui. In due course, more tribes may be covered. It is hoped that the sample verses printed in the broucher and its tune tape recorded in cassette with their traditionally accompanied music will serve as a preservative mechanism of the songs and music and a basis for further studies of the folk-music and songs.

Imphal,
9 August 1991

(Dr. H. Kamkhenthang)
Senior Research Officer,
Directorate for Development of Tribals
and Backward Classes, Manipur.



1

LAO PHUNH LU (Song of Seed-Sowing)

Lao Phunh Lu is a song of seed-sowing sung while paddy seeds are sown by the folk. The Kabuis (Rongmeis) believe that the goddess of paddy is happy and gives a bounty harvest if the cultivators work in happy mood without idleness. Therefore, they used to sing or shout 'Hoi' as they work in the field. A part from the belief, the main objective of singing while working is also to give a sense of oneness and concentration to the works, to forget the pain and trouble, and to eliminate idleness among the workers. It also attempts to train and bring the younger ones to the traditional system of working and singing.

The song is sung in responsive manner by two groups composed of male and female. In some cases, lead-and-follow manner of singing is practised where most of the workers are juniors and are not well-versed with the songs. The song shall be started by a leader of the lead-group very slowly and the second party responds to it with the next sentence of the song in the responsive system. In the lead-and-follow system, the lead-group will begin the song and the second group will follow them till the song is concluded. The song is sung very slowly at the beginning and it shall rhythmically be faster and faster. The same song shall be repeated three or four times. To conclude the song all the cultivators shall stand up and the singing shall gain momentum and shall be concluded with a shout 'Hoi, Hoi.'

No musical instrument is used as accompaniment to the song. However, an imaginary rhythm is always followed uniformly.

As a rule, there are series of songs such as song of the first morning, of the forenoon, of the after-noon and of the evening. The series of songs is strictly followed in order. However, selection of songs from each series is done at liberty by the working team and their leader.

A—mang chaeng tho intunahpui
 Ai nguihmeita jipman lana,
 Jipkei thuiamak a-mik in-ganne aimu.
 Jipkei thuiamak jipchung thu,
 Mei-kailong khou gong bam khonne.
 “Gongngo, intunah le,
 Mei-kai gong kannimei le !
 Nam thu milou mi ‘ji ‘lumdei bo ?”
 Tunah mu gong kachun su
 Mei-kailong-nung tei gong how lana.
 Katunah din’ ki ginroi rulakanne.
 Tunah ram howlou niki.
 Mongh roi pakliam lakanne.
 Tunah nang chun kaneimei.
 Nang samlang song nang chun geihmei
 Gongdat-no.
 “Ng-gaanh le Taroi chaeng-nung roi
 Gong’ ri~~n~~ dat kho” ‘kantu deiki
 Tunah anei lat sapui lat su.
 Jipmanne anei lat sapui lat su,
 Heipui lat tei saloiriu de,
 Ginpu now su kannimei le.
 A-mang mu ramh man mang,
 Mei-kailong khou gongbam khonne.

Free Rendering :

I dreamt tonight of a girl I loved most,
And I could not sleep almost the whole night.
When I fell asleep I saw my beloved
'Gone in marriage to a distant village.
"O Come ! My beloved !
Who had been married to a distant village.
Do you believe that it's good for you ?"
When she reached the village,
She mourned and regretted.
She was known for her beauty.
But had been won over by the stranger.
I wish to see that village of my beloved,
But the cloud has hidden it.
"O maiden ! You have two hearts,
And choices more than the hairs of your head.
Come ! O come back again !"
I dreamt of the words my beloved once said to me —
"Darling we shall meet in Heaven."
Cease not the word and keep on saying,
O stranger-engaged girl ?
I dreamt of nothing but only I saw my beloved
At the village of the stranger.

2

LAO ROIH LU (Song of Weeding)

Lao is field, roih or reo weeding—Lao Roih Lu or Lao Reo Lu is the song of weeding in the paddy field.

The song is sung in reponsive or lead-and-follow manner by two groups consisting of both male and female mixed. The mode of singing is the same with that of **Lao Phunh Lu**. every song shall be concluded with "He hoi" or "Hoi Hoi".

The song is sung without the accompaniment of instrument. But rhythm is always observed in mind uniformly.

As in the case of Lao Phunh Lu, series of songs or order of singing such as songs of first morning, forenoon, after-lunch or after noon and evening are strictly followed and in order. However, selection of song from the same series is done according to the wishes of the working team or their leader.

There are about 100 songs of this type. Of the two songs collected herein, the first song is sung just before the lunch and the second one is sung in the afternoon just after **Jouhsaengh** (Drink).

1. Raguangh tingthai tu nimei rana,
Majah sinsu' injanhpui su le,
Timei khang ti langna.
Kajat jao' injanhlou tio,
Nangta khan-nuanlou time.
Alaogotmei roi' janhtong khonletheimu,
Tingkum kathui tu bu-rap' injanh 'ti,...
Inrei kariu du ni-e-
"Gaidingnge, laogotmei latdin,"
Mei thonh du ni-e.

Free Rendering

Everyone wishes to get food from God,
The goddess and giver of rice,
Giving more to those who have.
Give without partiality,
Lest people are not happy with you.
Had it been done by my own team,
We would have distributed it sufficiently
For the whole year;
And people would praise us—
"The decision of Laogotmei (the Team) is good,
For it is just and fair."

3

MAJAH LU (Song of Rice)

Majah is rice, **Majah Lu** means the Song of Rice. The song is sung on the occasion connected with the harvest such as **Muliang**, **Napmu**, construction of **Majah Chaeng**, day of the first harvest etc. It sings on, or of the rice, the goddess of paddy, the harvest and also the owner of the house who hosts **Muliang** or **Napmu**—ritual occasions connected with big harvest.

Normally the song is sung by a group or persons right from the beginning of the song to its conclusion. No method of responsive singing or lead-and-follow is necessarily required. When the song is concluded, everyone who is present will shout "Laogai ! Laogai !" or as follow:

"Laogai, Laogai !
Tam khat Lu khat-re.
Chei kalakge,
Roikui kadunhe."

Gong called **Siammu** is used as accompaniment of the song. Cymbal is also sometimes used. Normally no drum is used in such occasions.

Majahta karaeng makge,
Lungh nonh kanri hei jo.
A-phai kasui a-mik tangjin pukhouroi,
Nangta gan'duh tongnge.
He ai nangta kao dat puni-e.
Ai nangta kao dat puineimu,
Roi-mu gaitong roi-laengh gaitong
Ponbung lana—
"Majah le gong pujo." 'na kao,
"He gong puboi" 'na dinne.
Chagou-kummeipui kumriu la,
Kahu nung sonthoi na,
Ka-kai nung homgut kanne.

Free Rendering :

I do not hate you, O Rice !
Do not be displeased.
Because of stumbling of my foot,
And blurring of my sight,
You have been thrown-out on the ground.
Someday I will call you back.
On that very day,
I will offer you—
The best cock and the best hen of the birds,
And call upon you—
“O Rice ! Do come.”
You will say—“O I have come.”
I will greet you, O goddess of paddy,
With praises I will take you in my front,
And take you to my home.

4

MAJAH KAILONG PAT LU

(Song of Pre-harvest—I)

Majah Kailongpatmei is a part of the pre-harvest ritual. It precedes the ritual sample harvest which is performed at the village gate leading to the paddy fields. It is a ritual inauguration of the harvest with prayer for blessing from God. Then and only after performing the rite, the villagers can go for harvest. The song is sung during this pre-harvest ritual occasion.

Normally the song is sung in responsive manner. However, lead-and-follow manner of singing has more advantage as it is easier to make the singing harmonious.

The singers will take with them one spear each and spin it and some will take bamboo bird scarer (Peo) and clap it instead of drum. Usually no other musical instrument is used.

Usually the song on the occasion is sung only by a group of male, normally bachelors. They will wear full customary costumes. However, **Raengdai mai**—feather of Horn-bill is prohibited since there is a belief that wearing of the same during the harvest season causes the paddy to become chaffy or immature falling.

The singers will sing going up and down the main/whole village normally seven times or so and then enter the **Napmupei Kai**—a household that hosts the ritual feast. And then, they will sing and visit every household, door to door without sleep. They shall continue it till the ritual harvest is performed at the village gate. This ritual harvest is done very early the next morning, usually before sun-rise.

He aramhlong majah inlaengh pui longh.
 Bamdon gainung singlarnga dingbam khonne.
 Tuisu' singlarng tongcho?
 Majah kaibang thai thuiamakna.
 Majah kaibang thai ni lethai—
 Kummeipu kai-e.
 Kummeipu ni majah luh khang,
 Intingh jaibamh —
 Inkhonbam bu-e.
 Majah—Kambuipui
 Nganangna longgong pu-e.

Free Rendering :

Our village is the abode of the goddess of rice.
Undecided she stands at the bamdon (place forvest)

Why is she undecided?

As she cannot know her abode.

If you are keen to know the abode,

It is the house of "Kummeipu" (an imaginary name)

Kummeipu gets ready to host the goddess of rice.

Loosing the mat open on the floor,

He waits for her.

The goddess of rice

Comes with her bounty.

5

KAI-LAAN-LU

(Song of Pre-Harvest II)

Kai-laanmei is also a part of the pre-harvest ritual occasion and comes immediately after Majaah Kailong Patmei is concluded. The song "Kai-laan Lu" is sung at the function of Kai-laanmei.

Two unmarried males dressed in customary clothings shall stand at both sides of the front door of a house and sing the song right from the beginning to its conclusion. No repetition is required. No responsive nor lead-and-follow manner is normally practised.

No instrument is used.

He Khun-na-pang jaeng
Namliang bon tei dei,
Kummeinei lunna kumme.
Ru-sinla tam nun makge,
Aramhlong raengdainata.
Aramhlong le he mun paengduhpuilong.
He neih gan-liambang:
He...he phumluh Kummeinei le:
Thao pantham liam lo,
He thaogian-gian lo.

Free Rendering :

Oh ! How beautiful is the bud of Namliangbon.
That grows near Khun-na-pang !
Kummeinei is as beautiful as the bud.
Everyone who plucks it should not part with it.
She is the hornbill of the land.
O my village where my beloved blooms !
O the ray of the sun is raising on the hill !
O my beloved Kummeinei !
Rise and do dance.
Rise and be full of you.

6

JOUH SOW LU

(Song of preparation of Rice Beer)

Jouh means liquor, sow pounding flour. **Jouh Sow Lu** is the song of making flour for rice-beer. Normally this making for rice beer is done some days ahead of big festivals or feasts like **Maku Baanruh**, **Muliang** and **Matui**—feasts of merit. The song is also known as Paantang lu.

The song is sung while pounding flour for rice-beer by the unmarried young men and women of the village either in responsive or lead-and-follow manner as per the choice of the folk. Rhythm from very slow to faster beat shall be followed.

The song is accompanied with drum, gong, cymbal etc. The beating of the drum synchronises with the sound of thrash of Mih pounding of the flour and it shall continue till the flour is properly pounded.

A-ramhlong hei kakhulongh,
Phunling kata' gaipuilong,
Gai puilong maku jouh sow puiongnge.
Agaengmei ta kabaigongngo.
Jouh sow khang.
Sow ngimh ngim.
Tingkaoh thu tingthinh tong kum.
Kummeiyangpu kaikhangmei nak,
Baantanh toi,
Baantah toi,
Baantanh tanhtong ronng,

Free Rendernig :

My village is rich and wealthy,
A place where all crops richly grow !
A village where making beer for feasts
Follows a tradition.
Go and invite the people
Of the surrounding villages,
For a big preparation of beer ;
Let it make a mighty sound,
Like thunder in the sky.
The men of Kummeiyangpu-
Strong and mighty.
Strong and mighty.
Strong and mighty in the ages past.

7

KAILONG PON LU
(Song of Carousel)

The song is sung at carousel or merry-go-round, normally during the festivals of **Gaanh-Ngai**, **Tun-Ngai** and **Rih-Ngai**. It is also sung as the song of Sentry of the village to embolden the villagers from fear of enemy or any threat or insecurity. Some of the songs are also known as "Watch Song" or "Song of Defence".

The song is sung either in responsive or lead-and-follow manner by at least 10 youths or young **Khangtanmei** young married men and they go round and through the village all night till dawn. They will visit house to house as per their convenience and have an offer of food and drinks. They may also go to the girls' dormitory to spend some part of the night for singing competition with the girls sitting by the fire.

Use of instruments depends on the type of occasions. Instruments like drum, cymbal, and spear are used as accompaniment of the song during the festivals like **Gaanh-Ngai** and **Rih-Ngai**, gong and cymbal are used during **Tun-Ngai** and only spear and shield are used during watch or sentrying of the village.

"Kailong, chu-e,
Kailong maronno."
"Rih hei geih,
Rihgaan sang makge,
Laekpuithiu le, ramhping riu :
Inggaan ai nai-e.
Rih ni gong diu-o,
Bui-baeng tei sin,
Inthao ti-jaome."

Free Rendering :

"Our village is silent and cold.
Go round the village."
"Having many enemies,
We are always on alert.
Do not be afraid, O mothers!
We the youths are with you.
Let the war break out,
And the enemies come,
With spear and dao in hand.
We will compel them to flee
Once for all.

8

MAKU LUCHIAN LU (Song of Pre-Feast of Merit)

This is a different type of song normally sung by a group of boys, and girls while they are going for collecting wild banana leaves and fire-wood as a part of arrangement for the feast of merit—Maku.

The song shall be preceded and also concluded by "Huai, huai,!" if the singers are only male and by "Hiangna!" if they are only female or male and female mixed. Normally the song is sung in the same rhythm and same volume throughout till it's conclusion. It may also be sung from very slow to a faster rhythm towards the end of it as in the case of other type of songs. It can also be sung in the lead-and-follow or responsive manner as per the liking of the team of singers.

No instrument is normally used as accompaniment of the song.

Huai. huai !
A-ramhlong hei kagui-e 'na din.
Din buna din tongdai.
Kadihpok thu thaomeigoi mu.
Paan ji bu-e.
A-ramhlong kaguipui namme.
Huai. huai !

Free Rendering :

Huai, huai ! (Or Hiangna)
People talk of the beauty of our village.
Indeed, it is fit to talk about.
The crops which grow in the soil-
Are luxuriant and abundant,
My village is a land of all goodness.
Huai, huai ! (Or Hiangna)

9

MAKU LU

(Song of Feast of Merit—I)

This is a song of the Feast of Merit. The Kabuis (Rongmeis) believed that a man goes to heaven when he dies if he could perform feasts of merit during his life time. Feast of merit is a very prestigious ritual function. It is normally performed by both the couple of an affluent family who have plenty of paddy, cattls and other wealths. It is a feast commemorating great achievement in one's life-time and as a result of which charity is being made. It is also believed that feast of merit is usually performed according to God's revelation that comes through the dream, prediction, or when unusual things or uncommon instances frequently come to a man or his household during a specific period of time, normally during a year. It is also believed that the Ornamented House of the Kabui (Rongmei) Taraengkai is a replica of God's house.

The style and method of singing of all the songs of feast of merit are not the same. Style of singing during some occasion like **Kuan kuanmei** is totally different. It is given in later part of this book. However, most of the songs are sung as other songs of dances. It is sung either in responsive manner or lead-and-follow method by two groups of males and female whoever may be present at the celebration. As in other cases, the song at the begininng shall be sung very slowly, and then the crescendo will become faster and faster as per the drum beat and the steps of dances are out or stopped and then the singing shall gain momentum still faster and be concluded with "huai, hnai!"

Usually, all available musical instruments like drum, gong,, cymbal shall be used to accompany the songs and the dances.

Kaipei Jouh—Suk

- (a) Nang ki jouhpon mateirei,
Kummelyangpui ki jouh,
Sagu aramh khang.
Sakgui je.

- (b) Ting—neih le.
 Riluh lun cham reikha inrei le.
 Reikha inrei chamei raleng.
 Nang khiampui jough laekpui jough.
 Jough le ponpat racheng je.
- (c) Jough ponpat khei loni je.
 Kummeipui ponpat khei loni je.
 Dihapui Kummeiyangpui,
 Jough bam don lo.
 He gong sagu je.
- (d) Chariang nang kilung jang gui je,
 Chariang kilung jang pheibian ni je'
 Chariang ki jough sagui je.
 Holo je.
 Chariang ki khang chathon gongkhe.
 Gong jough sak-khe.
 He gong sakgui je.

Free rendering:

Song of hostess' beer-dance;

- (a) Look! The function of drinking bout
 The beer of **Kummeipui**,
 Drink them all, you youths of the village.
 How sweet they are!
- (b) The damsel looks so bright,
 Like the sun of the sky!
 People admire her.
 O the beer of the hostess,
 Fetch the beer to cheer us up.

- (c) People love to be fetched with beer,
People want the hostess to fetch the beer.
Great is the hostess.
There is abundance of beer,
O come and drink them.
- (d) The interior of the house is so nice and plain.
All clothes look more colourful;
The beer of the host is so tasty;
Let's praise the host and his household.
Come and drink;
Oh! How tasty they are!

10

KUAN LU (Song Feast of Merit-II)

This is a typical song of feast of Merit that is somewhat different from the previous ones concerning the style of singing and the activities of the folk. The song is a very important and compulsory part of the feast of merit.

A big group comprising of males alone will come with 'Hoi', a type of rhythmic and harmonious howling at the house where the feast of merit is held. Just after the conclusion of 'Hoi' they shall sing the song 'Kuan Lu' by standing inside the house. They will sing it straight from the beginning to its conclusion in the same rhythm and same voice. No responsive or lead-and-follow method is normally practised.

No instrument is used as accompaniment.

There are nine songs of Kuan Lu in the following pattern.

- (i) Kuan-dai (Common Kuan)—1 song ;
 - (ii) Gaanh Kuan (Bachelor Kuan)—7 songs:
 - (iii) Tunah Kuan (Girl Kuan)—1 song.
- (a) Guiliang sing so! Kummeiyangpu niu:

Nang gongbam je,
Nang guipong je;
Nang ki so lo.
Manu bam je,
He gong guilian khanglian je.
Thingjiang kakhul je,
Nang kian guisang
Manu bam je,
He jai lo imbam jai lo.
Nang bamra guilian je.
He jai lo imbam jai lo,
Nang bamra guilian je.

- (b) He gongra, He gongra !
 He jamra nu-e !
 He gong kai jough sow,
 Pachun si je,
 Sow ki matha thiang-o
 Ho ho nang ki kadi,
 Nang muih kathiang,
 Muihna su khing,
 Thingjiang kakhui meithon
 Amuih gugong.

Free rendering:

- (a) Great is the host! Kummeiyangpu !
 You are like a king,
 You are admirable;
 You have built a House.
 Friends have come,
 Show your glory to all,
 Now and forever more,
 The beauty of your generation
 Shall be looked up by all.
 O come and enjoy with us.
 It's good if you are here.
 O come and enjoy with us,
 It's good if you are here.
- (b) O, we have come, we have come!
 No hurt. no wound !
 Pounding flour for beer,
 O how nice it is !
 Do it with praise and happiness.
 O, great is your house,
 Where fortune is adorned.
 Pounding with the drum beats;
 People will ever praise you,
 Let the fortune comes to you.

11

MATUI LU

(Song of Youth's Feast of Merit)

Matui and **Meiri** are the festivals of merit hosted by a **Thianh**. A **Thianh** is a type of village level social group or community which has normally one **Khangchu**—boys dormitory and one **Luchu**—girls dormitory separately. As per **Kabui's** custom, when one is born to this world, he or she shall become a member of a **Thianh** and remain so till his or her death. It is the two dormitories that organise and do everything for these feasts. Therefore, the feasts are also known as the Youth's Feasts of Merit. **Matui Lu** is sung at **Matui** feast.

Matui and **Meiri Lu** are the songs of challenge, competition and self-praises and self glorification of the **Thianh**. They are sung for dance and merry-makings either in responsive or lead-and-follow manner as per the convenience or convention followed at a particular village. As in other cases, the songs are sung from very slow in the beginning to a rhythmic faster beat till it is concluded. Every song is concluded with **Hoi**, **hoi** or **He**, **hoi**. The songs are sung in danching, **haansianghmei**, **pajehmei**, **pheigoumei** etc.

Accompaniment of drums, cymbals, gongs etc. is the normal practice. At **Haansianghmei**, everyone shall have in hand one bamboo uniformly cut in such away that they can make sound when struck against the floor with the other end of the bamboo. This bamboo is called **Haan**. The drum, cymbal, gong and **haan** are used in synchronisation with the rhythm of song and the dance.

Every **Thianh** has separate set of songs of their own for **Matui** and **Meiri**. A **Thianh** has a set of about 30/40 songs of the type. A **Thianh** cannot sing the songs of other **Thianh** during **Matui** or **Meiri** or at any other occasions without the prior approval of the concerned **Thianh**. Also, there are about 20/30 songs known as **Chabam Lu**. These songs are sung sitting around a big fire in the late night. **Chabam Lu** may be sung by any **Thianh**. They are common to all the **Thianh(s)**.

1. **Thianh Lu**

Mafui chaeng phu rei tong,
 Kummeiyangpu kaikhangmei-e.
 Ai roi ri 'ti majeih toi.
 Majeih tang lulakge,
 Thianh heijumei.
 Nang goih-chei
 Kailongh khou patdaan baoh mak,
 Kai lung tho
 Gan raamlou 'ne.

2. **Chabam Lu:**

Matui khang raengna,
 Thian kanmeigoi,
 A-kinta howlana,
 Kakai tho gonglana kachun su,
 Thiankei la amik inggan—
 Na phaeng bambu-e.
 Thiankei rikho Kummeineih le anei kin.
 Intheidouh kin khangsong.
 Intao chabon kin gai'
 Matui taan lakge.

Fee rendering:1. **Thian Lu:**

The first one that celebrates Matui,
 Is the group of Kummeiyangpu,
 Others are only following my foot-step,
 But cannot do it as I do.
 O all groups of the village;
 Your horn of mithun,
 Being inferior to place outside
 You did hide it inside
 Only to spoil it later,

2. **Chabam Lu:**

Those who were over-keen for Matui
But got married,
Now seeing us at our Matui,
They went back home only to regret,
And mourn there.
As they could not sleep,
They were looking and gazing at us.
Let not our generation fade away.
Today's generation being more charming
And beautiful,
Than that of the old ones,
We wish to celebrate Matui always.

12

MEINOW KAILONG PAT, LU (Song of Wedding Eve)

It is a song sung by two males of the same **Thianh** (which is a form of society) of a girl being married. The male duo shall sing this type of songs and go round the village all the night till the dawn of the marriage day. The aim and objective of the singing is to inform the whole village or the world that a girl belonging to their **Thianh** is being married and also to express their love and concern for the girl being married next day.

The song is normally sung by the male duo right from the beginning till its conclusion. It may also be sung in responsive or lead-and-follow manner depending on the liking of the duo. The song is always preceded and concluded with "Huai, huai."

The duo shall wear customary dresses or dance costumes with spear in hand. No instrument is used in accompaniment of the song.

1. Huai, huai !
 A-ramhlong mei kei kaji-e,
 Kummeineih !
 Kummeineih man-
 Goih ruh man ti' kaamthao kan.
 A-ramhlong tať ton la,
 A-ramhlong daamdatna hoi-e.
 Huai, huai !
2. Huai, huai !
 Kummeinelhta ti' mi ri lakge,
 Kailong pon khang deina,
 Ti mi ri lakge.
 Kummeineih ta ti' mi ri khon thei.
 A-janh thanh su me inggaan ai.
 Huai, huai ;

Free rendering ;

1. Huai, huai ! (-Or Hiangna)
 Adorable is my village,
 O Kummeineih !
 Kummeineih was compelled to go,
 On being forcibly given ten mithuns as bride price.
 Crossing the boundary of our village,
 She looked back with longing.
 Huai, huai ! (Or Hiangna)

2. Huai, huai !
 I don't want to let **Kummeineih** get married,
 Since she is the embellishment of the village,
 Let her not get married.
 If **Kummeineih** is ever to get married,
 I will change my name with new one.
 Huai, huai !

13

NOWSONH LUCHIAN LU

(Song of Marriage)

Nowsonh Luchian Lu is a type of song that is sung as a practice for the girls being married to other village.

Some bachelors will sing the song on the day preceding the marriage of a girl. And, also some bachelors or girls or mixed of both will similarly sing the song in front of her house just before the girl is sent off from her house. Then the same song shall be sung at the village gate. Each verse of the song carries appropriate meaning for all these purposes. The last verse shall be sung by the marriage party on behalf of the bride in response to the previous songs.

If the singers are only of bachelors/males, the song shall begin and also conclude with "Huai huai" and with "Hiangna" in case the singers are girls/females or mixed of both. The song is sung slowly in the same speed without strict rhythm till its conclusion.

Normally no instrument is used as accompaniment of the song.

1 A-ramhlong hei longhdaihlong

Tam' nung mak du-e.

Kummeineih man goih ruh- man'ti.

Kaamthao 'kan.

Ginramlong gongloula.

A-ramhlong daamdatna hoi'e

2 Meinowta indongh lana

Laonao thingbang,

Kei riam.

He...he...

Meinowta indongh lana

Laonao thingbang

Kei riam.

- (2) Indonghna bam jingh niki,
Tingsei neih deina,
Jingh jai.
He ...he ...
Indonghna bam' jingh niki,
Tingsei neih deina,
Jingh jai.
- (3) Meinowta sonthao puinei.
Kaitiang jaengh
Monghlu kadoi.
He ...he ...
Meinowta sonthao puinei,
Kaitiang jaengh
Monghu kadoi.
- (4) Kakaimun tattõn jihna.
Kummeineih tiangh pheina ding.
He ... he ...
Ka-kaimun tatton jihna.
Kummeineih tiangh pheina ding.
- (5) Raengh khum kei' inchung rio.
Gong Iaenghlaih pungge.
Meinow.
He ... he ...
Reangh khum kei' inchung rio,
Gong laenghlaih pungge,
Meinow.
- (6) Khoihgu su' lai-hon purio,
Nang pumh sum lamme,
Inggaanh.
He..... He.....
Khoihgu su' lai-hon purio,
Nang pumh sum lamme,
Inggaan.

Free rendering :

1. Great is my village.

There is no separation of engaged lovers.
 As ten mithuns were offered for Kummeineih.
 She was given to the stranger.
 When she reached the stranger village,
 She was crying for her village.

2. (1) In the company of the stranger's spouse,

We go to the forest,
 To collect wood for fuel.

O ... O ...

In the company of the stranger's spouse,
 We go to the forest,
 To collect wood for fuel.

(2) Though we wish to stay longer with her

All the day,
 The winter day is very short,
 And the sun sets sooner.

O ... O ...

Though we wish to stay longer with her—
 All the day,
 The winter day is very short
 And the sun sets sooner.

(3) On the day she is being sent off,
 The cloud gathers at the middle of the village.

O ... O ...

On the day she is being sent off,
 The cloud gathers at the middle
 Of the village.

- (4) As she does not want
to leave her home,
She clings to the front pillar.
O O
As she does not want
to leave her home,
She clings to the front pillar.
- (5) As you pass the village gate,
Do not go weeping,
May you early reach the other village,
O stranger's spouse.
O O
As you pass the village gate.
Do not go weeping,
May you early reach the other village,
O stranger's spouse.
- (6) O dear ! Do not follow me
Like a bee,
You may be in trouble,
O dear !
O O
O dear ! Do not follow me
Like a bee,
You may be in trouble,
O dear !

(Song of Group dance)

Chapalu Lu is a kind of song sung at **Chapa Laam**—a common type of dance. It is one of the most popular and common type of song. It can be sung for dances at any festivals or occasions and to entertain guest of status etc. Also, it can be sung at seed-sowing and wedding in the field when there is no other songs in the series or set.

It is sung either in responsive or lead-and-follow manner by the groups of singers comprised of males and females mixed. It is sung very slowly at the beginning and faster bit by bit till its conclusion, and the same song is sung repeatedly for three or four times as the case may be.

The song is sung with the accompaniment of beating of drum, cymbal and gong. The drum is beaten simultaneously with the first words of every sentence of the song at the beginning. It is known as single beat. When the dance starts, the beating changes from single to double beats. At double beats, the drum shall be beaten with every two syllables of the song. Now, the steps of dance, the song and emotion of the folks are synchronized with the drum beats. And it will continue till the dancers are out and then the song and the drum beat shall gain momentum and conclude the song with "Hoi hoi". The system is applicable to all songs of dance at any festivals or occasions.

1. Riluh liam kaipeipui liam,
Ai ngow ni.
Liam laekpui—
Suni mak ronne.
Imarei liam ngarihgong lo,
Nangta mareih diso lo,

Free rendering :

1. Of the dances of the girls,
I love to see the dance of Kaipeipui.
If I do dance,
I hate to be a married woman.
O turn towards me as you dance,
I admire you and love you.

15

MEI THONH LU (Song of Praises)

Mei Thonh Lu is the song of praises of man and his glory. People will sing and dance in front of him or her normally at the premises. The song is very popular and common.

It is sung either in responsive or lead-and follow manner. It is similar to that of **Chapa Lu**.

Drum, gong cymbal and other folk instruments accompany the song. Depending on the type of dances, different costumes like spear, shield, dagger etc. may also be used.

Goipong fakonh chaeng hu lana,
Rammapiita indonghna hom gong pu-e.
A-Thianhmei laamta jaolo
A-Thianhmei laamta jao nimei,
Daandi kachaekh ka-pon piuna gongpu-o.
A-Thianhmei laamta jao nimei
Kailong laa khou ding pang nikum bambu-e.
Inchingh ramma Kummeiyangpui (pu) ta how nina,
Raengdaih inlongh injon kum
Gong pu-e.

Free rendering :

With elephants and horses in the front,
Many are coming in the company of the king/queen.
Have a look at the dance of our **Thianh** ·
Those who want to see our dances-
Should come dressed in gold and diamond;
Those who want to see our dances
Now have swamped the village.
Wishing to see the king/queen of the hills,
People are coming in line,
Like the hornbills flying towards their abode.

16

NIANGGONGMEI LU

(Children Song)

Nianggongmei is a group of boys not yet admitted in any of the Khangchu (boys dormitory) of the village. **Neiangongmei Lu** is sung by these boys on the occasion of **Nahnu**—a special ritual occasion in which both the ears of all the children are bored for wearing ear-rings, and customary decoratives.

The song is sung making procession and dances from house to house praising, demanding and collecting vegetables, meat, rice etc. and also, they will perform "**Thingrou Thai Hame**"—a house to house distribution of the leaves and branches of **Thingrou**—a tree, which is believed to be a sign for plentiful harvest in the year.

Mode of singing of the song is similar to that of other songs sung for dances in other occasions or festivals.

All instruments like drum, gong, cymbal etc. are used as in other occasions.

Indih nam ru mei lunghmeigoi;
'Chaampeihtha inroih nimei naicho?
Kummeiyangpu sumu,
'Chaampeihtha
Laibu su sombam bu-e.
He napni tungammak,
Jouhni jang ngammak ronne.

Free rendering

O all men on the earth!

Who else can host the goddess of the jungle or the beasts?

O **Kummeiyangp** can do it.

By keeping the goddess of jungle or beasts,

As the stone of oven of his home,

Lives bountifully,

With plenty of rice and beer.

17

SAAM PAENGMEI LU (Song of Small Girls)

This is the song of small girls who are not yet admitted to the **Luchu** — girls dormitory. It is sung on the occasion of **Muliang** or **Guhdui Ngani** with dances.

The style of singing is the same with that of the songs of other dances. Normally some bigger girls will lead them both in singing and in dancing. It is also usual that the **Nianggongmei** — the small boys who are not yet admitted to the boys dormitory also use to help in singing while the girls are dancing.

Some villages prohibit the beating of drum during the seasons of work or cultivation, that is, from February/March to October/November every year. In such villages only gong and cymbal are used as accompaniment of the songs and the dance, whereas drum is also used where there is no such restriction.

Saamhpaengmei lu thiu laamh,
Tamuh thingpaek raek-daanh tongkum,
Ka-baanh baengthao —
Kummeiyangpu goih-chei imbah;
Kapumh-jin rui inthan gai-e,
Tingkaoh mouna,
Impon lao tongkumme.

Free rendering :

If the small girls begin dancing,
It's as beautiful and bright as the banner.
When they raise their hands,
They're just like the horns of
Kummeiyangpu's mithun.
Their complexion is pure and fair.
They are just like the kites,
Flying in the sky.

18

TINGKUM LU (Song of Procreation)

The song of procreation is normally sung by a group of middle-aged men called "Khangtanmei" only for increasing productivity of human being, cattles and other domestic animals, and to lessen the instances of miscarriage of both human being and domestic animals. The song is sung on the occasion of **Nahnu**. In this festival a ring-hole shall be made on both the ears of every child for the first time and bless him or her once for life-time. The song is known as "Tingkum Lu" meaning Annual Song. Though so high and good it may be the objective and interpretation of the philosophy behind it, the literal meaning of the song is usually indecent and lewd. Therefore, normally unmarried boys and girls do not sing the song. Most people have dropped it but in some remote villages it is still sung at **Nahnu** festival every year.

The song is normally sung in either responsive manner or straight from its beginning to the last. The singers mostly elders and middle-aged men will sing the song by going every street of the village and will conclude it at a house.

No instrument is used as accompaniment of the song.

Joungongpu, Joungongpu, Jou !
Taroih chaengdai
Bam khamme.
Joungongputa chagot sukho,
Langkhoipi.
Joungongputa theih' diu din' tiki,
Theihmakge,
Din gong pusan the.

Free rendering :

Joungongpu, Joungongpu, Jou (Devil Ape) !

Devil Ape is sitting,

At the junction of the street of Taroih (Land of the death).

Be in good term with **Joungongpu,**

Langkhoipi.

We wish for the death of **Joungongpu,**

But it is told—

That **Joungongpu** is not dead.

19

NAAH KATHU LU (Lullaby)

Naah Kathu Lu is lullaby. The song is sung to lull the baby to sleep or to caress or to stop a baby from crying etc. There is no specific time or occasion to sing it. It does not also imply particular meaning and most of the songs are of disjointed sentences. The song is purely connected with such things that may be of interest to the children.

It is a simple song and there is no specific method of singing. No instrument is used as accompaniment of the song. The song is sung by moving forward and backward of the body, shaking or rocking, or popping the child. There are numerous songs of this type.

Apui le, baengsina fei lulou-o,
Baenghmeifa adow khang,
Jongki-jongka kaphai jong bao,
Alei, alei, kaikun jonglou.
Khounna "Taru-tu" thingmui khou towlou.
'Ta-pong, pongringh-pong.
'Ta-pong le, kei-o, kei-o,
Pongringh-pong le kei-o, kei-o.

Free rendering :

Mother, buy me a knife,
To wage war with the Cachari.
His leg was broken while running —
Hither and thither.
Pain, Pain, He runs to the corner.
The dove cooes — "Kukru-ku" on the tree.
'Ta-pong, Pongringh-piong (both flowers).
O, Ta-pong come down,
O, Pongringh-pong, come down,

Following are some of the prominent composers of **Lurong** and **Luphai** who lived in different centuries and generations.

- Nsingh** of Koulong
- Karuku** or **Thaikhui** of Raengkung (Langkhong),
- Jijoupu** of Bonrong Namthan (Mongjarong Khunnou),
- Keiguiyang** of Nemning,
- Reihjipu** of Longmai (Noney),
- Joklupou** of Laolongpung,
- Raokaeng** of Longraeng (Nungngang),
- Dinkhong** of Makhom,
- Khoupumpong** of Khoupum
- Thangjou** of Tangkhonglong
- Taroubui** of Bonronglong (Mongjarong Khullen),
- Bondinnang** of Longhpi,
- Khnpa** (Manda) of Bonronglong (Mongjarong Khullen),
- Kaongannang** of Bonrongdai (Bolongdai).

Lao tai ngamna,
 Duangh lonlou du,
 Chakaan pat puhei roi,
 'Gin lonliang pungge.
 Intunah chalian chaengdai bamkhammei khou,
 Din tang tiheijo.
 Inggaan ai mu goih-bangh naimakna,
 Intunah chalian chaengdai,
 Kakhaam kai mihlou,
 Pamju ponh kanmei thiuta,
 How nina tat tung dei-e,
 Inggaan ai mu.
 Ai how laki tunah ni thian lum bu the,
 Lianchonghpu ni thian budei the,
 Tunah ni thian budei dingthe.
 Ai ni inrongh-ramh tho chagin—
 Longba paeng ngan,

Longpilog jon kei-e;
 Kaithipaeng le Kaimaengraengh ganron,
 Taohmonhbut, Longphailonglum keilouna,
 Chianpat keilou;
 Dalonlong tang,
 Achai Khianroupu nam tang la,
 Tangkhonglong ganron,
 Muntha gongron,
 Mukti gongtang,
 Muklina gong' jip pukhangnge,
 Inggan ai mu.
 Laothon thaona Bonronglong kuloula,
 Tunah anei kaibianna deithe.
 Namthanlong gongtang la,
 Gohchi tajeita injon kumna,
 Gong putong ku ai mu,
 Tunah ram how laki,
 Thiankei khang ning makge,
 Intai-pheimudah machunh karuhna,
 Khanglon khang ningbam bu-e.

Free Rendering :

Completing the harvest,
 And accumulating the paddy in the barn,
 And as the autumn comes,
 I'll have a journey to villages.
 Tell this to the girl—
 Who had been married and is living by the highway.
 Having no work at home,
 I go about only to see the girl—
 Who had married and has got a baby,
 And living at the highway.
 I've seen that many girls have faded,
 Me, **Lianchongphu** also is faded,
 The girl I longed to see also has faded.

'Am journeying towards the south,
Crossing **Longba**,
Going to **Longpi** and its ranges;
Passing **Kaithipaeng** and **Kaimaengraengh**
Reaching **Taohmonhbut** and **Longphailonglum**,
Halted at **Chianpat**.
And then going to **Dalonlong**,
Reached my brother **Khianroupu's** village,
Leaving **Tangkhonglong**,
And passing through **Muntha**,
I reached **Mukti** and
Hoping to reach **Muktina** and stay overnight there.
Next morning, having climbed **Bonronglong**,
Now am nearing the girl's village.
Reaching **Namthanlong**,
I went right through,
Like a thirsty bull running straight to the water.
Having seen the girl's village,
I do not wish to get faded,
And putting on the best clothes,
I wish to renew my life,
And live forever.

21

RAMRONH LU (Love or Sentimental Song)

Ramronh Lu is the song of love and sentimental expression. The songs are mainly of lamentation, anguish, mourning, love and melancholy, and are, therefore, mainly sung on the occasions like death, separation of dear ones or lovers. Also, it is sung in competition on the occasions of **Ramronh** and marriage. One saying runs thus—"One who knows more **Ramronh Lu** has more anguish and melancholy".

The song is sung in solo to mourn a death or in anguish over separation of love and dear ones. However, it is also normally sung in duet of boys or girls or one each in competition on the occasion like **Ramronh** and marriage. There is no rhythm nor responsive or lead-and-follow manner of singing in **Ramronh Lu**. It is sung very slowly with full expression of the meaning at the same speed and same vocal till its conclusion.

Normally no instrument is used in accompaniment of the song. However, there are some exceptional songs of the type that can be sung or normally sung with the accompaniment of harp. There is a separate series or type of **Inraah Lu** (Harp Song). It is dealt with later in this book.

Ji-jaenghnung talihna nui,
He munna nguihna anei.
"Tuithu ram tatlou nicho ?"
"Inggaan le thai makge,
Ting' kandih tou,
Thai-how mak puiram,
Gongngo tu-e."
'Gaan ai goih-bangh—
Naimak nung rui,
He munta singduh sonhlou,
Alungh mak ronne.
He munta singduh sonhlou—
Kanni bu-the.
Lai-kadi timc—

Ding 'khon heijo.
 Tingpuk le kandih kak khou,
 Nang lun kumhtong paeng riu makge,
 Gaimei-na le fu-e.
 He nang mu paandu fudei ki,
 Paandu fusong makna,
 Ningtow lapuinei,
 Mikdui long.

Free rendering :

Once playing and laughing together,
 With my sweet, my beloved.
 "Now where are you going to ?"—
 I asked for her reply;
 "My beloved, I do not know," she said—
 "I am forced to get married to a far off village,
 Which I never knew."
 A poor man that I am,
 Having nothing to win her hand,
 My beloved is being married to a far off village
 My heart is so broken.
 On the day my beloved is being sent off
 To a distant place,
 I was waiting for her on that day
 Only to bid her "Good-bye"
 "Under the heaven on this earth
 You are the fairest among women,
 O my sweet heart."
 God made us to be with each other,
 But only for a shortwhile.
 Tears roll down,
 Everytime I remember you, my beloved.

22

INRAAH LU (Harp Song)

Inraah Lu is the type of song that can be sung with harp —**Inraah** Harp is used as accompaniment in singing during the occasions of the feast of merit, marriages and also to mourn the death or separation of loved ones. Therefore, most of the songs except those of feast of merit are songs of lamentation or mourning.

The song is sung very slowly from the beginning to its conclusion. Normally the person who sings the song shall also play the harp himself. Harp is exclusively used by male only. However, there is no restriction for womanfolk to use it.

Use of harp is restricted only to a period from October/November to February/March. However, this restriction is applicable only to individual use and is relaxed for appropriate occasions like death, funeral, marriage etc. throughout the year.

No other instrument is used as accompaniment of the song.

Indih kun koi,
Khaam phu sini,
Mun nang kumhtong mei nai makge.
Kalun gai-e, lat-lu tong hamh makge,
Kathiam roi gai, taanthaina nung tei roi
Lat-lu tong dei-e,
Mun kummeinata.

Free rendering :

Though I go round the world,
In search of a damsel,
There is no one like you, my beloved.
It's not for the beauty,
It's for her creativity and skillfulness,
That I admire and love,
O my beloved.

23

MAGIAN LU (Song of Lamentation)

Magian Lu is the song of lamentation to lament the death or parting of loved ones. Singing of the song is restricted to appropriate situations or occasions only. Usually children or young people do not sing the song since there is a belief or saying that it is a sign of inviting a bad omen. But learning it is permissible for anyone at any time. In case of death the song is not sung after the burial of the dead body.

The song is sung in solo either by male or female, very slowly without observing rhythm till its conclusion.

No instrument is normally used as accompaniment. However, harp is occasionally used depending on the type of songs.

Kaima longrian luipat lana,
Nang rana kagiakhna tat-boi,
Nang khon maandaomei naimakna.
Nang khon maandaomei naimakna,
Khaam Donjipu le !
Imbao le Ngaoh kanglungna saoh' kiu,
Ahe meichun si-e.
He kaima longrian thing,
Roingaoh durian.
He khaam 'tam ki,
Roingaohmu du da'ne.
He tingkum mu gonh thiki,
A chun mu gonh lathui makge tu-e.
Inroi-inkhohuhta tingkum rah 'gonh thiki,
Phumlu Lujinei chun mu gonh lathui makge.
He kaima longrian thing
Kasai rui gai' ne,
Thingthang kasai thao chamh.

Free rendering :

Going to the land of the dead,
Alone you go shouting as of being a man,
Without a response from anyone,
Without a response from anyone;
O my beloved **Donjipu!**
Except the sounds of chirping of the birds.
Oh ! My heart is so gloomy!
On the tree of the land of the dead,
Roingaoh—the birds are sitting in twin.
O my beloved has gone,
But, O you two birds are sitting intimately.
The year has come to its end,
But there is no end to my gloomy heart.
The dove is cooing through the year
And has now stopped.
But the sorrow of **Lujinei** could not be wiped off.
On the tree of the death's land,
Many branches have sprung up,
Just like the trunks of the big tree.

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