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**FOLK SONGS**  
**OF**  
**THE THADOU**



**Directorate**  
**For Development of Tribals & Backward**  
**Classes : Manipur**

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# Introduction

Collection, compilation and tape recording of folk songs of the Thadou 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 folksongs in each tribe but all the songs cannot be collected and compiled. A representative verse of each type and kind of the folksongs 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 the Manipur Film Development Council.

The traditional tunes of the folksongs 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 cassettes. In the first phase, attempts had been made to cover five major tribes like, Thadou, Tangkhul, Paite, Mao and Kabul. 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,  
the 20th Sep, 1989,

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

# THADOU TRADITIONAL SONGS

## KHULKUON LA

1. This is the song of the Thadous sung together by both males & females using musical instruments such as big gong, a set of gongs, drums and horns of mithun. The song, is usually sung while returning home after killing a big game or after victorious head hunting

## THADOU

Thampi Khulla kapienni'n  
Luncha hing mibang pienna  
Ma'ng vanchoi kitingie.

Ma'ng vanchoi kitingie,  
Namin vaipi kakai guollin lhingie.  
Kakai guollin lhingie,  
Thangva'n ging bang  
Nuoi sietlei katawllie.

## ENGLISH VERSION

When I came out from the Khul (cave) I was a noble son of a chief. I placed all nations a kindreds under my command and my followers were myriad. My glory spread all over and like thunder my word were accepted and obeyed.

## GAM NGAILUT LA

2. This is a patriotic song sung on the occasion of important functions by a male or a group consisting of males only with gongs, drums and horns of mithun,

## THADOU

Ne'm ding diengin, jin ie lo'ng  
Simmang biang pupa gamlei guja kahuna hi,  
Pupa gamlei guja kahuna hi.  
Chinmang laitan vanmang kahuolna hi.

## ENGLISH VERSION

For the love of my country and my brethren I speak  
the language of the meek and the humble and practice  
hospitality to all and thus I draw people.

## GÅ'L LA

3. This song was composed and sung in the beginning  
of 20th century when the Thadous fought against  
the Britishers. This song is now sung on the occa-  
sion of the anniversaries of the Thadou war of  
Independence of 1917-1919 depicting their unflin-  
ching courage in the wars defending their country.  
The musical instruments used are gongs, drums and  
horns of mithun.

## THADOU

Kithangsa va'nnuoiya kithangsa,  
Amang simlu hinkhaiyuo  
He-uo Tintawng Laijangte cha,  
Anuommie, le'ntuol jawsang anuommie,  
Amang touna, amang touna.

## ENGLISH VERSION

Brother Tintawng, son of Laijang (Tamenglong)  
Bring the heads of world renown English men.  
How dignified, how pleasant is your palanquin,  
Better looking than the green vae.

#### 4. CHA'NG AI LA

This song is sung in group both by males and females after a big feast thrown by the woman who had a bumper harvest which seldom come in one's life time. The musical instruments used are a big gong, a set of gongs, drums and horns of mithun.

Pupa min pha'n  
Buhtuol kuom luo dim dem,  
Tuoingei jatam lhawlam kuom ale'tnie.  
Lhawlam kuomle chunnu khavang huolna  
La'mtuol changsiel dellou, lungmuong puongie,

(The names of the great famous ancestors have filled the courtyard of the hut,  
So, likewise those of my brethren every place  
I cannot rest content  
Until I kill one mithun;  
In honour of my mother).

Jacha'ng thang kadei luot,  
Gam vangke bang,  
Sietlei thaini vuongie,  
Sum tinthang kadei luot,  
Kalhaw lamma  
Kavan ngeitil ngawnnie.

(In search of riches in grain,  
I break and till the ground all day long like a quail,  
In seach of riches in money,  
I urge my children on to the fields).

## 5. KUT LA

This song is sung by the old and the young during the harvest festivals with joy and mirth using drums, horns of mithun including a set of gongs.

Mim kut taotie, jou mim kut taotie,  
Jou mim leiya khuva ha't lawm lawmmie,

Lumsuong kajonkah

Chunga khaimu je'ngin chawi jaw e.

(Let us celebrate feast of job's tear

Where it grows, there are too many birds  
to destroy the grain.

While searching for the stones

They were carried away by the flying kites of the sky.)

## 6 HA'N LA

After a big wild beast or an enemy is killed in war this "Han la" is recited glorifying oneself at the gate of the Village by the one who killed the beast or the enemy depicting his triumphant victory and a shot is fired at the end

Kathangie, khangie,

Namtin khuovaipei laiya

(name of the clan he belongs) cha khangie,

Khangie, khangie,

Tuong tui phaiya,

Vuisai buo nang kasiellie

Guollai lawjang khangie,

(My fame spreads, my fame spreads

Among all nations and kindreds,

The fame of I, son of (the name of the clan) spreads,

My fame spreads, my fame spreads.

As on the banks of the Latui river

I threw down an elephant,

My fame spreads, my fame spreads.)

## 7. GA'L AI OR GA'L HA'T LA

In the head hunting days when the warriors came back after their victory over the enemies a grand feast used to be held glorifying oneself who could surpass all others. They danced and sang this type of songs with the musical instruments used on any other important occasions.

Simma sangjawi katinni n

Sangkop sielling.

Leidou tuonglam kakha ni'n

Laiuong sielling.

Dou tuong lamlah (name of the clan) dangin chieng.

(When I way laid the trek of the beasts

I killed a pair of them.

When I went to war.

I killed my enemies,

So. I surpassed all others.)

Guolpi jangma suon luova. veigam nanaw.

Namtin jar el lhinglaiya lai dinglhu.

Laiding nahuh guollai naminchiei

Suemuol chungchuon chungga hatjing kaiyie.

(Without any comrade-in-arms

You went to war all alone

Amidst hordes of warriors.

Single handed you killed your enemies

You had thus earned fame among all,

To commemorate your victory

A memorial stood erected at the gate.)

Come spirit of mithun, come spirit of the mithun of  
Vungsuons. I will make you a good stall.

Come mithun, spirit of grain come,  
My grandmother was born with you in the Khul (cave)  
I will make you a good barn,  
Come grain.

## 12 NAO OI LA

This is a lullaby sung without any musical instrument  
by the one who is to make the child sleep,

Haiyuo haiyuo bemtaw tawnu haiyuo.  
Akhie lang kenpieh louve  
Sun nanu haiyuo.

Weep not, weep not, dear one weep not,  
No milk has been brought for her,  
O. Day who is a mother to her-  
Succour her,

Suohlhu chungu kakalle,  
Kanao puoncha kalhahsan,  
Galah vahding katile  
Sangah meipal aha'm aha'mmie  
Chinnieng, Chinnieng nanao kipuoh-uo ja'm tuotie,  
Va'npil pulung lung aha'mmie

As I climbed the peach tree  
I dropped a tiny piece of cloth of my younger  
brother  
As I intended to get it up,  
Stripe tailed wild cat roared and roared,  
Chinnieng, Chinnieng, carry your child  
Let us run the heavens thundered all around.

### 13 JANGCHA LA

Jangcha la song is sung during the "CHON" the celebration of bumper harvest, killing a number of wild beasts or enemies. For this a big feast is arranged in honour of the one who has bumper harvest or who kills many big games or enemies surpassing all others. The musical instruments used are a big gong, drums, a set of gongs and horns of mithun,

Pu pa'n pannie vabang paovie,  
Lamsai tingle guol lawiyie,

Lamsai tingie guol lawiyie,  
Kasai thei dim demmie

Our forefathers, by words, began forming rings of dancers in a fellowship.

Could I fit myself into these rings of dancers?

Jangcha lanu nadei le  
Kasei bang sei taveovin,  
Kasei bang sei taveovin,  
Kage'l bang ge'l taveovin.

If you love the daughter of the enemy  
Speak as I speak,  
think as I think

### 14 SANNEM LA

Sanem la is sung during merry making on the occasion of important functions. Only drums and horns of mithun are used as musical instruments.

Simgamtang nisat malgam  
Damdei jaw--e  
Aluolla le hungki kuo  
Sannem, sannem javaw e.

In the east the heat of the sun is too much.

The west is cooler.

So, come back and let us sing sannem song together.

## 15. GUOSEM LA

Whenever a young boy calls on his beloved one he sings love songs with a typical musical instrument called "guosem" made of bamboo reeds. The meaning of the musical sound played by the boy can only be understood by his beloved one.

Dawng kot neihon, guol gienu → uo

Joujam kohung laile' ngie,

Joujam nahung laile' ng • uo

Tuhlou noucha'n kaha'mmie.

Open the door, beloved one,

I Joujam (coxcorn) come to call on you.

If you Joujam, come calling on me,

I welcome you with the sweet and meek cries of a young tuhlou bird.

## 16. LAPI

Lapi song is sung on the day a man dies glorifying the clan in which he belongs. Each and every clan has its own lapi song depending on their status in the society. Gongs, drums and horns of the mithun are used in singing the songs.

Chunxun eichoi chun lhingin,

Chunlhing choiya valhou mu

Chonkhuong chungu katonvie.

Kajuon eichoiyuo thummin  
Juo thum choiya sakawl kei,  
Laihen chung katouvie.

With the help of my mother like an eagle  
I soar high above with riches.

As my father begets me and lift me up

I owned many slaves and servants like a lion

## 17 KHUONG LA

To sing khuong la song without any purpose is a taboo. This is a song of confrontation with the demons. While singing the song no one is allowed to laugh and to cut joke to one another amongst the participants and there cannot be any mistake in pronouncing any word of the song and the song should not be out of tune. Guosem, selangdah, lhiemlhei and theile are not used in the song.

Nine'l hiya chalaiya thang hiluo pa

Kawl kei kajiet tieng aw - e

Kawl kei kajiet tieng laiya

Nine'l saitang thangva'n nang chungnung aw - e,

Atui kisunglut tajaw vaitui kisunglut tajaw,

Ga'la vaitui pava nun.

Lisung thaova jaw neiti,

Ke na tumthing kilih,

Ja'nga lamei jang kacheenne

Taisuh tang tumsuong kabang,

Taitou tang sanmei kabang.

(Among my children, I, the sun rays am famous like a tiger. But you the heaven is higher.

When I run up the sloppy terrain I am like stones, logs  
tumbling down and I can extinguish the fire in the plain.  
After that when I run up the high slopes  
I am like fireball defeating even the demons.)

## 18 LAKHIENG LA

Lakhieng la is a song of lamentation usually sung by  
the males. Only drums and horns of mithun are used.  
Lakhieng la chu paikhuong khatnia kuongie.  
Jaolam thuomma kaluonsah dildiellie

I shall put the song of lakhieng in a basket at my  
loin and make it flow at the junction of the way to the field.  
Lakhieng la chun mantih neipuontie,  
Akhangtaih in sun navang awi nan'nie.

The song of lakhieng will have no ending.  
Young generation will continue singing it like a lullaby.

## 19 LAWM LA

To celebrate the completion of jhum cultivation a  
feast is arranged by the youths of the same age group.  
They dance and sing this song together with joy. Drums  
and horns are used as musical instruments,

Lawm guol changang phat petna kasah lhuong  
Lhangtieng phuolvanu bangin le'nnuommie,  
Lhangtieng phuolva nou banga kale' n laichun,  
Sim na'mchem le lanu kadei penie.

I feel good when young boys and young girls are many  
But, when I happen to lead life like young horn-bill,  
my greatest desires are a long sword and a young maiden.

## 20 LAKAWI LA

This song is sung by both boys and girls who are in love with each other on the way to jhum fields or returning from jhum and no musical instrument is used except the flute.

Achie masa iumle

Tuonglam vaosawt kisetie,

Lung lhangai gienu,

Lung lhangai gienu khutoh

Tuonglam dame chaw kija wtleng

Leljong lelpuongie.

Let either of us who precedes the other on the way to the jhum (field) make a sign to that effect by laying a branch of leaves on the path.

## 21 LACHAWM LA

This type of song is sung either in group or single at home. The musical instruments used are drums and horns of mithun.

Lachawm la kasah kah in aw,

Kalou khuongbang akhullie

Pajuon pu vaw e,

While I am singing

My field has been overgrown with weeds.

Simman simnun thaw hitie,

Ma' llan ma' nun thaw hitie ule nao vaw e.

Simnun thawle ma' nun thaw e.

Chimang kinuol puotie ule nao vaw e.

Let these people in the east follow the ways of the east and those in the west—those of the west.

As followers of the ways of either the east or the west let us not abhor each other brethren.

## 22 LAMLHANG LA

This is also a song of lamentation sung by males on the way to their fields. No musical instrument is used except theile (flute),

Chuh khuo lhummei kaiya bawn kimuonglou,

Chava'ng khalni hung kichawi hih bawndie.

Chava'ng khalni kichawi ta e

Lhummei kaita

Guol noileuan, buhtul muom tapuontie.

Even when in the rainy season, all the mountains and hills are made invisible by thick clouds and I feel no place,

May not the autumn come.

Autumn has come, vapour has come to stay and those who have no sweetheart will hardly touch the tobacco juice.

## 23 DAWNGMA LA

This is a romantic song sung by boys and girls using guosem, lhiemlhei, selangdah and theile as musical instruments,

Na'mchem hiem kikhang jongleh

Khuotuonglam deilam jonna'n,

Jing dailam nohnuommie,

Phung guollin daithaw kaihen

Pal ge' njongleh

Lungtuosangin muolla vellha rangie.

Swords and spears may block me to my beloved,  
They will not prevent me from going to her.

Even if my way is blocked by a wall of enemies,  
I will still locate a way to reach my beloved.

Pi salunglien kangthal phu nojawntem ?

Kum sawtna guollhang kangai najawntem ?

Pi salunglien kangthal phula thakie ta'n tin,

Kum sawtna guollhang kangai najawntie,

Will the pain I feel in longing for my sweetheart  
be more painful than that felt by the great beast  
when the arrow sticks in its flesh ?

The arrow that sticks in the flesh of the great  
beast will give away soon,

But my never ending love for my sweetheart  
will be more painful.

## 24 LENCHONGHOI LA

This song is based on the folk tale "Lenchonghoi"  
Whenever grand mothers tell this tale to their grand  
children at bed time the song is sung at the intervals of  
the story narrating the events occurred in the story.

No musical instrument is used in the olden days,

Ka u ka u Lenchonghoi yuo

Thihpi thuo sawm kot neiho nuo,

Nanao haite kahungie,

Buchun sagi mechun sagi kahinpuoi.

My sister, my sister Lenchonghoi

Open the ten-fold door of steel for me

Your sister has come

Carrying seven packets of rice and seven packets of curry.

## 25 KHUPTING LE NGAMBAWM

This song is taken from the folk tale *Khupting and Ngambawm*. While narrating the story as the songs are sung at the intervals of the story, Gousem is used as musical instrument.

*Khupting le Ngambawm*

*Lien vailu sangin*

*Gamma sawlduo sil pounnin neiyie,*

*Khat cha'ng chung a kisiel*

*Khat cha'ng nuoiya kisiel*

*Suntin samang Ja'lkhawm jite,*

*Khupting and Ngambawm*

*Stricken with poverty and misery*

*Had to use leaves as clothes*

*One was made to sleep upon a log*

*One was made to sleep under a log*

*At every noon, they slept together,*

*Atuidung lhah ing*

*Teo dung lhah ing.*

*Tinguo samang kavaimaw hiellie,*

*Following the river*

*Following the banks of river*

*I could not locate *Khupting* any where.*

*Sim lamma awn kalham le*

*Sim nungah toh kakisai saiye,*

*Ma'l lamma awn kalham le*

*Ma'l nungah toh kakisai saiye,*

*Cutting the branches leaning eastward,*

*I flirted with the young maidens of the east*

*Cutting the branches leaning westward*

*I flirted with the young maidens of the west.*

Ka semguo pantang,  
Awnthing le'i sanga,  
Tinguo lhao lha.  
Thimu cha'n hung lenguo.

As I played my bamboo instrument (Guosem)  
On the high branches of the tree,  
May the spirit of Khupting  
Come flying as a kite.

Tinsuo nanung tieng  
Nachun le najuon.  
Malou sangthing lhamin eideiyie.

Tinguo nalhao lha  
Lengvan kim tienga  
Mella mudin

Thimu chan hung lenguo Khupting  
After you had gone Khupting  
Your parents required of me  
to cut the branches of tall trees

Khupting — may your spirit come flying  
in the middle of the sky for me to see  
as akite.

Pabawm adang achah ie  
Khupting naonu Sielnieng in  
Tui gakhaiyuo

Ngambawm gets thirsty  
Let Khupting's younger sister, Sielnieng  
draw water.

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