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ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTE
ON
THE KABUIS OF MANIPUR

Investigation and Draft

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Supplementary Information

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FOREWORD

The Constitution lays down that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation"

To assist States in fulfilling their responsibility in this regard, the 1961 Census provided a series of special tabulations of the social and economic data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are notified by the President under the Constitution and the Parliament is empowered to include in or exclude from the lists, any caste or tribe. During the Census operations, the enumerators frequently face the problem of identifying the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the President's notification, though in some cases, the names of the sub-castes and sub-tribes and synonyms are given, there are many cases where such names have not been provided in the list. The Census enumerators, therefore, require guidance about the acceptance or rejection of claims that they come across during the operations of some communities to be treated as sub-castes or sub-tribes of the notified Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose, the Census Organisation has thought it wise to undertake detailed ethnographic studies in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India. This is also in conformity with the past Census tradition of presenting authentic ethnographic account of Indian communities.

For conducting the ethnographic studies, a number of ancillary operations are undertaken by the Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General, India, as well as the staff of the Superintendents of Census Operations in the various States. These ancillary operations include: (i) compilation of available information on each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and preparation of bibliography in respect of them; (ii) preparation and interpretation of maps showing distribution of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes over time and space; and (iii) special studies on cultural, technological and economic changes taking place among the various tribal communities.

Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Deputy Registrar General, Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit, assisted by Shri N. G. Nag, Officer on Special Duty, and Shri A. M. Kurup, Research Officer, is coordinating all these studies at the Central level. At the State level, the Superintendent of Census Operations and his staff are collaborating in conducting the field investigations and preparing the report. Shri R. K. Birendra Singh, Superintendent of Census Operations, supervised the study at the State level and Dr. K. B. Singh carried out the field investigation on this community and prepared the draft. Dr. P. D. Sharma of the Social Studies Unit, Office of the Registrar General, furnished supplementary information. In avail of this opportunity to extend my warm thanks to all my colleagues who have undertaken various studies on different aspects of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India.

A. CHANDRA SEKHAR
Registrar General, India.

P R E F A C E

This Ethnographic Note on the Kabui Nagas of Imphal is yet one more by-work of the 1961 Census Operations of Manipur of which I had the privilege to be in-charge. The Note seeks to study, in some detail, the ethnographic characteristics of the Kabui Nagas of Imphal, who have settled down in the precious little valley of Manipur for periods ranging from 50 to 100 years and who have, therefore, undergone a certain degree of acculturation. It may be of interest to note that, the Kabuis of Imphal, have exhibited a remarkable capacity for adaptation to changing circumstances; the Kabuis of younger generation appear to have no nostalgia for their original habitat in the western hills of Manipur and for the sylvan setting and the lofty heights to which for generations their forbears had been accustomed. None the less, one comes across one or two elders who talk vaguely of distant kinsmen left behind at a temporal and spatial point which seems to them to be 'long ago and far away'. It may also be seen from the pages that follow that, despite their removal, lock, stock and barrel from their original habitat in the hills, and despite their adaptation to urban life, the Kabuis of Imphal still retain the fundamental social and cultural traits of their community. Apart from providing a fascinating study in ethnography, this is perhaps yet one more instance of the unity in diversity which is the main characteristic of the larger Indian culture.

I am much obliged to Dr. K. B. Singh who collected the bulk of the information contained in this Note and to Dr. P. D. Sharma of the Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General, who collected some supplementary information. I am also grateful to the Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General, headed by Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Deputy Registrar General, Social Studies for making some valuable modifications in the original draft.

IMPHAL,
September 22, 1971.

R. K. BIRENDRA SINGH

THE KABUIS

Name, Identity, Origin and History

The word Kabui is still a mystery to the Kabuis themselves. It is an alien word of which no definite origin is known to the Kabuis. The Kabuis of Manipur nowadays call themselves "Rongmei" also. It is a combination of two words "rong" and "mei" meaning "south" and "people" respectively. Thus, "Rongmei" stands for the "Southerners".

The ancestral home of the Kabuis lies in the mountain ranges in the Tamenglong Sub-division of Manipur and adjacent mountainous areas in Nagaland and Assam. The Kabui settlement area within the territory of Manipur happens to be the southern portion of the vast tract of Kabui country, and hence those who are settling in the southern part of their habitat within Manipur call themselves the Rongmei—the Southerners.

In present day literature, the word Kabui has been widely used within and outside Manipur, and the name Rongmei is less known to other communities. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British administrators wrote monographs on a number of communities of Manipur and references to the Kabuis had been made in these writings. Colonel McCulloch in his "Accounts of the Valley of Munnipore" published in 1859 made remarks about the Kabuis. Similarly, E.T. Dalton, T. C. Hodson, R. Brown and Colonel Shakespear, among other, devoted a few lines or pages on the Kabuis. Kabui had been spelled out differently by different writers. "Koupoeee" of McCulloch, "Kowpoi" of Brown and "Koupui" of Dalton are the same.

The present study of the Kabuis is confined to the Kabui settlement areas within the urban areas of Imphal. All the Kabui settlement areas within the municipal area of Imphal have been in existence for the last half a century or more. The major settlement areas of the Kabuis are Kakhulong, Keisamthong, Majorkhul, Minuthong and Thangmeiband (Muchi-khul)—all within a radius of one or two miles.

Settlement History

The original home of the Kabuis of Manipur lies in Tamenglong area which is a vast tract of hilly region situated along the western border of Manipur. It is reported that many early settlers into the valley of Manipur came from Tamenglong area. It is also reported that the earliest settlement of the Kabuis in Imphal is about a century old, but it is difficult to obtain authentic information with regard to the exact year of settlement of the Kabuis in Imphal. Some areas like Keisamthong, Minuthong and Moirangkhoi are reported to have been settled since the beginning of the present century. Other settlement areas appear to be a little older though their antiquity is believed to be not earlier than the later part of the nineteenth century.

Distribution and Population Trend

The Kabuis are one of the major Scheduled Tribes of Manipur, and according to the Census of 1961, the population of the Kabuis is 29,218 persons consisting of 14,613 males and 14,605 females. For administrative purposes, Manipur has been divided into ten Sub-divisions, and the distribution of the Kabui population in these ten Sub-divisions is shown in a tabular form below :—

Sub-division	Kabui Population		
	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
Imphal West	4,179	2,064	2,115
Imphal East	899	487	412
Bishenpur	614	282	332
Thoubal	130	65	65
Tamenglong	20,545	10,329	10,216
Tengnoupal	4	4	—
Churachandpur	1,298	598	700
Mao & Sadar Hills	1,377	667	710
Jiribam	166	115	51
Ukhrul	6	2	4

The municipal area of Imphal comprises parts of the two Sub-divisions of Imphal West and Imphal East. The major settlement areas of the Kabuis mentioned earlier are located in the Imphal West Sub-division, and hence the urban Kabui population in Imphal West portion of Imphal town outnumbers Kabui population in the urban areas of Imphal East. The total urban Kabui population according to 1961 Census is 2,335 persons consisting of 1,229 males and 1,106 females, out of which 2,101 persons or 1,099 males and 1,002 females are found in the urban area of Imphal West Sub-division.

The Kabuis are also enumerated not only in Manipur but also in other neighbouring areas like Assam, Nagaland, Tripura and NEFA, and the total Kabui population outside Manipur is 870 persons consisting of 502 males and 368 females according to the Census of 1961. The Kabui population in Tripura and NEFA is however negligible. The distribution of the Kabui population in areas outside Manipur is as follows :—

State/Territory	Population	
	Males	Females
1	2	3
Assam	363	244
Nagaland	138	123
Tripura	1	—
NEFA	1	—

The distribution of urban population of the Kabuis in different settlement areas in Imphal as per 1961 Census has been presented in the following table :—

TABLE 1

Settlement Areas	No. of Households	Total Population		
		Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5
Keisamthong .	64	382	180	202
Kakhulong .	73	465	219	246
Majorkhul .	32	212	105	107
Minuthong .	37	190	96	94
Moirangkhom .	14	86	40	46
Thangmeiband .	44	242	120	122
Other places .	—	758	469	289

As stated earlier, the urban population of the Kabuis is 2,335 persons consisting of 1,229 males and 1,106 females. This shows an excess of male population over female population to the extent of about 111 males for every 1,000 females. The number of rural population of the Kabuis exceeds the urban population considerably. The total rural Kabui population is 26,883 persons consisting of 13,384 males and 13,499 females. Hence, the urban population is about one-twelfth of the total Kabui population. In the absence of adequate information, no break-up of both the urban and rural Kabui population under different age-groups is possible.

Physical Characteristics

Depending upon a broad observation, the Kabuis may be said to possess Mongoloid features. In facial appearance, the Kabuis do not differ widely from other communities of Manipur. Except for the language and traditional dress one can hardly distinguish a Kabui from a non-Kabui. The colour of the skin varies from extremely fair to dark brown. The epicanthic folds of the eyes are present but these are not thickly set. Most of the individuals do not have body hair while hair on the head is straight and black though a few are found to possess wavy hairs on their heads.

Family, Clan and Kinship

The size of family for all the Kabui areas in Imphal cannot be given for want of sufficient information. Depending upon data of Kabui settlement areas of Kakhulong, Keisamthong, Majorkhul, Minuthong, Moirangkhom and Thangmeiband, we find that the average size of a family stands at about 6 persons.

The Kabui family is patrilineal and patrilocal. To trace down descent through the male line is the customary principle. As regards residence, patrilocality, that is a man staying at his father's place, is the general practice, yet there are also exceptions where a man stays either at his wife's father's house after his marriage or at his mother's father's house. In either

case, the circumstances may differ from person to person. When a person stays at his wife's place after his marriage, the type of residence is known as *naomungmei* among the Kabuis.

Both nuclear and extended families are found among the Kabuis. There is a general impression that the extended family is decreasing in number, but statistical co-ordination of the same was not obtained during the rapid survey. By tradition it is usually the youngest son who remains with his parents even after his marriage, but the other sons also continue to have their sense of responsibility for the old parents, even after they set up separate households after marriage.

The distribution of the types of families in a number of Kabui settlement areas at the time of the survey is furnished below :—

Settlement Area	No. and Type of Families		
	Nuclear	Intermediate or nuclear with adhesion	Extended
1	2	3	4
Kakhulong	33	29	11
Keisamthong	38	14	12
Majorkhul	13	15	4
Minuthong	21	12	4
Moirangkhom	6	5	3
Thangmeiband	26	18	5

The statement shows that at the time of survey extended family constitutes a small proportion of total number of families but as evidence was not collected through genealogies, to show its higher frequency in the past, it is better to refrain from drawing any conclusion about the trend.

The Kabui population has been divided into a number of exogamous clans. The following four clans are found among the Kabuis of Imphal :

1. Gangmei
2. Golmei
3. Kamci
4. Longmei

It is interesting to note that all these clans or exogamous units have been identified with the exogamous units i.e. the *Salais* of the Manipuris which are as follows :—

<i>KABUI</i>	<i>MANIPURI</i>
Gangmei	Angom
Golmei	Khumal
Kamei	Ningthouja
Longmei	Luwang

Besides the Kabuis, there are also other tribal communities in Manipur who identify their clans with some of the *Salais* of the Manipuris. This seems to be a phenomenon of syncretism indicating a transitional stage in the process of cultural change.

Among the Kabuis of Imphal, clan hierarchy is not found. All the clans are considered to possess equal social status in day-to-day activities. The clan is not a factor or a condition at all so far as residential concentration is concerned. In all the settlement areas of the Kabuis in Imphal, there is no concentration of the households on the basis of the clans to which they belong.

In the past, the general tradition among the Kabuis was to have a headman from the Kamei clan only. Though the same tradition continues till now, much emphasis is given on personal qualities like competence and ability to lead and a sound knowledge of customary practices. These qualities are some of the important factors to be considered by the people at the time of appointing their headman. If such a person cannot be found from among the Kamei clan, headmanship will go to a person from any other clan. At the time of investigation, the headman of Minuthong settlement area, for instance, was found to belong to Longmei clan, though this trend also caused some amount of dissension.

The kinship terminologies of the Kabuis with reference to consanguineal, collateral and affinal relatives have been given below. It will be found from the list that the classificatory type of kinship exists in the Kabui society.

CONSANGUINEOUS

FATHER	APA
MOTHER	AMA
FATHER'S FATHER	APOU
FATHER'S MOTHER	APAI
MOTHER'S FATHER	APOU
MOTHER'S MOTHER	APAI
SON	ANA
DAUGHTER	ANALUPUI
SON'S SON	ATOU
SON'S DAUGHTER	ATOU
DAUGHTER'S SON	ATOU
DAUGHTER'S DAUGHTER	ATOU

COLLATERALS

FATHER'S BROTHER	APUTHAO (EI) APARAO (YO)
FATHER'S BROTHER'S SON	ACHAIBUNG (EI) AKAINA (YO)
FATHER'S BROTHER'S DAUGHTER	ACHAIMAO (EI) AKAINA (YO)
FATHER'S SISTER	ANAI
FATHER'S SISTER'S SON	AMHAK
FATHER'S SISTER'S DAUGHTER	APUIRAO (EI)
MOTHER'S BROTHER	APOU
MOTHER'S BROTHER'S SON	AMHAK
MOTHER'S BROTHER'S DAUGHTER	APUIRAO (EI)
MOTHER'S SISTER	APUIRAO
MOTHER'S SISTER'S SON	ACHAIBUNG (EI) AKAINA (YO)

MOTHER'S SISTER'S DAUGHTER	ACHAIMAO (EI) AKAINA (YO)
BROTHER	ACHAIBUNG (EI) AKAINA (YO)
BROTHER'S SON	ANA
BROTHER'S DAUGHTER	ANALUPUI
SISTER	ACHAIMAO (EI) AKAINA (YO)
SISTER'S SON	ACHAIMAONA
SISTER'S DAUGHTER	ACHAIMAONA- LUPUI

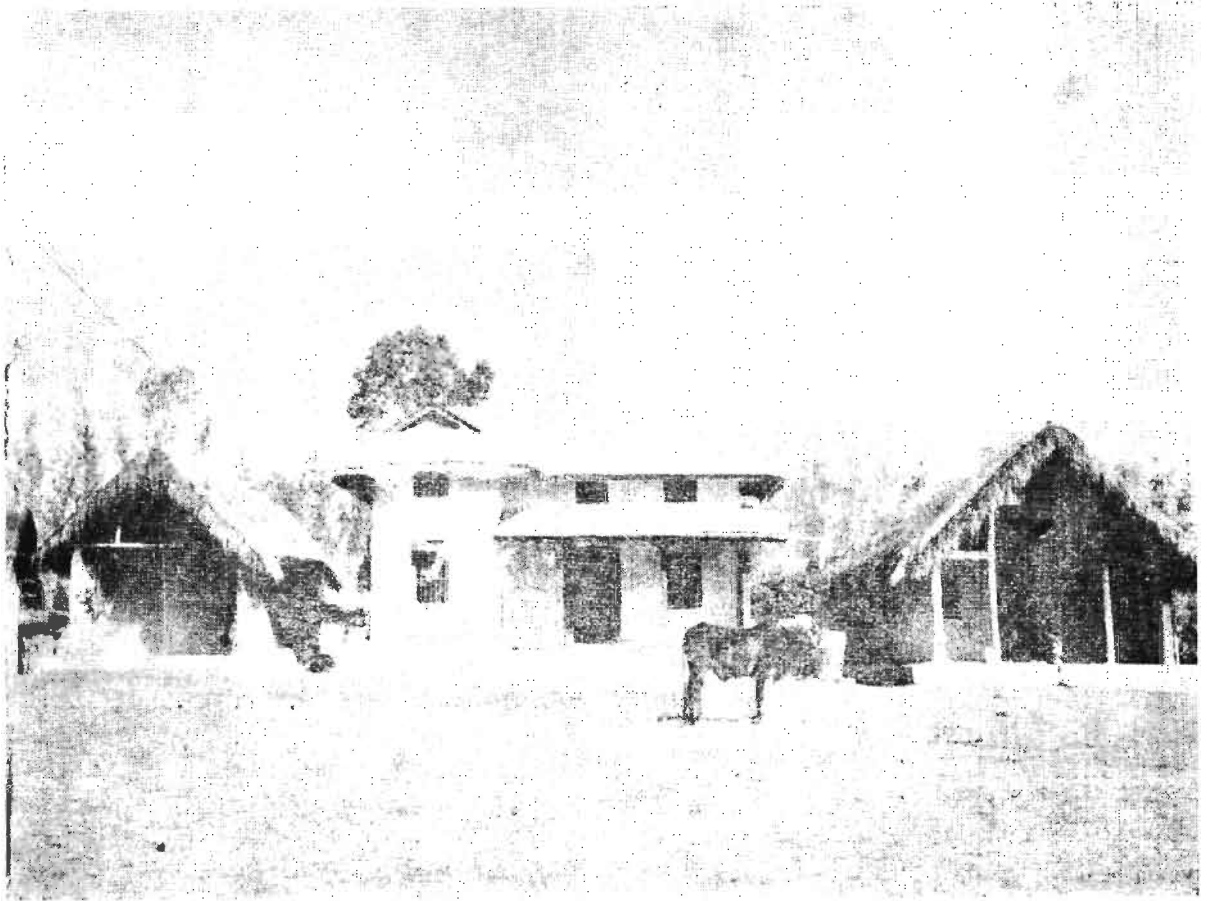
AFFINES

FATHER'S BROTHER'S WIFE	APUIRAO (YO) APUITHAO (EI)
FATHER'S SISTER'S HUSBAND	APOU
MOTHER'S BROTHER'S WIFE	ANEI
MOTHER'S SISTER'S HUSBAND	APATHOU (EI) APARAO (YO)
SON'S WIFE	AMAQ
DAUGHTER'S HUSBAND	ATOU
ELDER BROTHER'S WIFE	ACHAI
YOUNGER BROTHER'S WIFE	AKAINAPUI
ELDER SISTER'S HUSBAND	AMHAK
YOUNGER SISTER'S HUSBAND	AMHAK
WIFE	ANOU
WIFE'S FATHER	APOU
WIFE'S MOTHER	ANEI
WIFE'S ELDER BROTHER	AMHAK
WIFE'S YOUNGER BROTHER	AMHAK
WIFE'S ELDER SISTER	APUIRAO
WIFE'S YOUNGER SISTER	AKAINA PUI
HUSBAND	AGAN
HUSBAND'S FATHER	APOU
HUSBAND'S MOTHER	ANEI
HUSBAND'S ELDER BROTHER	APOU
HUSBAND'S YOUNGER BROTHER	AKAINAPUI
HUSBAND'S ELDER SISTER	ANING
HUSBAND'S YOUNGER SISTER	ANING
HUSBAND AND WIFE	KAKAI-NOUPUNEI (EI=Elder; YO=Younger)

Settlements, Neighbourhood and Dwellings

As stated earlier, the majority of the Kabuis of Imphal are found in the following localities: Kakhulong, Keisamthong, Majorkhul, Minuthong, Moirangkhom and Thangmeiband. All these places are compact areas inhabited exclusively by the Kabuis in the past, though nowadays, non-Kabuis are also found to stay in some of the settlement areas like Majorkhul, frequently, as tenants.

As the settlement history of the Kabuis of Imphal reveals, most of these settlement areas came into existence during the early part of the present century or the last part of the nineteenth century. The patterns of settlement in all these major areas of the Kabuis are more or less similar. That is, the residential houses are built on both sides of the common path which cuts through the central portion of the residential areas. Except Keisamthong, where two parallel common paths are found, other settlement areas have



KEISAMTHONG—Thatched houses are gradually disappearing and *pucca* buildings are constructed in their place.



MAJORKHUL—The traditional costumes of the Kabuis are rarely seen now-a-days except at the time of their festivals.

only one main common path running through the middle of the residential area. With the exception of Thangmeiband, in all the other major settlement areas of the Kabuis of Imphal, the common path runs south and north, whereas in Thangmeiband the common path runs east and west. There is no specific customary regulation with regard to the directions of the common paths. These are determined by the topographical features of the localities concerned.

All the settlement areas have rectangular or near-rectangular shape, and the houses are built facing the common path. Kakhulong and Majorkhul are located close to Khwairamband Bazar—the biggest commercial and marketing centre in Manipur, and hence, from the commercial point of view, these two areas have a few advantages which are absent in other settlement areas. These advantages and also the disadvantages if any, will be discussed later on.

Minuthong is the only settlement area which is a bit far off from other Manipuri localities. Keisamthong, Moirangkhom and Thangmeiband are situated as compact units in the midst of thickly populated Manipuri (Meitei) localities, and naturally contact of the Kabuis of these areas with the neighbouring Meiteis is common and frequent. In Kakhulong and Majorkhul, the neighbourhood pattern is very complex, due to the presence of tenants, mostly businessmen and their families from outside Manipur.

The housing conditions in all the settlement areas remain more or less the same. Houses built in traditional Kabui style are decreasing in number for the reason that traditional house-type is no longer preferred and the people have constructed their houses similar to those of the neighbouring Meiteis in appearance. Nowadays, both thatched and "pucca" houses are found. Many of the "pucca" houses have galvanized corrugated iron sheets as roofs and recently a few flattopped and double-storeyed houses have also been constructed in some of these areas like Kakhulong, Keisamthong and Majorkhul. In spite of the similarity between the house-types of the Kabuis and the Meiteis, a major departure of the Kabuis may be found in the absence of enclosures demarcating the area occupied by an individual household. Fencing around the compound is usually absent almost in all the households. Hence, in the absence of compound fencing, there is hardly any specific entrance to the house excepting the main door. The entire space in front of the house is open.

Excepting the "pucca" buildings for which bricks and stones are used for the foundation and the walls, other types of houses have earthen floor, and wooden and bamboo skeleton. The walls are plastered with a mixture of mud, cow-dung and pieces of straw. As for thatched houses, thatching is done with a local grass called "ee" (*imperata cylindrica*). There is another type of house which is neither "pucca" nor thatched. This type of house has galvanized corrugated iron sheets as roofs but has mud plastered walls and earthen floor like that of a thatched house. Compared with the thatched house, the non-thatched or "pucca" houses are better ventilated due to the presence of four or five windows in addition to the main doors in each house.

Dress

Nowadays, menfolk have adopted western dress consisting of pants, shirts, coats and shoes. Neckties are considered as things of the educated, and wearing of neck-ties is usually restricted to the educated persons and many illiterate persons still feel uneasy to wear a neck-tie and hence they are seldom seen wearing it. *Dhoti* in the Indian style is not worn by the menfolk in general. A local handloom cloth called *khudei* is worn more or less in *dhoti* style by men while remaining at home. The size of this cloth is approximately 3'×8'. Though the menfolk have adopted western dress, the womenfolk have not done so. They wear a wide sheet of cloth known as *pheiso* to cover mainly the lower part of the body. The size of this cloth is roughly 4'×6' for an adult. This cloth is worn in two modes—one around the waist, and another over the breasts. If the *pheiso* is worn over the breasts, wearing of a blouse is not always necessary. Girls and young women are usually seen wearing the *pheiso* around the waist, and a blouse and a piece of cloth as wrapper for the upper part of the body. These clothes are either woven at the loom at home or purchased from the market. However, the Kabuis have their own traditional costume which is usually displayed on festive occasions like the Gan-Ngai, etc. These clothes are woven by themselves at the loom, and black, red, white and yellow colours are predominantly used.

Ornaments

The traditional ornaments are rarely seen nowadays except during festivals and these ornaments are chiefly worn by the women. They wear necklace of glass and cheap stone beads of different colours, brass bangles and armlets. In addition to the cheap ornaments, gold ornaments are also worn by the women. There is no goldsmith in any of the Kabui settlement areas. Therefore, the people, mostly womenfolk, go to any Meitei goldsmith of a nearby locality. Those who cannot afford gold ornaments purchase gilded ornaments which are readily available at the market. Menfolk practically do not wear ornaments. They wear at the most one or two rings on the fingers.

Hair-cutting

Men cut their hair regularly at any saloon situated in the town. There are also persons among themselves who know the art of hair-cutting. They also oblige friends and neighbours by cutting their hair on request and no remuneration is given. Social prestige or status is not at all affected when a person cuts the hair of his fellow men. Women do not cut their hair. Long and jet-black hair is prized most and considered an object of beauty. Women, therefore, take enough care, and precaution for lustrous growth of their hair. Soaping of the hair is seldom resorted to owing to the belief that soaping will cause growth of grey hair. The indigenous method of taking care of the hair is by washing it regularly, say once or twice a week, with the milky liquid obtained by washing uncooked rice in it. As regards hair style, there is little difference between married and unmarried girls.

Food and Drink

The Kabuis are non-vegetarians. They take meat and fish in addition to vegetables and pulses. Their staple food is rice. Meat and fish are costlier than pulses and vegetables, and hence the majority of the households cannot afford to take meat and fish daily.

Rice-beer is indispensable on all important ceremonial occasions, and drinking of rice-beer called "zou" in Kabui is not customarily prohibited. Smoking of cigarettes and *bidis* is very popular among the Kabuis. They also smoke in a *hukkah* but it is usually restricted to old folks. Tea is another very popular drink of the entire urban Kabui population.

Household Equipments

As regards household equipments mention may be made of utensils, furnitures, and bicycles. The utensils are purchased from the market and these are more or less similar to those of the Meiteis. For serving cooked food, bell-metal and aluminium utensils are popular, while for cooking food, brass, aluminium and earthen pots are used. In addition to metal utensils, earthen pots are also used for storing water, uncooked rice, and rice-beer. Crockeries have also become popular with them and these are used mainly for serving tea.

Almost every household possesses a wooden chair and a wooden chest or almirah for keeping valuable articles. These furnitures are purchased from any carpenter of Imphal. The cheapest and most popular conveyance throughout Manipur is the bicycle. Nowadays, many households are found to possess bicycles, and it is rare to find a man, excepting old folks and women, who does not know cycling. School and college going girls and even small boys of ten or twelve years old know cycling nowadays.

Environmental Sanitation

Though all the Kabui settlement areas under the present study are within the municipal area of Imphal town, many of the civic amenities are absent in these localities. Daily or regular cleaning of these localities has not been done by the Municipality. The inhabitants themselves look after proper sanitation of their environments. Sweeping of the interior of the house and the verandah is done with a soft broom by the women once or twice daily, while the menfolk keep the courtyards and the close environs of their houses clean by sweeping daily with a hard broom. Every household has a private latrine, and well-to-do households have even installed septic latrines. Those who cannot afford to have septic latrines have the "open-type" latrines, and pigs which are reared by many households in all the Kabui settlement areas do the "scavenging."

The Kabuis of Imphal are very neat and clean physically. Use of soaps and detergents for washing their bodies and clothes is not a new thing. Men and women of younger generation are found using paste and brush for cleaning the teeth while older folks who do not prefer brush and paste are seen using small splits of bamboo instead. Cleaning of household

utensils like dishes, cups and pots is done by the womenfolk daily. Scouring the utensils with ash, paddy husk and water is usually done for removing dirt and grease from the utensils.

Diseases and Treatment

People have faith in both modern and traditional modes of curing diseases and sickness. Nowadays, for the treatment of minor ailments and less serious cases people may consult local physicians whose mode of treatment consists of massaging, administering of herbal medicines and sacrificing of fowl. The people may also go to a pharmacy of the town for getting medicines. In serious cases of sickness the ailing person is either taken to the Government Civil Hospital or a doctor is called at home for treatment.

Language and Education

The ancestral language and mother-tongue of the Kabuis throughout Manipur is Kabui whose speakers according to the Census of 1961 comprise 14,613 males and 14,605 females. G. E. Grierson in his classification of Indian languages put Kabui under the Naga group which is a branch of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family. Meitei or Manipuri is the most important second language of the Kabuis of Imphal and it is spoken by young and old alike and understood thoroughly by them. The Kabuis do not have written scripts of their own, yet a number of printed books in Kabui language can be seen, and they have adopted, like the Meiteis, the modern Bengali scripts. They speak in Hindi or English to outsiders who do not understand Kabui or Meitei. Though English is known to only the educated persons, imperfect Hindi is known more or less to even the illiterate ones.

According to the Census of 1961, the number of literate Kabuis in the urban area of Imphal is 723 males and 307 females, and their percentages are approximately 31.0 and 13.1 respectively of the total urban Kabui population. Separate figures for each of the settlement areas are not available.

Further details of educational standards of the urban Kabui population have been furnished in a tabular form below :—

Area	Educational Standard	Number of Persons	
		Males	Females
1	2	3	4
IMPHAL	Illiterate	506	799
	Literate without Educational standard	426	237
	Primary and junior basic level	251	63
	Matriculation or Higher Secondary	27	2
	Technical diploma not equal to degree	—	2
	Non-technical diploma not equal to degree	10	2
	University degree or post-graduate degree	9	—
	Technical degree/diploma	—	1

The Kabuis of Imphal are conscious of the importance of modern education, and this has been evinced by the existence of at least one primary school in each settlement area under survey except Moirangkhom. As for this settlement area, the school is situated quite close to it. It is not rare to find B.A.s and M.A.s, not to speak of matriculates, among the Kabuis of Imphal.

The number of matriculates and university degree holders, at the time of Survey, in all the settlement areas under study has been furnished below. It may be seen that so far not a single Kabui girl has become a graduate at the time of investigation. This partly shows their attitude, though it has undergone considerable change nowadays, towards female education.

Number of persons who have passed the following examinations

Kabui settlement areas	M.A.		B.A.		B.S.C.		M.B.B.S.		Matriculation/HSLC	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Kakhulong	1	—	3	—	—	—	1	—	10	4
Keisamthong	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	8	3
Majorkhul	3	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	11	1
Minuthong	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	2	—
Moirangkhom	—	—	—	N	I	L	—	—	—	—
Thangmeiband	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	4	—

Economic Life

According to the 1961 Census, the distribution of the Kabui working force by industrial categories is as follows :—

TABLE 2

Showing industrial classification of workers among the Kabuis of Imphal

Occupation	Males	Females	Total
Cultivation	22	..	22
Household industry	36	112	148
Manufacture other than household industry	6	1	7
Construction	2	..	2
Trade and commerce	33	15	48
Transport	17	..	17
Other Services	235	25	260
TOTAL	351	153	504

It will be seen from the above table that the total working population consists of 351 males and 153 females. The non-working population, therefore, consists of 878 males and 953 females, and they outnumber workers. The population of non-working males is more than double of the working males, while the number of non-working females is more than three times the number of working females. Only 504 persons consisting of 351 males and 153 females are found to be workers, and they constitute only about 21.6% of the total population. Compared with male workers, female workers are fairly small in number.

There are only 153 female workers out of 1,106 females while the number of male workers is 351 out of 1,229 males. Hence, about 28.5% of the male population and about 13.8% of the female population constitute the working population. The present inhabitants who are the descendants of the early settlers, do not have specific occupations of their own. Nowadays, all the inhabitants particularly the menfolk are found to be engaged in different types of occupation ranging from professorship to sweeping the streets.

LIFE CYCLE

Birth

It is the natural desire of parents to have bonny and healthy child. In order to have handsome baby, many pregnant woman, during the fifth month of pregnancy, offer prayer to god by engaging a priest known as *muh* who sacrifices a cock in honour of the god and also prays on behalf of the pregnant woman.

The Kabuis of Imphal do not have elaborate prenatal practices. So far as normal discharge of household chores is concerned, there is little restriction in respect of the pregnant woman. Rounding of paddy at the mortar with a pestle is considered a good exercise of the pregnant woman. As regards restriction on diet, bananas and eggs are normally avoided by the pregnant woman. It is considered desirable for a pregnant woman not to attend on sick and ailing members of the household though there is no customary restrictions on her for looking after the sick members of the household.

When the pregnant woman begins to feel labour pain arrangements for delivery are made as quickly as possible. The household may either engage a local *dai* or a trained nurse according to convenience. Living in the urban area, one can easily get medical facilities if necessary.

The delivery of the child takes place on a mat near the fire-place inside the house. The sleeping bed is usually avoided in order to spare the mattress and linens from being soiled. As soon as the child is born, the navel cord is cut preferably with a sharpened piece of bamboo. Each wrist of the newly born baby is loosely tied with a black thread which is considered as a sign of human being. The after-birth is buried near the mother's bed and close to the wall. Before the burial, the after-birth is pricked with a pointed knife by way of destroying it. It is then buried at least one foot deep. Shallow-burial, i.e. burying the after-birth only five or six inches deep is considered to be the cause of regular or frequent vomiting of the newly born child. After the delivery, the mother will remain inside the house for five days. After that, the period of confinement is over and she is allowed to come out of the house. The child is fed on its mother's breasts for quite a long time, and weaning of the child is gradually done when the child attains its second or third year of age. When the child is three months old and develops some biting habit, the food-taking ceremony known as *nasammei* which is a short ceremony, is performed on any auspicious day. All kinds of food other than mother's milk is usually not given to the child until *nasammei* is performed. On this day of *nasammi*, a choice-food, say a beautiful bird, is cooked and the child is fed with it.

There is no name-giving ceremony. A child is normally addressed with any term of endearment. There is no definite period or time when a child is given a personal name by his parents or grandparents or any other member of the family. Another interesting phenomenon so far as personal names are concerned is that nowadays it has become common among young men and women to adopt names usually found among the Meiteis. It is also not rare to find a person having two names—a Kabui name and a Meitei name—being known by both.

Ear-piercing Ceremony

The Kabuis call this ceremony *Nanu*, which is performed for one day in the Manipuri month of Lamda (March-April) in every Kabui settlement area. The main purpose of this ceremony is to pierce the ear lobes of every child born during that year. The piercing of the ear is done by an elderly person with a needle and thread. The thread is tied to make a ring and it is left there. This ceremony of *Nanu* is performed in the following manner. Some old women go to a nearby pond or river in the early hour of the morning to fetch water. For filling up water, *tumbas* (dry rind of gourd) are taken. In addition to the *tumbas*, a *dao* and a lance are also taken. When they return they stop in front of the house of every child whose ears are to be pierced on that day. Two old women from the group will enter the house and give some water for washing the face of the child. If the child happens to be a boy, one of the women will carry a lance with her while entering into the house. If the child is a girl a *dao* is taken inside the house. After this, the families of the children for whom the ceremony is performed, will bring cooked food of various preparations, and indigenous salt-cakes and rice-beer to the place where

the old women assemble. The preparations are consumed by the village elders. The headman of the settlement area will bless the children and pray for their welfare. When the prayer of the headman is over, an elderly person performs the ear-piercing of the children. In order to distract the attention of the children so that they may not cry, old boys and girls make shouts and noises. The day of *Nanu* is a day of rejoicing and after the ear-piercing is over, old men and women sing and dance in front of the houses of those children for whom the day is a special one.

Sex Life and Marriage

Premarital or extra-marital sex relation is reported to be considered a social anathema.

Child-marriage is not practised by the Kabuis of Imphal. A girl is seldom married before her attaining the age of 15 years. In other words, 15 years of age is considered the desirable minimum age at which a girl may be married. Similarly, the minimum marriageable age of a boy is 20 years. However, in actual practice, the marriageable age is reported to be higher due to many factors. Some of the important factors which are responsible for the trend of higher marriageable age are as follows. Firstly, living in urban area, the field of selecting a bride or a groom becomes wider, and there is a tendency among parents to avoid hasty engagements in the hope of getting more suitable partners for their children. Secondly, many boys and girls are students and they remain unmarried until at least they complete their high school education. Thirdly, economic condition is an important factor responsible for late marriage, because many families are not in favour of marriage of their boys until they are capable of earning regular income.

It has been stated already that the Kabuis are divided into a number of clans namely Kamei, Golmei, Gangmei and Longmei. Each clan is an exogamous unit and a man cannot marry a woman if she belongs to the same clan. A man cannot marry his father's brother's daughter or mother's sister's daughter, because parallel cousins are regarded as brothers and sisters, and marriage with any of them is unthinkable. However, marriage with mother's brother's daughter is allowed and preferred. When the parents of a boy are in search of a bride for their son, boy's mother will first ask for the hands of her brother's daughter, if any, to become her son's wife before looking for other girls. It is also customarily obligatory on the part of a man to offer his daughter in marriage to the son of his sister. Marriage with father's sister's daughter is not permissible.

Widow remarriage is permissible by custom but in actual practice, it is a matter of personal inclination, and the circumstances leading to widow remarriage may differ from person to person. As regards types of marriage, monogamy is the general practice, though a few instances of polygyny take place. There is no tradition among the Kabuis that polyandry was ever practised by them in the past.

Seleceion of spouse

Nowadays, much importance is given to family background and the moral character of the girl or the boy. Economic condition, educational qualification, physical beauty, etc., are also other determining factors while selecting a girl or a boy.

Modes of Acquiring Mate

There are two modes of acquiring mates—these are by negotiation and by elopement. As regards marriage by negotiation, the initiative is taken by the parents of the boy, and very rarely by the parents of the girl. If the boy and the girl to be engaged belong to the same locality some of the preliminary formalities associated with negotiation may be conveniently relaxed. But if the boy and the girl are from different localities, the general procedures are as follows. Some elderly women from the boy's side will go to the girl's house taking with them an iron hoe which is a symbol of proposal. The women will talk to the parents of the girl on behalf of the boy's family. After this, until the marriage proposal has been finalised, two males who act as go-between will go to the house of the girl more than once. Such a person is known as *naothanpaos*. The two *naothanpaos* from the boy's place will first contact two *naothanpaos* from the girl's place, and the four *naothanpaos* will meet the parents or guardians of the girl and talk with them. When the parents of the girl give their consent, further discussions follow regarding *mankat* or bride-price.

Terms of Settlement

The Kabuis did not have any written literature regarding customary details on marriage, funeral, festivals, etc. Naturally the people have experienced inconveniences when differences of opinions arise among them. It is reported that in order to avoid some of the inconveniences as far as possible, several elders from a number of Kabui settlement areas in the valley of Manipur formed themselves into an association known as the Kabui Naga Association, and in February 1947, these elders met at Keisamthong and discussed a number of subjects including *mankat*. According to the decisions of the Association which gives due respect to the custom and traditional mores of the Kabuis, the *mankat* for a girl will consist of a pair of iron hoes, a cloth for the girl's father, two *daos*, two spears, two dishes, a necklace, a pair of buffaloes, four *tadiu* (bangle) and four *munthang* (armlet). In place of these sundry articles, an amount of Rs. 125 plus a pair of iron hoes and a cloth for the girl's father may also be given as *mankat*. It is reported that the decisions of the Association have been adopted to a great extent by almost all the Kabuis of Imphal town, though cases are not rare where the parents of the girl refuse to accept monetary payment as they consider it undesirable. Acceptance of money is thus a matter of individual inclination. The *mankat* for a widow or a divorcee is reported to consist of a pair of iron hoes, one cloth for the woman's father, and half the amount of money paid for the girl.

Marriage Ceremony

The marriage ceremony is held at the house of the boy. Nowadays marriage ceremony is always associat-

ed with pomp and gaiety. The services of band-party have become almost unavoidable, not as a part of the ritual as traditionally conceived but as an order of the day. When the bride's party arrives at the boy's place the bride is lightly embraced by the mother of the boy and she is taken inside the house. While entering the house, the bride is asked to step over the threshold of the door with her right leg. Inside the house, the bride and the groom are seated on the edge of a bed or on some high seat, while their feet are on the floor. The marriage ceremony is performed by a priest known as *Muh* in local terminology. The solemnising part of the ceremony is called *meirakmei* (*yenkhongtamba*)* which involves chanting of the marriage hymn and sacrifice of a cock after reciting the hymn. While sacrificing the cock, a plantain leaf is spread near the feet of the bride and the groom, and upon the leaf are placed one iron hoe and a piece of ginger. The main objective of *yenkhongtamba* ceremony is to examine the position of the legs of the sacrificed cock. The priest minutely examines the position of the legs of the dead cock. This ceremony is also more or less an act of divination, and the priest declares whether the marriage will last long or whether the couple will have many children, and so on. No Kabui marriage is complete without performing *meirakmei* ceremony.

On the fifth day after the marriage, the parents of the bride bring cooked food for their daughter. The quantity is usually large enough for distribution among all the members of the household. This function is called *Pukpaoba*.

Bridal Gifts

There is no limit to bridal gifts from the parents. Rich parents give as many household articles as they can, and the poor parents will also do their best to give sufficient quantities of articles to their daughter, and such articles usually consist of clothes, utensils, ornaments, weavingloom, and such other articles which are normally necessary for daily use at home. No parents will marry off their daughter without giving such presents to her. Mention had been made earlier about *mankat* or the bride-price. Most of the interviewees are of the opinion that receiving *mankat* from the boy's family, does not mean that the girl is actually sold by her parents. If the parents of the girl receive some cash or kind from the family of the boy at the time of negotiating the marriage, they give articles as bridal gifts worth several times the value of cash or kind received from the boy's family. Hence, payment of *mankat*, seems to be more a symbol of alliance, than of economic transaction.

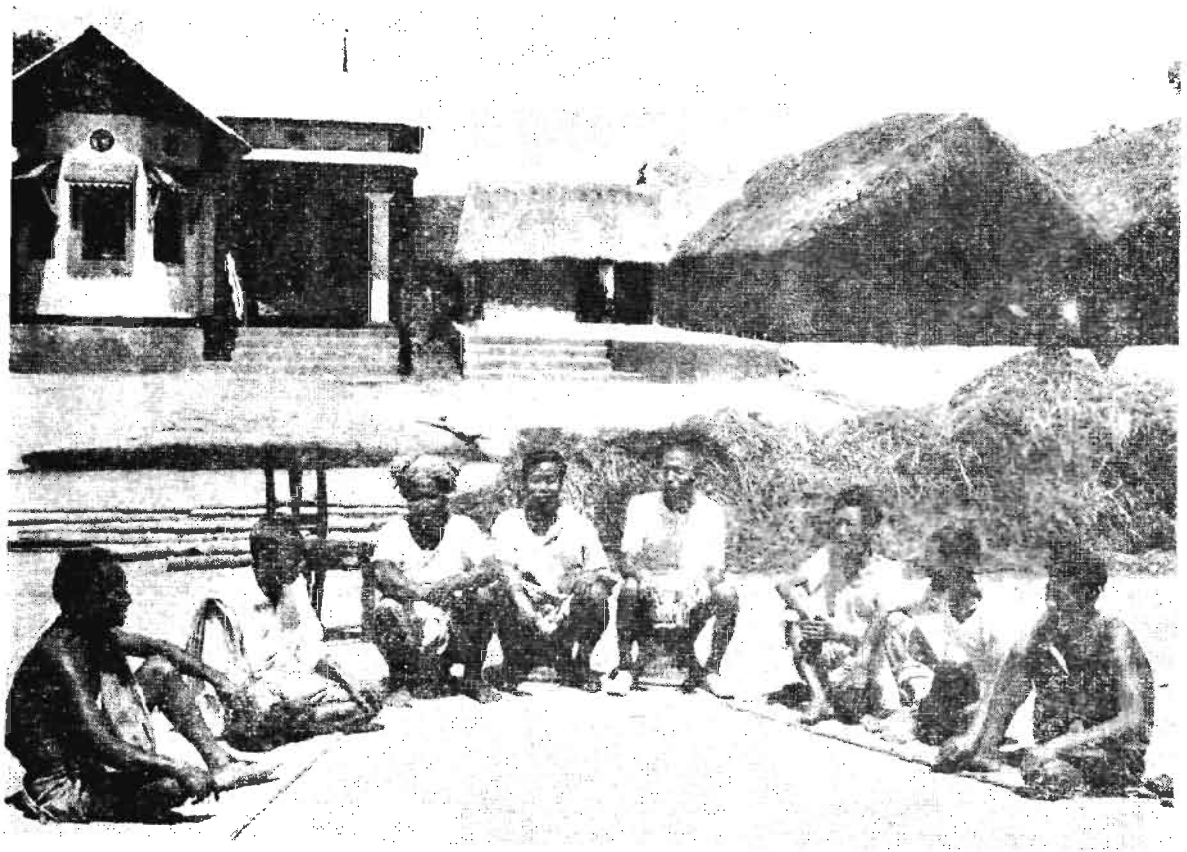
Elopement

Elopement is also another mode of acquiring a mate. When a girl elopes with a boy, the ceremony of *yenkhongtamba* must also be performed so that the boy and the girl be recognised as husband and wife. Payment of *mankat* is not strictly enforced, but it is always considered fair on the part of the boy to give the *mankat* by way of honouring the customary practice.

*The marriage hymn is given in Appendix I.



MINCTHONG - Fond of fun and good life, men and women dance in one of their festivals.



KEISAMTHONG—A group of elders discussing matters concerning their settlement area.

Religion

The Kabuis of Imphal are believers in their ancient religion which some educated persons among them call as Kabuism. At the time of investigation, no household has reported to have accepted any other faith except the traditional one.

The Kabui pantheon is a very elaborate one. Under a broad classification, the deities of the Kabuis who are closely associated with the cultural life of the people may be grouped into three categories—the supreme deity, the village deity, and the household deity. The supreme deity of the Kabuis is called Lagang (Ragang). He is considered the most powerful god having the power to create or destroy both the animate and inanimate objects. The village deities are known as Bambus who are propitiated in order to bring peace and prosperity within the settlement areas. The household or ancestral deity of the Kabuis is called Kairao. But most of the households are found to have acknowledged Sanamahi—the household deity of the Meiteis, as also their household deity, and as the Meiteis do, a rear corner of the house is usually reserved as the seat of this deity by many Kabui households. The acceptance of the Meitei deity Sanamahi by the Kabuis living in the urban areas of Imphal as their own is an example, among others, of the close cultural relation between the Meiteis and the Kabuis of Imphal. Besides the above three categories of deities, there are also a number of deities and godlings who are considered to be in-charge of natural objects and responsible for physical phenomena.*

Leisure and Recreation

Playing, gossiping and meeting friends are among the popular forms of leisure-time activities of the inhabitants. Practically there is no seasonal variation so far as leisure-time activities are concerned. It is quite natural that children who have little burden of domestic works to do spend most of their time in play. They either play within their settlement areas or at any open place or *maidan* close to their settlement areas. Grown-up boys are found spending their leisure-time by playing games of volley-ball, badminton, etc., within their own settlement areas. Card-playing has also become a popular form of recreational activity. As far as elderly persons, playing is out of the question. They, on the contrary, spend their leisure-time by playing games of volley-ball sitting or by telling stories to the kids or by simply sleeping. Among the womenfolk, gossiping and picking lice from one another's head, are popular forms of spending the leisure-time. By and large, another popular and expensive form of spending the leisure-time is to go to a movie.

Inter-community Relationship

Living in the urban area and coming in constant contact with persons from different communities, the Kabuis of Imphal are by no means an isolated community. The Kabuis of Imphal do not engage Brah-

min priests in their religious and ceremonial functions, but in day-to-day life they interact with various communities.

The concept of pollution by touch or proximity does not practically exist. Everyday several caste Hindus come in physical contact with the Kabuis at a number of places—at home or the market-place, inside the bus, cinema halls, etc. On the occasion of Meitei Hindu festivals like the Rath Yatra and Cheiraoba, the Kabuis join the Hindu congregation mainly as spectators.

The Kabuis are one of the Scheduled Tribes of Manipur who have a distinct social entity of their own and they do not fall within the fold of caste hierarchy of the Hindus. However, it may be mentioned here that as a result of their closer contact with the Hindus, cordial relationship based on mutual respect, understanding and friendliness has developed between the two. It has become commonplace for a Hindu to receive drinks and eatables from his Kabui friend and vice versa though orthodox views of the Hindus are still against this. One of the most significant events concerning inter-community relationship took place sometime by the end of 1969 in Majorkhul when the newly appointed traditional Headman offered a feast in which many Hindu guests joined and dined with the Kabuis. This incident marked a great leap towards the goal to cultural integration between the Kabuis of Imphal and their Hindu neighbours.

Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership

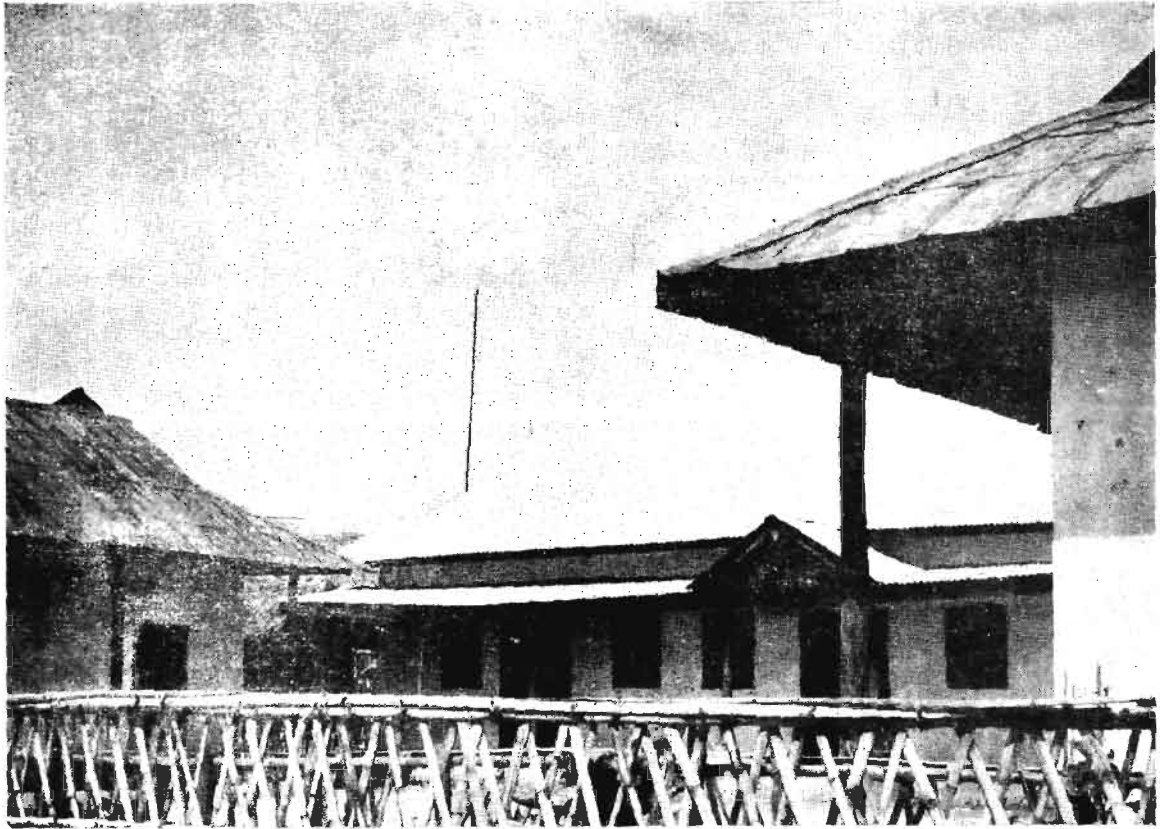
Every Kabui settlement area within Imphal is found to respect the traditional norms and mores concerning communal life. The elders have considerable influence upon the day-to-day social activities of the inhabitants within each settlement area.

In order to look after the propagation of customary practices and ancient traditions, every Kabui settlement area has a headman who acts as the titular head without receiving any remuneration but respect. He is assisted by other elders led by subordinate office bearers of whom mention may be made of *Luplakpa* and *Khunbu*. As a matter of tradition, the headmanship goes to an elder from the Kamei clan, and only in the absence of a suitable man possessing the requisite quality and rich knowledge of ancient customs and traditions, the headmanship may go to a person from other clans. Similarly, *Luplakpa* and *Khunbu* normally belong to the Golmei clan.

Social Reform and Welfare

Till the first quarter of the present century, the strict and regimented nature of customary practices of the Kabuis remained more or less unchanged. Sometime in the year 1934 an association of the Kabuis known as the Kabui Samiti came into existence in which almost all the headmen and elders of Kabui villages in the valley and the hills of Manipur were involved. There was no written constitution of the Samiti. It was the intention of the Samiti to bring

*In the marriage hymn given in Appendix I, Ragang and Bisnu (Vishnu) have been mentioned. According to Kabui tradition, both are considered as brothers. It is still an enigma to a number of informants as to the inclusion of Bisnu as a god of the Kabui pantheon.



KEISAMTHONG—The School buildings.

about a number of change in customary practices which had become extremely inconvenient to the people and unsuitable to their environment. Customs do not change overnight, and the ground prepared by the Samiti was not lost sight of. Committees and associations, though short-lived, sprang up at later stages with similar intentions of the Samiti in bringing about some reforms in the customary practices. Mention may be made of the Kabui Young Working Committee of 1945, Kabui Naga Association of 1946 and Manipur Zeliangruong Union of 1947, and the last one is still found functioning. However, the changes in customary practices began to have taken place under the pioneering zeal of Kabui Samiti, and the associations which sprang up subsequently gave support to the steps taken by the Samiti. Some of the major reforms are in the following fields.

Mankat : In the past the payment of *mankat* or bride-price at the time of marriage was very much complex and costly. Excepting a few basic articles which are indispensable, other articles have been avoided by paying a fixed sum of money instead.

Taboo : Kabui custom was full of *neimei*, i.e., taboos. When a woman died at child-birth, *neimei* was observed for 3 months and the house wherein the delivery took place had to be destroyed. Now, with the introduction of the reforms, *neimei* is observed for 5 days only and the house need not be destroyed. Similarly when a kite or a dog sat on the roof of a house, *neimei* was observed. Such practices have now been given up. Previously, when a death took place or a major festival like Gan-Ngai was observed, *langthingmei* (which means closure of the entrances of the settlement area, thereby allowing none to cross the gate from within or from outside), lasted for at least one full day, but nowadays *langthingmei* lasts for about an hour or so.

Festivals : The Kabuis had almost a festival for every month. The celebration of these festivals in the urban area has been felt inconvenient. Therefore, with the exception of a few major festivals, other minor festivals are not now celebrated. In the celebration of the festivals, old traditional costume has been revived.

Dormitory system : One of the imperatives of dormitory system is that young boys and girls are compelled to sleep in the dormitory at night. In the urban area where many of the boys and girls are students, it has become highly inconvenient if the boys and girls spend the night in the dormitory. Hence, nowadays boys and girls are no longer required to sleep in the dormitory.

Occupation : Since the British days, the Kabuis of Imphal had been engaged in manual works like sweeping the streets and similar other works which are considered degrading by the caste Hindus. It is reported that some have already given up such occupations, and the elite groups among the Kabuis are also making efforts to see that such lowly occupations are given up by their fellow-men.

Religious practices : The Kabuis of Imphal being close neighbours of the Hindu Meiteis, used to observe till recently a number of religious practices of the Meiteis at least in form if not in content. A survival of this practice is found among the Kabui inhabitants of Thangmeiband, who celebrate Durga Puja even to this day. The present tendency however is to forsake all the customs which were adopted from outside under the influence of Hinduism.

Of all the welfare activities, the establishment of schools may be considered to be one of the most important. Mention had been made earlier about the schools in the settlement areas of the Kabuis of Imphal. Another equally important welfare agency is the *Paikai* which is the traditional body of authority found in every settlement area. The headman and a number of responsible elders are the members of the *Paikai*; their responsibility is to look after the general welfare of the settlement as well as to decide disputes and differences of socio-religious nature among the inhabitants. Nowadays, almost in all the settlement areas, Youth Clubs and Women Societies have been established. The former institution looks after the general welfare of the youths, though its field of interest is generally confined to literary and sports activities. The Women Societies on the other hand are playing an important role in encouraging, reviving on a selective manner and modernising the traditional crafts of the Kabuis. They are also imparting new skills in knitting, embroidery and related fields.

In their locality, the activities of the various organisations of the young men and women reflect a search for a new horizon—a journey from the shore of tradition, but not by discarding it. It is the spirit of Columbus in search of a new path to enrich the old land. Significantly, sometime back the Kabui youngmen of Imphal brought out a journal and named it "New Horizon". It was short-lived. But it was followed by another "New Horizon". It tried to reinterpret the old traditions of the community in modern terms; and it symbolised the urge of the rising generation to link the vision of their little community to the wisdom of the universal man.

APPENDIX I

THE MARRIAGE HYMN OF THE KABUIS AND
ITS FREE RENDERING INTO ENGLISH

Thei-ee-tei, thei namsudisukho tuitei. Thei namsu disuthiki, champanthurei, chamgaithurei, thuta phukho tuitei, champanthurei, chamgaithurei, duiba phengna phukeirakho champanthurei, chamgaithurei duiba phengna phukeiki, nou makge na makge tuitei. Hei! Kummitei thuitei phukho tuitei? Champanthurei, chamgaithurei, duipi phengna phugandarakho tuitei. Hei! champanthurei, chamgaithurei, duipi phengna phuganki, champanthurei, chamgaithurei kummei lu (mention the name of the girl and her clan) kapi duithana kasam paobanna dingbamkhonnitei. Champanthurei, chamgaithurei nou ko naithei na ko naithe tuitei.

Gaithei, champanthurei, chamgaithurei tuitei. Thou khamcho tuitei? Meikham namme tuitei. Heikum-mitei Atou Kummei pu (mention the name of the boy and his clan) khamkhangthe tuitei. Champanthurei, chamgaithurei nou phang na phangna kakai karao thaina ganglungbamthekei katan tanthaimak, karoi loithaimak, kaban pam changu dingbam.

Hei! Champanthurei, chamgaithurei, thuta thankho tuitei? Champanthurei, chamgaithurei Dansanmeikho thankho tuitei. Hei! Dansanmeikho tatna thaotthanki, Dansanmeirui dipuitung, "Ai thaimakge tuitei. Pub-meikhou thanno" tuitei.

Champanthurei, chamgaithurei, Apou Ragang Mhu Chara Khandimeirui dipuitung, "Hei! Hao manseinana Ai thaimakna thou thainicho" tuitei. "Hao manseinana Nau phang Na phangna kakai karao thaina ganglungbamthekei katan tanthaimak karoi loithaimak, kaban pam changu bammeitei, Haipou Ragang Meiraksuna Loidu Kashep phannoumeirui Ragang meirak suna lakkeiouteou. Hei! Kumtitei katan tanthaoputei goirumai karaikum, tareng kanning-kum taithei bangthaimaipui su kakaingang meingang phang, kadong det meigoimeipui suna Ragang geng geng, Bisnu geng geng suna panti nungsingna lung-punge" tuitei. Aseimu Haipou Ragang Mhu Chara Khandimejpu rui dinloumei lat tithina meikai ganneisunina kaphangsina tamdurakhe. Thingkhon gainung meinguiroi lamtoukum dungdengkarok lokna bamkadutho. Kanami gouna gana kum kinkubamkadutho.

(English translation)

Long long ago, it was proposed to start a family; they said, O! friends, where shall we search for the bride? O! friends, let us search downstream. O! friends, downstream is searched; there is no bride.

* Dansanmei is god's oracle.

** Pubumei is higher oracle.

*** He is the priest of the god Ragang. Sometimes, he is regarded as the god himself.

† A kind of bird often found in pairs and seldom alone.

O! where shall we search then?

O! friends, let us search upstream.

O! friends, (mention the name of the girl and her clan) is found standing drying her long hair over a bamboo stand.

O! friends, the bride is found.

Well friends, whose betrothed is she?

O! friends, she is not betrothed.

Then she will be betrothed to (mention the name of the boy and his clan).

O! friends, a bride is found.

She is living in a family, yet she does not know how to perform her household duties.

She is standing always with folded arms and dozing.

O! friends, whom shall we consult?

O! friends, let us consult Dansanmei.*

Dansanmei is consulted; he says, "I do not know; consult Pubumei."**

O! friends, Pubumei is consulted. He says, "O! man, I do not know. Consult Ragang Mhu Chara Khandi."***

O! friends, Haipou Ragang Mhu Chara Khandi says, "O! man, if I do not know, who will know? O! man, if a wife living in a family does not know how to perform her household duties and is always standing with folded arms and dozing, perform the Mairamei ceremony by sacrificing a handsome cock in the name of God. Then, she will enthusiastically work like the smart cow with tail raised, like the spinning wheel. She will be a sociable, respectable rich lady whose granary is always full. Like the matrimonial relation between the house of Ragang and that of Bisnu, they will live a long and happy life."

Today, as instructed by Haipou Ragang Mhu Chara Khandi, this couple will not be separated even by an axe. Like the mangui† in the beautiful groves, they will remain close to one another and have innumerable children like the seeds of toads and crabs.

APPENDIX II

FRAMEWORK FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

I. Name, Identity, Origin and History

1. Name; Synonym; sub-caste/sub-tribe as in President's Order and in other published sources such as Census Reports, Monographs, etc., grouping with other castes and tribes during various Censuses. Affinity with other castes and tribes according to recognised authorities.
2. Etymological significance of the name; names by which the community is referred to by (a) others and (b) itself.
3. Identification of the community by occupation or any other way of life.
4. Myths and legends connected with the origin and history of the community and its segments; historical references and popular beliefs about history and migration of the community.

II. Distribution and Population Trend

1. Area where found; population and concentration in the State and outside; physical aspects of the areas of concentration.
2. Numerical strength in 1961 and population variations during 1901-1961; sex ratio; age-groups and rural-urban distribution in 1961.

III. Physical Characteristics

Racial Stock; appearance and affinity with other known communities.

IV. Family, Clan, Kinship and other Analogous Divisions

1. Family, size (observed and published), Types, residence after marriage, descent, lineage and its economic and religious function and inheritance.
2. Clan/gotra and sub-clans; names, etymological meaning, clustering of clans, belief and mythology about origin, status among clans, clan and regulation of marriage (preference and prohibition), occupation and clan, clan and rituals, clan and food restrictions, prescriptions, etc.
3. Others : Phratry, Dual organisation, like moieties, etc., as in 2 above.

V. Dwelling, Dress, Food Ornaments and other Material Objects Distinctive of the Community

1. Settlement : Village site, location, settlement pattern (agglomerated, nucleated, dispersed, sprinkled, isolated, amorphous, star-shaped, horse-shoe-shaped, linear, rectangular, circular or ring-shaped, etc.) and variations; regional pattern *vis-a-vis* pattern of the community.
2. Neighbourhood pattern on the basis of religion, caste (Caste Hindus, untouchables) and tribes, etc., with segregations, if any, and the basis thereof.
3. Dwelling unit : compound, entrance, source of water, the use of different parts of the house

(latrine, cattle shed, isolation huts, etc.); shape (square, round, irregular, etc.); storeys; nature of floor, plinth; wall; roofing, thatching; ventilations and doorsill materials used; decorations and embellishments; temporary structures.

4. Dress including head gear and foot wear used ordinarily, on ceremonial occasions and special occasions; sex-wise and according to majority or minority; dress of priests and office bearers; variations.
5. Ornaments : use; materials used; from where obtained; variations according to sex and age.
6. Personal decoration : tattooing; mutilation (chapping of teeth, etc.); hair cutting; how done, purpose, attitude and variation according to sex and age.
7. Food and drink : Materials (staple and other), prescriptions and prohibitions, fuel, utensils and mode of preparation; practices connected with serving and taking of food; preservation of food rituals, if any.
8. Equipments connected with economic pursuits, religion and ritual; how procured, material used, construction and purpose.
9. Other household equipments. As above.
10. Equipments connected with recording of time, space and weight and their methods of use : As above.

VI. Environmental Sanitation, Hygienic Habits, Disease and Treatment

1. Environmental sanitation, settlement, disposal of night soil, garbage, etc.
2. Hygienic habit : cleanliness of body, teeth, dress, houses, utensils, etc.
3. Diseases : Incidence; local names; interpretation of the causes; symptoms; diagnosis and cure—persons and methods involved.
4. Modern systems of medicine and attitude of the community towards it.

VII. Language and Education

1. Ancestral Language : Classification according to Grierson, persistence of ancestral language and literature.
2. Mother tongue : Classification according to Grierson; bilingualism and multilingualism; regional language.
3. Information collected during 1961 Census on language and literature.
4. Education and literacy : Traditional and modern attitude, information collected during 1961 Census—literacy and level of education.

VIII. Economic Life

1. Economic resources : Land, community land, individual ownership and types of land possessed and land utilized.

2. Forest wealth : Flora and fauna; nature and extent of right in the forest; forest utilization.
3. Fishery, Livestock and others.
4. Working force : Sex-wise urban and rural variations and comparison of the same with the region.
5. Non-workers.
6. Industrial classifications : Details as collected in the field and comparison with that of the 1961 Census figures, traditional occupation and changes in the pattern; main and subsidiary occupations.
7. Forced labour, bonded labour, patron-client relationship (jajmani), mode of payment.
8. Seasonal migration connected with occupation recruitment, formation of working groups.
9. Nomadic movement : Cycle and occupational pattern.
10. Shifting cultivation : Method, implements and equipments, produce, participation, cycle of rotation, measure to regulate shifting cultivation and its impact.
11. Terrace cultivation : As above.
12. Income and expenditure : Sources of income, extent, expenditure on food, clothing, house, education, social functions and others.
13. Other aspects of economic life.

IX. Life Cycle

A. BIRTH

1. Beliefs and practices connected with conception, barrenness, still birth, miscarriage, abortion, child death, regulation of sex, etc.
2. Prenatal and natal practices : Residence, diet, work, taboos, etc., delivery place, assistance, equipments used in delivery, position during delivery, severance of umbilical cord (who does and how done), disposal of placenta.
3. Postnatal practices : Confinement and segregation, ceremonial pollution, diet for mother and child, rituals.
4. Protection and care of child and training.
5. Attitude towards birth of child, preference about sex, preference about number, segregation of sex, etc.

B. INITIATION

1. Initiation ceremony, descriptions.
2. Premarital sex relations within the community, outside the community, sanctions and taboos.

C. MARRIAGE

1. Age at marriage for both sex; prohibited degrees of relationship, preferences, widow re-marriage (preferences and taboos).

2. Civil status and social status.
3. Types of marriage : Monogamy, polygamy (polyandry and polygyny).
4. Selection of spouse : Qualities valued (for bride and groom) mode of selection, procedure.
5. Modes of acquiring mate : By negotiation, force, intrusion, elopement, etc.
6. Terms of settlement : Payment of bride-price, dowry service, exchange, adoption, etc.
7. Ceremonies connected with marriage : Details including who presides over the marriage and services of functional castes.
8. Statistical data as per 1961 Census.
9. Divorce : Reasons and procedure.

D. DEATH

1. Concept about death, measures to ensure future well being of the soul, measures to avert harm by the spirits.
2. Methods of disposal : Burial, cremation, exposure, floating on water, etc.
3. Preparation for disposal of dead, informing friend and relatives, treatment of the dead body digging of pit, etc. for disposal; how carried, who carry, who accompany, place of disposal, methods of disposal, norms and taboos.
4. Ceremonies connected with disposal.
5. Death rites : Details.
6. Monuments : Tombs, megaliths, etc.
7. Pollution : duration, restrictions in work, food, dress, shaving, hair cropping, sex life etc.; removal of pollution.
8. Mourning : mourners and duration.

X. Religion

1. Deities : supreme deity, benevolent deities, malevolent spirits, presiding deities of village and other aspects of life including occupation, clans, gotras, etc.
2. Place of the deities in the regional pattern and Brahmanical and other traditions.
3. Rituals and concepts associated with the pantheon.
4. Spots associated with the deities, pilgrim centres and methods of worship.
5. Religious functionaries.
6. Calendar of festivals and their observance.
7. Concept of soul, hell, heaven, rebirth, transmigration of soul, etc.
8. Sects and denominations : Name, distribution, beliefs and practices, etc.