

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF SURVEY ON THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HRANGKHOL TRIBE

Since the Hrangkhols are scholarly obscure tribes to the academic world, it is necessary to begin with a study of their history and cultural heritage in a brief survey.

A. THE HRANGKHOLS

The Hrangkhols are one of the hill tribes inhabiting in North East India. The word "Hrangkhol" is variously spelled by different writers as "Rangkol", "Rhangkol", "Rangkhol", "Rongkhol", "Rangkhal", "Rankhal", or, "Hrangkel", "Hrangkul", "Hrangchul", "Hrangkol", "Hrangkhaol", "Hrangkhawl", and "Hrangkhoh." The above words give same designation. The most commonly accepted one is "Hrangkhawl" or, "Hrangkhoh."¹ The term 'hrang' probably means courageous, and 'khawl' or, 'khol' means to win over enemies. Hence, the name 'Hrangkhawl' or, 'Hrangkhoh' stands for 'courageous warrior.'² Sometimes the names "Rangkhoh" or, "Hrangkhawl" and "Hrangkhoh" have been used interchangeably.

The Hrangkhols claim that they belong to the Mongoloid descent by race.³ In so far as the affinity of hill tribes appearance and countenance are concerned, they are a kin to the Mizos, Kuki-Chin.⁴ A Senior Research Officer R.S. Rosangluaia writes, "The Hrangkhawl co-tribe is Biate and its offshoot are

¹ Interview with Mr. B.K. Hrangkhawl of Tripura, at his quarters Agartala, on 30th April, 1997.

² Information from Mr. Henry Hrangkhawl, Zion Hills, West Tripura, on 30th August, 1997; See R. Dangliana "Hrangkhawl Hnam Chanchin" in a Seminar booklet entitled *Piah Lam Ram*, Aizawl, Synod Ramthar Board, 1976, p.23. Hereafter cited as Dangliana, *Hrangkhawl Hnam*.

³ Interview with Mr. B.K. Hrangkhawl of Tripura, on 30th April, 1997.

⁴ G.A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. III, Part III, Delhi, 1967, pp 1-2; See also S. Prem Vaiphei, *The Vaiphei Tribes*, Imphal, 1975, p.1; Cf. Sing Khaw Khai, *Zo People and Their Culture*, Churachandpur, 1995, p.4.