

result, the Hrangkhols tribes scattered into different areas. That event becomes a historical epoch and watershed in legend.

The Hrangkhols are now largely concentrating in North Cachar Hills and South Cachar in Assam and Tripura. A small group are living in Mizoram, Meghalaya as well as Manipur. However, this study is mainly confined to the Hrangkhols Christians inhabiting in North Cachar Hills and South Cachar in Assam.

D. TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The primal religion of Hrangkhols has been called as 'animism' and 'naturalism'. Tradition asserted that the religion was first introduced by the two *doithei* (sorcerers) named *Siangsiangkha* and *Olongkha* who considered themselves as God's representatives as well as gods. All beliefs and practices were taught by them. Thenceforth, their religion was generally called 'Sonong'.¹⁵

1. Concept of God and deities:

The Hrangkhols believed in the existence of one Supreme God whom they called *Chung Pathian* (High God). Besides, they recognised the existence of 17 (seventeen) high gods called '*Chung Pathian somhleisari*'. C.A. Soppitt wrote, "The Rangkols (sic. Hrangkhols) believe in three principal gods- *Lambra*, *Golarai*, and *Dudukal*."¹⁶ *Dudukal* has a wife named '*Fapite*' who was the goddess of rice crops. Besides these, there were many kinds of gods. C.A. Soppitt wrote, "there are numerous minor deities working for good and evils..."¹⁷ The other deities are as follows.¹⁸ (a) *zugundurai* and *bugundurai* (*Tang Pathian* =

¹⁵ Interview with *Chonbuangril* of *Michikhur*, *Dittokcherra*, on 28th April, 1997.

¹⁶ C.A. Soppitt (ed.), *A short Account of the Kuki-Lushai Tribes on the North-East Frontier with An outline Grammar of the Rangkhols-Lushai language*, Reprinted, Aizawl, 1976, p.11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Interview with *Thirdangir* of *Loskor* on 9th May, 1997. Cf. *Lalbiaktluangi* "Hrangkhawl Sakhua leh an hnena Chanchin Tha hril dan tur." in a booklet entitled *Piah Lam Ram*, Aizawl, 1976, pp.26f.