

Lakher

also known as “Maras”

Data source: eHRAF

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Entered by Emily Pitek, Human Relations Area Files

** Data Source entry, prepared based on data sourced from an external project.*

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Entry tags: Indic Religious Traditions, Religious Group

The Lakher, who refer to themselves as the Mara, “inhabit the south-eastern corner of the Lushai Hills district, south of the Haka sub-division of the Chin Hills, and the extreme north of the Arakan Hill Tracts” (Parry, 1932:1). This area is located primarily in the Indian state of Mizoram, but also extends into Burma and Bangladesh. The Lakher are comprised of six groups: the Tlongsai, Hawthai, Zeuhngang, Sabeu, Lialai, and Heima. These groups are further subdivided into clans, but the village (led by a chief or bei) is the primary social, political, and religious unit. This entry focuses around the time of 1930; just six years after the Lakher came under British rule. At this time, Lakher customs remained largely unchanged by foreign influence (British government and Christian Missionaries), and traditional religious beliefs were still held by the majority of the Lakher population. The Lakher’s supreme high god is known as Khazangpa, who is believed to have created the world and holds control over all its inhabitants. Other supernatural beings include zang (tutelary deities/guardian spirits), leurahripas (demons/evil spirits), and ancestral spirits. No official religious practitioners are present; the heads of households perform most rites and sacrifices. Mediums (zhazanghneipa) have special communication with spirits, and typically use this communication for medicinal purposes (such as finding out what sacrifices to prescribe a woman hoping to increase her fertility, for example). Ceremonies are present, and accompany most major life-cycle events. Also present is a yearly cycle of rites/feasts associated primarily with agriculture and the propitiation of supernatural beings. Zhazangpina is the most important sacrificial rite, which is performed by the head of a household in hopes of pleasing Zhazangpa, who will in turn bless the household with good health and prosperity. The Lakher’s religious beliefs are bound up with the functioning of society as a whole, so this entry considers the religious group to be coterminous with the society at large.



Date Range: 1905 CE - 1935 CE

Region: Lushai Hills, Chin Hills, Arakan Hill Tracts

Region tags: Asia, Southeast Asia, Myanmar, South Asia, Bangladesh, India

The Lakher "...inhabit the south-eastern corner of the Lushai Hills district, south of the Haka sub-division of the Chin Hills, and the extreme north of the Arakan Hill Tracts" (Parry, 1932:1).

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Tuden, A. & Marshall, C. (Oct., 1972). Political organization: Cross-cultural codes 4. *Ethnology*, 11(4), 436-464.
- Source 2: Murdock, G.P. (1967). *Ethnographic Atlas*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Source 1: Parry, N.E. (1932). *The Lakhers*. London.
- Source 2: Divale, W. 2004. Codebook of Variables for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. *World Cultures: The Journal of Cross-Cultural and Comparative Research*.
- Source 3: Murdock, G.P. & Wilson, S.F. (Jul., 1972). Settlement patterns and community organization: Cross-Cultural Codes 3. *Ethnology*, 11(3), 254-295.

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: "A more active instrument of change than Government is the Christian mission. The Lakhers have not been affected by the mission in the same way as the Lushois, for although a mission has been established at Saiko for nearly twenty years, it has made comparatively little headway. As yet the Lakher mission has done little or no harm, and has in certain directions done much good" (Parry, 1932:19).



Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1654, Pacification (Resolved Rating), indicates that the Lakhers are "not completely pacified: some indication that warfare has decreased because of pacification attempts". Additionally, SCCS Variable 1649, Frequency of Internal Warfare (Resolved Rating), coded internal warfare frequency as 1.75, which is between "internal warfare seems to be absent or rare" (original code 1) and "internal warfare seems to occur once every three to ten years" (original code 2). Source of information: Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004.



Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

– Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1654, Pacification (Resolved Rating), indicates that the Lakhers are "not completely pacified: some indication that warfare has decreased because of pacification attempts". Additionally, SCCS Variable 1650, Frequency of External Warfare (Resolved Rating), indicates that external warfare seems to occur once every three to ten years. Source of information: Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004.

Does the religion have official political support

– Yes

Notes: The religious groups has political support in the sense that the religious sphere of life is not distinguished from other aspects of life. Rather, religion is bound up with the functioning of society at

large.



Are the priests paid by polity:

– No

Notes: No full-time religious officials are present. See questions below and Parry, 1932:246-247.

Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

– Estimated population, numeric: 10000

Notes: "The number of Lakhers in Assam at the last census was returned at 3683, as against 3647 in 1911. As there must be very nearly as many again in the Chin Hills, and as at the time of the last census the areas recently taken over by Assam and Burma were not included, as they were still unadministered, I estimate that the total number of the tribe is now somewhere about 10,000 souls" (Parry, 1932:4).

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

– No

Notes: "The Lakhers have no such thing as village priests, each householder performing his own sacrifices, but for the Tleulia sacrifice a special priest is appointed by the chief and villagers from among the families that have been in the village for several generations. This priest is known as the tleuliabopa. In most of the villages the post of tleuliabopa is held for life, and the tleuliabopa is very often succeeded by his son, though in case of misconduct the chief and villagers can dismiss the holder of the post and replace him. In Chapi and Savang no permanent tleuliabopa is appointed, the sacrifice being performed by any man who is ceremonially pure. In all the villages except Chapi the tleuliabopa is entitled to a yearly due, known as zidei, which consists of a basket of paddy" (Parry, 1932:246-247).

Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also "oral scriptures" (e.g. the Vedas of India).

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of scripture among the Lakher.

Beliefs

Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer "no" only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body. Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

– Yes

Notes: "Souls are of two kinds. The ordinary soul is called thalpa; some people, however, are afflicted with mischievous souls, which, while wandering about when their owner is asleep, maltreat and go out of their way to annoy others; such souls are called thlachhi" (Parry, 1932:352). "Death is caused by Khazangpa or a leurahripa becoming angry and confiscating a man's spirit...when the sick man dies [the soul] finally leaves his body and goes off to Athikhi, which is said to be below the earth" (ibid, pg. 394).

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body:

– Yes

Notes: "A man's soul resembles his body in appearance and size, but is invisible. During the day the soul lives inside the body, which it enters by the mouth, but at night, during sleep, the soul sometimes leaves its body and wanders about; a link called hu in the shape of an invisible cord remains, however, between the soul and the body, and on the sleeper awakening the soul returns" (Parry, 1932:351-352).

Belief in afterlife:

– Yes

Notes: "Death is caused by Khazangpa or a leurahripa becoming angry and confiscating a man's spirit...when the sick man dies [the soul] finally leaves his body and goes off to Athikhi, which is said to be below the earth" (Parry, 1932:394). "There is no second life for the dead, but after a dead man's spirit has been a very long time in Athikhi it dies again, and when this death of the spirit takes place a chief's spirit is turned into heat mist, and a poor man's spirit becomes a worm; the heat mist goes up to heaven and vanishes, the worm is eaten by a chicken, and that is an end of it. The spirits in Athikhi refer to themselves as Hrangzong or immortals, and refer to human beings as Pawdua or flowers that fade in a day" (ibid, pg. 395).

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: "There are three separate abodes to which the spirits of the dead may be sent...The abode of all ordinary spirits is Athikhi. Sawvaw, people who have died unnatural deaths, and thichhi, those who have died of certain loathsome diseases, go to Sawvawkhi" (Parry, 1932:396).

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "above" space:

– No

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "below" space:

– Yes

Notes: "Death is caused by Khazangpa or a leurahripa becoming angry and

confiscating a man's spirit...when the sick man dies [the soul] finally leaves his body and goes off to Athikhi, which is said to be below the earth" (Parry, 1932:394).

Reincarnation in this world:

– Yes

Notes: "Although Lakhers hold that when an adult dies the spirit goes to Athikhi, whence it never returns, there is a strong belief that the spirits of children are sometimes reborn in the person of a younger brother or sister..." (Parry, 1932:397-398).

↳ In a human form:

– Yes

Notes: Parry, 1932:397-398

↳ In animal/plant form:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a belief in reincarnation in animal/plant form.

↳ In form of an inanimate object(s):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a belief in reincarnation in the form of an inanimate object.

↳ Reincarnation linked to notion of life-transcending causality (e.g. karma):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a belief that reincarnation is linked to a notion of life-transcending causality.

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– Yes

Notes: "The Lakhers always bury their dead, and, so far as I can ascertain, there are no traces of either cremation or platform burial...they never use coffins, the corpses being simply wrapped in a cloth" (Parry, 1932:409-410).

↳ Cremation:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of cremation.

↳ Mummification:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of mummification.

↳ Interment:

– Yes

Notes: The deceased are buried in graves (for more information, see Parry, 1932:401-402).

↳ Corpse is flexed (legs are bent or body is crouched):

– No

Notes: Parry, 1932:411

↳ Corpse is extended (lying flat on front or back):

– Yes

Notes: "...no Lakher is ever buried in any other way except lying straight out flat..." (Parry, 1932:411).

↳ Corpse is upright (where body is interred in standing position):

– No

Notes: Parry, 1932:411

↳ Cannibalism:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of cannibalism.

↳ Exposure to elements (e.g. air drying):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of exposing corpses to the elements.

↳ Feeding to animals:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of feeding corpses to animals.

↳ Secondary burial:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1850 (Secondary Bone/Body Treatment: Original Scale) indicates that secondary bone/body treatment is absent (Schroeder, 2001; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– Yes

Notes: During the wake, "...pigs, or whatever animals may be available are killed as riha to accompany the spirit to Athikhi" (Parry, 1932:400).

↳ Human sacrifices present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifices.

↳ Animal co-sacrifices present:

– Yes

Notes: During the wake, "...pigs, or whatever animals may be available are killed as riha to accompany the spirit to Athikhi" (Parry, 1932:400).

Are grave goods present:

– Yes

Notes: See below for more information on grave goods.

↳ Valuable items:

– Yes

Notes: "When a body is placed in a vault, valuable ornaments and guns are often deposited with it for the use of the spirit of the deceased in the next world, the articles selected being those that the dead man habitually used and liked" (Parry, 1932:410).

Specific to this answer:

Status of Participants: ✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists

↳ Other grave goods:

– Yes

Notes: "...when a Lakher dies, in addition to the cloth he is wrapped in, a small piece of cloth is placed under his armpit for the Chhongchhongpipa [supernatural being that steals cloth from the dead on their way to Athikhi] to steal" (Parry, 1932:397).

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

Notes: "There are three kinds of graves. Chiefs and important persons generally have family vaults, which are called thlapi or longang, situated near the house" (Parry, 1932:-410). "A commoner's grave is called thlata, and is generally dug in front of the deceased's house" (ibid, pg. 412). "The grave of a person who has died an unnatural death is called thlachhi, and is always dug outside the village fence, on the west of the village, towards the setting sun" (ibid., pg. 413).

↳ In cemetery:

– Yes

Notes: "The grave is dug by the young men of the village, whether they belong to the deceased's clan or not, in front of the deceased's house or in the village street, except among the Sabeus of Chapi, Chakang and some Haka villages, who have cemeteries outside the village" (Parry, 1932:401).

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– Yes

Notes: "There are three kinds of graves. Chiefs and important persons generally have family vaults, which are called thlapi or longang, situated near the house" (Parry, 1932:-410).

Specific to this answer:

Status of Participants: ✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists

↳ Other formal burial type:

– Yes [specify]: By the home or village of the deceased

Notes: "The grave is dug by the young men of the village, whether they belong to the deceased's clan or not, in front of the deceased's house or in the village street, except among the Sabeus of Chapi, Chakang and some Haka villages, who have cemeteries outside the village" (Parry, 1932:401).

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: A variety of supernatural beings are present. See questions below for more details.

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Notes: "The Lakhers believe that the destinies of the universe are in the hands of one God, who is known as Khazangpa, or Khazangleutha, or Pachhpapa, the creator of the world" (Parry, 1932:349).

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:

– Yes

Notes: "Khazangpa is possessed of all human attributes..." (Parry, 1932:349).

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity:

– Yes

Notes: "Khazangpa is generally believed to live in the sky..." (Parry, 1932:349).

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld):

– No

Notes: Parry, 1932:349

↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good:

– I don't know

↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world:

– Yes

Notes: "This god [Khazangpa, the high god] has full power over men, and can make them prosperous or the reverse, as he likes" (Parry, 1932:349).

↳ The supreme high god has deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Notes: "Khazangpa is a just and benevolent being, who is believed to deal with men according to their works. Proud and quarrelsome men who oppress the poor are called by the Lakhers thatlongbireu (boasters, because of their power), while men who speak the truth, act in all things according to custom and are kindly disposed towards their neighbours are called thlochhibireu (those who speak kindly), and it is believed that Khazangpa punishes the former by cutting short their lives, while he rewards the latter with long life and riches" (Parry: 1932:349-350).

↳ The supreme high god can reward:

– Yes

Notes: (Parry: 1932:349-350)

↳ The supreme high god can punish:

– Yes

Notes: (Parry: 1932:349-350)

↳ The supreme high god exhibits positive emotion:

– Yes

Notes: "Khazangpa is a just and benevolent being, who is believed to deal with men according to their works" (Parry: 1932:349).

↳ The supreme high god exhibits negative emotion:

– I don't know

↳ The supreme high god possesses hunger:

– Yes

Notes: The high god "...eats food and drinks beer like any human being" (Parry, 1932:349).

↳ Is it permissible to worship supernatural beings other than the high god:

– Yes

Notes: "While Khazangpa is the supreme god, every person is believed to have a sort of tutelary deity or guardian angel, known as Zang" (Parry, 1932:350).

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living:

– I don't know

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– Yes

Notes: Although human spirits are present, they are not described in great detail. It appears that after burial and the accompanying ceremonies, the spirit travels to the after world, where interaction with the living seems to end. See questions below for available details.

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Notes: "This [the Laliachhia] is a village sacrifice performed by the Lakhers about the month of October to the spirits of their ancestors to induce them to help make the crops good, the domestic animals healthy and fertile, and to give good hunting" (Parry, 1932:445).

↳ Human spirits exhibit positive emotion:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits exhibit negative emotion:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits possess hunger:

– No

Notes: "As soon as the memorial stone has been erected [over the grave], the offerings cease, as it is believed that after this the spirit goes off to Athikhi for good and does not return, and so will have no further use for food" (Parry, 1932:414).

– Yes

Notes: "Against the wall above the dead man's head a small shelf is erected, on which rice and cooked eggs are placed for the spirit to eat" (Parry, 1932:399-400).

↳ Human spirits communicate with the living:

– No

Notes: It appears that once funeral ceremonies have been concluded and the spirit of the deceased has moved on to the afterlife, the spirits of the deceased do not interact with the living (see Parry, 1932:394-414).

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: "While Khazangpa is the supreme god, every person is believed to have a sort of tutelary deity or guardian angel, known as Zang...The leurahripas are evil spirits or demons, the more powerful of whom live in the Khisongs, which are high mountains, steep cliffs, deep pools, precipices or ponds. The whole world, however, is full of lesser leurahripas, who come into contact with man in all his doings" (Parry, 1932:350).

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

Notes: "If a zang [similar to a guardian spirit] is well pleased with the person it has charge of, it can make him happy, healthy, and prosperous, grant him children and protect him from accidents, and so the zang must be propitiated with sacrifices, lest it become displeased with its charge and neglect to watch over him and even punish him" (Parry, 1932:350).

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Notes: "If a zang is well pleased with the person it has charge of, it can make him happy, healthy, and prosperous, grant him children and protect him from accidents, and so the zang must be propitiated with sacrifices, lest it become displeased with its charge and neglect to watch over him and even punish him" (Parry, 1932:350).

↳ These supernatural beings can reward:

– Yes

Notes: (Parry, 1932:350)

↳ These supernatural beings can punish:

– Yes

Notes: (Parry, 1932:350)

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Notes: "Leurahripas sometimes quarrel and fight, and such fights are believed to be the cause of hurricanes" (Parry, 1932:351).

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion:

– Yes

Notes: The leurahripas are generally evil, but sometimes benevolent (see Parry, 1932:350).

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:

– Yes

Notes: The leurahripas are generally evil, but sometimes benevolent (see Parry, 1932:350).

↳ Mixed human-divine beings are present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of mixed human-divine beings.

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: Several types of supernatural beings are present among the Lakher. Among these are Khazangpa (high god), Zang (tutelary deity/guardian spirit), leurahripas (evil spirits/demons), previously human spirits, and other minor/place spirits. See Parry, 1932 pages 349-500 for detailed information.

↳ Organized hierarchically:

– Yes

Notes: There is not an explicit organization for the Lakher's supernatural beings, but a hierarchical organization is present. See Parry, 1932 pages 349-500 for detailed information.

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Notes: "Khazangpa is a just and benevolent being, who is believed to deal with men according to their works. Proud and quarrelsome men who oppress the poor are called by the Lakhers thatlongbireu (boasters, because of their power), while men who speak the truth, act in all things according to custom and are kindly disposed towards their neighbours are called thlochhibireu (those who speak kindly), and it is believed that Khazangpa punishes the former by cutting short their lives, while he rewards the latter with long life and riches" (Parry, 1932:349-350).

↳ There is supernatural monitoring of prosocial norm adherence in particular:

Prosocial norms are norms that enhance cooperation among members of the group, including obviously "moral" or "ethical" norms, but also extending to norms concerning honouring contracts and oaths, providing hospitality, coming to mutual aid in emergencies, etc.

– Yes

Notes: See Parry, 1932:349-350

↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– Yes [specify]: Funeral ceremony taboos

Notes: "It is ana [taboo] to walk over a corpse. If anyone does so, the spirit of the deceased removes the strength of the man crossing over his body and carries it off to Athikhi. People who disregard this prohibition become suddenly weak and feeble when on a journey, and are unable to proceed" (Parry, 1932:404).

↳ Supernatural beings care about non-lethal fighting:

– Yes

Notes: Parry, 1932:349-350

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

– Yes

Notes: "Unless this purificatory ceremony is performed [ceremony for washing the body with water and rice after touching a corpse] a man must not touch his anahmang, the vessels dedicated to the service of Khazangpa, or they would be defiled, and Khazangpa would be annoyed and would wreak vengeance for the insult offered to him" (Parry, 1932:404).

↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

– Yes

Notes: "Tleulia is a village sacrifice to the slope of the hill on which the village is situated, as, though the village site is not a regular Khisong, it is believed to be also inhabited by spirits, who must be propitiated in order to induce them to make the people healthy and fertile, to give good crops, and to make all domestic animals breed freely" (Parry, 1932:369).

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Notes: "Khazangpa is a just and benevolent being, who is believed to deal with men according to their works. Proud and quarrelsome men who oppress the poor are called by the Lakhers thatlongbireu (boasters, because of their power), while men who speak the truth, act in all things according to custom and are kindly disposed towards their neighbours are called thlochhibireu (those who speak kindly), and it is believed that Khazangpa punishes the former by cutting short their lives, while he rewards the latter with long life and riches" (Parry, 1932:349-350).

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: Khazangpa [high god] and zangs [guardian spirits] are described as agents of supernatural reward and punishment (Parry, 1932: 349-350).

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

Notes: Khazangpa [high god] and zangs [guardian spirits] are described as agents of supernatural reward and punishment (Parry, 1932: 349-350).

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: Khazangpa [high god] and zangs [guardian spirits] are described as agents of supernatural reward and punishment (Parry, 1932: 349-350).

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for information regarding the reason for supernatural punishment.

↳

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– Yes

Notes: Khazangpa is a just and benevolent being, who is believed to deal with men according to their works. Proud and quarrelsome men who oppress the poor are called by the Lakhers thatlongbireu (boasters, because of their power), while men who speak the truth, act in all things according to custom and are kindly disposed towards their neighbours are called thlochhibireu (those who speak kindly), and it is believed that Khazangpa punishes the former by cutting short their lives, while he rewards the latter with long life and riches" (Parry, 1932:349-350).

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

– I don't know

Notes: The after life is not described in enough detail to make a clear decision.

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for examples of supernatural punishment.

↳ Other [specify]

– Yes

Notes: Punishment in this life consists of a shortened life (Parry, 1932:349-350).

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– Yes

Notes: "Khazangpa is a just and benevolent being, who is believed to deal with men according to their works. Proud and quarrelsome men who oppress the poor are called by the Lakhers thatlongbireu (boasters, because of their power), while men who speak the truth, act in all things according to custom and are kindly disposed towards their neighbours are called thlochhibireu (those who speak kindly), and it is believed that Khazangpa punishes the former by cutting short their lives, while he rewards the latter with long life and riches" (Parry, 1932:349-350).

↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known:

– Yes

Notes: Khazangpa [high god] and zangs [guardian spirits] are described as agents of supernatural reward and punishment (Parry, 1932: 349-350).

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: Khazangpa [high god] and zangs [guardian spirits] are described as agents of supernatural reward and punishment (Parry, 1932: 349-350).

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– Yes

Notes: "Tleulia is a village sacrifice to the slope of the hill on which the village is situated, as, though the village site is not a regular Khisong, it is believed to be also inhabited by spirits, who must be propitiated in order to induce them to make the people healthy and fertile, to give good crops, and to make all domestic animals breed freely" (Parry, 1932:369).

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– Yes

Notes: (Parry, 1932:349-350)

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in the afterlife:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for examples of supernatural reward.

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced health:

– Yes

Notes: "Khazangpa is a just and benevolent being, who is believed to deal with men according to their works. Proud and quarrelsome men who oppress the poor are called by the Lakhers thatlongbireu (boasters, because of their power), while men who speak the truth, act in all things according to custom and are kindly disposed towards their neighbours are called thlochhibireu (those who speak kindly), and it is believed that Khazangpa punishes the former by cutting short their lives, while he rewards the latter with long life and riches" (Parry, 1932:349-350).

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced reproductive success:

– Yes

Notes: "If a zang [similar to a guardian spirit] is well pleased with the person it has charge of, it can make him happy, healthy, and prosperous, grant him children and protect him from accidents, and so the zang must be propitiated with sacrifices, lest it become displeased with its charge and neglect to watch over him and even punish him" (Parry, 1932:350).

↳ Other [specify]

– Yes

Notes: Reward in this life consists of riches (Parry, 1932:349-350).

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of messianic beliefs.

Is an eschatology present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a belief in an eschatology.

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required celibacy.

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required castration among the Lakhers.

Does membership in this religious group require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice.

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice.

Does membership in this religious group require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household):

– No

Notes: "Khazangpina is the most important sacrifice performed by the Lakhers. It is a sacrifice to the god Khazangpa with the object of pleasing him and inducing him to bless the sacrificer and his wife with good health and with children, to give him good crops and fertile domestic animals, and to make him rich...Khazangpina is not performed every year, but only when it is thought necessary, as when the householder or his wife has ill health or their domestic animals die" (Parry, 1932:361-362).

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

I.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale "ceremonies" and "festivals."

– Yes

Notes: "As Lakhers believe that it is in the power of the spirits to give them good or bad crops, it is not surprising to find that each phase of agricultural operations is marked by its appropriate sacrifice intended to placate the spirits of the hills and the fields...When the jhums have all been cut, the knee dance called Pakhupila is performed, and a joint feast contributed to by all the villagers is held. This feast is called Khutla...and is the only public merry-making indulged in by the Lakhers, who do not have numerous public feasts...It is not held every year, but only when the village has had very good crops...Everybody in the village is supposed to be present at this feast" (Parry, 1932:429).

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

– A chiefdom

Notes: The Lakhers have one level of jurisdictional hierarchy beyond the local community, which is reflective of a chiefdom (Ethnographic Atlas column 33, Murdock, 1967; retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

– No

Notes: "The only religious exercise that is taught to children is the Khazangpina chant; they learn about other sacrifices by watching them" (Parry 1932:28).

Is formal education available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: The principal ethnographic authority, Parry (1932:20), indicates the presence of a Christian mission school.



Is extra-religious education open to both males and females:

– No

Notes: Only males are described as being present in mission schools. Presumably, this is because education is open to only males. "...so far the mission has always insisted on strict discipline among the boys in the school and on their all working in return for their education" (Parry, 1932:20).

Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 90 (Food Storage) indicates that food is stored in individual households (Murdock and Morrow, 1970; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 14, Routes of Land Transport, indicates that unimproved trails are present (Murdock and Morrow, 1970; Retrieved from Divale, 2004). Presumably, transportation infrastructure is not present.

Taxation

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: The Lakhers, being under British rule, are subject to taxes levied by the British (see Parry, 1932:14).

Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

– No

Notes: According to Tuden and Marshall (1972; Column 10, Police), "police functions are not specialized or institutionalized at any level of political integration, the maintenance of law and order being left exclusively to informal mechanisms of social control, to private retaliation, or to sorcery" [Note: Equivalent to SCCS Variable 90].

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– No

Notes: According to Tuden and Marshall (1972; Column 9, Judiciary), "supreme judicial authority is lacking at any level above that of the local community" [Note: Equivalent to SCCS Variable 89].

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized judicial system provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Based off the following ethnographic excerpt, it can be assumed that because the Lakhers are under British authority, the Lakhers interact with the British judicial system. "Although nowadays murder cases are tried by the courts, prior to British rule they were dealt with by the chief and elders, and a murderer had to pay a fine ranging from 100 to 300 rupees to the relatives of the man murdered" (Parry, 1932:264).

Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

– No

Notes: "Lakher has no written language" (Parry, 1932:501).

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes

Notes: The Lakhers rely primarily on agriculture for subsistence, with a secondary dependence on hunting. Fishing and animal husbandry supplement the diet. Source of information from Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

- Hunting (including marine animals)
- Fishing
- Pastoralism
- Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

Notes: The Lakhers rely primarily on agriculture for subsistence, with a secondary dependence on hunting. Fishing and animal husbandry supplement the diet. Source of information from

Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.