

3. Priests and Prophets:

The ochai (priests) and deipu (prophets) were gifted people inspired by divine power commonly called 'ramtuiikhian'. The priests played an important role in religious activities on behalf of the people. Office of the priests was mainly confined to male alone. The prophet's role was to detect the symptom of sickness, and discovered the cause of calamities as well as warning the people about the impending events through their divination called 'deiinzal'. Furthermore, they practised sorcery, witchcraft, which brought a great torture, sickness and even death of enemies. Thus, the skilful prophets were called as doikola/doibur/doikara, meaning expert in sorcery and witchcraft.²¹ In pre-Christian period, strangers were afraid even to enter into the Hrangkhoh Villages, because of this practice.

4. Belief in life after death:

It is believed that at death, the soul or spirit (*irtha*) escaped from the dead body, and it hovered above the vicinity of deceased village for months. After some months passed, the soul then goes to 'Mithi khua' (village of dead) where they (souls) live a similar kind of life on the earth. They do jhum cultivation, hunting, etc. Folklore tells us that a man by named Pangam went to 'Mithi khua' where he met his wife named Suiting and have hunting with them.²² For this reason when a man dies, weapons, implements, pottery, cloths, etc., were burned down along with the corpse. Like Hindus, the Hrangkhols recognised the existence of rebirth called 'irzirnok'. Therefore, they made a little mark on the part of a dead body in order to identify him/her in the next second birth.²³

²¹ Interview with Thirldarngir of Losker, on 9th May, 1997.

²² Interview with Joithanglian of Zion, on 26th May, 1997.

²³ Ibid.