

the departed soul. Traditionally, one of the maternal uncles had to kick the floor, which is called, 'luthun inrak'. In case of unnatural death called 'sara thi or thi sia', the corpse is neither carried into the village nor performed a formal funeral ceremony. The corpse had to be buried or cremated where the person dies.

Regarding funeral ceremonies, a corpse was put on the bamboo frame called 'irlang' and carried on a procession. Cremation was their custom, as B.N.Bordoi & G.C.Sharmah Thakur said. "The Rangkhols...cremate their dead like the Hindus."⁴⁷ When a corpse was being burned, they used to throw the utensils, clothes on the funeral pyre. This practice of cremation is still in existence among the non-Christians. The deceased family had to be slaughtered a mithun or pig either at the time of death or later.⁴⁸ This kind of slaughtering animal is called 'ruak hngha that'.

As stated above, the I Irangkhols belong to the Mongolian origin by race, immigrating into India many centuries ago. Therefore, they are unknown to the academic world. They are now scattered into different areas in North East India. They had a considerable cultural heritage and practices. Their pristine nature was very primitive. However, after embracing Christianity their traditional culture was slowly transformed, and got written literature and education through the effort of Christian mission.

⁴⁷ B.N.Bordoloi & G.C.Sharmah Thakur (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.52. Cf.C.A.Soppitt, *op.cit.*, p.12.

⁴⁸ Cf. A.Wati Longchar, *The Tribal Religious Traditions In North East India*, Jorhat, 1991, p.96.