

# THE LAKHERS

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND SUPPLEMENTARY

NOTES BY

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*paka*, which path passes between two huge stones, and every soul must pass through this gap on its way to *Athikhi*. Living people never use this path. Near Longchei also is a stream called the dead men's water supply. It is said that any one approaching this stream hears voices talking ; these are the voices of the dead, who cease conversing as soon as the intruder reaches the spring from which they are drawing water. They also say that there is always a swarm of flies hovering over this spot, and that these are the spirits of the dead <sup>1</sup> awaiting their turn to draw water.

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. When it is noon in this world it is night in *Athikhi*, and night in this world is noon in *Athikhi*. The spirits use bamboo leaves instead of fish, regard the large woolly caterpillars as bears, and use a large mushroom called *athipaso* as a fishing-net. Lusheis call this mushroom *phungsahmim*, or the ghost's bag. There are numerous other plants to which the Lusheis assign uses in the abode of the dead, e.g. *mithi buhtun*, dead men's millet ; *mithi sulhlu*, dead men's plums ; *mithi zongtha*, dead men's tree beans. In *Athikhi* <sup>2</sup> people who in this world have had several wives or husbands in succession, as the case may be, always marry their first wife or their first husband. When a man who has had many successful intrigues with women dies, on his road to *Athikhi* he collects a number of

<sup>1</sup> The soul is thought of as flying in the form of a butterfly or bee, at any rate all over Europe from Ireland to Lithuania, in Assam, Burma, Japan, and the Pacific.—J. H. H.

<sup>2</sup> This word *Athikhi* is interesting ; obviously it means village (*khi*) of the Dead (*thi*), and is etymologically the same as the Thado *Mi-thi-khu*, while the syllable *thi* reappears in the Sema words for "die" and "dead." The Ao word *tiya*, meaning the sky soul on which the life of a man depends, is perhaps connected, as well as the Polynesian *tii*, the figure made to accommodate the soul of a dead man.—J. H. H.

small stones equal in number to the girls with whom he has been successful, and places them at the gateway to *Athikhi*, to show his friends how many women have succumbed to his charms. Even in *Athikhi* men are not equal ; a chief in this world remains a chief in *Athikhi*, and a slave remains a slave. The rich remain rich, and the poor remain poor.

There are three separate abodes to which the spirits of the dead may be sent. The pleasantest abode is *Peira*, which is nearest to *Khazangpa*, and corresponds to our Paradise. Attainment of *Peira* is very difficult, and the only way to get there is by killing certain wild animals. I have been given the following list of the animals which must be killed to qualify for this abode of bliss. A man, an elephant, a tiger, a bear, a small tree bear, a *serow*, a *gural*, a *mithun*, a rhinoceros, a *sambhur*, a barking deer, a wild boar, a crocodile, a hamadryad, an eagle, a specimen of each kind of hornbill found in the Lakher country and a king crow. Over each of these animals and birds the *Ia* ceremony must be performed. A man who has qualified in this way is known as *Hrapaki* or *Chhongki*, and is eligible for *Peira*. Whatever may have been the case in the old days, I fear that now the standard will have to be lowered, or no one at all will ever reach *Peira*, as not only has Government declared a permanent close time for men, but the other larger animals are much scarcer than they were.

Prowess in love is of no avail as a help on the road to *Peira*, though among the Lusheis it is of great assistance. The Siaha chief's clan, who are influenced by Chin custom, say that those who have performed the *Khangchei* feasts can also attain to *Peira*. This is peculiar to the Siaha Khicha Hleuchhang clan, as no other Lakhers ever perform these feasts, and even among the Khicha Hleuchhang clan the mere giving of feasts is not enough, unless the prescribed animals have been slain as well. A man who reaches *Peira* takes his wife with him when she dies, and also his children.

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*. All spirits start along the same road ; when they get to the

English.	Tlongsai.	Zeuhnang.	Hawthai.	Sabeu.	Lushei.
Bamboo	<i>Ramaw</i>	<i>Rameu</i>	<i>Ramaw</i>	<i>Ramaw</i>	<i>Mau</i>
Bamboos	<i>Rasang</i>	<i>Rachhai</i>	<i>Rasang</i>	<i>Rasei</i>	<i>Rothing</i>
	<i>Rahniapa</i>	<i>Rahnepa</i>	<i>Rahnia</i>	<i>Rahne</i>	<i>Ronal</i>
	<i>Ravaw</i>	<i>Rava</i>	<i>Ravaw</i>	<i>Ravaw</i>	<i>Phulrua</i>
	<i>Rangia</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Rangia</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Rongal</i>
	<i>Siari</i>	<i>Seri</i>	<i>Siari</i>	<i>Siari</i>	<i>Sairil</i>
	<i>Raka</i>	<i>Ratla</i>	<i>Ratlapa</i>	<i>Raka</i>	<i>Rothla</i>
	<i>Ratai</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>Achia</i>	<i>Rache</i>	<i>Chal</i>
Hen	<i>Awh</i>	<i>Ah</i>	<i>Awh</i>	<i>Awh</i>	<i>Ar</i>
River	<i>Chava</i>	<i>Chavah</i>	<i>Chava</i>	<i>Chava</i>	<i>Lui</i>
Mountain	<i>Tla</i>	<i>Tle</i>	<i>Tla</i>	<i>Tla</i>	<i>Tlang</i>
Boundary	<i>Rari</i>	<i>Reri</i>	<i>Rari</i>	<i>Rari</i>	<i>Ramri</i>
Stone	<i>Along</i>	<i>Elo</i>	<i>Along</i>	<i>Aleu</i>	<i>Lung</i>
Earth	<i>Alei</i>	<i>Elei</i>	<i>Alei</i>	<i>Ali</i>	<i>Lei</i>
Precipice	<i>Longkapa</i>	<i>Longkapa</i>	<i>Longkapa</i>	<i>Longkapa</i>	<i>Kham</i>
Elephant	<i>Masia</i>	<i>Mase</i>	<i>Masia</i>	<i>Mase</i>	<i>Sai</i>
Bison	<i>Chawlia</i>	<i>Chualia</i>	<i>Chawlia</i>	<i>Chawle</i>	<i>Sele</i>
Rhinoceros	<i>Kawra</i>	<i>Kuare</i>	<i>Kawra</i>	<i>Kawra</i>	<i>Samak</i>
Sambhur deer	<i>Sasu</i>	<i>Chasu</i>	<i>Sasu</i>	<i>Sasu</i>	<i>Sazuk</i>
Wild boar	<i>Ngiacha</i>	<i>Ngeche</i>	<i>Ngiacha</i>	<i>Ngeicha</i>	<i>Sanghal</i> <sup>1</sup>
Barking deer	<i>Sakhi</i>	<i>Rakhi</i>	<i>Sakhi</i>	<i>Fakhi</i>	<i>Sakhi</i>
Serow	<i>Sawzaw</i>	<i>Sazapa</i>	<i>Sawzaw</i>	<i>Sawzaw</i>	<i>Saza</i>
Gural	<i>Sathaw</i>	<i>Hratha</i>	<i>Sathaw</i>	<i>Sathaw</i>	<i>Sathar</i>
Tiger	<i>Keipi</i>	<i>Kei-pi</i>	<i>Keipi</i>	<i>Kipi</i>	<i>Keipui</i>
Leopard	<i>Keichhang</i>	<i>Keichhang</i>	<i>Keichhang</i>	<i>Kite</i>	<i>Keite</i>
Bear	<i>Chave</i>	<i>Chavaw</i>	<i>Chave</i>	<i>Chavaw</i>	<i>Savawm</i>
Small bear	<i>Veti-</i> <i>khawpa</i>	<i>Vauti-</i> <i>khupa</i>	<i>Veti-</i> <i>khawpa</i>	<i>Veti-</i> <i>khawpa</i>	<i>Samang</i>
Porcupine	<i>Sawku</i>	<i>Saku</i>	<i>Sawku</i>	<i>Saku</i>	<i>Sakuh</i>
Hedgehog	<i>Sawthai</i>	<i>Sathia</i>	<i>Sawthai</i>	<i>Sawthai</i>	<i>Kusi</i>
Pheasant ( <i>kalij</i> )	<i>Vacharipa</i>	<i>Vacharipa</i>	<i>Vacharipa</i>	<i>Vachari</i>	<i>Vahrit</i>
Jungle fowl	<i>Rahawh</i>	<i>Reah</i>	<i>Raawh</i>	<i>Raawh</i>	<i>Ramar</i>
Partridge	<i>Beukheipa</i>	<i>Bawkeipa</i>	<i>Vaparong</i>	<i>Vaparong</i>	<i>Varung</i>
Peacock- pheasant	<i>Varapa</i>	<i>Valahuapa</i>	<i>Varapa</i>	<i>Valahawpa</i>	<i>Varihaw</i>
Mrs. Hume's pheasant ( <i>Syrmaticus</i> <i>Humiae</i> <i>Humiae</i> )	<i>Vawvu</i>	<i>Vavupa</i>	<i>Vawvu</i>	<i>Vawvu</i>	<i>Vavu</i> <sup>2</sup>
King crow	<i>Vathlepa</i>	<i>Vazongpi</i>	<i>Vathlepa</i>	<i>Vathlepa</i>	<i>Vakul</i>
Babbler	<i>Vazaw</i>	<i>Vaza</i>	<i>Vawzaw</i>	<i>Vawzaw</i>	<i>Vazar</i>
Great Indian hornbill	<i>Kawnga</i>	<i>Vakuang-</i> <i>apa</i>	<i>Kawnga</i>	<i>Kawnga</i>	<i>Vapual</i>
Minivet	<i>Bemai</i>	<i>Bawme</i>	<i>Benai</i>	<i>Bonai</i>	<i>Bawng</i>
Imperial pigeon	<i>Atuma-</i> <i>nong</i>	<i>Atuma-</i> <i>nong</i>	<i>Atuvanong</i>	<i>Atuvanong</i>	<i>Bullut</i>
Green pigeon	<i>Vahi</i>	<i>Vahi</i>	<i>Vahisenong</i>	<i>Vahi</i>	<i>Vahui</i>
Bulbul	<i>Phiabipa</i>	<i>Bebiapa</i>	<i>Biabipa</i>	<i>Phiabipa</i>	<i>Tlaiber</i>
Hoopoe ( <i>Upupa ni-</i> <i>gripennis</i> )	<i>Vatlong-</i> <i>pahripa</i>	<i>Matlong-</i> <i>mari</i>	<i>Vathlong-</i> <i>hripa</i>	<i>Khekaripa</i>	<i>Tukkhum-</i> <i>vilik</i>

<sup>1</sup> The Thado *sagul* means a wild pig as one of a sounder, whereas *ngälchäng* is used for a solitary wild boar. It is possible, therefore, that in this case the contrast between the Lakher and Lushei words is more apparent than real.—J. H. H.

<sup>2</sup> *Vavu* in Thado is used for Mrs. Hume's Pheasant.—J. H. H.