



Karuna Mission Social
Solidarity (KMSS) - Loikaw
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2017



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Livelihood, Land Use and Customary Tenure in **KHUPRA**

Report of a
Participatory
Action
Research

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Published by Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS)-Loikaw

KMSS: www.kmss-caritasmyanmar.org

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Cover photos: Christian Erni, Alesio Ngairi

Maps: Nabwong Chuaychuwong (Fig. 02);

all other maps and satellite images were created by Prawit Nikornuaychai

Printed in Yangon by MYINT color offset

This publication has been produced with financial support from MISEREOR, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Introduction

This report is the result of a participatory action research (PAR) conducted by members of Khupra community and Karuna Mission Social Solidarity-Loikaw (KMSS-Loikaw) Livelihood Program team between October 2015 to November 2016. In its first field work, the research team was joined by members of the Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Nationalities (IP/EN) network who had attended the preparatory training.

The PAR is one of the components of the project that supports indigenous communities in Kayah/Karen state to document and seek official recognition of their customary land and natural resource rights and management practices.

This report contains the findings of the PAR and is part of the evidence compiled by Khupra community that is proof of the community's long and close relationship to and dependence on its land and resources. The PAR report is complemented by a detailed map showing key features of Khupra territory such as settlement sites or sacred sites, and the current land use system. This map was also made in a participatory manner with community members and KMSS-Loikaw staff. A copy of this map is included in this report.

The three villages of Khupra community formed a research committee, which was part of the research team. The members of the community research committee are: Aung Thein, Krounsu and Khukabwe from Upper Khupra; Benedetto, Giovanni, Leone, Filippo and Roberto from Old Khupra; Anthony, Columbano, Luka and Pilatio from New Khupra. The other members of the research team are staff of the KMSS-Loikaw Livelihood Sector Program: Christina Timya, Elena, Anne Mary Ne Ne, Alesio Ngairi and Ignatio.

The PAR was supported by Dr. Christian Erni, Prawit Nikornuaychai and Gam Angkang Shimray as trainers, during field testing of the research methodology, and through technical support during data consolidation and analysis, and report writing. The research team would like to extend heartfelt appreciation to Gemma Nanmu for her assistance in report translation.

The research team would like to express its gratitude to the other community members who shared their time and for willingly cooperating with the team. The community not only shared their knowledge and stories, that was immensely rich and enlightening, but received the research team with warm hospitality and open arms whenever they were approached.

The research team would also like to thank KMSS-Loikaw Management Team and other support staff for the warm hospitality and having done everything within their means to help successfully carry out the PAR. The research team also expresses its deep appreciation to MISEREOR and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) for their goodwill and financing the research.



Fig. 01: Members of the community research committee. Left to right, front row: Aung Thein, Luka, Roberto, Benedetto, Khukabwe, Anthony; back row: Pilatio, Columbano, Giovanni, Leone, Philippo, Krounsu

The Community and its History

1. Khupra community

The people of Khupra community belong to the Kayan Hlahui, one of the indigenous peoples of Kayah State. “Khu” means son and “Pra” means eldest, thus Khupra mean “eldest son” in the Kayan Hlahui language.

The three villages that comprise Khupra community are part of the Khupra Village Tract located in Demoso Township at around 1,350 m above sea level. The highest peak in its territory, Paikana rises up to 1,803m. The village is bordered by Danto and Thadekho villages in the east, Bithu village in the south and south east, Snipe in south west, Kanklo in the west, Yatkhu in the north west, Sibuplaw in the north and Khubado in the north east.

Khupra community’s territory measures approximately 19 square kilometers (4,790 acres). It extends for about 6 kilometers between 19°30’22.98”N and 96°55’43.76”E in the North and 19°27’2.17”N and 96°55’21.35”E in the South, and is between 2 and 4 kilometers wide. The precise



Fig. 02. Location of Khupra village

area could not be measured since the boundaries between Khupra and its neighboring villages are disputed and currently negotiated.

Khupra's territory consists mostly of mountainous land, and very little flat land along the Kanklo River and its tributaries. Most of the uplands are covered by secondary forest, grass and shrub land and some residual old-growth forest. Most of the secondary forests are shifting cultivation (taungya) fallow at various stages of regeneration.

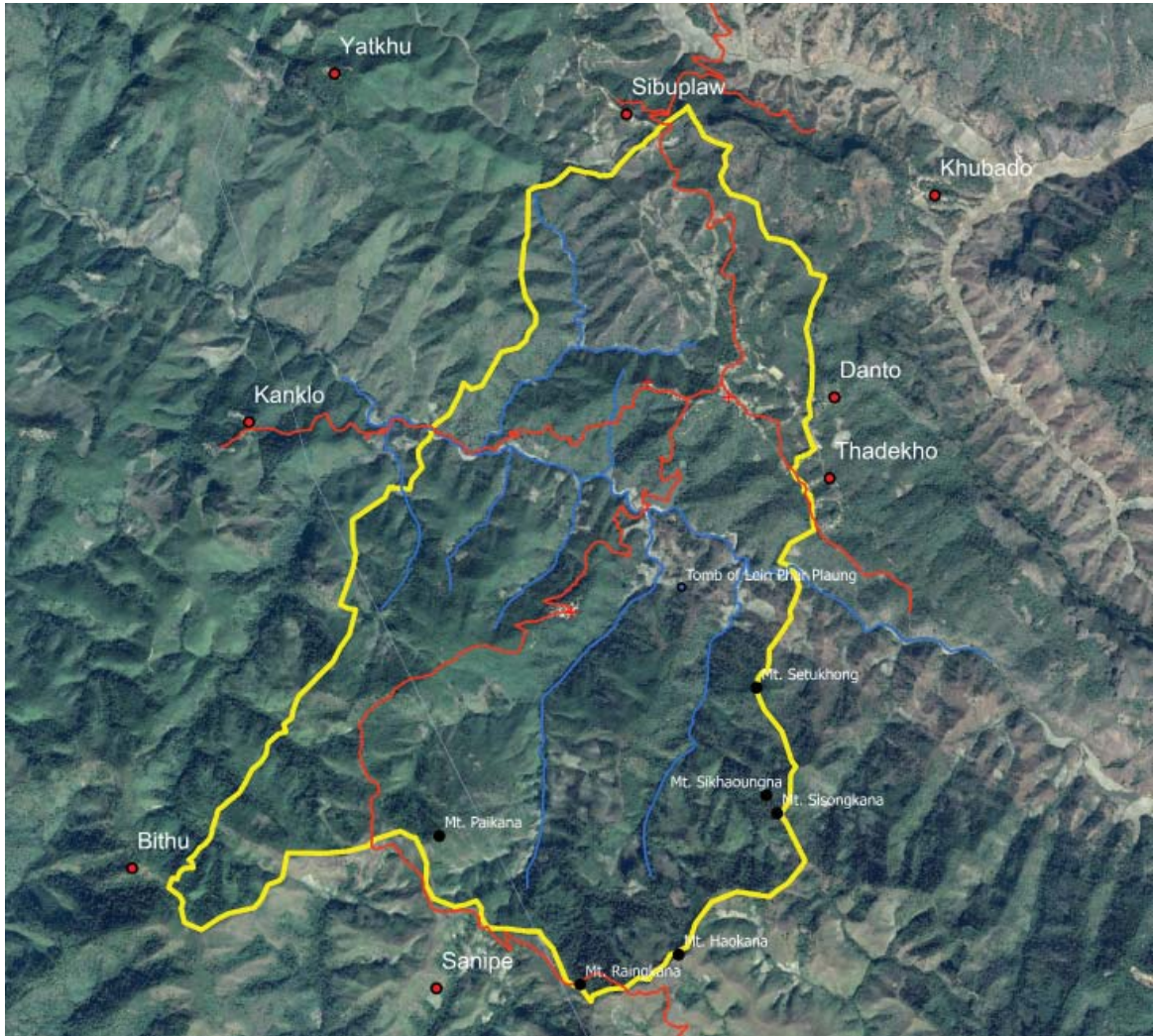


Fig. 03: Satellite image of Khupra community's territory. The perimeter line is only approximate since the boundaries between Khupra and its neighboring villages are disputed.

Demography of Khupra

Khupra community is composed of three villages: Dou Du ("Big Village", in Burmese and English usually referred to as "Upper Khupra") with 62 households, Dou Lú ("Old Village", i.e. "Old Khupra") with 26 and Dou Thù ("New Village", i.e. "New Khupra") with 24 households. All of them belong to the Kayan Hlahui ethnic group. The members of Upper Khupra are Baptists, while the members of Old Khupra and New Khupra are Catholics. The total population of the 112 households is 612 persons, of which 323 are males and 289 females. These are the figures according to the household census conducted for this study in 2016. The official figures according to the government census of 2014 are slightly different, as shown in table 01.



Fig. 04: Satellite image of the three villages of Khupra community



Fig. 05: View of the three villages of Khupra community: Part of New Khupra visible at bottom left of the image, Old Khupra above at center left, and New Khupra to the right.

Most households are composed of a married couple and their children. In some households, close relatives live with them. There are seven households headed by single men and ten households headed by single women. The average size of the households is 5.5 persons.

Table 01: Official census population and actual resident population

Official population 2014					Counted resident population 2016			
	House-holds	Male	Female	Total	House-holds	Male	Female	Total
Upper Khupra	62	157	141	298	62	154	137	291
		52.7%	47.3%			52.9%	47.1%	
Old Khupra	26	85	84	169	26	82	81	163
		50.3%	49.7%			50.3%	49.7%	
New Khupra	26	90	72	162	24	87	71	158
		55.6%	44.4%			55.1%	44.9%	
Total	114	332	297	629	112	323	289	612
		52.8%	47.2%			52.8%	47.2%	

Out of the 89 married children of all households, 52 married within the village, 37 married spouses from other communities.

Children attend elementary school and lower middle school in the village, but they have to pursue higher education elsewhere. All three villages have a primary school, and a lower middle school is located in Upper Khupra. 28 students currently attend upper middle school, high school and university in Loinanpha, Douroukhu and the state capital Loikaw.

There is a moderate level of labour migration. Four persons (three females, one male) work in Singapore and Malaysia, on works in Loikaw and Demoso, and one in Yangon. Eight (four men and four women) live in other towns.

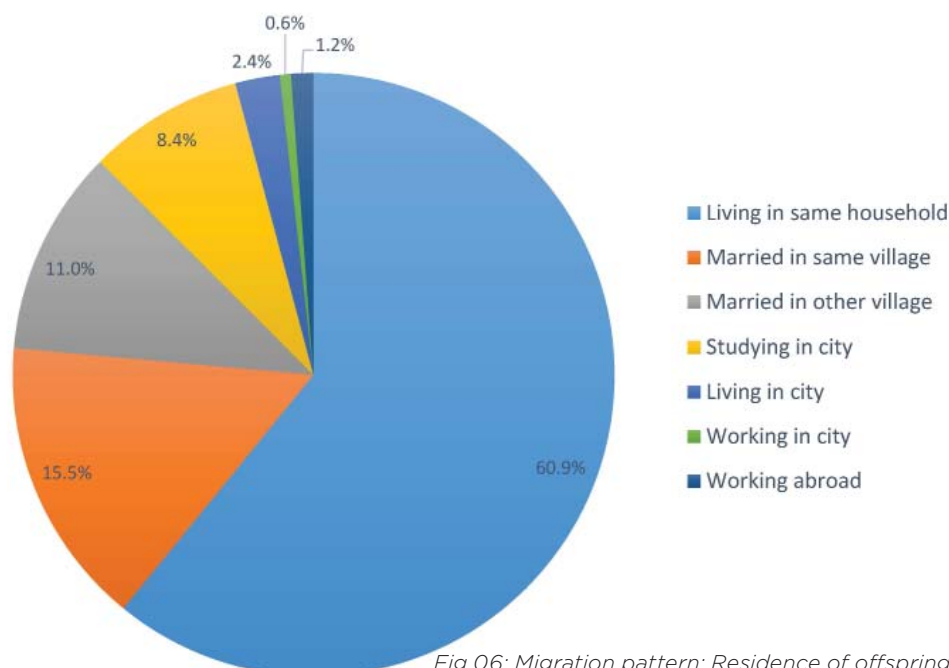


Fig.06: Migration pattern: Residence of offspring over 15 years of age



Fig. 07: Upper Khupra village



Fig. 08: Old Khupra village



Fig. 09: New Khupra village

2. History of Khupra

One of the first two clans that settled in Khupra area in 1350 was Phu Kaw and Phu Khan. Phu Kaw originally settled in Kalikhu village, that was northern Kalita village (at border between Shan and Kayin States). He was dissatisfied with the village chief for collecting two baskets of paddy as the administrative tax. He then went off to learn how to use the spear. Once he mastered the art of using the spear he came back to the village and killed the village chief with the spear, and he fled the village. Phu Kaw went to settle at Saikadaung in Kalupra area. His burial place became to be called Kawblaw until this day.

The other clan that came to settle in Khupra area was Lein Phar Plaung, Phar Yaung and Naung Mo (his brother-in-laws) who left Kalupra around 1360. Kalupra was a large village located in the east of the Htu River, and its inhabitants belonged to Kayaw ethnic group. But the villagers left the village due to disputes among clans and over pastures, and the village no longer existed after 1450.

Kayaw people strictly prohibited any marriage between uncle and niece, and between aunt and nephew. Any couple who disobeyed the custom was expelled from the village. Lein Phar Plaung married his niece, Mu Paw, and was therefore expelled from the village in the summer of 1350. After his departure from the village, PharYaung and Naung Mo also moved from the village.

Lein Phar Plaung founded the village

Lein Phar Plaung was a rich person owning a lot of precious stones, elephants and slaves (servants). When he left Kalupra he took along with him his elephant called Pharlaswa, gold bars and slaves (servants). He crossed Bithu and Takha areas and settled at Santo area. In order to know if anybody had settled in Santo, he set fire to the forest. When nobody came to protest his action,

he knew that nobody owned the place and so he founded the village. Phar Yaung and Naung Mo searched for him, and not finding him they settled at Sonekan and Dawaw areas. Later on Phu Kaw and Phu Khan moved from Kalita and settled in Santo area.

Fire destroyed the village

From Santo, Lein Phar Plaung moved to Poekantaung area. Two villagers by the name of Than Su and Po Su caught a porcupine in the forest and removed its feathers by fire. They did not extinguish the fire and the forest was set on fire that later burned the village down. Lein Phar Plaung lost all his possessions in the fire. As compensation, he was given a mountain between Kansoe stream and Mo stream. Later on he moved to Takokho village.

The death of Lein Phar Plaung

For his livelihood, Lein Phar Plaung grew paddy, beans, corn and other vegetables. He died a natural death due to old age. He was buried in Lukadein (now in Khupra area) together with a traditional drum, a gong, a musket, precious stones, a rooster and a slave (servant). It was said that villagers could hear the beating of traditional drum, gong and the crow of a rooster for seven consecutive nights. The mountain where he was buried became to be known as Lukadein to this day.

Khupra community

Lein Phar Plaung and his brother-in-laws, Phar Yaung and Naung Mo had moved from Kalupra (Khupra) and founded Doethakaw and Mutkahti villages. As the villages were close, there was regular contact and cooperation and inter-marriage between the two villages. Later the villagers from the two villages moved to Khaunglu, and by 1900 the village had 50 households. But the villagers still regarded themselves as villagers of Kalupra, so did the nearby communities. As times go on “Kalupra” became to be known as “Khupra” which means “first born son” or “elder brother.” Another clan who came to settle in Khupra was Ta Lein whose members were living among relatives of Lein Phar Plaung, and they were later regarded as members of Khupra clan. Whoever came to settle in Khupra became villagers of Khupra.¹

The clans and leaders of Khupra

The descendants of Lein Phar Plaung were: Yann Su, Ta Ka Waw, Suu Mo, La Mo.

From Phar Yaung and Naung Mo came Ta Than, while Ta Lein was the descendent of Pha Kaw and Pha Khan. So the clans now living in Khupra are as follows:

Table 02: Clan founders

Descendants of Lein Phar Plaung	Descendent of Phar Yaung and Naung Mo	Descendent of Pha Kaw and Pha Khan
1. Yann Su	5. Ta Than	6. Ta Lein
2. Ta Ka Waw		
3. Suu Mo		
4. La Mo		

¹ — Source: “History of Khupra Clans” written by Saya Saw Htoo Wah

There were two more clans in the past, but both have left the village: Ta Kha and Saung Htun came to Khupra in 1948 from Lukupra village that was near Bithu village. All the Ta Kha people left in 1955 to Khupra Patongan village near Kwaingan, and the Saung Htun people left to Danto in 1958.

There have been 23 community leaders of Khupra since the time of Lein Phar Plaung. They are:

Table 03: Community leaders of Khupra

1. Lein Phar Plaung	13. San Thaw
2. La Baw	14. Thaw Su / Aww Su
3. Saw Pa Htya	15. The Su
4. Hta Su	16. La Koe
5. Ya Khay	17. Mawt Su
6. Ki PhaYo	18. HtarTha
7. Ka La Phri	19. Ye Su
8. Lut Su	20. Ya Khay
9. Ka Su	21. Mattia
10. Phat Lo	22. Sar Da
11. Ba Thawt	23. Moses
12. Man Su	

Language spoken in Khupra

People who had moved from Kalupra spoke Kayaw in their new settlements. As time went on they began to adopt the dialect spoken by the Ta Lein clan who had moved to Khupra from Kalita village, and to this day the dialect of Ta Lein (which is a dialect of the Kyan Hlahui language) is still used in Khupra. Besides Khupra community has a mixture of Kayaw and Ta Lein customs and culture.

Traditional belief and conversion to Christianity

Before 1900 Khupra clans were followers of the traditional Kayan religion, a form of animism. They celebrated Tagontain festival, during which a long, straight decorated wooden pole is erected with ritual and dancing every year. Tagontain means “stair that connects heaven and earth”. It was recounted by the elders that Khupra clans were the best dancers at the tagontain festival.

At that time, there were frequent fighting and lawsuits among Khupra and surrounding communities. Villagers of Khupra looked for some wise people who would stand by them and advise them in those situations. At that time Doroukhu (that is located in the east of Khupra) had already embraced the Catholic faith and there were some educated people in that village. So Khupra community members invited those educated persons from Doroukhu to their village, but their invitation was turned down. During that time, Baptist missionaries from Taungngu arrived in Khupra and told the villagers to become Baptists. In addition, the Baptist missionaries sent some educated persons to Khupra.

At that time Khupra had two village chiefs by the name of U Khin Maung and U Mu Htraw, and there was a power struggle between the two. Those villagers who supported U Khin Maung became Baptists in 1903. The villagers that supported U Mu Htraw became Catholics in 1906. The 20 Baptists families moved to a settlement east of Khupra, while the Catholics, about 30 families, remained in Khulaung (near the cemetery of today's Old Khupra).



Fig. 10: The church of New Khupra



Fig. 11: The church of Old Khupra



Fig. 12: The church of Upper Khupra

Split of Khupra settlement

As the number of households increased, there was less land available for cultivation. Besides, social problems had also arisen within the village. So the village split as some people chose to move to new areas.

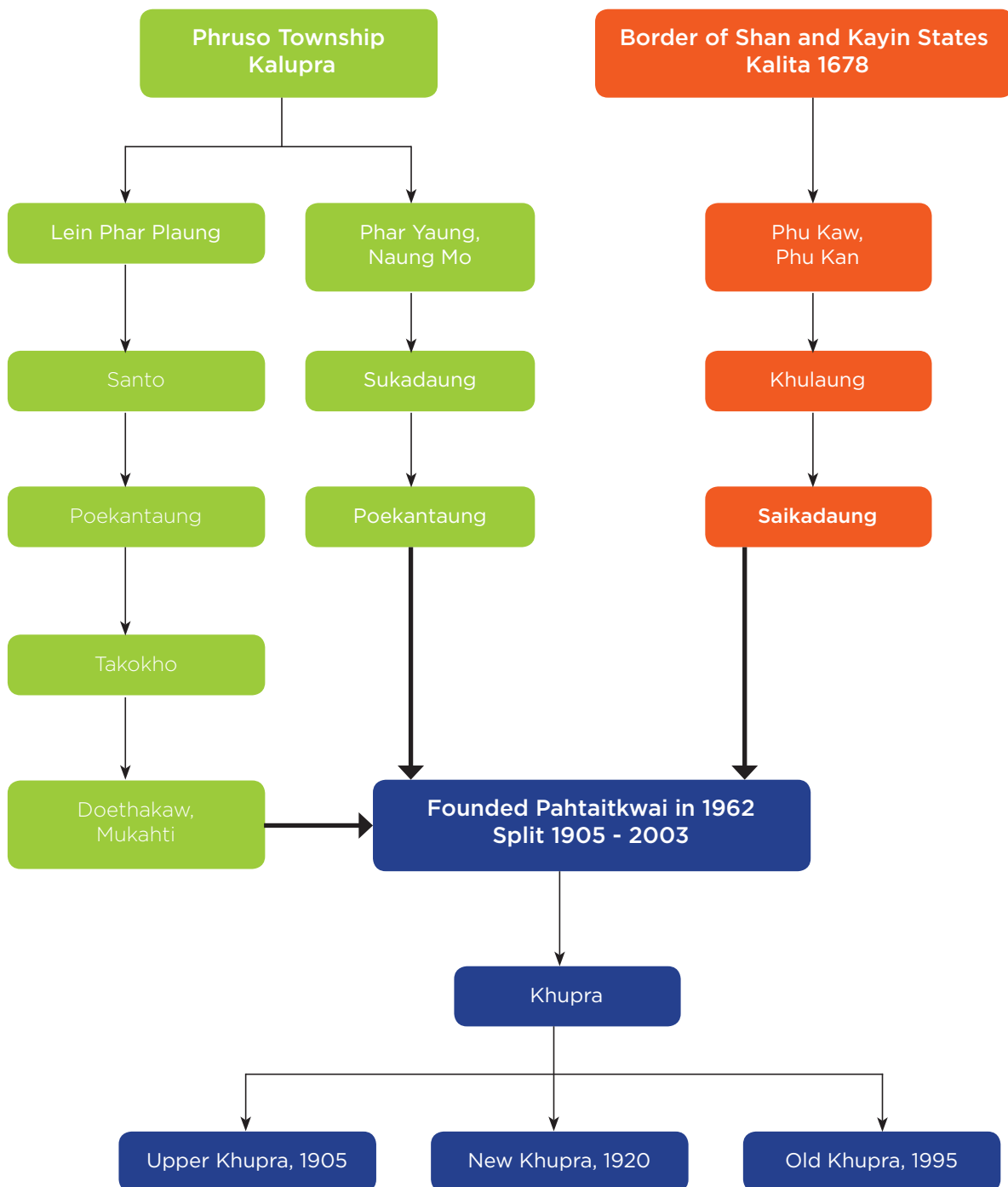
In 1905, the Baptists families moved to settle on the hill near the original Khupra, and the village is now known as Khupra or Upper Khupra.

Another new settlement was established in the Matukhaung area opposite of Kanklo stream in 1920 by families led by U Oh Har, U Thari, U Peitzu and U Muu Lo. This new settlement is called New Khupra and it is also known as Matukhaung. They are all Catholics.

Due to livelihood difficulties, some households moved in 1995 to settle on a mountain called Prainkaday or Thwinkadaw that is located near the original Khupra. The community is now called Old Khupra, and it is the village of Catholics.

Families of U Tai Su, U S'kalai and U Muu converted to Buddhism-animism (Byamaso) from the Catholic faith, and they settled on Tyanday hill in 1945. But they all moved to new areas in 1965.

Fig. 13: The foundation of Khupra village



Hardships during WW II and armed conflicts

In 1941, the invading Japanese reached Kayah State (at that time called Karenni State). Some youths from Khupra went to Wabanplo village to join others to mount an attack against the Japanese. Khupra villagers U Kli Su and U Ba Khe lost their lives during the fighting against the Japanese soldiers. During 1945-1946, the retreating Japanese soldiers took refuge near Innsu stream between Khupra and Bithu. The people from nearby villages again fought against the intruders. In that fighting, U Ko and U Kaung Su from Khupra community were killed, while there were ten casualties among the Japanese soldiers.

In 1991 Khupra community was forcefully displaced to Aungmingala village/quarter in Demoso Township due to the armed conflict between the Myanmar Tatmadaw and the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). A total of 66 households from Khupra (all three clusters) were displaced. After two years the villagers were able to return to Khupra.²

Migration to other communities

Over the years, some villagers chose to migrate to communities outside of Khupra area. Most of them remained within Demoso township and almost all within Kayah state. In some cases the year of migration is not remembered any more. These villagers migrated to the following areas:

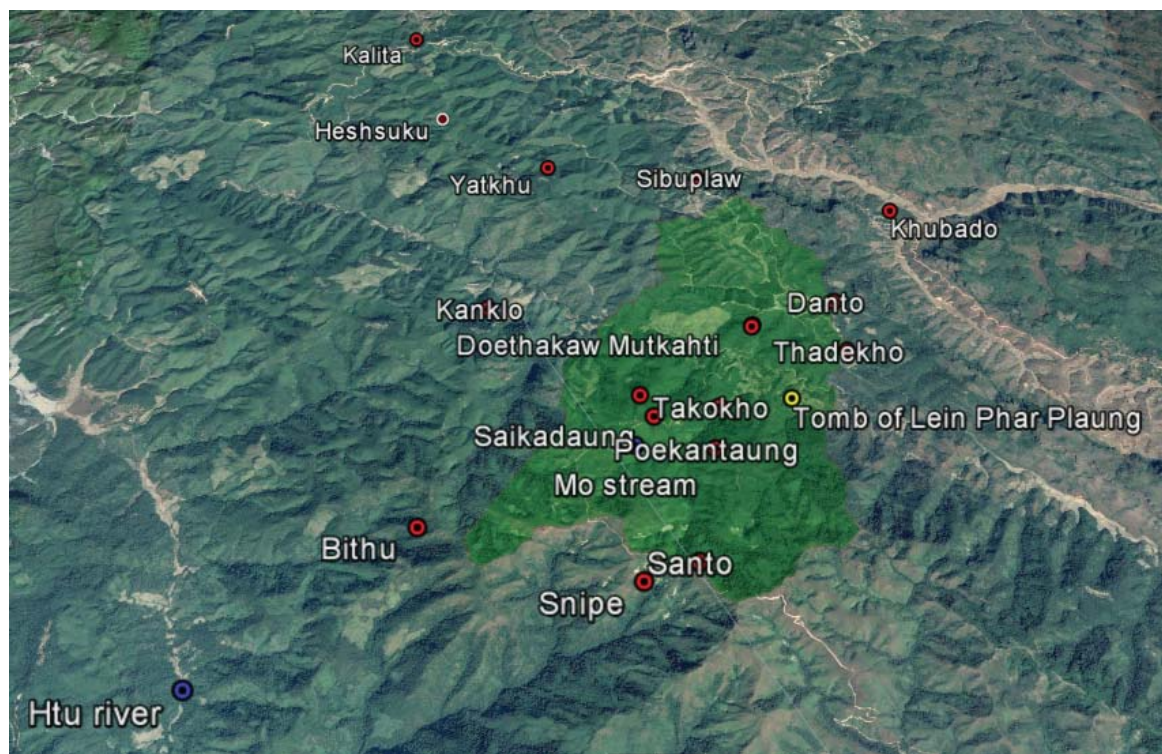


Fig. 14: Historical places

² — Source: “History of Khupra Clans” written by Saya Saw Htoo Wah

Table 04. Outmigration

Year	Community/Town	Township	State/Region
1953	6 Mile (Sanpya)	Demoso	Kayah State
1956	Patongan	Demoso	Kayah State
1958	Dawbukho	Demoso	Kayah State
1960	Okhuri	Demoso	Kayah State
1969	Htudungantha	Loikaw	Kayah State
1976	Sinlinn	Demoso	Kayah State
1985	Khuprahtoo	Demoso	Kayah State
n.d.	Nanmekhon	Demoso	Kayah State
n.d.	Loikaw	Loikaw	Kayah State
n.d.	Lawpita	Loikaw	Kayah State
n.d.	Hose	Mese	Kayah State
n.d.	Mese	Mese	Kayah State
n.d.	Taungngu	Taungngu	Bago Region

Important sites, historical events and personalities

Kanso waterfall

Kanso is a small stream flowing into Kanklo River. At the upper part of the stream there is a water fall, and the noise of water falling can be heard from nearby. But in extraordinary times, like when there is a heavy downpour of rain in summer, the waterfall can be heard even from a distance. On June 30, 1960, there was heavy rain and massive landslides following an unusual noise from Kanso waterfall.

Oath bearing tree

If any problem arose between two persons or two groups, the practice was that a third person or group would take the quarrelling persons or groups before a tree and make them take an oath by making a cut in that tree. They were supposed to keep that oath and it was believed that if they failed to do so they would be killed by a spear that stood at the foot of the tree. According to the accounts of elder people, there were seven or eight such oath bearing trees in Khupra.

Khupra, the wasp

In ancient times there was a big wasp nest near Pasayla village. The wasps would bring food from Snipe and Supyaung areas to their nest, and they sometimes brought the food of children from those villages. People from the surrounding villages tried to destroy the wasps nest but were unsuccessful. At last Khupra villagers succeeded in destroying it through collective effort. So people from surrounding villages praised Khupra for its bravery, and likened Khupra to the wasp in songs.³



³ — Source: “History of Khupra Clans” written by Saya Saw Htoo Wah

Elephant stone

Near Kanso waterfall, there was a rather big stone in the shape of an elephant, weighing about 18 pounds that sat on another stone. The stone was found by a certain KhunTinsu who used to hunt wild chicken and birds around Kanso water fall. One day KhunTinsu knocked the stone off its place, but found it in its original place the next day. He knocked it again off its place only to see the next day the stone in its usual place. He then moved it to a far-away place, but again, next day the stone was found in its original place. At last KhunTinsu moved the elephant stone together with the stone underneath it, and found that the stone no longer moved back to its former place. But KhunTinsu got seriously ill, and recovered only after offering a white chicken and a white pig to the spirit. Believing that the stone he brought had some power, KhunTinsu built a hut in its honor. If there was no rain during rainy season, a roof was made over the stone and then the rain would come. The villagers believed that the stone protected the village from various harms.

One day enemies came to attack Khupra and to steal the elephant stone. On their way to Khupra they consulted their spirit by reading chicken bone that indicated that bad luck awaited them. But in their greed for the elephant stone, they continued to proceed to Khupra. Before reaching Khupra, they all suffered severe nose bleeding, and becoming afraid they turned back. Although the Ta Lein clan kept custody of the elephant stone, it was lost in June 30, 1960 in a massive landslide caused by strong wind and heavy rain.⁴

U So Su

U So Su was a descendent of Su Mo clan and was born of very poor parents. Although he did not have any formal education and any experience in composing poems, he was well known for his wit and eloquence. His sayings were remarkable and they were pleasing to everybody who heard them. U So Su composed poems about his poor upbringing and his reliance on roots and fruits in place of rice. He made use of his wit and humor in conversing with his son, Lotmoso. U So Su passed away after Khupra embraced Christianity.

Table 05. Main historical events

Year	Event
1360	Lein Phar Pluang settled in Khupra
1903	About 20 households became Baptists from traditional religion
1906	About 30 households became Catholics, and built a small chapel
1914	Built self-help primary school in Khupra
1920	Constructed wooden chapel at Khupra(old) Five families moved to Matukhaung
1934-36	Left Matukhaung to move to New Khupra
1938	Constructed self-help primary school in New Khupra
1945-46	Fighting with Japanese soldiers near Innsu stream Built wooden chapel in New Khupra

⁴ — Source: “History of Khupra Clans” written by Saya Saw Htoo Wah

Year	Event
1950	Renovation of self-help primary school in Khupra Discontinued self-help primary school education in New Khupra
1952	20 households from New Khupra moved to Okhuri in Demoso Township due to scarcity of land
1953	Celebration of 50th silver jubilee of becoming Baptists in Khupra Government recognized the self-help primary school of Khupra
1956	Ten households from New Khupra moved to Patongan in Demoso Township
1960	Five households from Old Khupra migrated to Six Mile (Sanpya) in Demoso Township Paddy fields destroyed by heavy rain and floods. Landslides caused by heavy rain
1974	Reopening of self-help primary school in New Khupra
1976	Government recognized the self-help primary school of New Khupra
1982	Renovation of chapel in Old Khupra
1985	Started self-help primary school in Khupra
1986	Seven villagers died for doing taungya in a forest believed to be protected by some spirits (and therefore prohibited to do taungya)
1992	All of Khupra community was forcefully displaced to Aungmingala in Demoso Township due to armed conflicts Ten people from New Khupra died of fever resulted from severe cold
1996	Heavy rain caused floods, landslides and loss of crops



Fig. 15: School in New Khupra



Fig. 16: Middle school in Upper Khupra



Fig. 17: Khupra's health sub-center

II Livelihood and Land Use

1. Livelihood

Agriculture is the backbone of the livelihood of Khupra villagers. Except for one household, everyone in Khupra is engaged in farming. However, most households are not able to cover all their needs from farming alone and combine it with a broad range of other livelihood activities to support food security and generate cash income, such as the sale of handicrafts and forest products, doing carpentry or masonry work for others, daily labor in their own or neighboring villages, and seasonal labor migration. Small retail shops provide additional income for a few families, but only one household lives entirely off running a shop.

Wet-rice farming

All 111 households engaged in farming plant rice, either on paddy fields (*saouna*) or on taungya fields. As there is only little flat land suitable for paddy cultivation, terraces have been made in suitable locations for paddy cultivation. Paddy fields rely on rain and irrigation water from creeks or streams. Paddy fields are cultivated only once a year, in the rainy season. In paddy field they grow two varieties of rice (*Buudu* and *Maywae* in their language) and one variety of sticky rice (*Dee Bue Ei*).



Fig. 18: Rice terraces

After the rice harvest, a few families whose fields lie near the streams and can be irrigated during the dry season are able to grow onion, garlic, tomato, mustard and salad. These fields need to be fenced to protect from free roaming domestic animals.

No chemical fertilizer is used as the rice fields are fertile from rich soil deposits brought by the water from the upland. For less fertile fields, animal dung and compost from plants are used. Domestic animals are used to till most fields, and in the more accessible areas small tractors. Human labor is used in all stages, from transplantation to weeding and harvesting making use of customary exchange of labor between families. But in some cases, hired labor is also used. For harvesting, some ask for paddy (one basket of paddy per day) instead of cash for their labor. The harvested paddy is transported to the village by pick-up cars or motorbikes, and sometimes it has to be carried by people. No bullock carts are used since it is a very mountainous area.



Fig. 19: Ploughing a paddy field

Taungya

Taungya is the term commonly used in Myanmar for shifting cultivation. In Kayan Hlahui, the language spoken in Khupra village, shifting cultivation is called *soû khu soû kar* which means “the field on the mountain”.

Generally, throughout the world shifting cultivation is characterized by a short period of cultivation alternating with a longer period of fallow. Khupra villagers’ *taungya* cultivation is a long-fallow system of shifting cultivation of at least ten years of fallow. They prefer to have their *taungya* fields next to each other, since less labor needs to be spent for making fire breaks. Therefore, usually most of a year’s new fields are cleared in two or three large blocks.

The *taungya* cycle begins early in the year when the clan elders discuss and decide on the location of the new fields. Once some families start cutting their fields, others join them in that area. Individual families have their own plots, which they usually had inherited from their parents.

Lineages with large plots are obliged by custom to allow families with insufficient land to use some of theirs, usually granted against a compensation in cash, labor or a share of the harvest.

New taungya fields are cleared through labor exchange between the families owning the plots there. By April the fields are burned. All families are obliged to contribute labor for making a fire break around the block and to help start and watch the fire when the field is burned. After that, a fence is erected collectively where necessary to keep animals out.



Fig.20: Burning a taungya field

Once the field is cleared and fenced and the rain about to fall, each family plants its own plot. Again, exchange of labor among the families sharing a block is a common practice. Along with the main crop rice, other cereals like corn or millet and various tubers and vegetables are intercropped, such as taro, yam, cucumber, pumpkin, mustard, lettuce, cilantro and beans. Some families may plant part of a field with cash crops like chilies.

Seeds are planted with the dibble method in small teams of a man and a woman. Usually, the man makes a shallow hole with the dibble stick in which the woman places the seeds (see fig. 06). This causes only minimal disturbance of the top soil and helps reduce soil erosion.



Fig. 21: Sowing seeds in a new taungya

Table 06. Crops grown in taungya fields

English name	Local name	Burmese name
Rice (local varieties)	Maung tha, Ki tha	
Rice (Burman variety)		Myee Shy
Sticky rice	Dee Bu Ei	
Corn yellow	Kheeta ban	Phyne
Corn white	Kheeta buu	
Sorghum white	Takalon bu	Phyond kaut phyu
Sorghum red	Takalon lei	Phyondvkaut ni
Cucumber round	Kyutha talone	
Cucumber long	Kyutha htone	
Pumpkin long	Lwanta htone	Phayonetee shae
Pumpkin round	Lwanta talone	Phayonetee alone
White pumpkin round	Lwanbuta talone	Kyautpayone alone
White pumpkin long	Lwanbuta htone	Kyautpayone shae
Mustard	Sapala	Monnyin
Taro	Shu	Pain u
Sesame	Htae	Nann

English name	Local name	Burmese name
Beans	Baindu	Paregyi
	Bainshwin	Parenout
	Bain htone	
Chili long	Tahig ta htone	Moe myol
Chili small	Tahighta phruu	Kalaraww
Yam	Nwain	Myout u
Aubergine	Ganta	Kayantee
Tomato	Ganshuta	Kayanchintee
Centella	Tatekamonla	Myinkwar
Ginger	Aim	Jin
Basil	Pahoyla	Pinsain
Lemongrass	Mihigh	Sabarlin
Soap nut plant	Pakyautshu	Kinponchin
Gourd	Ceita	Butee
Sunflower	Phomonhtan	Naykyar

During the growing season, fields need to be weeded at least two or three times. No chemical inputs are used in taungya cultivation in Khupra, but there is also no formal prohibition against it. The first vegetables can be harvested a few weeks after planting, corn in July and August, rice is harvested in November and millet in December.



Fig. 22: Weeding a taungya

Only rarely is a field used for a second year, when it is replanted with corn and other less demanding crops like chilies. Usually it is left fallow already after the first year. Young fallow fields continue to provide tubers and some vegetables until the fields are completely taken over by secondary forest.

Khupra villagers never cut all trees in a field. Some larger trees are only lopped, some smaller trees are also left standing and lopped, to provide support for beans or yam. And since many trees are cut a foot or two above the ground they start to grow shoots again, other grow shoots from the root stock. This helps the forest fallow to establish itself very quickly. Many of the large trees have obviously survived many taungya cycles and have grown to a considerable size despite repeated lopping.



Fig. 23: Lopped trees in new taungya

In Khupra, fields are left to lie fallow for at least 10, usually for 12 to 14 years before they are cleared again. The fallow management practiced by Khupra taungya farmers, i.e. keeping large trees in the taungya fields and coppicing trees that allows the root stock to remain alive and to grow new shoots soon after burning, and the minimal disturbance of the soil during the growing period allow a rapid growth of secondary forest. After 12 to 14 years the area is free from weeds and the soil fertility sufficiently restored for a new cycle to begin.

Table 07. Local names for fallow years

Year of rest	Local name
First	Soûsho
Second	Soûrei
Thirth	Soûro
Fourth	Soûra
Fifth	Soûraou
Sixth	Soûraõu
Seventh	Soûri
Eighth	Soûdaou
Nineth	Soûdou
Tenth	Soûrihtanaou
Eleventh	Soûrihtanaõu
Twelfth	Soûrimaandahê



Fig. 24: Twelve years old fallow forest in New Khupra

The people of Khupra take precautions to make sure that the fallow is not accidentally destroyed by fire. If fire does destroy fallowed fields the vegetation has to be left to recover for another ten or more years before cultivation is possible in that area again.

Although Khupra is currently practicing taungya with long fallow periods as its population is still small and its territory large, the community has already planned to turn some fields into alternative farming such as long term plantations in order to address the needs of growing population in the future.

Animal husbandry

Breeding buffaloes and cattle are important both for farming use as well as for cash income. Two thirds of all households (71 households) own cattle and/or buffalos, in total 121 heads of cattle and 35 buffalos. Some animals are kept near the house but most households let their livestock graze on the pastures that are collectively owned by clans. A few families are using pastures of nearby villages, and livestock from nearby villages are also grazing on Khupra's pastures.

Other domesticated animals, such as chicken, pigs, ducks etc., are kept for own consumption as well as an occasional source of cash income.

Source of cash income

Almost 70% of all households (77 of 112) earn money through casual labor in the area or through seasonal labor migration. Most of them do this only occasionally, in total for less than 2 months a year.

Table 08. Annual time spent on labor

Over 6 months	9	11.7%
3-6 months	6	7.8%
1-2 months	31	40.3%
Less than 1 month	31	40.3%
	77	

42% of all households are doing labor within the village, i.e. are employed by other villagers. 28.6% (32 households) are seeking their income in urban areas in Loikaw, Demoso, Mawchi in Kayah State, and some moved to the Kayan region in southern Shan state.

In Khupra 11 people work as teachers, medical and social worker and for the state security forces: Two school teachers (both women, employed by the government) work at middle school, a lady and a man are working for the Karenni National People Liberation Front (KNPLF; as medical staff and a Border Guard Force). Four youths (all women) work as volunteers for the civil society organization Kayan New Generation Youth (KNGY), and three ladies work as volunteer teachers at community-run (not government funded) primary school.

The second most important source of cash income is forest products, above all the sale of baskets and brooms made from bamboo and broom grass respectively. A broad range of other forest products are collected for cash income: firewood, timber for construction, fibers for weaving mats, herbal medicine, orchids, mushrooms, wild vegetables, honey and meat of wild animals.

Cash crops such as chilly, cucumber, pumpkin, beans, lack root (a kind of vegetable) are grown on taungya and paddy fields, but only to a limited extent, by merely 10 households (8.93%).

The dependence on forest products in the livelihood of Khupra villagers is considerable: Almost 40% of all households depend for their cash income partly on the sale of forest products, and over 90% of all households gather forest products for their own use and consumption.



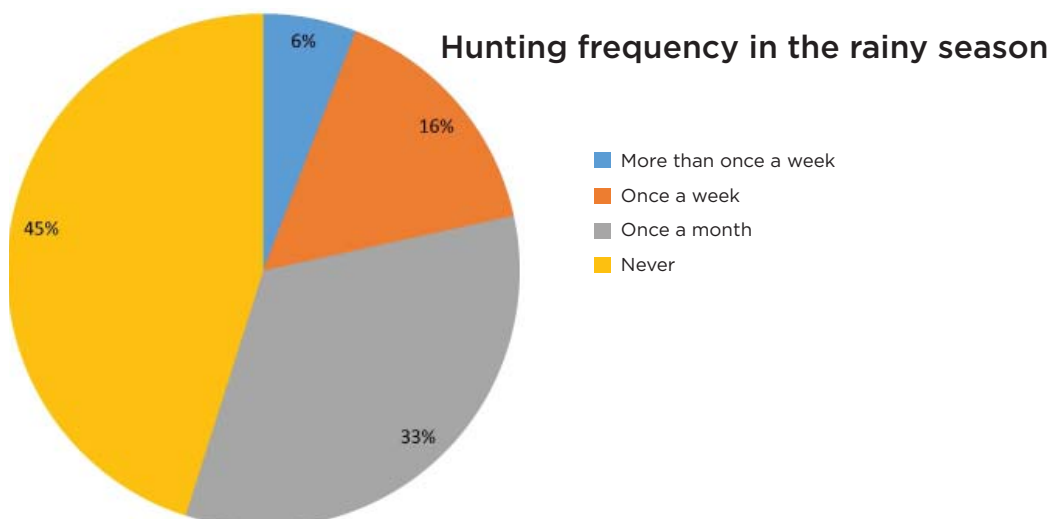
Fig. 25: Producing baskets for sale is an important source of income

Food from fields and forest

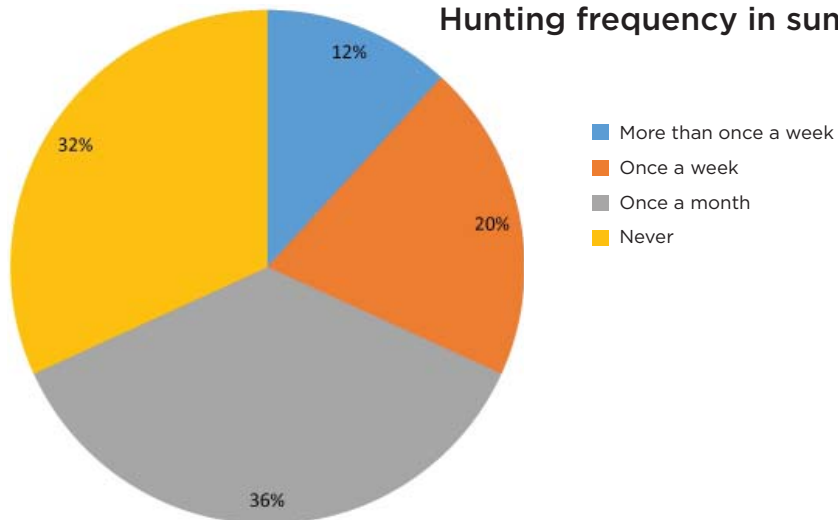
Increased mobility thanks to affordable Chinese motorbikes and the presence of itinerant petty traders provides Khupra villagers better access to manufactured goods as well as processed and fresh food like fish, meat and vegetables. Even though most households regularly buy vegetables on the market now, especially in the dry season, kitchen gardens, taungya fields, fallow and forest are still in important source of vegetables, herbs, spices and other food. In the rainy season, they are of equal importance, while in the dry season it is clearly the forest (along with the market) which is the most important source of vegetables for home consumption.

About half of all households are occasionally fishing in nearby streams, and in two out of three households someone goes hunting, above all in the dry season, when for one out of five households it is a weekly activity.

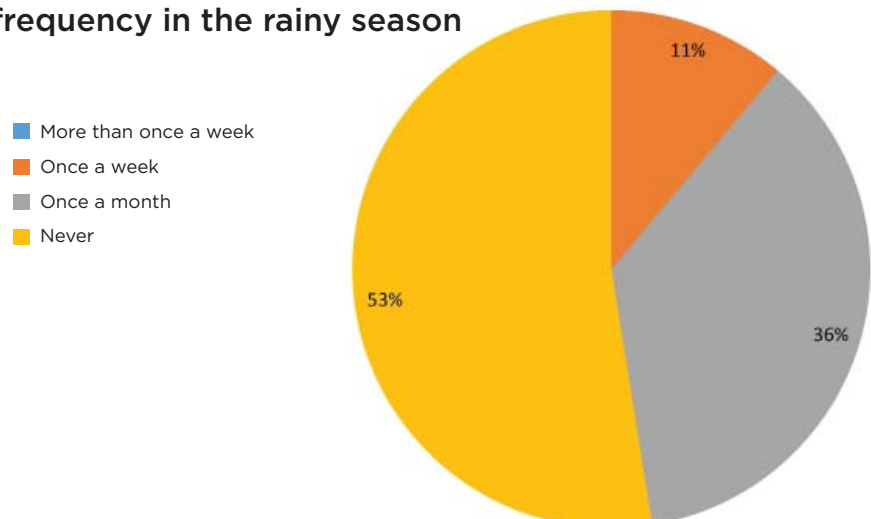
Fig. 24: Twelve years old fallow forest in New Khupra



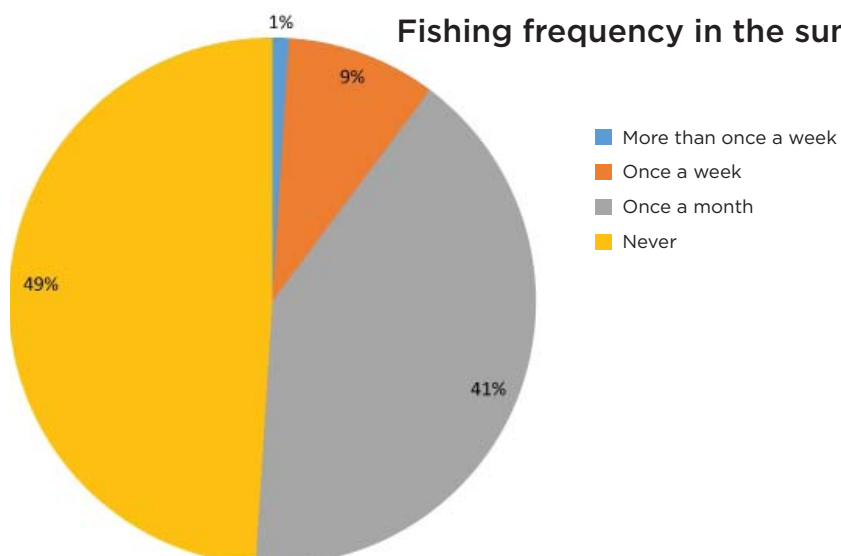
Hunting frequency in summer season



Fishing frequency in the rainy season



Fishing frequency in the summer season



Fields and forests are the main source of vegetables. However, with increased mobility and access to the market and due to the regular visits of itinerant traders vegetables are increasingly bought, especially during the dry summer season when growing vegetables is possible only on the few irrigate fields near the river and wild vegetables are also scarce.

Figure 27: Seasonal source of vegetables

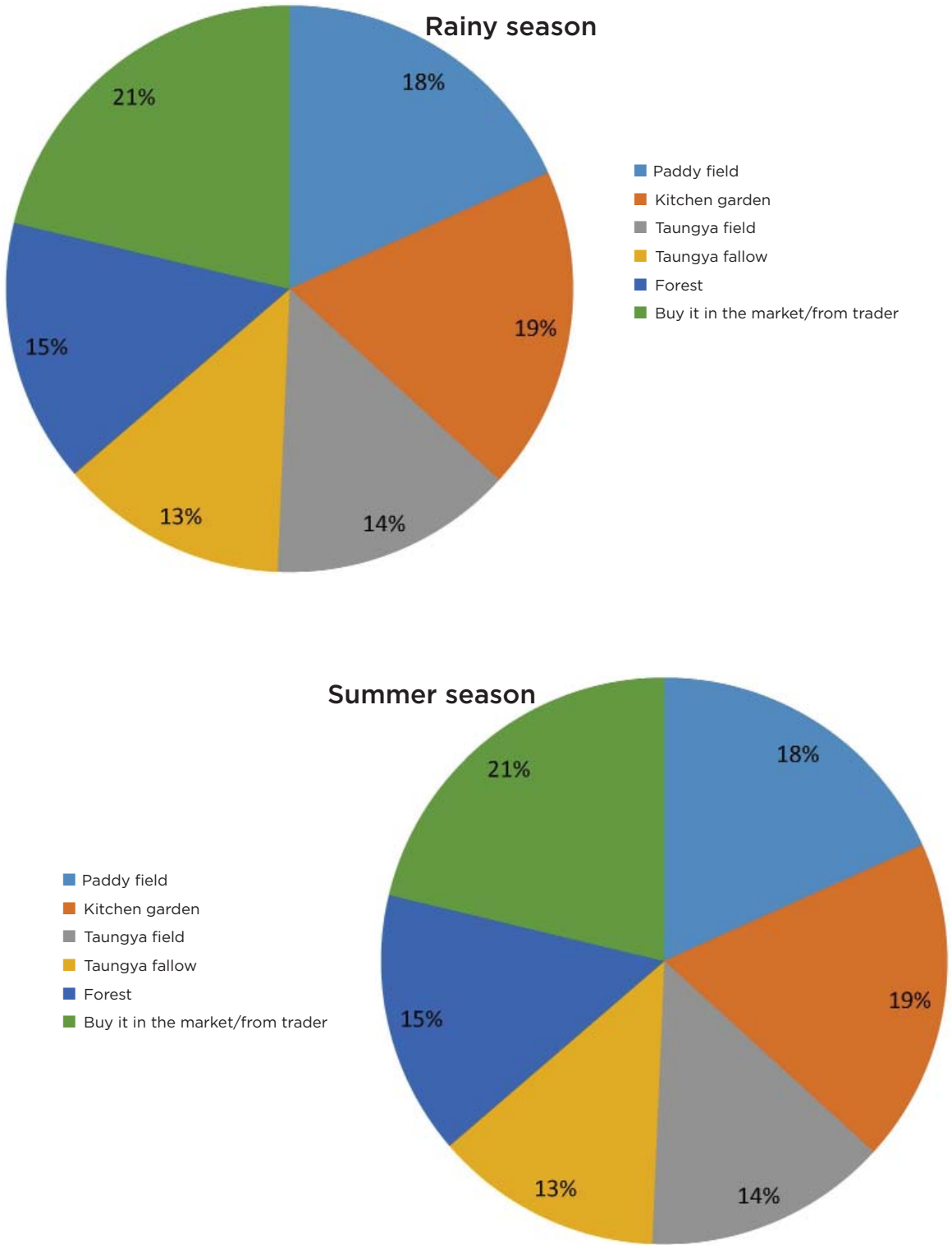




Fig. 28: Forests provide many kinds of vegetable, herbs and spices throughout the year

Food security

Only 13 of the 111 rice-growing households are able to produce enough rice to cover their needs throughout the year. 19 have enough for about 8 months, 26 for about 6 months and for almost half of all household rice is enough for less than 6 months. Since most households need to buy rice and all of them need cash for purchasing other goods, the various income generating activities are of critical importance for the livelihood of Khupra villagers.

Fig. 29: Level of rice self-sufficiency

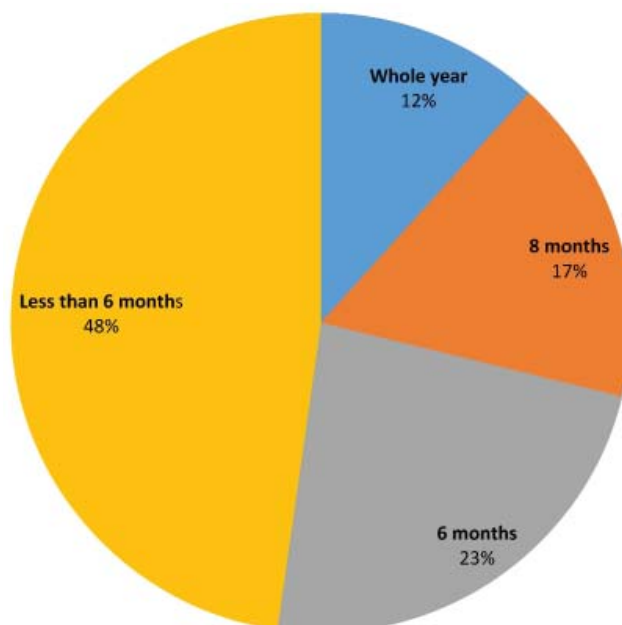




Fig. 30: Threshing paddy

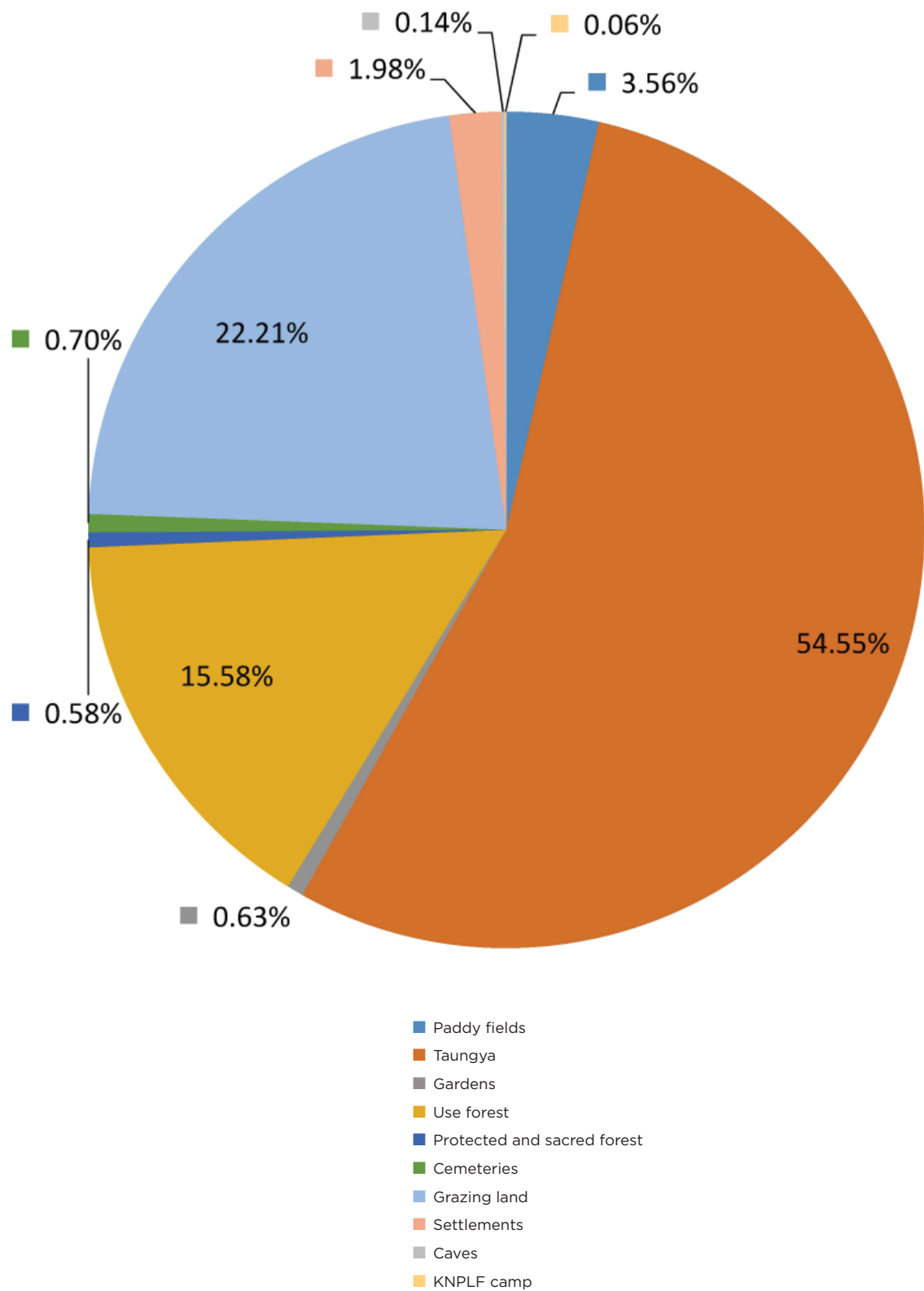
2. Land Use

Khupra's large territory is covered by a complex mosaic of different types of vegetation, the result of hundreds of years of land use by Khupra villagers. Agricultural land covers about 58% of the total land area. However, most of this is fallow taungya land under secondary forest. Thus over 70% of the land is covered by forest. The main types of land distinguished by the people of Khupra are shown in table 09 below.

Table 09: Land use in Khupra

Land use	Area (acres)	%
Agricultural land		
Paddy fields (Sūena)	170.54	3.56%
Taungya (Sue khu Sue kar)	2,613.47	54.55%
Gardens (Thoū tar phar)	30.15	0.63%
Forest land		
Use forests (Thoūphar)	746.56	15.58%
Protected and spirit forests (Kan Du)	27.66	0.58%
Cemeteries (Lu khu)	33.53	0.70%
Other land		
Grazing land (Bon Panan Kalan Ansar Gan)	1,064.00	22.21%
Settlements (Doū)	95.03	1.98%
Caves (Lōn Ku)	6.54	0.14%
KNPLF camp	3.09	0.06%
Total land area	4,790.57	100.00%

Fig. 31: Land use in Khupra



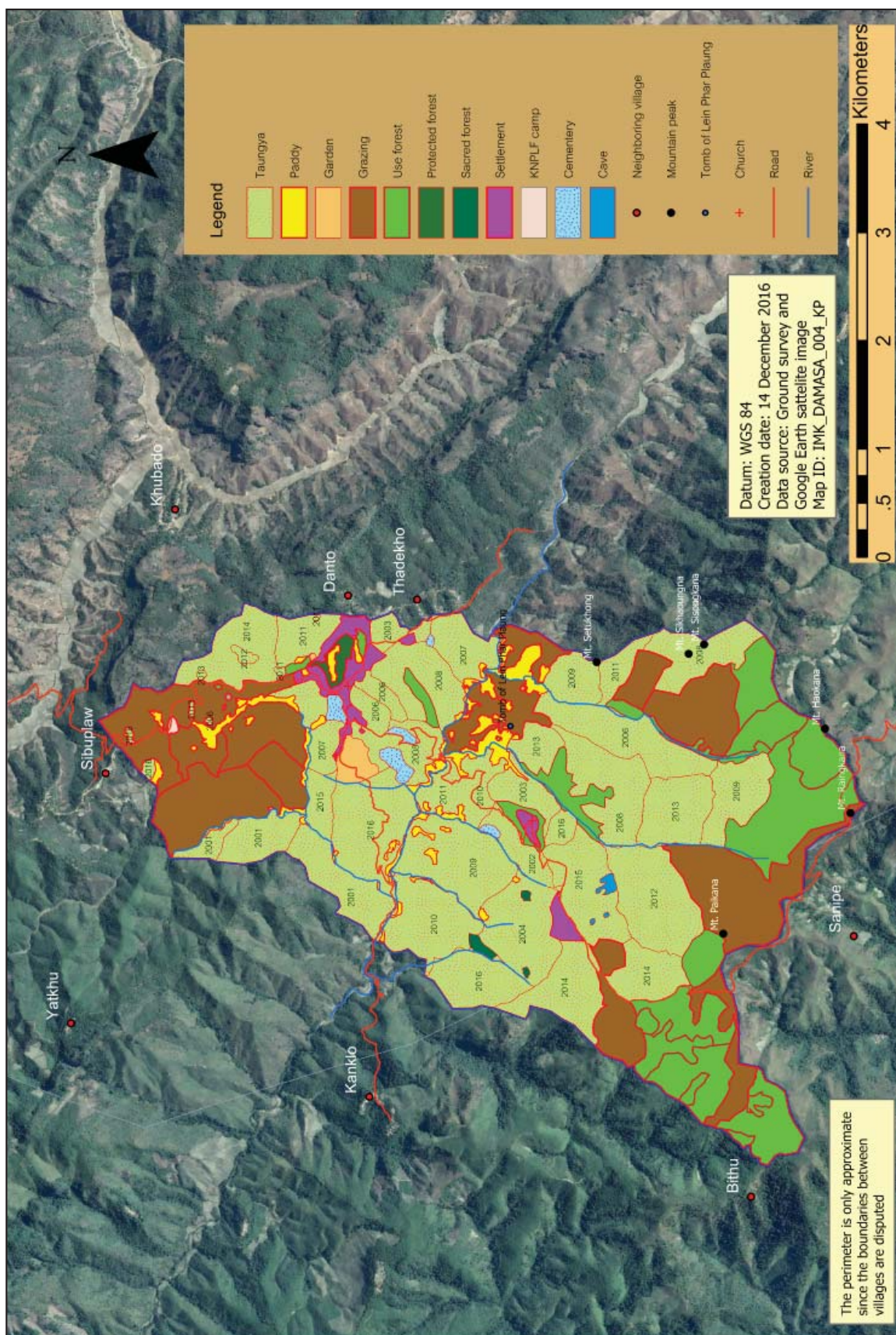


Fig. 32: Land use map of Khupra community



Fig. 33: Land use in Khupra.
New taungya field and cemetery forest in the foreground, paddy fields in the valley below

Paddy land (*Sūena*)

In Khupra, paddy fields (*saouna*) are confined to the limited flat land along the Kanklo River and its tributary streams. Due to the limited flat land for paddy cultivation terraces have been cut in suitable areas, a practice that started generations ago and was supported by means of technical training by the French NGO Action Contre la Faim (ACF) in 2010-2011 as part of a project on sustainable agriculture. These terraces are called *krain*. They also rely on rain and water from creeks and streams. Now some families started transforming their taungya and grazing land into rice terraces. Making rice terraces is very labor intensive, which not all families can afford. They continue to rely on taungya to make ends meet.

Paddy fields are also a source of food other than rice, including aquatic animals like fish, crabs or snails, as well as wild herbs and vegetables (see table 10 below providing an overview of resources found in different types of land).

Gardens (*Thoū tar phar*)

Kitchen gardens are maintained near the houses to provide their owners with herbs, spices and vegetables like lack root, ginger, chilies, corn, pumpkin etc.

Recently, a few families started horticulture of cash crops like cardamom, coffee and bamboo on parts of their taungya land. They are planning to increase these permanent gardens in the near future. Two households own a small orchard.

Taungya land (*Soū khu soū kar*)

Over half of Khupra's territory is used for taungya, and because of the long fallow period most of this land is under fallow forest. Aside from the many kinds of plants grown there, new fields also are a source of herbs, wild plants, mushrooms and small animals like birds (*htone*), moles (*yutaha*), mice (*u*) and squirrels (*yushiban*). The secondary forest on fallow land continues to provide a broad range of food and other valuable products similar to those found in the use forests.



Fig. 34: Land use in Khupra: Terraced fields and taungya fallow forests

Forest land

Around 17% of Khupra's land area is under permanent forest, comprising of use forest, protected and sacred forests, and cemetery forests. If the fallow forests of the taungya land is added, over 70% of the village territory is covered by forest.

Use forest (*Thoū phar*)

Use forests, like the secondary forests on fallow taungya land, are an important source of food and other products that are collected by the people of Khupra for their own use and for cash income: firewood, timber for construction, fibers for weaving mats, bamboo for baskets and many other uses, herbal medicine, honey, flowers and stems of wild banana, orchids, mushrooms, wild vegetables and meat of wild animals.

Protected and spirit forest (*Kan Du*)

Near Upper Khupra settlement the community declared an area of 17 acres as protected forest. It is a forest around a spring that is the water source for the gravity flow water system for all three settlements.

There are three small spirit forests: Surinkodon, Korlar and Donkhu Dandei. Together they measure about 10 acres. They have been protected since the time before conversion to Christianity. It is strongly prohibited to cut any trees in these forests since it would anger the spirits dwelling there and bring harm to people. In 1986, seven villagers allegedly died for making a taungya field in a forest believed to be protected by spirits. However, hunting wild animals and birds and collecting wild food are allowed in the protected and spirit forests.

Cemeteries (*Lu khu*)

Cemeteries are located in a forest. Three cemeteries are presently used: Phandain, Saprin Khaun and Pa Oh Ka Taung. The two cementeries Lu Ka Daung and Thu Kaung are located near previous settlement sites and not in use anymore. Despite belonging to different Christian denominations the whole community is using the cemeteries together and follow the customary practice of burying the dead.



Fig. 35. Phandain cemetery forest

Grazing land (*Bon panan kalan ansar gan*)

A little over 20% of the village land is covered by grass and brush land and used mainly for grazing. Cattle and buffalos from Khupra and neighboring villages are grazing in these areas. Even though the land belongs to different clans everybody is allowed to let their animals graze there.

There are also different useful plants growing in these areas, and they are used for hunting. Parts of the grazing land is burned every year. Khupra villagers sometimes intentionally burn pastures in order to maintain open grasslands, or they are burned by hunters in order to flush out game. Sometimes fires are caused accidentally or may occur naturally on very hot days. However, the vegetation is recovering quickly when the Monsoon rains set in.

When hunters cause fires that destroy taungya fallow they are expected to apologize to the owners of that fallow land. In some areas, where there has not been any fire for a long time, the forest is growing back and some families have started using these areas for taungya.

There is also increasing awareness among Khupra villagers of the need to conserve forest, which is reflected, for example, in the decision of New Khupra to declare part of the former grazing and taungya land as community forest.



Fig. 36: Grazing land at Saphukanar

Caves (*Lōn ku*)

Three natural caves are found in Khupra's mountains. They contain water and are home to bats, snakes and other animals. Bats are hunted and eaten and their dung is collected and used as fertilizer.

Settlements (*Doū*)

The house lots in the settlement areas are individually owned while churches, schools, nursery schools, the clinic, football field, roads and paths belong to the community. There are a lot of fruit trees in the settlement areas, bamboo and flowers as well as kitchen gardens with various vegetables. Domestic animals like pigs, buffalos, chicken and ducks are kept near the house. The house lots are usually fenced and may contain a separate rice barn.



Fig. 37: In Old Khupra settlement

Table 10. Types of land and resources

Land types	Plants	Season			Animals	Season		
		Rainy	Winter	Dry		Rainy	Winter	Dry
Wet-paddy field Terrace land	Paddy		√		Fish	√	√	
	Natural vegetables	√	√		Frog	√	√	
					Various insects	√	√	√
Taungya land (new field)	Paddy		√		Birds	√	√	√
	Chilly	√	√		Rodents	√	√	√
	Cucumber	√	√		Insects		√	√
	Pumpkin	√	√		Beetle larva (grubs)	√	√	√
	White pumpkin		√					
	Various beans	√	√					
	Various yams		√					
	Natural vegetables	√	√	√				

Land types	Plants	Season			Animals	Season		
		Rainy	Winter	Dry		Rainy	Winter	Dry
Taungya land: 1 year old fallow land	Firewood			√	Birds, rodents etc.	√	√	√
	Natural vegetables			√				
	Mushroom	√						
	Chili		√					
	Various beans		√					
Taungya land: 2-3 years old fallow	Firewood			√				
	Natural vegetables	√	√	√				
Taungya land: over three years old fallow	Firewood	√	√	√	Various animals and birds		√	√
	Natural vegetables	√	√	√				
Forest land	Wild bananas	√	√	√	Barking deer, serow, wild pig, squirrel, civet, wild cat, monkey, birds, snakes		√	√
	Various wild vegetables	√	√	√				
	Wild fruits	√	√	√	Frogs		√	√
					Fish	√	√	√
					Bees		√	√
Grazing land	Natural vegetables	√	√		Birds		√	√
	Fruits	√			Insects	√	√	√
					Rodents	√	√	√
Gardens	Lack-leave and roots		√	√	Insects	√	√	√
	Ginger	√	√		Birds	√	√	√
	Chili	√	√		squirrel	√	√	√
	Various yams		√	√	Mouse	√	√	
	Sweet potato		√	√	Insects	√	√	

Land types	Plants	Season			Animals	Season		
		Rainy	Winter	Dry		Rainy	Winter	Dry
	Mustard	√	√					
	Pumpkin	√	√					
	Cucumber	√	√					
	White pumpkin		√					
	Varies kind of beans	√	√					
	Turmeric		√	√				
	Pine apple		√					
	Papaya	√	√	√				
	Betel leaf	√	√	√				
	Tomato	√	√					
	Banana	√	√	√				
	Coffee		√					
	Lemon	√	√	√				
	Spicy Fruit (Metkar) local	√	√					
	Gourd	√	√					
	Jack fruit	√		√				
	brinjal	√	√					



*Fig. 38: Some taungya crops:
Rice being harvested, corn stored under the roof, beans, pumpkin, cucumber, chilies*

III Customary Tenure and Management of Land and Resources

Customary law of Khupra community defines clear rules for community members regarding residence, land tenure and the use and management of land and resources.

1. Residence rules

If outside people want to settle in Khupra village they need to obtain the permission from the village administrative.

A woman marrying a man from another community is not allowed to settle with her husband in the village. Community members are not allowed to have sexual intercourse before marriage. If they violate this law they have to pay a fine comprising of a pig and three pots of rice wine (the size of the pig and rice wine pot are determined by the elders). If they do not pay the fine they are not allowed to settle in the village.

2. Customary tenure

None of the villagers has any official document recognizing land ownership or use rights. Therefore, access to land and resources are regulated entirely by customary law. Customary tenure in Khupra comprises ownership rights over land, use rights over certain resources and the right to access certain areas.

Land ownership rights

There are basically three types of customary ownership rights:

1. Individual ownership
2. Collective ownership by a clan
3. Collective ownership by the whole community

Table 11. Customary land ownership rights

Land type	Ownership rights
Paddy land	Individual
Taungya land	Individual and clan
Gardens	Individual
Grazing land	Clan
Use forest land	Mostly clan, some community
Protected forests and cemeteries	Community

Paddy fields are owned by individuals, usually men. Only two plots are owned by women. Most households own some paddy land. Only 10 of the 111 households that grow rice do not own paddy fields. The size of the holdings ranges from 0.3 to 3.5 acres.

All households also grow rice on taungya fields. 13 of the village's 112 households do not own any taungya land. Around half of the taungya plots are owned by individuals (again in most cases men), the rest are owned collectively by clans. The size of taungya land owned ranges from 1 to 20 acres (average 10.5 acres). The few permanent gardens and orchards in the community were established on individually owned taungya land.

Forest land is owned collectively, mainly by four clans, members of which live in all three villages: Ta Ka Waw, Suu Mo, Ta Than and Ta Lein clans. But in New Khupra, the village decided that grazing land and forest land near Paikana mountain and Mo stream belong to the whole community.

Clan ownership of land implies that clan members have use rights over these lands. Furthermore, all village members have the right to access and use forest resources on forest land owned by clans, and all community members and even people from neighboring communities can let their cattle and buffalos graze on grazing land which is owned by clans (see more on use rights in the next chapter on customary law and resource management).

Customary rules on use rights and renting of land

The ownership right implies that the owner has the right to lease land for temporary use to others. But according to customary law in Khupra, owners of taungya land not only have the right but also the obligation to allow households that do not own any or do not own enough land to use some land.

Since land ownership is unevenly distributed in Khupra, almost half of all household (47 of 112) were renting land from others in 2016. In some cases they are allowed to use the land for free, but in most cases a rent is paid either in cash (10,000 kyat, ca. 8 US\$, per field), a share of the rice product (usually one third) or in labor (10 days).

Table 12. Forms of land rent payment

Form of rent	No. of households	Percentage
Cash payment	20	42.6%
Share of product	11	23.4%
Labor	8	17.0%
No rent	8	17.0%
	47	100.0%

Customary rules on inheritance and sale of land

When land is passed on to the children of a couple, sons get the larger share of both paddy and taungya land. Daughters sometimes also inherit land, but if there are both sons and daughters the daughters will always get less land, if any at all.

Within the community, land owners can freely sell and exchange their land, but they are not allowed to sell any land to people from outside the community. The only exception is the sale of land at the village boundary to members of the adjacent community.

3. Customary law and resource management

Taungya regulations

1. The selection of the site of new taungya fields is done by the elders of the village
2. People who own enough taungya land are obliged to allow people without any or without enough land to rent land
3. Before burning the field a fire break is made around the field to prevent the fire from burning adjacent fallow or forest land. All households who have a field in that particular taungya block have to contribute labor to making the fire break
4. The date of burning the field is decided on jointly and announced to everybody in time before the burning
5. When burning the field, the fire must be started at the top (forehead) of the taungya and carefully watched until the entire field is burned
6. All households who have a field in that particular taungya block have to help watch the burning and prevent accidents
7. All households have to contribute labor together to fence the taungya block as prevention for animal destruction
8. If anybody wants to take any product from a particular taungya field they need to get the permission from the respective owner of the field
9. Anybody has the right to take any product from fallow taungya fields
10. If somebody's domestic animal is causing any destruction of crops in a taungya field the owner of that animal has to pay proper compensation to the owner of the taungya field
11. There is no prohibition for using fertilizer and pesticides on taungya fields

Paddy land regulations

1. All the land owners much cooperate in the maintenance of the irrigation system
2. If domestic animals damage the crop on a paddy field, the owner had to pay compensation.
3. Flags of different colors are used as warning to the owner: a white flag is a first warning, a yellow flag is a second warning. If the destruction continues the field owner is allowed to kill those animals
4. Needs permission from land owner if someone would like to catch fish, frog, prawn from the field but after harvest they are free to catch.
5. For vegetable plantation need to get approval from the land owner, too.

Forest regulations

1. Forests belong to the clans
2. The clans who own the forests have forest management committees which have their own rulebook on how the forests are managed
3. Everybody from the community is free to take orchid, collect natural food and herbal medicine from the forest but not allow for cutting trees, bamboos, etc.
4. If someone wants to cut wood or bamboo from these forests, they have to get the permission from the clan that owns it. If this rule is violated, there will be punishment in the form of paying a fine or compensation pay
5. Community members are also free to take construction materials from the clan forests but they first have to ask for permission from the respective clan
6. People are allowed to take forest products only for their own use and not for sale to others
7. It is not allowed to cut trees that have been marked
8. If someone would like to make a taungya field in these forests they need to negotiate with the respective clan forest management committee
9. If someone wants to collect honey and bees they need to inform the forest owner and they will collect it together and share

Cemetery regulations

1. Burials have to be done according to customary practice and in the customary burial sites (the community cemeteries)
2. There are separate burial sites for outside people
3. It is not allowed to cultivate in the cemetery areas as it is believed that this will anger the spirits
4. It is allowed to hunt, collect honey and bees or orchids in the cemetery forests, but it is not allowed to cut trees and bamboo
5. Anybody who by accident damages a grave has to apologize to the relatives of the person buried there
6. Fire has to be strictly prevented in the cemetery

Grazing land regulations

1. Grazing lands are covered by grass and shrubs only nobody is occupying the land for farming
2. There are plans now to use some of these lands for cultivation and clans have started occupying parts of the grazing land
3. All the people from Khupra are allowed to let their animals graze in the grazing lands
4. People from outside Khupra are also allowed to let their animals graze on Khupra's grazing land

Regulations for creeks and streams

1. Everybody is allowed to catch fish, frogs, crabs and prawns in the creeks and streams within Khupra territory but only for their own consumption and sharing with neighbors, not for selling to others
2. It is forbidden to use electrocution, poison or lime powder to catch fish and other aquatic animals
3. It is not allowed to cut big tree along the creeks and streams which are marked and owned by someone. Any person cutting those trees will receive a punishment determined by the owner of the trees, and if the case is not solved at this stage the village administration determines the form of punishment.

IV

Community Governance

1. Village administration

Khupra is governed by the official local government administration and the customary institutions. The customary institutions are the clan elders and the forest committees set up by the four clans who own the forest.

The local government administration consists of the village tract administrator and the village administration group. The village tract administration is responsible for the following five villages that comprise his village tract. (Upper) Khupra, Old Khupra, New Khupra , Danto and Tardaikho. The village tract administrator is elected by the members of these five villages.

Like all villages, each of the three villages that comprised Khupra community has an official village administrator and official ten household leaders. They deal with all matters concerning their respective villages.

The current members of the village administration groups are:

Old Khupra

U Ambroso	Village administrator
U Elia	Ten household leader
U Benedetto	Ten household leader
U Nicodemo	Ten household leader

New Khupra

U Golobarno	Village administrator
U Roberto	Ten household leader
U Nicodemo	Ten household leader

(Upper) Khupra

U Htooday	Village administrator
U Elglo	Ten household leader
U Saw Nayblu	Ten household leader
U Kyaw Zin Myint	Ten household leader
U Khu Leh Htoo	Ten household leader
U Mar Naing Htoo	Ten household leader
U Aung Tin Maung	Ten household leader
U Muu Di	Ten household leader

The selection and appointment of the village administration is done according to the rules defined by the villages, which are written down in the community rule book.

There is no fixed term for the positions since resignations are frequent due to various reasons and new office holders are elected to replace them. The members of the village administration are selected by the community considering the candidates' ethics and manners. They must be honest and respectable people, should be educated, in good health and with a volunteer spirit.

All village matters are dealt with, solutions have to be found and decisions have to be taken by the village administration group. Clan elders and leaders are involved in problem solving and decision making and give advice to the village administration group.

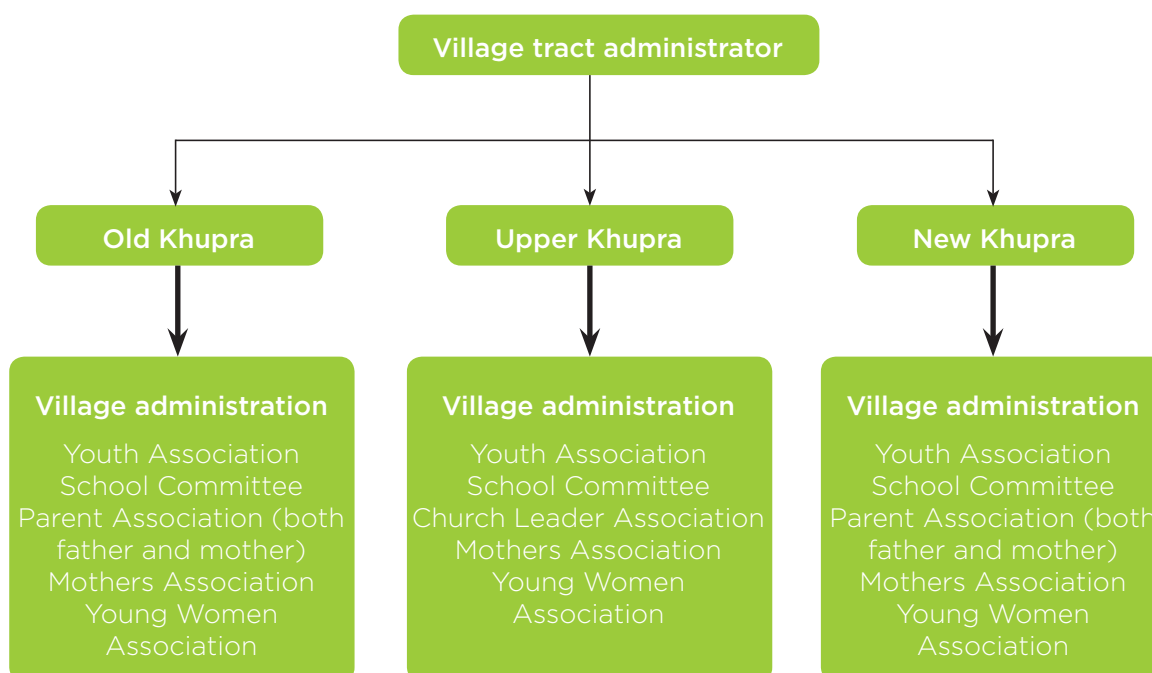
Roles and responsibilities of the members of the village administration

1. The village administration is responsible for ensure a peaceful life in the community and to set up rules and maintain law and order
2. This includes finding and taking action against persons suspected of violating the law in the village
3. Equal consideration has to be given to all cases happening in the village (social and economic problems, crimes etc.)
4. The village administration is responsible for implementing and supporting all community development work and poverty alleviation
5. Village administrator, head of ten households and elders have to explain to the other community members all their activities and show them all documentation
6. Before any village activity or meeting all people have to be informed and mobilized to participate
7. The village administration is responsible to preserve and manage well all community properties and funds

Rights and responsibilities of community members

1. All community members In Khupra have to pay respect to village administrator
2. All members must attend all meetings organized by village administrator if they are present in the village. In case of urgent work or due to health conditions, they have to send a representative.
3. Both men and women who have completed the age of 18 can participate in the community activities
4. All community member have to contribute to the community fund according to the decision of village administration group. Payments should be on time. If someone cannot afford to pay in cash they can contribute in other ways
5. All the household have to give one day volunteer work in cultivation for the village administrator per year. The head of ten households will organize this volunteer work.
6. Community members have to follow the guideline on community development work, which are developed by the respective committees
7. On all matters concerning the village, advice has to be sought from the village administration group which will take the decisions
8. All members are obliged to uphold village solidarity and development according to the village rules and regulations. Those who violated the village rules will be charged as follows:
 - If not attending a meeting: A fine of 1,000. Kyats per time
 - If not participating in community work: A fine of 2,500. Kyats per time
 - Any disrespectful manner toward the village administrator: A fine of 5,000. kyats
9. Fines have to be paid at community meetings and a promise has to be made not to repeat the violation.
10. If members refuse to follow the above rules another punishment will be given by the administration groups.

Fig. 13: The foundation of Khupra village



2. Village committees and associations

Each village also has several associations and committees dealing with specific groups and matters.

Youth Association

Each village has a Youth Association and all young people from the village are member of its Youth Association. Their structure comprises the Chairman, Secretary, Cashier, Auditor and the members.

Youth Association regulations

1. All the young girls and boys who completed age 15 are members of the Youth Association and must participate in the youth activities
2. The members must assist in social care and development works
3. They must contribute to village security and safety through the respective good manners
4. The members must be devoted to and protect their religious conviction
5. Those who travel more than 5 months have to pay a contribution to the association fund
6. Anyone who is absent in the group work has to pay 4,000 kyats per time
7. If a member is absent from group work three times he or she will be dismissed from the association and will not receive any assistance from the group
8. All members are responsible for maintaining the association properties
9. Members can rent association properties for a stipulated charge and they have to pay compensation for any loss or damage
10. If a member, whose membership is less than three years, commits pre-marital sex he/she will be expelled from the association and will be charged 10,000 kyats as a penalty. Moreover, he/she will not get any assistance from the association. If a member whose membership is three years and above, he/she will be expelled from the association but fined by the village (usually a rooster and a pig having the size of at least 6 inch in diameter).

School Committee

In each village a School Committee is formed by the village administrator, students' parents and the teachers. The Chairman is the village administrator, the Secretary is a teacher, the Cashier is one of the parents, the Auditor is a teacher and members are both teachers and parents.

The roles and responsibilities of School Committee are

1. Monitor and manage school security and safety
2. Collaborate with the community in ensuring and managing school funding
3. Maintain school furniture, tables and chairs etc.
4. Participate in the coordination meetings

Religious associations

There are several religious associations in Khupra. The table below provides a brief overview of their main responsibilities.

Table 13. Responsibilities of religious associations

Name	Responsibilities
Catholic action association and Church leader group (Old Khupra and New Khupra only)	Supporting funding, assisting in Church work and reading bible
Mothers Association (all villages)	Seeking for association funding, conducting prayer meetings, involving and assisting in traditional festivals and funeral services
Young Women Association (all)	Teaching catechism to children, reading bible, maintaining the Church, seeking association funding, setting up association rules

V Challenges and the Way Forward

Although Khupra community has their own customary law since their ancestors' time and which are still respected, due to the changes of living conditions and many outside influences some people are less interested in maintaining their customary law. Many feel that there is no evidence, there is no proper documentation, that these laws are just passed on orally, and that there is a lot of mixing up of different practices, that there are a lot of changes and that customary law is disappearing slowly.

People also are concerned that the way of conducting traditional festivals and their beliefs and traditional dresses are changing, and that their language becomes mixed with other languages.

Khupra villagers are particularly concerned about the lack of recognition of their land ownership. They do not have any document that proves their customary ownership. And between communities they are facing land conflicts that have not been settled for a long time.

However, in recent years the community has again become more united and there is more solidarity among the three villages, and together with Karuna Loikaw they want to work together on land and territorial rights.

Khupra community has started discussing boundary issues with the neighboring villages and are determined to negotiate further until the boundary disputes are resolved. In response to the challenges related to land, the community has identified the following needs for further action and support:

For outside supporters:

1. To provide customary land law training for the community
2. To provide advise to the community on good methods of preserving natural resources systematically
3. To produce a detailed map of taungya land currently used by the community even though the village boundary map cannot be drawn yet
4. To provide support to conflict resolution with neighboring communities

For the community:

1. To collaborate with other villages and outside supporters in making a joint map the territory of Khupra village tract
2. To participate in lobbying the government for the official recognition of customary practices, systems and regulations
3. To participate in lobbying the government for the recognition of taungya as it is not only the tradition of the community but also the main source for their livelihood



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