

Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge and Ways of Learning

Role of Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge and Ways of Learning in Formal Education and NEP 2020.

-- ***Mr. Surjit S Thokchom****

The highest goal in life: As per NEP 2020, the highest goal of life is to acquire Knowledge (Jyan), wisdom (Pragya), and truth (Satya) for the realization and liberation of self.

The motive for India as it is envisaged in NEP 2020: India as a vibrant knowledge society and a global superpower has been emphasized in the NEP 2020. We need a sense of national pride, self-confidence, cooperation, integration, and positive cultural identity and self-esteem. We must have an understanding and appreciation of diversity, culture, traditions, and knowledge of different parts of India.

The development goal: The development goal is circumscribed within SDG 4 to be achieved by 2030.

The knowledge that we must acquire and why: NEP 2020 introduces four main systems of knowledge to be acquired simultaneously viz. modern scientific knowledge system, eternal and ancient Indian Knowledge System, Sanskrit Knowledge System, and Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge System. These systems may have overlapping areas too. The document brackets the Tribal and Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional ways of Learning within the Knowledge of India and Indian Knowledge systems. The document asserts that Knowledge of India including Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge is critical:

- (i) For having national pride, self-confidence, cooperation, integration, and positive cultural identity and self-esteem.
- (ii) For an understanding and appreciation of diversity, culture, traditions, and knowledge of different parts of India.
- (iii) For fulfilling SDG 4 by 2030.
- (iv) For making India a knowledge-based society and a global superpower.

The intention of NEP 2020 in the context of indigenous and traditional knowledge and ways of learning: There is an overarching desire to redesign the curriculum and the pedagogy with its root in the Indian and local contexts. The knowledge of India distinguished from other knowledge does come again and again in the document. It is here that the employment of the Indigenous and Traditional ways of learning is mandated to be very necessary. The emphasis on the knowledge of India is also visible in Teachers' education too as it says, "Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions." The document also endeavors for a synergy between traditional and indigenous knowledge and ways of learning with modern scientific knowledge.

Values that NEP 2020 endeavors to promote: The document further envisages the promotion of three sets of values: the traditional Indian values, all basic human and constitutional values. Keeping the three distinct values that may or may not overlap each other is to be noted at this stage, for it is likely to have far-reaching consequences.

Traditional knowledge with particular emphasis to the Tribal of North East: Traditional knowledge though it is, (yet to be included in the curriculum), interfaces the mind, the heart, and the spirit in the context of people's life. Without traditional knowledge, a person does not have a worldview of her or his own. Traditional knowledge particularly Tribal traditional knowledge is housed in the language of the people, particularly in oral tradition. And the language is again housed in the world of work. And the world of work is circumscribed by the geo-cultural context of people's life. It is here the land, the world of work and the culture intertwine with each other. The traditional world of work and the process of production within a society have been validated over a long time. And this system is yet to be incorporated into the school curriculum. The prevailing disconnection between school and society is mainly because of the dichotomy between the traditionally prescribed knowledge and state-prescribed knowledge promoted in school. While traditional knowledge is imparted by society for social reproduction, formal education seems to be neither for social reproduction nor for social transformation. This is to be resolved.

Many a time, we take traditional knowledge as an outdated ethnic remnant and to be preserved as a museum specimen. Within this paradigm, traditional knowledge losses its essence and remains stagnant. This paradigm must change and a dignified space to evolve the traditional knowledge must be given in the school curriculum.

The post-colonial experiences of Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Northeast India: Within the post-colonial experience, Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge represents an inherited worldview with very little politico-economic space in post-independent India. In many ways, modernity in the post-colonial period is an antithesis of traditional knowledge, and sometimes, there is an endeavor to marginalize the tradition in the name of modernization. There are traditional practices that have been contested by the state directly or indirectly.

Traditional Knowledge that has been marginalized heavily may be looked into broad three categories viz. healthcare practices, imparting education, and preparing for livelihood. And there are inherited the traditional practice of health care and preparation of livelihood and informal education. There are incoming modern practices contesting traditional practices. These are imported by the state, contesting the traditional paradigm of development. Most of the traditional practices are based on empirical experiences over thousands of years, tested and retested and visited and revisited, and then reached a stage that we may call, “people’s prescribed knowledge” and it becomes the culture.

Problems, & issues, of Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge Systems: There is an absence of space for dialogue within the tradition. And it makes Tradition anaemic on the epistemological level and increasingly becoming weak to contest with the so-called modern scientific knowledge. The Indian state in Post Independent India, under Nehruvian perspectives of development, reduced traditional knowledge as an ad-hoc-arrangement till modernity took it over. And modernity within the Nehrubian development paradigm meant a strong flourishing capitalist India.

The available politico-economic space of traditional and indigenous Knowledge: Today, India has adopted Market Economy within a unilateral power equation and it is now advancing from the notion of Equity to the notion of Inclusion. Traditional Knowledge is now given certain politico-economic space emphasizing inclusion in place of equity. It is within this perspective, NEP 2020 gives some workable space to include traditional and indigenous Knowledge in the curriculum.

The challenges: We have challenges now. Traditional knowledge needs scrutiny and of course, modernity too must be scrutinized. Today India under present power has the mandate to stand on its own roots and become a world leader (both economically and intellectually). The promotion of traditional knowledge has political motives. These political motives may be good but

still, we must critically examine the motive. We also need to keep ourselves aware, that there is an overbearing notion that Indian tradition means Vedic tradition.

There is a tendency to look at traditional knowledge as something to be preserved rather than practice and it is used as a concession in the modern world. It is preserved as a narrative of the past and not taken as compatible with modern knowledge. The utilitarian approach of tradition remains anthropological, historical, and identity markers. The question for us is: what is traditional knowledge? Can modernity too be a tradition for us? As and when we have something that has been inherited and something that we feel proud of and it has socio-economic and political value and something that we cannot sacrifice but cherished and value, something we believe that life becomes less alive without it, yet not given a place within the modernity and remains as marginalized knowledge. This is to be challenged.

There is a tendency to pack and sell traditional knowledge. Research remains cocooned within the market viability. I would like to assert that Traditional knowledge is not necessarily in our past. But it can be rooted in the future too. Plurality in place of singularity, multilingual in place of mono-lingual, democracy in place of authoritarianism, connection in place of disconnection, etc. can be, must be and will be our traditional knowledge. This is possible if and only if when we stop looking at traditional knowledge as the remnant of some past. We need to see Traditional knowledge as organic and living, and allow traditional knowledge to evolve. This new paradigm demands space for dialogue in the curriculum and pedagogy. These are challenges in front of us and it is doable and achievable. We shall overcome!

**Mr. Surjit S Thokchom is an Educational Activist, based in Shillong. Currently, he is leading a movement for an alternative vision of education in rural Khasi Hills, as Director of Synroplang for Social Transformation. He was an Institute Advisory Board Member of NERIE, NCERT. He can be contacted through ssthokchom@gmail.com*

The transformative potential of folk stories: Two case studies from North East.

-Mr. Surjit S Thokchom*

Folk stories are expressions of the worldview of the community. It sandwiches the past, the present, and the future. Technically speaking, the content may not be possible to authenticate as history. It may be mythical. But it conveys an indispensable psycho-sociological, metaphysical, and epistemological basis of the community and people draw inspiration and meaning of life from the stories. It also helps us to shape the relationship of the individual to the community, the state, and nature. I choose two folk stories: one from the Meitei community (Manipur), and one from the Khasi community (Meghalaya). I will not reproduce the stories in full here. There are both oral and written versions of these stories. I will give a briefing on the stories.

Khamba-Thoibi story: The Meitei has a series of folk stories based on the transmigration of the soul of divine manifestation among the people. The story is about the 7th and last incarnation of the transmigrated soul of a series of stories known as Moirang-kangleiron. In the story, Khamba is the male protagonist and Thoibi is the female protagonist. The story goes as follows.

Puremba from the Khuman kingdom took asylum in the Moirang Kingdom. People were informed that a strange girl did appear in a place called Ngangkha-lampak. And Puremba took the girl to his home and named her Ngangkhaleima. Having heard the story of the girl, the King of Moirang took her as his wife though she was already with Puremba. Later, she was returned to Puremba as his wife as a reward for his bravery. Ngangkhaleima gave birth to a daughter and named her, "Khamnu". It is believed that she was the daughter of the Moirang king by blood.

Ngangkhaleima gave birth to a son as a 2nd child and the child was named, “Khamba”. At the time of Khamba’s birth, Puremba beat the royal drum. It was taken as treachery and therefore, he was ritually sentenced to death. Ngangkhaleima is too dead due to post-delivery complications. Now Khamnu and Khamba became orphans. And later they ran away from Moirang Kingdom and were sheltered in a small kingdom of Puremba’s old friend called Kabu-salang-Maiba. The sister and brother were well taken care of and educated and well trained. They came back to Moirang after they grew up and settled somewhere near Loktak Lake without public knowledge.

Thoibi was the niece of the Moirang king and she enjoyed the status of a princess. She became an intimate friend with Khamnu after a chance meeting in the market. Very soon, Khamba and Thoibi fell in love with each other. Their love life was troubled by a lot of socio-political and economic hurdles. Their relationship was not approved by the King. Finally, after overcoming a series of hurdles, they got married. The married life was short-lived and Thoibi killed Khamba. Thus the kingdom of Moirang was not ruled by Khuman blood.

Thoibi did so many unconventional things including riding a horse and going to Khamba’s house with a final decision to get married to him. Thoibi’s life can be a learning resource as a symbol of a liberated woman or a feminist. The story has a huge potential to internalize the rich-poor power equation, progressive worldview, woman’s freedom, inter and intra-kingdom politics, geo-cultural political context, class-clan social formation, the institution of family, the institution of the state, and priority to state over love. The story has full of events referring to the games and sports, the Hill and Valley relationship in Manipur, the conservation of wetland biodiversity, justice vs nepotism, exile, etc., etc. If we use the story as the window to switch over to several disciplines including politics, economics, literature, environment, etc then it will bridge between modernity and tradition. This is possible taking into cognizance of the NEP 2020. And a new perspective of modernity versus tradition will emerge.

Now let us come to the 2nd story. The Khasi traditional States are traditionally organized with a Hima (federal parliament) for each state. This is the story of how Hima Khyrim Syienship came into existence. Hima Khyriem is also known as Hima Ublei (Hima of God). The story is called, “Ka-Pah-Syntiew”. There is variance in the oral tradition of the story. Here, I am giving a briefing of the story. The story goes as follows:

Once upon a time, there was a divine entity called Ka Puriblei that lived in a cave called Marai(KremMarai). The Ka Puriblei was spotted near the bank of Wah-Umiew (Umiew River) by young shepherds. The shepherds narrated that Ka Puriblei who looked like a young beautiful maiden would sit on a huge rock. When they tried to go near her, she would climb down the boulder and go back to the cave. More and more people heard about the mysterious maiden but none dared to venture inside the cave. Then one day, a young man from Mylliemngap Kur (clan) decided to lure her(Purablei) out of the cave. There are multiple versions of who this young man was. For this paper, we subscribed to the legend that the boy belonged to Mylliengapkur. The young man collected a bunch of flowers named, "Tiew-Jalyngkteng" and held it at the mouth of the cave where Puriblei was sheltering. She came out and tried to reach the flower with her hands. As she tried to reach out, the young man would recede backward till the young maiden came out of the cave. Once she was out of the cave, the young man caught her and took her to his home. There, in his home, the young maiden was taken care and later she was married to a young man called "U Kongor Nongjri". She was then called, "Ka-Pah-Syntiew" and she gave birth to two sons and a daughter. After her children grew up, she left her family and returned to her cave, "Krem Marai". Her children were considered children of God. And Ka-Pah-Syntiew came to be known as U Lei Shillong (daughter of Mountain). As the children of Ka-Pah-Syntiew grew older, they became stronger and they formed the Ka Hima Shyllong (the state of Shillong).

We may note here that the Ka Hima Shyllong(Shillong) was divided into 2 Hima viz Ka Hima Mylliem and Ka Hima Khyrim in 1853 under British intervention. And the sanctity of divine origin as a descendent of Ka-Pah-Syntiew was retained by the Ka Hima Khyrim and hence the right and duty to rites and rituals, and religious ceremonies are still conducted by the U Syiem (federal Head) of Hima Khyrim. U Syiem of Hima Khyrim is believed to be of divine origin as per legend and folklore. The rules and regulations and structure of the Ka Hima Khyrim are rooted in the myths of Ka-Pah-Syntiew.

Here the progeny of the Hima was a woman. This story conveys the essence of a woman and perhaps this is the reason why the Khasi follows a matrilineal system. We may engage in dialogue. This has scope for us to use as the window to compare and contrast the patriarchal and matrilineal systems. We can examine the truth, goodness, and usefulness of the matrilineal

system. The geopolitical specificity and progressive nuances and psycho-social space can be appropriately used to deepen the understanding of the possibility of an alternative social structure. The stories give us an opportunity to have an epistemological revisit of what is patriarchy.

So much discussion is on at what level the folk stories are to be introduced. Traditionally speaking a folk story is good both for a small kid and an old man alike. It is just like a breeze in the field that serves the purpose for all. It is like a river to quench our thirst but the water will not dry. Traditional knowledge is something that will never be exhausted and it flows as a perennial stream. The knowledge as per the prescribed syllabus in the formal structure is given to the learner and it is rationed. And we blinker the child's capacity to learn by limiting the freedom to get access to knowledge out of turn. In the case of traditional knowledge, it is just like an ocean and everything is accessible to any child in the community. A child merges in the traditional knowledge and he or she comes out of it with his or her choice of knowledge.

The two paradigms are not compatible. Here we can re-imagine the alternative possibilities and may think of a paradigm shift. We can endeavor to include the prescribed syllabus in traditional knowledge in place of the notion of inclusion of traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge can host the prescribed syllabus in formal education. This will pave the way toward epistemic sovereignty. And this is doable and achievable.

**Mr. Surjit S Thokchom is an Educational Activist, based in Shillong. Currently, he is leading a movement for an alternative vision of education in rural Khasi Hills, as Director of Synroplang for Social Transformation. He was an Institute Advisory Board Member of NERIE, NCERT. He can be contacted through ssthokchom@gmail.com*

Wise Sayings of the Zeliangrong-Inpui Community: Lessons for Navigating Life.

--Dr. Achingliu Kamei *

Introduction

This introductory resource on wise sayings of the past is designed to provide critical insights into a community's philosophy and socio-cultural ethos by explaining several essential proverbs in the context of the four cognate tribes: Liangmai, Zeme, Rongmei, and Inpui. The purpose is to assist the student in gaining a greater comprehension of the traditional teaching in the wise sayings, emphasizing practical application.

Proverbs and oral literature are essential components of culture, which are often overlooked and abused by contemporary members of a culture. It is important to give attention to their proverbs, oral literature, and indigenous cultures and to sustain them through an ongoing interest in teaching and learning cum transmission. It is important to ensure that these aspects of culture are preserved and taught both at home and school.

This resource presents an introductory information about the Zeliangrong-Inpui proverbs, followed by folklore where proverbs were found to do a study of the wise sayings. This introductory lesson is made to inculcate new ways to interpret, understand, and read what was once thought inferior literature. This resource will critically engage with students and uncovers silenced voices while moving the majoritarian viewpoint to the margins and what was in the margins to the mainstream, instilling a sense of respect for their literature in young minds. It will also help the students better understand the wisdom in the wise sayings and use it as a guiding light. Further,

this resource is to be used as a practical component to assist the students in gaining a greater comprehension of the traditional teaching contained in the wise sayings, emphasizing practical application.

After attending the class, the students can read non-verbal social practices and wisdom. They will be encouraged to be open to the diverse forms of literature and understand how to apply proverbs as tools to guide them. The students would have learned to engage critically with the wisdom literature and uncover silenced literature from the majoritarian viewpoint. Further, the students will be able to demonstrate conceptual and textual understanding in fieldwork; by documenting, transcribing, and recording from this resource. This resource is mainly for young adults to make them think and understand better and have respect for their literature. It will help them in their daily lives while making important decisions in all aspects of life. It is also a good resource for research scholars interested in this field.

With the help of the facilitator, the student can begin by exploring a folk story with the help of a series of exploratory questions. They will then follow an in-depth study of the story, guided by an expositional commentary on the text.

Who are the Zeliangron-Inpui? Zeliangrong-Inpui communities are the four cognate groups living in Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland. Noteworthy qualities of the people are kindness, courage, gentleness, and humour. "At the most adverse times (they have the) ability to laugh at themselves without giving up their dignity and self-respect." (A Naga Odyssey: Visier's Long Way Home (2017)

Some colonial writers have written about the Nagas as simple people whose minds were unadulterated, which to some extent is true. However, they have come to this state of life not only because they were simple-minded. The art of clearing mental clutter has been passed down through the generations. The people as a community have learned to develop personal and collective rituals and to do things properly and intentionally. They have mastered the art of designating time for certain things, paying utmost concentration and mindfulness of every activity, and the calm and peace they find in their days moving along with the seasons. Unfortunately, with the invasion of technology and capitalism, some people have been sucked into the ever-widening whirlpool of the

'modern-day lifestyle.' The people are hard-working people. They do not lead a lazy life: he wakes early and has a work-filled day. However, he doesn't have an unending task list either.

What Are Wise Sayings or Proverbs? How are they important?

Wolfgang Meider defines proverbs as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation." Proverbs are deemed nuggets of conventional wisdom, containing high philosophy and ideal concepts, and are often used to lend support when making a point. In the Zeliangrong-Inpui community, proverbs' implications are elaborated to understand distinctive allusions better. The essential function of the proverb is to instruct critically, protect against an unfair system, and criticize and impart knowledge about society's cultural norms and logical and behavioural patterns among the younger generation. Proverbs also teach everyday survival common sense and express values, ethics, wit, and traditional wisdom in families.

"Proverbs have not lost their usefulness in modern society. They serve people well in oral speech and the written word, coming to mind almost automatically as prefabricated verbal units...(They) are a significant rhetorical force in various modes of communication...." (Wolfgang Meider. Proverbs: A Handbook. (2004)

When people migrated to a different location, the context of the proverbs lost its intended meaning. Without understanding their social context, Proverbs do not reveal their value and actual meaning and use, for its function vary from one situation to another. So, the proverbs' implications are elaborated to understand better the traditional ways of their usage and the people in their social problems. Proverbs are relevant and need to be contextualized. The contextualization makes proverbs' implications elaborated to understand the source language's nuances better.

The Zeliangrong-Inpui community uses proverbs in daily conversations and has an immense collection of both quantity and quality proverbs. Proverbs are the repository of the people's collective knowledge, history, simple belief, plain truth, fantastic imagery, naïve, and easy expressions based on their close interactions with nature and the world surrounding them.

The Zeliangrong-*Input* cognate communities are agriculturists, and their life revolves around the agricultural seasons, and they are attuned to the world around them. So, their proverbs' primary source is the nature surrounding them. In the olden agricultural days, their day-to-day life was always engaged with the forest, animals, birds, and crop fields. Lessons of life were learned from the characteristics of the animals and plant life from years of observation and close association with it, resulting in the crystallization of (words) ideas into the proverbial form, which contains not only traditional wisdom but also important information concerning the peoples' "interpretation of wars, events, migration," feats performed by the heroes and communal festival in a primarily oral culture. These so-formed proverbs are unique to the cultural experiences of the people. They can still access the wisdom passed down to them over millennia from the folk stories, traditional songs, riddles, dances, and songs accompanying the oral literature. Proverbs are used as mitigating strategies in discourse, owing to their effectiveness to the indirect and less provocative way of expressing something that must be said. These formulaic expressions reflect the people's philosophical and socio-economic aspects while retaining the ethos and aesthetical values.

Proverb

6 Classifications of Proverbs:
Proverbs expressing a general attitude.
Ethical proverbs.
Proverbs expressing a system of values.
Proverbs expressing general truths.
Humorous proverbs.
Miscellaneous proverbs.

The earliest proverbs have survived for thousands of years, providing lessons and examples that remain relevant today.
Ancient Zeliangrong-*Input* wisdom for the 12th century

Puan mang nsiang thai nkhuankum (Rongmei)

Taktru na bakhiang thakra ngaakna dan (Input)

Like an owl waiting for inseang fruit to ripen.

Nsiang is a tree with thick bark endemic to the North East Region. When young, its fruit is green but becomes hard, cracks open, and falls off as soon as it ripens. This proverb tells of one waiting for something in vain. (Wallich).

Find out if there are any trees connected to proverbs.



Image 1 source: Google

An example of a riddle

What is that thing that has the same quantity before and after it is eaten?

“*Tuni, tumak-ni kalat khat namei gan tabui cho?*”

Answer: Snail curry.

The role of colonization had a lot to do with how people view negatively certain food and diet.

When snail curry is mentioned, most people turn up their noses. When ‘escargot,’ ‘Lumache alla Romana’etc are mentioned, the response has a positive shift. But it is the same snail curry. It is wild-harvested, which is of the highest quality, and then prepared in a very traditional fashion because simplicity is always best. It is featured as one of the staple ingredients in traditional cuisine.

The Zeliangrong-Inpui people respect and revere the elders of the society. Much importance is attached to ‘*pipuang nziu*’ grey hair when decisions are to be taken regarding marriage, divorce, formation of the new village, or any other vital socio-political issues. The following proverbs will illustrate the extent of the difference to the elder’s command. The proverbs have been recorded, translated, contextualized, and studied as informative and valuable linguistic signs of the cultural values and ideals of the people.

Gaanhai meakmei kai thu sansimei ye. (Rongmei)

Patso maaknu inkunna aisianu we (Inpui)

Unfortunate is the family that does not house an elder.

Gaanhai baa rui lai phoumei nkat tuang nge. (Rongmei)

Patso ziakna ben menne (Inpui)

Elders' excrement can mend a broken pot.

A downside-This respect for the elders are to such a degree that sometimes the youngsters do not speak up if elders are present even when they have new and fresh ideas

Ganthaih tah ntan riu- kapmei ariutuang nge. (Rongmei)

Patso rwan ding usit maknu chan sia theiye (Inpui)

Do not provoke an elder lest you come to grief.

Some proverbs from the four cognate communities in their source languages

(Sources from *Aneipi Guirianphiiliu*, and *Apou Lungkiang Pamei*)

Min mei tah nkhan liatlak nga nzi tuwe. (Rongmei)

Minnu ding ngaak ngam mak ka kasan sa ye. (Inpui)

Eaten raw, being unable to wait for it to be cooked.

Gei lang ti thei mei muang ngit re. (Rongmei)

Kengzu biziу maimun abit re (Liangmai)

Mateusuo nteunan dege mi mui sup chilei (Zeme)

Satam lai ye be bao kha thei ye (Inpui)

Too much makes the mouth bitter.

Mut kanni mei maaithumpui kho kadian ne. (Rongmei)

Mut mirabo Mithumpui mikah kha kanui e (Liangmai)

Mesumpui tud rahe hemika kha kenui lei (Zeme)

Chik mik lam dingnu thingkhaliokna khut henne (Inpui)

A burning log smokes the most when about to burn out.

In every Zliangrong-Inpui house, the most comforting place is near the fire/hearth, for the weather is quite cold, and the insulation is not good. The family members spend much time sitting

around the fireplace, and troublesome smoke causes great inconvenience and teary eyes. A quarrelsome, unreasonable elder in a community is compared to a ‘smoking’ log. However, it is to be noted that Zliangrong-Inpui respects and reveres their elders.

Nui geilang e thei kapbe nathe. (Rongmei)

Nui kengzo nisai kabsi ye (Liangmai)

Nnui nteu doge hap chi lei (Zeme)

Banui kanhen lair we be chap thei ye (Inpui)

Too much laughter leads to crying.

Note the word ‘nui,’ (nui mei)

laughter/smile in the four
cognate dialects.

Can you find other similar
words like this?

Write them down.

This proverb is used by elders to teach the young not to be excessive in their emotions/behavior. It is considered inappropriate to be either excessively happy or sad. It teaches the people to be balanced. The proverb could also have stemmed from the belief of the people that the spirits are jealous when they see people too happy, and they bring about sadness.

The people are temperate of spirit and love a balanced way of life, to always be calm. The ways and demeanour of the people have been passed on to the next generation. The people have learned and practiced over generations to come to this ‘*Inchu-Injeang-mei*,’ calm and composed state of living. One worrying trend is the slow eroding of this ‘*Inchu-Injeang-mei*,’ state due to the influence of modern-day living.

Zouban khou naphun nsin lou kum.

Like handing over seeds for sowing to the monkey for safekeeping.

A monkey is considered to be an animal that does not do any hard work. It takes advantage of whatever is at hand and eats up everything, never saving it for a rainy day. Likewise, a person who uses up anything without investing it is likened to a monkey. Also refers to someone who cannot be trusted with resources.

The following wise sayings are self-explanatory.

Tingriu khourai zou kakai kasiam me.

The monkey makes his house only when it starts to rain.

Nruuna baan khou zanhbang hou daij ye.

A piece of meat appears bigger in an orphan's hands.

Meina thei kandiu tuwe thei anaa thei ye nathe.

If one wishes others' child to die, one's child dies.

Kapou katou ziuh houhmei kum.

Like grandfather and grandson's eyes after stealing a goat.

Once, an old man and his grandson stole a goat. When the two were questioned, they denied any knowledge of the theft. However, their guilty eyes (of fear and guilt) betrayed them and they were eventually found out/caught. This proverb indirectly teaches the elderly not to teach bad habits to young people.

Joukluk story.

Flying squirrel's story.

Khouring pang Joukluk daeng khou thaeng akha guang tiki "Aithu khouring rammak ge" tuna sah the. Kumtina khouring pang Joukluk khou ruai thaeng lamakna hangdat thi ta.

Neikhat pat dat khou Inruai pang Joukluk Daeng khou thaeng akha guang dat tiki "Ai thu inruai ram me. Ai thu khouring de" tuna sadat thi ta. Kumtina Jaukluk khou ruai inruai pang thaeng akha makna han dat thi tah.

Kumma Joukluk kathou thaeng ti mak na lung gong thi ta. Jaukluk rianra mei toulou khow khouring pang khou guangna sa the. 'Ata inkha lou wo.' Khouring pang ruai "Inruai pang khou inkha lou khang satat tho" tu na sa the. Jaukluk inruai pang khou inkha lou khang satatdat the. Inruai pang ruai dau khon ne. Nang thu khouring diki. Kaniu khou jang huai tat tho inkha lou khang tuna dau kan the.

*Khouring pang khatni Inruai pang khou ruai ni Jaukaluk mateang phang kan mak khe.
Thouthaeng tithai mak mei thu Joukaluk kum tong the.*

Animals came to the flying squirrel to collect tax for the community. The squirrel said, “I am not an animal. I am a bird.” So the animals went back without collecting the contribution from the squirrel.

Some months later, the birds came to collect tax from the squirrel. The flying squirrel said, “I am an animal, not a bird.” So the birds returned without getting tax from the flying squirrel.

One day the flying squirrel got into serious trouble. He went to the animals for help. They told him to go to the birds for help since he is a bird. Then the squirrel went to the birds for help. He was told to take help from the animals since he is an animal. The flying squirrel did not get any help from the birds or the animals.

Humans are born into a society with distinct identities, traditions, and cultures and are bound by the norms of the community to which they are a member. There are certain things every member is expected to contribute or even sacrifice for the welfare of society, and those who neglect their duties are not trusted and depended on for critical community issues.

Being responsible and paying one’s dues is one of the most important qualities of the Zeliangrong-Inpui society. Every individual in society has different duties and functions, and those who neglect their duties are not trusted and accounted for critical community issues.



Image 2. <https://www.lifeberries.com/holidays/5-species-of-flying-squirrels-found-in-india-148736.html>

Raengdai neilaa langnga puanmang kalaep kei ye tei (Rongmei)

"Rehengdi besui yi nteu nanze hebey kelap keulei," (Zeme)

The great Hornbill dropped the hidden owl while flapping its wings in excitement.

Once upon a time, the animals gathered to compete for the title of the most beautiful animal in the land during Amang's feast of merit. While all animals, big and small, beautiful as well as the ugly, decided to attend, the owl could not summon enough courage to show itself, for it thought itself too ugly. However, he was curious to see the event. So, it sought out the Hornbill, considered one of the most beautiful and majestic, to hide under its wings and take him to the event. As expected, the Hornbill was the most popular on one of the great days of the feast. Some of the birds wanted to see it spread its colourful and majestic wings before they decided. The Hornbill got excited and carried away that it forgot about the hidden owl and began to flap its wings when out dropped the ugly owl. There was a stunned silence, and the shocked birds began to whisper that the Hornbill was not so beautiful, after all, for a strange creature had dropped out of its wings. Thus, the Hornbill was not selected.

Some of the lessons from the story are:

1. People in high positions having hidden agendas are likened to this situation.
2. Excitable people who let out secrets are also likened to this situation.
3. If not done in the right way, even deeds done with good intentions could do more harm than good. Enjoy the story where the proverb is found.

Amang Kaidai Khou Khouring Pari--Animals' Story in Amang Feast of Merit

It is said that all the animals of the forest were also invited to Amang's Feast of merit during the celebration for House of merit. These were the times when animals and mankind lived together harmoniously.

All creatures, big and small, began to groom and beautify themselves for the great feast. Two friends, the rat, and the bird decided to do each other up for the big day when all would see them. The rat painstakingly groomed the bird's plumage and long tail beautifully. It took a long time for the rat to make up the bird's tail. The countdown for the great celebration had begun. The beating drum began to sound louder and louder. The bird could no longer stand the suspense; in its impatience, it carelessly rolled the rat's tail with mud, making an inferior finish, and flew off for the feast. The poor rat was left behind, feeling resentful of the bird's beautiful tail. His tail was brown and looked like a twig. The rat was so angry, and from that day onwards, the fast friends became enemies and are so even to this day.

Among the Zeliangrong community, the saying "Apuak-mai ram alulou dihidah," 'like the rolling of the rat's tail' is said for work done hastily and carelessly.

The deer and monkey also agreed to arrange each other's tails; the deer used its creativity and made the monkey's tail very beautifully, but just then, the "Langdimei," the chefs, began calling out,

"The great feast is ready! Come, come!"

At the sound of the food announcement, the monkey dashed off in the twinkle of an eye. The deer was left behind, feeling dejected. He called out after the monkey, "Oh, who will do my tail? Who will do my tail? Come back!"

The monkey did not come back, and nobody did his tail. He had to do it by himself, so it is short and stubby to this day.

All creatures of the land came for the grand feast with their gifts. The host began to give

names to all the creatures. Amang's younger aunt also came as invited, bringing her rice water instead of a fermented rice drink. The "Langdimei," the chefs for the day, poured out the liquid on the ground, making rushing sounds "Diaau," and "Buk, buk, buk," out of the jar. The cicada heard this sound and took a liking to it. He asked Amang to name him "Diaau-Diaau-Buk-Buk." And that was how it got its name. So many other animals got their names too.

By now, all the creatures had entered the House and taken their places one by one. The turn of the wild hare and the bad-smelling skunk came, and as they entered, everybody began to say, "Shoos, shoos." The wild hare pointed the finger at his friend and said it was his smell. The skunk felt so embarrassed. He thought to himself that he would teach the hare a lesson. The skunk told the hare to bring a lunch packet for him and hastily retreated.

It was said that the animals gathered for the festival decided to compete for the title of the most beautiful animal in the land. While all animals, big and small, beautiful as well as the ugly, decided to attend, the owl could not summon enough courage to show itself, for it thought itself too ugly. However, he was curious to see the event. So it sought out the hornbill, considered one of the most beautiful, to hide under its wings and attend the event. The hornbill agreed.

The hornbill was the most popular at the event. All the animals wanted to hear him. So the hornbill got up and squawked, and everyone applauded and said he should be king. Then the animals wanted to see him spread his beautiful and majestic wings. The hornbill forgot about the hidden owl under his wings. In its excitement and began to flap its wings when out dropped the ugly owl. There was a stunned silence. Then the shocked birds whispered that the hornbill was not so beautiful after all, for a strange creature had dropped out of its wings. Thus, the hornbill was not selected.

The proverb "*Rehengdi besui yi nteu nanze hebey kelap keulei*," "The great Hornbill dropped the hidden owl while flapping its wings in excitement," is said to this day of people having hidden agendas, or in excitement letting out hidden secrets like the hornbill. The bird decorated by the rat was then asked to fly and show its wings. It spread its wings so beautifully that everyone unanimously selected the bird as the king of the birds. The bird cried happily, "Coolee, Coolee."

All the guests at the feast had their fill and came to thank the host. One after the other, the guests came to Amang. When it was the turn of the "Mithun," Amang asked how the food was. The "Mithun" said, "I've had as much as I can eat, and I'm quite full."

"All right, you go into the forest. Half the day you can eat, and the rest of the time you can lie down under the shade of a tree and chew the cud."

So Amang's "Mithun" all went into the jungle, and all the wild "Mithuns" descended from them. Henceforth, whenever the folks have festivals coming up, they go to the forest to collectively hunt for a Mithun.

Then the buffalo trudged up. Amang asked him, "Have you eaten your fill?" "Oh, just enough. There wasn't too much, and there wasn't too little."

"Very well," said Amang. "Even though you eat for days, you shall still be the same – neither too big nor too small."

The animals left one by one. There was plenty of food left after the feast. The hare was also given a lunch packet to eat on the way home, as is customary. After a while, the hare passed through the forest with two lunch packets and happily called out to his friend, thinking of making it up to him. The skunk heard him and, leaping out of the forest, bit off the hare's head in revenge for publicly shaming him at the feast and ran off with the head. Then all the birds came along and found the hare's headless body in the path.

They stopped their chatter abruptly, and the one in front stopped suddenly. The ones following behind tumbled upon one another. They then thought of carrying the body away. But one tiny bird was so short; it carried the neck on his head. It got stained with blood. The Bulbul thought it was cool, so he rubbed himself with the blood too, but he got the stain on the other end of him. Another bird rubbed his wings and tail in it and made them red. The crow thought of joining the fray and rolled himself in the dark blood and on the mess in the road. The crow rolled so vigorously that the gallbladder burst and was covered in the dark liquid. That's how the crow remains black to this day.

All had a great time during the feast and the celebration given by Amang. It was the biggest celebration the people had experienced.

With folklore, the classroom becomes a laboratory or forum for a consideration of “real life” as it is experienced and perceived by those being educated.

Story from Naga Tales Dawn
by Achingliu Kamei (2017)

Activity 1

- a) What role do wise sayings/proverbs play in understanding a community’s worldview?
- b) Find out 3 proverbs from your community and learn their meanings from your parents/elders.

Activity 2

- a) Write a brief paragraph on how to apply a proverb in your life (Teacher to give an example proverb)
- b) State the function of wise sayings/proverbs in your own words.

Activity 3

- a) Explain in brief the different kinds of proverbs and wise sayings.

Activity 4

- a) Look closely at the dialects used in the proverbs and see if they come from the same root language. What are similar words? Write them down.
- b) Write the numerals 1 to 10 in words in the four cognate dialects.

Further Readings

1. Kamei, Achingliu (2017) Naga Tales Dawn
2. Kamei Achingliu (2023) Naga Tales Morning Blush
3. Kamei, Gangmumei, (2004) The History of Zeliangrong Nagas, From Makhel to Rani Gaidinliu.
4. Pamei, Namthiubuiyang, (2001) The Trail from Makulongdi, The Continuing Saga of the Zeliangrong People.
5. Wolfgang, Mieder (2004) Proverbs: A Handbook Volume

*Dr. Achingliu Kamei is a poet, short story writer, ultra-runner, and an Associate Professor at English Department Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College, DU. She has 6 published books.

Ultra Trail Running: The Why - A Revisit of Ancestors' Trail and Cultural Roots.

--Dr Achingliu Kamei*

Introduction

This resource will look at the time-tested ways of the Ancestors of the Zeliangrong-Inpui Nagas. To understand how people, acquire and use knowledge and decimate it through the ultra-

trail I had taken, passing through many villages, and experiencing my traditions and culture's best practices first-hand. This resource is prepared so that the readers can also revisit the ways of the ancestors of the Zeliangrong-Inpui cognate communities to understand their ethos, philosophy, and worldview. Students will know through this journey the benefits of physical activity and the benefits of hard work. Most importantly, they will realize the importance of knowing and being rooted in one's culture. The lesson activity is planned so that the students can do a theoretical analysis through explanation, questioning, and practical activities.

"Trust the trail. Many have come before you that know the way." Trails are a link to the past and a route into the future. Trails are the best metaphor for life. A trail is a path or a track usually formed by repeated footfalls on the ground. In the Naga territories, the term was historically used for a route through deep forests used by people to go from one village to the next. Metaphorically speaking, a trail is life's or people's journey. Trails provide us with a sense of place and orientation in our lives.

I went on an Ultra trail run in January of 2022 to one of the ancient villages of the Zeliangrong- Inpui community. I planned to embark on this arduous journey for a few years and have trained religiously for six months. Finally, after much planning, with a few running friends and a guide, we set off the beaten track down crooked paths through roads, old forgotten paths, shortcuts, and bamboo trails along winding rivers, crossing Ahu (Barak) River and then the steep climb into the deep ancient mountains. Many folks we passed by asked why we were making this journey on foot while there were vehicles now to take us to our destination. Having no time to explain why we were doing this, we just replied that we would like to retrace our forefathers' footsteps to experience what they had.

We encountered kind and hospitable people on the trail and passed through several villages. In one village, after a steep climb, we sought to rest briefly in a house. A young boy of 19 or 20 years old went to the kitchen and cooked *napnaeng*, sticky rice, for us. Napnaeng is among the best kind to give energy for endurance.



Napneang is a rich source of carbohydrate for endurance athletes. Red rice helps in regulating the insulin levels

Image 1. Resting and having the Napneang, Red sticky rice.

Before cooking *napnaeng* for us, he had given us a huge bunch of bananas and a mug of cool water. We carried some snacks and gels, but something different from a home-cooked meal is precious. It restored our energy to move on. He did all this without expecting anything in return. It set me off thinking again about how wonderful and practical it will be if we apply our traditions and worldview to modern life.

Since our guide had not travelled after this point for many years and was unsure which way to go, the young lad offered to take us to a certain point. The evening was setting in, and we wanted to take shortcuts wherever possible. Our new guide now led us up a hill at an incline of 80-degree angles. Like a sure-footed goat, he went ahead, leaving us huffing and puffing our way up the slippery slope. Vegetation at this point was sparse and nothing to hold onto, so it was tough for us.

As the sweat dripped in my eye, I wiped it off irritably. Why can't we keep up with this young man? We had trained for months. To avoid having any negative thoughts, we kept telling each other that this is what we were looking for. To face hardship like the ones gone before us. That we are almost cresting the hilltop. This is what trail running is all about. It's mind over matter. Our ancestors in those days had no option of ever quitting halfway. There were no vehicles to ferry them back home when they decided to give up midway.



Image 2 & 3.
Steep climb

Runners' terminology DNF, 'did not finish,' was outside their vocabulary. *Theipou-tatmei*, the runner who goes to report a death in a village to another village, runs all the way without any rest in between. This task was usually entrusted to the strongest and the bravest. No helicopter to lift them off to hospitals when they injured themselves on the trail. The runner was able to do this through years of maintaining discipline and consistency. One cannot just simply get up and run long distances. The only way to be able to run long distances was to train, stay focused in the present moment, stay mindful, direct the focus of the mind on the walking/running feet to boost efficiency, and learn to be fit and be successful. This is achieved by doing it again and again over the years.

After some tricky climbing, we crested a hill, thinking we were back on the trail, but with a sinking feeling, we realized we had to climb one or two more hills to get back to the trail. The way ahead would be termed 'very technical' in trail terminology, as it appeared to be covered with vines and thick foliage.

On a trail one has to depend on one's tenacity, grit, and mental determination to reach the destination.

There are five mental muscles a) motivation, b) confidence c) intensity, d) focus, and e) emotions

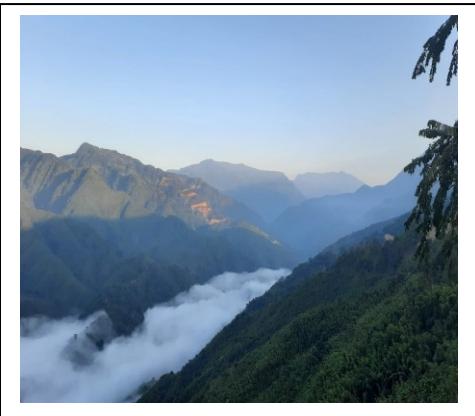


Image 4. View of our destination mountain



Image 5. River crossing

Straight ahead, I noticed rays of evening sunlight pass through a canopy of the dense forest, making the foliage shimmer and making me feel emotional. The going was tough, and at this point, all of us had the low of lows. Much later, we learned that we all had entertained thoughts about surviving the night in the forest. We had not carried any lighter and needed more food. We had brought our sleeping bags, though. We continued to push forward and eventually met the old village trail, to our huge relief.

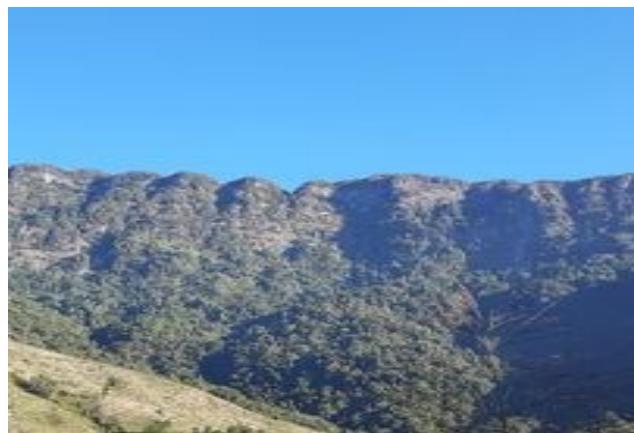


Image 6. View of Kacha Cliff



Image7. Back on the village trail

Trail running is the ultimate expression of freedom and the greatest metaphor for life. In life, much like trail running, we go through some peaks and valleys and might even get lost along the way. But as long as we persevere and finish what we started, we'll eventually find ourselves. At this point, we had to part ways with our young guide. I offered him some money to thank him for his effort in guiding us, with much inconvenience to himself. He flatly refused to take my offer.

We continued on our way. The Sun had by now set behind the cliffs. It was getting cold, and the trail was getting difficult to see and was rough. We trudged on silently, bereft of any thoughts. The only aim is to continue. As we came to a clearing, we could make out the *bamduan* and see some people with torches, and their conversations got louder. Turned out they were from the village we were headed to. They were looking for some cattle that had escaped. They offered to come with us. Fortunately for us, they were from the village we were headed to. As we all continued our journey, it became apparent that we were holding them up. We told them to go ahead, we will be ok on our own, but they won't let us go by ourselves because it was pitch dark by now. The moment we saw the village water hole, the pain, and suffering turned into thrill and exhilaration. The villagers who had walked with us from the *bamduan* saw us till the house we were to stay.

The moment I stepped on the veranda of the house, the feeling of accomplishment was overwhelming! Our bones and joints were aching, but we made it, covering 45 kilometers one way and an elevation of 2,955 meters. Endurance running is all about finding what you're really made of because the trail will eventually reveal who you truly are; physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Ultra marathons, or ultras, are any running races beyond the standard marathon distance of 42.2 k. The most common ultra-distances are 50k, 100k, 50 miles, or 100 miles, but each event is unique in terms of distance and terrain.

Likewise, in life, "doesn't everyone at certain times experience an excruciating uphill battle, where there's no end in sight, where the destination itself is unknown and of questionable value, where the path seems aimless, and where the only experience we have is one of physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion?"

When we arrived, our host informed us that the village elders had come to enquire about us. We were moved by the care and concern they had for us. They were worried that we might have gotten

lost somewhere. This motley bunch of city slickers undertaking this difficult journey must arouse some curiosity in them. The Internet was patchy, and we could only be contacted briefly. Our hostess readied hot water for us to wash up and fed us spicy chicken. We had one of the best dinners in front of the fireplace. Our bones and souls were warmed. We had wonderful conversations about our ancestors and the young people of today. We had a good night's rest and embarked on the return journey early the following day.

This offering of food and drink to us, the boy refusing to take money for his trouble, the villagers slowing down to accompany us, the host gladly welcoming us without expecting anything in return, our guide who volunteered to accompany us on our adventure, and the villagers who accompanied us from the *bamduan*- all this is what we know as Chakhuang.

This trail running was the catalyst for a reconnection to the ancestral path and its worldview. This resource is the outcome of the cultural roots and the crystalized lessons re-learned, embedded along the trail of the people whose way of life has been relegated as irrelevant and lacking a modern outlook. As an informed insider, an attempt is made to give a voice to the 'redundant' culture and traditions of the people.



Image 9. Open barn. No thieving.

Image 10. Bamboo trail
Return journey through a
beautiful trail

Philosophy and Worldview of the people gleaned from the Ultra Trail Run Experience.

Chakhuang

Chakhuang, practiced by the 4-cognate communities, Zeliangrong-Inpui Naga, is a way of life where one thinks first for the welfare of others. It is intangible, a way of life permeating every aspect of life for the Zeliangrong-Inpui community. Chakhuang embodies all the invaluable virtues a society strives to maintain in harmony and the spirit of sharing among its members. It is there in *Latsah-luhsuan khou*, in the way they speak, *taantan mei khou*, in the way they do work for others, *tipatmei khou*, in their giving and charity, and *tu-jaangmei khou*, in the way they partake of food.

Another area in lived experiences where we see Chakhuang is in how an elder is addressed. It is taboo, *nu-neimei* to call elderly persons, be it male or female, by their given names; instead, they are called by their children's names or, in the case of unmarried elderly, by their nephew's/niece's names, as uncle/aunt of someone. This tradition could be that the other's individualism is mirrored in the person; the so-called *hemeiyang nei/pou* is indirect; by being called someone's aunt/uncle, the person has automatically conferred a role as that of a mentor for the younger one. Also, the individual represents the people he comes from at all times. An individual's greater societal identity takes the place of their own identity. As a result, individuals depict or reflect their families, and this phenomenon also applies to villages, districts, and regions. This motivates the individual to uphold the highest moral standards and exhibits the virtues the community values most.

Having Chakhuang demonstrates concern and care for one's neighbour by acknowledging that we are all connected in ways that may be imperceptible to the untrained person; that there is a oneness to mankind; and that we are by sharing ourselves and our wealth with those who, too cared for us. Chakhuang exists because people cannot live in isolation. They need to co-exist to survive. Having Chakhuang shows care and concern for one's clan, maternal mother's clan, and the village and clan members in other village. The concept of prize or reward within the Zeliangrong-Inpui community is unique. The concept of Chakhuang is closely related to '*Tathuan*

or *Thuankei mei*' also. This *Thuankei mei* is a treat offered to the people by the winner. The winner in any competition is respected.

Chakhuang is the respect you give the other person where you make the other person fully and wholly

"Chakhuang: It is the respect a man gives to someone older to him. It is his gallantry and stoicism when he sacrifices his needs and interests for the well-being of the weaker ones and the elder-who speaks, eats and rink first and walks in front of him....Those without chakhuang are considered coarse and uncultured."

Trail from MakuilongdiNamthiubuiyang

be themselves while you diminish yourself. The show of respect and honour and the very philosophy of the Zeliangrong-Inpui community is built upon. It is not simply letting the other person eat first or giving the seat go beyond that. Chakuang is not expected from individuals, and it is not equivalent to taboo, but it is something not done. It was not the laying down of rules, for the people did not learn this Chakuang from the elders' teaching as a text but learned from their attitudes and mannerisms over generations. It is something that is not expected of an individual. It is not laying down the norms of a community in hard-and-fast rules. What happens when you don't follow or have Chakhuang? There is no penalty for not following. But when you do not have Chakhuang, your reputation is at stake. The word goes out, and one's relationship with fellow members of the clan and village members in the community is adversely affected. These are all subtle things that society follows. Practices of Chakhuang start from home.

Another example of Chakhuang can be seen in the electing of a leader. In the community, one does not volunteer to lead. It is for others to put out there that you can lead. When requested, the proposed candidate declines by saying some better people can lead. Then the proposers insist and give their word to support him/her. So, the leader is elected with the assurance that everyone will support and work together. When things do not go well, collective responsibility is taken for the failure, for the people know that the leader has done his/her best in the given situation.

Unlike in the west, when a child gets into trouble with another child, the parent or ward will discipline only his child and not touch the other person's child.

Chakhuang-Champoumei (Respect and Honour)

Chakhuang is elaborated further in this compound noun hyphenated term, Chakhuang-Champoumei adage is what it means to be recognised as a human is "to affirm one's humanity by

accepting the humanity of others and, on that basis, build respectful human connections with others." The second adage says that if given a choice between wealth and another person's survival, one should choose to save that person's life. The third adage said that the merit-seeker "owed his standing, to some extent, to the clan he belonged to, which was "deeply embedded in ancient ideology." He is governed by the collective will of the clan.

For example, going back to the Morung days, how mid-level leaders were designated and addressed. The community in the discussion has *ingan-kapi*, the boys' leader, *tuna-kapi*, the girls' leader. This practice of giving honour and acknowledging their roles to others can also be practiced in our day-to-day life. For example, when we tag someone on FB, the prefix '*apou*,' '*anei*,' 'elder,' etc., can be used before or after their tagged names. Seeing young adults directly calling elders by their names is strange and rude. Some people have openly criticized this way of addressing the elders (as somebody's father/mother/uncle/aunt etc.). We can not only adapt to technology but evolve as well to suit the ways of the community.

Ginki-Phaipam (Hosting the Sojourner)

I had mentioned how food was offered to us when we were resting in one of the houses on our ultra-run. This way of offering food to the sojourners reminded me of the concept of *Gin-ki-Phai-pammei*, hosting and feeding of sojourners, practiced by the four cognate communities. Naga hospitality is one of the best in India. *Ginki-phaipam* is the Zeliangrong-Inpui concept of showing hospitality to sojourners passing through the village or to those who have come to seek shelter in the village. It refers to how guests are treated or the hospitality shown to them. Hosting a guest is seen as a privilege and blessing, and the act of such is praised and honoured. *Gin-ki* is hosting and feeding of guests, and *Phai-pammei* means, loosely translated, 'embracing the leg. So, it means, in essence, welcoming the sojourner's tired legs.'

Even during the tumultuous years 1960s to 1980s, many Naga families got into trouble because they fed soldiers who came asking for food. How could they refuse food to the hungry?

The younger people might not know this, but it is a thumb rule not to pluck fruits or vegetables that grow on the outer fence or boundary-it's kept for the people who need it. This is done so as not wanting to cause embarrassment to the needy.

Gin-ki-phai-pammei-Hospitality is held with the utmost importance, where guests or travellers are meant to be welcomed into the family circle, even if they are strangers.

Hospitality was taken seriously in the Zeliangrong-Input community. It is still being practiced in some villages. To feed the guests, not from one's own village but even those from other villages, every household contributes rice/food items or pays some money towards the '*Gin-ki-Phai-pam thaeng*', the contribution for feeding guests. "This term is... with the way how the Zeliangrong treats or takes care of the guest. Taking a journey or traveling is part and parcel of life.... Hosting a guest is considered a privileged and blessing to the host." (Ramkhun Pamei in 'The Zeliangrong Concept of Meaning of Life')

The maxim "*Inkhuang hiuna kabaidat bamsini guang dat nitaram me*," even if you beat the drum and invite, there will come a time they (guests) will not come (to stay in your house).

"If you have much, give of your wealth; if you have little, give of your heart." Arab proverb
(Arabian hospitality is considered to be the best in the world)

The Greeks also have this concept of hospitality; Xenia's generosity towards travelers far from home and fundamental to them.

Recent examples -During the pandemic lockdown, villagers from the Zeliangrong-Input inhabited regions brought truckloads of vegetables and fruits to the towns and distributed them for free to the townsfolk who did not have their own kitchen gardens. All these practices stem from the Zeliangrong-Input culture that ensures no one goes hungry.

Gansu-Ganthai (Elder)

In the Naga culture, elders are revered and considered to be people with wisdom that comes with experience, with a contribution to make. A proverb says, *gaanthai baa rui lai phoumei nkat tuang nge*- Elder's excrement can mend a broken pot. In such adages as this, it is clear the crucial role a traditional elder, not senior, plays and the honour accorded to him. For any critical issues or disputes, the elderly give solutions or judgments by tapping into their experiences and past generations' experiences to counsel the problem. Elders are also custodians of culture and history and are responsible for the transference of communities' values from generation to generation.

Older people are respected and revered not because of their age alone but mainly for what they possess: knowledge and experiences. They are considered to be the embodiment and author of the culture and traditions. They are expected to educate the younger generations about their society's culture and values.

Slowly, modernization, globalization, and the use of modern technology have brought about new ways of life, and the elders have less and less role to play. For all their talk about human values, the West doesn't really value humans for who they are. They love them for what they either give or purchase. And once they're no longer either producers or consumers, they lose their value. A whole new discourse can be taken up on how to be a modern elder.

The Zeliangrong-Inpui culture value elders as protectors, mentors, teachers, keepers of wisdom, and intergenerational transmitters of cultural knowledge. Urban Zeliangrong-Inpui elders are often community leaders and are expected to be involved in decision-making. They share the people's worldview that forms the foundation of beliefs and values shaping the identity and behaviors of the Zeliangrong-Inpui people.

Activity 1

Have you ever entered a trail for the first time and experienced a gentle breeze blowing through your hair? Have you ever taken the time to enjoy its surroundings, including the smooth round stones, mosses, and various fresh and dried twigs? Have you ever taken the time to admire the wrinkly old trees that line its perimeter and the ridged earth that bears the footprints of those who had gone ahead of you?

- a) Go on a trail walk
- b) Note down your feelings and experiences.

Hiking backpack. Weather-appropriate clothing. Hiking boots or shoes. Food and dry nuts. Plenty of water. Navigation tools such as a map and compass. First-aid kit. Knife or multi-tool. A small note pad and a pen

Activity 2

Do you have something like

‘Chakhuang’ in your culture? Find out by asking some elders.

Activity 3

- a) How do you treat the elders in your society?
- b) Meet and talk to 3/4 elders in your society and find out how society treats them.
- c) Find out what they think of young people these days.

*Running provides many health benefits, such as strengthening heart and lungs, building endurance, and increasing the elasticity of blood vessels. It also reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and all-cause mortality. Running in the morning gives you a sense of accomplishment and sets the tone for a productive, upbeat, and successful day. Evidence suggests that working out in the morning can help improve attention, working memory, and executive function throughout the rest of the day.

*Waking up in a scheduled way was seen to be a sign of health and good ethics. In the past, people get up at the first cock crow and goes to bed at sundown. Research has proven that those who wake up early have shown better mental health symptoms. They are optimistic, satisfied and feel positive about situations. It also lowers the chance of mental illnesses which is usually found in those who go to sleep late and wake up late

*Dr. Achingliu Kamei is a poet, short story writer, ultra-runner, and an Associate Professor at English Department Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College, DU. She has 6 published books.

Indigenous Agri practices of Naga: *Zabo (Zabü)* farming system

***Dr. Nesatalu Hiese (Ph.D.)**

Introduction:

Agriculture is one of the largest water consumers worldwide, accounting for about 70% of global freshwater use. Water plays a crucial role in food security, and the availability of water is one of the critical factors that determine the ability of farmers to produce enough food to meet the growing demand. With climate change set in, it is significantly impacting water availability, with some areas facing more severe and acute droughts, particularly in areas/ regions where food production is already limited. Insufficient water supply can lead to reduced crop yields, lower quality crops and even crop failure.

This chapter will introduce an indigenous knowledge system developed by Kikruma village, a Chakhesang village under the Phek District of Nagaland. Unlike other settlements with good water sources, Kikruma faces an acute water shortage. They have successfully developed an integrated farming system called *Zabo (Zabü)*. It involves the conservation of forest at the top, water harvesting structure (*Rüza*) at the middle and paddy or rice fields at the lower section. The farming community of Kikruma village has developed its own unique, indigenous system of water harvesting that nurtures the soil and enhances agriculture production.

In this chapter, the student will understand the indigenous way of water conservation, harvesting rainwater and its usage in the terrace field, the importance of an indigenous integrated farming system, the advantages of traditional farming practices in the hilly area compared to plain areas and achieving sustainability using natural resources which are found free, for example, *Zabo*.

Indigenous Knowledge about sustainable agriculture can be understood or taught through the *Zabo* farming system. It will demonstrate how traditional knowledge plays a vital role in balancing the environment and food security and how a community can develop a mechanism to adapt to climate change by observing nature and the dynamics of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in traditional farming systems.

Indigenous Knowledge is traditional or local Knowledge unique to a community, society, or system. Indigenous farming is a product of adapting farming practices to the local environment, creating unique indigenous farming practices and food culture. The Indigenous people pass down farming knowledge orally through generations by observing the weather and lunar calendar to determine the optimal timing for clearing the field for cultivation and sowing of seeds.

Zabo Farming System:

Zabo farming system is a sustainable indigenous farming model which comprises integrated agricultural activities such as forest land for silviculture, water harvesting, fishery, animal husbandry and paddy cultivation along the slope of the hills.

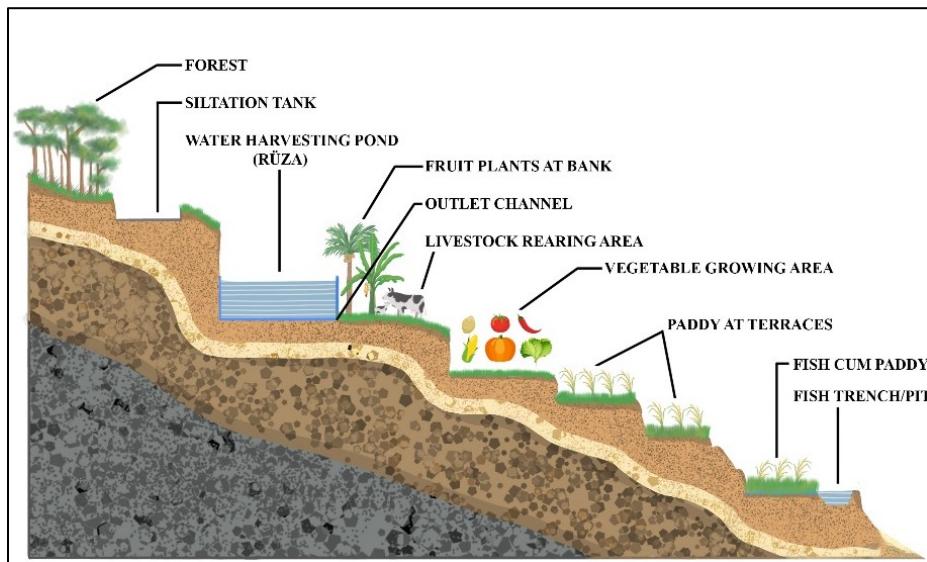


Image 1: Illustration of Integrated Agriculture in Zabo Farming System

"Zabo" means impounding runoff water in local Chakhesang dialect. Zabo is also known as *Dzüdü* or *Rüza* in certain areas of Phek district. "Zabo" is the indigenous water conservation and integrated farming system practised by the Kikruma village and some other villages under the Phek District.

It originates from Kikruma village. The village population is 7,152, situated at an altitude of 1505 metres above sea level under the Pfutsero sub-division, Phek District, Nagaland. Though Kikruma village receives good rainfall due to high surface runoff, people suffer from acute water scarcity. This suffering from water scarcity has compelled them to evolve an elaborate water harvesting system (*Rüza*) that ultimately resulted in *Zabo*. This system has an inbuilt water harvesting and recycling system with a well-founded conservation base to control soil erosion, and proper soil fertility management, where the communities have sustained themselves for many decades.



Image 2: Illustration of a village with Zabo farming

Another advantage of the *Zabo* agricultural system is that it provides in-situ conservation of several traditional varieties, which are maintained and preserved by the communities and passed on from generation to generation.

Zabo farming system is an integrated model of farming, which consist of three-tier system, where the hilltop, forest is conserved. The mid-hill section contains the water harvesting structures called *Rüza* (in the local dialect), to collect the runoff water located along with livestock farms.

Water flows into the third lower section for irrigation, where people cultivate rice or paddy fields and maintain fishery ponds.



Image 3: View of *Zabo* farming

Photo credit: Kikruma 75th souvenir book, 2022.

So *Zabo* farming system comprises well-maintained forestry on the upper elevation of the hill, provision for a water harvesting structure in the middle for livestock and paddy fields situated at the lower elevation.

The entire village community manages soil erosion, water sources, and soil fertility sustainably in this process. They also manage and protect forest land and implement water harvesting and conservation measures, which are inbuilt aspects of this practice.

Practices of *Zabo*: Forest Conservation

In *Zabo* farming, the village community protect and conserved forest at the hilltop and below the settlement, in which forest vegetation is allowed to grow. This forest area at the hilltop serves as a catchment area. Water collected from the catchment area serves as irrigation water for livestock and crop cultivation. The community enforces strict rules regarding foraging, gathering wild food, and harvesting forest timber in this area, which has become a protected forest.



Image 4: Forest with Paddy field

Construction of Water Harvesting Ponds and channels:

Below the forest area, they construct a water harvesting pond for water storage which is adequately rammed at the pond's bottom surface to minimize water loss through seepage.

Protected forest lands on hilltops act as catchments, and water is channelized through inlet channels from the catchment area and along the footpaths.

Silt retention tanks are constructed at several points before the runoff water enters the pond, and water is kept in the silt retention tanks for 2 or 3 days before transferring to the main ponds. They clean the silt retention tanks annually. Sometimes, they construct several harvesting ponds to allow surplus water from one pond to flow down to the other pond below. They release water from the pond through an outlet at its base for irrigation, carrying it either by open channels or bamboo pipes. Customarily, they compact the tracks by hammering their base to reduce water percolation. They pass water through livestock enclosures before using it for irrigation in the fields. While passing through the livestock, the water carries the dung and urine of the animal, which enriches the soil nutrients and maintains soil fertility.

If they cannot find a suitable location to construct a water storage pond, they directly take the water runoff into the rice field.



Image 5: Water harvesting pond



Image 6: Silt retention Tank with water harvesting pond

Silt retention
Tank

Sharing of water and repairing of Ponds and Channels:

Usually, they repair the ponds when they dry up by March or April. The water-sharing process is essential, where everybody has to benefit since the cultivation of crops and rearing of animals depend on this system. Therefore, all of the families who own the rice terraces, irrespective of the farm size, participate in the clearing, cleaning, and repairing the siltation tanks, ponds, and channels. They transfer the de-silted material, which has a good amount of organic matter and nutrients, to the terrace fields below the pond. They build strong bonding within the community during such exercises.



Animal
shed

Inlet
Channels

Image 9: Rainwater from catchment channeling down to the harvesting pond.

Photo source: Ch03-Amenla_Zabo-Farming 2021-01-13aa.pdf

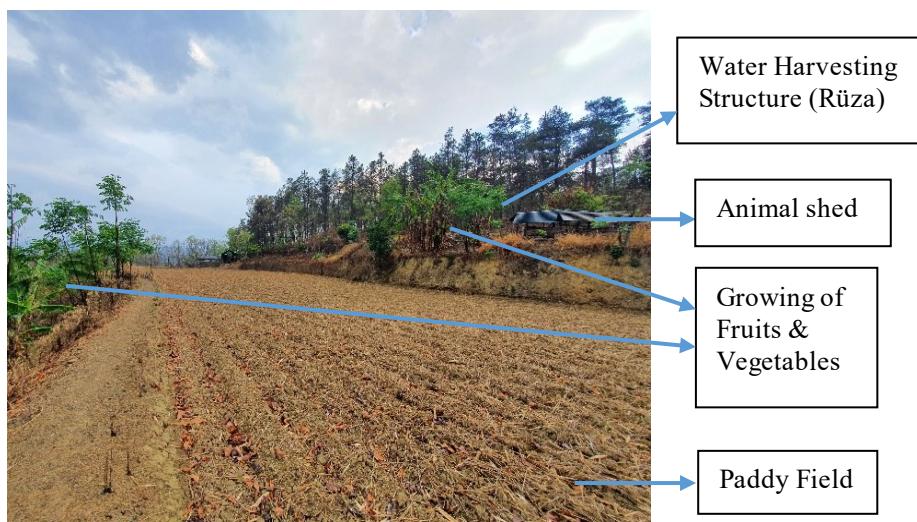
Image 10: Inlet channels from cattle shed carrying manure to the Paddy field

Allied Farming Activities:

Raising livestock and growing vegetables and fruits are carried out nearby or just below the pond area. They cultivate squash, Colocasia, cucurbits, banana, papaya, oranges, and citrus on the pond's banks and below the livestock enclosure. They raise livestock like cattle, goats, pigs, and poultry beside and below the pond. They fence the cattle enclosures with bamboo and wooden branches. They construct enclosures and houses for livestock on the lower side of the water-harvesting pond. The farmers allow irrigation water to pass through the livestock enclosures, carrying the dung and urine of the animals to the paddy fields located at the lower elevation, thus enriching the soil fertility of the fields. The farmers also planted "Khuthesü" tree on the bank of the pond and paddy field, where they cut the leaves and put into the field for manure and the fruits is use as a fodder for cattle.



Image 11: Livestock and fruit cultivation beside and below the pond



Paddy or Rice Cultivation:

Paddy farming constitutes the main component of *Zabo* farming, and farmers generally construct paddy fields at lower elevations. They cultivate the paddy, taking advantage of the continuous water supply from the water harvesting ponds. The field bunds are thoroughly rammed by beating with wooden sticks to avoid percolation and seepage of water. Paddy husk is also used with mud to reduce seepage losses from the bund. Typically, a long-duration local variety of paddy is grown in the paddy fields. This variety matures in about 180 days. The nursery sowing time is mid-March to mid-April; transplanting is over in June and July and generally harvested in October and early November. Typically, 2-3 seedlings are transplanted per hill, depending on the quality of the seedlings. The yield of paddy in zabo farming varied from 1400 to 2500 kg/ha with an average of 1950.00 kg/ha, which is comparatively higher than jhum or other methods of paddy cultivation prevalent in Nagaland.

Farmers commonly practice paddy cum fish culture, where they rear fish along with the paddy during the growing season. They dig a small pit/ trench within the centre of the paddy field and release fish fingerlings during June and July. Paddy matures by the end of October, and the paddy field dries by then. If there is excess water, they drain it off before harvesting the paddy. As the area dries, the fish move into the pit/ trench, and the farmers harvest them. On average, the farmers harvest 50 – 60 kgs per hectare from paddy cum fish culture. Traditionally, the Chakhesang practices paddy cum fish culture on terraces of rice fields.



Image 13: Paddy Field with Fish trench/Pit

Culture and Festival:

The Chakhesang community of Porba village celebrates Khilunye /fish festival which is also known as Fünye.

The villagers celebrate Khilünye (Fish festival) in November after harvesting crops from the paddy fields. The community celebrates Khilunye to mark a new beginning and invoke God's blessings for a good and productive summer and the judicious use of the harvested crops. They observe the festival for seven days and perform various rituals.

During this festival, every family goes to their fields to catch fish and taking them home on the same day is taboo, so they keep the fish outside the village gate except the dead fish. The next day, they will perform the rituals. All these rituals have to be completed before sunrise. On that morning, they will go and carry the fish that was kept outside the village gate, and before entering the house, the fishes will be shared to the poor and needy people who do not have fish, and the left over are taken inside the house after which it is taboo to give to anybody. They will cook the fishes and feast for two days and if they cannot finish the cooked fish within the two days, all the left overs are buried at the feet of the main post of the house. So this makes everybody equal with the celebration.

In the olden days, people used to rear fish for the purpose of economy and as a food source. As protein consumption was low, fish and snails from paddy fields were the main sources of protein supplement.

This festival signifies the joy of sharing and new beginning.



Conclusion:

The Indigenous farming system developed by tribal farmers as an alternative to shifting cultivation is sustainable and ecologically friendly, apart from an increase in yield and productivity. Zabo farming is a feasible farming practice in hilly topography like Nagaland and basing on the principle of integrated farming comprising forestry, crops, livestock, fishery etc. This system has the inbuilt feature for conservation of ecological and biodiversity conservation and water resource management

This viable practice of resource management and maintenance of ecological balance, developed by observing nature, can be replicated elsewhere where water is scarce.

Exercise/Assessment:

What do you understand by the Indigenous Zabo farming system? Discuss

What is Indigenous Knowledge, and what are the advantages?

Write a short note on the advantages of the Zabo farming System.

Which village celebrates the fish festival and why

Give an illustration of the management of the Zabo farming system.

Suggested Activities: A group discussion on the different farming systems in your locality and compare the advantages between the Indigenous and your locality farming systems.

School science project on Indigenous Water Conservation and Agriculture

Note to the Teacher: The earlier researcher has recorded Zabü as Zabo, where as the literal word should be Zabü in local dialect. To futher explore and read about the different farming system practices in the North East/ Nagaland. The teacher can watch the video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAhSEBM0YIM>

References:

1. Amenla I. and Shuya K., 2021 Zabo (Zabü) Farming of Kikruma Village, Nagaland, India. Innovations In Agricultural Extension | © 2021 Michigan State University | Msu Extension

https://www.canr.msu.edu/_extension/international/Innovations-in-Agricultural-Extension/files/Ch03-Amenla_Zabo-Farming_2021-01-13aa.pdf

2. Ngachan, S. V., Mohanty, A. K & Pattanayak, A. (2012). Status paper on Rice in Northeast India. Rice Knowledge Management Portal, Directorate of Rice Research. Retrieved from <http://www.rkmp.co.in/sites/default/files/ris/rice-state-wise>Status%20Paper%20on%20Rice%20in%20North%20East%20India.pdf>.
3. Singh RK., Singh V,C Rajkhowa(2012). Zabo: A Traditional Way of Integrated Farming. In the book: Resilient Shifting Cultivation: Challenges and Opportunities (Deka BC, Patra MK, Thirugnanavel A, Chatterjee D, Borah Tasvina R and Ngachan SV Eds). ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Nagaland Centre, Medziphema, Nagaland. pp. 114-117.
4. Singh RK, Hannah K, Asangla, Bharali R, Borkotoky D., 2018: Zabo: A Time-tested Integrated Farming System Practiced by Chakhesang Tribe of Nagaland. Indian Journal of Hill Farming 2018;31(1):188-192.
5. Interview of farmers, 28th Dec 2022 & 16th March, 2023
Name of the farmers interviewed:
 1. Sheniezo Dzudo
 2. Zanehu Tunyi

***Dr** Nesatalu Hiese (PhD) received her PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University. She has published several papers in both National and International Journals. She is a Senior Scientist under Nagaland Science & Technology, Department of Science & Technology. She has worked on various R & D projects, and one of her focus areas is land resources management.

Naga Indigenous Agri Practices: Alder-Based Farming System

***Dr. Nesatalu Hiese (Ph. D)**

Nagaland is endowed with rich Biodiversity and falls under the Indo-Burma (Myanmar) Biodiversity, one of the 25 biodiversity hotspots of the world. It is inhabited by different indigenous tribal communities, who have practised various forms of traditional agriculture for centuries in this biodiversity hotspot. Shifting cultivation, or Jhum, involving slash-and-burn agriculture, is the predominant practice where the forest is cut down and burnt for agricultural activities. Shifting cultivation is the primary source of livelihood, where about 70% of the population depends on agriculture.

Over the years, with the increasing population, more pressure has been put on land, which has led to the shortening of the jhum cycle. The capacity to restore soil fertility is no longer sufficient because of the short uncultivated (short fallow development) periods; therefore, there is a decline in crop productivity. Transformation of shifting cultivation to settled agriculture is critical to *sustainable livelihood* and economic transformation.

This Chapter will introduce an indigenous farming system developed by Naga farmers known as Alder based farming system. This is practised as an alternative to jhum farming as it creates an ecological balance between meeting our present needs and preserving natural resources.

Jhum/ shifting cultivation is defined as any agricultural system in which the forest is cut down, and the fields are cleared (usually by fire) and cultivated for shorter periods. It is also known as the slash-and-burn method and is a predominant farming practice in Nagaland. The field is cultivated for 2 to 3 years, depending on the fertility of the land. Then it is left fallow (uncultivated) for about 7 to 8 years. After this period, the same land is cultivated again. This type of cultivation is called Jhum, and the rotation of Jhum cultivation is called the Jhum cycle.

However, the increasing population has reduced the jhum cycle, whereas earlier, it was usually 7-8 years. Currently, the cycle is reduced to 4-5 years, depending on the population and tribal practices. Jhum plays an essential cultural role in local customs, traditions, and practices, besides offering economic security to farmers.

Several problems caused by jhum have been reported. This primitive form of agriculture resulted in serious environmental problems: loss of forest cover, erosion of topsoil, desertification, and declines in forest productivity, due to the reduction in the jhum cycle.

The farmers, by observing nature, have developed many alternative farming practices, which are indigenous, evolved through their farming experiences suitable to their locality of hilly terrain, and one such practice is Alder based farming system.



Image 1: Shifting/ Jhum cultivation

Photo credit: IWMP, LRD

Alder-Based Farming System:

The Alder farming system is an indigenous farming practice of Naga farmers with good potential as an alternative to the Jhum or Slash-and-Burn farming system. This farming system grows crops as an intercrop with alder trees. This agro-practice system is a unique and efficient sustainable agricultural farming system developed and practised since immemorial by some indigenous tribes of Nagaland.



Image 2: Illustration of Alder base farming

Alder (*Alnus nepalensis sp.*) is a non-leguminous deciduous or semi-deciduous tree and fast-growing species that does not require high soil fertility; hence, conversion of wasteland into

agricultural land through this system is suitable. The root nodule of Alder is responsible for fertilizing the soil, whereas the roots' spreading nature helps prevent soil erosion in slopes.



Image 3: Alder Tree

An area is selected in this indigenous farming system, and trees and shrubs are cleared from October to December. The felled trees, branches and shrubs are kept to dry for 2 to 3 months, after which the area is burnt, which later on serves as manure to the soil. Then the soil is tilled with a spade for the sowing of crops. This whole process is done from February to March. The sowing of seeds (crops) is done from March to April. With the onset of pre-monsoon, the Alder tree saplings are planted between the crops in May. The saplings/seedlings of the Alder tree are uprooted from the jungle or naturally grown area and soaked in water for a few days to a week for root development before transplanting in the Jhum field, which give better survival rate. Some farmers practice direct transplantation into the field. The trees are planted with a wide spacing of approximately 12 to 15 feet between plants, depending on the farmers and slopes of the land cropping pattern and the proximity to where the leaves/litter will fall. The land is cultivated for 2 to 3 years, and the intercrops grown are rice, maize, colocasia, tomato, chilli, pumpkin, potato, beans, millet, varieties of gourds etc. Subsequently, the jhum land is abandoned (uncultivated) for 7-8 years to allow the trees to attain a certain height. The leaf litter makes the soil fertile, which is suitable for recultivation.



Image 4: Root of Alder tree
before transplanting

Alder trees grow rapidly during the first seven to nine years and their growth then begins to slow and the previously smooth bark becomes rough and fissured. This indicates the optimum age for first pollarding. The tree's main trunk is cut horizontally at 4 to 5 feet above the ground, while taking care to avoid splitting of stump head. The best time for pollarding is November to February. The new shoots are allowed to grow for few months, and in the same year, during June-July the pruning is done and only a few healthy nodes are preserved. These shoots can grow until the next jhum cycle. This cycle continues for many years, which makes the alder tree big and sturdy as it ages. Such alder trees, which are more than 100 years are found in farming areas. The technique of pruning is done at the base of the joint. The pruned branches are used for domestic firewood and timber.

In the first pollarding,
some farmers use stone
slab on the head of the
tree stump to protect the
wound from frost,
sunlight and wind, and
to enable uniform
sprouting of new shoots



Image 5: Alder tree before Pollarding



Image 6: First Pollarding



Image 7: Alder tree after Pollarding - 1st year



Image 8: Alder tree after Pollarding – 4-5 years in the abandoned Jhum field.

The traditional method of Peace Building and Communication of the Phom Naga tribe

--Dr. B. Henshet Phom*

Introduction

The people of the Phom Naga tribe inhabit Longleng district of Nagaland (Fig. 1). It is located in the north eastern part of Nagaland. Like any part of Nagaland, Longleng district is mountainous with an area of 1066.80 sq. km. It is bounded by Mon district (Konyak tribe) in the east, Assam in the north, Tuensang district (Chang tribe) in the south and Mokokchung district (Ao tribe) in the west. Its boundary is well demarcated by natural rivers such as Dikhu river with Mokokchung district, Yongmon river with the Mon district and Nyapa stream with the Tuensang district.

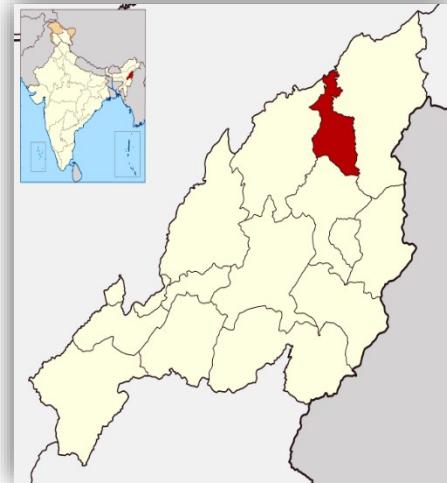


Figure 1. Map of Nagaland indicating Longleng district.

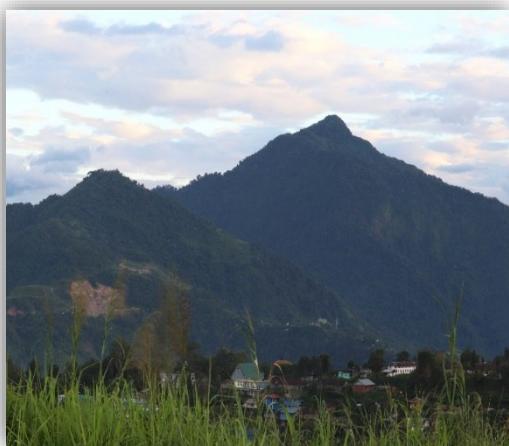


Figure 2. Mt. Yingnyushang. The highest mountain peak in Phom land.

Longleng district has low land in the foothills bordering Assam. This area is very fertile and has vast potential for agricultural production and development of industries and commerce. The mount Yingnyiüshang (Fig. 2) is the highest peak in Longleng district. It is in the south-eastern part of the district, bordering Tuensang with approximate height of 2500 meters above sea level. The forest of Yingnyiüshang is famous for its varieties of flora and fauna. The Phom tribe has its own distinct political and socio-cultural features. It is interesting to note

that Phom Naga tribe is the last Naga tribe to officially give up the head hunting culture (Fig. 3).

The Phom Day: A case study

The Phom Naga tribe is one of the 17 major tribes in Nagaland. As late as early 1950s, the Phom Nagas were practising head taking culture, where more than 100 heads were lost in the inter village raids. Thus, observing that it was an urgent need to establish peace, the government administrative officer, pioneer of Longleng headquarters and their colleagues, and few church leaders have been persuading the village elders of the tribe to stop the head taking practice.



Figure 3. Phom Naga tribesmen

Consequently, on June 6, 1952 the village elders of the tribe were summoned at Longleng and after discussing about the importance of maintaining peace, a pit was dug and the village elders were asked to spit inside the pit as a sign of pledge that here onward they will no more carry on the culture of killing one another. And swords and spears were buried inside the

pit and a stone pillar was erected

symbolizing the end of the head hunting era. Since then Phoms have given up the head taking practice once and for all, and the day is observed as Phom Day annually by organising grand programmes.

The story of Phom Day also teaches a lesson that it is possible to bring permanent peace and understanding among the people through the traditional method of peace building. One positive character of the Nagas is that the Nagas can keep words. If they have forgiven one another, then they will remain true to their words; the previous rivals can sit and dine together and would chat about the past with laughter.

In the preceding discussion, a brief study on the Phom Naga traditional method of peace building will be done.

The Phom Naga traditional method of Peace Building

Whereas, the modern method of peace building provides certain high standard modes of pacific settlement of international disputes which include bilateral negotiations, investigation, mediation, settlement, use of good offices, international arbitration, conciliation or any regional or self-determined mode of resolving international conflict; interestingly or surprisingly, one would find that the Naga ancestors had their own indigenous way of peace building which is very simple but effective and it is still relevant, some of which are given below:



Figure 4. Phom Morung.

1. **Lempong:** The literal meaning of the term Lempong is ‘meeting’.

It is similar to the tri-lateral, bi-lateral or the peace summit being held among the modern nations. The village leaders would meet at an appointed place and discuss about their inter-village affairs and make a pledge to maintain their peaceful relationships.

2. **Mailok:** The literal meaning of Mailok is ‘lovers meeting’ but this signifies ‘Youth Meeting’.

It is similar to the ‘Youth Convention’ of the present days. Mailok is held only between villages that are in good term. During mailok, young men from one village would go to the villages who are in friendly term in the evening and would sing and dance with the young women of that village the whole night. Indirectly, it was a diplomacy of maintaining friendly relationship between the villages. It was a taboo to invade the villagers who are maintaining the ‘Mailok’ with them. It would be a serious offence.

3. **Exchange of Slave:** Slavery had also been prevalent in the traditional Phom society,

though in a milder form. A slave is called “Aa” in Phom Naga parlance. Sometimes, Aa would be exchanged between villages as a sign of peace treaty. Slave would be sacrificed during community ceremony like during the dedication of morung (Fig. 4). Of course, now this is no more practiced and an outdated ideology.

4. **Changhom:** It is the visit of bereaved family after the demise of their near and dear ones.

There is also inter-village ‘Changhom’ relationship. It is said that during the Changhom visit, one is advised not to bring costly items or heavy priced livestock but one can bring just a chicken or a simple shawl to show solidarity with the bereaved family. The rationale is that if we exchange heavy priced gift items then some may not afford to reciprocate in

times of the other party's misfortune, which may compel them to discontinue their cordial relationship. This is a simple gesture but effectively enhance inter-community peaceful ties.

5. **Exchange of gifts:** The warring village elders may organize a peace summit and may exchange gift items like shawls, spears, swords etc. as a symbol of peace after the peace summit is held between villages. The items are exchanged after the declaration of vow not to break their peaceful relationship.
6. **Clearing of inter-village path:** The neighbouring villages also divide the portion of roads between the villages to be cleared so that the roads remain clear for their inter-village communication. This is also a kind of Peace Pact.
7. **Mediators:** The villages who had been at war can also decide to have peace with the help of mediator. The mediators should never be attacked or harmed. Those who violate this moral code could even face divine repercussion. Thus, they maintain strict moral observance in matter of inter village war or peace treaties.
8. **Erection of Peace Monolith:** The village elders declare maintenance of peace by calling the Sun and the Moon as witness and also erect a monolith. According to them, the sun and moon are the symbols that never change or never fail.
9. **Community fishing** is also organized among the villages to maintain peaceful atmosphere and to have camaraderie among the friendly neighbours.
10. **Visits:** The villagers also visit or assist one another in times of sorrow or merriment like morung dedication, festival, disaster, fire accident, epidemics etc. This is how they nurture and promote peace among villagers.

The Traditional Method of Communication

Tribal community lives in communion or in harmony with nature. The songs of the bird, the flow of stream, fall of the leaves, change of season convey to them message and meanings. Leaving aside the modern means of communication, given below are some of the medium of communication used by the traditional Phom Naga rural folks.

- Log drum:** Log drum (Fig. 5) was the chief means of communication used by the Naga rural folks. It heralds the arrival of the festive season, victory, defeat, invasion by enemy, community gathering, social work, accident, death of warrior, young, old, ordinary person, victory in game of hunting etc are all conveyed through the tune of the log drum. Log drum is called ‘shem’ by the Phom Nagas. Phoms also keep smaller log drum called ‘Shemha’ for the young boys who are not yet recruited to the morung. Shemha is also used in jhum field to communicate arrival, lunch time, departure, injury or emergency situation in the field.



Figure 5. Beating the log drum.

- Folk songs and folk tales:** The Nagas transmit the lesson of life through the medium of folk song and folk tales. During community singing and dancing, people sing songs of merriment and sometimes they debate on wide ranges of topic including inter village affairs. One interesting feature is that one cannot be fined for the wrong committed during debate through folk songs, particularly during the earlier cited Mailok occasion.
- Sign Communication:** The traditional Phom Nagas too used sign language particularly to convey their secrets. They would use smoke to convey message from the distant place, they may spread white cotton clothes to convey message of certain issues, they may use certain kind of leaves to convey different kinds of message. For example, Phoms call a kind of leave called ‘shinpü lak’ (Fig. 6), which produce red juice when plucked are kept as sign to signify danger.

Lovers also convey message through the exchange of folded betel leaf or by smearing of lime in the pan leaf. If lime is smeared on the normal side of the betel leaf, it signifies that she is willing to be his lover but if the lime is smeared on the opposite side of the leaf, then the man understand that she does not want to be his lover.

Daughters who are married outside their village also send message to the family members in time of war or strain relationship between villages. For example, when a daughter or sister sends coal, ashes, chilly or bamboo-shot inside gift packet it signifies bad news, it signals that there will be war or bitter experience.



Figure 6. Shinpü lak

4. **Keeping of leaves** on the road side shows different messages. For example, folded leaves on the road shows road-blocked, one must not proceed further. It is the sign of danger.

From the above cited illustrations one can surmise that the Naga indigenous methods of peace building and communication are not theory laden but very simple, practical and relevant. Thus, one can see the viability of reviving and promoting the traditional method of communication and building peace in their community.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions

1. Can you give the name of the districts surrounding Longleng district?
2. What is the name of the highest peak in Longleng district?
3. How many officially recognized tribes are there in Nagaland?
4. Describe how the culture of head taking was abandoned by the people of Phom Naga tribe?
5. Enumerate 5 methods of peace building practised by the people of Phom Naga tribe since the time of ancestors?

6. Why was the log drum considered as the main means of communication by the Phom Nagas?
7. Elaborate on some of the signs (code language) used by the Phom Nagas as the means of communication.

REFERENCE

1. Datta Ray B. 1989. ‘Tribal Identity and Tension in North East India’. Omsons publication. New Delhi.
2. Longduk Phom. Interview at Anaki Phom: 22.11.2017.
3. Nayar K Pramod. 2009. ‘An introduction to Cultural Studies’. Viva Book Private Limited. New Delhi.
4. Phom Henshet B. 2015. ‘The Phom Naga Indigenous Religion’. Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, Nagaland.
5. Verma Avnindra Kumar. 2010. ‘Political Science’. VK Enterprise, New Delhi.

Dr. B. Henshet Phom is the vice Principal, Yingli College, Longleng, Nagaland.

The "Pang Culture": The Traditional Learning Institution of the Phom Naga Tribe.

--Dr. Nurul Islam*

Introduction:

The present resource is about the main aspects of the Pang like the physical layout of the Pang, its hierarchy, the activities carried out in it, folktales and oral historical tradition, wrestling, court house, community service, military strategy etc. The resource is important because in the absence of schools, especially in the olden days, the Pang served as a training centre for all lessons that youth must learn before starting to live independently. The Pang was an autonomous body free from external influences on its administration and activities. It had its own advisors, councillors and administrators from among the senior members. The Pang played a vital role in preparing the younger generations for posts in the village council of Phom Naga tribe, the Pang was the club for entertainment and fun, the public school, the military training centre for the social, religious and political activities.

Learning Outcomes: The resource will help the pupils to understand how in the absence of schools the Phom Naga Tribe learnt the important and valuable lessons like discipline, hard work, the spirit of service, community life, singing, dancing, culture, rules and regulations of village festivals, religious get-together or a wedding, skilful sportsmen, wrestlers, warriors etc.

Pedagogical Process/Design and Suggested Activities: Inquiry-based and integrative approaches may be adopted. The teacher may prepare some handouts and worksheets on the resources or texts. The teacher may adopt discussion, explanation, storytelling, questioning, heuristic techniques etc.

Assessment Tools/Practices: Both the Formative (e.g. writing assignment, homework, surveys etc.) and Summative (e.g. final presentations, reports, grade etc.) assessment tools may be used.

Note to the Facilitator / Teacher: As a part of educational tour and field study the teacher will take the pupils to nearby "KHEL" or Village to show the physical layout of "PANG" and will narrate the story of it in brief. Assignment or homework may be given.

The main focus should be on the physical layout of the Pang, its hierarchy, the activities carried out in it, folktales and oral historical tradition, wrestling, court house, community service, military strategy and in the absence of schools how the Pang served as a vibrant training centre for all lessons etc. The resource may be used in the Social Science Subject as one of the Chapters for the classes 6-10.

Culture represents the accumulated habits, attitudes, values, skills and material goods of the society into which the individual is born.¹ It is the way in which a group of people live, think, feel, organize themselves, celebrate and share life. In every culture, there are underlying system of values, meanings and views of the world which are visibly expressed in languages, life styles, gestures, symbols and rituals. Culture is what a social group considers the best and sum-total of its thinking, living and expressing. Over the years, tribal culture has attained a clear distinctiveness by fostering a special balance between nature and culture. Economically natural resources, which are gifts of nature, are shared in common among the tribes.

Culture includes all that man has acquired in the mental and intellectual sphere of his individual and social life. It can best be expressed as social heritage. In the broader sense it includes such material or utilitarian factors or instruments like railway train, cars, radio, television, tables, and chairs etc. that enriches the social life of man on the one hand and non-material factors or values, beliefs, traditions, religion, literature, art, philosophy etc. on the other. But most of the philosophers differentiate between culture and civilization. According to them the material aspects is represented by the word civilization and non-material by culture. This view is widely accepted.

In the view of MacIver and Page, Culture is “the realm of styles, of values, of emotional attachments, of intellectual adventures. Culture, then, is the antithesis of civilization. It is the expression of our nature in our modes of living and our thinking intercourse, in our literature, in religion, in recreation and enjoyment.”

Culture and Education:

Education is an instrument of culture. If culture emphasizes the element of aesthetic and moral perfection it is evident that education is a significant technique for the realization of this perfection. It is an integral part of culture. The social dimensions of culture can be learnt through a process of correct education. The attitudes of mutual consideration and social regard are cultivated in the institutions for educational work. Thus, education is a vital ingredient in the process of socialization of the individual which is a tremendously important aspect of culture.

Education is mainly a technique while culture is a value. Education has been regarded as a means, sometimes for salvation, sometimes for personal ennoblement and perfection, and sometimes for creative participant citizenship. Culture on the other hand, is a value, it is a good in its right. Hence it can be said education is the process of the creation, perpetuation, transmission and enrichment of cultural values.

The Common feature of all Phom Naga living which invariably attracts the attention of the modern readers is its community based approach. Away from the cities and towns, they organised their habituation mostly in small hamlets. This made them build up their life with a strong community based approach and established a deep cooperative relationship among them.

The "Pang" has been derived from a Phom word which refers to houses, barracks or dormitories where unmarried boys sleep in groups. The Pang occupied a central position in the organization of the village level and administration. It was an institutionalized mechanism of social control and education.⁵

Physical layout of the Pang:

The Pang in the real sense of the term connotes a big hall built separately for young men to sleep and keep a vigil at night against the enemies. The Pang is a very large building, usually the most important structure in the village. It has a

great post carved with snakes, hornbills, monkeys, etc. It is located at the entrance of the village or on a spot where the whole village could be guarded most effectively. Today, the term Pang is used in general for all the boy's dormitories which are common to all the Phom Naga Villages, whether it is separately built or located in the house of the village chief or a rich man's house.



Fig-1: Physical Layout of the Pang



Fig-2: Physical Layout of the Pang

3

Upon reaching the age of puberty boys are admitted to their respective dormitory. A man may continue to sleep at the Pang for some time even after his marriage. No fees were paid for going to the Pang but members had to take part in the activities of the Pang. There were dormitories for girls too but they were not as prominent as that of the boys. The dormitories meant for girls were known as Yow (B. Henshet Phom). The girl ceases to go to the dormitory after marriage.

Hierarchy in the Pang:

The Pang was an important educational institution for the boys. There were regular

ranks through which the boys passed until they attained adulthood and were admitted to full membership. Each order has to perform some distinctive form of service for the men who belong in the Pang.

The Activities carried out in the Pang:

Normal activities of the Pang were never organised. They were spontaneous and members responded naturally. The Pang was the institution where the young people were trained, disciplined and given proper instruction in every field of life. In the absence of any other institutionalized system of schooling, the Pang played the foremost part in making them effective members of the society. They learnt the art of handicraft like wood carving, cane and bamboo works, basket making, black smith, etc., whereas the womenfolk learnt different kinds of cloth making arts and embroidery works during their stay in the girls' dormitory. Over and above, to preserve the cultural heritage of the past they learnt the art of dancing and singing. Most of the tradition passed from generation to generation through the medium of folk music, dance, folktales and oral historical tradition, carving of figures on stones and woods and design on cloth especially on shawls. Much of these learning and teaching process took place at the Pang and Yow.

As the boys sat inside the Pang they were often found singing. Many Phom Naga folk songs tend to be romantic in their contents as their composition was often inspired and motivated by the boy-girl relationship at the girls' dormitory and at work in the fields. There are however many a folk song, which contain historical background of the tribe, the community, the village, the clan and even certain well-known individuals. Some folk songs speak of the heroic deeds of certain individuals and clans. Seasonal songs are sung only in the particular seasons for which they are composed.

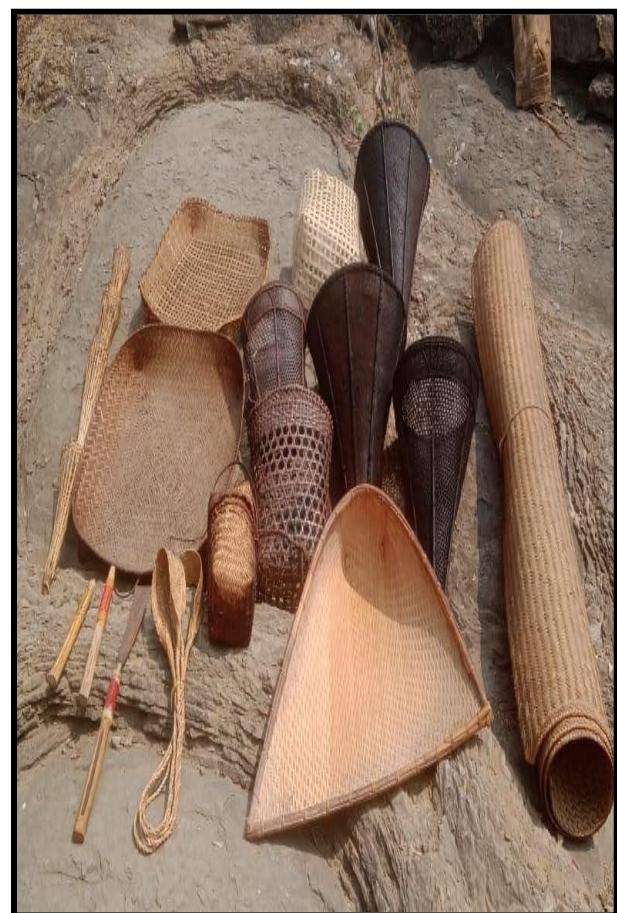




Fig-3: Wood Carving

Fig-4: Wood Carving



Fig-5: Wood Carving

Fig-6: Bamboo Works

Hardly any Phom Naga dance is performed without the accompaniment of music or shouts of some kind. A variety of dances are performed by the Phom Nagas each year, and dances used to be performed during social festivals and religious ceremonies.

Folktales and oral historical tradition:

Folktales and oral historical traditions have been the best and the most effective means of transmitting events of the past to the present generation. It appears that in the early days, storytelling at the Pang was more organised. The elder or the priest would come prepared and recite the stories of the past. Folk stories contain less romantic episodes. They tell more about customs and traditions of the past.

Boys listened to the talk given by the elders and the old men on war, discipline, manner, stories of brave warriors etc. In the absence of any written document, folk tales and oral historical traditions remain the sole link between the past and the present.

Wrestling:

Informal wrestling is very common among the boys; they would wrestle in the Pang or just outside of it or in any open space. From time to time there would be inter-Pang or inter-clan wrestling competitions.



Fig-7: Wrestling



Fig-8: Wrestling

Court House:

The Pang is a place of making understanding and reconciliation. It provides an opportunity to the young men to talk face to face to find out the best solution. If any difficult problem arises among the people, the final decision would be taken by the elder or old men. Often cases were tried at or just outside the Pang. The village chief, the elders and the alumni of the Pang acted as judges.

Guest House:

Outsiders were entertained at the Pang. Even a criminal, once accepted into the Pang, was protected by the inmate. The Pang acted as the hospitality wing of the Phom Naga Community.

Community Service:

Members of the men's Pang acted as mailmen carrying messages to other villages. As a group they assisted any family or person in the village needing their help. They participated in social works by repairing houses and platforms, or cleaning the village, in case of a sign of an attack in any shape, a password is given and every man is instantly on his legs, carrying his battle axe and spear, and a large hollow tree (Log drum) which is invariably kept in the Pang is struck by large pieces of wood. The nature of the situation would be indicated by the different sounds of the log drum. The kind of log referred to is of itself, when scoped out, capable of producing a tremendous noise and is of certain use as a musical instrument.

The Pang as a charitable institution helped the orphans, the weak, the widows, the poor and the disabled sharing with each other, the principle of each for all was followed in their day-to-day activities. Any participant, who could perform selfless service in the society, was highly regarded.

Every inmate performed his duties with great zeal and enthusiasm. It was through his selfless services that the community-based approach of the village life could bring happiness in their lives.

Military Strategy:

War between the villages was a common feature in those days. Raids were planned and discussed at the Pang. All headhunting equipment such as spears, shields, daos, guns etc. were kept at the Pang. All the heads taken on the raids too were preserved in the Pang.

Problems, Suggestions and Conclusion:

In the absence of schools, especially in the olden days, the Pang served as a

training centre for all lessons that youth must learn before starting to live independently. In Pang they learnt the important and valuable lessons like discipline, hard work, the spirit of service, community life, singing, dancing, culture, rules and regulations of village festivals, religious get-together or a wedding, skilful sportsmen, wrestlers, warriors etc. The Pang practices have come down to some extent in the present times due to the following reasons. In the first place with the advent of modernity the base necessity of guarding the village from the enemies was no more a burden on the people themselves. Secondly mass conversion of the people into Christianity brought new approaches to the people and weakening forces began to operate in undermining the stability of the Pang system. Thirdly, the introduction of formal education through the establishment of schools brought a great change to the Pang way of living. Fourthly, most of the responsible persons of the village today do not stay in their village as they entered into government services after their formal education, and they are also bound to live somewhere else. This single factor, perhaps contributed most to the parting of ways of the old order of life, a life definitely more complex and problems ridden, yet more challenging and promising. Fifthly, today to pursue higher studies many youngsters leave their villages as such a unifying force cannot be maintained in the Pang organization. Sixthly, the old-fashioned technology of the Pang can no longer face the challenge of modern technology in weaving, wood work, metal work and many other trades.

The young generation, NGOs and Government should take initiatives to preserve the Pang so that it can function as a vibrant learning institution.

The Pang was an autonomous body free from external influences on its administration and activities. It had its own advisors, councillors and administrators from among the senior members. The Pang played a vital role in preparing the younger generations for posts in the village council of Phom Naga tribe, the Pang was the club for entertainment and fun, the public school, the military training centre for the social, religious and political activities. In short, it was the fulcrum of the village democracies. According to J.P. Mills, ‘No one

Who is No longer a member of the Pang can interfere in its internal affairs and anyone attempting to do so can be fined. A Pang is a microcosm of the village and has its own council.” As a training ground for boys, it offered courses like testing of courage, endurance and ingenuity. It also played a vital role in preparing theyouth to attain a high position in the village in particular and the society in general.

GLOSSARY:

Phom: Name of a tribe.

Pang: The Traditional Learning Institution of the Phom

Nagas meant for Boys. Khel: Ward.

Hollow tree: Log drum.

Yow: The Traditional Learning Institution of the Phom Nagas meant for Girls.

Exercises:

Very short answer type questions:

- 1) What does culture represent?
- 2) What does culture include?
- 3) What do you mean by Pang culture?
- 4) Give the derivative meaning of the word Pang.
- 5) What is Yow?

Short answer type questions:

- 1) What is culture according to MacIver and Page?
- 2) State the functions of the Court House in the Pang.
- 3) What was Hierarchy in the Pang?
- 4) In the absence of Schools, how does the Pang serve as a training centre for all lessons?

Long answer type questions:

- 1) Differentiate between Culture and Education.
- 2) Describe the physical layout of the Pang with a diagram.
- 3) Write a brief note on the activities carried out in the Pang.

- 4) How does Pang serve as a Community Service Centre?
- 5) Describe the role of folktales and oral historical tradition in transmitting events of the past to the present generation.

- 6) **Write short notes on the following:**
 - a) Wrestling,
 - b) Court House,
 - c) Guest House,
 - d) Community Service, and
 - e) Military Strategy.

References:

1. Shishak, Tuisem A., Indigenous Naga Culture, www.angelfire.com.
2. Phom, Henshet B., (ed.), (2015) Facets of Naga Culture, Yingli College Publishing cell, Longleng, p.47.
3. Singh, Yogendra, (2000), Culture Change in India, Identity and Globalization, Jaipur, Prem Rawat for Rawat publication, p.85.
4. Walia, J.S., (1998), Principles and methods of Education, Jalandhar City (Punjab), Paul Publishers, p.252.
5. Government of Nagaland (2004), Festival of Nagaland, Directorate of

Information & Public Relation, Kohima, p.36.

6. Jose, V.A., (2009), Education, New Delhi, Livingstone publishing House, pp.107-108.
7. Islam, Nurul, (2001), 'Over-view of Backward Areas of Nagaland since Independence with special Reference to Educational Status of the Phom Area', printed in the proceeding of a seminar entitled "Over-View of Backward Areas of Nagaland since Independence", Longleng, pp.37-38.
8. Rahman, A., (2015), Change and Development in Phom Naga Society, New Delhi, Concept publishing company Pvt. Ltd., p. 85-86.
9. Phom, Henshet B., (2009), Naga Concern: Reflection on Society, Religion, Culture and politics in Nagaland, Longleng, p.42.
10. Kumar, B.B. (1995-96), An introduction to the Naga Tribes, Meerut, Pragati Prakashan, pp.18-19.
11. Gosh, B.B., (ed.), (1981), Nagaland District Gazetteers, Tuensang District, Kohima, pp. 48-49.
12. Bareh, H. (ed.), (1970), Nagaland District Gazetteers, Kohima District, Kohima p.31.
13. Mathew, joseph, (2005), A text Book of Higher Secondary Education, Academic Publishers, Kohima (Third edition), pp. 176-177
14. Internet Sources, Wikipedia: Different India, Different Tribe, part III, Nagaland
15. Mills, J.P., (2003), The Ao Nagas, Kohima (Third Edition), p.69.

Personal Interviews:

INTERVIEW HELD WITH INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED BELOW:

- 1) Shri.A. Longpo Phom (70), Orangkong Village, Retired MPW, MS Office, at Longleng on 05-11-2022.
- 2) Shri. A. Toshi (32), Teacher, at Longleng on 06-11-2022.
- 3) Dr. B. Henshet Phom (47), Anaiki Village, Vice -Principal, Yingli College, at Longleng on 15-12-2022.
- 4) Shri. C. Shipa Phom (71), Do-Bhasi, at DC office, at Longleng on 18-11-2022.
- 5) Smt. Elei Phom (63), Orangkong Village, House wife, at Longleng on 05-11-2022.
- 6) Shri. Hamphe Phom (61), Tangha Village, Pastor, on 29-11-2022.
- 7) Shri. H. Cheiyang (72), Farmer, at Yongnya Village on 11-11-2022
- 8) Shri. H. Pangshen Phom (42), NAP, SP office, at Longleng on 18-11-2022.
- 9) Smt. Isenjungla Phom (39), Noksosang Village, House wife, on 06-12-2022.
- 10) Shri. K. Mangang Phom (52), Peon, Soil Department, at Longleng on 06-11-2022
- 11) Shri. K. Shoang Phom (65), Retired UDA Sericulture office, at Longleng on 07-11-2022.
- 12) Shri. Longshak Phom (55), Tamlu Village, Duftry, Yingli College, at Longleng on 25-11-2022.
- 13) Smt. Matje (69) Farmer, at Yongnya Village on 11-11-2022.
- 14) Shri. Nukshi Phom (43), Noksosang Village, Teacher, on 06-12-2022.
- 15) Shri. Noky Phom (46), Do-Bhasi, DC office, at Longleng on 21-11-2022.
- 16) Shri. T. Lepdang Phom (72), Farmer at Orangkong Village on 04-11-2022.

- 17) Smt. Shingnyu Phom M.A. (23), Niang Village, on 03-03-2023
- 18) Dr. Vangngoi Phom (47), Tamlu Village, Assistant Professor, Yingli College, at Longleng on 03-02-2023.

**Dr. Nurul Islam teaches the subject Education in the department of Education, Yingli Government College, Longleng, Nagaland University since 1997. He has a Ph.D. from Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, Haryana. Several of his research papers and articles are published in Journals from India and USA. Moreover, several of his research articles are published in some edited books. He has completed a book titled "Development of Logical Thinking in Elementary School Students" and is under publication.*

Beyond The Single Story: Using Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool

-Sophy Lasuh*

The Single Story is a concept introduced by the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her 2009 TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story". The idea of the single story refers to reducing a person, group, or culture to a single narrative, often a negative stereotype, which ignores the complexities and diversity of their experiences and identities.

The theory argues that everyone is susceptible to the danger of a single story, as we are all exposed to dominant narratives in media, literature and other forms of cultural production. However, seeking diverse perspectives and stories can challenge and disrupt a single account and create a more inclusive and accurate understanding of people worldwide (TED, 2009).

Adichie read British and American books while she was a young girl growing up in Nigeria, but she rarely came across works that resonated with her realities. As a response, when she first started writing, she imitated the style and concepts of the writings she had read. It wasn't until she came across books written by African writers that she realised how important it was to create stories portraying her reality.

This chapter explores lived experiences, illustrating the significance of recognizing and valuing the diversity of voices and perspectives that shape our societies. Three stories are used as case studies designed to provoke critical thinking and empathy among readers and encourage active engagement with diverse stories.

Through stories, the chapter encourages a deeper understanding of the complexities and multifaceted nature of the past. By examining lived historical experiences, readers gain a heightened awareness of the importance of inclusivity. The chapter seeks to provide them with tools to appreciate the diversity of voices and perspectives that shape our societies.

Scientific research has shown that telling a story activates several brain parts. Neuroscience imaging reveals that the brain activates just two areas responsible for language comprehension and processing when receiving facts and figures. However, when processing stories, the brain activates up to seven regions associated with touch, movement, scent, sound, colour, shape, language and comprehension

(Greg J. Stephens, 2010). This implies that the brain responds to story events as if they were happening to the listener. Perhaps this is why crying, laughing and other emotions are exhibited while listening to or reading stories.

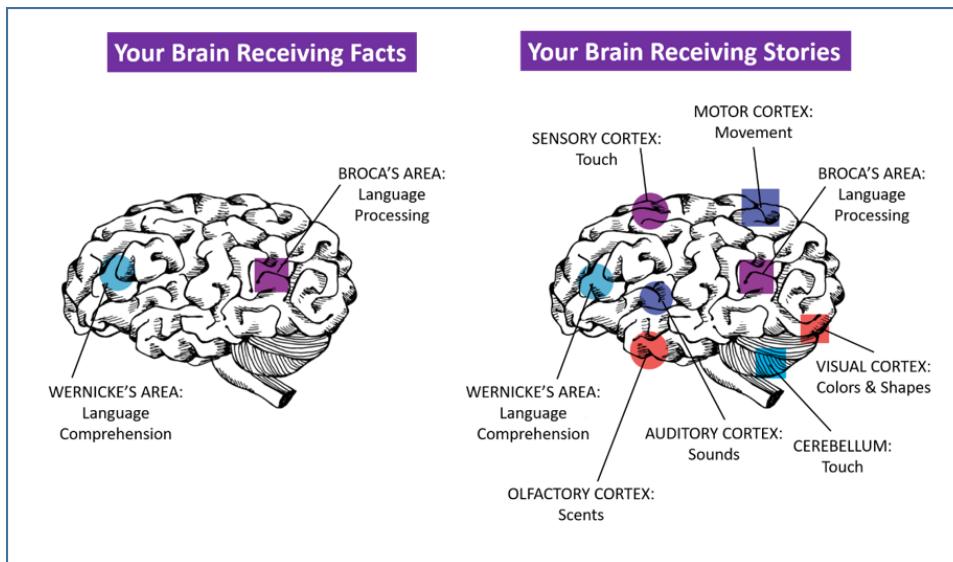


Image 1: *An illustration of how the brain reacts to storytelling. (Picture credit: andreaalphonso.com, brandfoundation.us)*

Storytelling has been crucial for preserving history, traditions, and cultural practices in societies that rely primarily on oral communication. Such communities have sustained themselves through centuries by transferring knowledge through storytelling.

The Nagas are an oral society. The story about the Nagas, specifically its origins, is still in the process of being written. There are many theories, yet they are subject to certainty. The appellation "Naga" was given to them by outsiders. Outsiders wrote stories about the Nagas from their brief encounters based on their assumptions or Eurocentric theories. They extracted and claimed ownership of the indigenous ways of knowing the Naga imagery and the material culture that the Nagas created and produced. Tweeted as "one of the most violent spaces in Oxford", the Pitts River Museum in Oxford, England, possesses the most extensive Naga collection in the world, with approximately 6459 cultural artefacts and 214 ancestral human remains (Editorial, 2022). Outsiders projected Nagas as primitive tribes living in the north-eastern hills of India.



Image 2: *Hand-coloured reproduction photograph of an original (monochrome) watercolour painting by Robert Gosset Woodthorpe depicting Nagas from various communities alongside numerous British officials and surveyors, including Woodthorpe himself. The photograph is dated '1874' and annotated in pencil below the print: 'Coloured by Capt. Woodthorpe R[.]JE.'*

Copyright Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1910.45.18)

"The Naked Nagas" is a book written by a German-speaking anthropologist from Austria, Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf. Published in 1956, this book explores the social structure and religious and traditional beliefs of the Nagas, including their headhunting rituals, agricultural practices and musical traditions. The field of anthropology recognizes it as a significant contribution, particularly in the study of the Naga people and their culture, and academic literature widely cites and references it. The cover of this book is one of the best-known images of Haimendorf. It shows a naked Naga girl, taken from a low angle. Her name is Henlong, and she is from Wakching, a Konyak village in the eastern part of Nagaland.

Another anthropologist, Kauffmann, accompanied Haimendorf during this trip, and much later in Munich, the discovery of Kauffmann's photographs revealed behind-the-scenes of the cover image. From Kauffmann's prints, the story of the pose comes alive. It is evening, and Henlong and her parents are returning to the village. Haimendorf approaches them, and Henlong is giggling. She

moves away from her parents, removes her shawl, and Haimendorf directs her to pose with her hands lifted (Stockhausen A. V., 2014)

From this story, we can infer that Haimendorf wanted to project the Nagas as naked to his audience. That was his single story about the Nagas, and it reflects in his book's title and cover image. The travellers' stories of 2022 continue to look for this single 'colonized' story about the Nagas. This confirmation bias represents the danger of the single story.

Barcelona Dreamtime (2007)

"I believe that stories are powerful
they have the power to transform lives
the magic to work peace
and then, it is so important that they be told
in any way, even in ways that we have not
thought of before
in pictures, as gestures, as dance, as song
in any way they can be told
reinvented, breathing life in new forms
so that they can touch lives and
work their transforming magic." ...
"Every story has the right to be heard.
Some stories are more desperate than others
because they are trying to shout
'What we have is not what we want.'
Imagine the predicament of a people



Image 3: Easterine Kire is a Naga author and poet. Easterine Kire's "Son of the Thundercloud" was awarded Bal Sahitya Puraskar by Sahitya Academy in 2018. In 2011, Easterine Kire was awarded the Governor's Medal for excellence in Naga literature. Catalan PEN Barcelona also awarded her the Free Voice Award. "Bitter Wormwood" was shortlisted for The Hindu Prize in 2013. "A Terrible Matriarchy" was selected to be translated into UN languages. Furthermore, the books "A Terrible Matriarchy", "Mari", "Forest Song", "Naga Folktales Retold", and "A Naga Village Remembered" have been translated into German. In 2015, her "When the River Sleeps" was awarded The Hindu Literary Prize. (Picture credit: Easterine Kire)

One of the most effective ways to address a single story is by telling your own stories through writing. Outsiders produced the highest concentration of published accounts about the Nagas between 1832, which marks the year of the British entry into the Naga country until India got its independence from British rule in 1947 (Nien, 2015). Between 1832 – 1947, the Nagas came in contact with a new religion in 1839 following the first conversion in 1847, two World Wars, after which Nagas found themselves scattered in India and Myanmar. Being an oral society, the Nagas transferred knowledge through storytelling from word of mouth, carvings on wood, symbols and designs in textiles and ornaments, tattoos on flesh, words of wisdom in songs, and stories of victory and lamentations interpreted into movement through dance. Some of these oral knowledge systems of the Nagas were

observed and recorded in books, mainly by Hutton and Mills, senior English officers posted in the Naga hills by the British Administration. Hutton, who was also an anthropologist, published two monographs in 1921, *The Angami Nagas* and *The Sema Nagas*, while Mills published *The Lotha Nagas* (1922), *The Ao Nagas* (1926) and *The Rengma Nagas* (1937). Europeans presented the Naga story through their lens.

The Nagas did not write anything about themselves until 1957. The first book written by a Naga was *Ao Naga Customary Laws* by Tajenyuba Ao. It was locally published, and this book remains in use in Guwahati University Law Department. The second book is attributed to the same author. Published in 1958, it was titled *History of Anglo-Naga Affairs*. His book titles exhibit a desire of the Nagas to represent themselves through their own stories. It started the decolonization of the single story that has impressed the Nagas since 1832.

As Nagas continue to represent themselves through various communication mediums such as visual art, music, poetry, films, literature, and dance, this chapter introduces a new form of storytelling that can be equally powerful as those already in existence: unheard stories. Unheard stories can fill gaps in our understanding of communities that traditional narratives and new-age media often exclude. The three unheard stories shared here exemplify how personal storytelling provides a platform to any community for self-expression and building their sense of identity and agency.

The Blyth's Tragopan bird, The World's Tallest Rhododendron Tree and The biggest Elephant Tusk in Nagaland.

-Thepfulhouvi Solo

No Blyth's Tragopan survived WWII in any of the European Zoos. The spectacularly beautiful ground bird, a Pheasant family member, first became the White People's fascination from specimens trapped in the highest mountain ranges, 6000–10000Ft of Naga Hills, and were taken to Europe by the British in the early nineteenth Century. But no birds survived in European Zoos by the end of the Second World War.

The bird naturally reproduces a pair of eggs once a year. Soon after Naga Hills became Nagaland, the 16th State of India, in 1963, the State procured a couple of Tragopan birds and tried multiplying them in a small pen in their natural habitat Puliebadze Protected Forest just above the Forest Colony in Kohima.

We primarily fed the birds with wild ferns and leaves from their natural habitat, and in 2 years, the birds produced two chicks and survived.

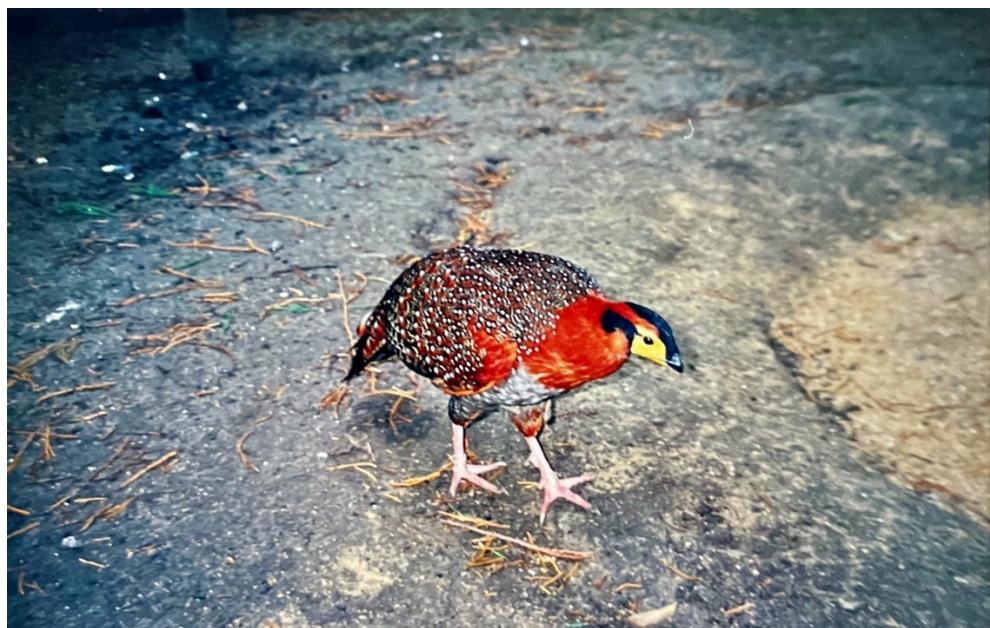


Image 4: *Blyth's Tragopan, the State Bird of Nagaland (Picture credit: T Solo)*

The BBC got this story, and within a few years, the World Pheasant Association, London, informed its great desire to multiply the bird in captivity jointly with the Department of Forest in Nagaland. The London Association expressed it would train a person from the State free of cost.

We sent a pair of birds to London. The government later chose me to learn about the Captive Breeding of Birds method. I, who entered the Forest Service expecting the fulfilment of my favourite hunting hobby, is grudgingly converted to Wildlife and Nature Preservation.

In Nagaland, we made attempts to rear the bird as near its natural condition as possible, and we had no idea of increasing the egg in the nest made on the ground.

In London, I found the President of the World Pheasant Association would quietly go to the nest, and if the bird were not sitting on the eggs, he would 'steal' one of the two eggs from the bird and keep it in the refrigerator. The hen thought it must lay two, so it laid another egg, and the President of the Association would again misbehave! The Naga Trainee learned how to misbehave with nature and get double the eggs from the civilized Captive Breeding through observation.



Image 5: Keith Howman (Right), President of World Pheasant Association with T Solo's wife, Nidiü Solo (Left), at Captive Breeding Centre in London, 1980 (Picture credit: T Solo)

One morning, Mr Keith, the owner of the Aviary with most of the birds in the world threatened with extinction after feeding the bird, forgot to close the small door to the enclosure of the most beautiful Palawan Peacock Pheasant. The bird came out and ran into the surrounding bush of the Aviary.

I was at the other section of the Aviary feeding other birds when I saw several gentlemen excitedly running hither and thither with long-handled butterfly nets. I inquired what had happened, and they told me the irreplaceable Palawan peacock had left its enclosure and was hiding in the front bush.

With an elongated neck, I cautiously waded into the bush and saw the bird twittering excitedly and running towards a cleared patch. I ran after it, but it jumped up, flew away across the fence and found a wall of tall trees with thick crowns of leaves; I turned to the left and tried to land on a roll of goat-proof wire of loose mesh. I also jumped over the fence and ran after it. The bird did not find a smooth landing, and its legs fell into the mesh, and it tried to fly up with its wings. Before it could, I jumped at it and caught it in mid-air with my hands, arm, and elbow in my armpit. I brought it to Keith Homann; I never saw a Scottish face happier!

There have been requests years later for 'New Blood' of the bird from the wild in Nagaland for the degenerating blood due to interbreeding of the close birds taken earlier. Still, we are interested in the protection of the bird in its natural environment and population increase 'in situ' than in captive breeding, where the bird becomes unnaturally tame, obedient and civilized without wild attractiveness!

The Tallest Rhododendron Tree in The World

While on training in 1980 at Captive Breeding Centre in London, at a gathering of Members of the World Pheasant Association, conversations were going on about wild animals and plants; Mr Howman said the Tallest Rhododendron in the world is in Nangalbari, Nepal.

Since childhood, I have been very fond of hunting. I considered every animal and birdshot in the jungle as 'blessings from *Tshükhieo*' –the mythological wild Animal Owner of the wilderness according to the true Angami Naga Belief System!

I thought if I became a Forest Officer, I would get a lot of hunting chances during Service time; nothing seems to me better than that! That was before India gained independence.

But India, on becoming Independent, soon sealed up my favourite hobby by declaring 'Forests' a national asset, turned the subject from the State List to Concurrent List, revived the colonial Imperial Forest Service (IFS) into Indian Forest Service, and soon even passed a Wildlife Preservation Act opposed to my favourite pastime. By then, I could not change my life's journey and had to appear for the National Forest Service Exam. I took Science in my Intermediate (Hons) Degree and was studying Post Degree in Science stream but left for Forest Service. I sat in the UPSC for Forest Service.



Image 6: T Solo transformed himself from a hunter to a protector when he became the first Naga to be inducted into the first batch of the Indian Forest Service Post-Independence. (Photo credit: T Solo)

I passed the Commission's written tests and got invited for a personal interview. During the interview, I could satisfactorily answer all the members' questions. However, towards the end of the interview, one of the examiners suddenly said:

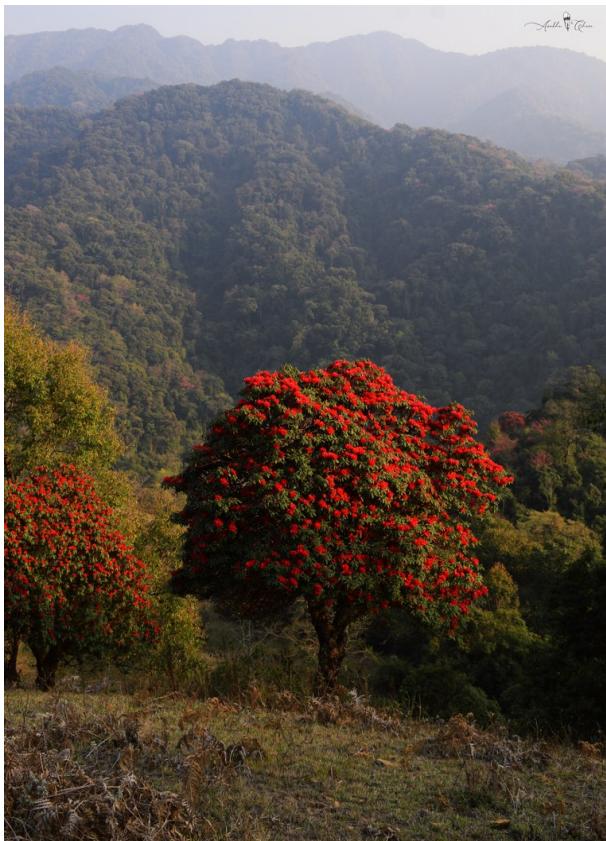
"You Nagas eat dogs, so your teeth are bad." I replied: "Sir, we Nagas eat anything that is not poisonous."

Suddenly, all the Members broke into spontaneous laughter. The laughter ended the interview, and someone brought them tea just then. I begged them to leave, but the Chairman asked me to stay and have tea.

I sat down, had the tea, said, 'Than you, Sir,' and took leave of them. I left the imposing building with a glowing feeling that I may get selected.

Much later, when I received my Mark Sheet, they marked me much above my expectation and enabled me to secure 29th rank in the "General List" of 99. So, I got into the IFS in Independent India's first batch of Indian Forest Service because the Nagas eat dog meat!

After the London training, I returned home and searched for the Rhododendron taller than the one at Nangalbari, Nepal, recorded as 65ft.



Rhododendron flowers are utilized by Nagas for its medicinal properties. In cases where fish bones become lodged in the throat while eating, a technique involves placing a dried solitary strand of the flower petal in the mouth without chewing. This results in the dissolution of the bone.

Image 7: A flowering Rhododendron tree. (Picture credit: Asakho Chase)

A tree of 65 feet is significant and very tall. Rhododendron *arborium* species held the Tallest Rhododendron in the Guinness Book of World Records from Nangalbari, Nepal. Eight kinds of Rhododendrons grow in Nagaland in the Japfü mountain ranges and North East India, rising from 5000ft to 9000ft in cold steep mountainsides. Usually, 40ft tall is the height for most Rhododendron *arborium* trees.

I was an avid hunter during my High School boyhood. I had observed big and tall Rhododendron trees on the side of the tract to Japfü Mountain, which is 9968ft. I climbed four times, and one of my forest labourers told me there was a tall one on the far north side of the mountain peak. Nobody knew how tall it was. The location was too far away in the mountain; there was no possibility of going and coming back the same day to and from my house in Kohima. One has to spend at least one night in the jungle.

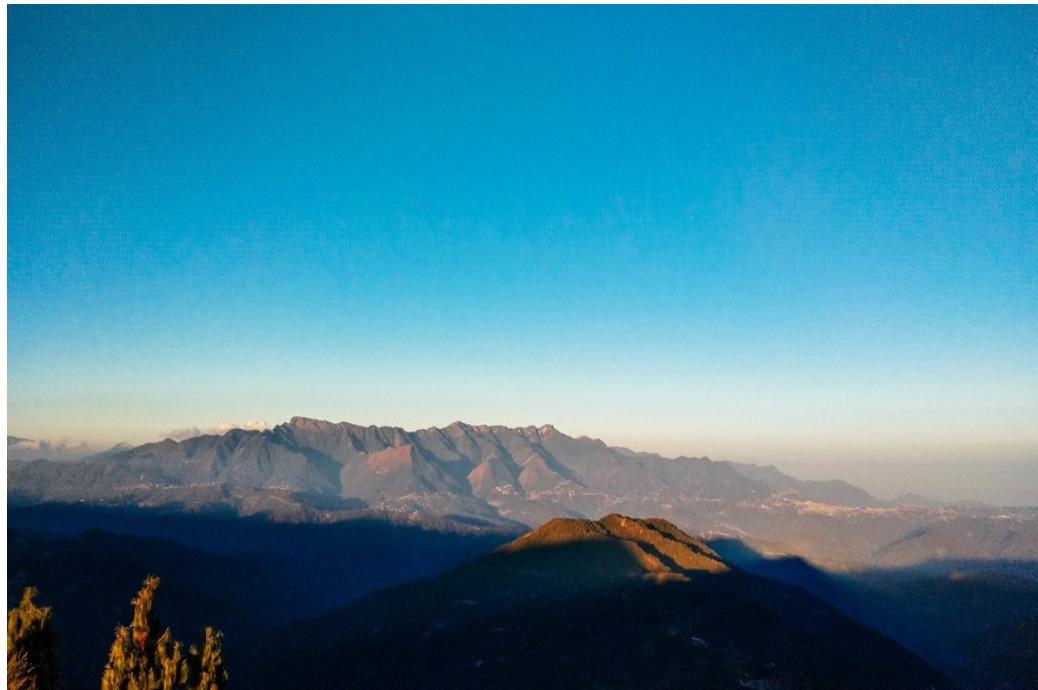


Image 8: *Panoramic view of the entire Japfü Mountain Range. (Photo credit: Megotsolie Dolie)*

Well, I gave the forest labourer Donipa of Phesama Village an amount of money to clear a tract to the spot.

Then on New Year's day of 1989, with another labourer to carry our beddings and some tinned food, I took all three of my sons, the youngest only six years old, to the mountain.

Very early in the morning, when our cheeks touched the cold mountain air, with painful earlobes and even before the sun rose above the far away Saramati Peak on the eastern horizon, we were already on the top of the Aradura mountain range far above the city of Kohima. Further up, the Puliebadze range meets the tract to the Japfü Mountain. We followed the Puliebadze ridge until it joined the well-worn Japfü track to its peak.



Image 9: *A signpost signalling trekkers details about Mt. Japfū (Picture credit: Megostolie Dolie)*

On the way, after some time, I was a bit concerned that the youngest son, six years old, may find it challenging to go up the stiff mountain tract, and the prospect of me carrying him piggyback on my back or the back of his eldest brother alternately worried me. But he seemed to be taking the ascent effortlessly with boundless spirit.

The early January morning weather was as clean as the dressing table mirror. But as we climbed the base of the side of the Japfū Peak, dark clouds began to drift in the western horizon, and a delicate breeze began to blow on our right cheeks. We left the beaten track to Japfū and turned to our right towards the steep slope with thick, soft, black humus overlain with layers of fallen dry leaves. The sky began to thunder, at first on the distant horizon but coming nearer and nearer as time went by.

We had to catch thorny buses to prevent slipping down the slope. Slowly we progressed without stopping to reach the spot before darkness overtook us.

By late evening, the sky became dark and ugly, and peels of thunder frequently continued more and more; it appeared there would be rain, something abnormal during the dead of winter. Not expecting rain, we carried only heavy blankets but no raincoat or umbrella.

We could not reach the spot where the Rhododendron tree grew. We stopped short of the place and found a small spring well from where we collected water to cook our food. Donipa cooked the Naga

food while we opened our beddings with numbed fingers and spread the blankets on the bare cold forest floor for our bed. It was freezing, and I observed my youngest child grow very quiet. I suspected hypothermia might be settling on him. I wrapped him close to me with my arms and made him sleep in the middle, on one side his elder brothers and on the other me.

At night, soon after food, we slipped in between the blankets, stones and lumps of protruding ground pressed against our backs and sides but our tired bodies made us go to sleep without our knowledge.

In the dead of night, we woke up startled to find our blankets wet and all the forests amid a rainstorm. We jumped up in search of someplace to take shelter. Luckily, a huge fallen tree was nearby, and the trunk was lying horizontally on the ground. The fallen tree's trunk did not touch the earth at a depressed portion of the land. We crowded together to spend the night in the shivering cold at this spot.

In the morning, we went up to where the Rhododendron tree was. A dense mass of entangling tropical climbers, lianas, and crowns of other trees surrounds it. I moved here and there in search of a spot from where I could see the tip of the tree from my camera lens, but it proved futile.

The tree is a fantastic specimen, big, very tall, the basal portion completely covered with ages of moss up to some height and the branches festooned with giant beards lichen. The tree is still young and growing; I noticed that one of the branches, which looked like a twin bole, had broken, leading me to think that the tree might be a twin. One grew up to some 15 feet above the ground and separated after that, but the one broken grew at an impossibly odd lateral angle that finally, on its weight, it broke down itself.

On the way to Mount Japfü peak, I also found another unusually big convoluted Rhododendron with one giant bole but branched and broken; the unbroken bole was growing normally healthy but not at all tall. As mentioned earlier, *R. arboreum* does not produce vast and tall, mostly less than 40ft, but the tallest of the three I have seen had a big branch, seemingly a twin bole but with a broken unit.

I know trees have twins, but at a variable height from the ground, one individual becomes small and weak at some height, is smothered by the healthier and looks like a branch but dies as its roots are dominated by the healthier!

I took photos of the tree in two sections since I didn't have a wide-angle lens, one basal portion with my youngest son standing at the base, and the other the of the crown, but the photos are just to witness the tree and not good enough for a show.

I took notes in my diary dated January 1 and 2 of 1989, the Diameter and Girth of the Tree at ground level and measurements with Abney's Level, and Trigonometric calculations of height menstruations of the height to be 4.5 ft: diameter at Base, 2.41m, (8.2ft) Girth and 24.41m, (79.11ft) in height.

Then I found the Tallest Rhododendron Tree in the world, and before the ink ran dry in my pen, I wrote to the Guinness Book of Records in London, and they accepted it on P/48 in the Guinness Book.

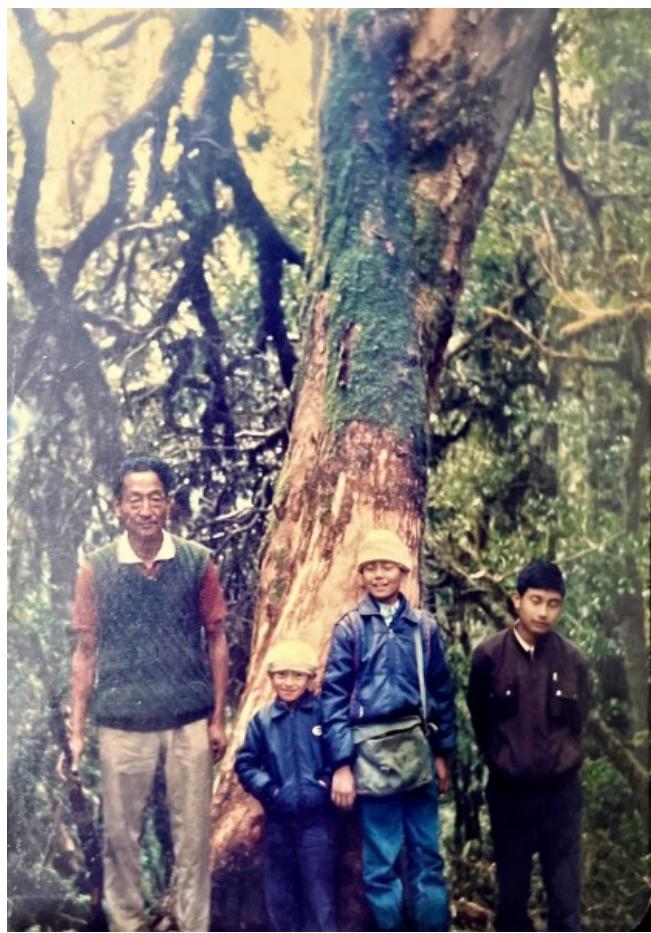


Image 10: Donipa, the forest labourer, and T Solo's sons posing at the base trunk of the world's tallest living rhododendron tree, measuring a height of 79.11 ft.

(Picture credit: T Solo)

The Biggest Elephant Tusk 6'4" In Nagaland

As the Divisional Forest Officer of Kohima Division, I became enchanted by the story of the high alpine hollow of the Dzüku Tableland. ['ü' is pronounced as 'U' in 'urgent' or 'urchin' in English]. It is surrounded by thickly forested mountains, rising to a height of 9965 ft, amid a sub-tropical region. The Dzüku Tableland falls under the jurisdiction of the Kohima Division. Besides the Saramati Mountains, Dzüku is the second spot snow falls for a short period in the dead of winter every year in Nagaland.

Nobody had much business going to trackless Dzüku valley during those days, grown with pencil-sized short, stature bamboo called *dzüpfü* in Angami that carpeted the cold valley.

I wanted to see the area, particularly as it has a non-coniferous broad-leaved primaeval forest that surrounds the tableland all around its outer sides and because no Forest officers of higher echelons have ever been to it.

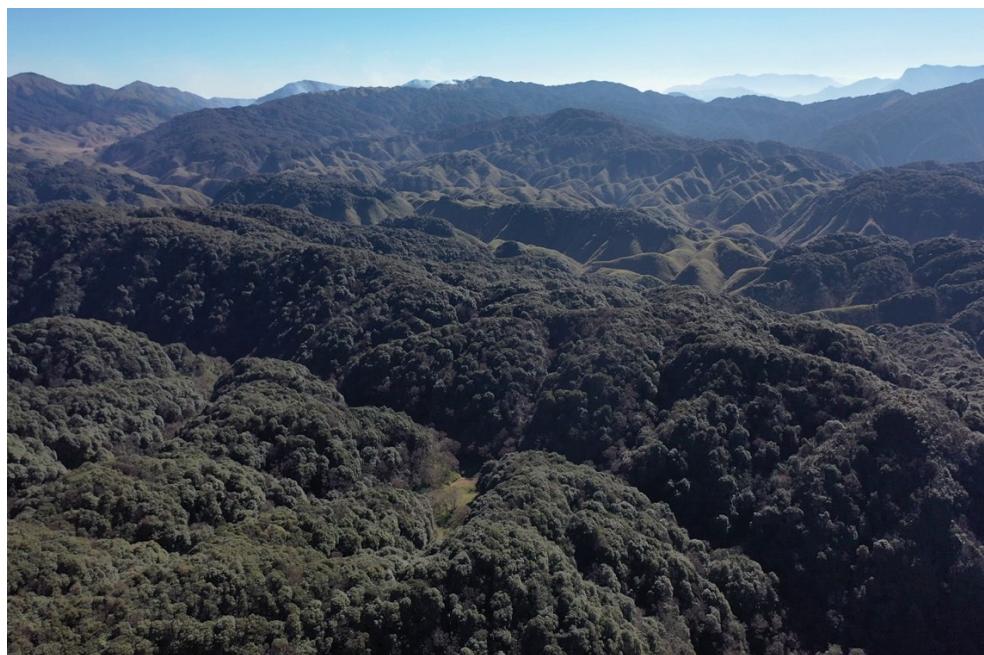


Image 11: Drone shot of Western and Eastern Dzüku valley. (Picture credit: Megotsolie Dolie)

I engaged a renowned hunter tracker of Khonoma Village, Vilehu Khate. He is well acquainted with the area and came with his well-worn 12-bore gun and homemade re-cycled shots. Another helper accompanied him to carry my bedding without a pillow, whose name I cannot recall. My total

gentlemanly brother-in-law Kezhalelie Terhüja, and two young pleasant Forest Guards, Ngusie and Whesau, completed the group.

On April 24 morning 1974, we all followed in a single line, one after another, of our tract leader. There was no tract in the jungle but only rough North, East, West and South directions. Vilehu told us we would go and sleep in a small cave where we could cook and sleep on the dry floor at night.

The tracker had lost some of his memory of the ancient cave, causing us to spend much time searching for its location. It grew dark, but whether daylight or dark, cave or not, our first requirement was to cook food to fill our empty stomachs. And we have to find a fountain or a stream near us. However, nobody can order a stream or a fountain to be on the top of a stony 9000ft mountain tableland.

Somehow our leader Tracker crawled here and there in the dark like a black bear, vanished with a water vessel, and soon brought water for cooking. Then he first took a small piece of rubber from his bag, lit it with his match stick, and laboriously made a fire of dried sticks and leaves.

Soon, the group made a giant fire in addition to the hearth, and we all heated comfortably. The fire wafts up flakes of burned leaves and sparks into the air high up to the crown of the trees. Suddenly a flying squirrel glided into one of the trees and crawled up the tree and then to the branches.

I was surprised, but the old hunter said that the flying squirrel is attracted to licking the ash of the burned leaf that floated up and got stuck to the tree branches! The older man could not differentiate the alphabet A from B, but he beat the qualified IFS in the jungle and animal knowledge!

It began to drizzle a little, and I slid into my sleeping bag without a pillow and could not sleep. One of the Forest Guards brought me a stone for my pillow; I asked him to get some leaves to cushion the hard rock a pad. After some time, I did not know when I had fallen asleep.

Very early in the morning, after food, we started following a westerly direction; my sense of the cardinal geographic rule matched my pocket compass. Dzüku is, as I said, covered very thickly with a peculiar small, short bamboo not found in other places of the State. Pushing the tuff plant sideways with both hands is necessary to proceed forward, but the plant returns to a position like stretched rubber as soon as you remove the needles. The valley's ground is not level flat, it is a valley consisting

of hillocks and humps, and once one passes a particular hump or hillock, he does not know from which direction he came or which direction is east or west.



Image 12: *A picturesque view of Dzüku during summer. (Picture credit: Megotsolie Dolie)*

The first day and the second, before noon, I could somehow sense the geographical direction correctly. We entered the valley from the East and were going West, and my pocket compass bore me out my sense of direction, but by an afternoon of our second day, I consulted my compass, and I thought Vilehu must be going wrong. We should travel in a Westerly direction to meet the Dzüpfü River, where our excursion would end.

I was a little worried but silently followed the leader. He was just avoiding the problematic, rough hillock-to-hillock direction. He started following down a small ravine which would form a brook, and then down a small stream that would ultimately lead us to the entry point of the Dzüpfü river.

It drizzled, and the way made slippery. Still, the troublesome Dzüpfü bamboo became less and less problematic as we descended, leaving the steep mountain surrounding the valley at a little distance. We had not got down far when I saw the skull of an elephant on the right side of the deep gorge we were following. Vilehu went past the odd white object without seeing it, with green moss growing.

I went down alert of the object and found it to be a real elephant skull. I thought, 'from where would an elephant head come here in these impossible mountains'! But it was, indeed, an elephant skull. It had died years ago since no clear skin or flesh was sticking to the bones. Surprisingly, there were no other bones in the near surrounding.

The giant skull could not have dropped down from the sky, so I stopped the members and said the head of an elephant must have rolled down from the mountain range above, and there must be other bones above. So I told them to go up and search for other bones up on the mountainside.

It was a deserved rest for those carrying loads; the prospect of finding other bones, possibly tusks, was added. And indeed, small plants were found pressed down to the ground; further up was one of the elephant tusks. The Forest Guard Whesie found it lying on the floor of the jungle. Another member found the other tusk broken at the terminal end and shorter than the unbroken one.

Today also, we were going towards a cave Vilehu was leading us to. A short time after we started again, Vilehu motioned us to stop and be silent. We did what he wanted; he removed his backpack and proceeded with his gun, ready to fire. We lost sight of him for a few moments but heard a gunshot.

After a time, he returned and said: 'he was walking away without stopping, and so I fired but could not get him.'

It was getting dark in the close canopy of the thick tall trees of the mountain's primaeval forest, and true to his acute sense of direction; Vilehu led us to the cave we were going. Reaching it, we heaved a sigh of relief and sat down to rest in it.

Then, we returned to the village the next day to Kohima on 26 April 1974.

I registered the Tusk in the Office of the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State of Nagaland. I kept them with me for 27 years till I demitted office as Principal Secretary, Forest, Wildlife, Environment, Government of Nagaland by taking voluntary retirement with a full pension.

I then presented the tusks with a decorative stand to the Legislative Assembly, Nagaland; "the Chief Minister wished to keep them in his Official Room, but I suggested keeping them in my office room since more dignitaries visit the Speaker's room", said the Speaker to me. So, I replied, "That you

decide between you two yourselves", and deposited the Tusks [6ft 4in, 4ft 4inch and 9inch girth] and Forest Certificates in the Room of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly Speaker.

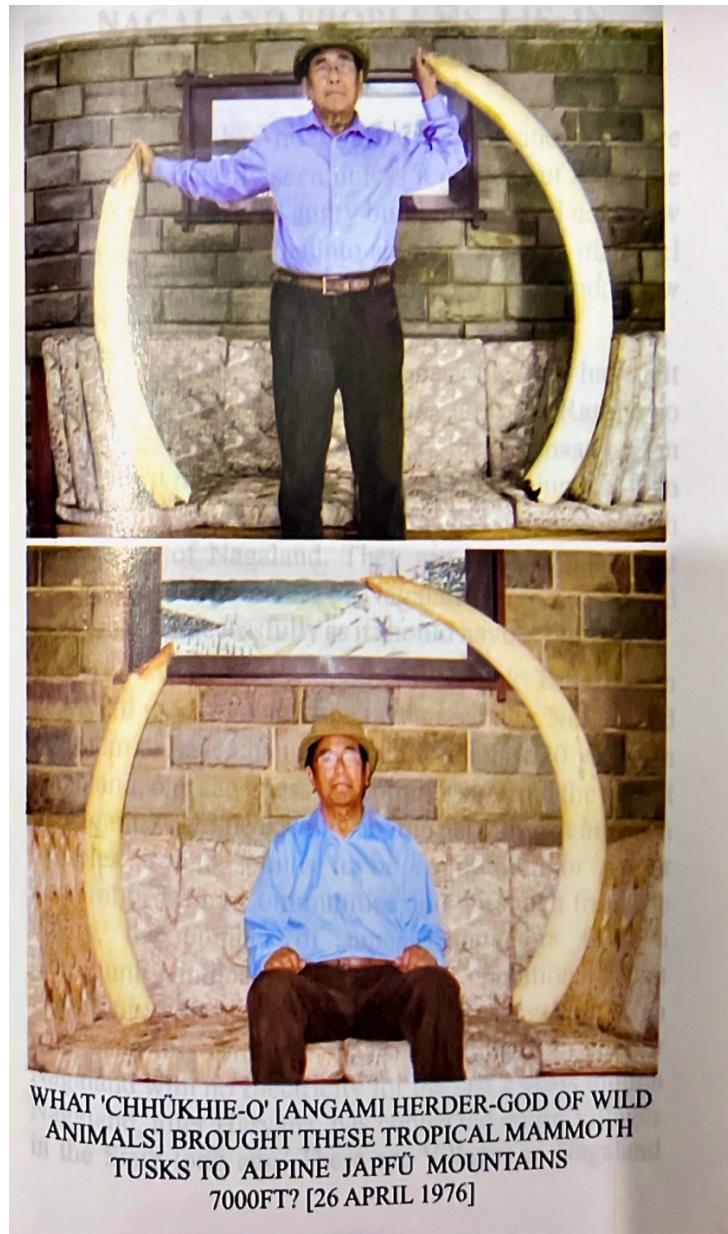


Image 13: Photo extract from T Solo's book, "From Violence to Peace & Prosperity: Nagaland"

2011

Activity:

What do these three stories about Mr T Solo tell you about the Nagas? Discuss.

Assessment activity:

Find an unheard story from your community which challenges stereotypes about your people.

or

Share a story about a stereotype you had about someone and how this chapter challenges your assumptions.

Note to teacher:

During the discussion, prompt the readers how the three stories of T Solo challenge assumptions such as

- a) the observation that the arborium species of Rhododendron don't usually grow beyond 45ft and how his story challenges that scientific observation
- b) the single narrative that tribals cannot qualify for competitive exams without a quota
- c) the idea that elephants are unlikely to climb high mountains

Watch YouTube stories on how Vloggers present stories about Nagaland. Use keywords such as headhunting, the last of the head-hunters and exoticism.

As homework, make students watch two videos on Ted Talk Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story | TED

Why storytelling is more trustworthy than presenting data | Karen Eber | TEDxPurdueU
(Relationship between storytelling and neurology)

*Sophy Lasuh is a filmmaker by profession. Her visual works centre on “women as preservers of Indigenous Knowledge”. She is a PhD scholar in Cultural Studies at MLCU, Shillong. She has an MA in Visual Communication from the University of Edinburgh, UK.

References

Editorial. (2022, August 28). Retrieved from The Morung Express:

<https://morungexpress.com/repatriation-an-action-towards-reconciliation>

Greg J. Stephens, L. J. (2010, July 26). Speaker-listener neural coupling underlies successful communication. *PNAS*, 107. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1008662107>

Nienow, V. (2015). Naga Cultural Milieu. San Francisco, CA: Dorylus Publishing Group (DPG)

TED, T. (2009, October 8). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story |TED

Stockhausen, A. V. (2014). Imag(in)ing the Nagas. Vienna: ARNOLDSCHE, Art Publishers, Stuttgart.

Counting of the Stars

--Ragongning Gangmei*

The resource is based on a Ruangmei (Rongmei) folktale.

Ruangmei is a native community of Manipur. They also settled in Assam, Nagaland and Mizoram. The Ruangmei tribe is recognised as RONGMEI in the Constitution of India. But they called themselves Ruangmei in their native sound. In Ruangmei native sound there is no 'O' between two consonants. RUANGMEI is correct one in their native sound. So they used RUANGMEI in their mother tongue education in Manipur State.

Introduction

The lesson is based on a popular folktale in which many animals of the jungle, as it goes, wanted to live with the human being because humankind was living in the house with fire, eating cooked food and staying inside the house during rain and storm. But human being would not able to accommodate all the animals of the jungle. So the story of Counting of the Stars took place once upon a time. The story provides the basic framework of counting system which is considered as one of the indigenous and traditional knowledge and ways of learning. The system of counting in this folktale was handed down the generations.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students learn the beauty and importance of the folktale. They also learn how to learn things from the folktales of their own communities. They learn about the development of Ruangmei counting system from this folktale. They also learn that impossible are possible in the folktale. It also gives them to think about the importance of indigenous and traditional knowledge system and ways of learning.

Pedagogical Process and suggested activities

- (1) Reading or narrating the story of the resource in the class with an attempt to infuse the values of the resource to the learners.
- (2) Going through the **(a) Glossary, (b) Comprehension Check, (c) Working with Language, (d) Speaking and Writing** provided in the text.

Assessment Tools/Practices

- (1) ***Working with the Text - providing questions to be answered by the learners during the assessment. The questions covered all the contents of the lessons/intended resources for imparting to the learners.***
- (2) ***Practices and Activities***
 - (a) Group discussion on the importance of the Folktale “Counting of the Stars” in the class.
 - (b) A class-room drama depicting the meeting of animals of the jungle and human being on star counting.
 - (e) Giving extempore speeches on the relationship of animals and the human being.

Counting of the Stars

The lesson is based on a Ruangmei (Rongmei) folktale.

The uniqueness of the folktale is that impossible things are possible in it. But that is not the end. In some tales, some invaluable things are built-in to be handed down the generations along with the tales. Today's tale is one of them.

Humankind were hard working beings to support their lives. They constructed houses to live in. They tilt the land to grow crops and vegetables for their food. They constructed houses to store the farm produces for the days to come. They lived under the shade or house. So they were not afraid of the winter frost nor the summer rains. They sheltered themselves inside the house during the thunderstorms and fierce winds. They burnt fire inside their house and cooked eatery on the fire. They were sheltered and safe inside the house. They were also safeguarded by the shade in the night from their enemies or rivals.

Illustration

*Background of a night picture with the stars in the sky. A house at the background
Picture of human being and some of the animals.*

As a reason, many of the animals wanted to live with the human being. But human being could not accommodate all the animals at their house. Therefore, the human being was thinking of a plan to choose one animal to live with them. He proposed a plan of choosing one animal to stay with human being at their house. He said that any animal who could completely count the stars in the sky shall live with human being.

A day was fixed. Many animals participated at the star counting. They, one by one, had counted the stars of the sky but could not complete them. The boar had counted but could not complete. The bear counted but could not do it. The tiger had counted but could not make it. Then the cat said, "I will count the stars on the rooftop of the house." All they agreed.

Illustration

Background of a night picture with the stars in the sky. Picture of human being and animals sitting around and counting the stars. Tiger is standing up and trying to count the stars.

The cat climbed up the top of the roof and laid back facing up the sky and started counting pointing its four legs to the stars. Khat (1), kanei (2), kathumh (3), padeih (4), panguh (5), charuk (6), chanei (7), tachat (8), chakiu (9) and aruh (10). The cat further counted phay (100), ching khat (1,000), chingruh (10,000), chingphay (100,000) and akhaa khat (1,000,000). He counted slowly **apang** ..., **ngalang** ..., **atung**..., **ngalung**... and then he said, “it is finished.” All the animals were astonished. No one did ask how. Consequently, the cat was allowed to live with the human being inside their house.

In the beginning or traditionally, the Ruangmei counting system had only upto akhaa (1,000,000). They didn't have counting term beyond this. Recently they had adopted the counting system of the cat by incorporating **apang**, **ngalang**, **atung** and **ngalung** in 1-10-100 system of the cat's counting in the manner of **1 apang, 10 apang, 100 apang; 1 ngalang, 10 ngalang, 100 ngalang; 1 atung, 10 atung, 100 atung** and **1 ngalung, 10 ngalung, 100 ngalung**. Now they have the terms of counting system upto 100 ngalung (100 quintilions) (100,000,000,000,000,000,000).

Following is the counting system of Ruangmei recently developed from the above folk tale.

Raeng 0 (zero), khat 1 (one), kanei 2(two), kathumh 3(three), padeih 4(four), panguh 5(five), charuk 6(six), chanei 7(seven), tachat 8(eight), chakiu 9(nine), aruh10 (ten), achuih 20(tweny), tamvruc 30(thirty), riakdei 40 (forty), riakngu 50(fifty), riakcharuk 60(sixty), riakchanei 70(seventy), riaktachat 80 (eighty), riakchakiu 90 (ninety) and phay khat 100 (one hundred). And we may arrange them in a brief as follow.

raeng	0 (zero)	0
khat	1 (one)	1
aruh	10 (ten)	10
phay	100 (hundred)	100
aching	1 (1 thousand)	1,000
aching	10 (10 thousands)	10,000
aching	100 (100 thousands)	100,000
akhaa	1 (1 million)	1,000,000
akhaa	10 (10 millions)	10,000,000

akhaa	100 (100 millions)	100,000,000
apang	1 (1 billion)	1,000,000,000
apang	10 (10 billions)	10,000,000,000
apang	100 (100 billions)	100,000,000,000
ngalang	1 (1 trillion)	1,000,000,000,000
ngalang	10 (10 trillions)	10,000,000,000,000
ngalang	100 (100 trillions)	100,000,000,000,000
atung	1 (1 quadrillion)	1,000,000,000,000,000
atung	10 (10 quadrillions)	10,000,000,000,000,000
atung	100 (100 quadrillions)	100,000,000,000,000,000
ngalung	1 (1 quintillion)	1,000,000,000,000,000,000
ngalung	10 (10 quintillions)	10,000,000,000,000,000,000
ngalung	100(100 quintillions)	100,000,000,000,000,000,000

GLOSSARY:

uniqueness	- being the only one of its kind.
accommodate	- provide lodging or room for
framework	- basic system
indigenous	- native, belonging naturally to a place
traditional	- of, based on, or obtained by tradition
folktale	- popular or traditional story
tilt	- cultivate
frost	- temperature below freezing point; cool weather
sheltered	- protected
thunderstorm	- a storm with thunder and lightning and usually very heavy rain.
fierce	- powerful
safeguarded	- protected
rivals	- challengers; enemies
participated	- joined
astonished	- wondered, surprised
incorporating	- including, comprising

A. Comprehension Check

Complete the following sentences by adding appropriate parts of sentence given in the box:

1. Humankind were hard working being

2. Human being sheltered themselves inside the house

3. Many animals wanted to live

4. Animal who could completely count the stars in the sky

5. The cat counted the stars completely and was allowed

— during the thunderstorms and fierce winds.

— to support their lives.

— to live with the human being inside their house.

— shall live with human being.

— with the human being.

B. Working with the text:

Answer the following questions.

1. What is the uniqueness of the folktale?
2. How do human being support their lives?
3. How were mankind safeguarded from their enemies and rivals?
4. Why was the counting of stars conducted among the animals of the jungle?
5. Why were animals wanted to live with human being?
6. What plan was set by human being to live with the animals of the jungle?
7. How was the counting of stars conducted?
8. How did the cat count the stars of the sky?

9. Who won the star counting competition?
10. How did human being allow the cat to live together with them?
11. Why were all the animals astonished when the cat finished counting the stars in the sky?
12. How was the counting system of the Ruangmeis developed?

C. *Working with Language*

1. Match items in List A with their meaning in List B.

	A	B
i)	framework	popular or tradition story.
ii)	tilt	basic system
iii)	folktale	cultivate
iv)	rivals	including
v)	indigenous	challengers
vi)	incorporating	native
vii)	frost	powerful
viii)	fierce	cool weather
ix)	astonished	protected
x)	safeguarded	surprised

Use any five of the above words in sentences of your own. You may change the form of the word.

2. Study the sentences in the columns A and B.

	A	B
i)	The cat was swept away.	The waves swept the cat away.
ii)	The man was hit on the head. Something hit the man on the head.	
iii)	Fifty tourists were killed.	The terrorist killed fifty tourists.
iv)	No animal carcasses were found.	People did not find any animal carcasses.

Compare the sentences in A to the ones in B. Who is the ‘doer’ of the action in every case? Is the ‘doer’ mentioned in A or in B?

Notice the verb in A: ‘was swept away’, ‘was hit’, ‘were killed’, ‘were found’. They are in the passive form. The sentences are in the *Passive Voice*. In these sentences, the focus is not on the person who does the action.

In B, the ‘doer’ of the action is named. The verbs are in the active form. The sentences are in the *Active Voice*.

Say whether the following sentences are in the Active or Passive Voice:

- i) Do you see the bird?
- ii) Obey your teacher.
- iii) Let the door be opened.
- iv) Who gave you the ice-cream?
- v) Football will be played by you.
- vi) I do not like fried rice.
- vii) A race was run by him.
- viii) He dreamt a dream.
- ix) My friend sent me a gift.
- x) He stole my pencil.

D. ***Speaking and Writing***

1. Imagine you are the cat who won the stars counting competition. Narrate the incident how you made all the jungle animals astonished. Begin like this:

Many animals participated at the star counting competition. I counted the stars on the roof of the house...

2. Imagine you are the tiger who was defeated in the stars counting competition. Write briefly the incident of your meeting all the jungle animals at the house of the human being. Begin like this:

One day I was invited by a man at his house for counting the stars of the sky. I met all the jungle animals there...

3. A prank is a childish trick. Do you remember any incident when someone played a prank on you or your friends? Describe the prank in a paragraph.

E. **Activity**

1. Discuss the importance of the folktale ‘Counting of the Stars’ in group and write down three points what you learnt from it.
2. Conduct a classroom drama depicting the meeting of animals of the jungle and human being on star counting and attempting to reject each other from the star counting competition.

Some points for rejecting each other:

Tiger is a hunter; he cannot live with man.

Bear is an animal of bad temper, he cannot live with man. Hornbill has its own wings to cover itself from the rain and wind.

Cat is a rat hunter only. Boar and tiger have strained relationship, etc.

3. Giving extempore speeches on the relationship of animals and the human being.

Illustration

Picture of conducting a classroom drama depicting the meeting of animals of the jungle and human being.

*Rangongning Gangmei is the president of Rongmei Literature Society, Manipur.

Asanhluc (A Doe)

--Ragongning Gangmei *

(From a Ruangmei's folk ritual narration/recital)

Introduction and background

In the olden days the Ruangmei believed that human sufferings and diseases are the consequences of **chuk** (sin) due to violation of divine ways of life. This story is a narration taken from the Ruangmei's ritual prayer or ritual recital of a rite performed to cleanse the **Kalung Chuk** (meaning **inner sin**) committed by human being. The rite was performed to cleanse the inner sins and to heal from the diseases caused by chuk (sin), particularly due to the torture, ill-treatment, humiliation meted out to one's own wife.

There was a beautiful doe - a female deer.

Also there was a fruit bearing olive tree.

Olive fruit is one of the favourites
of the deer. The doe ate the olive
fruits and used to dance at the foot
of the olive tree. One day a man saw the doe dancing under the olive tree. The man's heart was melted when he saw the doe. So he proposed to marry her. The doe replied, "You are a human being,
I am an animal of the jungle. I cannot be your wife."

ILLUSTRATION

A picture of a girl with deer head depicting a doe, dancing under an olive tree. And a man looking from a few distance.

Again and again, the man came to the doe.

And he proposed her to be his wife. But the doe replied the same again, "You are human being, I am an animal of the jungle. You would call me an animal of the jungle, I cannot be your wife."

Should I believe him or....?

... I also like him ...?

A picture of the doe
..thinking...?

The man said, “I will never call you animal of the jungle. I will be loving you always and treating you well.”

Believing him the doe became the wife of the man. And she had taken the form of a complete human being.

The deer-wife was so smart and swift in doing things and household chores. While her fellows could fetch water from the water source once, she could do it from the same water source two times. While her fellows could pluck one bundle of vegetable from the jungle, she could pluck two bundles of vegetable from the same jungle. While her fellows could weave a cloth, she could weave two cloths. So she made her in-laws and all family members very happy with her agility.

The father-in-law and mother-in-law were very happy and wondering of their daughter-in-law. Later, the parent-in-laws were suspicious of their daughter-in-law. So they had hatched a plan to test her.

The daughter-in-law had gone to fetch water with a backload of bamboo water containers in the back-carrying basket to the fountainhead. The parent-in-law had secretly sprinkled water on the floor to make that particular place slippery. The daughter-in-law had returned with a heavy load of water. She was about to unload the water containers by stooping down and suddenly she slipped and fell on the ground with a sudden bark ‘**kuang**’ as of a true muntjac. She rose up and said, “I told him this will happen so.” So she, feeling insulted and humiliated, ran to her bed. Thereafter she covered herself with the bed cloth and slept and was in a half breathing without a word and slightest movement.

ILLUSTRATION

A picture of a woman shouting and falling down with bamboo water containers in her back-carrying baskets and splashing water on the ground.

Then meal time came. Her son came to wake her up calling “mother” suddenly putting his hand on her body. With that she was frightened again and rose up and ran to the jungle nearby their home and stayed there for days. Her husband came and requested her to come back home. She had refused to come back home. Her brothers-in-law pleaded to come back home but she told them that she would not come back. Her youngest son came to her and urged her to come back home. She, unhappily replied to her son, “My son, I am a deer, an animal of the jungle. I have to go back to the jungle as usual and have to transform into deer as I was before. Go back to home. Do not follow me.” Then she went further to the thick forests.

The husband and his brothers planned to bring back the deer by any means. They put up snares in the whole range of the forests wherever the deer is expected to pass by. Every day they went and checked the snares whether the deer was caught in one of them. But the deer was not caught in the snare. So they stop going to see the snare for some days. When they checked the snares after a few days, they found the deer caught and died in one of the snares. They brought home the dead deer. And they said, “This is a deer and a game. Let us eat it. The youngest son said, “This is my mother. We cannot eat it.” Again they said, “This is a deer and only a game.” So they cut the deer into pieces. They cooked and ate them.

Somedays later, unknowingly sicknesses and disabilities visited the members of the household and the diseases overtook them with pain abdomen, pain back and disabilities like lameness, deafness and blindness.

They sought the helps from medicine men to shamans, from healers to magical powers. The medicine man said, “I do not know. Go to the Great Physician sent by God from Heaven.” The shaman also said, “I do not know. Go to the Great Physician sent by God from Heaven.” All of them said the same.

So they started searching for the Great Physician sent by God from Heaven. At last they met the Great Physician.

The Great Physician narrated their whole story straight to them, “You took a doe of the jungle as your wife. She was so creative, smart, efficient and swift. She always managed to outsmart all the

wives and women of your village. She fed her father-in-law and mother-in-law with new kinds of fresh vegetables and fruits. However, her father-in-law and mother-in-law were suspicious of her agility and they were curious to know whether she was an animal. They hatched an evil plan and there she was ill-treated, insulted and humiliated. So she left home but lived nearby the home for days. At last she decided to live a deer life, a muntjac again. So she went to the thick forests. Then you planned to put snares to catch her alive again. But she was caught dead in one of your snares. Then you brought her home dead as your prey. You cut her body into pieces and ate them. This is a great sin, the *inner sin* called ***Kalung Chuk***. So diseases, sickness and disabilities come upon you.” He told them, “Offer a sacrifice of fowl, a domestic black cock or black hen in front of your house invoking God for divine cleansing of your sins and thereby healing your sicknesses.”

They did the sacrifice invoking God and they were healed and made whole.

From that day onward, the ritual practice of cleansing of *inner sin* called ***Kalung Chuk*** was handed down from generation to generations among the Ruangmei folk. The ritual narration is about the evils of ill-treatment, humiliation and torture of wives, especially, married from the outsides of the community concerned. It had a big impact transcended on the folk lives of the Ruangmei.

Now the ritual practice has gone down but the belief is still having a positive social impact on married life of the people till today. So, ill-treatment, insult, humiliation and torture meted out to wives, even if they were from the outside of the community in the Ruangmei society are not seen till today.

GLOSSARY

Chuk	- Ruangmei language for <i>sin</i>
recital	- reciting, being recited
rite	- religious ceremony
Kalung Chuk	- inner sin
humiliation	- make ashamed; disgrace
indigenous	- native; belonging naturally to a place
chores	- domestic works
agility	- quick moving

sprinkled	- fall or scatter in small drops of water
stooping	- bending down
‘kuang’	- natural voice of barking a deer as heard by Ruangmei folk.
muntjac	- a type of small deer
snares	- traps
Shaman	- a person in some religions and societies who is believed to be able to contact good and evil spirits and cure people of illnesses
fowl	- chicken

A. ***Comprehension Check***

Which is the right answer?

1. According to the belief of Ruangmei Community ‘Kalung Chuk’ is the consequence of
 - a) human sufferings and diseases.
 - b) conservative outlook towards God, the healer.
 - c) violation of divine ways of life.
 - d) the Ruangmei ritual prayer.

2. The moral of the story ‘Asanhluç’ is
 - a) preserve your indigenous and traditional ways of belief.
 - b) real forgiveness comes only from the mother.
 - c) bad luck comes to one’s life if Shaman’s instructions are not paying heed to.
 - d) love your wife and treat her well in spite of many weaknesses.

3. On what condition was the doe became the wife of the man?
 - a) The man proposed her repeatedly to marry him.
 - b) On the pretext that she will never be called an animal of the jungle.
 - c) The man would love her without any conditions.
 - d) The man would transform into a deer.

4. How was the inner sin of human being cleansed?

- a) By the powerful prayer of the Great Physician.
 - b) By offering a fowl, black cock and hen.
 - c) By invoking God through sacrifice of fowl, black cock and hen.
 - d) By sanctification of our sins.
5. ‘So diseases and disabilities come upon you.’
- Why was this so?
- a) Due to ill-treatment of a wife.
 - b) Due to ill-treatment of a woman.
 - c) Due to ill-treatment of an outside wife.
 - d) Due to ill-treatment of an outside woman.

B. *Working with the Text:*

Answer the following questions:

1. How was Kalung Chuk important for the Ruangmei community?
2. How was the rite of Kalung Chuk performed?
3. How did the man meet the doe at first?
4. What happened to the man when he first saw the doe?
5. How did the doe react when the man proposed her to marry him?
6. In what condition was the doe gave her consent to marry the man?
7. Describe the agility of the deer-wife.
8. How was the real identity of the deer-wife revealed?
9. What had happened to the deer-wife after her in-laws came to know her real identity?
10. Who was the Great Physician? What role did the Great Physician play in cleansing the inner sins of human being?
11. How was the inner sin healed?

C. *Working with Language*

Look at the following words

melt heart

Can you create a meaningful phrase using both these words? (Hint: Add *-ing* to the verb and use it before the noun. Put an article at the beginning.)

... a melting heart

Now make six phrases using the words given in the box.

believe / man	love / wife	carry / basket
stoop / son	care / mother	visit / physician

D. Speaking and Writing

1. Say the following words with correct stress. Pronounce the italicized and bold parts loudly and clearly.

<i>female</i>	bearing
<i>olive</i>	dancing
<i>propose</i>	marry
<i>jungle</i>	treating
<i>became</i>	human
<i>member</i>	happy
<i>animal</i>	suddenly

* In a word having more than one syllable, the stressed syllable is the one that is more prominent than the other syllable(s).

* A word has as many syllables as it has vowels.

man (one syllable)

'mankind (two syllables)

* The mark (') indicates that the first syllable in 'mankind' is more prominent than the other.

2. Now underline stressed syllables in the following words. Consult the dictionary or ask your teacher if necessary.

native	community	recognised
prayer	diseases	belief
generation	marriage	knowledge

completely	secretly	agility
everyday	expected	humiliated

Agriculture Activities and Social Integration among the Tangkhul Nagas.

- H.A Sothing Shimray*

Introduction:

Agriculture is the mainstay for majority of the people in India. The farmers toil the soil every day. It is known that tilling the soil or cultivation is not an easy task but a strenuous activity. From the hunting and gathering stage the early man gradually adopted sedentary habit after developing the habit of soil tilling, seed sowing, cultivating and animal rearing. These activities not only meet the food need of mankind for centuries but help maintain natural environment and social integration. This way of life is commonly known as agriculture. The integrative role and the importance of indigenous knowledge which shaped what we are today were overshadowed by the economic concept of agriculture in modern day. This seriously impinged the ingenuity of our forefathers.

This resource is an attempt to bring out the various agriculture activities, the ingenuity which withstood the test of time and its humane consequences among the Tangkhul Naga tribe.



Pic.1: Traditional house of Tangkhul Nagas. Pic.2: Indigenous agriculture basket Pic 3: Traditional spade agriculture basket.

The Tangkhul Naga tribe, which inhabited the north eastern hills of Manipur at Ukhrul and Kamjong District, considered agriculture activities as a social integration activity and not simply an activity for sustenance. This is the reason why they performed agriculture activities with great relevance and obligation. Festivals, songs and dances mostly revolved around agriculture activities.

For the Tangkhuls agriculture activities is a community affair. By working collectively, the significance of reciprocal relationship gets strengthened as every member of the community find a purpose and responsibility in the society. It brings about collective consciousness and binds the individual together to a community. In fact, this brings stability within the society.

The Tangkhuls practices both terrace and shifting cultivation. Rice, the stable food crop, is cultivated at both the terrace fields and shifting cultivation or *Jhum*, as it is known in north east India. The terrace fields are again classified into two types according to the difference of ecosystem. Rainfed upland field is called *akanglui* and lowland field with perennial irrigation system is known as *chihuilui*. Shifting cultivation or *Jhum* field is called *ahanglui* among the Tangkhul. Rice cultivation at *jhum* is specifically known as *khayailui*. Cultivation of paddy at both the terrace and *jhum* field is monsoon dependent. Due to climatic condition paddy is cultivated only once in a year.

A group of young girls and boys of similar age known as *yarnao* walk down the mountain path giggling. It's a bright but cold winter's day. Girls carry the spades of the boys too in their bamboo baskets, in addition to their own things. It is the courtesy and not an obligation for the girls to carry the spade for boys. It is because of this etiquette that girls were honoured with a lump of pork called *tinphunsā* as reciprocal appreciation during the spring time youth festival of *Yarra*. The boys, on the other hand yodels from vantage points usually with an expectation of reciprocation by other groups from the adjacent hills. Yodelling called *kakahang* is an important aspect of Tangkhul culture. Yodelling at the country site is considered a masculine activity. It signifies the presence of friendly people at the vast country site and provides a sense of security to women and those working at isolated places.

These young girls and boys of the village were helping their family in soil digging the terrace fields for the new agriculture cycle through a turn-wise work model called *yarkathui*. Every members of the family joins *yarkathui* usually according to their age set or through group formation to execute the agriculture works. *Yarkathui*, is originally a form of age set agriculture operation. *Yar* in Tangkhul is an age set grouping of population. Persons with similar age form one *yar*. Every

Do you know?

There are different forms of yodelling practiced all over the world. It is a form of singing, calling, yelling, communication etc.

See the Tangkhul ways of yodelling at
<https://youtu.be/grmHNn76wx4>

individual of the village have their own *yar*. The members are closely knitted with strong feeling of empathy. The age set *Yar* is usually a form of ‘cradle to grave’ affiliation. An individual is known by its *yar*. In agriculture operation the age set group of the village or locality or even clan works together in a turn wise operation with an intention to lighten the workload. *Yarkathui* is an important work force formation. It is not confined to agriculture or any particular agriculture activities but involves a wide range of activities that need working together. Monetary system not is involved. However, it is the responsibility of the host work to provide foods and drinks.



Photo credit: Farmer Origin Society (FOS)

Pic.4: Yarkathui in progress digging the terrace field.

Yarkathui is an inevitable part of Tangkhul agriculture and social life. It is through *yarkathui* that one learns the different aspects of life. In the past where there is no formal institutions to undergo trainings as in modern days. *Yarkathui* is considered an important platform for the young to learn the different aspects of life skills. The inapt learns the skills from the more experience persons. It is also an important platform to learn the art of socialising and public participation. It boosts team spirit and tolerance of existing differences thereby strengthening not only the *yar* and the village but society at large.

The formation of *yarkathui* can also be initiated by forming different groups based on the needs. The goal of such formation, though lacks ‘cradle to grave’ affinity among members, has similar characteristics as that of the age set *yarkathui*. However, it can be winded up after completion of objective or when an individual change residence. There are also cases of continuing the formation in the form of Self Help Group of the modern day.

Langrin kazat is another method of executing agriculture activities which works on rotation basis among the members. It is a more professionally oriented formation that shares intense working

nature. A group of 15 to 20 or more usually forms a group for *Langrin kazat*. This group provides a sense of pride among the members as savvy persons. In agriculture operation they normally work with the rhythm of songs that they sang and yodel. As such there is no time to *illy tally* as everyone has to keep pace with the rhythmic singing and yodelling. *Yarkong kasui* is also another similar agriculture activities practice by the Tangkhuls of Hunphun village.

Charity work called *langpāng* is also a common practice among the Tangkhuls.

Mommy, mommy! Where is everyone going? Asked four years old Shinmila, when she saw her mother getting ready with her basket, her dad as well as her elder brother grinding their axes.

We are going for *langpang* work, answered her mother.

Langpang?

Is it some kinds of edible gift that you are going to bring back for me? Asked Shinmila. Chuiphy sat down on the wooden seat, pulled Shinmila on her lap, smiled and elucidate in a soft motherly voice, “my dear child, you are still young, and with age you will come to know better. *Langpang* is not an edible item but a charity work for the family in need. It is the social responsibility of our community to assist each other’s family so that we all thrived together. You see, uncle Angam is not in good health after his deadly encounter with a tiger last year during hunting. And with aunty Awon’s demise, four months ago, their family is really in a pathetic condition. If we don’t assist them in their agriculture works, your four cousins and uncle will starve”. But, how to we assist them ask Shinmila innocently. We are going to assist them in cutting firewood and soil digging their field today, responded her mother.

They are my cousins, they are very nice and I love them. I will also provide them *langpang*, said the young Shinmila enthusiastically. Yes, it is also your responsibility to help them feel happy

Tangkhul Naga harvest song.

*Oh! Khakha katei-a
Oh! Chamli raya
Oh! Chi pheisipna
Maha rakhan phungraya.*

English translation.

*Oh! Other insects
Oh! they come during lean
season.
Oh! that cicada
You brought the prosperity of
harvest.*

with your presence when you visit them. That will be your greatest contribution, answered her mother.

Yuimi, the head of Haobung clan of Hunphun village, in consultation with his clansman and Angam, fixed the clan's *langpang* date as well as work arrangement. The male was assigned to cut firewood while as the female has to dig the soil of the field.

We all know that agriculture activities are year round activity. After a brief respite from harvest the Tangkhuls started preparing for the new agriculture year. They dig the terrace fields and clear the vegetation at the shifting cultivation site during the cold winter days. Terrace building, walling or repairing is usually done in January and February. In fact this activity also kept the body metabolism strong during the cold winter days.

The Tangkhul agriculture season begins with the observation of seed sowing festival called *Luira*. Every village celebrate this seed sowing festival to mark the beginning of a new agriculture cycle.



Pic.5: Tangkhul girls performing seed sowing dance during seed sowing festival.

Do you know?

Tangkhul Nagas considered *kapathei* (a type of wood apple) blossom, cherry blossom, peach blossom and rhododendrons as flowers of the year and are highly revered. It is also a taboo to bring these flowers inside the village until the seed sowing ritual is performed.

These flowers are also considered an indicative of the coming agriculture harvest; exuberant blooms indicate prosperity while as poor blossom indicates a lean year.

At Hunphun village, also called Ukhru, the seed sowing festival is celebrated during mid-February. The new cycle precisely begins with the royal couple of the village performing the seed sowing ritual called *māmachi-paimachi khamashao* and digging a small portion of the field called *luikathui*. Similarly, the first transplantation of paddy was done by the royal couple by performing *luishom khamashār* ritual. Customary norms are strictly followed and no one is allowed to sow seed or do any plantation before the performing of seed sowing ritual. In the same way it is considered a desecration of custom and social norms to plant paddy before the transplantation ritual. The general belief of poor sprouting of seeds, infestation by rodents and insects resulting to poor harvest withholds anyone from disobeying the social norms.

Paddy seeds are sown usually at the hill slopes adjacent to the paddy field. Sowing of paddy seed is known as *mātha kathuk*. This paddy bed called *māthalui*, after transplanting, becomes a garden of cucurbits and legumes. While women sow seeds at *māthalui* man construct fences to prevent damage from animals. Ploughing, called *luikasao*, which is done with the help of buffalo, starts from the month of May. The terrace dikes called *tankui* are coated every year to retain water. The yearly coating of dike is called *tankui kashung*. Paddy-fish culture has become an important practice in modern day. During ploughing the dug-out clods of narrow terrace fields are usually spaded by hand when monsoon come and the broader ones are plough using buffalo. The indigenous ploughing tools called *sei-ot tin* is pulled around by the buffalo to break the clod. Transplantation of paddy called *luikashom* begins from May till the *maireiwon* (*hedychium coccineum*) flower blooms. *Maireiwon* usually blooms at its peaks during the month of July.



Photo credit: Gardens Online

Pic.6: Ploughing field

Pic.7: *Hedychium coccineum*, the seasonal marker flower for conclusion of paddy transplantation

There is a general belief at Hunphun village that paddy transplantation is a futile exercise when *maireiwon* blooms as the paddy fails to bear seeds. Once the paddy is transplanted it is a social obligation to stop using wind musical instruments such as flute, violin, harmonica etc. The obligation is unanimously observed among the Hunphun villagers. Weeding called *luikhamao* is usually done twice. The weed is either trodden into the deep mud or is piled in mound at the dikes. This is later planted with string beans and other vegetables. Soil fertility in terrace field is maintained by spreading the rice straw and through siltation.

Every household construct hut or shack at the terrace field as a second home. During hectic season the farmers usually stay over at the hut along with family members and domesticated animals.

The Tangkhul Nagas generally classified a year into four seasons called *Luiradung*, *Zur* or *Lum*, *Māthei Haoyāng* and *Kānrei* or *Si*. The four seasons are again classified into two parts according to working nature known as *kumkazang* and *kumkashok*. The time of the year beginning from seed sowing festival till the paddies are transplanted is considered *kumkazang* phase of the year. In modern Gregorian calendar this generally comes within February and



Photo credit: Pamreiso Shimray

Pic.8: Paddy field hut, the second home of farmers.

July. This is the busiest phase of the year. Sowing, ploughing and planting works are

Do you know?

Mangkhap is celebrated as a breather from the strenuous activities of ploughing and transplantation. Thus, the days are, by and large, spent in the merriment of foods and wine.

undertaken during this period. The time of the year after *Mangkhap* festival or after completion of paddy transplantation till the beginning of seed sowing is known as *Kumkashok* phase. During this period agriculture works are performed in leisurely manner. Weeding, tending and harvesting are the major works during this period which comes around August to

January.

There is no watertight division of labour among the Tangkhuls in agriculture activities. However, digging is mainly done by women and children. Sowing and planting of vegetables are mostly undertaken by the women. Men mostly take up the task of ploughing, river embankment, clearing forest for *jhum* fields, burning of the felled trees and shrubs, and fencing the farms. Clearing weeds from the fields is mostly done by women; however, men also assist in the work.

Harvesting and carrying back the harvest is the joint effort of all members of the family. After storage it is usually the responsibility of women to look after the granary called *māchum*. The responsibility of looking after the granary is considered an honourable position. Thus, initiation of granary right called *chumsinsā sangkhami* is strictly followed at Hunphun village. The granary right

Do you know?

Indigenous peoples' lifestyles are locally adapted and respectful of natural resources.

initiation ceremony, usually performed during the post-harvest festival of *Chumpha*, is purely of women affairs. No male, not even the commonly used male weapons ziv spear, axe, shield, etc, has to be inside the house during the ceremony.

Mailiang is a small upland village of Kamjong District. Every household in this village practices shifting cultivation. Terrace field is practically not viable in this village due to the undulating terrains with V shape landforms. The villagers said they cultivate paddy and other food crops through shifting cultivation which is their only means of cultivation. In spite of pockmarked presence of differently coloured vegetations due to *jhum* cultivation, vegetations around the village and the adjoining hills are mostly thick. The village represents a rich repository of agriculture crops including paddy, taro, yam, Jobs tear, maize, millets, pumpkin, cotton, chilli, soyabean etc. The village is self-sufficient in yearly availability of food crops and fruits. Hunting and fishing is also an important occupation of this village.

The village land, apart from the settlement area, is roughly divided into fifteen cultivable geographical clusters. The clusters were cultivated on shifting basis thereby allowing the land to fallow for at least 14 years.

Both the man and woman visit the cultivation site every day and do the daily chores of agriculture. Forest clearing for cultivation, which is a community affair, is usually done during the month of January. During clearing, the villagers follow the age-old fallow management practices of coppicing and pollarding trees. These methods help in the regeneration of the fallow lands into secondary forest as the fallow period of Mailiang village is long enough. The vegetations are usually burnt during March. Wind direction is carefully observed and fire break called *meilam*, a patch of land through top soil clearing of tried twigs and leaves, is done all around the site which is to be burnt. This is meticulously checked to prevent wildfire. It is the responsibility of man to burn the dried vegetation for cultivation.

After the amber cools down the villagers began to collect the unburned or half burned trees and keep them aside to use as firewood. The smaller logs and branches are laid along the contours to prevent soil erosion. While men and boys are busy with carrying the unburned trees women and girls spread the ashes across the field.

Mix cropping is practiced in this village. Pumpkin and gourd are usually planted along the boundary, chilli which needs more acidic soil is usually planted at thickly burnt site or where there are more ashes. Both man and woman are involved in sowing and planting. After sowing the seeds, apart from occasional visit to the cultivation site to check and scare away birds and animals, the villagers, while waiting for the monsoon rain, have a short break from agriculture activities, hunting and fishing.



Photos credit: Sonia Kasom.

Pic.9: Girls helping in carrying the half burnt trees
the of the jhum field.

Pic. 10: A delightful woman at the sight of
growing paddy.

Mailiang village practices two types of *yarkathui* activity. Apart from the usual age grade or group formation rotational works there is also another type of *yarkathui* where the families of immediate kin's shared the workload responsibility through reciprocal exchange of labour between the families.

The farmers visit their agriculture field daily. By the location of the sun, in the absence of watch, they maintain specific time for the daily convention of ‘going and coming’ called *tantak*. They usually go in group. Those who frequently miss this daily pattern are usually ridiculed upon as unsocial or introvert. This indigenous practice invariably became a guide for every Tangkhul a habit of punctuality and social conformity. *Tantak* is also an important platform for socializing in an informal way. They crack jokes, gossips and discuss issues. It is because of this jovial nature that no farmers consider the daily habit of ‘going and coming’ as monotonous.

Conclusion:

Through the indigenous methods of agriculture, the Tangkhuls have able to maintain the sustainability of farming system for generations. Over 80 percent of the Tangkhul farmers still practices agriculture using indigenous knowledge in spite of the swaying modern agriculture system. This is primarily because the practices are deeply ingrained with the local environment and culture which withstood the test of time. Agriculture among the Tangkhuls is not just the process of cultivation and impacting social bonding but also an art of maintaining balance in the use of natural resources and conservation. It is also a way of protecting the living culture, livelihood and creating a future for the generation to come.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- After going through the resource the students will come to know that the indigenous communities are not only consumer of ideas but producer of sustainable ideas.
- They will understand the value of indigenous knowledge, the various agriculture activities, its cohesive role hitherto seldom highlighted and its relevance in modern world.
- The student will understand that every culture is unique in its own way and contributes to national integration.

Pedagogical approach: The Resource is carefully designed to still the consciousness of students in a fun way learning. It is definitely the responsibility of the teacher to make it happen. The teachers/facilitators are advised to have thorough knowledge of the resource and its related subject beforehand through proper lesson planning rather than just bookish teaching.

Thus, after classroom lesson, the following activities are suggested;

- * Field trip/ observation and project work.
- * Sharing of story heard/learned from elders during class.

Level:

The Resource is prepared for Secondary stage level of the New Education Policy, which is also interchangeable, as part of social studies course.

Assessment tools:

1. Define the concept of *yarkathui* from your understanding.
2. Find out some etiquette that you think needs social appreciation and explain briefly.
3. Find out whether group formation of group viz Yar or self-help group is a boon to national integration. Explain.
4. Find out some flowers which are considered as seasonal marker in your community and briefly described about it.
5. What is the importance of *tantak* among the Tangkhul Naga?
6. Write in brief about the concept of *langpang*.
7. Find out the indigenous practice of your community or any community that you know and write a paragraph on its agriculture activities.
8. Do you think pollarding and coppicing of trees is a good practice? Elaborate.
9. Find out how agriculture activities strengthen social relationship.
10. Do you think the indigenous knowledge is relevant in modern day?
11. Find out why indigenous agriculture activities are environmental friendly.

*H. A. Sothing Shimray is a journalist and text book writer.

The Tangkhul Indigenous System of Measurement and Sky Watching

--Mungchan Zimik, Ukhru*

Introduction: The resource of this Indigenous system of measurement and sky watching was developed based on Tangkhul traditional knowledge and customary practices of our Community in order to give a better outlook of our past and methodical development in field of science, the studies of this Indigenous science of measurement and traditional sky watching will help the students to integrate about the basic ideas and concept of Traditional Knowledge of our Indigenous system of measurement and the significance of Sky watching, coherent with the advancing contemporary science.

The studies and inclusion in educational curriculum will enable children to understand the tradition and conventional observation practiced by our fore fathers that were relevant to their social life, agricultural activities etc.

This documentation of our methodology indigenous science for learning and for more comprehensible studies giving due emphasizes to our younger generation in education to acquire our traditional knowledge will surely encourage them to revisit our past and understand “Indigenous Knowledge”. So that we able to inherit our legacy, preserve our culture and upheld our identity at best.

The resource was designed to encourage children to familiarize with the terms especially Tangkhul language, that were describe in the resources, adopted Indigenous knowledge, identification, terminology, drawing, Relevance of categorization of length, mass, and time. Pictorial representation, Introduction of standardised method.

Human relation with heavenly bodies, the traditional knowledge of weather prediction, climate cycle and making of lunar calendar and the Tangkhul traditional names of Celestial bodies that surround us.

The resources talked more on the scientific observation, classification and other approaches in connection with application of traditional knowledge and understanding the natural behaviour that help in adopting a common system and its principle though there are lack of accuracy, the topic /subject can be incorporated in environment science for further exploring our indigenous science.

The teachers may refer books on modern science, identify merit or demerits and also discover the common application of modern science and indigenous knowledge to inculcate and develop insightful information.

Standard/Grade: Classes VII to VIII (Interchangeable)

“The Tangkhul Indigenous System of Measurement and Sky Watching”

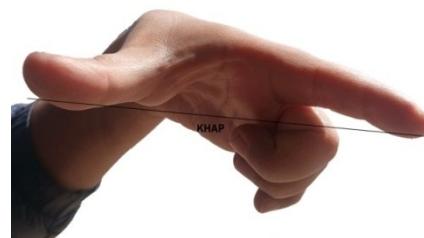
The development of Science & Technology among the Tangkhul Community was basically rooted in traditional belief, experience and the correlated knowledge gained from it. Traditional and indigenous know-how was developed by keenly observing the natural behaviour, thereby, adopting the consequential outcome in most aspect and its affairs.

There was no report of any scientific invention or discovery, but our ancestral way of life mainly depends on agricultural activities and the general observation based on agrarian cycle. A common system was introduced in three particular areas that were considered indispensable for our livelihood though accuracy and standardisation is a matter of debate in comparison with the modern scientific procedure. The adopted conventional system mainly confined to measurement of mass, length, and time as per the oral information passed on by our great grandparent. Consequently, a common standardized unit of measurement was developed and accepted by all the Tangkhul Communities for measuring the length, size/mass, and defining time according to our working hours.

Length: The concept and ideas for measurement of length was developed since from time immemorial, and was accepted and is also practice in our present society though there is weakness in precision.



SHANGHA



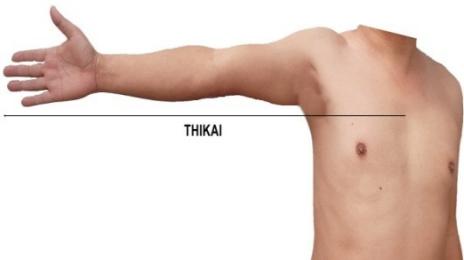
KHAP



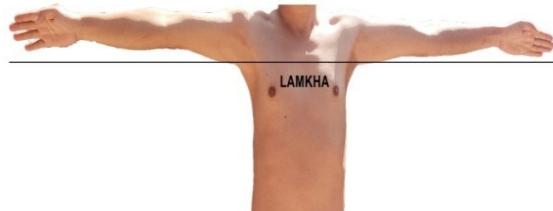
KHUTUP



KHUINING



THIKAI



LAMKHA

- Shangha – Inch,
- Khap – length from thumb to point finger,
- Khutup – length of elbow, (differentiate between Khap and Khutup; definition of cubit is very similar to Khutup)
- Khuining- Length of elbow to point of middle finger
- Thikhai – length from the point of middle finger to half portion of our heart, and
- Thingwut – fire wood length
- Lamkha – Full length of both arms

The villagers of Hunphun, Ukhru still practice this method of measurement and in defining the concept of small length in the scale of firewood length or meters. The traditional practice to identify long distance, in terms of kilometres for the purpose of conveyance and not necessarily for land demarcation or erection of boundary pillars etc. is called “**NgasamKha**”.

NgasamKha literally conveyed the meaning, if a person with a load and is going to a particular area or other village, then when the person will rest after covering some distances. The area covered is roughly more than one kilometres

Example: A village that is 5 km away from the Ukhrul town. Then a person with a load will definitely have four stop over rest. Depending on the number of stops, the distance between the Ukhrul town and the village will have 4/5 Ngasam.

Determination of mass

There was no standard unit for measuring mass of a body, however, the Tangkhul Community have a good customary practice of slicing meat, and dividing into equal parts as per the size of the village population for distribution. This practice is called Kameo Meishat Sa, though the community have abandon this practice.

While the other common practice for the determining weight or volumes in exchange of rice or others are:



SUPKHA



PANGHOMKHA



HOMKHA

Supkha- Small quantity (one or two piece), Panghomkha—palm full, Homkha – 2 palm join together, Horshaikha etc.

Rice production: Our traditional technique for calculating the annual production of a rice was based on Kachon system –tens, hundreds or more in term of Kachon. (1 Kachon is equivalent to 30 tin of rice as per our comparison, 1 tin is equivalent to 16.5 litres = 11.88 kg).

Method for determining Kachon

Kachon is determine by number of Pheichon (Pheichon meaning number of foot step counts). It was a very common and a simple mathematical practice followed by the Tangkhul particularly the Hunphun villagers, the heap of rice collected in paddy field were properly kept in a place called Lanbum. The circumference of the Lanbum was properly measured, and the length of the Lanbum is calculated with our number of our foot print/ steps.

Example, if the number foot print/ step counts 30. Then the total production of rice would be 90 tins. The measurement in 10 pheichon is equivalent to 1 kachon and it is equivalent to 30 tin of rice as per our comparison and observation

Traditional method of Time Measurement

Time calculation is mainly based on two factors (Day and Night) and the key determiner is Sun and Moon. Though no standardised unit for measurement of time was developed such as (second, minute, or hour), the smallest unit of time measurement was considered to be the Wink of an eye (Mik-Khayapkha), while the accurate time calculation/measurement was totally out of the picture. The Tangkhul community conventionally followed the sun rotational/movement period for determining the time:

- Dawn – Zingthanlam / Before Sunrise
- Brunch time –NgathorPhazat
- Working hour – Luivatatam
- 12 Noon – Ngashunungva (when the shadow falls straight into our fore head)
- Seihom- un – Time for preparation of evening meal
- Sun down - Time to Return from paddy field

- Dusk -Meirongngaman
- Pongda – whole day
- Langpongda – working hours

All of these terms are commonly used while in conversation for indicating the time period, and the smallest unit for measurement of time is Mik- khayapkha (wink of an eye).

The Tangkhul community at the end of 18th century, and with the arrival of western Missionary to our region and with introduction of western education.

A new era, and this was time the whole system was overhauled with the introduction of Standardised measurement into our society.

The indigenous unit of measurement such as Mass, Length and Time were replaced with more accurate and adopted to follow the system that were internationally accepted.

Length: The measurement of length was replaced with Inch, metre, kilometre etc.

Mass: Our traditional method of measuring the weight/ mass of a body was more accurately defined by introducing standardised method of measurement by following the unit such as Gram, kilogram, quintals, tons etc.

Time: Time measurement into second, minutes, hour, day, week, month and year was found to be more precise in determining the exact duration of time.

Tangkhul Astronomical Observation and its terminologies:

Astronomy is a natural science that studies the Celestial objects and its phenomena that we see around the sky and help us understand and predict the natural phenomenon that is likely to happen in the coming days or future. Most of us regularly look into the sky and observe the nature of sun, moon, stars etc. and act like an astrology to predict next day weather.

The Tangkhul community before embracing Christianity, our ancestral fore father practice animism and were strictly adhere to our traditional belief. Worship to nature has compelled us to build strong bond of relationship with 'Sun, Stars, Moon, Rock, Trees, Rivers, winds, Clouds' etc. The Tangkhul

community worship different gods and appeased them by invoking rituals during the celebration of our annual festival.

Relation with heaven god

Zinghungleng – King in heaven: The Tangkhul worship the God in heaven as Zinghungleng (Zing – heaven and Hungleng – King/god in local parlance), and in our tradition we Invoke Zinghungleng for His blessing and to safeguard our people. This show that our ancestral were keenly observing the planetary movement that we see in the sky and can assume that our fore father fixes the ritual festivities accordingly.

Tangkhul Astronomy: The love for celestial bodies that encompassed and surround in our solar system was found recorded in folk song and other oral stories. Reading the sky and study their phenomenal changes was very common as all the natural happening were directly or indirectly related with cycles. The movement or changing in position of the heavenly objects help us in determining or predicting the atmospheric condition of the region, and thereby the traditional science to study the atmosphere and weather were also developed during the ancient Tangkhul.

Some of the common name in Tangkhul language that were consider as key indicators and help to give accurate information in time.



NGATHOR



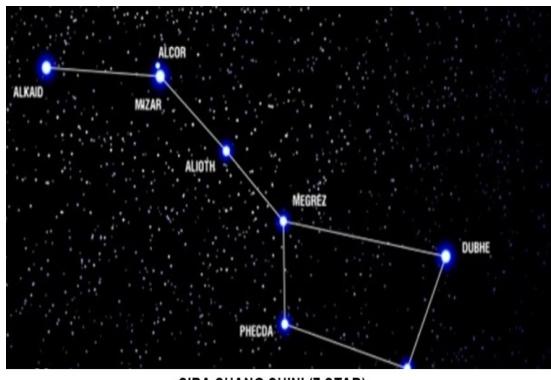
NGASHUN



ZINGTUN



NGAYA



SIRA SHANG SHINI (7 STAR)



ZINGTUNWO/ZINGTHANWO (VENUS)

- Sun – Zimik (Day)
- Star – Sira (Night)
- Moon – Kachang (movement of the Moon is climate indicator and for making annual lunar calendar)
- Three star (orient Constellation) – Kha Chao Shi (indicator)
- Group of stars – SiraLongkaka / Siralongpet
- Milky way – Shirungra (weather indicator), Tangkhul community have a strong traditional belief that Milky way nurture human being – if the milky way/ shirungra appear brightly from early evening hours across horizon, a blessed year with bountiful harvest usually during the month September /October.
- Evening star – Zingtunwo (visible from dusk)
- Morning star- Zingthanwo (indicate dawn)
- Seven stars – Sira Shang Shini

- Sirapai – Meteor / meteorite (Shooting star)
- Solar Eclipse – ShangkhanaZimik li Kashai
- Lunar Eclipse – ShangkhanaKachang li Kashai
- Rayleigh scattering Sunset – Zingko (weather indicator- the next day will dry & sunny day)
- Cumulus cloud – Lamikachonkaphui

Tangkhul making of Lunar Calendar:

The Tangkhul Community traditionally follows the movement of moon orbits the earth for making the annual lunar calendar.

Traditional calculation: According to our ancestral observation and finding, the moon takes 28 days to rotate its own axis, however additional 2 days were added to complete one cycle of the moon to orbit the earth and was counted as one month.



CHANGWOK

- Changwok – 1st appearance of moon
- Changpop pa – when the position of the moon is just below the semi-circle (before the full moon)
- Kachang Khangani – Full moon
- Mayar Ngala – Next day of Full moon
- Changji - New moon

The Additional two day activities of the moon was record as:

29th Day: KachangKapum (moon visits to Hades)/new moon

30th day: Akha Akhao (the new formation of moon starts but not visible by our naked eye but according to our Tangkhul traditional belief only animal can see this developing moon).

First day of the month: Subsequently after “Akha Akhao” the moon starts to re-appear and visible the formation in the sky, and that day is counted as the beginning/first day of the month and the cycle continues. Our traditional belief and observation of Moon re-appearance in the sky have different significant impact on earth.

Significant of moon appearance

The position of the moon helps to predict the weather / climate condition of the month.

Ngam Kharei position: when the moon appears in vertical position, our tradition believes that the said month would be dry or no rainfall. So all preparatory work was done during the month.

Ra Kharei position: when the moon appears in slanting position, it indicates that the moon carries rain water and is expect rainfall.

Changpo Pa: When the moon position is just below the half (semi-circle), the particular day is considered as Changpo pa. The Tangkhul have traditional belief that a person born on this very day will be immature (showing abnormality behaviour) and also any abnormal individual will greater effect on this same day.

The Tangkhul follows the earth rotation to determine the four season and accordingly, it was classified.

- Si – Winter
- Lum – Spring (sprouting of seeds/ regenerating leaf during this season)
- Zur – Summer /Rainy season
- Kan – Dry season (withering/withered of leaf)

The Tangkhul community being an agrarian society have always considered the beginning of the year as the Si/ winter season (Si can be also termed as Transitional Period for year end and beginning) in orderly manner and with celebration of the Seed Sowing Festival, which is also considered as new year festival. All our annual agricultural activities preparation for plantation or cultivation will begin in the village after the celebration of Luiraphanit (seed sowing festival)

The Tangkhul community after conversion into Christianity and with the introduction of western Education in the regions have ignored/ abandon our traditional system of Prediction, calculation, measurement and many other things in general. The introduction and adoption of more systematic and standardised measurement have compelled the people to forgo our indigenous knowledge that we inherit since from time immemorial.

Tangkhul contemporary Period: The Tangkhul community still practiced the art of sky watching though not for general purposes. The modern society relied on Gregorian Calendar for fixing community traditional festival, lunar calendars etc. however the Tangkhul still practice the art of sky watching for individual purposes particularly for fixing time for agriculture activities such as plantation, setting off jhum fire etc, and is an independent observation of the individual person about the natural cycle.

A trip to Shirui peak of Ukhrul district



SHIRUI PEAK



TENT HOUSE

We (Apam, Ashang, Achan, Makhok, and Jamir) five of us set for a trip at Shirui Mountain in the abode Shirui Lily flower during this winter season in Ukhrul for one day' sky watching as a part of new year celebration on 5th of January 2023. Among us, our friend Jamir lived in Dimapur, Nagaland and has to travel all the way from Dimapur for at least 8 hours to reach Ukhrul town. My friend Apam has a traditional knowledge and some basic ideas of fore telling the weather by watching the heavenly bodies that are hovering in the night sky.

On 31st December, we the four (Apam, Achan, Ashang, and Makhok) set together and discussed for our trip programme to Shirui peak for sky watching.

All of a sudden, Apam, then, immediately went out and look up the sky and watch the position of the appearing crescent moon. He then exclaimed, oh!! the moon appears in vertical position (Ngam

kharei), and predicted that the air carries no water affirmed by seeing the clear appearance of Shirungra /milky way in the night sky. Apam suggested to fix the date on 4rd or 5th of January, we agreed his proposal and instantaneously contact Jamir and narrated the details programme and timing for the sky watching at Shirui mountain peak was fixed on 5th of Janaury.

Since Jamir is coming from Dimapur, we decided to contribute additional rice for him (Panghomkharip) / Tangkhul traditional system of measurement (a palm full of rice) and is equivalent to 250 gm approximately was added to our share. Jamir who lived in Nagaland has to travel from Dimapur and has to take whole day/ pongda (one whole day journey). Achan instructed Jamir to start before sunrise/ Ngathorthakva (early morning), so that he can reach Ukhrul before sunset. Shirui village is about 20km away from Ukhrul town and is 30minute drive. We packed up all our necessary equipment such as (simple telescope, Camera, tent) and we waited for Jamir.

Jamir informed us, he has started driving in the early morning before sunrise around 5:am from Dimapur. He arrived at Ukhrul at around 2:30 pm, we had cup of coffee and some snack. We then headed toward the Shirui village, and parked our Gypsy at the foothill of Shirui mountain, and from the foothill, we walked on foot to scale up the hill top (ShiruiKashong).

After Ngasham Phanga (five time of short rest) and walk for one and half hours, we reach the peak and by the time it was already dark. We immediately set up our tent, and hurry for collection of fire wood. Apam told us to cut the wood as per the Tangkhul traditional measurement length of fire wood (Khuiningkha). Makhok started making fire and he prepared hot tea for all of us in order to get warm of ourselves. And in the meantime, Apam suddenly asked to look at the western side of the mountain. We then gaze toward western horizon, Apam asked what to you see? We saw a bright star that appear in the sky. Apam said, this is Zingtunwo (Evening Star).

The first star to appear in the sky after sunset is Zingtunwo, and subsequently many star appear in the sky. Makhok serve tea and some snack, we started chatting and making programme sequence for identifying the celestial bodies that we see around us. Apam gave us some tips of our Tangkhul traditional style of sky watching and our indigenous system of measurement. He put Panghom phanga (5 palm) full of rice for cooking for the night. And, after having our dinner, we start to look up and count the celestial bodies that were seen in the night sky. There appear, three bright star in the northern hemisphere called Kha Chao Shi (Orient constellation), (Siralongpet/ Sira Long kaka) were some of the group of star that we recorded in our diary.

We were fortunate that there was a frequent flying of shooting star (Sirapai) in the sky to make our wish. By the time, we heard cock crow, we then look into our watch it was already 2:30 am. Ashang locate a star that shines brightly on our eastern side of the mountain. We then recorded the star Zingthanwo (morning Star). And after spending the whole night, we slept for few hours and wake up late. Ashang prepared coffee and snack meanwhile we were busy packing our belonging for return home.

On our way to home, we saw huge paddy field at Langdang village. We enquire the owner. what is the annual production of your field? The owner replied, the annual rice production is 9 kachon. Apam said it is the Tangkhul traditional measurement system for huge quantity of produce. But now a day it is not practice and is not feasible in determining the exact quantity, however the elderly person who were illiterate used the term in their conversation and their calculation and observation also prove to be correct though there were some variability.

Conclusion: Indigenous Knowledge is not merely confined for thought provocation but its reveals the basis of every community's social fabric, ways of life, richness of culture and this has to be documented for learning context for the upcoming generation. So that our cultural identity is well protected and upheld for good.

Practical activities for students

Students have to Collect Data, draw picture, conversion, terminology, Prepare a project work of their native village.

Other Activity: Prepare Questions and Answers

Convert by measuring the following unit into standardize form

Shangha, Khutup, panghomkha etc.

1. What was the approximate distance from the foot of Shirui mountain to Shirui peak? (in term of kilometer)
2. How much of rice was cooked on the sky watching night? (in term of Kilogram)
3. What was the annual rice production of the Paddy field that was seen at Langdang Village? Approximate value in term of tins)

4. How long does the Jamir drive from Dimapur to Ukhrul? (in term of traditional time calculation)
5. How many celestial bodies were recorded in their dairy during the sky watching trip at Shirui peak?
6. What was the position of the crescent moon before trip to Shirui peak?
7. What is the name of the last star seen by them in Tangkhul?
8. Which festival is celebrated to mark the beginning of the year by the Tangkhul community?
Why is it important?
9. Who said to look at the western side of the Shirui Peak? What did they saw?
10. If you see Rayleigh scattering at western horizon, what do you expect the weather condition on the next following days?

Pictures

1. Draw the picture of the crescent moon that you see in your locality.
2. Indicate the position “Changpop pa” by drawing the moon
3. Draw picture of Stars, locate Kha Chao Shi and evening star.

Reasoning why Indigenous knowledge abandoned by the present society, importance in present context about traditional knowledge.

**Mungchan Zimik, a Writer & Tutor and a member of Tangkhul Literature Society (TLS), Ukhrul*

Storytelling as a Means of Disseminating Knowledge

-Hiyang Prem*

Abstract: Humans tell stories. Humans have used stories to communicate, pass on wisdom, and inspire imagination for nearly as long as we can remember. In Indigenous cultures, telling stories is a practice that supports communities, validates experiences and epistemologies, expresses the experiences of Indigenous peoples, and fosters connections and knowledge sharing. The paper aims to develop a textbook lesson for secondary-level students (class IX-X) using the folktale of Chothe Tribe of Manipur. The students will be able to learn about what bridewealth is and its importance, women's dignity and patriarchy from the story.

Introduction:

Manipur is a small highland state in north-eastern India that is home to several ethnic groups and has a rich cultural heritage. The Chhotes are an indigenous Manipur tribe. They have distinct social, cultural, religious, economic, and political institutions. The Chhotes, like any tribal community, have a collection of folklore, which is mostly oral and not written. Folktales have deep social meanings and close links to one's way of life and tradition. It keeps the people together as a distinct tribal group, whose lives are still heavily influenced by the legacy of folktales from their oral traditions.

Humans tell stories. Humans have used stories to communicate, pass on wisdom, and inspire imagination for nearly as long as we can remember. Storytelling has handed down cultural, ethical, and extra information from generation to generation for as long as people have spoken to each other, far before the invention of written language. The art of storytelling has been practiced in all periods and among all cultures recorded; it results from an instinct imprinted universally in the human psyche.

The human race's distinct predilection for storytelling is as old as time itself. The creation of humans, the birth of speech, and the birth of stories all happened simultaneously. Storytelling was a vital means of preserving cultural traditions, as well as informative and educational for young minds, and functioned as a source of inspiration in forming a moral code, providing the entire society a sense of belonging.

Myths, legends, and folktales founded in a people's oral storytelling traditions are examples of traditional stories. People carry along their religious beliefs, customs, history, lifestyle, language, values, and sacred sites from generation to generation through stories. As such, stories and their telling are more than just amusement. They tremendously impact the well-being of the communities from which they emerge. Stories convey lessons, messages, and viewpoints. They evoke emotions, empathy, tears, and incite fury. They provide frameworks for finding purpose in one's life and in the world. Stories maintained the manner in which humans lived and interacted with changing landscapes, and even mindscapes, long before the printed word. Generally, storytelling entails the creative and intimate live oral sharing of real or imagined experiences, often between a narrator and an audience.

Storytelling was a vital means of preserving cultural traditions, as well as informative and educational for young minds, serving as a source of inspiration in fashioning a moral code and providing the entire community a sense of belonging. The stories in the folktales are pregnant with

deep social meanings and have an intimate relationship with the tribe's way of life and tradition. These stories and folktales help to preserve one's rich cultural background. Folktales include these important assets, which storytellers hold. The stories could be about nature, the creation of man, animals, the interactions between villages and tribes, magical tales, courage legends, and so on.

The Love Story of Holi and Leipu: A Tragedy

Holi and Leipu is one of the most loved stories among the Chothe tribe. Their love story has been immortalised in the folk song named after them, Holi-Leipu. It is thanks to this song that they continue to exist in living memory.

Holi and Leipu were two young lovers in the village. Nobody knew about their love and they managed to keep it a secret from everyone in the village. They confessed to each other their mutual love and had been seeing each other for many days. Leipu was a young and charismatic man and Holi was at the prime of her youth madly in love and trying to keep her relationship hidden from her family at all cost. Back in the day, young girls were not supposed to meet men without a chaperone or approval of the parents.

However, the two would make up different excuses every day to sneak out of the house and meet at the paddy field. Sometimes, the excuses were regular requests such as to go and look after the field or to fetch water. But since such a request could not be made too frequently, they had to make up more complex scenarios for their parents to let them go out without suspicion. 'Mother, father, our field got attacked by the wild goats! Alas, father. But, worry not. I shall go and mend the field. I will visit more frequently'. Leipu and Holi would make up similar tales to their parents and sneak into the paddy field.



Photo credit: Hiyang Prem

They were young lovers. Their happiest times were the times when they were together. They would stay all day in the paddy field in the arms of each other, hiding from the crowd. Leipu knew that as the man in the relationship there was something really important for him to perform. Without it, no matter how madly in love with each other they were, the custom of their tribe would never allow them to be together. This was none other than the payment of “*bridewealth/numei man*”, the bridewealth/bride price.

Bridewealth: *Marriage payments from the husband and his kin to the bride's family. It establishes strong social bonds by opening kinship roads between the families of the bride and groom and to formalize an alliance between different clans. The tribe value the custom as a method of linking families and not as an*

‘Dear Holi. You must know how much I love you, but without paying any *bridewealth/numei man*, your family will never accept my proposal for your hand,’ Leipu said to Holi one day. ‘But you do not have any significant wealth for such an expensive task. Let us just elope!’ Holi begged. ‘No. I do not wish to taint your honour by such a cowardly act. I will go to a far-off place and earn enough wealth so that I can stand in front of your parents with dignity and honour and ask for your hand. I will prove that I am a man who can afford the woman I love and I would do anything for you’, Leipu answered. ‘But my parents do not know of our love. What if they force me to marry someone else?’ Holi began to cry. ‘Do not worry. We are both still young. Time is on our side. Try to persuade your parents not to marry you off while I am away. I will definitely come back sooner than you expect. I promise you!’ Leipu swore putting his hand across his heart.



Photo credit: Hiyang Prem

'I will do as you say and pray that you come back to me before, God forbid, anything unfortunate befalls us. I pray that you return to me safe and sound on time'. Holi sobbed bitterly as they said goodbye to each other for the day. The next morning, Holi learned that Leipu had already left the village to earn to pay her *bridewealth/numei man*. She prayed ardently that Leipu came back for her as promised.

A few days had passed and Holi's parents did begin to talk to her about her marriage. 'My sweet child, you will not stay young and fresh forever. Many young girls your age have married, and that too, to rich men who paid attractive *bridewealth/numei man* to their parents. We are getting old and might not stay long to provide for you. Why don't you consider a few men already at our doorsteps for you hand?', Holi's mother insisted, knowing that many eligible bachelors were waiting to court her.



Photo credit: Hiyang Prem

‘But mother, I am still too young. Let me stay happy under your and my father’s protection. Men will come. Let them have the patience for the right time,’ Holi would answer humbly. But deep down, such talks always evoked fear in her heart, a hidden fear of marrying someone she did not love, someone other than Leipu. A few months have passed and Holi sat by her courtyard, weaving all day waiting for Leipu. On one such day, Holi began to feel terribly sick and started vomiting. Her mother noticed it and she grew suspicious. She put Holi under close observation. Upon intense questioning, Holi had no choice but to reveal about her secret affair with Leipu to her mother.

‘What have you done! You have been having an affair with a young man without our consent?’ Holi’s mother almost yelled but she hissed instead. If anyone came to know of Holi’s condition, not only her but also the whole family would be shamed. Holi’s mother confirmed that she was pregnant with Leipu’s child. Holi cried and cried but her mother couldn’t do anything to help.

‘Why would you be so careless? What will happen to all of us, to your father if our neighbours find out about your condition? You will be shamed and outcast for all your life!’ her mother scolded. ‘I’m in love, mother! I love him and he is away to earn for the *bridewealth/numei man*! If not, we would have been happily together, away from all of you!’ Holi cried bitterly.

‘We do not have time. You will be ruined if we do not act according to your condition. We cannot wait for Leipu. You have to marry the first man who visits our courtyard tomorrow! Do you hear me?’ Holi’s mother made sure that Holi understood the gravity of the situation. If she did not marry someone before people found out about her pregnancy, Holi would be shamed as an undignified woman and the reputation of her whole family would be ruined. Holi had very little choice.

The next day, a man of considerable wealth named Hongpu came to court Holi. He offered a handsome amount of *bridewealth/numei man* for her hand. Holi could no longer refuse the proposal and accepted his proposal without protest. Everyone was happy. Hongpu, not knowing of Holi’s condition, was over the moon to finally be able to win her over with his fortune. Holi wedded Hongpu and left for his village not long after the formal acceptance.

A few years had passed and Leipu finally returned to the village with his hard-earned wealth. He went to Holi's house to offer it all as Holi's *bridewealth/numei man*, but her parents informed him that she was already married to Hongpu in another village. Leipu was heartbroken but also tortuously angry by the betrayal. He didn't know why Holi broke her promise but assumed that she left him for Hongpu's wealth.

'How shallow women are! There I was, for years. I toiled for her and for my love for her, and she left me, like a used banana leaf, for a man with better prospects! How selfish women are!' Leipu mourned for days, but he decided to visit Holi and make fun for her tactless behaviour after swearing eternal love. Leipu travelled and reached Hongpu's residence.

'Anybody home?' Leipu called out, hoping that Holi would come out and faint when she saw him, but Hongpu greeted him. 'Yes, dear friend. I am Hongpu. May I know who visits my humble abode so early in the morning?' Hongpu asked politely. 'I am Leipu from the village of Chothe. I have travelled a long distance and was looking for a place to stay for a few days before continuing my journey'. Leipu carefully made up the answer so he would get a chance to meet Holi. Not knowing that Leipu was lying and that he was once his wife's lover, Hongpu innocently welcomed Leipu by saying, 'Oh, please feel free to stay as long as you like. Make yourself at home. My wife is also from your village. You may even know. Do think of me as a brother-in-law'. Hongpu was happy to receive a guest from his wife's village. Leipu entered the house and finally met Holi in the kitchen, maintaining the fire with a child in her arm. Upon turning her head, she almost dropped her child.

'Greetings, oh, Holi, my sweet sister from my village!' Leipu greeted Holi with a pretentious smile, hinting that he had not told anyone of their past. 'Greetings, dear brother Leipu! What brings you all the way here and specifically into my house?' Holi composed herself and enquired with genuine curiosity. 'I have travelled a lot in the last few months. I have come to realise that the world is filled with deceit. I hope to be proven wrong, but I have witnessed nothing to change my belief so far. Sick and tired of this world of lies and deceit, I returned home. Since my home is still far away, I have come seeking shelter. I am glad to discover that the wife of this kind man is a Chothe woman.' Leipu sat on the ground with his hand over his forehead.

Holi knew that he thought she betrayed him and he was there to seek revenge. But she was already married. She realised it was futile to try and clear things with him. So, she decided to stay quiet and leave in peace. Leipu kept singing sad songs so Holi would feel sorry when she heard his songs. Holi was initially sad and sorry, but then she began to feel annoyed at such an unfair accusation without knowing the whole truth and assuming the worst of her.

‘Why is he not even having the slightest of thought as to why I had to marry someone else? Why does he assume the worst and not even consider the prospect of me loving him with all my heart!’ Holi began to feel increasingly bitter that her supposed lover did not hesitate to come to her husband’s house just to make her feel guilty of a circumstance that she had no control over and that he didn’t even bother to find out why.

For days, Leipu displayed his secret protest by lamenting songs and poems, making sure Holi regretted her choice and suffered from his presence. Holi decided to ignore him as much as she could. She kept nurturing her son, which was Leipu’s child. Hongpu did not notice much, but one look at the child and anyone could have guessed that the child was Leipu’s due to the striking resemblance. One day, Holi took his child out of the house to bathe him and Leipu finally took a good look at the child. He also began to notice that the child could be his. The baby looked just like him. Leipu began to question Holi.



Photo credit: Hiyang Prem

‘Holi, when did you give birth to this child?’ Leipu asked curiously, but Holi could no longer trust him. She was scared he would try to ruin her if he found out the truth. ‘That’s none of your

business! You have made your point clear! I betrayed you! I am a wicked woman! Now leave me alone!' Holi hissed, as angry as a tigress. 'No, why would he resemble me more than your husband? Why?' Leipu nagged but she couldn't take it any longer.

'You leave or I will kill you!' Holi finally pushed him hard. Leipu realised that he had indeed gone too far. He finally agreed to leave. Early the following day, Leipu quietly packed all his belongings and thanked Hongpu for his generosity. He also went to meet Holi before leaving to make peace with her.

'Holi, whatever happened, happened. Let us find it in our hearts to forgive each other', Leipu said. Holi gave him a package wrapped with banana leaf. 'What is this?' Leipu asked. 'I have wrapped some meat for you to eat when you are hungry. It is a long journey. So long, Leipu!' Holi said. Leipu thanked Holi for her kindness, but when he sniffed it, he realised, to his horror, that it was a powerful charm that would kill anyone who swallowed even a morsel of it. He realised that Holi no longer trusted him and wanted to kill him to ensure he didn't cause her more pain. Leipu didn't know what to say. He didn't bother confronting Holi, even when he knew her sinister plan. She had used dark magic to create a charm strong enough to kill him. Leipu thought for a while, but he decided to keep the meat wrap in Holi's room so she would realise he knew of her plans when she saw it. Leipu secretly went to Holi's room, left the bundle there, and left quietly.

Holi thought Leipu had left with the meat wrap she gave him and that he would die after eating it. She was filled with sorrow when she thought about what was to come. She remembered how madly in love they used to be and how a little misunderstanding can change things between two persons. She was still in love with him but things have changed now. She felt she needed to take that drastic step.

After a good length of time, Holi came to her room to take rest and saw the package. Not realising that it was the same package she gave Leipu, she opened the package and ate the charmed meat. Holi began to choke and died instantly.

In the story, the saying "As you sow, so shall you reap" holds a lot of relevance. If Holi had trusted Leipu and had forgiven him, the outcome would have been different.

Meanwhile, Leipu had gone quite far from Holi's village. When he turned back to take one last look at Holi's house, he saw trails of smoke from burning of animals. It was the sign of a funeral. It was customary, back in the day, to burn pigs or cows during a funeral. He realised what might have happened. Leipu began to regret everything he had done and how his love had turned out.

Conclusion:

Folk stories would keep the students interested by making them revisit their folk's past and learn more about who they were and what their culture was. It is very important to preserve our folktales/stories documented as factors like the strains of urbanization have led to the demise of story-telling and with its passing, a valuable educational tool have been lost, which was an important tool for preserving cultural tradition.

From the above story the students will be able to learn on:

Women's dignity and patriarchy:

A woman who lost chastity or got pregnant before marriage is considered taboo in our society, and individuals are uncomfortable discussing it. As the problem of honour enters the picture in our society, parents attempt to conceal when such things occur. The patriarchal system encourages girls to believe that it is their fault. What if our society had been welcoming and open to talking about it? Holi might have patiently waited for Leipu and lived a happy life instead of suffering the penalties that forced her to get married.

Communication and trust:

We can see from the tale that there was a miscommunication between Holi and Leipu. Communication is a two-way process, not a one-way one. Understanding each other and tying together sentiments and emotions are equally important aspects of communication in addition to talking. The fate of Holi and Leipu could have been different had they had better communication.

Feminine rage:

The story portrays an important aspect of women, “feminine rage”. It is a provocation of her physical and mental reaction to injustice.

In the story, Holi finally revolted against Leipu who came to her house to abuse her because of their past. She patiently put up with Leipu's covert protest, but when he questioned the child's identity, ruining everything she had previously given up for, she leapt in and decided to take harsh measures, killing Leipu. The rage of Holi is an intriguing depiction of women's reaction to the unfair treatment of already vulnerable women who are driven to take extreme measures instead of simply sobbing.

Glossary:

Charismatic: a person who possesses special traits that attract or inspire other people

Chaperone: a person who accompanies and looks after another person

Elope: to run away secretly to get married, usually without paternal consent

Taint: to touch or affect slightly with something bad

Pretentious: making usually unjustified or excessive claims

Deceit: the quality of being dishonest or misleading

Lamenting: to express sorrow, mourning

Nagged: to irritate by constant scolding or urging

Sinister: singularly evil or productive of evil

Activity:

1. Does your community practice *bridewealth* or any other forms of transaction in marriage?
Discuss.
2. ‘*But you do not have any significant wealth for such an expensive task. Let us just elope!*’
Holi begged; what was the task? Justify the statement from Leipu’s point of view.
3. “*We cannot wait for Leipu. You have to marry the first man who visits our courtyard tomorrow!*” Explain the gravity of the situation that leads to Holi’s mother’s statement.
4. At what point in the story did things begin to go wrong? Whose fault was this? Discuss how the choices of the following characters affected the outcome of the play: Holi, Leipu, Holi’s mother.

5. Who do you consider to be the most ardent patriarchal supporter? Discuss, from the perspective of your society.

References:

- Adriyanti, N. D., Suwandi, S., & Subiyantoro, S. (2019). The Reflection of Past Way of Life in Sumur Gentong Jalatunda Folklore as the Implementation of Local Wisdom of Kudus Society. *Ajhssr. Com*, 10, 115-118.
- Amali, H. I. (2014). The function of folktales as a process of educating children in the 21st century: A case study of idoma folktales. In *21st Century Academic Forum Conference Proceedings IC21CE* (Vol. 21, pp. 88-97).
- Chiparausha, B., & Mavhunduse, F. (2014). The Role of Folktales in the Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge Among the Shona: A Review Based on Aaron C. Hodza's Ngano Dzamatambidzanwa. *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies*, 24(2), 2007-219.
- Dawkins, R. M. (1951). The meaning of folktales. *Folklore*, 62(4), 417-429.
- Doley, P. P. (2014). Role of mising folktales in developing moral values among children. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 19(10), 19-23.
- Dorji, T. C. (2010). Preserving our folktales, myths and legends in the digital era. *Storytelling, Self, Society*, 19-38.
- Eugenio, D. L. (1985). Philippine folktales: an introduction. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 155-177.
- Gangmei, E. (2021). The Essence of Folklore to foster Identity of Rongmei Community. *Global Media Journal: Indian Edition*, 13(1).
- Gilstrap, R. L., & Evens, D. (1996). Folktales in the middle grades. *Childhood Education*, 73(1), 23-26.
- Hasan, S. (2009). A Comparative Study of Folk Tales of UP Tribes and European Fairy Tales. *Indian Literature*, 53(2 (250)), 202-208.
- Iseke, J. (2013). Indigenous storytelling as research. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 6(4), 559-577.

Kim, H. R. (2010). The role of folktales today. *Telling Tales from Southeast Asia and Korea: Teacher's Guide*, 2.

Nhung, P. T. H. (2016). Folktales as a valuable rich cultural and linguistic resource to teach a foreign language to young learners. *International Journal of Education, Culture and Society*, 1(1), 23-28.

Ojo, A. T. (2020). Yoruba folktales: An instrument for socio-cultural education in a democratic setting. *Nigerian Journal of African Studies (NJAS)*, 1(1).

Penjore, D. (2005). Folktales and education: role of Bhutanese folktales in value transmission.

Raha, D. (2019). Folk Tales of North-East India: A Tryst with Nature. *International Journal of Novel Research in Interdisciplinary Studies*, 6(6), 1-3.

Seki, K. (1966). Types of Japanese folktales. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 25, 1-220.

*Hiyang Prem, belongs to Chothe Tribe of Manipur. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. at Manipur University, Department of Anthropology.

Ethnomedicinal Practices of the Mao Nagas

--Dr. Daili Neli*

Expected Learning Outcome:

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the use of Medicinal plants and bio-product of animals for treating various ailments.
- Identify medicinal plants and animals of the indigenous way of healing.
- Know how the knowledge system of the past is handed down through generations.

INTRODUCTION:

Ethno medicinal practices is the care given to a person suffering from illness or injuries with the available means like treating with medicinal plant or bio-product of animals. Since time immemorial, various methods have been used to treat ailments and different kinds of sicknesses and diseases. According to the environment, people depended on resource availability in the use of medicinal plants and bio-products of animals. The indigenous people are close to nature, so the usage of different varieties of plants and animals as medicine for the treatment of illness is inevitable. The use of different plants and animals are a common practice for treating and healing ailments among the indigenous people. This is how the indigenous community takes care of the various health issues and problems.

Ethnomedicine broadly refers to the traditional medical practices concerned with the cultural interpretation of health, diseases, and illness that addresses the healthcare process and healing practices (Krippner and Staples, 2003).

Like other indigenous communities in the world, the Mao Nagas have a rich knowledge of medicinal plants and animals for treating different ailments. They are also, blessed with rich flora and fauna which are abundantly available to them. The Mao Nagas continues to use these resources using the transmitted knowledge system in the practice of traditional medicine for curing various ailments even today. There is a belief among the Mao Nagas that when seven different plant leaves are plucked and mixed for the treatment of ailments, it heals faster. There are several methods used in the preparation of various medicinal concoctions. Some medicines are prepared singly while others are prepared in combination with two or more items. Some ingredients are used fresh, while others are used after it is dried in the sun or smoked on the fire. Some of the medicinal plants and bio-product of animals are cooked and taken orally.

USES OF PLANTS AS A MEDICINE:

There are various ways and means of taking care of injured or sick people and it is observed that medicinal plants and animal bio-products were used in the process of traditional treatment. Common colds, coughs, fevers, headaches, bowel problems, and injuries caused by accidents, etc. are some of the problems treated using these methods. Specific plants and animals are used for treating specific ailments and injuries.

Sumac:

A commonly known native plant called Sumac, locally known as ‘*Emoshü*’ (Figure 1) is used in treating diarrhoea, dysentery, and stomach upset. These fruits are boiled and the decoction is taken by the patient for treatment of their illness.



Figure 1: Sumac (*Emoshü*)

Crofton:

One of the most common native plants used for herbal medicine by the Mao Nagas is the Crofton weed or Mexican devil, locally known as '*Japanpro*' (Figure 2). This plant is used for treating varieties of illnesses. The tender leaves of Crofton weed are washed and chewed by the patient to give instant relief during stomach aches, dysentery, and diarrhoea. It is also used for treating wounds and burns and to prevent bleeding from cuts and injuries.



Figure 2: Crofton (*Japanpro*)

Common Wormwood:

A widely used native plant to stop bleeding from wounds and cuts injuries is the Common wormwood, locally known as '*Shüprei preimü*' (Figure 3). The buds and tender leaves of this plant are crushed and pasted on the wounds to stop bleeding. Whenever a person cuts herself/himself and starts bleeding, the first thing s/he will do is look for these plants in order to stop the bleeding.



Figure 3: Common Wormwood (*Shüprei preimü*)

Chenopodium Ambrosioides Linn:

Chenopodium Ambrosioides Linn, locally known as ‘Nopupro’ (Figure 4) is used for treating fever, headache, and cough. The leaves of this plant are boiled and the decoction is taken for treating fever, headache, and cough.



Figure 4: Chenopodium Ambrosioides Linn
(Nopupro)

Castor Plant:



Figure 5. Castor Plant (*Shihreibu*)

In the case of swollen skin and bruises, the Castor plant locally known as ‘Shihreibu’ (Figure 5), is used. The leaves are boiled and massaged onto the patient in the swollen area for treatment.

Masae Indica:

They also used Masae Indica, locally known as ‘*Kohrawo*’ is used to treat multiple ailments like Blood pressure, diabetes, fever, headache, dizziness, vomiting, etc. ‘*Kohrawo*’ literally means ‘completion’ in the Mao Naga language. the name suggests, this plant is used for treating almost every illness. The tender leaves of this plant are boiled and both the decoction and boiled leaves are consumed for treating sicknesses.



As

Figure 6: Masaee Indica (*Kohrawo*)

Angel's Trumpet:

The Angel's trumpet, ‘*Bakha-Tobo*’ (Figure 7) in local terms is also used to counter snake poison. The leaves are crushed and applied to the wound.



Figure 7: Angel's Trumpet (*Bakha-Tobo*)

Another method of treating a patient bitten by a poisonous snake bite is to give a juice extracted from earthworms particularly found in the banana plant or plantain.

Rhododendron:

Rhododendron locally known as ‘*Lidaipa/Deniapa*’ (Figure 8) is commonly used in cuisines and as a medicine. The flower helps to dissolve fish bones. The Mao Naga people eat the flower petals to dissolve the fishbone whenever it gets stuck in one’s throat.



Figure 8: Rhododendron (*Lidaipa/Deniapa*)

USE OF ANIMAL BIO-PRODUCTS AS A MEDICINE:

Palm Squirrel:

Palm squirrel called ‘*Oku*’ in local terms is used for curing cough, pneumonia, and asthma (especially in the case of children). The spleen is taken out and consumed raw or dried in the sun or fireplace and is consumed when they get sick. Due to the small size of the Palm Squirrel, it is often difficult to locate the spleen. However, other parts of the meat are also said to help in getting rid of such problems.



Figure 9: Palm Squirrel (*Oku*)

Flying Squirrel:

Flying squirrel, ‘*Beilo*’ in Mao is said to have medicinal value in the urine. It is believed that, when it is shot while flying, it discharges the entire content of urine from its body before reaching the ground. So, it is advised to trap it when it is on the ground. The tail of a flying squirrel is also used for treating burned skin as it helps in curing wounds.

Bear:

The gall bladder and the bile duct extracted from the Bear ‘*Ovu*’ are used for relieving stomach disorders. The fat/lard is also used to relieve rheumatic pain and applied on joints.



Figure 10: Bear (*Ovu*)

Crab:

The Crab ‘*Ovo*’ is believed to be good for curing jaundice and is often used for the illness. The crab is crushed to a pulp and the juice extracted is mixed with water and boiled for few minutes.



Figure 11: Crab (*Ovo*)

Red Woodworm:

Red woodworm ‘*Livo*’ is essentially considered for treating Tuberculosis (TB). It is also considered to be good for joint and body pain. The worm can be roasted or cooked with water and consumed. When it is minced in raw form, a kind of secretion can be harvested which is used for body massage. Raw red woodworm



Figure 12: Red Woodworm (*Livo*)

is split apart from the middle and the fats are used to apply over the joint and body pain for relief.

Some commonly used and practiced ways will be discussed in the table here.

TABLE NO. 1: Medicinal plants and animals used by Mao Naga Indigenous community in Manipur, Northeast India

Sl. No .	Common Name	Local Name	Disease/Injury	Parts Used	Ethnomedicinal preparation and used
1.	Sumac	<i>Emoshiü</i>	Diarrhoea, Dysentery, and Stomach upset.	Fruits	These fruits are boiled and the decoction is taken by the patient for treatment of their sickness.
2.	Crofton weed	<i>Japanpro</i>	Stomach aches, Dysentery, Diarrhoea, Wounds and Burns	Leaves	The tender leaves are cleaned and chewed raw for stomach ache, diarrhoea, and dysentery. For wounds and burns, the leaves are crushed and applied to the injured areas.

3.	Common wormwood	<i>Shüprei preimü</i>	Injuries	Tender leaves/ Leaves	The buds and tender leaves of this plant are usually crushed and pasted on the wounds to stop bleeding. All parts of the Leaves can be used.
4.	Chenopodium Ambrosioides Linn	<i>Nopupro</i>	Fever, Headache, and Cough.	Whole plant	The leaves of this plant are boiled and the decoction is taken for treating fever, headache, and cough.
5.	Castor	<i>Shihreib u</i>	Swollen skin and Bruises	Leaves	The leaves are boiled and massaged onto the patient in the swollen area for treatment.
6.	Masae Indica,	<i>Kohrawo</i>	BP, Diabetes, Fever, Headache, Vomiting, Dizziness, etc.	Leaves	The tender leaves of this plant are boiled and both the decoction and cooked leaves are consumed for treating multiple ailments
7.	Angel's trumpet	<i>Tobobu</i>	Snakebite	Leaves & Bark	The leaves and bark are crushed and applied to the affected portion of the wound of the snakebite.
8.	Earthworm	Lipu	Snakebite	Whole body	When a person is bitten by a snake, the patient is given a concoction made with an earthworm which is particularly found in the banana plant, to consume.
9.	Rhododendron	<i>Lidaipa/ Deniapa</i>	Fishbone stuck on the throat	Flower Petals	The Mao Naga people eat the flower petals to dissolve the fish bone whenever the bone is stuck in one's throat.

10.	Palm squirrel	<i>Oku</i>	Cough, Pneumonia, and Asthma	Spleen	The spleen is taken out and consumed raw or dried in the sun or at the fireplace. Due to its small size, spleen of the palm squirrel can be hard to find, however, the meat is also found to be helpful in getting rid of such problems.
11.	Flying squirrel	<i>Beilo</i>	Stone (Kidney/Gall-bladder etc.)	Bile	The tail of the flying squirrel is used for treating burned skin as it is known to help in faster curing of the wound.
12.	Bear	<i>Ovu</i>	stomach disorders, joints, rheumatic pain	Gall bladder & Bile Duct, Fat	The gall bladder and the bile duct extracted from the bear ‘ <i>Ovu</i> ’ are used for relieving stomach disorders. The fat is also used to apply on the joints for rheumatic pain relief.
13.	Crab	<i>Ovo</i>	Jaundice	Whole	The crab is crushed to a pulp and the juice extracted is mixed with water and boiled for few minutes, it is then consumed.
14.	Red woodworm	<i>Livo</i>	Tuberculosis (TB)	Whole	The worm can be roasted or cooked with water and then consumed. The soup can be also used for body massage. Raw red woodworm is split apart from the middle and the fat lining is taken out to be used for application over the joints and for body pain relief.

Conclusion:

Even amid advanced modern medicine, indigenous ethnomedicinal practices continue to be relevant and useful. Unlike modern medicine, the use of medicinal plants and bio-products of animals for treating ailments and illnesses does not produce side effects.

Mother Earth, from the beginning, has provided us with every kind of option. It has provided all the needs, from air to breathe to food and shelter. The use of medicinal plants and bio-product of animals for treating various ailments has played a vital role in propagating good health and extended human life expectancy. In many instances, elders and pioneering settlers of a particular place become the keepers and preservers of such knowledge system. Hence, humans have been practicing this kind of natural medicine for ages and have transmitted down from generation to generation. In the era of severe climatic change and global warming, many people are recognising the urgency to change their consumption from chemically and genetically modified food sources to natural and organic food and medicine. Nature, therefore has shown us how indispensable it is to a human life. Thus, it is imperative that we preserve and protect it for the benefit of every species.

ACTIVITIES:

Objectives:

1. Red Woodworm is good for healing
 - a) Jaundice
 - b) TB
 - c) Joint Pain
 - d) Blood Clotting
2. Which part of the Rhododendron is used to treat fishbone stuck in one's throat?
 - a) Leaves
 - b) Bark
 - c) Flower Petal
 - d) Buds
3. Spleen of Palm Squirrel is treated for
 - a) Cough
 - b) Asthma
 - c) Both a & b
 - d) None of the above

Match list-I with list-II and select the correct answer using the codes given below:

List-1 (Medicine)	List-II (Use)
a) Angel's Trumpet	i) Jaundice
b) Crofton	ii) Snake Bite
c) Crab	iii) Dysentery

- 1. (a) – (ii), (b) - (iii), (c) - (i)
- 2. (a) – (iii), (b) - (i), (c) - (ii)
- 3. (a) – (i), (b) – (ii), (c) – (iii)

Questions:

1. What is ethnomedicine? Why it is important to study ethnomedicinal practices?
- 2.
3. What parts of the Crofton plant are used, and for what purposes?
4. Which ailments can be cured by using the decoction of ‘Sumac’?
5. In what different ways are plants used for healing different ailments?
6. Discuss the use of animal bio-product for various treatments of ailments?
7. Describe the benefits of plants and animal bio-product to indigenous people?

Suggested Activities/Assignments:

1. Interview members of your family about healing practices in which they have participated during the course of their lives.
2. Create informative ethnomedicinal posters about plants and animals and displayed them in the classroom.
3. Create a medicinal plants scrapbook by collecting leaves from different plants found in various areas in your community or around your home.
4. Collect Medicinal Plants and paste them onto a chart paper and describes how it is used as medicine.
5. Conduct a ‘case study’ on healing ailments through animal bio-product.
6. Choose a medicinal plant of your choice and discuss the benefits to humankind.
7. **Interview a knowledge keeper of the medicinal plants and animals in your village and documents the various uses.**

*Dr Daili Neli, earned his M. Sc., M. Phil, Ph. D, and Postdoctoral Research (UGC) from the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, New Delhi. His areas of interest are Tribal Studies, Ecology & Environment, Folklore, and Culture. Some of his articles were published in peer-reviewed journals and chapters in an edited book on Northeast tribes. He is the editor of ‘*Tribes of North East India: Orality, Migration and Epistemology*’ (2022). Currently, he is the HoD, Department of Sociology, Asufii Christian Institute, Punanamei Mao, Manipur.

--Dr. Daili Kholia*

Expected Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

- *Understand the Indigenous Knowledge and Practices of Beekeeping.*
- *Analyze various features of Indigenous beekeeping.*
- *Realize honey bee's enemies.*
- *Know the Indigenous methods and techniques of harvesting honey.*
- *Recognize the medicinal value of honey.*
- *Accept and handle honey bee's colony.*

Introduction

Beekeeping has been practiced since ancient times and honey has been considered by several cultures around the world as a valuable and precious commodity, used in traditional healing or as food. In almost all countries of the world, apiculture and its products are not only well known and have wide consumer preference and income generation, but provide sustainable livelihood to many small-scale farmers and other rural and urban populations. It also plays an important role in the pollination of fruits, vegetables, etc., and creates employment opportunities among the rural masses. Beekeeping offers huge potential with minimal investments as an agricultural enterprise.

“If the bees disappeared from the surface of the globe the man would only have four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man”.

Albert Einstein

Definition of significant terms:

Beekeeping : *Practical management of social species of bees, for farming purposes.*

Sustainable : *The production or use of natural resources in a manner that results in no net decline or negative impact on those resources over time.*

Crop Pollination: *The process of pollinating (fertilizing) crop species to ensure fruits and seeds are produced.*

Colony : *A group of organisms of the same species or group living or growing together.*

Comb : *The wax sheet of the bee nest, made up of hundreds of cells joined together containing brood, pollen, and nectar/honey*

Hive : *A colony of bees, or a shelter built by bees.*

Nectar : *A fluid secreted by flowers to attract pollinators. It usually contains sugar, amino acids, and other compounds that are of nutritional importance to flower visitors.*

Apiculture : *The science and art of beekeeping, involving all aspects of the sector: knowledge of Bees, bee products, their uses and markets, trade and equipment fabrication.*

Indigenous Knowledge: *The word indigenous knowledge has many meanings and distinction is made between local, traditional and indigenous knowledge. In this chapter, the term indigenous or local knowledge and traditional knowledge is used synonymously. It is unique knowledge that people in a given community (geographical area) have developed over time and continue to develop.*

Swarm : *A large number of bees concentrated in a specific area or splitting from its previous colony to a holding area.*

Indigenous Bee Keeping in Mao Manipur:

Mao region is blessed with various types of climatic conditions, from sub-tropical to dry-temperature. Such a condition promises inhabitants a wide variety of flora and fauna. Mao region contributes in good amount to the state economy through the production of various fruits (plum, peach, kiwi, pears, etc.) and other crops like tomato, potato, peas, beans, and also a variety of

flowers. There is a vast area of arable land that remains uncultivated but used for livestock grazing, and different types of bushes cover this area, providing immense potential for beekeeping.

Traditional beekeeping is part of the cultural heritage among the Mao people and has been practiced since ancient times except for recent intervention in modern beekeeping. Virtually, beekeeping practice in the Mao region is dominantly indigenous, where many households rear honeybees. Most farmers do not give due attention to Apiculture and own a few hives in their homestead which are kept aside for domestic use and very little quantity for sale in the local market. In recent times, few farmers have realized the benefit of indigenous apiculture practices and have come to own 15 to 20 beehives. Farmers who invest more in Apiculture, use their own materials, and undertake experimentation, they can be described as Innovative Apiculture farmers. Beekeeping has contributed to the income of the farmers, especially in times of financial difficulties. This has raised awareness in the community on the importance and smart fiscal behaviour in beekeeping and Apiculture.

Interestingly, Mao farmers' reason for adopting bee-keeping relies on its little demand for labour and land, and multiple uses of honey including added income and its medicinal value. The use of Honey also has social and cultural connotations in the Mao community as it is used as a special gift to close relatives, respected Elders, and Leaders.

Features of Indigenous beekeeping in the Mao Region:

Beekeeping does not require rental or land ownership; it can be started with equipment and tools that can be sourced locally and, in many instances, skills and knowledge required for such an enterprise are found within the tradition.

Most of the Mao beekeepers learned beekeeping from their parents, elders, and neighborhood. Fig. No. 1 shows Indigenous log hives are kept hanging from the roof of the house with the help of a rope. Management practices followed by the Mao traditional beekeepers do



Figure No. 3: Log Hive hanged from the top of the roof with the help of a rope not

include sugar feeding, seasonal management, and migration during winter months making it convenient for Mao farmers to practice beekeeping with their traditional knowledge. It is assumed that the bees manage the winters on their own and believe that keeping two to three sealed honeycombs in the hive would be sufficient for feeding during the death months or winter months. There is an enormous possibility of producing organic honey in the area as Beekeeping in Mao region depends on the abundance of wildflowers, fruits, and vegetables that are devoid of biocides, pesticides, or chemical fertilizers.

In order to start beekeeping certain methods and steps are followed, they are discussed below;

Collection of bees:

Farmers go in search of honeybee colonies from tree trunks and tree branches in the Forests. Some honeybee colony is found underground; hence Beekeepers adopt different methods of catching the swarms. For the collection of honeybee colonies on the tree branches, experienced beekeepers let the swarms settle on the branches, and then the process of identifying the queen or *Chovo-Kriü* in a swarm is done. Once, that is done they gently shift the queen to a soft cloth, worker bees follow the queen, and the swarm is then carried to the log hives. There are instances where the bees fly away or died when the queen dies or left them, so, the queen or *Chovo-Kriü* is tied to a tree branch, and then the swarm is carried home in a thin breathable cloth. The swarm later is shifted to the hives. Sometimes they are captured while migrating, and temporarily settling on the tree branches.

Bee Hives:

The traditional bee hives are kept in backyards or on tree branches as shown in Fig. No. 2 or on raised platforms of stones/outer courtyard or on a piece of a log placed above ground (Fig. No. 3). Log hives are collected from fallen trees, and the size of log hives depends on the tree trunk collected from the forest. A hole is made in the front, in the middle for the entry to the hives.



Figure 4: Log Hive

These hives are closed from both ends with a piece of wood (Fig. No. 3 and Fig. No 4) plastered on the hollowed ends of the tree trunk with a paste made by



Figure No. 3: Log Hives



Figure No 4: Side of Log Hive

mixing cow dung and clay. The beehives reflect the age-old traditional beekeeping knowledge system of the Mao people. In the collection of honey, traditional techniques are used which have been in practice through time.

Farmers have ranked construction materials according to their preferences. Farmers ranked log-wood as the best material because of its durability, waterproofing, and capacity to attract bee colonies.

People Involve in Beekeeping; -

Male members of the family are found to be more interested and involved in beekeeping. The fathers of the families are more involved in it with the helping hand of their sons.

Honey harvesting;



Figure No. 5: Honey sealed combs in the hive

The honey collection technique has been passed down from one generation to another. They have been following the age-old tradition even in the absence of written records and formal instruction.

Having knowledge of the correct time for honey harvesting is important in order to provide proper and timely extension service as well as technical support for beekeepers who share beekeeping equipment and accessories. Harvesting is done twice

a year i.e., in June/July and again in the month of December and early January, where July and December are peak harvesting months to obtain the largest quantity and quality of honey. Traditionally, men are responsible for honey harvesting which is mostly carried out at night because during the day the bee has a strong defensive behavior. The combs are cut one by one with a household use knife. The combs are squeezed and collected in big containers filtered through a thin cloth. The filtered honey is allowed to settle for one or two days and kept collected in bottles.

Problems of beekeeping:

Absconding was a major problem. It is usually observed at mid-day usually in September and October. It is believed that absconding is exacerbated and unfavorable situations e.g., invasion of a predator. To retain bee colonies and avoid absconding; farmers frequently spray water when bees show signs of absconding. They also captured absconding honey bees by thronging fine soil or water in natural conditions. Skilled farmers have reported that they arrest or killed newly born queens that initiate absconding from the colony. Farmers use a queen retaining device locally constructed.

The success or failure of beekeeping depends largely on the ability of the beekeeper to take suitable measures to control diseases and natural enemies of insects, birds, and mammals affecting bees. Various indigenous bee predators' protection method exists in the Mao area. *Shühraï* (Spider), *Shükriü* (Lizard), *Pike* (Ant), *Leikhejü* (Hornet) are protected by cleaning the site and some beekeepers put ash around the hive. Mao people also perceived that due to the misuse of chemical

pesticides, deforestation, and many different factors, the population of the honeybee is declined than the past in the region of Mao says the beekeepers.

Medicinal value of honey in Mao;

Honey has been using as a medicine and nutritional food since time immemorial. The Mao people have a wealth of traditional knowledge of apitherapy. Honey is good for healing wounds, and skin treatment. The medicinal value of honey is common knowledge among farmers in Mao. It is used as medicine for the following diseases; pneumonia, eye disease, and tuberculosis. Methods of use as medicine, however, vary in the Mao region depending on the types of diseases and users. Indigenous or Natural honey is always in demand throughout the year. It is also used in making certain healthy food preparations. With changing lifestyle and increasing health consciousness, honey is being increasingly consumed as health food. This is likely to drive domestic demand in the future.

Conclusion: -

The techniques of beekeeping have been handed on from generation to generation since time immemorial. Thus, neglecting their indigenous technical knowledge will not be a wise decision. Indigenous knowledge and practices could be a significant basis for the development of modern beekeeping in the area. It is a profitable enterprise. It has great scope for providing employment, and livelihood as well as generating additional income for farmers with less time and minimum financial inputs. With the progress of technologies, beekeeping can be taken up as an industry for the economic development of the village and of the state. There is no negative impact of beekeeping on the environment. It is needed to take full advantage of traditional beekeeping to promote a sustainable economy and improve the livelihood of local communities. Thus, a win-win situation can be achieved for culture and the economy.

Assessment tools:

1. Read the following four statements a-d
 - a. Honey is a highly nutritive value and also find use in indigenous system of medicine.
 - b. Bee-keeping is the maintenance of hives of honey bees for the production of honey only.
 - c. The increased demand for honey has led to small-scale bee-keeping practices.

- d. Bee-keeping can practice in any area where there are sufficient bee pastures of wild shrubs, fruit orchards, and cultivated crops.

How many of the above statements are correct?

2. What is swarming?
3. Name two natural enemies of the honeybees?
4. In addition to providing honey, what are the other uses of honey bees?
5. What is the key to success in beekeeping?
6. What causes swarming in bee colonies?
7. How can you manage the colonies to prevent swarming?
8. How can you protect colonies from winter?

**Dr. Daili Kholia did her MA Sociology, MA Education, B. ED and PhD from Nagaland University. She is presently serving as Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Modern College Kohima, Nagaland. She is the author of Educational Technology (2022). Apart from many articles and research papers published in periodical journals and books, she presented many research papers in State, National, and International Seminars and Conferences. She is currently Joint Secretary of Nagaland Education Association and Vice-President of Naga Scholars Association. She is an ardent follower of education and believes in honesty and dedication to her service.*

In the following study on Indigenous Narratives of Naga Folklore in the Curriculum, I would like to explore the idea of folklore and folktales as the keeper of knowledge of an Indigenous community. Its nature, value, and practices are resurgence to an age-old value system. Each community's meaning of folklore indicates its function and values. I will be looking into the meaning of folklore, its functions, role, and values in the community of few selected tribe of Nagaland. This material is design to enable the students understand the idea of folklore and folktale from an Indigenous point of view. Locating the practices using indigenous methods, adhering to cultural value and historical references to make learning more comprehensive. This resource is developed to enhance the students locate the role of folk culture and tradition, how it even today acts as an agent in shaping the society, the social psyche in which he/she is brought up. The students will futher learn the implication of folk narratives and folk culture; its age-old wisdom how it can be studied and learned parallel to the western method of learning. I have selected about five folktales of the Nagas, from both primary oral and secondary oral sources.

The following material will enable the student to understand what constitute folklore, its practices and its significance. The students will further be sensitized on how indigenous cultures especially that of the Nagas function. While learning on the selected folklore and the folktales of the Nagas, students will also understand the nature, the role and its relevance in the indigenous society, even till today. The student will be able to conceptualize the idea of folklore; its process, interpretation, the point of view and most of all, with field works and experiential learning, the students will be able to understand the concept of the folklore. It is still practice today in many ways, within the Naga context, enshrined in the customary practices. This lesson is design in such a way where a facilitator may utilize the material at all levels. I will be using folktales as the prime source of discussion with an attempt to interconnect various genre of stories to give a more comprehensive approach understanding folklores.

These stories can be used as a comparative study with that of the Traditional (Western) stories, which might give more clarity to learner who will be learning indigenous literature for the first time. This method can be incorporated as a study for both curriculum as well as holiday assignments wherein facilitators can assist them understanding the nature of folktales. Role-play can be of good example in this regard. This resource can be used at all levels

Introduction

Folktales are stories, legends and tales which are based on a particular place, culture, region, and ethnicity. Folklore is interdisciplinary intersection between the fields of language, the arts, and culture. It is a form of literature; and like literature, it is both a separate subject to be studied and raw language material to be utilized of learning culture.

Folk tales are oral literature, the oldest form of literature, and a prime source of language: epic poetry, hero sagas, myths, legends, fairy tales, fables, ghost stories, tall tales, yarns, and many more. These stories blend reality and fantasy through the repetition of simple language and story patterns. In traditional tales the common people express their values, fears, and dreams over generations. A folk tale exists to be told in the traditional oral style. Location, terminologies, knowledge, nature, philosophies, and ideologies etc, which are no more use, can still be found in folktales, while on the other hand, we can also see usage of these in folk songs and proverbs and legendary tales, which may only be found while they are read or told. Folklore being one of the oldest forms of orality, makes sense that it serves as a package for preserving the oral tradition alive. In the Naga context customary practices. Folktales in Phom Naga dialect is called as *Bushah*, which means stories of the Old. *Bu* in a literal translation means grandfather, and *Shah* means words. The words of the old are dearly treasured and are sought after and the elderly are highly regarded for they had much to share and tell. In villages, the eldest member is revered so much so that every person tries to look or feel like a senior, because of the kind of respect one receives as a senior member of the community. For a rich oral tradition like that of the Nagas, it is always the old, the story tellers, who can tell the stories of the old.

The postcolonial society today have lost all Indigenous values and ways of learning. This includes indigenous methods of learning, developing and recreating knowledge. The western standard of education has todays seemed to blur out all indigenous knowledge and its value, often making it look lesser to that of the western knowledge. Folklore and folktales are means of storing indigenous knowledge. They are storehouse to knowledge, beliefs, education and practices. The song, stories, games, jokes, riddles, folk speech, narration, oral history, and other forms of cultural practices are heritage of

Folklore and folktales is comprehensive. Through singing, storytelling, and folk speech activities, folklore integrates all the cognitive tasks, language skills, and learning strategies. Most of which are achieved while practicing it in a communal setting.

Folklore and folktales are easily learned as each learner are exposed to community-based learning. Most of the learning are practiced by means of communal participation and mass learning within a particular age group. Naga folklore is community-based learning as it involves senior members passing down knowledge to the younger generation. For retention, it is effective while learning in peer groups. For example, folk songs, log-drum beating, community fishing, farming or even processes making crafts as each group are designated with various method of artistic learning. A peer groups or ‘Aso’ in Phom (Naga) dialect practices their folklore within their age groups, which make the learning more comprehensive and compatible. Each age groups are made to learn various lesson as their age progresses. Similarly, to contemporary schools, folklore can be designed age wise or level wise.

Folklore are used for many social, cultural and political purposes. At time it even acts as an ethical guideline for economic affirmatives. It is used popularly for instruction, education, and recreation, which are commonly told by an elder of the community. Folklore and folktales serves as a repository of age old wisdom, which for an Oral community, plays a pivotal role in interpreting and norms and ethic with references.

Naga folklore functions in many ways of preserving, inculcating, and keeping the cultural history of the society. Indigenous communities like Phoms would always refer to **Buhu** (Council Member), in case of any interpretation needed to be made or reminded. ‘**Buhu**’ is an age-old practice of council of Village Elders, who are responsible in interpreting the rules and customary laws of the village. Most believes are enshrined in the folklore and tales of the communities, while some have been formulated over a period by social changes and political necessities. These lore and tales are designed to provide easy methodology for the practitioners, ushering lesson on social etiquette and manners, war tactics and citizenship rights and duties.

The curriculum on associating folklore in mainstream literature, is an attempt to create a space to use indigenous folklore to the already existing curriculum. There is however various type of folklore, which may be identified based on the nature of the stories.

Types of Folklore and Folktales

1. Spirit and People (The Were tiger, the Jungle Beast, The Carnelian Necklace)

Nagas in the earlier days followed their indigenous regions, believing in the spirits and offering were made to the deities. There are various types of spirits and people (forest, the land, the water, the almighty of the afterlife, the animal spirits). While some tribes like the Sumi and Konyaks believed in a supreme god, the Ao believed in God in various forms. In the case of the Angamis and Chakesang, they believed in the female embodiment of God, which refers to a god as the provider and caretaker/nurturer.

Nagas believed in the accountability of man and its repercussions in the spiritual world. That one may not speak of anything impulsively, because the spirits do not forget what it has heard even if the speaker (man) does. A folklore tells of a woman who lost her precious carnelian necklace by the riverside while taking a bath. She was not able to find her precious carnelian Necklace that was gifted by her parents. She wished death upon herself rather than losing the necklace. After a while she finds it, and she goes home overjoyed for having found it. The spirits did not forget her words and she died of a sudden illness.

Nagas have been aware of the supernatural realm, which sometimes includes the realm of dogs, a belief in the afterlife where one's spirit is to be passing the realm of dogs after death. It is said that what and how one has treated the dogs during his earthly existence will be treated the same in the afterlife in the dog's realm. This indicates that Nagas, while following their indigenous religion, did believe in the afterlife. Their moral conducts were monitored and thought in relevance to the various repercussions they believed in the afterlife. Folklore served as a way of moral teaching and directives.

Fable narrative (The Story of a Frog, Crab and Prawn, The Dog and Pig)

The Frog, The Crab, and The Prawn

In the season of harvest in the village, Crab, Frog and Prawn goes to the farm. They work the whole day until noon. Exhausted and tired the crab goes to the hut to prepare meal for the three. But while trying to check the fire, he falls into the pot due to the heat and turned red.

The Frog and the Prawn and the Frog on not getting anything about the meal. The hunger driven duo goes to see on the whereabouts of the Crab. On seeing that the Crab has turned red inside the pot, the Frog ridiculing the Crab laughs so hard until it breaks its hip and his waist becomes smaller. While the Prawn, seeing the situation in shock, moves backwards. Till today Prawns move backwards and Frogs have broken and squeezed hip.

The Pig and The Dog

There once lived an old man, a Pig, and a Dog. One day the old man assigned the Pig and Dog to work in the farm before the dawn, while he goes to the jungle. The Dog slept the whole day while the Pig worked entirely on his own. Just prior to the return of the Old Man, the Dog checked in the field, erasing the traces of the Pig and stamping on the soil replacing the Pig's foot prints with his. The Old Man on returning from the jungle finds only the footprints of the Dog. Without making any further inquiry, he kicks out the Pig from the house furiously, calling it lazy. While the Dog was praised as faithful and loyal, and welcomed the Dog to stay with the Old Man. Till today, Dog stays with man inside the house, while Pig stays outside the house.

How Man, God, and Tiger Went their Separate Ways (Ao, 2019)

Once upon a time in a village there lived a man who had three sons. They helped him to cultivate his lands. They were healthy and hardworking children, and the father was very happy with their work and was proud of them. However, there were very sharp differences in the nature of the three boys. The eldest son was a calm and steady worker, considerate of his brothers and had a pleasant personality. He was obedient to his father and slow to anger.

In contrast, the second son was excitable, erratic in his work aggressive and greedy. He loved to be out indoors all the time. But with the patient guidance of his elder brother, he did commendable work in the field. Only his elder brother could help him control his periodic outbursts of excessive temper. The youngest son on the other hand had a very peculiar nature. He was withdrawn and held himself aloof from all the others in the family. He spoke little, was irritated over small matters, and would often burst into tears at real or imagined slights. He was secretive and none in the family could become close to him. But the eldest son was tactful and patient and could coax his brother to relax and be normal with him sometimes. Yet, the youngest son remained the mystical one, though he did help out diligently in the field work.

During a harvest season, one morning, the father sent the sons to the field early, even before the morning meal so that they could put in extra hours of work in the field. The father was to follow, bringing their meal for them.

Later in the day, upon reaching the farm shed, the father hailed the sons in a loud voice so that they could come for their meal. But to his surprise nobody appeared. He called again but there was no response. So, he went out looking for them and after some time discovered his eldest son, reaping grain at a far end of the vast field. Upon being questioned about his brothers, the eldest boy told the father that his brothers behaved in a very peculiar manner that morning. They would not listen to him and were very adamant in their attitude. They seemed to be bent on doing things their own way and so he left them in disgust at the farm shed and had not seen them since.

When the father and the eldest son were coming towards the shed in order to have their meal, they could see that the second son was prowling about on the roof top of the shed. On coming nearer, to their great amazement and horror, they saw that he was undergoing a transformation. He was gradually turning into a tiger!

When he saw the father and brother coming near, he jumped down from the roof and started to move away towards the jungle. The father then called out. "Dear son, you have now turned into a wild animal and will begin killing for your food. But do spare your father's domestic animals." But the ferocious tiger only replied.

"In the darkness where I am going, all animals will look the same to me." Saying so, he gave a mighty leap and vanished from their sight forever.

The father and the son began to look for the youngest son and round him sitting under a big tree near the shed. He too was in the process of a strange transformation. He appeared to them to have no well-defined form but seemed to be only a shadow of his former self. They called out to him, asking questions, but he remained silent. He turned his face away from them and told his father and brother that henceforth they would not see him, that they should worship him under that tree bringing offerings of meat and eggs. But he stipulated that the eggs should be brought in a specially woven egg-basket only. Even as he was giving these instructions he turned into a god-like being and he too slowly vanished from their sight.

So, to this day the Aos observe the custom of bringing the sacrificial eggs in baskets of this special type. It is also believed that only a few people know the art of weaving this particular kind of basket as God gave the instruction in a hurry and that too with his face averted. The custom of offering sacrifices to God during sowing and harvesting seasons is believed to have been instituted by this god who was once a human being. These offerings are left at a specially selected place near the farm shed usually under a tree.

To this day, man, God, and the tiger went their separate ways.

In the folklore we see that, most stories associate the stories to human nature, human values, and qualities. The second son becoming a tiger is indicated by the fact that he is born aggressive and erratic, and hence developed the beastly instinct, while the last son was calm and rather passive in his nature. This led him to become a shadow or spirit, who later became god. But for the eldest he was balanced and more humane. He becomes a man. It is clear indication folktales are narrated from a social point of view which adheres to human characteristics and nature. It is not that the second son became tiger, and the third son became a shadow, because they were destined to become the later entity, but instead we may learn that it is first by their nature and attribute and later the attributed image of what they become.

Many animal stories of the Nagas are represented or conceptualized by their natural order. While animals are characterized by their behavioral pattern. Animal stories are used as a referential method to a particular kind of manner or behavior to make exemplified teaching more effective in creating moral lessons while sometimes making phenomena more simplified according to the narration of the story tellers.

Theories and Origin

How Head Hunting Began (Ao,2019)

The age-old wisdom of the Ao as enshrined in their oral tradition declares that the first enmity among men began when they became greedy for more land and began quibbling over it. The quibbles turned into quarrels and the quarrels into fistfights and physical encounters. Use of weaponry during fight came much later. And even then, the practice of head-hunting was still unknown to the people. The following account tells us how the Aos learn this art from the ant!

***In a Phom Naga folklore, head hunting was Imitated from Spiders.**

One day a soldier goes to the jungle where he finds a spider devouring on his prey. It first takes down the head and then it consumes the rest, removing the head makes the prey easier to manage. He emulates this act of head taking, making it a practice of his war tactics.

One day, a warrior was resting by the road on his way home. He noticed that the spot where he was sitting was swarmed with ants and they seemed to be engaged in a frantic affair. He watched them keenly and discovered that in fact the ant groups were having a fight. After some time, the activities of the ants became less frantic, and he could see only a few of them. As he continued watching these few, he discovered, to his great amazement, that these few were engaged in a peculiar activity. They were beheading the slain ants and were carrying off their heads! He surmised that these were the victor ants and that they were carrying off the heads of their slain enemies! He also reasoned that this was an easier way of carrying home the trophies of victory in warfare.

He came back to the village and disclosed his findings and the villagers also agreed that indeed, carrying off the head only was definitely much easier than carrying the whole body of the slain enemy to display before the public as evidence of military valour, So, this is how, the Aos say, the practice of head-hunting began among the people during times of inter-village and even internecine warfare.

Love and War (Mehoviu and Merusa)

Story of Man and Woman who were engaged to marry village. They belonged to different village, without having seen each other even once. Merusa the men behead a woman who was weaving, on his trip to another village, thinking that he would take it as a bride price for Mehoviu, his prospective wife.

Some days later the news came to him that Mehoviu has been killed by some man. Little did he know that it was him who killed his own wife.

How a Boy Turned into a Monkey (Ao, 2019)

Once upon a time there was a boy in a certain village whose mother had died when he was young. After some time, the father married again to have a helpmate for himself as well as to provide a mother for his young son.

But unfortunately for the little boy, the stepmother took an intense dislike to the boy from the very beginning and began to ill-treat him. She assigned him difficult chores but gave him little food, which was also inferior in quality. But most if this went unobserved by the father who was almost away at his paddy field far away from home. And though, sometimes, he detected signs of unhappiness in his son because the woman was cunning, and he was completely under her charm and domination.

(The Ao-Nagas have always practised the shining form of cultivation. According to the cycle, a farmer maintains two field, the previous year's field where he grows mainly rice and the current year's field where, besides rice, he grows an assortment of fruits and vegetables. The harvesting seasons of the two fields are also different. The rice in the old field, having been sown earlier, ripens earlier than the rice in the new one.)

This farmer also had two fields. In the new one, besides rice, he grew pumpkins, cucumbers, maize, arum, and various other fruits as well. But his crop was relentlessly ravaged by a pack of monkeys which ate up not only the fruits and vegetables but also the stalks of the young rice plants.

To save the crop in the new fields, the farmer decided to send his son to chase away the monkeys from the new field while he went to harvest the ripening rice in the old one. The son had to go to the field very early in the morning and came home late at night because the monkeys chose the hours before the arrival and after the departure of the farmers to deprecate the crops. The boy really had a difficult job to perform but he did it sincerely.

The stepmother had never shown any kindness to the boy and now she started to give him even less food than before. For his morning meal, he was given a little cold rice with no curry at all. But for his mid-day meal, she wrapped a few lumps of rotten rice in a leaf. When the boy found that the rice in the leaf-tiffin was unfit for consumption, he threw it away and ate the fruits and vegetables from the field itself. This went on for a number of days and the mound of rotten rice in a corner of the farmhouse began to grow bigger

As days went by with this unvarying pattern of treatment from his stepmother, the boy decided that there was no need to walk those long miles of rough road back home for a few lumps of cold rice and no curry: It was merely a waste of time and energy. And so he began to spend the nights as well in the farmhouse itself, subsisting on the maize and vegetables growing in the field.

In the meantime, the father too was busy harvesting his old old single handed. He used to start for the field very early in the morning and come back home late at night only carrying heavy loads of paddy on his back. He had little time to ask about his son's work and simply took it for granted that all was well with him.

But when the harvest in the old field was over, he turned his attention to the new field and began to enquire about his son's work. He was told that the son had not come home for many days now. (This in itself is not unusual, because when there is much work to be done in the fields, the farmers spend the night in the farmhouse in order to save precious time spent on commuting to and from the village.)

The father decided to check on his son and set out to the new field very early the next morning. On reaching the field, he looked out for his son but there was no sign of him anywhere. As he looked around the farmhouse, he discovered the mound of rotten rice left by his son. He now began to realise that something had gone terribly wrong with his son. Thinking that he might be somewhere in the field the farmer began to call out loudly for his son, "Dear son, where are you? I am your father, come to relieve you. Come to your father, my dear son.

But there was no response from his son. To his great surprise a monkey which was sitting on a log near the farmhouse began to respond to his call. Though he looked like a monkey, there were still traces of his human form and voice which made the father realize that he was no ordinary monkey, He at once knew that it was his son who was gradually transforming into a monkey, and he became terribly saddened at this turn of events. He shed bitter tears of remorse when he realized that it was because the boy had gone too long without proper meals and had been living on fruits and vegetables alone that he was undergoing the strange transformation. As he was not warmed by the fire at the heart, fur began to develop on his body and he was now almost transformed into a monkey,

Seeing the mound of rotten rice, he was convinced that it was his wife who was responsible for what had happened to his son. In this, he too was betrayed by her, and once again he wept for the loss of his son.

Before leaving the field, he turned to his son who was now becoming a monkey and said, "Since you find it impossible to return to your human form, I am leaving you here along with the other monkeys. You may eat all the fruits and vegetables you like. Among the rice stalks those in the far corner are sweeter because they are special sticky rice plants. You may eat this particular type of rice plants." With these parting words, the sad man left his son to join the group of monkeys as one of them.

(To this day, the Aos claim, because of the father's last words to his son, monkeys can distinguish this variety of rice from the ordinary one and relish eating it first.) The father, after bidding farewell to his son, returned home utterly dejected and broken hearted. He accused his wife of cruel treatment toward his son and on this ground, he divorced her and drove her way from his home. He lived alone with his grief and died a broken old man for having lost his only son in this manner.

From the above stories, one may raise these questions:

1. What do you think is the moral of the story?
2. How are these stories different from your regular stories?
3. Can you recreate a story with a similar nature to the stories you have read?
4. How do you think has the story been effective?
5. Do you have similar stories in your folktale?

Expected Learning Outcomes

- a. Cultural Sensitization

Students learn through folklore and folktales how an Indigenous Identity is learned. How it talks about the past, the people, and the society. One of the most important features is that folklore are preservers of cultural history. Folktales intertwines with historical facts and geographical

indication, which at times may lead to empirical reasoning. For example, new words associated with the folk community, in some cases untranslatable words

There are in most cases words that are associated with folklore, which are not much in used in our daily language but must have been used at one point of time. These words find its relevance only when stories that has these words are narrated or retold thus will learners' new words along with its associated meaning.

*Teachers can use synonyms and alternate words along with the “special word” in order to help students familiarize with the meaning.

b. Learning Social Manners in Folk Community

With westernisation, many cultural as well as social ethics have been introduced with a new name, while many forms of ethical values have always been associtedd to a community for a long time, the western value sytem had overshadowed for a long time. In folklore and tales one may find a way of reaching to various audience by helping them analyse and know the already in-practice value system which were part of one culture for long but has been overshadowed by western value system resulting to make the Indigenous system look more shallow and archaic as compared to the western value system.

c. Keeper of History

Folklore is orally transmitted heritage to a community, it is a combination of oral history, legends, tales, songs of all kinds, superstition, beliefs and so on. Folklore especially to a oral community signify a great deal of history keeping, its people and their temperament. Hence, practicing folklore and passing on folktale serves great interest in revisiting history and contextualizing it.

It is very important that, one develops an Indigenous Bend of Mind which will results into extensive learning of not just one's culture but also other indigenous learning (comparative and analytical).

7. Pedagogical Process

Folklore and folktales are indigenous and traditional practices and stories which are passed down from one generation to another, mostly done orally by the older generation to the younger one. However, some of the pedagogical process which can be adopted are such as.

1. Community based education which allows community members to participate and influence the learning environment and enable the learner through guidance/facilitator.

Naga folklore is community-based learning as it involves senior members passing down knowledge to the younger generation. For retention, it is effective while learning in peer groups. For example, folk songs, log-drum beating, community fishing, farming or even processes making crafts as each group are designated with various method of artistic learning. A peer group or *Aso* in Phom (Naga) dialect practices their folklore within their age groups, which make the learning more comprehensive and compatible. Each age groups will be made to learn various lesson as their age progresses. Similarly, in contemporary schools, folklore can be designed age wise or level wise.

2. Experimental learning can be practiced as it provides opportunities to the learner to reflect on the various dimension of knowledge such as emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and physical when they are engaged in the learning activities e.g Role playing (folk lore and folk tale) folk singing,

Folklore or folktale requires common believes in order for it to have its functionality in the society. It is within a community's belief that folklore or tales are acknowledged as it involves supernatural, the non-human and a good

3. Creating an inclusive learning environment which share equal opportunity to learn and share the diversity.

In a western mode of education, learners can be assigned to narrate stories of their own communities. By this they will learn the differences and similarities in narration. Hence, achieving diversity.

4. Recognising the important role that elders and traditional people have in passing down the knowledge.

In an oral tradition, it is inevitable to not have elders involved in the learning process. It is in fact a matter of pride and honour to have elders in an indigenous community as they are the story keepers

and narrators. Elders are the ones who would validate the stories and narration of communal group. They instruct and correct the younger generation.

5. Place-based learning, as indigenous pedagogy converts learning to a specific place, the learners are benefited when provided opportunities to explore, enquire and learn on the land (within a culturally integrated space), adding up to more relevancy.

It is always the local space which provides maximum development and learning of a folk- culture.

8. Assessment Process

1. Interaction with the student can be undertaken during the instruction as it reflects the insight on the student's knowledge.
2. Encouraging and bringing more inclusive on student's opinions.
3. Assigning projects and performance plays.
4. Providing useful effective feedback.

Note to the Teacher

Every storyteller tells stories differently and a story is different every time it's told. The teller's building materials are words, sounds, language patterns; the tools are the voice, the face, the hands, the storytelling craft; the product is the mutual creation of a special human experience, of a world based on words and imagination. The teacher need not be afraid of storytelling because most teachers are fine natural storytellers even without realizing it and beginners can tell as effectively as experts.

1. Choose stories that you like, to which you have a positive first reaction, and that you feel you can tell.

Find stories that your learners will like also, that match their age, and language level, and then look for the possible teaching points. Don't memorize stories but use nice, unusual expressions, word patterns, dialogue, emphasis, and themes. Try to create rich setting and character descriptions but be comfortable with your own use of language. Visualize the succession of scenes as you master the

structure of the story. Prepare skeleton outlines on cue cards--an aid in preparation and storage of tales, but not used in the actual telling.'

2. Mix-blend of learning (western and indigenous)

Learning folklore can be practiced using mix blend, by making comparisons between western and indigenous stories. For example, fairies and stories of the Nagas and Western. Sensitized knowledge on local art and literature.

The facilitator is to function as a guide to make all possible arrangements to create an awareness among the learners to achieve a balanced knowledge of both the past and the present. This can be done by creating space for discussing various indigenous knowledge from different background, identifying the similarities and differences and assisting the learners in understanding the functions of folklore in the present, just as discussed in the expected learning outcome.

4. Teachers should be aware of the problem in the cultural loss.

The teacher must be able to help student relies on the dying cultural practices. It should be seen that students participate in discussions, understand the problem and find possible solution to tackle such issue.

Reference

1. Ao, Temsula. (2019). The Ao-Naga Oral Tradition, Heritage Publication House,
2. Among, L. (2018). Delving into The Primal Life of Phom, Mega Printers, Dimapur
3. http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_195204_pilant.pdf
4. https://www.academia.edu/4044113/Folklore_and_Education

Story Narrator

1. Hamba Nemdakly, narrator:

1. The Frog, The Crab, and The Prawn
2. The Pig and the Dog
3. Naga folklore, head hunting was Initiated from Spiders

**Manngai Phom is an Assistant Professor at Tetso College, Dimapur*

Traditional Institution, Authority and Social Values: A Study of Zapami Village Polity

--**Sarup Sinha***

This essay attempts to introduce in an accessible manner the several roles and functions of traditional institutions among the Nagas based on a study of Zapami village inhabited by the Khezha people of the ‘Chakhesang’ tribe. In doing so, the article aims to chart the changing dimension of politics in the village brought about by gradual changes in customs, social beliefs and political practices. The essay also highlights the changes that have occurred through encounters with the colonial and State institutions. After studying this article, the student will be able to understand the concept of tradition and its relationship with the function and exercise of politics. Learning about the relationship between the two concepts will allow the students to contextualise the modern political changes with the traditional way of political life, about the continuities and the discontinuities of contemporary village life. While the chapter attempts to familiarise the student with the role, objective and functioning of traditional institutions, it also highlights the traces of inherited customary values in an individual's social life and how it intertwines with everyday politics.

It is important to first lay on the table an important term that appears throughout the chapter in some

Box 1

The chapter asks the following questions:

1. What is the political structure of the Naga village and how do the local governance bodies function?
2. What are the different political changes that the Zapami village underwent?
3. How can we perceive the political tradition of the Chakhesang Naga over the years? How does the village politics develop overtime?
4. How does the village community transfer the traditional knowledge and political practises the subsequent generation? In other words, how does the village community spread political awareness among the youth?

form: ‘Politics’. Politics is a multifarious concept with several aspects attached to its nature as an academic field, as a government activity, as an art and as an everyday form of negotiation by individuals and groups. There is no unanimously agreed definition for politics. For some, politics is

about power, while others relate it to an allocation of goods. Some associate politics with the study of the State, while others regard politics as decision-making. Some view politics as a domain of conflict and competition, and fewer still endorse the classical view that considers politics a means to create an ideal life. All definitions notwithstanding, for this chapter, politics is understood as *a means to take collective decisions in society through constant negotiation with various stakeholders who advance diverse interests, opposing agendas and differing moral conceptions of life*.

Background:

The Zapami village, situated about 53 km from Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, is one of the Khezha Naga villages of the Chakhesang tribe under the Pfutsero sub-division of Phek district. Tracing its descent to Leshemi village, considered the ancestral home to many Nagas, people from the Khezha tribe inhabit the Zapami village. Khezha comes under the nomenclature ‘Chakhesang’ tribe, one of the sixteen officially recognised tribes in Nagaland.



Fig 1: Panoramic View of Zapami

Before the advent of Christianity, Chakhesang Nagas, like many other Naga tribes, lived with a belief system that was richly infused with animistic and supernatural elements, with beliefs in diverse spirits and supreme deities. From the late 1870s, however, Christianity began to spread among the Nagas, driven by factors such as conversion, standardisation of vernacular scripts, and mass circulation of bibles translated in the vernaculars. It would be erroneous, however, to state that

Christianity completely replaced the traditional cosmology of the Naga, since the indigenous terms associated with the notion of God and Spirits were incorporated into the Christian cosmology of the Nagas, such as Menöpi for the Khezhas, Tsüngrem for the Aos, Ukepenuopfü for the Angamis and so on.

The social world of the Nagas until the arrival of the missionaries and colonial administrators was, to a great extent, limited to their immediate locality. That is to say, the social cohesiveness and the sense of belonging held the greatest resonance inside the village. Seen from this perspective, we discover that village was the fundamental political unit of the Nagas. Although most of the Naga languages belong to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family, many tribes spoke in mutually unintelligible languages that created communication barriers between tribes. The world outside the village was often alien; the abode of the “others”. The relations with adjoining villages were often hostile. Hence, one may find several fortifications around the village border and along the mountain tops whose purpose was to defend the villagers from outside attack.

In terms of social organisation, the village chief, known as ‘Mewü’ among the Khezhas, occupied the highest position of authority, decision-making power and social prestige in the village. The Mewü exercised power in all matters related to social life, rituals, work allocation and resolution of conflicts in the village. The diktats of the Mewü were often declared in a designated open space in the village. It was obligatory for the villagers to comply with the norms, decisions and customs declared by the Mewü. Because Mewüs were the most revered figure in the village, their role came with tremendous responsibility. Mewüs were expected to conduct themselves in the justest manner and take decisions upholding the collective interest of the village community. Titles that have become part of the lexicon, such as ‘Gaon Buras’ and ‘Dobash^{hihi}’ emerged during the colonial period when the British granted legal recognition to village chiefs for collecting taxes and resolving disputes in the village.

We will return to our discussion on social customs and political practices of the past and examine their connections with the present after discussing the village governance structures in Nagaland.

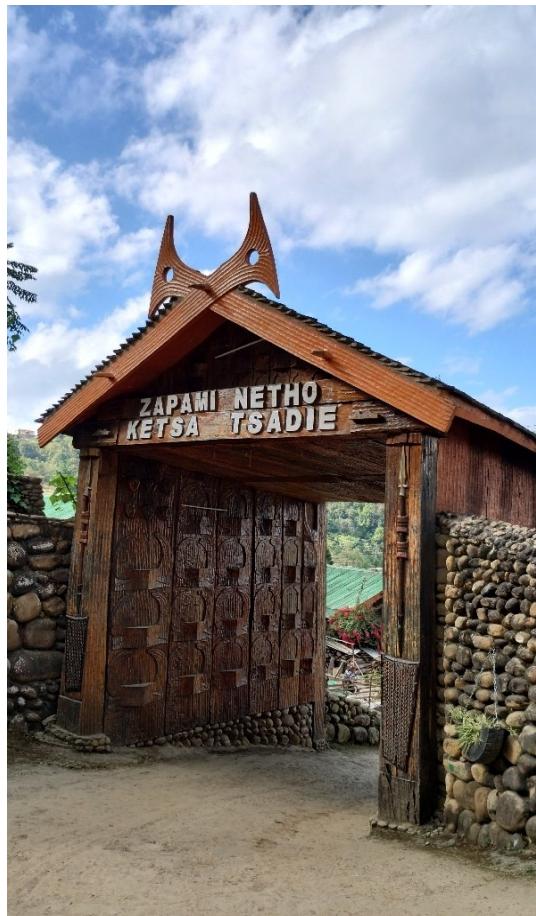


Fig 2: Village Gate

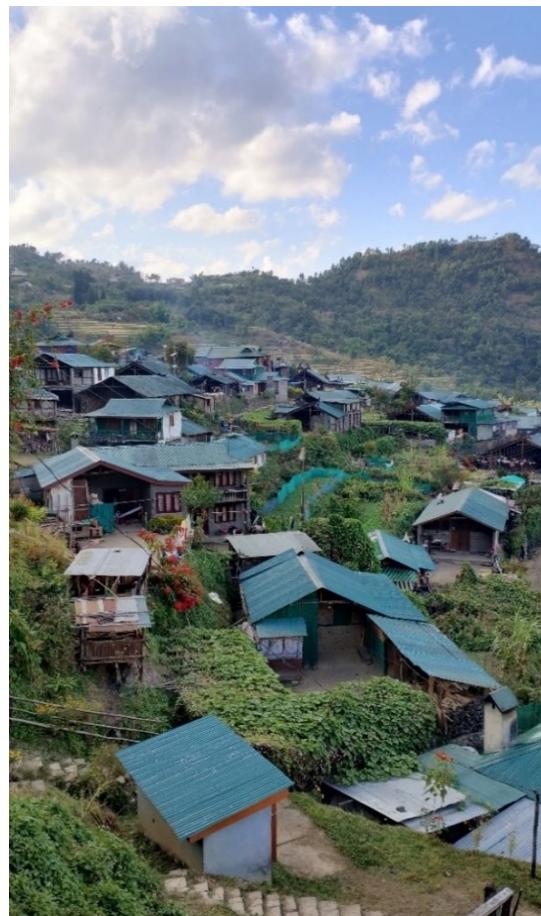


Fig 3: Inside View

Indian Constitution and Naga Customary Law:

Amidst sustained resistance against integration with India alongside a potent demand for independence as a separate sovereign nation-state, Nagaland was carved out of the Naga Hills districts of Assam and North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) in 1963 to be given the status of a new state. In an attempt to convince the Nagas that their political future and social fabric would remain secure, the Indian State brought Nagaland under the purview of Article 371(A), a constitutional arrangement guaranteeing increased political autonomy and cultural safeguards.

As per **Article 371(A)** of the Indian Constitution, no Act of Parliament in respect of – (a) Religious or social practices of the Nagas, (b) Naga customary law and procedure, (c) Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law (d) Ownership of transfer

of land and its resources shall apply to the State of Nagaland unless decided by the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland through a resolution.

Traditional Governance in Nagaland: Village Councils and Village Development Boards

Keeping up with the idea that the Nagas must be allowed to live according to their distinct traditions and customary laws, a decentralised form of governance was adopted by the Indian state, giving legal and administrative powers to the local bodies per the provisions of Indian constitutions. These village structures functioning along the line of traditional institutions are a unique feature of Nagaland, codified as Village Councils and Village Development Boards under the Indian law. Village Councils are the chief authority within the village's jurisdiction having judicial and administrative powers over matters such as justice, welfare and security. For all purposes, they are regarded as the chief decision-making unit on the village level.

Village Development Boards or VDBs are statutory bodies working in tandem with Village councils whose main purpose is to avail government schemes and execute development projects for the village. Hence, the VDBs play a vital role in matters related to the economic and infrastructural development of the village. It must be noted that the Village Councils and VDBs must work closely with the Rural Development Department of Nagaland, which coordinates with the village councils across the State.

The village councils get their legal and judicial empowerment through the "**Nagaland Village Council Act 1978**", which allows every recognised village in Nagaland to form Village councils. The Nagaland Village Councils (Fourth Amendment) Act, 2009 inserted the term "tribal council" into the act, which indicates various tribal councils/hohos/unions/organisations of Nagaland.

As per **Nagaland Village Council Act 1978**, the power and duties of the Village Council broadly cover three areas:

Administration: The village council has the authority to oversee the internal administration of the village. The village council is also responsible for maintaining law and order in village and to forward issues of serious matters to the nearest Administrative Officer or Police Station if required. They also enforce orders passed by the competent authority in the village.

Development: Work through the VDBs to avail government welfare schemes and execute development projects in the village. VDBs are required to oversee the allocation of funds, identify

beneficiaries for schemes and monitor the progress of development works. VDBs maintain records of all development works that shall be open and subject to any audit of its account. Enable themselves to mobilise their internal resources for investment in various income-generating ventures.

Justice: The Village Council shall administer justice following the customary law and canons of justice established in Nagaland. Its jurisdiction is confined to its village territory. When disputes involve different villages, two or more Village Councils may resolve a dispute in a joint session or refer it to the proper authority. Some of these issues include cases related to interpersonal conflicts, thefts, land disputes, resource conflicts, among others.

Box 2. Composition of the Village Council and VDB

- i) **Council Members:** A Village Council shall consist of members, chosen by villagers in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages, approved by the State Government. The qualification criteria require the individual to be an Indian citizen above 25 years of age without a criminal background.
- ii) **Chairman:** The Village Council is headed by the Chairman elected by the Council.
- iii) **VDB Secretary:** The Village Council select and appoint a secretary who may or may not be a member of the Council. If the Secretary is not a member of the Council, he shall have no voting rights.
- iv) **Grounds for Disqualification:** The State Government may remove any member of a Village Council from his office based on stipulated grounds such as mishandling of funds, corruption, involvement in criminal activity, unsound mental health and loss of confidence in the village councils.

Traditional Governance Structures in Zapami: Continuities and Discontinuities

Now let's consider closely how the traditional institutions function in Zapami and what kind of connections we can draw between the social practices of the past and its contemporary manifestations. As mentioned in the opening passage of this chapter, one of the basic ways to understand politics is to understand the collective decision-making process in a society. When it comes to the whole territory of a nation-state, the government is the highest decision-making body, with its power decentralised into federal and local units. In the case of Nagaland, the decision on a village level is taken by the Village councils, harking back to the customary Naga village politics where the village was the basic political unit, and the tribal body was its chief institution. This section

aims to identify the parallels, interlinkages and modifications that have arisen over time. Most importantly, we aim to understand the village's traditional form of politics and decision-making processes.

In Zapami, the Village Council has 14 members based on an arrangement reflecting the clan composition of the village. The village is inhabited by people belonging to 10 clans (four major clans and six sub-clans). Therefore, to ensure representation of every clan, the fourteen village council members are composed of ten members representing 10 clans, 3 Gaon Buras and 1 Head Gaon Bura. The three Gaon Buras are selected from the village's four major clans, and the head Gaon Bura is chosen from the four major clans on a rotation basis. The Head Gaon Bura ministers all the major oath ceremonies and appointment processes. The four major clans of Zapami are Puse, Kreo, Khutso and Wetsah. A clan must achieve certain population figures in order to be considered a major clan. Currently, the village clan has three major clans, as the Puse clan failed to meet the population criteria. Hence, in its place, one Gaon Bura representing all the general clans have been chosen.

All the village council's major decision is conducted according to the village constitution representing the customary law of the Khezhas. The right to interpret and implement decisions based on customary law lies with the Village councils, which gives an interface of understanding the village polity on two levels comprising the village council on one hand and the customary laws on the other. Despite the existence of customary law, the formation of the village council has slowly adopted a semi-democratic form. As a result, unlike in the past, when Mewü held the title of village chief on a hereditary basis, the village council chief is now chosen through a layered elective procedure.

One interesting observation about politics at the local level is to see how the local polities adopt and modify the codified laws. For instance, according to government regulations, the tenure of the Village chief is supposed to be for five years but the village council of Zapami has fixed the term to 2.5 years to reduce the possibility of corruption and misappropriation of funds. Further, Oaths are taken in the presence of the village members so that, in case, village council members indulge in the mishandling of their role and responsibilities, their family members are also held accountable.

The village council's role, powers and responsibilities are similar to what we have studied in the previous section. In Zapami, the village council handles all the major organisation and administration affairs. The village council also supervises the execution of customary law, along with the implementation of government schemes and development projects. All the criminal activities in the village are likewise dealt with by the village council in accordance with the customary law as

maintenance of law and order is one of the most important functions of the Village council. The cases of criminal activities are heard in the village courts (see Fig 4). To improve the revenue generation sources of the village, the Zapami village council is also engaged in effective management and economical usage of community resources.

To disqualify any member from the village council, a meeting must be held in the Village court using customary law procedures. If found guilty, the representative from the same clan must fill the vacancy on the village council. The severity of the violation determines the punishment, which can range from being forbidden from attending any board meetings to being excommunicated from the village. The procedure for removing the Village Council Chief is slightly different as it requires a vote of no confidence by at least six village council members.

Village Development Boards, responsible for implementing developmental activities, likewise operate under the Village council's supervision. VDB has a strength of 7 members with a tenure of 3 years headed by a Secretary. The VDB secretary works with the Village Council and plays an important role in executing the functions of VDB, such as handling allocated funds and implementing development programmes in the village. What is interesting about the VDB members is the inclusion of women in its membership which is not permitted in Village councils. While it is legally mandated to have at least 30% women representation in Village Development Boards, no such obligations apply to the Village council as it functions according to the customary law granted by the constitutional measure. The village council members remain hesitant about including women in the village council, citing that decision-making in the local polity has traditionally been the domain of men. It is here that one can find the traces of previous patriarchal structures in such dogged resistance against any change in the historically male-dominated decision-making authority of the village.



Fig 5: Zapami Village Court

Over the years, attempts have been made to combine the customary political tradition in line with the modern system of government. The village council members boast of the democratic and transparent mechanism of their political processes. Similarly, despite several socio-political changes, the village's customary laws maintain their authority. The village authorities carefully evaluate government directives and initiatives before giving the nod. Hence, only those policies and programmes are implemented whose objectives align with the sentiment and ethos of the village laws. On the socio-cultural level, the biggest change has been the practice of Christianity. Christianity has either replaced, modified or syncretised with the previous belief systems without, however, completely overthrowing the political customs of the village. While the council oversees the administrative and legal matters of the village, social institutions like marriage remain outside the purview of customary law. The customs, rituals and ceremonial proprieties regarding marriage are followed in accordance with the procedures of the Church.



Fig 5: Communal Cemetery built by VDB

While some elderly village folk expressed a preference for the old Mewü system, citing that, the Mewü system, though rigid, was able to regulate village activities more effectively; Mewüs could guard better against any cultural erosion by enforcing the customary laws more stringently and could elicit a stricter disciplinary ethic from the villagers. However, a large section of the village also supported the Village Council system, saying it represents an evolution of traditional polity that is keeping pace with the modern political framework. The supporters of the Village Council, however, iterated the need to preserve the culture and customary practises of the tribe while progressing with time.

In contrast to the pre-independence days when the traditional village could more or less successfully handle the internal village matters on its own, the village bodies today have to interact with a host of external political agencies that present many challenges in their own right. Amidst irregular disbursal

of funds from the government, a good portion of the funds gets siphoned off due to corruption. On top of that, the Village Council have to regularly deal with the tax demands from various factions of Naga national groups. While legally, the village councils are given the right to function according to their customary laws. The directives of the government agencies in the implementation of development programmes bind them.

Political Authority and Social Values among Khezha Nagas: Before and After

As indicated earlier, the cultural and political environment of the Nagas till the mid-nineteenth century was confined more or less to their immediate locality: that is, the village. Things began to change with the arrival of colonial masters and Christian missionaries, which led to the significant expansion of the social world of the Nagas. Self-sufficient though they were, the Nagas had irregular encounters with the Ahoms from the neighbouring plains, whose failed attempts at subjugating the Nagas ensured that their sense of autonomy remained unhurt. However, the increasing exposure to new colonial interventions, state regulations and conversion to Christianity brought considerable changes to the social world and belief systems of the Nagas.

One of the immediate changes after the onsets of Christianity were (i) the slow fading of traditional practises such as Morung (traditional learning and training centre of the bachelors), communal feasting, such as feasts of Merit, (ii) a gradual decline in the authority of the village chiefs and chief-priests and (iii) debasing of and putting restrictions on specific traditional practises such as consumption of rice beer, participating in village ceremonies and practise of animistic rituals. These changes, however, were also accompanied by the spread of education and linguistic standardisation, which led to improved inter-tribe communication. This backdrop is essential to contextualise the changes in the tradition of politics in previously locally-specific villages.

Keeping the above passage in mind, two of the biggest changes in Zapami village since the late nineteenth century, particularly after India's independence, have been in two spheres:

- (i) Religious: Change in their belief system from a diverse cosmology of natural and supernatural beings to Baptist Christianity, and
- (ii) Political: Disappearance of the traditional authority of Mewü, also known as village chief.

According to several village elders, Zapami was one of the last villages to fully convert to Christianity. Traditionally, Mewü had the supreme authority over all village matters—customary, ritualistic and justice-related—that were obligatory and unchallenged. The title of Mewü was

hereditary, and while the Mewüs were the village's supreme authority, there was also a hierarchy among the Mewüs. The hierarchy existed both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, the village had two types of Mewüs: Ri Mawu and Citrü. Ri Mawu had authority over war and religion, whereas Citrü had authority over agriculture. Both Mewü were in charge of these two distinct domains. Vertically, the Chief Priest of the three villages (i.e. Zapami, Leshemi and Lusami-Lasumi that together constitute the Zuketsa circle) held more power than the Mewüs of the other two villages. Chief Mewü's decisions were followed and implemented in their village by the other Mewüs.

According to the village elders, Zapami was one of the last villages to be fully converted to Christianity. Hence, despite the gradual decline of the authority of Mewü since the adoption of Christianity and with the codification of laws since the British and post-independent Indian State, Mewü enjoyed, although to a much lesser degree, titular powers until its replacement with the Village Council since 1978. Besides the spread of Christianity and Indian state laws, another factor behind the decline of the authority of Mewü was the struggle for Naga independence, from which emerged another political actor, i.e., Naga revolutionary groups that began enforcing and influencing the already shrinking political space of the Mewüs. What happened with the implementation of Village Councils more straightforwardly is that the administrative and ritualistic domains were separated? The Village Councils oversee the former, and the Church bodies authorise the latter.

Preserving a close-knit village polity requires the prevalence of political ethos and values that justify social hierarchies, uphold political structure and maintain a strong social fabric of the village. Despite the vertical hierarchy between Mewü and the villagers, the resources were held communally and agricultural produce made for a more or less self-sufficient lifestyle. The harvest season and its associated rituals are very closely tied, as we shall soon see, with the Naga tradition as evident in the form of festivities, ceremonial celebrations and folk culture. These activities act as visible markers of tribe identity. To return to the point made at the beginning of the passage, in Naga village polity, just as in other social groups, there are specific collective values that give a sense of togetherness and collective responsibility to the people. For the Khezha Nagas, such values are represented by the virtues of obedience (to customary law), honesty, discipline, and respect for tradition. These personal virtues are supplemented by an additional component of preserving nature and their indigenous culture.

Along with these extolled virtues, there also exist a set of vices and improprieties one must avoid under all conditions. These fall under three criteria:

Kenyū means Taboo (things one should not violate).

Metha means Fear (things one should be afraid of).

Menye inive means Shame (things whose doing would bring one shame).

Simply put, the traditional political ethos of Khezha say that a responsible and righteous village member is one who follows and exhibits the virtues and avoids the vices. Besides reverence to collective ethos, communal gatherings and ceremonies, such as the ‘Feast of Merit’, had in the past strengthened the social- bonding in the village. Unfortunately, such communal rituals are no longer practised today, but the collective virtues extolled in the customary laws are still promoted and handed down to the younger generations.



Fig 6: House of Horns, also known as *Kechikeh*.

Politics in its democratic form cannot be actuated without having a common forum for public discourse and communication. Jurgen Habermas, a leading political thinker, discusses the notion of the “Public Sphere”, a sphere between the State and the market, similar to civil society, where political discourse takes place in the spirit of public participation and cooperation. In Zapami village, an open space called “Nhube~~d~~” (See Fig:7) partially resembles Habermas’ public sphere. During old days, the Mewu made all the major pronouncements from ‘Nhube~~d~~’. Viewed from today’s perspective, ‘Nhube~~d~~’ may not entirely match the evaluative standards of a modern ‘public sphere’ as we are talking about a pre-democratic village polity. However, it was a space for public and

community gatherings where village folk gathered on a regular basis to discuss public matters. This was also a space for public ceremonies and celebrations such as the now abandoned practice of men folk assembling for collective humming, singing, chanting war cries and communal feasting. Such collective rituals, needless to decipher, greatly fostered a sense of community in the village. It is important to note, however, that, being patriarchal social structures, one exclusionary feature of Nhube~~d~~ and the village polity, in general, is the restriction on the full participation of women from major village social and decision-making processes.

Conclusion: Youth and the Continuation of tradition

Tsukhrelo Wetsah, well-spoken and confident, is Zapami's local youth pastor. Every Sunday, Tsukhrelo and his friends gather around the church premises to discuss various issues. The discussion topics range from simple village issues to upcoming local and state events, employment issues, state politics, national politics, and so on. The group as a whole is highly diverse. Tsukhrelo is a theology major involved in ministry, Kulo Wetsah has invested in local business ventures, and Mewe Khutsoh is a successful agro-entrepreneur known for his success in Shiitake mushroom cultivation.



What this group represents is the next generation of Khezha youth from Zapami who shoulder the responsibility of transferring the ~~folk~~ traditional gathering and culture to the next generation.

To understand this connection, let us briefly digress into the concept of tradition. Tradition often refers to a set of collective beliefs, customs, rituals and practices of a group or society representing a knowledge system. It is derived from the Latin word traditum, which means ‘to transfer’ or ‘handing down’; this is why tradition is often roughly understood as knowledge transferred from one generation to another. While transmissibility is considered an essential feature of tradition, it is not one-directional. The determining factor of any tradition is the degree to which the subsequent generation nurtures the inherited beliefs, cultures and institutions. Another important element of tradition is its impermanent nature. Traditions pass through a process of evaluation by the subsequent generation wherein some parts of tradition are preserved even as certain portions are abandoned or reformed to reflect the normative and socio-cultural standards of the time. It is in this context that the young group of Zapami become relevant since they become crucial stakeholders in the process of handing down the inherited set of values and traditions to the subsequent generation.



Fig 8: Youth meeting in Zapami

Most members of the youth of Zapami acknowledge the difference in their social and political environment compared to the older generations. The change in their conditions of life has resulted in changes in different areas: their lifestyles, ways of living, and priorities while presenting in its wake a set of new challenges. The youth, aware of this fact, seems sensitive about how their cultures underwent changes and that it shall continue to do so with the growing interaction with the outside world. While it may be the case that the youth today experience a broader zone of liberty and

autonomy than their forefathers, it ought not to lead one to assume that their attitude towards their tradition is one of indifference or ignorance. The youth, more than willing to shoulder the responsibility of preserving their culture, seem to have high pride in their tradition and tribal identity. As the youth themselves confirm, the traditions, customs and ideals resonate very strongly with their worldview. For example, the youth showed good awareness of the core values of the Khezhas, along with their taboos. They iterate that those principles remain the core ethic of their community. A great deal of learning about their tradition comes from three sources: One, with the oral tradition of transferring knowledge from the parents and elders. Second, by participating in collective ceremonies that involve the motifs of their tribe and third, by engaging directly with the substance of their customs during youth and village meetings. Not only do these forms of engagement familiarises them with their tradition, but it also generates a sense of association with their culture and their fellow tribe members



Fig 9: General Youth Meeting in Zapami

The following practises provides instances of how the youth learns about and engages with their tradition:

- **Public reading of Village booklet:** The youth society of Zapami has a public reading of the village booklet annually on 26th December. The function of this practice is twofold: while public reading makes others aware of the fundamental ethos of their tribe, it at the same time initiates a discussion about the several aspects of their social practices, rituals, customary laws, cultural ethos and other in the public eye.

- **Community gatherings:** In the times of high-speed internet, community gatherings remain occasions for the youth to engage with other members of the village. Through this process, the youth also receive discussion matters for their periodic Annual Plan meetings. Nhube, although slightly diminished in its communal imprint, continues to act as an important public sphere in the village.
- **Customary Law Reading:** Every ten years, the village assembles a public reading on customary laws. The purpose here, too, is twofold: First, it helps younger generations and adults become acquainted with the laws. Second, a committee is formed to review existing laws and, if required, make necessary amendments.

In addition to the above-mentioned practises, there are still different ways the youth make for a vibrant community bonding, such as wrestling competitions, beauty contests and festivals. On the political front, the village youth body is involved in other social activities with several organisations such as Student Unions, Women's societies, Church organisations and so on. This degree of cultural and political connection with other people, groups, and organisations not only makes the youth socially and politically active but also demonstrates how young people first learn about politics before developing their political style. From the perspective of the youth, politics today requires an engagement with a host of actors: villagers, bureaucrats, the State, NGOs, student bodies, and church authorities, among others. As the notion of politics has evolved, so has the social dynamics for the people of Zapami. The village is no longer the fundamental unit; the authority structure has evolved, and new cultural and digital exposures have emerged. Meanwhile, traditions and politics have both acquired new layers and intersect through several layers of agents, institutions, competing values and economic dynamics. Amidst all these changes and transformations, the tradition in Zapami continues to live among its people.

Assessment Activities:

The course requires an engagement with the written resource along with discussions with students about their villages, their customs, their history, while provoking them to think about political structures in their villages and the state in general. Following activities are recommended for the students:

- 1) Students could be asked to submit a report on the concept of traditional life of their village based on a discussion with the villagers, village elders, Village council members and the village youth.
- 2) Students could be asked to submit an account of the different development activities of the village.

Short Questions:

- 1) What do you understand by tradition?
- 2) Explain the role and functions of Village Council and Village Development Board?
- 3) How has the traditional institutions changed over time?

References:

Wouters, J. J. (2017). The making of tribes: the Chang and Chakhesang Nagas in India's Northeast. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 51(1), 79-104.

Marak, Q. (2021). Elicüra: The “Feasts of Merit” Shawl of the Chakhesang Naga of Northeast India. *The Oriental Anthropologist*, 21(1), 138–157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972558X21990790>

Thomas, J. (2015). *Evangelising the nation: religion and the formation of Naga political identity*. Routledge India.

Eaton, Richard. 1984. ‘Conversion to Christianity among Nagas 1876–1971’, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 21(1): 1–44.

Zapami Village Booklet (n.d) Zapami Village.

Yekha-ü, & Marak, Q. (2021). Elicüra: The “Feasts of Merit” Shawl of the Chakhesang Naga of Northeast India. *The Oriental Anthropologist*, 21(1), 138-157.

The Nagaland Village and Area Councils Act, 1978, Available at:

https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/11037/1/the_nagaland_village_area_and_area_councils_act_1979.pdf

*Sarup Sinha is a PhD candidate from the Department of Political Science, NEHU. He is also an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science. Besides teaching, He also works as an Independent Researcher covering various land and resource conflicts from the Northeast India.

Chakhesang Naga Traditional Ways of Counting Months

--Dr. Kewepfuzu Lohe*

All the living organism, air, water land, sun and moon provide the value of knowledge, economics, aesthetic and moral to human being for sustaining life. Chakhesang¹ Naga indigenous knowledge of months for multifarious activities lie on the position of the sun, moon, biodiversity and material culture. There was no script writing on the paper for upcoming generation to learn but they have their own traditional way of learning. Everything the Nagas know about themselves, their ancestors, the world around them in which they live, and the values which form the bases of their societies have been preserved and passed down throughout the generations by word of mouth. The sources of information for oral tradition lies on the tangible data of material culture, sun and moon, and biodiversity in the ecosystem. Parents, elders and mature persons in the community made a systematic influence upon the immature through living example, oral instruction and discipline. Though they did not have watches or yearly calendars to keep a track of time, they never committed any mistake for different agricultural activities. They carefully observe the position of the sun and the moon, and the nature of trees, flowers, migratory birds, the chirping sound of birds and small insects for the performance of certain religious rituals for different activities.

Way of Counting Months

The calender of Chakhesang Naga was based on the phases of the moon and the position of the sun on the hills. The position of the sun rise and sun set on the hill tops and the size of the moon were carefully observed by the village *mewu*² from a particular permanently chosen place to ascertain the day for making an announcement of *menyi*³ to mark the beginning and the end of the month. There are twelve months in a year and the lunar system was followed in reading the months. After every three years there is the leap year called *Relipfo* year. In *Relipfo* year there are thirteen months and this extra month is called *Relipfo khrü*⁴ comes between *Ciede khrü* (October) and *Buhlo khrü* (November). It was revealed by the village elders that some months are 29 days and some are 30 days. Days are counted with the folding of bamboo plait stick that is kept on the wall where children can not reach it. They follow lunar as well as solar system and make an adjustment in the other three years. The derivation of name of the months are based on the common activities of community. The name of the months and meaning are briefly explained below:

Months in a Year

1. **Zatho khriü (January):** *Zatho khriü* is roughly corresponding to January. They started a new year on the first day of *Zatho khriü*. This month is called *Zatho Khriü* because the rich men offer a feast of *zatho*. It includes, sacrificing unspotted *mithum*, pulling monolithic stone and erecting it near the common foot paths, generously distributing fresh meat to every household and to every male member in the village and offering a big feast to whole village. It is the highest and most respectable feast of the merit among the Chakhesang Nagas.
2. **Chüpfü khriü (February):** This month is called *Chüpfü khriü* because they collect fire wood for whole year. In Khezha language *chü* means wood, *pfhü* means search and gather. Literally it is the month of cutting firewood and bringing them into their house.
3. **Tside khriü (March):** This month is called *Tside khriü* because it is the month for sowing variety of seeds in shifting cultivation. *Tsi* means seeds *de* means big. Literally *tside* means the biggest month for sowing varieties of seeds in jhum land.
4. **Tsükheneye khriü:** This month is called *Tsükheneye khriü* because the biggest sowing seeds are over in the jhum fields and joyfully celebrating the festival of *Tsükheneye* as a sign of thanks giving to their God for helping them to complete the biggest season for sowing seeds and also appease their God to protect and help the crops to germinate well, grow well and bear good fruits. *Tsükheneye* is a combination of two words. *Tsükhe* means finish the work and *nye* means festival.
5. **Keme khriü:** The fifth month is called *keme khriü* because it starts for the preparation of busiest monsoon paddy transplantation for coming month. After celebration of *Tsükheneye* festival people start preparing for paddy transplantation. The work in the paddy field continue to merge with the work of monsoon paddy transplantation. That is why they call this month as *Keme khriü*. The *keme* means merging and *khriü* is month.
6. **Kezü khriü (Zhüde) (June):** It refers to the month of June. This month is called *Kezü khriü* because there is full of fog and cloud because of monsoon rain. *Kezü* means dark, could not see things properly because of cloudy rain. The main activities of this month are ploughing and transplanting rice plants in the wet terrace paddy field. Indigenous people work in the field throughout the day in

the scorching sun heat and in the heavy rains because they have to complete the work within the limited time.

7. *Ethsünye khrü* (July): This month is called *Ethsünye khrü* because they celebrate the festival of millet. The term *Ethsünye* derived from two words, *Ethsü* mean millet and *nye* means festival. The millet festival is celebrated joyfully with the intention of giving thanks to God for blessing upon the millet crop and giving them a successful harvest. They celebrate this festival after the harvesting of millet from the *jhum* land.

8. *Ehno khrü* (August): This month is called *Ehno khrü* because the main focus in this month is *Nonye* festival and *nono* rituals. *Nonye* is the festival celebrated with the strictest *nono menyi* with the intention of appeasing their Creator to control the natural calamities especially hailstorms not to damage the ripen paddy and give them a bountiful harvest of paddy.

9. *Methsa khrü* (September): The ninth month is called *Methsa khrü* in local language because they observe *menyi* to start harvesting paddy. It is taboo for Chakhesang Nagas to reap the ripened crops in the field till they observe this *Methsa menyi*. It is a strict *menyi* to thank God and appease their God to protect the crops so that hailstones and wild animals or birds will not have destroyed the crops. Besides, it is observed to seek blessings for harvesting work.

10. *Ciede khrü* (October). The tenth month is called *ciede khrü* because the peak season for harvesting paddy. *Cie* means harvesting paddy *de* means big. It refers to the busiest season for harvesting paddy. People are joyfully reaping the bountiful ripen paddy in fields and carrying them home with singing in fair weather.

***Buhlo khrü* (November).** This eleventh month is called *Buhlo khrü* because it is the commencing month of taking out paddy from the granary and beginning of eating newly harvested paddy. *Buchiüto* festival is celebrated and performing ritual to mark the beginning of eating the newly harvested paddy from the granary and marks the reopening of entertainment and games. This festival is celebrated joyfully with the intention of giving deep gratitude to the Supreme Being for giving them good health and good weather and for successful harvest of paddy.

Rünye khrü (December). This twelve month is called Rünye *khrü* because the main focus of the people is the celebration of this paddy festival. The term *Rünye* is a combination of two morphemes; *Erü* meaning paddy and *nye* meaning festival. The main significance of this festival is to offer thanksgiving to God for a good harvest of paddy and other crops and good health throughout the year and to appease God to protect and bless them in the coming year⁵.

Appearance of the new moon marks the beginning of the month while its disappearance marks the end of the month. One month is divided into five phases. There are *Khrüthse*, *Khrüparha*, *Khrümese*, *Khrüwhuli* and *Khrüsübu*. Appearing of the phase of new moon is called *Khrüthse*. The second phases of the moon after seven days of new moon they call it *Khrüparha* (half moon). The third phase of the moon is known as *Khrümese*. Locally, it is called *khrümese* (middle of the month) because when the sun appears on the hill in the morning and the moon is about to set beyond the hill, when both are facing each other or when the moon rises up and the sun about set in the evening facing each other. Sometimes, full moon is appeared on the 13th of the month, sometimes it appears on the 14th day of the month. In the fourth phase of the moon is appeared only half after seven days of full moon is called *khrüwhuli*. The last phase of the moon which disappear in the last part of the month is called *Khrüsübu*. It takes one day or two days to reappear new moon.

The days were counted according to the traditional system starting from the *menyi* of the new moon known as *Khrüthseru menyi*⁴. There was no written record of knowledge. Everything is depending on oral tradition but they did not commit a mistake for counting days, months and seasons in a year for different activities and doing things at the right time. In the past, all the economic activities were controlled by the village *mewumi* (village political chief and religious priest) and *cüsemi* (clan representatives). The *mewumi* performs all the rituals before the beginning of any work. Everyone has to complete their work within a fixed period of time. The village priests and *cüsemi* carefully observe the solar system, lunar system, flora and fauna and decode the right time for different activities throughout the year. They lead the people to do the right things at the right time and the right place and make the people succeed and prosper in their daily activities.

End Notes

1. Chakhesang is one of the major indigenous groups in Nagaland, India. During the colonial period Chakhesang were referred to eastern Angamis. Chakhesang is an acronym of three linguistic groups, namely ‘Cha’ for Chakrū/Chokri, ‘Khe’ for Khezha and ‘Sang’ for Sangtam (the present Pochury region). The nomanclture of Chakhesang was officially recognized by the then Deputy Commisioner of Naga Hills C.R. Pawsey in 1946 and also recognized as Scheduled Tribe in Nagaland by the constitution of India.
2. *Mewu* is a status of political chief and religious priest taking a decision for village administration and religious activities.
3. *Menyi* is a day that is set to stop normal work and rest for the whole day to appease their God for blessing and protection.
4. *Khriü* is the moon and month in Khezha language.

References

1. Lohe, Kewepfuzu. *Naga Village: A Sociological Study*. Guwahati: Eastern Publishers House, 2011.
2. „ *Socio-cultural Heritage of Kuzhami Chakhesang Nagas*. Kuzhalhü Zawe: Pfutsero, 2010.
3. „ *Medanism and Christianity:A Sociological Study*. Guwahati: Eastern Publishers House, 2019.
4. „ *Unwritten Indigenous way of Counting Months and Season with our Ecosystem*. Broadcasted in Chakhesang Khezha Language in AIR Station Kohima, Nagaland on 25th July 2022.

*Dr. Kewepfuzu Lohe, a native of Chizami, graduated from St. Edmund’s College, obtained MA, MPhil and PhD in Sociology from North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) Shillong, Meghalaya. He is the author of *Socio-cultural Heritage of Kuzhami Chakhesang Nagas* (2010), *Naga Village: A Sociological Study* (2011) and *Medanism and Christianity: A sociological Study* (2019). He is currently Vice Principal and Asst. Professor, Baptist College (Sechu Campus) Kohima, Nagaland

Conflict Resolution in Traditional Society: How *Chug* ended SR

-Poujenlung Gonmei*

Introduction

This is a story about how a peaceful traditional society (Zeliangrong) slipped into a fratricidal conflict, *Sangnah Rih* (*hereafter SR*), and how the embattled society resolved the protracted crisis by performing a rapprochement rite (Chug, 1934, also known as chug thoibou/chugsugaroumei). There is no definitive historical account of how the conflict began. But oral traditions point to the culture of chivalry as the source of the crisis. Chivalry is an audience-specific culture and its norms and values are held in high esteem within a closed social group. Outside of a known social group it has little value to the people or the warriors (*Liangtuang*). Further, in the absence of a central authority in the hill-dwelling society, chivalry and the culture of restrained violence made little sense outside of their circles of kinship.

In this anarchic environment, the idea of inflicting the first strike to be safe made more sense than taking the blows and then going for the second strike. So chivalry morphed into a vicious personal vendetta. This personally experienced and collectively inflicted violence engulfed the society for many centuries making their world violently small, scattered and weak. Tragic tales of the violence of SR are found across villages in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. It (SR) produced abnormal social conditions in the once peaceful and prosperous society. Daily activities of the community from travel, cultivation, marriage, to festival became severely restricted to close social groups. The violent culture of SR produced a restrictive, fearful, and mistrusting culture that eventually caused their marginality and underdevelopment which is manifestly evident in the post-colonial state.

In the colonial discourse SR became *headhunting*, a barbaric culture of a primitive people who needed to be subjected to the benevolent regime of the British. The imperial British forces appeared to the embattled society by the early 1830s. They even built their first Naga Hills Headquarter at Asalu village in Assam. But the benevolent regime did nothing to stop this violence. So SR ‘the war of the brothers’ carried on for another hundred years until 1934 along with its paradoxes. It was celebrated for its chivalry as well as feared for the death and destructions it induced. This paradox created a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) from which

they could not come out until the *Chug* resolved the crisis.

What makes the case of *Chug* intriguing is how the people managed to resolve the conflict on their own when their differences were at the maximum. At the time of *Chug* in 1934 they confronted increased linguistic, religious, regional and political differences. For instance, people became conscious about *Simak/thaimak* (Liangkhuan/Rongkhuan) linguistic identities, Christian vs. non-Christians conflicts and persecutions, hill people vs. plain people social stratifications, and pro-freedom group vs. pro-British elite political divide. These dichotomies specific to the twentieth century heightened their mutual suspicions about the actions and intentions of each group. In short, this peace pact under *Chug* was an anomaly which should not have happened. Many Naga communities found it almost impossible to reconcile because of the *headhunting* crises.

This resource is a short case study of a traditional society that slipped into a violent conflict but found the means to resolve its conflict using traditional methods. In order to understand the problem of conflict resolution the questions we have in mind are: What are the factors that can turn a peaceful traditional society into violent one? Is it got to do with culture, the absence of a central authority, patriarchal values and culture of hero-worship of warriors, or simply superstition? How did they manage to come out of the conflict? What are the central elements of the peace pact of *Chug*? Can this traditional conflict resolution strategy be replicated? How did *Chug* a negative threat succeeded in convincing the people to end the negative practice of headhunting?

Possessing effective conflict resolution ways and means is a desire of the contemporary human society because conflict is costly and harmful to human society. Contemporary society, notwithstanding the elaborate institutions, legal and penal provisions, continues to be challenged by unpredictable conflict and violence. Accordingly, debates sometimes emerged as to whether the penal measures of modern state need to be supplemented by traditional peacemaking and conflict resolution practices. Sensing this need, India's constitution recognized the importance of customary laws and traditions in governance. Article 371A which provides for a 'temporary, transitional and special' recognition of Naga social and religious practices and the importance of Naga customary laws and procedure in the administration of civil and criminal justice, ownership

and transfer of land, is an example of this provision. Traditional conflict resolution process is initiated with greater chance of success.

However, not all traditional conflict resolution methods succeed in building peace and cooperation. This is because some traditional methods leave the arbitration process to the natural and supernatural elements which are beyond human reason and control. Because of the presence of uncertain variables certain traditional methods of dispute settlement go wrong. For instance, the tradition of *duikeimei* or water ordeal is an uncertain method of conflict resolution. In order to prove their rights or innocence, parties to disputes immerse themselves together at the same time in public view. It is believed that the wrong doer because of his guilt would be the first to surface, whereas, the right of the innocent would be demonstrated by his ability to hold on for longer time under the water.

Undertaking the water ordeal has been shown to be a dangerous and unreliable practice. In some cases, this method ended in accidental deaths of people belonging to both sides of a dispute. Similarly, parties to disputes also resorted to measures such as swearing on the gods by holding the tooth of a tiger (*kamang nei sinmei*), holding the stone struck by lightning bolt (*ganri sinmei*) erecting a monolith to see which way it tilts (*tiang khunmei*), etc. In each case the ordeal was initiated in front of the general public and the supernatural elements to prove their rights and innocence. The unjust would become obvious when he/she is attack/kill by a tiger, struck by a lightning bolt or the monolith call out his bluff by tilting towards him/her.

That said, the mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) of SR that engulfed the Zeliangrong society was finally overcome when *Kabui Samiti* helped perform the *Chug*. Its (*Chug*) core idea was building trust, forgiveness, unity and fraternity between the parties to dispute and conflict through traditional confidence building measures. The 1934 peace pact was sealed with the solemn understanding that a renegade of the pact would come under the spell of *Chug*. The invocation also declared that a renegade would meet the same fate as that of the black dog which was symbolically killed and its head severed and buried separately. Eventually, this peace pact of *Chug* brought peace, security, and a sense of justice to the society.

Reconciling freedom and justice is a dilemma that has baffled humanity since antiquity. Freedom is interpreted as unrestrained rights while justice demands free citizens restrain

themselves and render their duties to the society. In other words, cooperation and conflict are the two outcomes when society either succeed or fail to reconcile freedom and justice. Reconciling freedom and justice for cooperation becomes a challenge with increase in human populations and interactions between more players/people. Modern society seeks to address this freedom-justice antinomy and the resulting issues of cooperation and conflict through the state by increasing its influence and power over its citizens. The state and its institutions viz. police, military, court, and the media constantly endeavour to ensure freedom, uphold justice, promote cooperation and resolve conflicts.

On the other hand, traditional societies which faced the antinomy of freedom and justice, sought to address the contradictions of freedom and conflict and justice and cooperation by three simple measures. One, by resorting to a policy called the state evading strategy under which they retreated themselves mostly onto inaccessible remote hills and high mountains so that people could enjoy their freedom, especially from the state and its acquisitive tendencies. Two, traditional societies engaged in *swidden* agriculture, a way of life that encouraged collective efforts, beliefs and values system.

Further, since this mode of production involves subsistence produces it acted as a natural and passive deterrence against any form of acquisitive move by any hostile elements, for the cost of launching aggression to loot and plunder the mountain dweller tends to be greater than the potential spoils of war. Three, their social and political institutions are erected upon close blood relations viz. clan and kinship for solidarity. Hence, any one that does not belong to their ethnic group or subscribe to their beliefs and values were viewed with suspicion and excluded. Living in modern nation state, traditional society no longer follows the state-evading strategy but they continue to practice *swidden* agriculture and uphold traditional institutions. This study is an attempt to explore how this traditional institution can be made to play effective role in peace and conflict resolution.

Expected Learning Outcome

Students would learn how and why conflicts arise in human society. Depending upon the state of the society, conflict resolution ways and means vary from society to society. Conflict resolution mechanism of the traditional society is based on the principle of restorative justice to

the community where confidence building measures such as communal feast consolidates the act of forgiveness and trust. It provides a second chance to all the party involved in the conflict situation for reposing trust in one another. On the contrary, conflict resolution process in the modern state is defined by overemphasis of the punitive and penal and the absence of empathy. Punitive, long-drawn and expensive legal battle worsens the relations between the parties in dispute. At its worse, the process becomes the punishment. Students would see the difference in how conflicts are resolved in traditional society and modern state.

At the end of this lesson a student would be able to learn that progress in human knowledge and understanding, whether in science or social science, is said to depend upon objective observation, description, recollection and interpretation. However, as a society that was subjected to colonial rule and its epistemic violence that dehumanized and demonized the indigenous people, colonial epistemic violence still persists in the body politics, collective discourse and pedagogical structures of post-colonial India. NEP 2020 intends to reverse this western-oriented colonial era curriculum and pedagogy by decolonizing Indian education system. How far this policy succeeds will be determined by the independence the body politics and collective discourse grant to the people in the education system.

Beliefs and practices of indigenous people deemed as traditional, primitive and irrational are being revisited to show that they have potentials lessons. The value system of the indigenous people enabled the people to resolve the crisis. In fact, in the absence of a central authority people of all ethnic, linguistics, and religious groups gets besieged by conflicts of varying intensity. The memory of the intensity or brutality of such conflict depends upon how such past is remembered or forgotten. More or less intense and conflicts and violence continue to trouble the modern society. The central lesson for us is what used to be passed off as traditional and obsolete ideas when revisited with an open mind provides critical ideas and insights that people use to address the issues of the contemporary society. For this reason, serious seekers of knowledge revisit ancient and classical ideas and thoughts for inspirations. Science, arts, law and governance, social justice, philosophy, spiritual and religious fields have benefitted from such exercises.

A student will also be able to understand the meaning of cooperation and conflict and the correlations between them. The two concepts are deeply connected with the values of

freedom and justice. History, according to Friedrich Hegel the German philosopher, is the account of the progress of human freedom. Accordingly, when freedom and justice are harmoniously synced human society is able to cooperate and avoid conflict. History also tells us that for change and cooperation to begin somebody has to take the initiative to lead and show the way. The story of *Chug* reminds us that ideas, actions and values become meaningful only when leaders and institutions take people out of conflict to peace and harmony. *Chug* was able to bring peace and cooperation because the conflict induced by *SR* had entered into a stage of mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) and so was ‘ripe’ for resolution at the time of the *Chug* rapprochement. Ripeness theory of conflict is an idea first mentioned by the American foreign policy expert and a leading international relations scholar Henry Kissinger in New York Times interview 1974. The idea was theoretically developed by I. William Zartman a scholar of negotiations theory in Ripe for Resolution (1985).

For this study, we begin with the simple assumption that people cooperate when there is certainty about justice or the greater good. The promises of greater good help people overcome the temptations of immediate gratifications provided by individual freedom. On the other hand, when people refused to restrain themselves and failed to abide by the social norms then people are pushed into conflict. To examine this connection between cooperation and conflict we examine the case of how *SR* broke out and how it was resolved again when people agreed to cooperate.

Freedom and justice were lost when people chose not to cooperate by not restraining themselves. But they regained peace, freedom and justice after realizing that cheating and creating conflict by not cooperating with one another did not work in their interests in the long run. The case of *SR* and *Chug* are briefly examined through game theory viz. Chicken Game Dilemma a game of confrontation. The theory is structured on the premises that as humans are rational beings and they like to live rather than die and they dislike being shamed as a timid chicken. So in this game of violent confrontation this study examines the strategy that rational players took to resolve the dilemma of death and shame.

‘War of the Brothers’

SR or ‘war of the brothers’ was known as *headhunting* to the British. The debilitating

fratricidal war that engulfed the Zeliangrong society caused untold miseries - death and destructions, fear and insecurity. The persistent fear and mutual distrust isolated them from each another and eventually caused their marginalization and underdevelopment in the remote hills. No village was able to escape the vicious effects of SR. SR and its bitter consequences are largely forgotten but people still recalled that it was rampant and prevalent in almost all of the Zeliangrong villages in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland.

However, a silver lining in the midst of this protracted conflict was the emergence of a collective consciousness within the society to resolve the protracted conflict. Legends say that initially SR began as conflict between *Liangtuang*, warriors noted for their strength, wisdom and

valour with deep senses of chivalry. Asa, Mensarung, Jamlenang, Gairemnang, and Jadonang were some of the heroes who are remembered by the people for their courage, conviction and wisdom. Later, the war degenerated into a brutal conflict that did not discriminate between combatants and non-combatants viz. women, children or the elderly. Although women, children and the elderly were non-combatants they constituted the major victims of the conflict which had become bitterly personal and political. This personal element in the conflict made it even more vicious and violent causing it to become protracted. Severed heads of the rival camps were collected as war trophies and elaborate rites were performed and brought to the village. Sometimes the heads taken were buried. Most of the time, the skulls were displayed in the house of the warriors who took the heads as trophies.

Young people were encouraged by a new war narrative - norms, beliefs and practices that encouraged them to join the ‘war of the brothers’ for glory and honour. The war narrative hyphenated masculinity with war and victory and encouraged vengeance for justice and dignity. Not resorting to vengeance was interpreted as cowardice and an insult to the entire group or village. In other words, the war had effectively become democratic. Its devastating effects were equally felt by all sections of the society men, women, children and the elderly. In the male-centric war narrative, the distinct roles of male and female were delineated in everyday life. For instance, boys were taught how to do everything quickly - eating, washing, cleaning and so on to be ready for the war duty, whereas the women were expected to help the men and they could afford to be slow in their works.

The narrative also provided war a chivalrous image. For instance, a young man who took a head was accorded a higher social standing in his society. Head taking was treated as a rite of passage for a young man to become a ‘full-fledged’ man and a warrior. Having war trophies of human heads was considered an important qualification for a man to be eligible for marriage. Such was the intensity of the war narrative on taking heads as trophy that woman who traditionally enjoyed lesser social status than man could decline a marriage proposal if a man had not taken any heads.

The war narrative also churned out a myth that the human soul dwelled in the head and so taking the head of a rival head was justified for it was believed that the head brought fertility and prosperity to the village that took heads of rivals. Most importantly, the war narrative present taking of heads as an opportunity to a victim’s son or brother of the affected group to undo the injustice and insult shown by the other. So taking a head was eulogized as a symbol of power and authority of warriors. Overwhelmed by the narrative and its practices, the people could not find the means to end the war.

The protracted war induced adverse ramifications for the people. As mutual mistrust and violence were the orders of the day, the society remained small, isolated and backward. It was considered a taboo for the people affected by the war to interact with one another even if they wanted to without formally ending the war. As a result, peoples’ lives were severely restricted, and isolated. Social interactions were restricted to clan, village and the neighbouring villages by anxiety and fear. Mundane activities like collecting firewood, fetching water, and going out to work in the field became dangerous for women and children. As the war raged on with vengeance, the society sunk deeper into the war. Whatever security measures people initiated to alleviate their fear and insecurity was perceived as a threat by the other side and vice-versa. The society was caught in a security dilemma. This paradox continued until the *Chug*. Arrival of strategic competitors in the form of the British *Raj* in the 1830s, arrival of new ethnic groups, including the spread of Christianity by late 19th century including the Indian national movement in the 20th century failed to create any discernable effect on the violent war of the brothers.

As discussed earlier, *SR* began as a war between rival warriors that glamourized head taking practices by the victorious warriors of the defeated warriors. It created a vivid space and offensive narrative that justified the conduct of war to the society as a means to search for a

security order in the anarchic environment. In the patriarchal society it was projected as the new norm wherein the male assumed the role of providing a masculine security order. In the society governed by this security order the rights and privileges of the men and warriors became preponderant over that of the others. It degenerated into a war of vendetta that justified the taking of the heads of any person deemed to be an adversary, including women and children.

Ending the War

How did the people who were caught in centuries of conflict, suspicious and divided come to embrace one another to end the dreaded *SR* through *Chug*? One of the intriguing aspects of *Chug* and the end of *SR* is how and why they embraced the rapprochement rite unanimously unlike other Naga communities who would not voluntarily end the practice despite punitive measures initiated by the state. There were anomalies. Nevertheless, the *Chug*'s rapprochement took place. As discussed earlier, the society in conflict encountered linguistic, religious, regional, and political differences at the time of the *Chug*. One, it is said that British surveys and administration in Tamenglong were carried out on the basis of which region/village spoke *simak-thaimak* language. This linguistic criterion used for 'survey' and collection of house taxes created a sense of a Liangkhuan-Ronglat dichotomous identity within the British subalterns and the common folks.

Two, as majority of the people followed traditional religious practices their relationship between Christians were extremely hostile. On one hand, the minority Christians were persecuted and excommunicated from villages. On the other hand, the newly converted Christians worked as British subalterns –*lambu* and *muhori*. *Lambu* and *muhori* were the tax collectors, survey agents and police informants. Three, the hill-valley class divide was also quite strong. Most of them settled in Imphal in Lambulane as a new group of elites. Four, one of the *lambu* or subalterns was even believed to have betrayed Jadonang, the Naga nationalist who challenged the British *Raj* with the idea of *Naga Raj*. The subaltern reported to the British that Jadonang was involved in an old unsolved murder case. Seizing this opportunity, the British *Raj* who feared the rise of Naga nationalism falsely implicated Jadonang and was hanged in 1931. These incidents led to heightened tension between the government and the people and within the society driven by class differences.

The social taboos associated with *SR* prevented people from having any kind of meaningful interaction. Perhaps, it would have perhaps remained that way had it not been for their civil society organizations. *Agaengmei* and *Kabui Chingsang* were some of the early institutions that came out broaching the idea of a rapprochement to end the war of the brothers. But they could not complete the task.

That said, the legitimacy and strength of a civil society organization is based on the idea that people's aspirations and mandate are reposed in them. It is only a matter of their choice whether they act independently or are dependent on the state. In this light, the *Kabui Samiti* and its leaders were used by the *British Raj* to convene the *Chug* for a greater strategic goal. The strategic goal of the *Raj* was to enhance its tax base in the hills. The people had stopped paying taxes since the rise of Jadonang Movement (1926-1931). Without a closure to *SR* the British *Raj* knew that let alone collect tax, the lives and limbs of the *lambu* and *muhori* were at stake. They could not freely move in the highly tense, hostile, and nationalistic environment after the hanging of Jadonang in 1931.

So the British *Raj* picked the *Kabui Samiti* for this job. The *Kabui Samiti* also felt the pressures of the mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) of *SR* and agreed to convene the people required to perform the *Chug*. Using the authoritative order of the British *Raj* without which the suspicious and warring people would not have taken the trouble to come, the *Kabui Samiti* brought together the embattled people at Tamenglong at the courtyard of Lunglinbou, a *lambu* on 1st April, 1934 and performed the rites of *Chug*. In the same spot where the rites were performed a unity pillar was erected and the place is declared as Jadonang park.

The rites of *Chug* were essentially a collective chanting of a religious spell invoked to end *SR* and also a declaration that whoever seeks to break the goodwill, trust, forgiveness, and solidarity of the brothers established by the *Chug* would meet the fate of the animals which were sacrificed. Two men led the performance of the rites and rituals of *Chug*. The congregation joined the priests. It involved invoking the gods to be witness to the rapprochement and the covenant of peace, forgiveness, love and respect for the brotherhood of the people; that they had forgiven one another for the acts of injustice and violence they committed against each other in the past; that if anyone willfully violates this covenant of peace and reconciliation, the person would meet the fate of the cat and dog whose heads were severed and buried separately

at the north and south.

As discussed above *SR*'s origin is traced to the ideal scenario of the chivalrous warriors who played by the rules of the game for they kept their disputes and conflict to themselves. These aspects of the chivalrous and disciplined warriors are what the society consciously and subconsciously remembers as valour, discipline and spiritualism. However, in the absence of a central authority to maintain this self-discipline it became easy for anyone to cheat and break the rules of the war game, thereby, triggering the free-for-all war without anyone having the means to stop it although everybody wanted to get out of it. Social taboo that prohibited social interactions further acted as another repellent preventing them from coming together.

Owing to the culture of violence, most villages are strategically located on treacherous mountain tops as security measures and to deter attacks. Dwelling in valley and plain proved to be easy target for invaders. After *SR* was resolved people gradually came down to settle in the slope and valley enhancing the quality of their life. Ze-Mnui (Yangkhullen), Khoupum, and Tamenglong village are examples of this strategic settlements during the conflict. Accordingly, their roads are located on circuitous ridges of mountain to enable to them to detect their enemies first. Their women and children are always accompanied by male relatives or warriors whenever they go to work in the field. Unfortunately, majority of the victims of the conflict happened to be women, children and the elderly when they let their guards down and set out on their own from the safety of the village and the community.

Kabui Samiti in 1934 decided that the continuation of the conflict was not in the interests of the community. Its members were people who knew how to read and write and had grown up in Imphal far from the anarchic hills. This distance from the centre of conflicts gave them a semblance of neutrality and advantage points such as the trust of the people caught in the mutually hurting stalemate (MHS). So *Kabui Samiti* was able to organize the *Chug* to end the conflict by bringing in people from across all sections of the society. The rites of *Chug* were followed by folksong and dance and a community feast proclaiming the end of fear and enmity.

Pedagogical Tools and Suggested Activities

To enhance the teaching-learning process teachers may use Game Theory to explain the dynamics of *SR* and *Chug*. Chicken Game, Stag Hunt Game, and Prisoner's Dilemma are some

of the popular game theories used to simplify, explain, or predict the behavior of people caught in difficult situations. Game Theories are used to help explain and predict why and how players would either agree to cooperate or engage in conflicts. The central assumption of Game Theory is that humans are rational beings and so they would not resort to any step that exposes them to harm, shame or death. Given this rationality the theory proposes that behavior of rational humans would depend upon each other's behavior whether to cooperate or to defect or engage in conflict.

When explained from the Chicken Game perspectives, *SR* may be seen as a simple confrontationist game that led to a mutually harming stalemate (MHS). MHS is a position which no rational player wants to be in. A Chicken Game is denoted by two players caught in a game of life and death over being taunted as a chicken. Players in this game involve driving headlong towards each other unsure of whether the other would continue to go straight or turn. Each player's priority is to get the best payoff which consists in making a decision to either go straight or turn.

If player A drives on straight, he is the hero while the other player B who turns is the chicken. The payoff is indicated by (A Win - B Lose) or numerically by (A 4 - B 1). In case both turns then the payoff is indicated by (A Tie - B Tie) and (A 3 - B 3). Neither is a chicken or a hero but they save faces. In case player A turns and player B go straight then the payoff is (A Lose - B Win) and (A 1 - B 4). A is the chicken and B the hero. In case if both failed to turn and choose to go straight then the payoff is (A Crash - B Crash) or (A 0 - B 0). This payoff is the least desirable because both players end up dead. In iterated games players are pushed by the desire to maximize their payoff matrix to emerge as the winner and avoid becoming the chicken.

SR resembles a Chicken Game that was repeatedly played out with the (A Crash - B Crash) or (A 0 - B 0) payoff where everybody involved in the conflict ended up losing their freedom, dignity, rights, and their lives over and over again. Initially, chivalrous players ended up with either (A Win - B Lose)/(A 4 - B 1) or (B Win - A Lose)/(A 1 - B 4) payoffs. But the uncertainty of the game and its payoff pushed the players to opt for a constantly aggressive game, thereby, producing the MHS or (A Crash - B Crash) or (A 0 - B 0) payoff repeatedly.

Chug changed the outlook of the players and the rules of the game by ending *SR*. After

this momentous event, players learned to avoid the (A Crash - B Crash) or (A 0 – B 0) payoff and opted for the (A Tie - B Tie) or (A 3 - B 3) payoff once and for all. In the new payoff, all players ended up with a win-win situation. No had to end up dead, be called a Chicken or hailed as a Hero. Warriors/players now became ordinary law abiding citizens. By ending *SR*, *Chug* was able to resolve the payoff dilemma with a face-saving formula for all the players and a new rule wherein they don't have to take the turn or go straight but could drive safely in their respective lanes. *Chug* could do this because it provided a space for trust, forgiveness and a reason to cooperate.

	Straight	Turn
Straight	Crash-Crash	Win-Lose
Turn	Lose-Win	Tie-Tie

Fig. 1. Chicken Game Payoff matrix (non-formal)

	Straig ht	Turn
Straight	0, 0	4, 1
Turn	1, 4	3, 3

Fig. 2. Chicken Game payoff matrix (formal)

Assessment Tools/Process

Exercise 1: Leadership and Conflict Resolution

Students can be asked to enact a role-play of the characters involved in *SR* and *Chug*. This role play can use the Chicken Game theory dilemma to see how a rational person in the MHS responds to the conflict situation by: (i) not doing anything to resolve it (ii) escalating the conflict, (ii) taking measures to resolve it.

It may be noted that in the Chicken Game there is no active third party to help mediate and resolve the conflict unlike *SR* and *Chug* where *Kabui Samiti* came as a mediator and as a conscience keeper. Chicken Game dilemma of death and shame were resolved by rational people who became wiser after seeing the iterated games being played out infinitely. *SR* was like a Ground Hog's Day time-loop where the people wake up to the same violent situation over and over again until they could find a way out of that labyrinth.

1. Which of these factors helped to resolve the headhunting crisis of *SR*? (i) Role of *Kabui Samiti* (ii) *Chug* and the act of forgiveness, trust, etc. (iii) British *Raj* punitive measures (iv) Desire of the people to end the conflict.
2. What was the strategic game behind the British facilitation of *Chug*? (i) British official's affection for the people (ii) Expanding the tax base of the *Raj* (iii) Consolidation of political control of the restive Naga Hills (iv) Move to contain spread of Indian National Movement.
3. Why do you think most traditional conflict resolution methods fail unlike *Chug*?

Exercise 2: Chivalry and Conflict

Human society in any part of the world or historical time is held together by the values of right to life, freedom, equality, and justice. Without these values society struggles to have order and peace. These values enhanced the qualities of life in society. Underlining the importance of society in upholding human values Aristotle observed if a human does not live in society he must be either a god or animal. And people who emerged to defend these human values and rights follow the culture of chivalry.

1. What do you understand by the term chivalry? Do you think this is a universal phenomenon or a specific culture of the warriors? Why do you think chivalric culture of *Liangtuang* gave way to *SR*?

In the story of *SR* when key players in were the chivalrous *Liangtuang* they were honoured as they defended the village and the community and kept the war to themselves, thereby, ensuring the culture of the chivalry and the village.

2. Write an essay on how decline of the culture of chivalry lead to trust deficit, misunderstand

and conflict in your school, village or city.

Exercise 3: Hierarchy, Anarchy and Conflict Resolution

SR was basically an anarchical conflict that broke in antiquity when there was no central authority to govern the people. It continued well into the 20th century. British *Raj* facilitated the *Chug* for its own strategic reasons. Conflict can break out in hierarchical as well as anarchical setting. Conflict within a state/society is known as hierarchical violence where the state/society is unable to establish order. On the other hand, violent conflict in the international realm is said to be anarchical because of the absence of central authority.

To understand the dynamics of anarchical conflict better students can be asked to do a project work/assignment on peace and conflict resolution initiatives made by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council. Example of this non-resolution of anarchical conflict could be the Korean War which is still not resolved and the India-Pakistan hostility.

To compare hierarchical conflict with anarchical conflict, identify any two conflicts in India that have been resolved by Government of India, state government and regional/local political interest groups. Examples of these hierarchical conflicts and the resulting accords could be the Mizo Accord (1986), Assam Accord (1985), Punjab Accord (1985), Shillong Accord (1975).

Why do you think some hierarchical conflicts and the attempts to find accord failed as in the case of the Shillong Accord (1975)? (i) Trust deficit between parties (ii) renegade of the accord (iii) incompatible interests (iv) foreign interferences (v) ‘unique’ history of Nagas.

Note to Teachers

As this story is based on *SR* and *Chug*, a teacher who is already familiar with the idea of ‘headhunting’ will find many similarities as well as differences and find it challenging to relate with the case and use it as a pedagogical resource. For this reason, the Chicken Game Theory is used as illustration of how rational players would respond to the crisis they face in an extended game.

The resource material developed here is not exhaustive. It is a limited case study of conflict resolution from one society that took place about one hundred years ago. The material is

produced with the intention to show that what we see as superstitious beliefs and practices of traditional and unscientific primitive *tribe* can provide deep insights into understanding the origin of violent conflicts and the measures required to resolve them.

As conflict is deeply connected with how human values (freedom and justice) are upheld and interpreted there is no one perfect solution. Perhaps, because of this reason policy makers and leaders employ people of all backgrounds to bring consensus and solution in society. Meaning, it is always a painstaking and long-drawn process to re-earn the good will of people whose trust and confidence must be brought on board again for society to coexist again. It is the optimism of this resource that a combination of this traditional case study along with other models and approaches would help us understand conflict resolution better.

References:

- Kamei, Gangmumei (2004), *A History of the Zeliangrong Nagas: Makhel to Rani Gaidinliu*, Spectrum: Guwahati.
- Kissinger, Henry (1974) *Partial Transcript of an Interview with Kissinger on the State of Western World*, New York Times, 12 October.
- Rajagopalan, Swarna (2008) *Peace Accords in North East India; Journey Over Milestones*, East-West Center: Washington DC.
- Zartman, William (1985) *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*, Oxford University Press, New York.

***Poujenlung Gonmei (PhD)** is Principal, Highland National College, Tispari, Kanglatongbi, Imphal.

Acknowledgement: I am grateful to Pou Akham Gonmei, a dependable repository of Zeliangrong folktales, for his insights on Chug and how Kabui Samiti was used by the British Raj to promote its strategic interests. Conventional understanding of Chug attributes the rapprochement pact of 1934 to the Kabui Samiti but is silent and incomplete on how it was done.

List of Resource Persons for the Workshops

1. Dr. Achingliu Kamei, Associate Professor
Atma Ran Sanatana Dharma College, University of Delhi
Address: D8, Tower V, type V, East Kidwsi Nagar, New Delhi—110023
Email id: achingliuk@gmail.com

2. Dr. Nesatulu Hiese
Scientist D & Incharge of Patent Information Centre
Nagaland Science & Technology Council, Below Civil Secretariat,
Kohima—797001, Nagaland
Email id: nhiese@gmail.com

3. Dr. Henshet Phom
Vice Principal, Yingli College
Longleng, Nagaland
Email id: henshet@rediffmail.com

4. Dr. Poujenlung Gonmei, Principal
Highland National College, Kanglatongbi
Address: Namdunlong, Imphal, Manipur
Email id: poujenlung@gmail.com

5. Dr. Nurul Islam
Associate Professor & Head, Department of Education
Yingli College, Longleng, Nagaland
Email id: nurulislamyc1972@gmail.com

6. Dr. Kewepfuzu Lohe
Assistant Professor

Baptist College, Mission Compound, Kohima, Nagaland

Email id: lohekewe2020@gmail.com

7. Dr. Thyiesinuo Keditsu

Assistant Professor

Kohima College, Kohima

C/O Putuonuo Nursing Home, New Market Road, Kohima, Nagaland—797001

Email id: theyiek@gmail.com

8. Dr. Daili Kholia, Assistant Professor

Modern College, Kohima, PB-405, Kohima

Nagaland—797001

Email id: kholiadaili@gmail.com

9. Dr. Daili Neli

Assistant Professor, Asufii Christian Institute, P.O. Punanamai--795150

Senapati District, Manipur

Email id: neli.daili@gmail.com

10. Dr. Manngai H Phom

Assistant Professor, Tetso College, Sovima, Dimapur, Nagaland

Email id: nemdaklyumanngai@gmail.com

11. Dr. Sarup Sinha

Assistant Professor

Tetso College, Sovima Dimapur, Nagaland

Email id: sarup.lyff@gmail.com

12. Surjit Thokchom Surjit Singh

Former Member IAB of NERIE

Project Director

Synroplang for Social Transformation (SST)

Sunny Dale School, Nongshilliang, Nongthymmai—793014

Shillong

Email id: ssthokchom@gmail.com

13. Sophy Lasuh

Film Maker & Researcher, MLCU, Shillong.

Email id: sophylasuh@googlemail.com

14. Ragongning Gangmei

President, Ruangmei Literature Society (RLS), Asssam, Manipur & Nagaland

Neikanlong, Thangmeiband, Imphal West—795001, Manipur

Email: ragongning@gmail.com

15. H.A. Sothing Shimray, Member Textbook Committee,

Tangkhul Literature Society, Manipur & District Correspondent, All India Radio, Imphal.

Email id: sothing17@gmail.com

16. Mungchan Zimik, School Teacher

JAU, Ukhrul, Manipur

Address: Tangrei, Ukhrul, Manipur

Email id: mungchan.zimik77@gmail.com

17. Hiyang Prem, Ph.D. Scholar

Manipur University, Imphal East, Manipur--795003

Address: Lamlanghupi Chothe, Bishnupur

w/n: 12, Pin code—795126

email id: premhiyang@gmail.com

Development of Resources on Indigenous and Traditional Ways of Learning

Venue: North East Regional Institute of Education (NERIE), Umiam, Meghalaya

Duration: 17th to 21st October, 2022

1. Date: 17/10/2022, Day 1

TIME	DESCRIPTION
09.30-10:30 am	<i>Registration of participants</i>
10:30- 11:00 am	<i>Inauguration</i>
11.00-11.15 am	Tea Break
11:15-1.00 pm	Open Sharing by all participants
1.00-2.00 Pm	Lunch Break
2.00-3.30 pm	NEP-2020 and School Education (Surjit Thokchom)
3:30-3.45 pm	Tea Break
3:45-5.00 pm	Open discussion on NEP-2020 and the way Forward for Inclusion of Indigenous/Traditional Knowledge.

2. Date: 18/10/2022, Day 2

TIME	DESCRIPTION
09.45-11:15 am	NEP-2020 and Indigenous Knowledge System (Surjit Thokchom)
11:15-11:30 am	Tea Break
11:30-1:00 am	Preparation of Preliminary notes for development of resources on indigenous knowledge by the participants on the topic/area of their choice.
1:00-2:00 pm	Lunch Break
2.00-:3.30 pm	Preparation of Preliminary notes for development of resources on indigenous knowledge by the participants on the topic/area of their choice.
3:30-3:45 pm	Tea Break
3:45-5:15 pm	Sharing of the preliminary notes by the participants.

3. Date: 19/10/2022, Day 3

TIME	DESCRIPTION
09:45- 11:15 am	Curriculum Development and Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge (Short Presentation by Surjit Thokchom) to be followed by discussion on the Format/Framework for the Development of the Resources on Indigenous Ways of Learning
11:15-11:30 am	Tea Break
11:30-1:00 pm	Preparation of draft for development of resources by the participants.
1:00-2:00 pm	Lunch Break
2:00-3:30 pm	Preparation of draft for development of Resources by the participants.
3:30-3:45 pm	Tea Break
3:45-5:15 pm	Preparation of draft for development of Resources by the participants.

4. Date: 20/10/2022, Day 4

TIME	DESCRIPTION
09:45- 11:15 am	Preparation of draft for development of Resources by the participants.
11.15-11.30 am	Tea Break
11:30-1:00 pm	Preparation of draft for development of Resources by the participants.
1:00-2:00 pm	Lunch Break
2:00-3:30 pm	Preparation of draft for development of Resources by the participants.
3:30-3:45 pm	Tea Break
3.45-5.00 pm	Preparation of draft for development of Resources by the participants.

5. Date: 21/10/2022, Day 5

TIME	DESCRIPTION
09:45- 11:15 am	Presentation by the participants
11:15-11:30 am	Tea Break
11:30-1:00 pm	Presentation by participants
1:00-2:00 pm	Lunch Break
2:00-3.30 pm	Presentation by participants
3:30-3:45 pm	Tea Break
3:45-5:15 pm	<i>Valedictory</i>