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HERITAGE EXPLORER

"LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES"

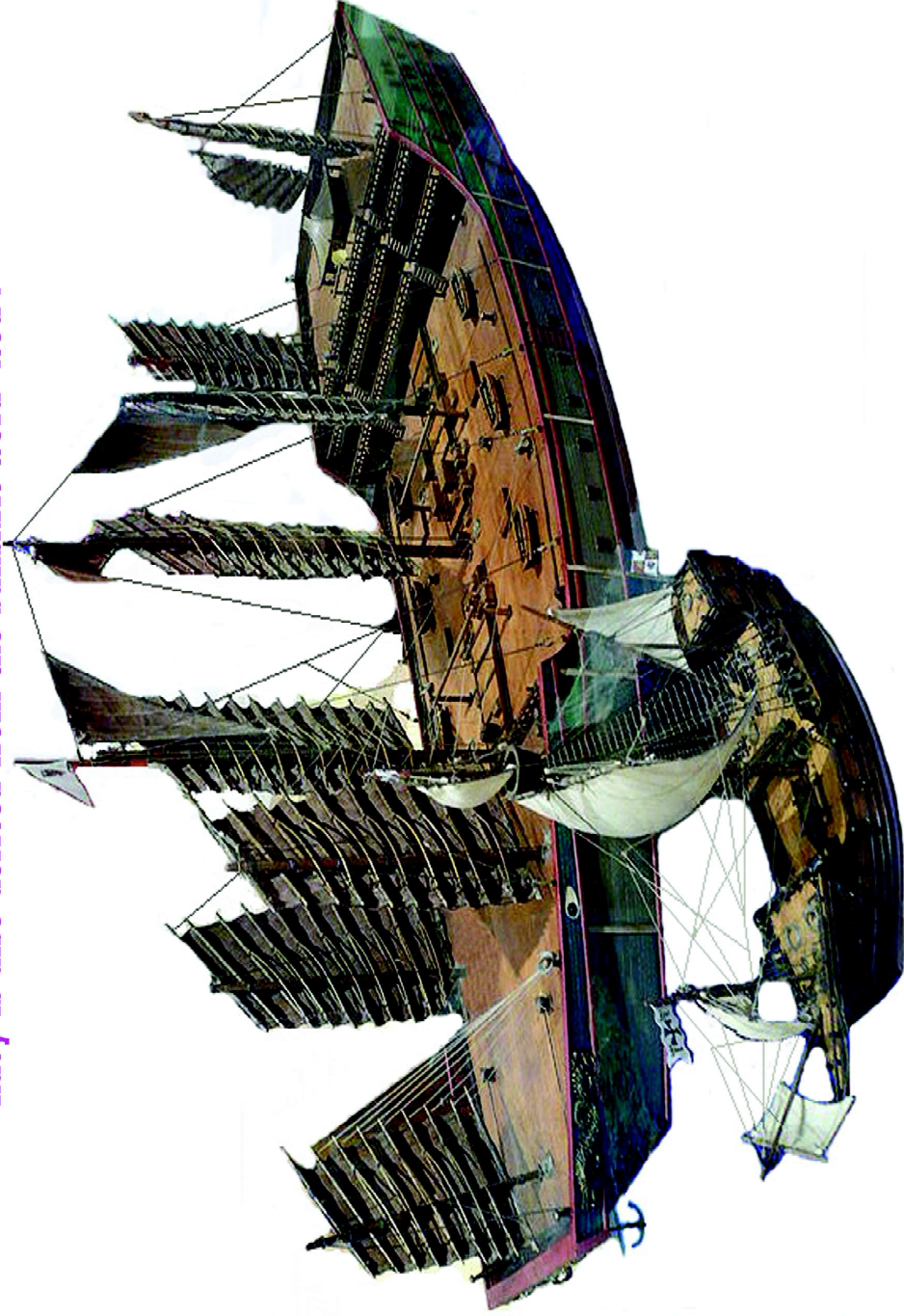
A Monthly News Bulletin

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**INTERESTING
FACTS ABOUT
INDIA**

The Art of Navigation & Navigating was born in the river Sindh over 6000 years ago. The very word Navigation is derived from the Sanskrit word 'NAVGATIH'. The word navy is also derived from the Sanskrit word 'Nou'.



Courtesy : <http://www.slideshare.net/jitendraadhikari/indias-contribution-to-the-world>

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e-mail: ourheritage123@gmail.com,
Website: www.heritagefoundation.org.in

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China must be told to behave

The conscious citizens of our country may not have missed the news of recent transgression of Indian Territory in Arunachal Pradesh by the Communist China. The Chinese have violated our land boundary and have set up a village for their people inside our country. The site of the village built by them between November 2019 and November 2020 is located a couple of kilometers across the 3,488-km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) and is close to where China had attacked an Assam Rifles post in 1959, better known as the Longju incident. The location is at least 2 km south of the McMahon Line, which China refuses to recognise. After the 1962 war, India stopped patrolling the area at the instance of the then political bosses of our country. Like in the past, now also many amongst us may not feel too concerned about this illegal encroachment by the land grabber Chinese regime because in the words of our first premier Nehru, not a blade of grass grows there, hence the area is of little importance. A similar unauthorized village was also set up by the Chinese in another area 2-3 km inside, what Bhutan sees as its territory. The village set up within Indian territory in Arunachal Pradesh is quite big and well-planned. It boasts of 101 cottage like houses, a bazaar and a two-lane road.

We must try to decipher the riddle of China's aggressive plan to build a habitation in such a remote area where there is no sign of any economic infrastructure or economic activity. They must not have undertaken such an internationally perilous step without a definitive objective or some strategic purpose, As per the opinions expressed by expert analysts the construction of the village is intended to bolster China's claim on the area and the aggressive push to build civilian settlements in the disputed frontier areas is aimed at populating the area with people from other parts of Tibet, including families of herders, who are staunch loyalists of China, for one reason or the other. About the disputed construction, the Chinese Foreign Ministry stated that China's "position on Zangnan (or South Tibet, as China refers to Arunachal Pradesh) region is consistent and clear." "We never recognised the so-called Arunachal Pradesh," - spokesperson Hua Chunying said. "China's development and construction activities within our own territory are normal. This is beyond reproach as it is in our territory." China further stated that the area "has

never been recognised by the Chinese government." "China and India haven't demarcated the border line of this area yet. So they cannot accuse China of building a village on the Indian side," Qian Feng, Director of the research department at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, was quoted as saying. It is necessary to point out here that another important reason behind the Chinese construction project, which they classify as "poverty alleviation villages project" is its bounteous mineral wealth and water resources in and around the vast plateau.

The interesting fact about the forcible Chinese occupation of Indian territory is that China is claiming Indian areas on the basis not of any historical Han Chinese connection to them but alleged Tibetan ecclesial or tutelary links. Simply put, China's territorial claims in Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are based on its claim over Tibet, which paradoxically, our Ex Premier Jawaharlal Nehru and later his party has acknowledged at the detriment of our country. In addition to the above, based on its Tibet stance China has recently unveiled Brahmaputra mega-project, which is another reminder for India to add nuance and leverage – to its Tibet policy. No nation is more vulnerable to China's re-engineering of trans-boundary water flows than India because it alone receives 48.33% of the total river waters that leave Chinese controlled territory. We must therefore assess our vulnerability and take guard. Fortunately, the recently enacted America's "Tibetan Policy and Support Act" (TPSA) can come to our aid. We must treat this act as a wake-up call for us to start reclaiming our leverage on Tibet. India already received a wake-up call in April-May 2020 when China stealthily grabbed key vantage points in Ladakh and then claimed, as in the Galwan valley case, that they were historically part of Tibet. We are today neither militarily weak nor weak in terms of international support. China's hegemony is being challenged by almost all the powerful countries of the world. We must take advantage of the situation and corner China to retreat to its own internationally accredited boundary and stop troubling us. Any failure on their part to do so must be replied as firmly and as sternly possible.

Romen Chakraborty
Chief Editor

The Wanchos of Arunachal Pradesh

Dr. Modang Reena

LOCATION AND EXTENT

Longding district is the 17th administrative district of Arunachal Pradesh. The total geographical extension of the district is 1192 sqkm. The latitudinal extension of the district is 93°57'- 95°23' E and longitudinal extension of 27°69'-29°27' N. Altitude is 886 mtrs above the sea level. Being situated in the sub-Patkai region the whole area is hilly and undulating. The hills have been denuded due to jhum cultivation except few foothills area adjoining the Assam plains. Situated in the eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh it is surrounded by Tirap District in the east, Mon district of Nagaland in the west, Sivasagar district of Assam in the north and Myanmar in south.

The Patkai hills in the south of the study area forms the international boundary between India and Myanmar. The hills in the region are the branches of Patkai range and from a distance they look like successive spurs.

The tribes inhabiting the district are known as “Wancho” who were once known for the practice of fierce head hunting.

The total geographical extension of the study area is 1192 sqkm. According to Census operation A.P, the total population of the district is 56,953 out of which 28710 are males and 28243 are females.

Longding district was created by bifurcating erstwhile Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh on 26th September 2011 by Arunachal Assembly. The district was formally inaugurated on 19th March 2012 and it became the 17th administrative district of Arunachal Pradesh.

There are six administrative circles in Longding district. They are -

1. Kanubari
2. Lawnu.
3. Longding.
4. Pumao.
5. Pongchau.
6. Wakka.

Table 2.1 Total area (in sq. kms) of various circles of Longding District

| <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>Name of Circle</i> | <i>Area (in sqkms)</i> | <i>Area (in %)</i> |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Longding | 234.77 | 22.06 |
| 2 | Kanubari | 240.77 | 22.62 |
| 3 | Lawnu | | |
| 4 | Wakka | 244.17 | 22.94 |
| 5 | Pongchau | 229.13 | 21.53 |
| 6 | Pumao | 115.61 | 10.87 |
| Total | | 1064.45 | 100.00 |

Source: District Census Handbook, 2011

The Social Practices of the Wanchos

The Social System

The Wancho society is divided into two important social divisions, Wangham, the chief and Wangpan, the commoner. The division dates back to the days of the first creation of a Wancho village and there is no tradition or folklore to determine the exact time of this division. As is customary and usual in a society with a chief, a Wancho chief is entitled to marry several girls from the commoner class. The marriage of the Wangham with Wangpan girl has given birth to two intermediate social classes, Wangsa and Wangsu. A chief is sacred and so is his blood. So his son born out of a Wangpan wife can never be Wangham because there is Wangpan blood in him, nor can he be a Wangpan because Wangham blood is also in him. Thus, all the children of Wangham from his Wangpan wife or wives are assigned to an intermediate class of Wangsa, just a rank lower than the Wangham. Below Wangsa there is another class, the Wangsu i.e. son of Wangsa father and Wangpan mother. Four social classes have thus been created. On the highest rank of the social hierarchy is the Wangham with all his glory enjoying special facilities and honour in every sphere of life. Next to him is the Wangsa, Wangsu goes a step further down and does not give rise to any other class. On the last and the lowest in the social strata is the Wangpan with no royal blood in him. All these four social classes have various social responsibilities and obligations, rights and duties and interpersonal relationship.

Social distinction between the classes is very scrupulously observed in every sphere of life. As for example, in the village festivals the Wangpans are not allowed to sit and take meal in the same row with the Wanghams. They are also not allowed to marry a Wangcha girl from Wangham's family although there is no restriction on the part of the Wangham to marry a Wangpan girl.

The Wangham is the head of the village as well as of the society. The head of the village has got to be Wangham and since the post of Wangham is hereditary, a Wangham has to produce a Wangham son. For this he has to marry the daughter of a Wangham born of a Wangcha wife. Such a daughter

is known as "Wangcha." If a Wangham does not have son from any of the Wangcha wife, the office of the chief, on his death goes to his nearest kin, his brother's son given the first preference. But if it so happens that his brother also does not have sons born out of their Wangcha wives he asks the Chief of his parent village to send to his village one of his younger son to succeed him. This arrangement is also followed when the Chief of the parent or the paramount village has no son, or other eligible heir. He then asks the Chief of the village which branched off from it to send his eldest son, who then shifts to the parent village and inherits the office of the paramount chief on his death. But in no case, a Wangsa becomes a chief. Since the office of the chief is sacred, the holder has to be sacred and one can only be sacred if one is born of a Wangcha mother.

Wangsa is a status only for one generation given to the Chief's children by a Wangpan wife, known as Wangnu. So long such a child survives he remains a Wangsa, his children are downgraded to a still lower status of Wangsu. This helps in the reducing the number of Wangsa in the village. If the Wangsa were made into a permanent class it could create problems for the society by becoming a potential rival to the heirs of the chief. If Wangsa were allowed to increase their number, one day they would become very powerful in the village and could pose a threat to the chief's authority. Numerical strength has always been considered as main source of power in the Wancho villages, and villages with considerable population have always dominated smaller ones and subjected them to their authority by sheer threat of annihilation. A Wangsu is the descendent of Wangsa. This class is permanent and more stable.

A Wangsu is the descendent of the Wangsa; this class is permanent and more stable by virtue of having the chief's blood in them. They are considered a little superior to the Wangpan but are not entitled to much social prestige.

A Wangpan remains a Wangpan for all time. There is no change in their social status. His marriage relation with a higher class female does not enable him to rise in social scale. He can marry a daughter of a Wangham, other than a Wangcha that means

the daughter of Wangpan wife. A Wangpan cannot marry a Wangcha but can marry Wangham's daughter who is born out of Wangpan mother. There is no restriction on the part of a Wangham to marry a Wangpan girl. The Wanghams, Wangsas and Wangsus practically controls the affairs of the village. As they have royal blood in their veins they are entitled to take important part in social function and important portfolios such as looking after the chief bachelor dormitory called "Paa."

Family

Family consists of father, mother and their children. This group forms the household which transform to an extended family. Eldest son who by custom live in the parental house has the responsibility of looking after the family and aged parents. Other son(s) has to establish individual household after marriage. All the family members of the family take their meal from the common kitchen. But in case of Chief it is different. Chief marries a Wangpan girl from the same village especially to cook for him. She is called "sha chonnu." "Sha means food "chonnu" means one who serves. In other words, she can be called royal cook. Other wife cooks their food themselves. Other wives of Chief apart from Wanghcha doesn't enjoy special privileges, they cook their own food, goes to the field, work and raise crops like others. Each wife has a separate room called "noi.

Marriage System

Clan exogamy is strictly prohibited in the society. It is the fundamental rule of the marriage. Intra clan marriage is looked upon as incest and never allowed. Violation of this rule ends in excommunication and even in capital punishment in extreme cases. In case of arranged marriage, marriage is formally negotiated and settled by the parents but the preferences of the young are always considered.

Songs and Dances

Songs:

Songs are called "tsai" in Wancho. There are numerous songs which are sung on all sorts of occasions such as while pounding rice, harvesting of crops, while cleaning jungle in the agricultural

fields. Each song has its own name.

Lai lung: Lailung is a love song of the Wanchos. It has sweet and soft melody, rich in thoughts and beautiful ideas. The songs are characterized by their rich poetic imagination. Usually the boy first sing a song to the girl he fancy, expressing his love and yearning for her and a girl who receives his attention, gives an appropriate reply through her melodious song. The Wancho love songs are marked by definite air of dignity as their singing is mostly confined to the bachelor dormitory. It is against the social norms to sing a love song publicly or in presence of the elders. It is also not sung between members of the same clan group.

Dances:

Most of the dances of the Wanchos are performed in groups. The beauty of the dances is raised by the colourful costume. The folk dances of Wanchos are performed by men and women in a synchronized manner. Dances are generally performed in religious and festive occasions. The dances donot differ much in styles and manner. For festival dances, the dancers put on their traditional dress and ornaments. Flexing of knees at equal interval and the stepping in time with the beats of the drum provide the rhythm of the dance. Girls participate in the dances of festivals only, never in war and funeral dances. Men perform the war dances. This dance is a martial and athletic style. It involves a great deal of expertise as the performers go through dangerous war motion. Even a little bit of carelessness can prove highly fatal. The dancers wear colourful and graceful dresses which add more charm to the dances. The dresses of the dancer resemble the costume of the warrior.

There are dances of peaceful social occasions also such as marriage, building of house, death of chief etc. 'Ojii' is the only agricultural festival when they dance for two consecutive days. The first day is called bonu and second day is called bosa.

(Contd. to next issue)

(The author of this article is serving as an Asstt. Professsor of Geography in Wangcha Rajkumar Govt College, Deomali, Arunachal Pradesh and can be reached at - rynamon@rediffmail.com)

Legal Status of Converted Tribals

Shri Kartik Oraon a great son of the Oraon community is remembered for his visionary leadership and wisdom. He was born on 29th October, 1924 in a village named Karounda Littatoli of Gumla district and died on 8th December, 1981 in New Delhi. Baba Kartik Oraon, as he was fondly known in the community was a perceptive and wary leader dedicated to protection of faith and culture of tribes of the country. His struggle, wisdom and great perspicacity along with deep anguish was highlighted in his book titled, “**बीस वर्ष की काली रात**” (The Dark Night of Twenty Years). He had highlighted the unfair, unjust and discriminatory treatment and suffering of tribes who are devotees of tribal beliefs and faiths under the Constitution of the country that is meant to protect their dignity of life as well as right to live with dignity availing the constitutional rights and benefits.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Bill, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 12th August, 1967. It was referred to the Joint Committee on 26th March, 1968 in Lok Sabha and this was concurred upon in Rajya Sabha on 28th March, 1968. The Chairman of the Joint Committee was Shri Anil K Chanda. The committee met 22 times to discuss and presented the report on 17th November, 1969 in Lok Sabha. The recommendations of the Committee were supported by 235 members of the Lok Sabha of 1967-71.

Shri Kartik Oraon, then a member of fourth Lok Sabha (1967-71) from Lohardaga and a very learned highly decorated personality from the tribal community presented a memorandum on 17th June, 1970 to the then Honorable Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi for adopting the recommendation of the committee most urgently for rectifying the injustice suffered by the persons from tribes who are following tribal beliefs/faiths.

Shri Kartik Oraon had highlighted the following amendment that was recommended by the Joint Committee of the Parliament.

“2A. Notwithstanding anything contained in Paragraph 2, no person who has given up tribal faith or faiths and has embraced either Christianity or Islam shall be deemed to be a member of any Scheduled Tribes” (Vide Para 2A, page 29, line 38 of the schedule II of the Joint Committee Report).

a) Parliament of India, Lok Sabha, Digital Library

b) https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/755526/2/jcb_04_1969_scheduled_evidence.pdf

Such an amendment had already been done in the case of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in 1956 which reads as under:-”3. Notwithstanding anything contained in Paragraph 2, no person who professes a religion different from the Hindu or Sikh religion shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Castes”.

a) <https://tribal.nic.in/DivisionsFiles/clm/3.pdf>

As per the Government of India Act, 1935, an Indian Christian is defined as a person who professes any form of Christian religion and who is not a European or an Anglo Indian. Accordingly, when a person has given up tribal faith or faiths and embraced Christianity then naturally he/she falls under the category of Indian Christians and is not entitled to get the constitutional benefits under scheduled tribe category. Availing such benefits was entirely unconstitutional.

Janajati Dharma Sanskruti Surksha Manch (JDSSM) wish to highlight the injustice done to the genuine Scheduled Tribes who have followed their tribal faith/faiths. So far, the constitutional and legal benefits are enjoyed by persons who have given up their tribal faith/faiths and have embraced Christianity and who are educationally and

(Contd. to Page 14)

Measurement of Time: East vis-a-vis West

Suresh Soni

When was the world created and till when will it last? These questions have disturbed the minds of the humanity for ages. To get the answers, we will first have to understand time. Time - through which we measure the occurrence of incidents and changes; when did it start?

Stephen Hawking, the renowned cosmologist of modern times, has written a book named "The Brief History of Time". In this book, he writes that universe and time started together when the Big Bang occurred. This resulted in the creation of the universe and the universe came from the unexpressed state into the expressed state. With this, time was also born. Hence, the universe and time started together and shall remain so until the universe survives and shall vanish with it.

The second question is "What was there before the universe?" In reply, Hawking says that today that is unknown. However, there can be a way to find out. A star dies when its fuel is used up in the form of light and energy and it keeps shrinking until it becomes a dot. At that time, it acquires such a strong gravitational force that it can absorb light. It thus becomes impossible to know what is inside. Lack of light is known as darkness. It is probably because of this that such areas are called black holes. Our universe too perhaps was in this condition before being born.

In India, sages contemplated on this and perceived it. Describing the condition before the creation of the universe, the *Naasadiya Sookta* of the *Rigveda* say that there was no truth or untruth, neither atom nor leisure. Then what was there? There was neither death nor immortality, neither day nor night. At that time, there was an element with the power of pulsation.

Darkness was enveloped with the darkness before creation and there was an element which had the power or the strength of penance. It was first the

power of the effect of desire that the equilibrium was shattered and the universe was created from the unexpressed state. And the journey of time also began. This is how the journey of time moves on along with the universe.

Defining this, Sages have described it as '*kalayati sarvaani bbootani*' that is one that drives the entire universe or creation. It is also said that this universe is made once and then, gets destroyed, this is not the end. The cycle of birth and death, creation and destruction goes on. The giant wheel of time goes on with its creation, position, change and destruction. The poets of India and the west have described the all eclipsing form of time alike. *Kshemendra*, a renowned poet of India has expressed his views thus -

*Aho kaalasamudraya na lakshyante atisantataah
Majjantontaranantasya yugaantaah parvataa iva.*

"There is no such interval as compression in the ocean of time; huge mountains like massive ages come to submerge into it." Octavia Paz, the poet who won the Nobel Prize in 1990, has, in his poem '**Into the Matter**', described the all-engulfing nature of time in the following words —

A clock strikes the time
Now it's time
It is not time now,
not it is now
Now it is time
to get rid of time

Now it is not time
It is time and not now
Time eats the now
Now it is time
Windows close
Walls closed doors close
The words go home
Now we are more alone

The shortest as well as the largest unit of time has been described in our country.

There is a reference to this in the *Shrimad Bhagwad Mahapurana*. King *Pareekshit* asks Sage *Shukdev* what is time? What are its minutest and greatest forms? The reply that the sage gives is amazing because in today's modern age, we know that time is an abstract element. We know it because of the incidents that occur. Thousands of years ago, Sage *Shukdev* had said, "The changing of subjects is the form of time. The element of time expresses itself through it (change). It expresses itself through the unexpressed."

MEASUREMENT OF TIME

The minutest part of time is the atom and the greatest is Brahma Age. Explaining it in detail, Sage *Shukdev* gives its various measures-

- 2 *paramaanu* - 1 *Anu*
- 3 *Anu* -1 *trasrenu*
- 3 *trasrenu* -1 *truti*
- 100 *truti* -1 *vedb*
- 3 *vedb* -1 *lav*
- 3 *lav* -1 *nimesh*
- 3 *nimesh* - 1 *kshan* (moment)
- 5 *kshan* -1 *kaashthaa*
- 15 *kaashthaa* —1 *laghu*
- 15 *laghu* -1 *naarika*
- 2 *naarika* -1 *muhoort*
- 30 *muhoort* - 1 *day-night*
- 7 *day-night* - 1 *week*
- 2 *weeks* -1 *fortnight*
- 2 *fortnights* - 1 *month*
- 2 *months* - 1 *ritu* (season)
- 3 *ritus* -1 *ayan*
- 2 *ayans* - 1 *year*

According to the calculations of Sage *Shukdev*, there are 3280500000 *paramaanu* of time in a day and night; and 86,400 seconds in a day and night. This means that in its minutest measure, one *paramaanu* of time is equal to 37968th part of a second.

In the *Moksh Parva* in the *Mahabharata*, time has been calculated as under-

- 15 *nimesh* -1 *kaashtha*
- 30 *kaashtha* -1 *kala*

30 *kala* -1 *muhoort*

30 *muhoort* -1 *day and night*

There is a slight difference between the two calculations, According to Sage *Shukdev*, there are 450 *kaashthaa*s in a moment and according to the *Mahabharata*, there are 900 *kaashthaa*s in a moment. This implies the different methods of calculations.

These are the units for ordinary time calculations. But to measure the age of the universe or the changes therein, bigger units will be required. That measurement unit is *Yuga*.

- 1. *Kaliyuga Era* - 432,000 years
- 2. *Dwaparyuga Era* - 864,000 years
- 3. *Tretayuga Era* - 1296,000 years
- 4. *Satyayuga Era* - 1728,000 years

The four ages (Eras) together make a *Chaturyuga* 43,20,000 years

71 *Chaturyugas* make a *Manvantar* 30,67,20,000 years

14 *Manvantaras* along with 15 *Satyayugas* as a part of the dusk make up a **Kalpa** that is 43,20,000,000 years or **432 crore years** or 100 *Chaturyugas* of 43,20,000 years.

One *Kalpa* means one day of Brahma.
One night of His is equally long.

One Brahma lives for 100 years and when one Brahma complete its life cycle, it is Lord *Vishnu's nimesh* (blinking of the eye), and after *Vishnu*, the age of *Rudra* starts. He is himself a form of *kaal* and is, therefore, eternal. That is why time is said to be endless.

After reading this description of Sage *Shukdev*, a thought that comes to mind is that this description is fantastic imagination and an intellectual game. What is the significance of such things in today's scientific age? But this is not fantastic imagination. It is related to astronomy. India's calculations of time were made on the basis of a minute study of the speed and changes in the astronomical bodies which means solid scientific truth. Whereas in the calculations of the *Anno Domini era* prevalent today the only scientific thing is the fact that the year is based on the calculations of the time that the earth

takes to revolve around the sun. Otherwise, there is no relation between the calculations of the months and days and astronomical speeds.

Let us try to find out something about the Western and Indian calculations of time.

HISTORY OF MEASUREMENT OF TIME IN THE WEST

In the context of the calendar, the Children's Britannica Vol. 3.1964 gives a brief description of its history. Calendar means a way of dividing time on the basis of year, month, days, the movement of the earth and the moon. Luna is the Latin word for the moon. Hence, it is known as the Lunar month. The Latin word for sun is Sol; therefore we call it a solar year.

Today, it measures 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds. Since there is no co-ordination between the solar year and the lunar year, there was confusion or disorder in many countries. Another reason for this confusion was the lack of knowledge.

Secondly, comes the point of dividing time on the basis of a historical event, Christians believe that the birth of Christ is the deciding event of history. On this basis, they divided history into two parts — (1) BC, which means the period before the birth of Christ and refers to incidents that took place before the birth of Christ, and (2) The events that occurred after the birth of Christ are called AD (Anno Domini) which means in the year of our Lord. It is a different matter that this method was not in use for some centuries after the birth of Christ.

ROMAN CALENDAR

Today's AD year is based on the Roman calendar. It started with the establishment of the city of Rome — 753 years before the birth of Christ. Initially it had a 10 month year which lasted from March till December and had 304 days. Later on, King Pimpolius added two months, Jonu Arius and Februarius to it and made it 12 months with 355 days, but in later years, because of the movement of the planets, the difference kept on increasing. Then, in 46 BC, Julius Caesar ordered a new calendar which had 365 ¼ days so as to set the difference right. That is why, in history, year 46 BC is known as the 'Year

of Confusion'.

JULIAN CALENDAR

Julius Caesar gave 365¼ days to a year. Serially, the months were given 31 and 30 days. February had 29 days, but in a leap year, it had 30 days. Along with this, to immortalise his name, he changed the name of the seventh month from its old name Quintiles to July, which had, and still has 31 days. Later on came Emperor Augustus, who changed the name of the eighth month from Sextilis to August to immortalise his name. At that time, August had 30 days but, to show that he was as great as Caesar, he took one day off from February, which contained 29 days then, and added it to August. Since then, the days and the months have continued to remain the same.

GREGORIAN CALENDAR

In the 16th century, the Julian calendar was increased by 10 days and the church festivals like Easter etc started getting into trouble. So, Pope Gregory XIII issued an order in 1582 to rectify it by observing 4th October as 15th October and the beginning of the year from January 1 instead of March 25th. The Roman Catholics accepted the order of the Pope with immediate effect but the Protestants took some time to accept it. Britain kept following the Julian Calendar and by 1752, there was a difference of 11 days. Hence, to rectify it, the day after September 2 was observed as 14th September. At that time, people used to shout slogans of "Criseus back our 11 days." After England, Bulgaria accepted the Gregorian calendar in 1918 and then, in 1924, the Greek Orthodox Church also adopted it.

HISTORY OF MEASUREMENT OF TIME IN INDIA

India had the tradition of studying minute planetary movements. Calculations continued to be made on the basis of the movements of the earth, the moon and the sun. To bridge the difference in the motion of the sun and the moon, there has been a practice of adding an extra month (*Adbik maas*). The various units of time and their reasons have been. Described below in brief:

Day - Saawan day- The earth rotates on its axis

at speed of 1600 km per hour. To complete one rotation, it takes 24 hours. That part of the earth which stays in front of the sun for 12 hours has been called *Abah* and the part that is behind, has been called *Raatra*. This way, there are 24 horas in one *aboraatra*. It seems as if the word 'hour' in the English language is the slang form of the *hora*. *Saawan din* has been called *Bhoo din* (Earth Day).

Saur day - The earth is going around the sun at a speed of 1 lakh km per hour. A one degree movement of the earth is called a *Saur din* (Solar Day).

Chandra Din or tithi - A *Chandra din* or lunar day has been called a *tithi*, for example *Ekam*, *Chaturthi*, *Ekadashi*, *Purnima*, *Amavasya*, etc.. The movement of the moon to the twelfth part, while going around the earth is called a *tithi*.

Saptaah (Week) - The days of the week and their sequence throughout the world are the same as has been discovered in India, The sequence of the planets was determined as per their progressive distances from the earth. Hence, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury and Moon. Of these, the moon is the closest to the earth and Saturn is the farthest. Each planet is the ruler for one hour out of the 24 hours or *hora* day. Hence, each of the seven planets become the ruler for one hour by turn. This cycle goes on and once the 24 hours are complete the name of the next day is according to the planet that is the ruler in the first hour of that day. Since creation started with the sun, hence the first day of the week was Sunday and the other days were named sequentially.

We can easily understand the sequence of the seven days as per the table given below:

| Moon | Mercury | Venus | Sun | Mars | Jupiter | Saturn |
|------|---------|-------|----------|-------|---------|------------|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | Sunday 1 | - | - | - |
| 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 18 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 |
| Mon1 | 24 | 23 | 22 | 21 | 20 | 19 |
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 9 |
| Moon | Mercury | Venus | Sun | Mars | Jupiter | Saturn |
| 22 | 21 | 20 | 19 | 18 | 17 | 16 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | Tues1 | 24 | 23 |
| 12 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| 19 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 |
| 2 | Wed1 | 24 | 23 | 22 | 21 | 20 |
| 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 10 |
| 23 | 22 | 21 | 20 | 19 | 18 | 17 |
| 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | Thurs1 | 24 |
| 13 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| 20 | 19 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 |
| 3 | 2 | Fri1 | 24 | 23 | 22 | 21 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 |
| 24 | 23 | 22 | 21 | 20 | 19 | 18 Satur 1 |

(Contd. to next issue)

Importance of Codification of the Customary Laws

We organised a seminar on the Codification of Customary Laws, invited eminent people and tried to educate our delegates about its necessity. What do we mean by a code? For example, we have CRPC/IPC etc enacted by our government. In CRPC under section 302, the culprit gets life imprisonment or death penalty by execution or being hanged by the neck. Similarly, each tribe has different provisions of customary laws, which are traditionally practised by its members since time immemorial. If those laws are documented, duly accepted by the community, and approved by the government, then it becomes code. There can't be any law without a code.

Therefore, we have to prepare this code in respect of our tribe and submit it to the government for approval. One of the Member of the District Council from the concerned community will place it before the Council. The Draft Bill will be discussed in the council and must be passed by majority vote. After approval by the council, it will go to the Governor. On getting the Governor's assent, the Bill will become a law.

In some libraries of Assam, we have books like the Dimas Customary Law, the Karbi

Customary Law etc. Politicians and bureaucrats usually try to formulate customary laws as per their convenience. However, those are based only on the history of those communities, and not codes of customary laws. Some conscious tribes have already codified their customary laws. The Chakmas of Mizoram have done it. They submitted 'The Chakma Customary Laws 1997' before the ADC. It was approved on 8th December 2005 and notified in the gazette. Nobody can change it now.

Our people are trying to build a secular society and therefore, we lost our customary laws; but

remember, the society itself will wither away without Dharma. In the customary law, you have to quote your religion clearly. We have to give all details in it, what activities we do along with worshipping the nature.

In various cases, the courts have opined that those who do not follow their own customary laws, and converted to an alien religion, they no longer belong to that particular tribes. A convert is considered to have gone to another society. He can't become the Chief of the community, cast votes in the community affairs, or contest elections. The Reangs formed the 'Socio-Cultural Organization of Reang Community, Tripura' who in turn formulated the code. However, they included in the society even those who have been converted to Christianity and Islam. This happened due to the mixture of religion with politics. Then what is the meaning of a customary law? How Christians and Mias can be members of the Reang tribe? They have their own separate customary laws. How can there be two codes of customary laws for a single person? Therefore, the Reang customary laws could not be codified until now.

One important aspect of the code of customary laws is that after the approval of the governor, verdicts on various crimes or activities will be given according to the customary law of that tribe to which the accused belongs, and not according to any other law of the land. Customary law stands supreme above all. The Constitution of India have conferred upon us the right to formulate and codify our own customary laws. One cannot be ST unless he abides by the customary laws of that particular tribe. It is also possible to formulate a common code for all the STs which may cover most of our tribes.

We have prepared the Jamatia Code, which is now with the government for approval. We will abide by the government's decision. In our tribe,

the father distributes his property among his children according to his own discretion. He can give as much share as he wishes to any of them. Nevertheless, the government changed this provision and said, no, all the sons whether old or young, should get equal share. All the tribes now are waiting for the codes of their customary laws, but they can't, because they don't know how to do it.

Another important aspect of the code of customary laws is that the community Chief is recognized by means of a gazette notification. Therefore, he is in a position to testify anything on

any matter or issues related to members of the community. One has to spend thousands for obtaining a survivor certificate. If the approved community Chief recommends the claimant's request, then the SDM will be bound to accept it. The community chief enjoys the status of a gazetted officer after gazette notification. Birth, death, residential or income, in every matter the Registrar, Tahasildar, the SDM or DM, every administrative officer has to accept his word.

Therefore, it is time, I urge, all the janajatis to get their customary laws documented and get it approved by the government.

(Contd. from Page 8)

Legal Status of Converted Tribals

economically well off in comparison with the genuine scheduled tribes.

JDSSM demands amendment in the Constitution as recommended by the Joint Committee Report on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Bill, 1967. As mentioned above, it has already been too late, more than 70 years to be more particular.

JDSSM participated in the signature campaign that was conducted across the country against this injustice in the year 2009 and collected signatures of 27.67 lakh (above 18 years of age) tribal people. A delegation under the leadership of Late Sri Jagdeo Ram ji Uraon, Late Sri Dilip Singh Bhuriya ji and Smt Anusuiya ji Uike, presently holding the office as Honorable Governor of Chhattisgarh, had met Smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil, the then Honorable President of India on 18th January, 2010 to appraise the strong and unequivocal

demand of tribal people of the country to amend the President's Order on Scheduled Tribes, 1950 to exclude such tribal persons from the list of scheduled tribes and to stop constitutional and legal benefits being provided to the persons of scheduled tribes who have given up their tribal faith/faiths.

It must be mentioned here that these genuine aspirations of the tribal people from across the country have been continuously ignored since 1970 thereby perpetuating the unjust and unfair treatment to the persons of tribes who are proud believer of traditional faith/faiths.

Shri Dr. Nishikant Dubey, honorable member of Lok Sabha from Godda, Jharkhand had raised this issue on 22nd September, 2020 in the Lok Sabha during the debate. The issue that he has raised is of paramount significance and relevance.

Arunachal CM attends Mopin festival at Aalo in West Siang district

“Galo without Mopin and Mopin without traditional rituals...will always be incomplete,” said Chief Minister Pema Khandu attending Mopin festival at Aalo in West Siang district. He added that wearing traditional dress without knowing the traditions and unable to speak in mother tongue doesn’t make a Monpa Monpa or a Galo Galo while emphasizing on the importance of indigenous culture and local languages. Informing that he was blessed by local priests during his visit to the Donyi Polo Central Kargu Gamgi, he appreciated the Galos for preserving their culture and traditional faith. “I am overwhelmed by your attachment with your roots. Galos are real torchbearers in maintaining the indigenous identity, which is the hallmark of Arunachal Pradesh,” he said. He maintained that no amount of modernization should come in way of indigenous culture and faith, which he said are the most precious treasure handed down by the ancestors.

Acknowledging that the old infrastructure of the Central Kargu Gamgi was in need of maintenance, CM Khandu assured to provide funds for its renovation. Talking about road connectivity to the district, Khandu further informed that all packages on the Akajan-Likabali-Bame stretch, through which he had travelled yesterday, are under construction. He also informed that NHIDCL, which is executing the construction works has assured to complete the stretch within two years. He, however, expressed concern over the progress of the Package 9, Nigmoi to Pangin tri-junction, of the Potin to Pangin stretch of Trans-Arunachal Highway (NH13) being constructed by M/S SRK Construction and Project Pvt Ltd. “On my way to Aalo, I interacted with highway officials, local leaders, villagers and the contractors. Package 9 is very complicated. At this rate, this stretch will never be completed soon. When I am back in the capital, I will convene a meeting of all stakeholders including the contractor firm. Those at fault will be reprimanded and I assure you all a solution soon,” he said. Khandu promised that the

state government will give its best to complete all the nine packages of the Potin to Pangin (approx. 400 Kms) by March 2022 that has been marred by various controversies.

He also assured that the government is aware of the dilapidated sectoral and township roads in Aalo. For construction and maintenance of all township roads, he informed the state government has placed an amount of Rs 20 Cr under Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure (CCI) and another Rs 9 Cr under Chief Minister Comprehensive State Road Plan 2019-24 (CMCSR). “I request you all to check and ensure quality work once construction starts for the government will not grant funds time and again for the same work,” he urged.

Bringing up the issue of half-done Aalo stadium, Khandu regretted that it has been lying abandoned after start of construction work, making it unusable for years. He revealed that construction of the new stadium in place of the old ground was sanctioned under Special Plan Allocation (SPA). But since 2014 the SPA scheme was withdrawn by the central government and the state government had to dole out from its own resources to complete all ongoing projects under the scheme. “It is very unfortunate that this particular project got left out. However, the state Sports & Youth Affairs minister has already visited the project and will be soon submitting a report to me. I assure that whatever fund is required to complete the project will be sanctioned. We cannot let the spirits of the talented footballers of Aalo area dampen.

Earlier in the day, Khandu along with Lok Sabha MP Tapir Gao and legislators Kento Jini, Kumsi Sidisow, Hayang Mangfi, Ojing Tassing, Zignu Namchoom and Jikke Tako visited the Drug Rehabilitation & Recovery Centre, Aalo run by Mother’s Vision since 2013. More than 270 addicts have recovered from the institute to which Khandu assured government’s support.

Indigenous Calendar of the Adis

Kaling Borang

The seasonal changes of a year are marked with changes in weather, temperature, leaves and flowers, fruits and appearance of different varieties of insects, butterflies, birds and animals etc. occur in front of our eyes. These changes arouse human emotions, sentiments and many thoughts and imaginations. Man has therefore tried to express them in different ways and forms. Of all the forms of expression, the thoughts in the form of songs and dances have been the most popular and easiest way to express the thoughts and imaginations among the tribal people since time immemorial. Therefore, we find the narrations on birds, animals and as such on the seasonal changes in the Folk song of the tribal people.

The *Adis* of Arunachal Pradesh to which I belong is no exception. They are very poetic and orators by nature. Therefore like any other tribe, the *Adis* have their own way of expressing their thoughts through songs and dances. The human emotions in connection with its relationship with the nature and the Ultimate find place in these songs, so also the seasonal changes of a year.

Comparing the full seasonal cycle of a year with a full human life, the folk singers divide the year in to four different seasons. They are (1) *Donggup* (spring), (2) *Lobo* (summer) (3) *Jedi* (Autumn) (4) *Digin* (winter). However the basic principles of such divisions are based mostly on their nature. The character of the same is also of “Lunar” system. Thus it is difficult to pin point the English months which matches with traditional Adi months. It may prove wrong even if we do so because of the English calendar being “Solar” in character.

Same will be the case with the Indian (Hindu) calendar, because of the differences in the number of seasons. (The Govt. of India publishes the

national calendar every year which is less known to people and is based on Saka era and counting of months and days are as per the indigenous way of counting followed in our country.) In Indian calendar there are six seasons and so only two months fall in a season. However in case of the *Adis* there are four seasons of three months each. Therefore the calendar of the *Adis* is unique in its own way or to be considered as a mixture of the tradition, the solar and the Lunar calendar. In this context the later seems to be acceptable.

As a matter of fact the *Adis* have never had a calendar. As stated earlier the *Adis* compare the full cycle of seasons with a full life of a man. The spring season is described as the beginning of the life cycle and youthfulness. The summer as the time of reproduction and prosperity, the autumn as the time of contentment and creativity and the winter as ending and shedding of the earthly possessions in man’s life. Describing the spring season the folk singer sings as “*To di ribunge sutsu tokunam, yaamo pegonge go:sup tokunam, To:di mimume mummo lendakku yaamo yameye memo lendakku, Neyicte neyi nengane nganlen dakku, Neyange pu:pune benyong lendakku.*” Meaning: “With the joining of the two ends of the year rope and with the making of a full circle of the years seasonal cycle, the year is back to it’s youthfulness with the new attires of new leaves and flowers marking the beginning of a new year season.”

It is therefore clear from the above that the *Adis* do not have a New Year Day and instead they have a New Year season.

However, the present need is to have an indigenous calendar and have a particular day for the beginning of the New Year. Since we depend mostly on the nature there is no change visible

around us in the months of December and January. Therefore we do not have reason to assume that the New Year sets in on the first day of January as practiced by the Gregorian Calendar. Neither there is any reason to assume the natural change on the Makar *Sankranti* Day when the earth starts tilting upwards or the Sun starts its northward movement (beginning of *Uttarayana*). The *Adis* do not know or have not bothered themselves with such thoughts on the movement of earth and other planets around the sun and the movement of moon round the earth. To them it is the sun and the moon going round the earth causing day and night. The moon grows by itself and weans by itself. They do not know anything about the alignment between the three in the course of the movement. There are not a bit of astronomy attached in the process of determining the New year season by the *Adis*. Therefore, it is to be an Indigenous Calendar, it is required to be based mostly on observation of the natural changes and traditional systems. Therefore the New year season of the *Adis* necessarily fall in the Spring (*Donggup*) season. However to determine a possible New Year Day requires blending with the scientific knowledge that we have earned during the course of our formal or informal education.

For putting the months within the seasons and matching them with the seasons and matching them with the Indian (Hindu) calendar and also with the Gregarious calendar one needs to go through the attributes given to different months by the tradition, the natural phenomena like weather. Few examples are cited below.

(1) The month of Gatling:- The month is named after the blooming of blood red flowers of the “*Tagat*” (*Modar* in Assamese). Meaning that it is the month in which the flowers of the “*Tagat*” tree bloom.

(2) The month of Di;sang :- *Di:sang* is a traditional practice of the *Adis* for collecting “Aconite” (*Emo*) from the mountain. The operation is undertaken in a particular period of time when most of the undergrowth of the dense forest have

withered away but snowfall has not started yet in the mountains. The month in which this operation is undertaken is also named as “*Di:sang*”. If we study the time period during which such conducive situation prevail, we will find that it falls between the months of October and November of the Gregarian calendar.

(3) The month of Gitmur: - There is a saying in the *Adi* society as “*Gitmur pa:pure, Sobo pa:pure*”. Meaning *Gitmur* is the month for preparing baskets for storing meat of “*Sobo panam, Sobo Panam*” is a practice of the *Adis* during *A:ram/Uminging* festival where well to do families sacrifice *Mithun (Eso Bos frontalis)* and share the meat with all the villagers.

(4) The month of Kombaong:- A few people say that it is the month when the “*Kombong Tree*” (peas) flower but the popular saying is “*Kombong sigule gullen dok?*” meaning few small streams start having new flowing water. It happens when there is a good winter rain as a part of North-South west Monsoon. This winter rain causes early germination of undergrowth, which become visible during *Kombong gatling* months.

The other available examples can be left out for the present. Putting all these facts together and also finding a New Year Day would probably be possible as per the Indigenous calendar of the *Adis*. As stated earlier we need to blend our traditional knowledge with modern scientific knowledge. Our mindset do not allow us or we are reluctant to accept a New Year Day without any marked transformation or change in the Nature. Therefore we feel that the Day must fall within the New Year season when there are visible changes of nature around us.

At this juncture we need to take the help of science. In the course of the movement of earth round the sun there are two occasions when the time period taken to complete a full day is exactly the same to complete a full night, called equinox. The first one is the midpoint of Autumn to Winter. The other is from Spring season to Summer. For our present purpose, the later which is known as vernal equinox which fall on 21st March every year

could be considered. This is because it falls within the traditional New Year season. This day could be taken as the meeting point of the year rope or the finishing point of the full seasons' cycle of a year. The day time begins to be longer from the following day i.e. the 22nd March which could be treated as the first day of the year The New Year Day.

In regards to the number of days in a month we may adjust with or adopt from any one of the established Lunar calendar for our convenience. This justification was mooted long before by the *Do:nyipolo*

devotees of Sri *Talom Dupak* and as a result a calendar was also brought out. Accepting this justification as the most viable, the central *Ganging* and the *Lamrung* ganging of Pasighat have been observing the 21st March of year as the New Year Day since last eight/nine years.

However, the days of the months require further research as to pinpoint the *Adi* Indigenous months and see which month has how many days or just adopt an established “Lunar” calendar for our convenience.

Given the facts above the Indigenous calendar of the *Adis* would look like as follows –

| Adi Indigenous calendar in relation to the Gregorian and Indian calendar : | | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sl.No. | Adi Months | English Months | Indian Months (Hindu) |
| 1 | <i>Gatling</i> | March 22- April 21 | Chaitra-Baisakh |
| 2 | <i>Kijir</i> | April 22- May 21 | Baisakh-Jeth |
| 3 | <i>Lobo</i> | May 22- June 21 | Jeth-Ashad |
| 4 | <i>Yilo</i> | June 22-July 21 | Ashad-vado |
| 5 | <i>Tanno</i> | July 22-August 21 | Shavan-Vado |
| 6 | <i>Yio</i> | August 22- September 21 | Vado-Ashwin |
| 7 | <i>Yite</i> | September 22-October 21 | Ashwin-kartika |
| 8 | <i>Diisang</i> | October 22- November 21 | Kartika – Aghun |
| 9 | <i>Terem</i> | November 22- December 21 | Aghun –Pausa |
| 10 | <i>Bising</i> | December 22-January 21 | Pausa- Magh |
| 11 | <i>Gitmur</i> | January 22-February 21 | Magh-Falgun |
| 12 | <i>Kombong</i> | February 22- March 21 | Falgun-chaitra |

However this is just a presentation of the idea mooted long before by the *Do:nyipolo* devotees and as has been said, is being observed by them every year. It is being presented as of now to share the

opinions and if possible, make a collective approach for bringing out such a calendar in future. We do hope a tradition-based scientific calendar for Adi people will come out soon.

Tirap Calling!

Dr Ranga Ranjan Das

Recent field expedition of Tirip district, Arunachal Pradesh, was indeed unique and unforgettable experience. The entire trip is somewhat a kind of exploration of hidden territory, a society with a hidden custom of head hunting that possess real testimony of circumstantial evidences, asserted by monolithic tradition and preservation of human skull in a common house of a village under consideration. The village society comprises of Nocte, a major tribe of the state with vibrant tradition and practice. The present endeavour makes an attempt to provide narratives of a journey to Tirap district and direct contact with the Noctes. There were two destinations Deomali and Khonsa.

On 15th March, at around 6.45 am, we started journey from Tinsukia. Our first destination was Deomali, a small township of Tirap district. Actually, we started on 14th from Guwahati and had a night halt at Tinsukia. Deomali, is not far away from Tinsukia. Margherita, is the last exit point from Assam towards Deomali in Arunachal. It was indeed a fascinating journey that provides knowledge in the historical context. During the entire journey, we had the privilege Romen Chakraborty, the Chief Editor, as member of team, his wisdom, knowledge and experience of various places relating to colonial history. Mr Chakraborty is a living encyclopedia, who has a tremendous knowledge of the region. He shared many important facts and events related to places like Makum, Digboi, Bogpani, Margherita and about Dihing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary. While crossing Makum, it was found revisiting the plot of 'Makam', a widely read novel by Rita Choudhury, the descendants of Chinese families, their anxieties and worries during the Chinese aggression of 1962. They were confined in detention camp at Dibrugarh and Tezpur, and also were deported. The settlement of Chinese in Upper Assam, was a saga of colonial

history, whom the British brought to work in the tea plantations. Later on Chinese group had given up doing work in the plantations, but arranged own workshop making equipments, machineries associated with tea cultivation. As revealed that there was a Ho's family who deals with such machineries in a large scale. Besides a large area from Bogapani to Lidu, was provided to East India Company by Queen. This entire area had lots of economic potential. From Digboi to Margherita, it is 16 km. During colonial period, Digboi was a clean city. Even stray dogs were shoot at sight by police force. Tea plantations were located around the corner. Powai tea estate, was famous earlier and fetched high price during auction as revealed. We had a light breakfast at Margherita. Thereafter via Margherita Tea Estate, we had a journey in the midst of serene beauty of Dihing Patkai Rainforest. The Dihing river flows nearby, the entire forest had a special attraction since colonial times, attraction was coal, crude oil and timber. Giant straight holong, trees in both the sides, witnessing some patches of coffee cultivation in a fragment way, sound of nature, eco of ape species, made the journey more interesting. We were just 15 km away from Deomali. It was quite surprising and interesting to explore Narottam Nagar, a connection with Baisnavite tradition and linkages with Srimanta Sankardeva. *Ek saran namdharma*, and Baisnavite religion propagated by Sankardeva, was really a unifying force irrespective of caste, creeds, hills and plains. The name Narottam, perhaps provided by Sankardev to one of his Naga disciple. It is like a small centre where Ramkrishna Mission Sarda Vidhyalaya, is located adjacent to the area. We reached Deomali at 9.50 am, southern part of Arunachal as testified by Chief Conservator of Forest Office. The signboard of Wangchia Rajkumar Government

College, was traced and it has a deep connection for the trip at Deomali. Dr Watsen Bangsia Yekar, one of the faculties of this college arranged the entire logistics during the one day stay. The sanctity and warmth of a particular place is known by its inhabitants. It was one Ranjan Handique, who helped to find out our first destination at Deomali. He communicated with us in broken Assamese who has close association with Assam during his student days.

Deomali, as it appeared a census town inhabited by Nocte, as well as many Hindi speaking populations. Khonsa, which was our second destination, is the district headquarters of Tirap district. As a district, Tirap is recognized as one of the oldest district of Arunachal Pradesh. The name Tirap originates from the river Tirap that originates from the hills of Lazu. Two districts Changlang and Longding were bifurcated from Tirap in different phases. There is a marginal history related to Tirap. During colonial period, it was known as Tirap Frontier Tract. Later on it was renamed as Tirap Frontier Division, and in 1965, it became district. Earlier, it had an area of 2362 square km, and at present 1170 square km, after carving out two districts. Changlang came in 1987 while Longding appeared during 2013. Located between the latitude $26^{\circ}38' N$ and $27^{\circ}47' N$ and the longitude $96^{\circ}16' E$ and $95^{\circ}40' E$, the district is surrounded by Myanmar in its south, Assam on the north, Nagaland in the west and Changlang towards east. Four Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly constituencies are located within the district: Namsang, Khonsa East, Khonsa West, Borduria-Bogapani. They are part of Arunachal East Lok Sabha constituency. For the convenience of administration, the entire district is divided into eight (8) circles: Khonsa, Deomali, Soha, Lazu, Dadam, Katang, Borduria and Koilam. Tirap, is said to be the main home of Noctes and further said that they came here during the Ahom period. Besides, Noctes there are some villages where Tutsa and Wanchos are also settled apart from Hindi speaking population at the centre of Deomali. According to 2011 census, number of

population was 111,975 of which 57604 and 54371, are male and female respectively. Deomali is located at an altitude of 131 meters above sea level and surrounded by Burhi-dihing river. Namsang is the only constituency.

Reaching Deomali, we had a plan for the rest of the day. It included visiting to Nocte villages located at different altitudes. Let's examine the Noctes as a traditional group. They are one of the recognized scheduled tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Earlier, there were attempts to include them within Naga groups. But it is still an issue of discussion, debates and cross-cultural comparison. As reported, there are 74 Nocte villages in the Tirap district, besides one village each at Bordumsa area of Changlang district, and Naharkatia of Dibrugarh district of Assam. As a group Noctes are one, and there is no division as subgroup. However, there is territorial divisions as classified by them. They are divided into three main groups as per location: Upper belt Noctes, Middle belt Noctes and Lower belt Noctes. Different names are assigned to coin these groups. Upper one is referred as *Kote*, middle is *Hakhunbung te* and lower one is *Hawa te*. There are several villages like Longo, Noksa, Soha, Borduria, Lazu, etc inhabited by Nocte people located at a distance from Deomali. Out of them, the village Soha is located at a distance of 72 km from district headquarter. At around midday, we were guided to Soha. The village is popularly known as *basti*, among them. It is a big village with around 850 persons settled at the higher altitude. The village under Soha circle is a clean village, situated in the undulating hilly terrain and very close to natural ambience. Houses in the hilly slopes are constructed on wooden piles (known as *chaang ghar*), in a form of raised platform made by split bamboo, roofing done by *tokou* leaves which is locally available. The available ethnographic accounts have wonderful narration of traditional Nocte houses. Soha village really exhibits the presence of such houses. We had an opportunity to go inside of such a house. Examining the inner and outer parts of the house, techniques and skill associated with preparing such a house, and feeling

the comfort inside the house, it asserts that it was their traditional science. The traditional hearth, in the midst of main sitting room, and its' relevance in the context of house is part of ethnoscience of the community. Two or three tier arrangement is made above the hearth, where various food items are preserved for the lean period. The smoke of the fire not only helps in preserving, but at the same time, it is very much important for the roof as it keeps safe from insects, and enhances longevity. House is constructed with the help of locally available resources. Bamboo and canes are still lots of relevance. Basketry items of different types and sizes for different purposes are seen hanging inside the house. Women still used to carry different items in the basket arranged in the head strap. They have no option except shifting cultivation (*jhum*) as principal mode of economy. There was a nice interactive session with Dr Bangsia sitting in a platform house at Soha. She wonderfully elaborates various facets of Nocte socio-cultural life in general, the village in particular. There is some differences of societal and tangible facets of groups residing in different altitudes. She pointed out specifically interior of house. Apart from Soha, we were taken to a village located at lower altitude. It was during the evening hours of the same day. The village was Mopaya, located under Namsang, just way back towards Narattum Nagar. It is located in plain area. The only point as revealed was to explore the differences of interior as per geography. Regarding housing construction and pattern of Soha village she notes that village expert measure the length and breadth of the land to dig the hole for the pillar, built on raised platform, floor is made after splitting bamboo in pieces, spreading out in line. She further reveals that generally flooring pattern of chief and common people house is different. Flooring pattern of chief indicates cross symbol while common people have plus symbol. In the context of Soha village, she observes that the houses consists of four rooms, drawing room is called *kbun-tum*, the first room, another room made for elderly male folk is known as *kata*, *kbun-ka* is the kitchen, place for cooking and women folk used to stay, *jaang-ka* is the toilet room

used by children and elderly women folk, now separate room is constructed near by the house, also balcony like open space used for drying edible items, crops and rest after coming from outside. It is also revealed that there are three rooms in ideal house. She nicely pointed out minor differences. Observing two villages in and around Deomali, it is found that they are nicely adjusted with nature where from they collected raw materials for house building, making basketry items and also for *jhum* cultivation. Regarding their religion, it is reported that there is an attempt to revive their traditional beliefs and practices, as Rang O, that is still infancy stage. There is an impact of Rangfra religion of Tangsa society, besides a section of Noctes has already converted to Christianity.

Our next destination was Khonsa, district headquarter of Tirap. 16th March. We were ready in the early morning. As the road connecting to Khonsa, was not good. Earth cutting was on and there was possibility of road blockade. We had no options. Dr Bangsia was supposed to accompany and guide us. Due to health related issues of her young daughter she skipped but provided a warm hospitality during the stay at Deomali. Winjong Namati joined us to Khonsa. At 7.30, we stopped at Hukanjuri for necessary ILP (inner line pass verification). At 9.40 am, we just entered Khonsa, the biggest commercial hub of Tirap. It is a beautiful township. It is located at 27.02° N 95.57°E, having an average elevation of 1215 metres, with a population of 9928 in the town. The town is also a specific interest for me, as one of my bachelors' classmates is working higher portfolio under the Government of Arunachal Pradesh. We stayed at the circuit house. Her office is just nearby the circuit house. But due to busy schedule, it was unfortunate that I couldn't meet her. As soon as we reached, we were taken to witness a site nearby Barduria village. It was Gopal Bayang and his team member who joined us for the proceedings at Khonsa. We had a plan to revisit a few Nocte villages within Khonsa. Kamwang Peter Lowang, an interesting young boy

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Nokpante: The Bachelors' Dormitory of the Garos

Tengsrang A Marak & Madhusudan JV

The institution of youth dormitory has been traditionally one of the most important social institutions among the tribal people. Youth dormitory is a place where boys, usually those who have entered into adolescence become members mandatorily. According to Julius Marak (2000), The *Nokpante* of Garos is also such type of an institution which is the centre of traditional life. The Garos form the major tribal population in the Garo Hills Region of the State of Meghalaya. The Nokpante is a bachelor's dormitory constructed by the Garos at the courtyard of the village head or at the heart of the village. The word "Nokpante" literally means the house of the unmarried young men. Here, the Garo boys acquire knowledge in the fields of art, crafts, wood carving and basketry, music, culture, physical fitness, medicine, agriculture, defence, sports, moral standard and etiquettes which are propagated by the village elders. It also provides a community life of the youths and inculcates strong sense of unity, discipline and corporate life. Nokpante acts as an institution for acquiring and imparting knowledge through oral tradition.

The Nokpante resident youths are to learn and adapt the rules and discipline of the *nokpante*. *Nokpante* in a village is constructed through joint cooperative labours of married and unmarried young men of the village. Depending on the population in the village, Nokpante is constructed separately for each clan. In the bachelor's dormitory of Marak clan (*chatchi*) only *marak* bachelors can sleep and learn the art, while it is the same for the clan Sangma, Areng, Shira and Momin.

Nokpante Nokdonggaa (Inauguration)

On the very first day of completion of constructing *Nokpante*, *Nokpante Nokdonggaa* is

performed. *Nokpante Nokdonggaa* is a ceremony where the bachelors are ready to move in to a new bachelors' house. The first day of inauguration itself it becomes an introduction of rituals performed by the *Kamal* (teacher/priest), by the unmarried young men and by the elderly male villagers. The *Kamal* at this ceremony takes the opportunity to teach the bachelors as he chants out sacrificial songs over the burning incense at the altar in the *nokpante*. The *Kamal* chants out *doroa* (ordinances) on the native rhythmic beat of drums singing on the origin of *nokpante*. The *Kamal* inculcates how *nokpante* started since the era of the Demi-Gods. This ceremony becomes as a seminar where *Kamal* gives lectures and bachelors act as disciples inside the *nokpante*.

Nokpante and Semiotics

The basic historical background the bachelors need to know are the totems carved on the posts and pillars of *Nokpante*. It becomes important for every bachelor to know because as they build *Nokpante*, they carve the pictures of the stories they have seen in the past of their lives. It acts as an observation, experimental and participatory education system. The important part of the totem in *Nokpante* is *Do-kaku*. *Do-kaku* is carved on a pillar that connects the roof above the entrance which signifies the 'beginning and salvaging' of what has been practised in the past shall be redone and remembered through totems and cultural preservation. *Do-kaku* consists of the symbols of diamonds (*miksep*) which signifies 'keeper and the holy eye', shield (*sepi*) which signifies 'protection', Closed gongs (*rang kingkipa*) which signifies 'property' and Necklace with a precious stone (*Ripok dokatchi*) that signifies 'beauty and high status'. These symbols act as the signs to inculcate the bachelors of their origin and the need to preserve their

culture through visual communication or traditional media.

Other totems on the woods inside the Nokpante are made for judgment and oath taking. The cause and effect of the crime can be known after having taken the oaths by touching the totems if a person is really saying the truth or lying. The totems consist of the sun, moon, star and all the wild animals and insects that are liable to hurt human beings. Animals and insects like elephant, tiger, alligator, snake, Goral, scorpion, centipede etc, are engraved on the posts. Nokpante at the same time acts as the court for judgement for them. Sun, moon and star refer to as witness and proof both for truth and lie. With fear of these animals groom the bachelors to live a truthful and peaceful life inside the Nokpante and in the society in future.

Education system in Nokpante

The first and foremost practice the bachelors need to do in *nokpante* is to keep the traditional kitchen, the indoors and surroundings clean. The bachelors are also taught to be well-behaved, show respect and learn the social etiquette they need to show in front of elders and women. Members in the nokpante are led by the eldest bachelor, a leader selected among them to guide the younger bachelors. He makes sure that other bachelors learn and grasp the knowledge in a right way. Boys in the *nokpante* learn about epic stories, myths, legends, Gods, origin, migration from the elders told by way of reciting poems, ordinances, chanting, mourning and mostly singing. They mostly learn all these through singing, merry making, sharing stories and their experiences during recreation hours after going through a hard labour of the day. The Garo bachelors and other elders mostly pay attention on the knowledge of ritualism. Their practice in nokpante becomes ritual and it gets propagated to the younger generations. Bachelors in *Nokpante* learn to grasp the information without any attempt to test its validity by argument. The bachelors learn from each other through conversation, songs, dialogues, etc,. It acts as a casual institution of knowledge where nature motivates to groom them through

their observation and act of participation.

Today, the Nokpante system is almost dead. There are very few unproductive Nokpante structures still to be seen. Time has relegated it to the background. Modernisation (as in modern education) and Christianity have impacted the Nokpante system. In Garo hills, in 1857 after the British territorialisation and influence of Christianity the villagers themselves destroyed artefacts, musical instruments, metals and structures including nokpante. There are few nokpante preserved and reconstructed in few villages. The nokpante from the year 1800 is still being preserved in Eman A'sakgre, South Garo Hills. Chidaogre village still preserves its old nokpante but abandoned without any renovation. The transmission of oral literature, recitation of sacred texts and texts in performances are like a syllabii in *Nokpante* where each and every individual besides learning other things can also specialize their own interests through oral tradition and observations. However, construction of *Nokpante* and the institution itself in villages is now rare in today's digitized era which once acted as an important oral educational institution.

Songs and Texts

When Garo bachelors, elders and women speak, their conversations and dialogues are in a form of songs and ordinances. The texts are orally executed since there has never been a culture of writing a record in the ancient Garo society. The verbal communication existed since time immemorial where a language itself acts as a song. These are regularly practised inside the nokpante where daily life's event is sung for the other persons and the other persons reply back in a form of ordinances and other folk form of singing of the Garos such as Doroa, gonda, serinjing, ajea, ahom ring'a, dani doka, ajema ring'a, gogae doka, nanggorere ring'a, harara and many more.

Bachelors, as stated earlier, acquired the sacred rituals and techniques from the village elders in Nokpante. Every action of human and nature are

converted into a form of songs inside nokpante. Mistakes committed by the boys are corrected by elders and lines are added to the mistaken line. During few festive occasions the Kamal (priest) recites and sings the history of every living being, nonliving being, origin of mankind etc, for a week long days as they drink and make merry. These are not just festivities but a time to grasp every words and tunes which needed to be carried forward for the upcoming generation. These occasions for gathering knowledge and bachelors listening with an educated ear can become a difficult task as there are beating of drums and gongs being played inside the nokpante. The bachelors strictly follow their own responsibility in completing the characteristics of the institution.

Today, there is a grave risk that much indigenous knowledge is being lost and, along with it, valuable knowledge about ways of living sustainably. This module illustrates ways that indigenous knowledge may be integrated into education and thereby, brings the benefits of helping to 'sustain' indigenous knowledge and societies to all. It also encourages teachers and students to gain enhanced respect for local culture, its wisdom and its ethics, and provides ways of teaching and learning locally relevant knowledge and skills. Hence, there is a need to study the indigenous knowledge of tribal people like that of Garos. This knowledge needs to be captured and preserved.

Conclusion

The bachelor dormitory practice among the Garo, emerges at the outset is the centrality of the *nokpante* institution in the settlements of the community. Another point that became explicit in the linkages of the institution of *nokpante* with the family organization, marriage system. Concept of manhood and chastity, institutional enabling of parental privacy, mobilizing of youth labour,

juvenile socialization and imitation to community polity and so on. Most of the studies on the variety of dormitory practices with or without gender exclusiveness prevailing among the different tribes in India clearly show that the *nokpante system* also was primarily an arrangement to ensure privacy for the cohabitation of husbands and wives.

The *nokpante* functions as if it is a club, a place of juvenile happiness, a non-formal school, a training center, and so on for the making of unmarried man to a mature community member. It enables them to get to know how to protect the community by learning the ways of defence against animal raids and enemy attacks, teaches them how to be useful for the community through co-operative labour, enables to know the community rituals and rites and also how to participate in them, provides an avenue to be community conscious and corporate in their feeling and actions thus making them responsible to the community. The *nokpante* is also function as a common shelter of the community, serving a variety of public purposes like community's guesthouse, space for convening meetings and conducting political deliberations, and after all a site for community entertainment and amusements. All these features make it obvious that the existence of the *nokpante* amongst Garos is not accidental. To conclude, *nokpante* is still a pivotal institution entrenched in the community culture of the Garos.

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(Sri Madhusudan JV, one of the authors of this article, is serving as Assistant Professor in the Department of Education of North-Eastern Hill University, Tura-794002) and his Co-author Mr. Tengsrang A Marak is a Research Scholar in the Department of Education under the same university)

The Story of the Toad

Dr. Uzzal Sharma

Once upon a time, there was an aged couple, who were very poor. They were even very weak to do work and earn their living. They only had a fish trap, which they set at night; and the fish they caught they exchanged for rice. One night it happened that no fish got into the trap, but only toads. The trap was jam-packed with toads and became very heavy. Early next morning, when the cock crowed, the old man came and found the trap full of toads. He was very happy and hoisting the trap on to his back waddled back home.

After reaching home he woke up his wife shouting - "Old woman, old woman, not up yet? The day has dawned." So the old woman jumped up and lighted up the fire and the couple squatted near it warming themselves.

The old man then said - "We are in luck today! The trap is packed." The old woman said - "Let's see, let's see." Then the old man emptied out the contents of the trap and behold, they were all toads. On seeing that the old woman said - "We *are* in luck today! We shall have lots to eat today!".

The old man bid her kill the toads without further ado. And the old woman, taking her stick, ran about after the toads and slew them one by one. She then skinned and cleaned them all. However one toad, half dead with fear, crawled under the old woman's stool and thus escaped her notice. When the old man removed the stool he discovered the survivor and said to the old woman - "There is one left; kill that, too!" But the toad called out - "Ah! father, do not kill me. I will plough for you, and hoe for you, and plant out paddy for you!" The old man then replied "How shall a toad do all these things? Your ploughing and hoeing would be a bad business! You only want to escape your imminent death." But the toad pleaded with in trembling voice and begged

hard. The old couple took pity on him and let him stay in their house. So the days went by till the rainy season came round, and the toad went off to plough in the field. As he was sitting on the handle of the plough urging on his cattle, a king came by that way riding on his elephant. The toad called out to him - "What fellow is that? You are knocking down all the balks of my field!" To which the king replied - "Who dares speak to me thus," and sent men to fetch him.

But the toad hid behind a clod, so that they could not find him. And when he continued to abuse them without their finding him, the king bade them take away the plough cattle to his house. The toad, followed secretly behind, and hiding himself in the thatch of the cowshed, began to abuse the king afresh. And the king searched for him in vain and at last ordered the cowshed to be pulled down and the cattle to be put elsewhere. The toad went and hid there, too, and abused the king again.

Finally, the king was frightened and called to him - "Oh! father, are you god or mortal? And what harm have I done to you?" The toad said - "I am mortal of a sooth. And I abuse you because you have carried off my cattle. And if you do not give me your daughter in marriage, I shall remain invisible and abuse you daily."

On hearing this, the king was shocked. At the same time the toad came forth and appeared before him. The king swore that the toad should have his daughter, and for his oath's sake, and lest the toad is some sort a god, gave him his daughter, and sent him home with a sedan-chair and elephants and horses. When the toad reached near his home, the old man and old woman ran clean away. But the toad, their adopted son, seeing their terror, bade them not to be afraid, and sent men after them to fetch them

back. Then they sat down with their adopted son and the daughter-in-law and feasted the men who had come with them.

One day the girl, finding her husband very ugly to look upon, told him to take a bath. "But," said her husband - "what is the good of my taking a bath? I am a frog and always bathing." Then his wife replied - "I know very well that you live in

cold water. But I want to get rid of those nasty protuberances on your back, and want to bathe you." So, finally, her husband agreed. So she heated some water and called out - "Come quick, I must bathe you!" And when the toad came, and asked what he was to do, she said - "You jump straight in, and I will bathe you afterwards." So he jumped in, and, turning over on his back, died.

(Contd. from Page 21)

Tirap Calling!

who is assigned a role for audio-video documentation, was on the team. He had a curiosity on ethnographic documentation. He joined with me during the trip. This trip helps me to explore an important tradition of Noctes which is not known to me. They practice head hunting and had a tradition of erecting monolith. It was witnessed at a hill top-at a place known as Songlong. Large number elongated medium size stone were affixed in the ground in erect posture. Such stone is in the memory of dead. The entire place is regarded as sacred. One is not allowed to point any finger, spit and touch any stone erected over there. Rituals are performed in a specific time. Returning from the site, we came across a Nocte village where we sought a process of construction of house with locally available materials. It is informed that the people who are engaged in building the house are members of the village. The owner of the house arranges a lunch with rice beer for them. In that village, we had also an opportunity to witness a log-drum and able to find its' importance in the context of the society. What is log and what is drum? Log is basically a trunk of big sized tree. It is carved out in such a manner that the middle portion becomes hollow. It is big in size. Some portion of the hollow log, is cut in small squares. A number of thick wooden stick is prepared out. One can take two such stick. Many people can beat the log at a time. The purpose of making such drum was to

disseminate information. One is not allowed to beat the log without any reason. As soon as collective beating starts, people of the village started coming to the place. During beating, there is a specific arrangement for standing from aged to young. It is still going on at the advent of cellular phone. There is strict custom associate with making such log drum in the jungle, need to make appropriate prayer to the custodian deity of the forest for cutting big tree to prepare such drum, and sing song praying for forgiveness for destroying forest. In the evening time, we were taken to Lapnan village situated close to Khonsa town. We saw a large log drum in their common community hall known as *poo* or *pang*. Apart from it, we could saw the real testimony of head hunting tradition. Skulls of a number of individuals were seen arranged as a museum. They reveal that they preserve it for the memory of their forefather's tradition. Seeing is believing. We had an opportunity to visit a kings' house at the village. It is really a Nocte king's house at its' size. Panghu Suyang, Gopal Bayang's brother-in-law provided a warm hospitality during the visit of the village. With this brief visit to Tirap, meeting members from Nocte group, it is found that Noctes possess a wonderful heart that can embrace anyone with ease. They are really hospitable in nature. Looking the presence members of Nocte groups, and exploring their vanishing custom of head hunting- testifies that there is changes and transformation of traditional societies of the north east!



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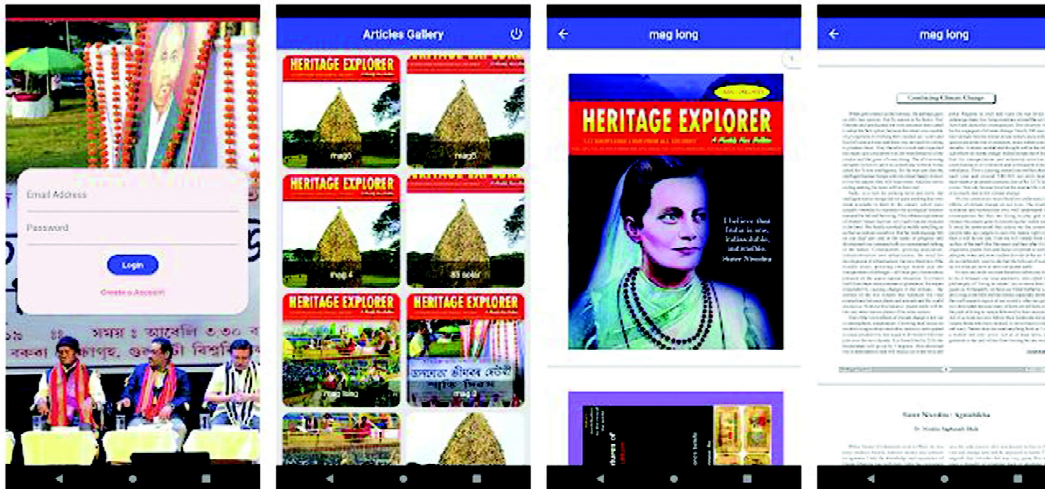
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