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HERITAGE EXPLORER

"LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES"

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India's Unsung Heroes



U Kiang Nangbah was a freedom fighter of the Jaintia's tribe. Kiang Nangbah fought against the British colonial government because of their suppressive power that denied the rights of the native people. He was born to Ka Rimai Nangbah at Tpeppale in Jowai.

He was hang on 30th December 1862. Kiang Nangbah was hang on till death. The suppressive power of the British and disrespect over their religious, faith and culture ignite the fire of mass movement which started with the calling of Dorbar of the twelve Daloi's to appraise the people about the need to resist the alien rules. In the Dorbar he was elected as a leader by his countrymen.

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Should we discard AFSPA

Days after the Union government constituted a high-level committee to examine the possibility of the withdrawal of the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act from Nagaland, it decided to declare the entire Nagaland as a “disturbed area” for six more months with effect from December 30 while terming the state’s condition as “disturbed and dangerous”.

There is nothing surprising about the decision because there cannot be a vacuum between the date the high level committee constituted by the Union Government comes to a decision and the present, which as per government view is disturbed and dangerous. For decades Nagaland has been highly violence prone. Starting with Phizo, who fought for independence of Nagaland during the sixties and was instrumental in several rail track blasts and killing of many innocent people, to the present day independence seeking NSCN faction, all have resorted to violence to achieve their single point goal of Independent Nagaland. Even after a peace process is in force, and a framework agreement has been reached, the NSCN factions did not restrain themselves or stopped imposing taxes on the hapless. They are still forcing the non-Naga populace to part with their hard earned money at the point of gun. The Government of India has also entered into a Ceasefire Agreement with National Socialist Council of Nagaland (K)Niki Group, with effect from 8 September, 2021 for a period of one year and more than 200 cadres of this group along with 83 weapons joined the peace process, but real peace still eludes Nagaland. Under these circumstances, absence of any legally enforceable restraint till the high level committee comes to a decision, will only help the Anti-AFSPA groups and prove harmful to the national integrity.

It is sad that the recent incident of death due to army firing in Nagaland’s Mon District on 4-5 December has added fuel to the fire of the shrill demand for withdrawal AFSPA from Nagaland. Most of the hill states of North East that are badly ravaged by insurgency are in support of the withdrawal of the Act. It is difficult to understand why the democratically elected governments of these smaller states are supporting the move knowing full well that the withdrawal will only help the extremist groups and not the peace loving common populace of the state.

From whatever little information that has come out it is gathered that, a group of labourers from Oting village were returning home from their coal mining venture, were intercepted and asked to stop for questioning. Instead of

stopping their pick-up van, the group allegedly tried to speed away by shooting at the army forcing them to retaliate. The Army later stated that a specific operation had been planned in the area “based on credible intelligence of likely movement of insurgents”. Consequently, when the army contingent on look out duty saw a fast moving pick-up van carrying several people, they mistook it for the insurgents belonging to the Yung Aung faction of the banned outfit NSCN (K) based in Myanmar. Whatever may be the truth, it is certain that the army had no reason to kill some innocent villagers just for fun because they could gain nothing out of the misadventure.

A careful study of the events that resulted in the unfortunate massacre smacks of some conspiracy. It is a well known fact that the army serving in the area had a very cordial relations with the local populaces, who were very supportive to the army operations. Another thing that adds to the conspiracy theory is that the intelligence input provided in past by the local informers were never found unreliable.. The question automatically arises as to why it failed so miserably this time. The only answer to the riddle is perhaps the machinations of the insurgent groups who may have either lured the informer or forced him to pass on wrong input to the army to serve their purpose. The insurgents’ main aim was to create a rift between the local people and the army. The army firing and the subsequent killings helped them to achieve their goal and at the same time garner the support of the state government and public for repeal of the AFSPA.

We the people of north east are at cross roads today; Time has come for us to decide whether we wish to have a peaceful and progressive society. When a state is partly ruled by politicians and partly ruled by extremist groups, there can never be peace and progress. We shall have to stand firmly against the firearm powered goons failing which our elected representatives will start speaking their language. In course of time there will be no law and order because we will then be governed by the law of the jungle – might is right. China and Myanmar juntas are waiting for that to happen. Discarding AFSPA will only serve their purpose, not ours. We must not allow that to become a reality.

Romen Chakraborty
Chief Editor

The Eternal Religion in perspective of Malsom Janajati of Tripura

Chandra Krishna Malsom
(continued from november issue)

TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP OF MALSOM DOFA

1. Rai/Halamsa: The Chief of the entire Dofa, heads the administration, maintains co-ordination and co-operation among the Halam villages, clans, other tribes etc.

2. Kanchikao: The Deputy Chief (who may be equated with Jubraj of ancient period) assists the chief in all his public duties, succeeds the Halamsa when the latter's office falls vacant.

3. Galim/Kalim: He is the assistant of the Kanchikao.

4. Kabur/Gabur: He supervises all public duties in the Dofa.

5. Chapiya-lwn (Senior Chapiya) Nazir: He makes arrangement of food, tobacco, Paan/Betel leaf etc., for the Rai/Halamsa and his associates in any social meeting. Besides, he is to arrange accommodation for the guests.

6. Chapiya-tom (Junior Chapiya): He assists the Chapiya-lwn in all his duties.

7. Khoukusung: His duty is like a Police personnel, to arrest the accused as and when asked for by competent authority for trial in the community court.

8. Hajira: His duty is to produce the offenders in the court of the Rai/Halamsa in due time. The offenders are generally kept under his custody at the time of hearings of any case while in the court of the Rai/Halamsa.

9. Karbari: Caretaker of the guests who are delegates from different villages for performing public duties in the Rai's residence.

10. Yaksung Peon-cum-messenger: He informs the people about any meeting, distributes tobacco, rice beer and makes sitting arrangement for the dignitaries in a courteous manner.

11. Dolai/Doria Peon-cum-messenger: He informs the people about any meeting by the beat of drum (Dul hem) etc. His specialty is to beating the drum in every big community festivals or pujas.

12. Karma Peon-cum-messenger: He is the helper of Chapiya in all-public duties along with other peon-cum-messengers.

13. Sengkanta Executor of corporal punishment on the accused person in the court of the Halamsa.

The Apex Body Committee consists of member from every clan (Panchi) in order to represent all the clans in the Community Council.

(10) The Chieftainship and Judicial System:

(i) Chieftainship at Village Level: A 'Khawsak' is an important socio-administrative unit among the Malsoms at the village level. A village is the second form of association, generally more complex than the family. However, the 'Khawsak Choudhuri (village headman)' is the chief in a particular village. There are two assistants in the name of 'Khandol' to assist him in all his social activities. The 'Khandols' generally inform, as and when directed by the 'Khawsak Choudhuri (Village Headman)', all villagers regarding any meeting, social gatherings and social functions. The 'Khawsak-Choudhuri (Village Headman)' is selective rather than hereditary. A 'Khawsak-Choudhuri' however, is devoid of extreme judicial power. He has the power to call a meeting of a 'Khawsak (Village)' which is commonly known as 'Khawsung ruson' to settle various issues like petty theft, robbery and other offences. A villager can appeal to the Malsom Rai/Halamsa (Chief of the Community) if one is not satisfied with the decision of a 'Khawsak Choudhuri (Village Headman)'. He also maintains a close liaison with the members of the Executive Committee of his region while referring the serious cases to the court

of the Malsom Rai/ Halamsa. He himself remains present in all meetings of the Dofa. If he fails to attend for unavoidable circumstances, he sends one of his representatives.

(ii) Chieftainship at Community Level: The Dofa is the apex socio-administrative organization of the Malsoms. The supreme head of the Malsoms is known as 'Rai or Halamsa'. One must be old-aged enough, free from politics and well acquainted with the social custom and practices of the Malsoms. Over the ages, the Rai/Halamsa has been exercising legislative, administrative, judicial, financial power over the whole community. The Malsom Rai/ Halamsa presides over the annual conference of the Dofa which has its legislative powers. He is interpreter and guardian of the Malsom society. All decisions to be implemented among the Malsoms need approval of the Malsom Rai/ Halamsa.

The administrative power of the Malsom Rai/ Halamsa is that he can dismiss any member of the Dofa Executive Committee for any contravention of customary rules. He can even dismiss or outcaste any family belonging to Malsom tribe from the Malsom Dofa for violation of customary rules and practices. Every Malsom individual and family is supposed to respect and abide by the customary rules and regulations of the Malsom Dofa.

The Malsom Rai/Halamsa exercises judicial power also. He while exercising this judicial power, adjudicated the relation between man and woman; elopement, adultery and rape etc. He also directs collection of fees for performing pujas and meeting etc. He also performs religious functions as the supreme head of the whole community in the Pathwn Sengrak Khawser, Khawser(Kerpuja), Ramser, Ganga puja(Tui-pathwn pek), and in other festivals of the Malsom society.

In addition to 'Khawsak Choudhuri (Village headman)', the members of traditional Rai/ Halamsa Executive Committee and Advisory Committee extend their co-operation to the Malsom Rai/ Halamsa in all socio-cultural programmes as and when asked by him. The Advisory Committee can offer advice on important issues likely to be taken up by the Dofa from time to time. There is a

traditional Dofa Executive Committee which comprises of total 13 members. To become a member of this committee, one must attain 21 years of age. The Dofa Executive Committee has the President, Secretary, Office Secretary, Treasurer and 9 members. The Executive Committee acts on matters relating to education, finance, religious functions and festivals and maintenance of peace and tranquility among the Malsoms as well as the State and thus assists the Malsom Rai/ Halamsa in his legislative, judicial and administrative functions. In religious functions, the Malsom Rai/Halamsa is assisted by Kanchikao, Kalim, Kabur and others. The socio-political set up of the Malsoms is a combination of the age-old traditional Dofa system and modern democracy.

(iii) Judicial System (Rubo dan):-

There are some methods of controlling defaulters or offenders, as the case may be, like social admonition, realization of monetary fine, corporal punishment, externment from the Dofa (Community) etc. However, the punishment of an offender or a defaulter committing some sort of offences or crime shall be determined by the nature and extent of the guilt offence or crime, as deem fit by a competent 'Darbar' (court) trying such a case.

(iv) Classification of Offences: The offences triable by the 'Dofa' are classified on the basis of nature and grievousness and impact on society. The 'Sakpui' (society) deals with such offences and disposes them off peacefully. However, the Social, Civil and Criminal offences which are grievous in nature which may disturb badly social harmony, peace and tranquility are generally referred to government for appropriate action.

1. BIRTH OFFENCES:

Commission of miscarriage of a quick child.

2. MARRIAGE OFFENCES:

i. Obstruction to legal marriage.

ii. Receiving Dowry.

iii. Abducting and marrying a girl

iv. Taking to or allowing a marriage restricted under section 17.

v. Marrying a girl to any body against her will.

vi. Other forced marriage.

3. DEATH OFFENCES:

Dishonouring a human dead body or defiling a funeral site or tomb constructed in honour of a deceased.

4. RELIGIOUS OFFENCES:

i. Creation of disruption or disturbance to a 'Dharma-kam'.

ii. Dishonouring or polluting an icon or a Temple or a shrine, or an element believed to be sacred.

iii. Behaving in disparaging or dishonouring or humiliating manner with an 'Ochai'.

iv. Taking direct action against an 'Ochai' by a person not a member of 'Malsom Dofa', Tripura.

v. Physical hurt, assault or attack on any 'Ochai'.

5. PROPERTY OFFENCES:

i. Forcible taking possession of somebody's property.

ii. Damage of somebody's property.

iii. Use of property in such a manner as to cause nuisance or other harm to the general public.

6. HUR NGAL (SEXUAL) OFFENCES:-

The 'Hur ngal' offences are classified as Group A, B and C as under:-

Group-A Hur ngal Offences:-

(1) Jalrat nupang muruk' means abduction or kidnapping.

(2) Sexual intercourse with a close relative or with a pupil.

(3) Sexual copulation with a premature girl.

(4) Sexual copulation with a mentally handicapped woman or girl.

(5) Jalrat nupang awmpui' or rape.

(6) Juvenile 'Hur ngal'.

(7) Unnatural sexual intercourse.

(8) 'Noti suak' i.e., prostitution.

(9) Offering or supplying woman for illegal sexual intercourse.

(10) Sexual intercourse with a woman whose husband is alive.

(11) Elopement of a betrothed girl/bride.

Group-B Hur ngal Offences:-

(1) Sexual intercourse between a man and woman who are not husband and wife, except those falling under Group-A.

(2) Elopement i.e., 'Raw-awl nin rawt'.

(3) 'Doile mania mir-twi'.

(4) 'Doile mania mir-awl'.

Group-C Hur ngal Offences:-

(1) Kissing or touching the breasts or a sexual organ.

(2) 'Hurngal khwr' i.e., intelligent and wanton behaviors indicating sex or arousing sexual desire.

(3) Unrestricted association or movements of young woman and man.

(11) Death rites (Thikam):-

The Malsoms believe that Almighty God bestows death to all, thus none can escape from its clutches. They burn dead bodies in any nearby cremation ground (Thwan) uttering the sacred word 'Hari Bol, Bol hari' for the salvation of one's soul. The son of the deceased is set fire on the pyre (Mangkhon). In case the deceased has no children, the pyre would be lit by his/her dear and near one. It is also to be noted that the Malsoms would never leave the cremation ground till the dead body is completely burnt to ashes. After that a small quantity of the bone from the portion of skull (Lutham) is collected and preserved for further social customs, before leaving the cremation ground, a black chicken (Aawr vomte) is left behind as a sign of respect to the deceased person. Two occasions are arranged, namely, (1) Buzok and (2) Samsw. Buzok is held three days after death while Samsw after one week or a fortnight. In the latter occasion, the bone skull (Lutham) is immersed in the holy water of Dumbur or Ganga on a pilgrimage or in any other holy water as considered by them. The forefathers of the Malsoms were sound in economy and used to throw the bone-skull (Lutham) of their parents or relatives in the Ganga river in the past. Generally, they perform it in great respect at the time of Paush Sankranti (middle of January). The Malsoms also believe in rebirth of human souls (Rwtha). According to them, the supreme God will judge the deceased person's soul. He or she will be punished for his or her mischief (Kamsw) and awarded for his or her good deeds (Kamtha).

*(To be continued in
February, 2022 issue)*

ZELIANRONG HERAKA NEW YEAR

Haingaukambe Kuame

The primitive Zelian-rong Naga people imagined the Sun as a Masculine in regards to its marvelous radiation and considered it as Superior than the Moon. They also believed, the Moon as a Feminine considering as the Mother of all living beings which is older than the sun. Besides, it is helpful for counting of days and months on its movement showing light which grow bigger and bigger day by day till Full moon (Purnima); and again becomes lesser and lesser day after day till the Dark Moon (Amavashya). However, due to lack of its own light it was assumed as the second creation of God according to the moral reports of our ancestors. Since then, the Zelianrong Naga had been counting the time, day, week, month and the year in relation with the periodical movement of the Moon. The method of counting of Zelianrong Naga New Year starts from 1st day of the New Moon appears just after the day of the Dark Moon of the first Lunar Calendar Month i.e. 'KEREKEU' which falls in between the month of December and January of Gregorian Calendar. The Zelianrong Naga considers the Dark Moon (Amavashya) as a bad Omen day; hence conducting any worship on that day is generally abstained as per Hingde (rules of Heraka).

The Zelianrong Naga follows the counting method of Lunar Calendar based on the Calculation of 12 full Moon and 12 Dark Moon in a year which come to 355 days only. The rest 10 days, 6 hours etc. are adjusted once in every 3 years by adding one more month named as 'KEHIKEU' (an Extra Month) to that year by making it the year of 13 months as like leap year in the Gregorian Calendar (which adjusts 1 day by making February for 29 days).

Like other communities, the Zelianrong Naga also observes NEW YEAR on the 1st New Moon day after the completion of the annual Festival (Hega'ngi) of the previous year. On the eve of the New Year Day, the priest or Paine of each village

announces to observe the New Year day with full abstention from all daily activities. They observe New Year Day praying to Tingwang (Almighty God) for their misery free and prosperous life throughout the year by His grace. The process of praying on that day is as follows:

1. Gathering at Kelumki (Mandir)
2. Collective Sunrise prayer,
3. Prayer by the Priest,
4. Singing a devotional song while entering the Kelumki,
5. Individual's prayer at the holy Altar,
6. Singing a benedictory song,
7. Speech on the New Year day,
8. Exultant prayer by the Priest upon the offertories,
9. Singing five devotional songs followed by Heraka Mantra,
10. Taking of Telau dui (Holy Water).

Name of Days of A Week And Months of A Year:

In accordance with the creative affairs of the Heaven and the Earth (Universe) by the Almighty God, the genuine meaning of the name of the days of the week and the months of the year are described in the Heraka Lunar Calendar as per ancestors' statements are as follows:

Name of days of a week and Meaning:

1. Naimik mai (Day of the Sun): Among the God's Creation, the Sun was believed to be created as First, So, the 1st day of the week was named Naimik mai (Day of the Sun)
2. Hekeu mai (Day of the Moon): On the next day, God created the Moon, So, the 2nd day of the week was named as Hekeu mai (Day of the Moon).
3. Hegih mai (Day of the Stars): On the 3rd day, God created the Constellations to beautify the sky,

so the day was named after it as Hegih mai.

4. Ting mai (Day of setting of heavenly bodies:

The other heavenly bodies were created and were placed at different places. So the day was named as Ting mai

5. Kedei mai (Day of the earth: After creating all necessary celestial bodies, God then created the Earth. So this day was named as Kedei mai.

6. Kering mai (Day of the living things): It seemed so empty though He created the earth. So, God created living things to beautify the earth. Hence, the day was named as Kering mai.

7. Kam mai (Day of completion of His creation):

Now, God had created all necessities of the heaven and the earth. Thus, He himself feel contented and happy that all creations were completed. Therefore, the 7th day was named as Kam mai (Day of completion of all creation).

Name Of Months In Zeliangrong Heraka Calendar :

1. Kerekeu (Month of Stimulation to work):

In accordance with the changing of seasons naturally, the Zeliangrong people also used to calculate months of a year and named them in relation with the nature of agricultural stages of operation. Likewise, our ancestors track out the seasons and stir up in their minds that probably time has come to engage in work. So they named the 1st month of the year as kerekeu.

2. Kena Keu (Month of season drawing to work in agricultural purposes):

In relation with the changes in atmosphere, the season reveals the time to start agricultural activities. So, this month is named as Kena keu.

3. Kezingkeu (Month of sprouting new seeds):

In this month all-deciduous grasses or leaves of trees are withered away and the new buds sprout off the ground and makes the environment completely green. So the 3rd month of the year is called as Kezingkeu (Month of sprouting new seeds).

4. Keramkeu (Month of crop tilling):

The spring season comes by in the 4th month of the year. In this season, almost all crops should be sowed in field. So this month of the year is named as Keramkeu.

5. Gepeikeu (Month of bushy grasses):

By this month, all the weeds are grown up to hill size and make the land full of thick and rough bushes which hinder the growth of crops in field and also make people reluctance to work in bushy jungle. So this month is named as Gepeikeu.

6. Nchewkeu (Month of crops forming flowers and fruits):

After around three months from sowing of crops in the field, the crops fully grown up and begin to yield flowers and fruits. So this month is called as Nchewkeu.

7. Ndikeu (Month of crops starting to mature):

In this month almost all cultivated crops start maturing. So, the 7th month of the year is called as Ndikeu.

8. Gepaieku (Month of drizzling season):

This month marks the ending of summer season but light drizzle and foggy weather occur in this month. So, this month is called as Gepaieku.

9. Hechit keu (Month of Harvesting):

All the matured crops are harvested and reaped by this month, So, this month is called as Hechitkeu.

10. Hebaieku (Month of storing corn in Barns):

In this month all the harvested crops are collected and stored in the barn or granary. Thus, the month is named as Hebaieku.

11. Kerukeu (Month of lightening agriculture works of the year): After engaging the whole 10 months of the year in agriculture field, people finally get relieved from field works. All young boys and girls recreate themselves and roam hither and thither freely and merrily, so this month is called as Kerukeu.

12. Nduikeu (Month of contentment and festival):

After the good result of year long labour, people feel contented with sufficient food and drink as in a festive mood without worries. So the 12th month of the year is called as Nduikeu.

13. Kehikeu (An extra month):

Unlike the Gregorian English calendar, the Lunar Calendar is quite peculiar and unique. According to Lunar month, there is a leap year after the confluence of every two years, and there is one extra month in every three years which is called as Kehikeu (An extra month).

INDIGENOUS FAITH DAY CELEBRATION IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Dr. Sodyong Kri

The Indigenous people is having so many gods and goddesses which include Doni-Polo of Tani Clans, Amik-Matai, Ringya-Jawmalu of Kaman & Tawra Mishmis, Ini Mashello Zinu Khuya of Idu Mishmi, Rangfra of the Tangsa, and so on. Indigenous Faith Day (IFD) was celebrated across the state with various events with a resolve to safeguard the indigenous faith and identity with two main theme viz., *i. Implementation of Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978, and ii. Delisting of converted Christians from Schedule Tribe List.* Moreover, it also stressed on bringing back the religion column in ST certificates.

Indigenous Faith Day was earlier celebrated on 31st of December every year, under the aegis of the IFCSAP to commemorate the birth anniversary of Golgi Bote Talom Rukbo, who is regarded as the father of the indigenous faith movement; the day is celebrated on this day since 2013.

So many Chief Guests, Guest of Honors and resource persons spoke on the occasion including Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. Pema Khandu Ji, Hon'ble Minister, Education, Er. Taba Tedir Ji, MLAs, Deputy Commissioners, SPs and reputed personalities from each community across the state. Wherein, they have talk of promoting, preserving and propagating indigenous faiths and cultural traditions.

While speaking on the occasion the Chief Minister stated that "Religion is a very personal choice in a democratic and secular country where every religion and faith is equal and all tribes and communities followed and practiced their respective indigenous faiths, which, pushed by modernity and democratic process, changed with time. But, what we should never forget is that we are all from the same origin. So, elders to teach their young ones their native

language, speak in their native language along with preserving and promoting aged old tradition and culture. If any of our languages dies, the connection to our cultural identity will die".

He also lauded the Indigenous Faith & Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFCSAP) for continuously putting in efforts through its various tribe-based branches to promote, preserve and propagate indigenous faiths and cultural traditions.

Attending as one of the Chief Guests, Hon'ble Minister, Education Er. Taba Tedir said that the local priest institutions are being supported well by the department, and that the National Education Policy 2020 would focus on teaching nursery and pre-primary children their native languages. He also spoke about the importance of the indigenous faith and exhorted one and all to "contribute their best for the preservation and promotion of the indigenous faith in the state."

All the Chief Guests and Guests of the Honors of the celebration were very much concern over the diminishing uses of own dialogues and practices of the rich cultural tradition of the indigenous people of the state and called upon the youths and the intellectuals to shoulder the responsibilities of preserving their tradition and culture for the next generations to come. Otherwise, these traditions, customs and rituals as our real identity would have been extinct.

Every resource persons have appealed everyone to preach and promote the verses of Gods and Goddesses of the Indigenous Faith Believers for the goodness of the indigenous religion and could have been spread. Because, there is none to protect our culture and it is our responsibility to protect it.

(Contd. to Page 20)

Contemporary verbal Literature of North- East India

Dr Tridib Kr. Goswami

The title of this paper consists of three terms ‘contemporary’, Verbal literature and ‘North – East India ‘the term contemporary means Living or occuring at the same time or belonging to or occuring in the present. North -East India is the easternmost region of India representing both a geographic and political administrative division of the country. It comprises eight states – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. verbal Literature means Oral Literature which transforms from mouth to mouth without having any written form. It can also be considered as a colloquial Literature. This literature does not have a printed form and transforms from one mouth to another, one society to another, one generation to another, from one line to the next, thus it continues, having significance and importance like the printed literature or the E-Literature.

Arunachal Pradesh finds mention in the literature of kalika purana and Mahabharata. This place is the prabhu Mountains of the puranas. It is heard that sage parashuram atoned for his sin, sage vyasa meditated king Bismaka Founded his kingdom and had Krishna married his consort Rukmini here in this place.

Arunachal Pradesh is a house to several groups of indigenous people like monpas sherdukpen, tagins, Akas etc. They follow vaisnavism and Buddhism. This language is derived from tibeto burman language and more than 50 dialects are available. Dance and ritual dance are also there, these are performed with verbal song. A rich oral collection of folklores and chants, usually in a ballad tone, have been passed down from centuries about the historical events, myths, poems of spirits and calling of deities. These all are part of verbal literature.

Manipur is famous for its meitei language. Here also, we find verbal literature in the form of epic poems, curative chants, folk tales, myths, legends, proverbs etc.

Meghalaya is known for its Khasi, Garo, and Jaintia people. The verbal literature of Meghalaya is chiefly known for its folk tales and fables. Among these – the legend of Mount Sopheh how the peacock got his beautiful feathers. The goddess who came to live with mankind, the formation of earth, the tiger and the monkeys – significant.

In Mizoram, we have the oral tradition of literature, i.e., verbal literature. Duhlian dialect is for this cause. Folk song and folk stories are the best example of verbal literature in Mizoram.

In Nagaland, Nagamese, Aö, Tenyidie these languages are used in oral literature. The identity of the Nagas lies with its oral tradition. This oral tradition includes folktales, songs, poems, proverbs etc. These reflect belief, customs, public paradises etc. Each person lives with a new tale but by passing time, disappears, while the respective person dies.

In Sikkim, Sikkimese language is used. Limbo language is also seen there. Their oral literature is known as ‘Mundhum’ folktales, sermons, Mantras, songs all found in the oral tradition.

Folktales, folksong, ballad – these are also found in Tripura in the form of oral literature.

In Assam, we have Ojapali, Putala Nach, Kusan Gan, Bharigan, Khuliya Bhauriya, Kamrupia- Dhuliya and Pala Gaan and text of these performing art transformed from generation to generation as oral literature.

In Arunachal, we find ‘Oyo Heiya’ song, which is a good example of folk song. In Nagaland, ‘Hiyo Hiyo’ song is an example of oral literature. In Sikkim

'Dhamphu' song is available, which is a part of oral literature. In Tripura, we have folk dances like mog, halam, molsom where oral literature is used for its better performance. Oral literature (Folk literature) of Manipur can rightly be assessed from the collectives works of Dr. Kamal Lamabam. On the other hand, oral library tradition of Mizoram and Meghalaya on also be estimated from the works of C. Latrinliani and Bah Karios Wahlog respectively.

Biyanam, Nisukani geet, Jeng bihu, Dhahi naam these are the excellent example of verbal literature in Assam. The perfuming art of Assam like kushan gan, Kamrupiya Dhuliya, Ojapali, Ankiya bhaoua, pala bhaona have a plenty of verbal literature. A few examples of verbal literature, talking from the performing art of Assam, are mentioned below:

"Ramayan puniya katha Sri Ram chandar
Laba kusha duyua bhair kakai Ramar Santan"
(kushan gan)

'Nila Chari pindha jani
Mor janir nicina lagice' (kamrupiya Dhuliya)

'Lankata jampa dile
tar nama ki
Bir Hanuman nam
Bir Hanuman'(Ojapali)

'Maabor dhan re Monai
Mao bor dhan
Jar ghare Mao nai nisphal jiban' (Manai yatra)

The oral literature of bhaona tradition in Assam is different From place to place. consequently. Oral literature found in the art form in middle Assam is different from the lower Assam or the upper Assam.

The oral literary tradition of the pala – art form can easily be estimated from the following examples-

'Harichandra ace bane
mata sabe aka mone
'Teu ahi Kariba odhara he'
(Harichandra is in the forest , please call him for rescue)-
(Harichandra uppakhyan)

'Bise mara puri mok

Otha praneswari
Nuwaro sahibo moi
Jai pran uri'
(O my dear wife, get up quickly. I am suffering from severe pain. I can't bear pain, I will breath my last)
(Beula-lakhimdar)

'Suna Suna Durasara
Suna Mura bani
Tor matha katibuhu
Hate khanda dhari'
(Hello, scoundrel, listen to me, I will be head you with my sword) (Bhakta prahlad)

Thus if we observe the contemporary verbal literature of north- east India, we can have a clear picture of it. The verbal literature of north- east India is rich treasure of folk literature and it should be estimated properly. For a proper estimation in future, a few steps can be taken. These are mentioned below:

- (1) The oral or the verbal literature should have a written form.
- (2) The government of India and the respective govts of the North-east India should take necessary steps for presentation of the literature.
- (3) The oral literature- its dialect and language should have a place in the languages that we use in our day to day life.
- (4) Arrangement of India state folk festival is also necessary.
- (5) India state exchange programme of verbal literature is also important.
- (6) Study of the verbal / oral literature should be a part of the syllabus- starting from primary to university level.
- (7) Linguistics society of India should play a role publishing journal on the oral literature of the North-east India and India respectively.

No doubt , this verbal or oral literature of North-east India will paue a new way which will contribute a lot to the growth and development of India literature as a whole.

Important contribution of Purvanchal states on Indian Sanatan culture

Major S N Mathur, SM (Retd)

Religious book Gita is synonymous to Sankhya Tathya philosophy. Kapil Muni is the father of Sankhya tathya and is related to Tripura Kingdom of Northeast Of India. He was the first Chief Priest of Tripura Kingdom. The state of Tripura is the most mythical royal house of India and has had a significant influence and contribution to the Sanatan Hindu culture.

Most of India's Northeast States were part of the mythical Tripura kingdom, which has been associated with King Yayati from the Mahabharata period. This empire was governed from Sagar Island, popularly known as Tribanga. This state was governed from a group of islands in the Bay of Bengal, of which many submerged and also included Prayag in the north and the area extended upto the Himalayas. One of islands was the ashram of Kapil Muni, Ganga Sagar, is still the center of Hindu faith. The vast Tribanga kingdom was reduced to the present state of Tripura. West Bengal and East Bengal (Bangladesh) were part of the Tribanga Empire, which is why Bengal is named Paschim Banga. This is a very beautiful initiative and this is the reason why Bengal's culture, language, music etc. is so beautiful and attractive. There has been a wonderful contribution of Bengal in the freedom struggle.

Kapil Muni was the Kul guru (First Priest) of Tribanga kingdom and this is the reason why the chief priests of Chaturdash temple of Tripura state are people who went from Ganga Sagar and they are called Chintai. They can only be the priests of this temple, as per the mythological tradition of the Kingdom.

Kapil Muni was originally from Gujarat (Sidhpur) and he was invited by the Tribanga kings to build an ashram in Ganga Sagar, and to be the First Chief Priest of the Tribanga kingdom.

Perhaps we have forgotten the role of the

Tribanga Empire, that is, the northeastern states of present-day India, and the important contribution that has been made to the Indian Sanatan Hindu culture. We have also forgotten their contribution abroad.

The wonderful contribution of the Northeast states on the Indian Sanatan culture is important and unimaginable. Yayati's son Druhyu established a kingdom in Punjab and Gandhara (Afghanistan) with a huge army and the influence of his descendants spread far and wide.

The sons of the later Druhyu king Pracetas finally migrate to the region north of Afghanistan. Some scholars say they could be related to Zoroastrian, Iranian, Greek or European peoples. They were probably a north-western people. In the Hindu epics, they are connected with Ghandara (Afghanistan). Their influence is felt as far as the Yezdi of Iraq, Armenians, Egyptians, Druze (Syria, Lebanon and Israel)

Some Tripura scholars strongly believe that they have a deep connection with the Druids of Europe (Druhyu /Drui + Viddha = Druivid= Druid). Viddha / Vid means scholar.

Tripura is closely related to the Baltic (Lithuania, Latvia) countries. There are many similarities between the deities. The Sun God is called Saule, and in the same way Lakshmi ji is called Laima and Kali Maa is called Laume.

The wonderful contribution of the Northeast states on the Indian Sanatan culture is important and unimaginable. We Indians are proud of the contribution of Sanatan Hindu culture of Northeast people.

Kolkata's Durga Puja has been officially recognised by UNESCO. Yes, the incredible cultural feast has made it to the UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list.

BIRDS ARE WATCHING...

Kedar Arvind Kulkarni

Affinity between Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalayan Ashram (ABVKA) and Professor Gangmumei Kamei is of sublime texture. 'Professor ji', as he was affectionately called by everyone in the organization with lot of admiration for his wisdom and steadfastness, was very proud to be associated with Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram. He acknowledged his admiration that he had in his mind for the organization in September 2002 in the speech that he delivered in ABVKA Conference at Varanasi. He was closely associated with Rani Gaidinliu for 27 long years. He met founder president of ABVKA Shri Balasaheb Deshpande ji during his long association with Rani Gaidinliu. He held Balasaheb Deshpande ji in very high esteem. He realized that both, Deshpande ji and Rani Gaidinliu, shared a vision of uplifting the janajatis (tribes), of preservation of ancient faith and culture and for a dignified place for them in the national life of our great country. These two leaders, Professor ji believed, represented national cultural heritage of janajatis of India and the dream of the janajati people for progress and modernization through social and economic development.

'ABVKA admired Professor ji' spurity and integrity of thoughts; uprightness for ancient tradition, faith and culture of janajatis; forthright opinions on the social and historical events and episodes; for his involvement and eagerness for social welfare and awareness; for his trusteeship of karyakartas of the organization and its activities.

Professor ji passed away on 5th January, 2017 in Imphal. Everyone in the organization was heartbroken. Everyone who knew him felt grieved as we lost an elder person of our family. Kalyan Ashram Manipur was more disheartened as we lost our angel.

The formation of Tingkao Ragwang Chapriak

Phom in 1994 in Imphal was a glittering example of Professor ji's fortitude, will power and prophetic personality. Construction of Kalum Kai in Chingmeirong village in Imphal as the main center is a testimonial of his leadership and emphasizing construction of Kalum Kai in every village of TRC followers underscores his farsightedness. ABVKA reckons Professor ji in very high esteem and feel proud to be associated with two illuminaries, Rani Gaidinliu and Professor ji, who have not only shown concepts and methods to Kabui (Rongmei) janajati, but to Nagas as well as to every janajati in the North East. ABVKA always prayed for the success in every endeavor of Professor ji. Every karyakarta of ABVKA always solicit divine blessings and strength for the fulfillment of Professor ji's hopes and aspirations for Kabui (Rongmei) and other janajatis.

Professor ji gave shape to programs and activities of Kalyan Ashram Manipur. The essence of Kalyan Ashram, as Professor ji understood was to arouse the conscience and determination of the janajati people to preserve their tradition, faith and culture as well as the sense of nationalism. He highlighted the importance of our work on the backdrop of thoughts of other influential and dominating zealous assemblies which were condemning janajatis' way of life and faith as animist, heathen, savaged, pagan, and barbaric.

Professor ji attended the Golden Jubilee conference of ABVKA in 2004 in New Delhi. His friendship with senior karyakartas of ABVKA was natural and informal. He was very soft spoken but everyone enjoyed interactions with him. Professor ji's perspicuous assessments of issues and their impact at the state and national level were keenly listened. His assessment on the issue of influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh creating problems not only in Assam but in Manipur as well as in entire

North East region between sons of the soil and these illegal immigrants was prescient.

In his speech at Varanasi he recommended to organize the scholars and intellectuals of the ancient faith into frequent conferences, seminars and symposiums to have interaction on the way of life, culture and problems of development. Janajati Faith and Culture Protection Forum was established with his active participation as an executive member of the Forum in April 2002. 'Jagata Purvanchal' an extensive interaction tour was organized by the Forum in 2003 to New Delhi, Haryana and Punjab, where lots of students from North East have been going for their higher studies, to create awareness on the janajati people of North East and their way of life. He interacted with various social organizations and encouraged them to extend their helping hand to not only students of north east but to the janajatis residing in remote corners of north east in their own capacities and competence.

In December 2006 the Forum organized the 'Youth Conference' inviting participants from every state of the North East for three days in Guwahati. More than 4500 youths from more than 100 tribes arrived with their traditional dress and costume in Guwahati. The people of Guwahati were mesmerized to see the richness of culture of north east. The procession of janajati youths created excellent impression on the minds of people to take note of Janajati brethren of north east.

In the year 2010 a seminar on 'Spiritual and Philosophical Traditions of Janajatis of North East' was organized in Guwahati by the Forum to emphasize the purpose and way of life of which is the pillar of identity of janajatis. A reference book was published in the year 2012 by the Forum from the research papers of the seminar.

Professor ji was the most valued member of the 'Rani Gaidinliu Birth Centenary Celebration Committee' formed in the year 2014. The committee organized programs in 73 places throughout the country to pay tribute to inspiring personality of Rani Gaidinliu. It brought sympathetic and keen response from the people on the freedom struggle in the North

East. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji inaugurated the birth centenary celebrations in New Delhi.

ABVKA organized seminars in 2015 to create the 'Vision Document' of janajatis. The Vision Document was formed after a lot of discussions and meetings with common Janajati people, intellectuals, bureaucrats, leaders, social organizations on every aspect of janajati life. The Document incorporated issues of economic, health, agricultural, social, political, educational schemes and even skill development of janajatis. The Document recommended to Union Government to finalize National Policy on Janajatis and to effectively implement it for the benefit of janajatis. The Vision Document considered recommendations on forest, land, environment, water resources, wild life, mining and even on primitive tribal groups (PTGs).

Professor ji was always intensely interested in training programs of karyakartas of Kalyan Ashram as well as janajati organizations. He devoted lot of his time in explaining peculiarities of janajatis to karyakartas. Professor ji used to patiently listen to experiences of karyakartas. We could open our heart to him. His personal care and affection used to be our mental and physical stamina to work in remote janajati villages. Professor ji always admired the dedication, sacrifice and love for janajatis shown by Kalyan Ashram in their national and state level activities.

Every karyakarta of ABVKA on his visit to Imphal certainly pays tribute at the Samadhi of Professor ji at Namching, Keithelmanbi on Imphal-Jiribam road. Shri Somayajulu, the then National Organising Secretary ABVKA visited Samadhi in January 2018. Mataji and didi Jenpuru had reached before us. They were waiting for Somayajulu and other karyakartas. As soon as we reached at the Samadhi two birds which were not seen earlier were seen on the skyline. They came and sat on a tree in the campus near to Samadhi. Mataji had tears in her eyes. She believed that they were sent by Professor ji to welcome Somayajulu. Every one of us had tears in our eyes. We left the Samadhi with heart filled with commitment.

‘USA benefits greatly from Indian talent’- Elon Musk

E. Rajesh Pathak

‘O wealth less, unpleasant and ever troublesome poverty! Go to remote hill. Or else with all our might we will bring your destruction!’[Rigveda-10, 155, 1]. The content of the verse is enough to understand that in our life-philosophy the prosperity is always given equal importance as is given to the attitude of dispossession of a renunciant. But today whom country recognize as prosperous and wealthy such Ambani, Tata and others business houses are subject to the criticism from a particular political class that still subscribe to the ideology already rejected by the world at large. Contrary to that if it is to be seen what way world is heading to, we must take the note of the reactions of the prominent personalities on the achievement of Parag Agrawal being the new CEO of Twitter: ‘Google, Microsoft, Adobe, IBM, Palo Alto Networks and now Twitter run by CEOs who grew up in India. Wonderful to watch the amazing success of Indians in the technology world and a good reminder of the opportunity America offers to immigrants.’ On this tweet of Stripe’s CEO, Patrick Collison, the founder of electric car company Tesla’s CEO, Elon Musk retweeted-‘USA benefits greatly from Indian talent’

All over the world there are no dearth of people who recognize and appreciate the Indian talents. But as for India the things here is different from the world. And how extent, that could be understood by one latest example. Polysilicon is a specific kind of plastic. Today solar cells made of polysilicon and such other components like solar panels, solar modules are imported in the country from abroad. Due to which cost of final solar product gets to be expensive by 40% as compared to that of China. But now Ambani Industries has decided to invest 75,000 crores in Dheerubhai Ambani Green Energy Giga Complex to be established in 5000 acres land in Jamnagar, Gujarat. And from raw material (polysilicon) to manufactured goods (solar cells, solar panels, solar modules etc.), everything would be produced here. Such a great

initiative is this that Reliance Industries should be welcomed by the countrymen. But thing is that many people even know not this development so crucial in present global scenario.

Chinese threat is big, and it is big business houses that can fulfill their role to deal with that. Only airport built by China in Uganda has gone under the control of it. On this development the ret. Military commander, Sarath Fonseka, of Sri Lanka reminded the countrymen that the corrupt politicians have drowned the country in Chinese debt by taking aid from it on high interest rate. Instead of developing Colombo harbor the preference is given to less important Hambantota harbor built by China. Now the thing is that China has gained its foothold inside country’s sea-boundary itself. This incident, notably, underlines the wider importance of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’, too.

It must be noted that the India’s four companies recently to have proudly made their slots among world’s top ten IT service firms are TCS, Infosys, HCL and Wipro. When it came to think of high technological defence sector once our mind itself moves out of country to fulfil our needs. Now the things have got changed. Tejas fighter plane or be it Pinaka multi barrel rocket launchers we have acquired the capability of building them inside the country itself. Larsen & Toubro and TATA Aerospace and Defence of private sectors with BEML [Bharat Earth Movers Limited] are engaged to execute the task.

Increasing demand of petrol-diesel in the future warrants the need of making hurry in working upon their substitutes. 81% components of Lithium ion battery required for the electric vehicles are available at local level. Government is all set to soon achieve international standard in battery manufacturing. The news is that under Production Linked Incentive [PLI] scheme the 20 companies have shown their interests in producing the Advanced Chemistry Cells [ACC] in the country itself. And so that the far lying regions

too may not face scarcity of battery, Hero-electric has made a planning to speed up the building of logistic centres in entire eastern and north-eastern parts of the country, including Patna. Moreover Gulf Oil Lubricants of Hinduja group has braced up itself for the investment to establish the battery-charging centres in different places.

Due to the effect of much paraded socialism-communism the private entrepreneurship and big business houses have remained deprived of the honour due to them in the country. As if without talent; intellect; without work and, above all, without taking risk involved in business the wealth has gone into their possession!

Tripura flags off 'Bharat ko Jaano' programme

The North East Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC), Dimapur, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, in collaboration with Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of Tripura, has organized the 'Bharat ko Jaano' programme from December 27 to December 29, 2021 in different locations of Tripura. The festival is being held under the theme of 'National Cultural Exchange programme'. The event has been organized with an aim to reach out to the rural and urban areas and to create awareness about the rich cultural diversity of the country and promote national integration through culture. The programme will be organized in different places of Tripura i.e. Udaipur, Jirania and Agartala.

The inaugural day of the festival was held at Rajashri Kala Kshetra of Udaipur on Monday. The folk artistes will showcase their colorful folk dance and musical cultural performance in the festival; i.e.- Juju Jaja dance from Arunachal Pradesh, Bihu dance from Assam, Seraikela Chhau dance from Jharkhand, Pung Cholom and Dhol Cholom and Stick Dance from Manipur, Ghudka Sambalpuri dance by team Odisha. Folk and tribal music, and songs and dances of Tripura will also be presented in the festival. The closing ceremony of Bharat Ko Jaano festival will held at the Dr BR Ambedkar English Model School Community Hall of West Ananda Nagar, Agartala, stated a press release.

Side by side, as a part of the Bharat Ko Jano festivities, 3-day long Chain Yatra cultural programme concluded on 29th December 2021, Wednesday. On Wednesday, the North East Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC), Dimapur in collaboration with the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs of

Tripura organised the programme at Dr. BR Ambedkar English Model School Community Hall of West Ananda Nagar in Agartala from 11:30 am. Tripura cooperative and fair price minister Ram Prasad Paul graced the festival as chief guest while Ajay Kumar Das, chairman of Dukli Panchayat Samity, attended as guest of honour.

Ashim Saha, SDM of Sadar sub-division, Subrata Chakraborty, member of Tripura to EZCC were present as guests of honour while Shila Chakraborty of Dr. BR Ambedkar English Model School presided over the inaugural programme. Folk artistes from Arunachal Pradesh, led by Niktor Yadam, presented Juju Jaja folk dance, team Assam, led by Rimjhim Gogoi, performed Bihu dance, and Shiva Charan Sahu and his team from Jharkhand presented Seraikela Chhau dance. Bahadur Singh and his team from Manipur performed Pung Cholom & Dhol Cholom and Stick dance while Ghudka Sambalpuri folk dance was presented by the team from Odisha under the leadership of Dharendra Kumar Panda. The patriotic songs and dances troupes of Tripura presented colourful cultural performances during the festival.

Meanwhile, a Rangoli (Alpana) competition & Creative Portrait Workshop were also organised along with cultural presentation of Bharat Ko Jaano festival in tribute to unsung heroes in connection with Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav from Wednesday at Alpanagram, Lankamura, Agartala, (Indo-Bangla Border Area) of Tripura. The Rangoli (Alpana) competition & Creative Portrait Workshop continue till December 31, 2021.

Post-harvest festival Sikpui Ruoi celebrated at Pillangkatta

Sikpui Ruoi, post-harvest festival of the Hmâr tribe was observed at EFCI Evangel Mission Centre, Pillangkatta, Meghalaya on Sunday by the Hmâr Welfare Society, Guwahati (HWSG).

Sikpui Ruoi, which means 'year of bountiful harvest', is an annual gala for the Hmâr tribe, usually marked by pomp, splendor, dance, merry making and feasting. However, this year the unique and special event was without the usual fanfare and a rather simple, low-key but symbolic occasion due to the pandemic situation.

The proceedings began with collective singing of an opening song *Dâr ang lêngnâ kan tânggram mâwi*. James L. Neingaite, assistant secretary, HWSG, delivered the welcome address. After hoisting of organizational flag, HWSG chairman Thanghlun Hmar in his speech said that celebration of Sikpui Ruoi in olden days would extend for days and sometimes even a month to celebrate the year of 'Fapang Ralinsan' (abundant harvest) in which the granary is still filled with the rice harvest of the previous year. The yield distributed to every

household is brewed into a drink called zu (fermented rice) and is then collectively consumed during the celebration.

Sikpui Ruoi is an inclusive festival in which people from all walks of life, affluent or less unfortunate, young or old get together in perfect harmony. He recalled that, on November 29, 2018, in recognition of the significance of this festival, the Government of Assam had declared December 5 as restricted holiday. He said that the celebration in contemporary times is no longer akin to those days of old; a positive change which became more pronounced after the advent of Christianity among the Hmârs of Manipur in the year 1910. The occasion celebrated with the usual merry making is now more in tune with Christianity and has done away with the age-old customary community brewing and drinking of zu. He exhorted the gathering to continue observing 'Sikpui Ruoi' as an annual event as it will serve as a constant reminder to the younger Hmâr generation about their identity, deep and rich history, culture, custom and tradition.

Siang River Festival is the Siang chapter of the Brahmaputra Utsav

Chief Minister Pema Khandu attended the celebration of Siang River Festival, Siang chapter of the Brahmaputra Utsav here in presence of his cabinet colleagues and legislators on 19th December 2021.

Speaking at the inaugural event of the festival, the CM hoped that the festival will go a long way in spreading awareness on river rejuvenation and conservation. CM Pema Khandu also said the Siang River Festival is an opportunity to showcase and promote the rich cultural heritage of the local tribes and to promote eco-tourism activities in the region.

On repeated threats from floodwaters of Siang river during the monsoon, the CM assured for measures to protect, maintain and stabilize the riverbanks of Siang river to prevent it from causing erosion and floods.

He said it's important that the flow of Siang river is kept in control to prevent loss of properties and damages to agriculture fields. Also the CM expressed keen on having discussions with the local community for protection of Siang river.

The two-day mega event is being organized by State Government in collaboration with the Brahmaputra Board, Ministry of Jal Shakti. The main objective of the festival is to generate awareness on river cleaning, rejuvenation, rainwater harvesting, tourism development etc.

It is being celebrated with the theme of river rejuvenation, freedom struggle and eco-tourism as part of the continuing celebration of 75th years of India's Independence, portraying country's freedom struggle based on the theme "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav".

Ekasharana Naam Dharma: Shelter-in-One religion

Anuradha Dutta

To discuss the relevance and importance of the Ekasharana Naam Dharma in few pages is a nearly impossible task. As we all know this sect of Baishnavism came into existence at a time when the masses were lost in the misinterpretation of dharma and exploitation was prominent in the name of dharma, people embraced it and the followers of this religion are still abundantly found all across the State of Assam. It was propagated by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva in the 15th-16th century. Ekasharana Naam Dharma is a neo-Vaishnavite religion. The philosophy of this faith rejects focus on vedic ritualism and focuses on total devotion to Krishna through congregational listening and singing his name and deeds that is Naam - kirtan. Non-adherence to the varna system and rejection of Vedic karma marked its character. Although this religion is often seen as a part of the Bhakti movement, it has its own root. This school of vaishnavism does not worship Radha with Krishna which is the central concept of other Vaishnava schools.

The holy text of this sect is Bhagavat of SrimantaSankardeva. The most important religious text is the Bhagavata, especially the Book Daxama. This work was transcreated from the original Sanskrit Bhagavata Purana to Assamese in the 15th and 16th centuries by ten different individuals, but chiefly by SrimantaSankardev who rendered as many as ten Cantos (complete and partial) of this holy text. Three other works holds special importance in this religion: Kirtan Ghoxa, composed by Sankardev; and Naam Ghoxa and Ratnavali, composed by Madhavdev. These books are written in the Assamese language. Which made the philosophy of this religion reach the masses better.

The object of devotion in Ekasharana Dharma is Krishna, who is the supreme entity himself. All other deities are subservient to Him. Brahman, Vishnu and Krishna are fundamentally one. Krishna is alone the supreme worshipful in this system. Sankardeva's Krishna is Nârâyana, the Supreme Reality or Parama

Brahma and not merely an avatara of Visnu. Krishna is God Himself. It considers Narayana (Krishna) as both the cause as well as the effect of this creation, and asserts Narayana alone is the sole reality. From the philosophical angle, He is the Supreme Spirit (Param-Brahma). As the controller of the senses, the Yogis call him Paramatma. When connected with this world, He assumes the name of Bhagavanta. Moreover, some of the characteristics usually reserved for the impersonal God in other philosophies are attributed to Narayana with reinterpretations. The embodied self, called jiva or jivatma is identical to Narayana. It is shrouded by maya and thus suffers from misery. When the ego (ahamkara) is destroyed, the jiva can perceive himself as Brahma. The jiva attains mukti (liberation) when the jiva is restored to its natural state. Among the five different kinds of videhamukti, the Ekasharana rejects the Sayujya form of mukti, where the complete absorption in God deprives jiva of the sweetness and bliss associated with bhakti. Bhakti is thus not a means to mukti but an end to itself, and this is strongly emphasised in Ekasharana writings—Madhavdeva begins his Namaghosha with an obeisance to devotees who do not prefer mukti.

Narayana often manifests through avatars, and Krishna is considered as the most perfect one who is not a partial manifestation but Narayana himself. It is in the form of Krishna that Narayana is usually worshiped. The description of Krishna is based on the one in Bhagavat Puran, as one who resides in Vaikuntha along with his devotees. The form of devotion is infused with the dasya and balya bhava in the works of Sankardev and Madhabdev. The sari vastu or the Four Principles defined this religious system are: Naam , Deva, Guru, Bhakat. Sankardev defined the first, second and fourth of these, whereas Madhavdev introduced the third while at Belaguri when he accepted Sankardev as the guru for himself and for all others who accepted his faith. The four principles are revealed and their meaning explained

at the time of initiation (xonron-lowa).

The most important religious text is the Bhagavata, especially the Book ten (Daxama). This work was created from the original Sanskrit Bhagavata Purana to Assamese in the 15th and 16th centuries by ten different individuals, but chiefly by SrimantaSankardev who rendered as many as ten Cantos of this holy text. Three other texts find a special place in this religion: Kirtan Ghoxa, composed by Sankardev; and Naam Ghoxa and Ratnavali, composed by Madhavdev.

The religion fissured into four sanghati (samhatis or sub-sects) soon after the death of SrimantaSankardeva. Sankardev handed down the leadership to Madhabdev, but the followers of Damodardev and Harideva did not accept Madhabdev as their leader and formed their own group (Brahma sanghati). Madhabdeva at the time of his death did not name a successor. After his death three leaders formed their own denominations: Bhabanipuria Gopal Ata (Kaal sanghati), Purushuttom Thakur Ata, a grandson of Sankardev (Purusasanghati) and MathuradasBurhagopal Ata (Nika Sanghati). They differ mostly in the emphasis of the sari vastus (four fundamental principles).

The Brahma sanghatiwas developed as a result of Damodardev and Haridev moving away from Sankardev's successor Madhabdev's leadership. Over time this sanghati brought back some elements of Brahminical orthodoxy. The vedic rituals which are generally prohibited in the other sanghatis are allowed in this sanghati. Brahmins too found this sanghati

attractive and most of the Sattras of this sanghati have traditionally had Brahmin sattradhikars.

The Purushsanghati was initiated by the grandsons of Sankardeva—Purushottam Thakur and Chaturbhuj Thakur—after the death of Madhavdev. The emphasis is on Naam. Sankardeva has a special position among the hierarchy of Gurus. Some brahminical rites as well as the worship of images is tolerated to some extent.

This sanghati was initiated by Padma, Mathuradas and Kesava Ata. The emphasis is on sat-sanga. This sanghati is called Nika (clean) because it developed strict codes for purity and cleanliness in religious matters as well as in general living, as laid down by Madhabdeva. Idol worship is strictly prohibited and it gives special importance to Madhavdev.

The Kala sanghati, initiated by Gopal Ata (Gopaldev of Bhavanipur) and named after the place of his headquarters Kaljar, placed its emphasis on Guru. The sattariya of this sanghati came to be considered as the physical embodiment of Deva, and the disciples of this sect are not allowed to pay obeisance to anyone else. This sect was successful in initiating many tribal and socially backward groups into the Mahapuruxiasect.

Although the faith fissured into four sanghatis the main philosophy of the Eksarana Naam Dharma remains same. It still unites the people and guides its followers through the path of peace and salvation like Maharush Srimanat Sankardeva intended it to do.

(Contd. from Page 10)

Indigenous Faith Day Celebration In Arunachal Pradesh

Moreover, some of the resource persons have strongly stated that the responsibility of preservation and promotion of own language, culture and identity lies on younger generation and conversion may be his/her right and personal choice; however, mocking the indigenous religion cannot be tolerated. Further, a resource person has appealed that the Namlos, Tachow-Klumyas, etc., should not be a mere place of worship rather these platform be serving as centers of preservation, promotion and dissemination of our rich culture and tradition knowledge to the

younger generations.

IFCSAP's state executive body along with district units and community based organizations for preservation and promotion of the indigenous faith believers have reiterated the state government to "take initiative in delisting of any converted person from the ST status list who is no longer connected with the indigenous way of practices," and also demanded immediate implementation of the Freedom of Religion Act, 1978.

U Kiang Nangbah – Jaintia Freedom Fighter

Chandlok Dkhar

30th December 1862, is a most memorable day for all of us Indian, because on this fateful day a great freedom fighter from Jaintia hills laid down his life for the sake of mother India.

It was the martyrdom day of U Kiang Nangbah, one of India's Freedom Fighters who waged a freedom battle against the British and ultimately gave his life in the gallows on that day for the sake of his dear Motherland, India. His deed of patriotism had glorified the past history of our country. One could not forget his prophetic message which he uttered from the gallows to the people which came true on the 15th August 1947 when India became free from the bondage of slavery. The history how U Kiang Nangbah emerged as one of India's freedom fighters is briefly narrated as follows :

U Kiang Nangbah hailed from Jowai, the District headquarter of Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya. He was born sometime in the year 1835, the year in which the British annexed Jaintia Hills to its dominion. Unlike the Khasi patriot, U Tirot Sing, U Kiang Nangbah had no royal back ground. He was a rural folk and belonged to the Syngkon Clan of the Soo Kpoh Family. From his very childhood, Kiang Nangbah was known to be thoughtful, inquisitive and far-sighted. While still in his teen he could sense the evil influence of foreign domination. The proud and haughty movement of the British in his land, made him asked his mother who were they and what was their purpose of coming to his land. The reply of his mother carried the impression that those were the foreigners who came to rule over Jaintia Hills. The answer was enough to kindle the fire of patriotism already awaited to be exploded in his heart at once his heart cried out at the very thought of his dear Mother Land.

Although the British annexed Jaintia Hills on 15.3.1835, they cleverly refrained themselves from

interfering in the native administration of Jaintia Hills by the Dalois. An uneasy peace prevailed in the Hills for about 24 years, giving U Kiang Nangbah an opportunity to grow up, till such time, when he would be mature enough, to exhibit his patriotic traits against the foreigners. If the British did so from the beginning they would have possibly escaped the Pnars' rebellion under the Leadership of U Kiang Nangbah, who was endowed with a noble burden to his Mother Land, would have a chance one day to expose his virtues or noble qualities.

Thus, when the British imposed a House-Tax in 1860, U Kiang Nangbah had been in the prime of his life, strong enough to shoulder the responsibilities of liberating his land from the clutches of foreign rule. The imposition of taxes other than house tax followed by torture and harassment to those who, could not pay, deeply affected U Kiang Nangbah. The case of one poor women, Ka Lakhi Pyrdiang of Jowai, was a glowing example. Ka Lakhi Pyrdiang was too poor to pay the house tax and consequently had been forcibly assaulted and driven out of her humble hut. Her belongings such as utensils etc, were scornfully kicked out by the British tax Collectors. Secondly, in December, 1861 during the "Pastieh" a religious festival of Lalong Village near Jowai in which the Dancers brandished swords and shields the British authority tried to interfere in this religious festival and to aggravate the situation they stopped a cremation procession near Jowai.

For the moment U Kiang Nangbah paused to ponder at the pitiable plight of his countrymen who were ignorant and completely perplex and without any idea as to how to face the enemy who possessed superior arms. Yet U Kiang Nangbah was not a man to be disheartened. He had full confidence of patriotism and courage of his people. Relying mainly on this, he planned and made necessary preparations

to face the enemy boldly. But before doing this, he made a thorough tour of the interior of his land to apprise the innocent people of the evils of foreign rule. Then he convened the great 'Jaintia Dorbar' at the Syntu Ksiar ground of Jowai to decide the life and death question of the Land and its people. The Dorbar was largely attended by Men, Women, young and old and with one mind decided to raise up arms in order to drive out the foreigners once and for all from their Sacred Soil. In the Dorbar U Kiang Nangbah was unanimously elected as the Leader.

The saying of great men says that charity begins at home. The same applied to U Kiang Nangbah and his story was incomplete if mention was not made about the glorious role played by his Mother. Before embarking upon his noble mission, he approached his mother for her blessings. The noble mother of a noble son instead of preventing him from undertaking such a risky adventure and foolish act, she encouraged him and at the same time made him promise before her that he should not marry till his objective is attained.

The upheaval under the direction of U Kiang Nangbah started from Jowai where the people attacked the British arsenal and set fire to the Thana (Police Station). Having inflicted heavy damage to these British Outpost, they vanished quickly to the deep jungle. The war started like a fire in the straw to Mynso, Shangpung, Raliang, Nartiang, Borato, Mookaiaw, Sutnga and to others places of Jaintia Hills. The Dalois, everywhere were actively organizing their own areas. The women were heavily engaged preparing food for men. The sick and the disables were cautiously removed to safer places and war songs overflowed the hills giving strength and courage to the fighters. U Kiang Nangbah wisely undertook guerilla tactics and avoided a frontal

encounter with the British who possessed superior arms and deadly weapons as against his bows and arrows, swords and shields. The swiftness of U Kiang Nangbah to move from one place to other places to organize his fellow men to put the British in a state of despair and frustration. They found it very difficult to fight with the enemy whom they could not see. That is why the British had to deploy as many troops as available to suppress U Kiang Nangbah.



The war lasted for two years (1860-1862), it was long and tedious to the great vexation of the British. Thus, considering the strength of the troops and regiments as stated above, one can at once understand the magnitude of the uprising as well as the greatness of U Kiang Nangbah in so far as his war-policy is concerned.

But unfortunately, patriotism had its own enemy everywhere. No patriot in the world could escape and withstand treachery. U Kiang Nangbah, the truest and the most dedicated freedom fighter met with the same fate, this was so since the

dawn of history. Having failed completely to crush U Kiang Nangbah in a straight fight, the British look for a traitor to capture U Kiang Nangbah by offering a reward of Rs.1 000/- to anyone who could tell the secret hideout of U Kiang Nangbah. Luckily for them, they apprehended the right person in U Daloi Tyngker. He went secretly to the British on the plea of negotiating peace process. The British assured him that no harm would be done to U Kiang Nangbah if he could tell them his whereabouts. U Daloi Tyngker was in a fix, in the conflict of the mind, he leaked out to them the hideout of U Kiang Nangbah.

If the betrayal ended here, it was the compassion and anxiety of U Tyngker to end the long sufferings of men, women and children. But it came after the proclamation of a cash reward of Rs.1000/- to

anyone who could tell the whereabouts of U Kiang Nangbah. Considering this, it was a clear hankering of U Daloi Tyngker for the British money at the cost of U Kiang Nangbah and the country.

Finally, thus with the held of the British money, U Kiang Nangbah was captured on the 27th December 1862 from his hideout at Mynso village and brought to Jowai the same day for trial, the British compelled him to make a public declaration that he had come of his own sweet will to surrender before them for the sake of peace. Otherwise, he could face death in the gallows. But the true patriot and freedom fighter like U Kiang Nangbah would never betray his people even at the cost of his life. The reply of U Kiang Nangbah carried the meaning that if the British wants peace, they should quit his Mother land to their land and he and his people to govern the hills for themselves, otherwise peace was impossible. Having failed in their efforts to make him denouncer, they staged a mock trial and condemned him to the gallows. The day was fixed for his public hanging on the 30th December 1862. Early morning on this day, when U Kiang Nangbah climbed the scaffold, he told his weeping countrymen “To watch his face with courage, faith and hope and if his face turns towards east, when he swung on the rope they would get back their erstwhile freedom within hundred years, but if it turns to the west they would remain slaves forever”.

The work was executed and the face of the freedom fighter turned to the east giving his people a fresh hope when the day of freedom will come. The British had to vacate our land before One Hundred years on the 15th August 1947 only 85 years after his death. his prediction came true on that day to show that he was both a freedom fighter and a prophet.

His above leadership and determination to free his motherland had earned him the love and respect of his people. He should have been declared a National Hero who spared no pains to fight for freedom of his motherland, perhaps, from the modern historians point of view, he might not have attained heroic perfection. But if he was given place in proper historical background, I am sure his place

as a freedom fighter would not be denied .As a matter of fact, the life and struggle of U Kiang Nangbah are comparable to that of Garibaldi of Italy and Jeane de Arc of France.

Today, on the occasion of 64th Independence Day, we salute our Hero and his numerous followers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of our freedom. We should not only pay our respectful tribute to them but we, at the same time should also pledge to be true to the service of our people and our Nation. Let this day remind us of our duties and responsibilities to our motherland. On this day our heart and minds should also go to U Kiang Nangbah and his followers to shower us with blessings so that we will be able to devote our lives and energy, individually and collectively, towards the development and welfare of our beloved State Meghalaya in particular and our motherland India in general.

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Hidden Philosophy of the Rangfraa Faith

W. Zongsam

From the real point of view no one can say firmly how and when this cosmos had come into existence. Yet almost all the people of this world believe that there must be a certain invisible power behind this creation. Everything right from non-living things to living beings are the result of this very power which is treated as the God Himself. Among the creatures human being is treated to be the most superior creature next to the creator.

Societies develop due to the knowledge and intellectual makeup of the members of the family or dynasty. Further they are caused to frequent rise and fall while attempting to climb up the ladder of development. Of course the very unseen power or God also gives the arrangement to destroy the people when there is inordinate material development at the cost of moral and spiritual advancement. The cosmic annihilation is sometimes foretold by Himself or His messenger in the form of man or any other creatures.

In similar manner according to the tradition of the Tangsas and the Tutsas of Changlang and Tirap districts of Arunachal Pradesh, the God is described to have appeared on earth once upon a time in the form of an old man to weigh quantum of what is called “NGAAREY” and “KYECHU” i.e., paap and punnya respectively.

In order to accomplish the mission the ‘RANG’ (God) opted human form (fraa or Rangfraa) in the disguise of a sick, old, poor and weak, seeking for a night shelter from door to door with a spear in his left hand, a bunch of paddy in his right ear and an earthworm in his left ear. Unfortunately no one entertained him rather they treated him with utter contempt and suspicion and even scolded him not to proceed towards their houses. At last there was a small hut left which was in a dilapidated condition where two young orphans (Brother & Sister by blood relation) were residing. When the Rangfraa went

there and asked for shelter, the two orphans warmly received him with love and sympathy but they were sorry for being unable to provide food and clothing to their guest for the night. The God or Rangfraa knew their difficulties and told them not to worry at all. He directed them to lay open two numbers of ‘KHHAM’ (a big mat made of bamboo straws). By his power, on one slap of his right ear one mat became full of paddy and on another slap of the other ear; another mat became full of vegetables, fruits and other cereals. By seeing such act of miracle the two orphans took no time to realize that he was not an ordinary human being but the Rangfraa himself. So they bowed before his feet for pardon for being unable to recognize Him and for the lapses if any, on their part while welcoming Him. But the Rangfraa told them that they welcomed him exactly according to the way how, He is to be welcomed and was rather pleased for being so hospitable and warm in their dealing towards him. He further told them that He was really the Rangfraa Himself. He just appeared on earth in human form just to ascertain the quantum of Paap and Punnya permissible limit. Hence he declared complete annihilation of life on earth called ‘RANGTHIP’ and re-evolution (Rangphang) again and in fact it happened.

However, Rangfraa told two orphans that He desired them to survive for further continuance of the human race on earth. But the Rangfraa warned them not to leak out to anybody about the annihilation; others wish they also will meet the same fate. Rangfraa gave a spear and told them to dig an underground hold (cave) under a bamboo grove so as to hide themselves at the time of annihilation. He also gave four numbers of birds out of which three were of the same species called ‘WOCHAAL’ or ‘WOSHUKSHU’ and another was of different species called ‘WOKHYIT’ with the

instruction that when the bird called 'WOKHYIT' will make a cry they should immediately enter the underground cave and stay there with the door properly closed till the annihilation is over. They were also further instructed that when the annihilation would appear to have ceased, they were to release the bird called 'WOCHAAL' or 'WOSHUKSHU' one by one after a gap of a few minutes till any of them gave a cry. They were also warned not to come out of the hold till the bird gave a cry. After telling them the Rangfraa vanished in the air.

The two orphans took some days to dig the underground hole. When the other people saw them digging the ground they laughed at them with sarcastic remarks and used indignant words to insult them. But the two orphans remained unaffected with the thought that their laughter would be put to an end forever by the Rangfraa very soon and thus went on doing their duties as instructed.

When the digging was over as told, the 'WOKHYIT' made a cry. They entered the hold immediately with all their belongings. The annihilation started. The earth trembled like anything with an unbearable sound as if a poor child trembling out of extreme fear. When the annihilation stopped they left the birds one by one as instructed and finally the third bird gave a cry. When they came out of the hole there was no sign of life. Where there were rivers there came up mountains and where there were mountains there appeared lakes and rivers.

As the time rolled on, the two young orphans attained their adulthood. One day one of them (girl or younger sister) went to fetch some water from a bamboo pole. It so happened that the bamboo pole never became full. The girl was embarrassed and felt angry upon the bamboo pole for not becoming full. Under such situation one bird called WOPI sitting on the branch of a tree said to itself in a poetic language i.e., "YUNGTUNG TANGLOLO, YONGYOYO" in a repeated manner whose meaning may be interpreted as follows:- YUNGTUNG means water container (bamboo pole in this case) and 'TANG' means bottom, 'LO' means hollow or having hole, 'YONG' means

addressing word towards brother or sister which can be used from both sides, 'Yo' means to share or to unite, the meaning as a whole would be as follows. "Though they were brother and sister by relation, they have to behave themselves as sexual counterpart of each other for procreation of human race else the earth will remain barren without human being to reign over, just as the water container never became full." But the girl misunderstood and felt insulted and ultimately threw a stone at the bird out of anger, which hit and broke the legs of the bird. She came back home and reported the incident to her elder brother. Her elder brother went to the spot and found the bird in a very painful state uttering the same language. On hearing this the boy looked into the bottom of the pole and really found a hole in it. He could realize the meaning which was implicit and wondered that his sister despite, being a human could not understand the reason for not becoming full. Whereas a simple being i.e. bird could know the bottom of the bamboo pole was hollow. He was confirmed that the bird is not an ordinary bird but Rangfraa Himself in the form of bird. It came to remind them of their duties. He went to the bird and asked for pardon on behalf of his sister and mended the legs of the bird with the orchid plant and medicine. It is told that from that day the legs of the bird became yellow. It is also told that from this very day the bird had to remain on the ground.

The boy came back to his sister and made her understand about the will of the God, that for the continuance of the human race on earth they need to stay together as sexual counterparts of each other irrespective of their likes and dislikes. Finally, his younger sister had to accept the will of God. It is told in the tradition that the present population of the entire world are descendants of those two orphans.

Beliefs and its hidden philosophy or moral teaching:

i. The momentary appearance of Rangfraa and again disappearance in the air lead us to believe that the God is basically formless but can take any form

at any time if necessary, i.e., the God is Omnipresent and Omnipotent as well.

ii. Creation of Paddy and other cereals including vegetables and fruits by Rangfraa out of nothing is really a great miracle. Further the annihilation caused to life on Earth lead us to believe that God is omnipotent. There is no word like 'impossible' in the dictionary of God.

iii. The Rangfraa though not told yet knew that the two orphans were feeling sorry for not having food to serve their guest for the night. Further when the digging of underground hole was finished the God knew by himself and let the bird cry, which implies that the God is all knowing and ever knowing that is omniscient.

iv. The Rangfraa was upset by seeing the state of affairs on Earth as understood from the tradition which resulted in the annihilation of life. These lead us to learn that if the moral conduct of human beings does not conform to the divine principle of morality, annihilation is certain.

v. Rangfraa appeared as a guest, sick, poor, old and weak to examine whether the people on Earth have any feelings of love, sympathy, care and a sense of respect to such people. He destroyed those who were indifferent and cruel to such types of people. Hence what he wants to let us know is that we should respect the guests and old people and take care of them. We should also feel pity for the weak, poor and sick people.

vi. He wore an Earthworm, in his left ear as an earring which implies that for Him, His very creation is beautiful, important and meaningful. He loves other living beings as much as human beings, which implies that all living beings are equal in the eyes of God. And in fact every living being is equal in so far as the right to live on Earth is concerned. Hence killing is essentially a sin except under self-defiance and execution of judicial sentences.

vii. The people criticized and insulted the two orphans by using indignant word and mocked at them at the time of digging underground hole but they paid no attention towards their ill behaviors and

simply went on doing their duties as instructed by the Rangfraa. Similarly, we should not hesitate to do anything that is good for the sake of good no matter the people of this world may go against us.

viii. Wearing a bunch of Paddy in his right ear stands for the symbol of prosperity. He is the God of wealth also.

ix. Spears in his left hand symbolized his power to save his true followers and to destroy the unfaithful people and in fact he destroyed those who deserved.

x. The two young orphans were poor and the people around neglected them by depriving of their shares which they ought to get, Their hut was also in a dilapidated condition, yet the people who were cruel and indifferent to those two orphans hated them by neither visiting their hut nor allowing them to enter their houses. These people were annihilated by God. So we should not be cruel to orphans as well as to the young helpless children.

xi. His younger sister was not at all interested to behave with her elder brother as sexual counterpart but for the sake of greater interest as directed by God, she had to sacrifice her personal interest.

xii. The two orphans were though not in a position to provide the old man anything yet they never tried to deny help. From this one basic principle it is very clear that even if we cannot help, it does not matter but at the same time we also do not have the right to hurt others by saying harsh things to those to whom we cannot render help.

xiii. According to the traditional belief, the present population of the entire world and the descendents of those two orphans from which we learn the concept of the universal Brotherhood.

xiv. It is also explicit that God has the power to create, sustain and destroy if necessary.

xv. By the blessing of God we can survive like the two orphans both physically and spiritually if we develop the right attitude, purify our heart and become holy in our actions.



Zeme Youths in Traditional Attire during Hega'ngi Festival

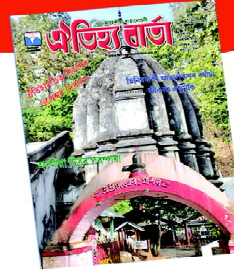
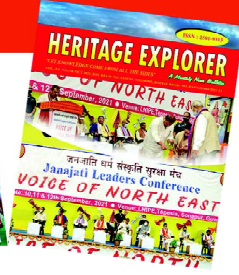
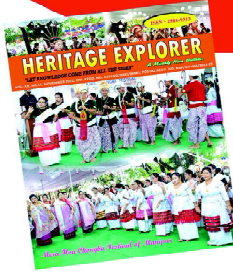
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