



## ***Department of Sociology***

### **School of Social Sciences**

*(A Central University established by an Act of Parliament No.35 of 1989)*

*(संसद द्वारा पारित अधिनियम 1989, क्रमांक 35 के अंतर्गत स्थापित केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय)*

Headquarters: Lumami, Dist: Zunheboto, (Nagaland), Pin Code-798 627

मुख्यालय : लुमामी, जुन्हेबोटो (नागालैण्ड), पिन कोड – 798627

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This thesis entitled “A Sociological Study of Naga Traditional Attires” submitted by Adangla Changkija, bearing Registration No. 546/2013(Dated: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2013) embodies the results of investigations carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

Further, certified that this work has not been submitted for any degree elsewhere and that the candidate has fulfilled all conditions laid down by the University.

(DR TEMJENSOSANG)  
Supervisor



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## **DECLARATION**

I, Ms. Adangla changkja, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University /Institution.

This is being submitted to Nagaland University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology.

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(ADANGLA CHANGKIJA)

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# **CHAPTER – I**

## **INTRODUCTION**



## INTRODUCTION

Nagaland is the 16<sup>th</sup> state in the Indian union. It attained statehood on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1963. Nagaland is situated in the northeastern region of India currently having a population of about 2 million i.e. (1,980,602) with having a literacy rate of 80.11 % which is above the national rate of 74.04%<sup>1</sup> and is scattered over 11 administrative districts. The state is inhabited by 16 major tribes and a host of sub-tribes. People of Nagaland claim themselves to be a family of same cultural community hence same origins, and belonging to mongoloid race. However, certain innate features or cultural elements mark each of them in a distinct character from the others in terms of customs, language and dress. This subject concerns on the Naga tribal's attires and its artifacts. Throughout the study words like tribal, indigenous and traditional will be used interchangeably, all this attempts to describe the subject of concern and carries same meaning.

The Nagas have no written historical record about their origin and the route of migration to their present inhabitation. Some writers believed that Nagas immigrated from three directions-North East, North West and South East. However it is a general believe that the majority of the Nagas immigrated from South East through the corridor of India-Myanmar border to the Naga Hills. Historically, it is believed they have inhabited the hilly and mountainous regions between the Brahmaputra River in India and the Chindwin River in Myanmar (Burma). Today, the family is claim to have scattered in states of Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in India and Eastern Nagaland in Myanmar (Burma) falling between 98 degree and 96 degree east longitude and 26.6 degree and 27.4 degree latitude north of the Equator.

The word *Naga*, appears to have been a tag given by others on the basis of its cultural practice. The first reference to the word *Naga* is found in the writings of Ptolomy, the Greek writers, who during his visit to south and west India about 150

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<sup>1</sup> Census of India 2011: Government of India Provisional population total. Nagaland series 14.

AD, heard the Hindus referring to a Mongoloid race as *Nagalok* (thus written as *Nagalok*) meaning naked people<sup>2</sup>. WC Smith maintained that, according to peak, the true form of this word is not *Naga* but *Noga*, *Nog*, *Nok*, means people<sup>3</sup>. AZ Phizo a legendary leader and Naga freedom fighter has interpreted the word Naga based on its feature, that Burmese word Naka, is the origin of the word. In Burmese ‘Na’ Means ear, ‘Ka’ means pierced<sup>4</sup>. Whereas, that Nagas a human race in the family of human kind has that culture of ear piercing. According to Rev Y. Chingang Konyak in his book “The Konyak Naga Yesterday and Today, the word Naga means, “Ear-hole” in Konyak Naga. This was used from the time they started out from longhang Veenyu . So even when they came in contact with the Shan people in the Chindwin valley around 6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. the Shans called them by the same name “Naga”. Later, around 8<sup>th</sup> Century they move across the “patkai” range and made settlement in the Deilao valley (Brahmaputra) and there too, they were called by the name “Naga”. It seems to have derived from two words i.e. ‘Na’ meaning ear, ‘Ga’ meaning hole.<sup>5</sup>

It is also believe that, the word “Naga” had been given by the Cachari king Dima of Dimapur, to a legendary Rengma hero of Chokedonyu village. Njon Tegibu, a notorious young warrior who used to collect tax from traders and often visit Dimapur and had many encounters with the king Dima. During one of such encounter the king asked him what the hill people do with the heads of their victims. He replied ‘NAU’, which means rituals. The king again asked the warrior the word for killing a man with dao and spear called? He replied ‘GA’. So the king called him ‘NAUGA’ meaning people who do rituals with their victim’s head. Therefore the headhunters inhabiting the hilly regions between the Brahmaputra river in India and the Chindwin river in Myanmar; who practice rituals with the head of their victims are called ‘NAGAS’, which was originally derived from the word ‘NAUGA’ as expressed by the Cachari King Dima of Dimapur<sup>6</sup>. Peal, Holcombe and V.Elwin favor the word Nok, people as

<sup>2</sup> M. Alemchiba 1970. A brief historical account of Nagaland. P.22.

<sup>3</sup> W.C Smith, 1980. The Ao Naga Tribe of Assam P.166.

<sup>4</sup> A.Z. Phizo, 1986. The Naga case. In Panger Imchen(1993) Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture P. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Rev.Y.Chingang Konyak, 2008. Yesterday and today. P.10.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph, S.Thong &Phanenmo Kath, 2011. Glimpses of Naga Legacy and Culture. P.32.

having a common term in some local dialect<sup>7</sup>. V. Elwin wrote that, the most likely derivation to my mind is that which traces Naga from the word Nok or people, which is its meaning in a few Tibeto Burman languages as in Garo, Nokte and Ao<sup>8</sup>.

According to philologist of the Nagas, they belong to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group not to the Siamese-Chinese or the Sino-Tibetan language though the origin of the former is traced back from the North West China between the Haung-Ho and Yangtse-Kiang rivers. Each tribe has its own dialect with common roots. They have adopted the Roman script brought by the American missionaries in the nineteenth century<sup>9</sup>.

Whatever be the theory of its origin, the term common to this family of race called 'Nagas' popularly came into use only after the advent of the British to this land. Until then, each tribe was distinct in its culture and practices, and was better known by their tribe name as Aos, Semas, Angamis, Konyaks, etc. Traditionally, Nagas lived in villages and each village has a government that is sovereign and independent, internally supreme and externally free from outside control. It may be stated here, each of the tribe distinctly identified as Ao, Angami, Konyak, Sema, etc. came into more evident during the rise of the Naga Club (N.C) in 1918, and subsequently, at the formation of the Naga National Council (N.N.C.) as a united Naga Political institution in February 2, 1946<sup>10</sup>.

The present Nagaland was only a district called "Naga Hills" within the state of Assam till 1957. It was put under the administration of the Ministry of External Affairs with the nomenclature of Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA) from 1 December, 1957 to 18 February, 1961. In July, 1960, the discussion between the Prime Minister of India and the leaders of the Naga People Convention resulted in a 16-point Agreement whereby the Government of India recognized the formation of Nagaland as a full-fledged State within the union of India. Accordingly, the state of Nagaland was

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<sup>7</sup> Panger Imchen , 1993. Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture P.16

<sup>8</sup>ibid. P.7

<sup>9</sup> Ibid P.19

<sup>10</sup>Ibid P.15

placed under the Nagaland (Transitional Provision) Regulation, 1961 which provided for an interim Body consisting of 45 members to be elected by various tribes according to the custom, traditions and usage of the respective tribes. The interim body was dissolved on 30 November, 1963. The people of Nagaland for the first time went for general election in the month of January, 1964 and the first Nagaland Legislative Assembly was formally constituted on 11 February, 1964<sup>7</sup>. Traditionally there was no written record or history on Nagas, it was the oral history that perhaps related on the Naga value system from one generation to the other. Many features of their material culture came in supersizes like mega log-drums, mega husking tables and mega beer vats etc. Each of these was carved out of single tree trunks, using basic hand tools which can be identified as unique cultural characteristic of the Naga tribes<sup>11</sup>.

The people of Nagaland have a rich and varied cultural heritage. This natural skills of the Nagas in basketry, pottery, cultivation, spinning and weaving, carving, dyeing, metal work etc had once made the Naga tribes self sufficient. Traditional attires are an enduring and vibrant part of ethnic identity and folk art reflects the unique cultural history of each tribe who produces them. The traditional attires combine the best of ingenuity and cultural tradition. The 16 major tribes of Nagaland and other sub-tribes have their unique and distinct customs and traditions which are morally reflected in their traditional attires. The dressing habits and traditional attires of the people, especially women contributed immensely to the development of the handloom enterprises in the region. Handloom forms an integral part of the cultural life of the people and every household possess handloom for spinning and weaving clothes for family needs. Besides these, every community possesses unique motifs, myriad patterns and techniques which such designs carry different sociological meanings and interpretations. Colors are used to beautify and established clan and tribes to distinguish them from each other. Among the tribal people of the region the designs and colors of the garments embody symbolic

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<sup>11</sup> V. Nienu, 2015. Naga cultural Milieu, P.xvii.

meaning and the cultural identity of the tribe. Such symbolic meanings are reflection of their past as head hunters and also represent significant indicators of merits amongst the community members. More than just personal decoration, jewellery symbolized social and economic status. Weaving has a very long tradition in Naga society but now the younger generations are abandoning it, and they prefer to go for western wear which they find it more convenient and fashionable, replacing indigenously produced goods, these traditional forms of knowledge and skills that carry immense semiotic meanings became under-valued. Today, in Nagaland, the cultural fusions of tribal and western lifestyle are an everyday reality.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In spite of the fact that Naga traditional attires are full of signs and symbols, patterns that depict a social life which is full of rituals and ceremonial meanings, yet that colorful culture is fading fast away from the society. The current wave of modernization and westernization coupled with the inculcation of the western knowledge and world view onslaught the native culture. Today, the Naga traditional attires stands nowhere for daily uses when compared with western style of clothes and attires. Rather, it remains as an occasional outfit that is worn during festivals or on very rare occasions. Traditional life and cultural meanings, social values and beliefs system of the native Naga culture (little traditions) have been disrupted or rather run over due to western contact. Most of the young generations have no idea about the history, culture and uniqueness of these traditional attire and jewellery. It may be stated here, that the Nagas have a rich heritage of cultural symbols and meanings which are inscribed in the shawls, rich man's house, or the village gate in the form of various objects, animals, planetary objects, etc. In shawl various pattern and symbols are designed such as elephants, tigers, lion, human head, to name a few, besides motifs, criss-cross patterns etc. It may be mention here, today; Nagas do not have a written script of its own. An Ao legend says, the earlier Nagas had their own script which was written in the animal's skin, unfortunately and sadly those scripts were eaten by dogs, hence lost their script. No documentation of history and past records is therefore available, it is for this reason, believed that manifestation of cultural symbols

and meanings was therefore carried out through songs and symbols and patterns. It is therefore in this context arises the need for the documentation and compilation of such data.

Not many documentary works on the said subject are available, especially studies related to the Semiological relevance or interpretation of cultural symbols into socially relevant meanings. An instance to substantiate this contention is that, among the Naga community traditionally the highest social honor and prestige was accorded to a man who performed the feast of merit. Performing such merit of feast has a long chain of taboo to observe and the process is year long. On completion of all formalities and on successful completion of the final feast, one is socially recognized to wear an ornamental shawl which was woven out of many patterns and symbols. A person not performing such feast of merit was not qualified to use that particular shawl. On the other hand failure to such observance invites the malevolent spill. The greater questions underlying in this study is that, today the younger generation has lost a sense of understanding such painstaking culture and its values thereby failing to appreciate its traditional art, the rich heritage of the Nagas. Moreover, the traditional weaving process such as picking cotton sprout, ginning cotton, carding and fluffing cotton, spinning cotton into thread, dyeing, starching, winding threads into skeins, preparing the wrap for weaving and finally weaving cloth was widely practiced by the older generation. But today very few, if not, nobody knows about the natural dyeing process thus considered as a dying art. In modern times textile market has become wider with the increase in populations and demands. The more textile industries appear and the more bales of cotton yarns and chemical dyes are being used. It is natural that the talent for weaving, dyeing and crafts making are gradually disappearing if not severe, in the face of machine made goods and its inexpensive clothing. If so, can such indigenous products designed with socially significant symbols and meanings be attractive items in the global market situation? Furthermore, such symbolic attires which had been a vehicle that carries distinctive meanings in relation to the status of a person in social life, Can such attires in the face of modernization where younger generation designs with modern fashion technology still carry the same meanings?

These few questions constitute the core problems of this study.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The use of various attires and cultural artifacts reflects and interpret various cultural meaning in day to day living. This study therefore partially falls within the purview of semiotics as far as it attempts to understand the meanings and significant, the attires and such artifacts convey to the user and the society at large. The earliest use of semiotic can be trace to Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist. To him Semiotics refers to a closed-system, a historical structure approach to signs. The sign is a function of signifier and signified joined as a mental construct thus meaning comes from construct. Social Psychologist G.H Mead introduced a widely used symbolic framework. Mead asks how does a sign (a symbol become significant)? He imagined a little scenario in which people gestured, indicated objects which in turn were suffused with meaning and action potential, and thus created a dialogue between the I, present action, the Me, reflection on action, and the (significant and generalized) other<sup>12</sup>.

The most systematic approaches to semantics relevant to ethnographic work emerged in the 1960 developed by the anthropologists influenced by biological taxonomies, cognitive psychology and mathematics. This works shows how they organized key domain in culture, such as color, kinship and ethno-botanical categories. Later, work systematized native notion of mental illness, weddings, firewood, lesions and law, and map taxonomy yielding western, linear, hierarchal, exclusive, Aristotelian classification. One of the broadest definitions is that of Umberto Eco, who states that ‘semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. It not involves the study of signs in everyday speech but of anything which stands for something else. In semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects<sup>13</sup>. Thus Katgryn Sullivan Kruger explains in her article ‘weaving the word’, the relationship between texts and textiles is, historically a significant one.

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Atkinson, et.al..2009-2010. Handbook of Ethnography, P. 149-150

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Chandler, 2017.Semiotics for Beginners. P.8

Anthropologists have long been intrigued at the various ways in which cloth embodies the unique ideas of a culture. They can trace the history of a culture through the record of its textiles, “reading” cloth like a written text. Indeed, this cloth transmits information about the society which created it in a manner not dissimilar from a written language, except in this case the semiotics of the cloth depends on choice of fiber, pattern, dye, as well as its methods of production<sup>14</sup>.

The above theoretical framework leads us to review the existing literature relevant to the use of various attires and artifacts around the world during different stages of human civilizations, and how such attires have signified different meanings to the user. According to Edmund Leach ‘All the various non-verbal dimensions of culture such as styles in clothing, village lay out, architecture, furniture, food, cooking, music, physical gesture, postural attitudes and so on are organized in patterned sets so as to incorporate coded information in a manner analogous to the sounds and words and sentences of a natural language. I assume therefore it is just as meaningful to talk about the grammatical rules which govern the wearing of clothes as it is to talk about grammatical rules which govern speech utterance’<sup>15</sup>.

Sociologist Irving Goffman collectively termed our ‘presentation of self’—functions as a medium of expression. And moreover those visual communications can ‘say’ certain things more immediately and powerfully than verbal language ever can<sup>16</sup>.

In all civilizations, dress is worn for warmth, protection modesty (to enhance the appearance of the wearer), and to proclaim his place in society, including rank, occupation, age, sex, place of origin, marital status, and religion<sup>17</sup>. For instance, about 4,000 years ago in the warm Indus valley, an assured little dancing girl from Harappa

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<sup>14</sup> Semiotics of the cloth.2012 Reading Medieval Norse textiles Traditions.  
Available at: <http://mds.marshall.edu/etd> Retrieved on 18/6/17

<sup>15</sup> Edmund Leach 1979. Culture and Communication P.9

<sup>16</sup> Ted Polhemus, 2016. Appearance Identity.  
Available at: <file:///c:/Users/WORK%20GROUP/Desktop/Ted%20Polhemus%20-%20Appearance%20=%20Identity.html> Retrieved on 7/4/17

<sup>17</sup> Ralph L. Beals and Harry Hoijer, 2007. An introduction to Anthropology. P.368



felt well-dressed wearing only bracelets, knowingly massed, a necklace, and well coiffed hair.

Elizabeth Wilson states: In all societies the body is 'dressed' and everywhere dress and adornment play symbolic, communicative and aesthetic roles. 'Dress is always unspeakably meaningful'. The earliest forms of clothing seem to have been adornments such as body painting, ornaments, scarifications (scarring) tolling mask, and often constricting neck and waist bands. Many of these deformed, reformed or otherwise modified the body<sup>18</sup>.

Clothing is a significant factor in human development. Clothes are a way of showing social status, religious beliefs and artistic aspirations. They are often an easily identifiable and fiercely treasured cultural heritage. D. Galinsky<sup>19</sup> said, Clothes invade the body and brain, putting the wearer into a different psychological state. Clothing affects how other people perceive us as well as how we think about ourselves. Clothing has become a symbol of an individual's identity. It represents and expresses the style of a person. "It is impossible to wear clothes without transmitting social signals." Human behaviorist Desmond Morris mentioned in his book a field guide to human behavior that, the dress code has built in rules or signals indicating the message being given by a person's clothing and how it is worn. This message may include indications of the person's gender, income, occupation and social class, political, ethnic and religious affiliation, attitude towards comfort, fashion, traditions, gender expression, marital status etc. Clothes convey other social messages including the stating or claiming personal or cultural identity, the establishing, maintaining or defying social group norms and appreciating comfort and functionality<sup>20</sup>. In olden days the traditional attires of a person, tribe, and clan reads much like a conversation; highlighting certain codes and symbols to represent sentences that are able to explain identity. It comes from the semiotics of the culture that a person comes from. This is especially true in Asia, where each of the hundreds of ethnic groups have developed

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<sup>18</sup> Rampley, 2005. Exploring visual culture..Definition, concepts, context. Edinburg University Press

<sup>19</sup> Adam D. Galinsky 2012. Symbolic meaning of clothes. Available at: <http://www.inc.com/tim-askew/clothes-branding-and-entrepreneurship.html> Retrieved on 27/10/14.

<sup>20</sup> Desmond Morris,et.al. n.d. Available at: [http://en.org/wiki/Dress code](http://en.org/wiki/Dress_code). Retrieved on 7/8/15

traditional attire particularly suited to their culture and environment. According to Eicher and Sumberg ethnic dress is linked to ethnicity and ethnic identity. Thus dress is significant to ethnic identity, since it communicates the identity of individuals among groups and of a group. Various scholars argue that ethnicity embraces the ideas of group cohesion and has boundaries that can distinguish members of a group from non-members. This unity shares a common heritage including language, dress, beliefs, conduct and general way of life. Thus ethnic or traditional dress indicates common or shared ways of dress that identify a group of people who share a common background and heritage<sup>21</sup>.

Among the Ao tribe, different kinds of dresses with distinctive colors and symbols are used to distinguish among village elders, whenever they are on certain formal and informal duties both in public and social gatherings. It shows their individual position and status according to their attires they wear<sup>22</sup>. When we talk about attires, among the Nagas it includes earrings, tattoos, hair bun, feathers, necklace Armlets and bracelets along with the colorful shawls, mekhalas, loin clothes and head gears.

The earliest known evidence of 'artistic behavior' is of human body decoration, including skin coloring with ochre and the use of beads, although both may have had functional origins. Zig- Zag and the criss-cross patterns, netted curved and parallel lines are the earliest known patterns to have been created separately from the body. In many societies clothing may be a status symbol, a head hunters and giver of feast of merit among the Nagas who are entitled to wear certain type of clothes or ornaments according to their status. In the early European societies, "there was a vast difference in attire between the classes. Not only did materials vary, but styles as well as the lower class opted for practically in their clothing by necessity. Lower classes, such as laborers and apprentices would wear linen, a light cool fabric derived from the

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<sup>21</sup> Potlako L.P.Disele, et.al. n.d. Conserving and sustaining culture through traditional dress Available at: <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk> Retrieved on 1/4/17.

<sup>22</sup> Pursowa, 2011. The Ao Naga Traditional Dress as a medium of communication in the society p.33

flax plant, wool or sheep skin. The upper classes wore silk, satin velvet and brocade<sup>23</sup>. Just as textiles can indicate status, gender clan and communities of a person, even symbolic meaning has been attached to colors from the early stages of human development to modern cultures. Among the Nagas, heavily decorated colourful shawls and mekhalas were meant to be for the people from higher status. People from lower status wore plain undecorated or simple clothes. In France during the 18<sup>th</sup> century the first born and the heir in the families of the nobility of the high office were to wear solely black and grey. While the glamour of velvet and silk was reserved to the president, satin to the general and clerks of the court in simple taffeta<sup>24</sup>.

“Nagas have developed a set of symbols to serve as cultural representations of reality with different expressions and perceptions. Symbols as practiced among the Naga tribes, served as cultural objects or items that acted as triggers to remind themselves of the culture society’s rules and beliefs, amongst others, and to keep the community aligned for balance and harmony”<sup>25</sup>. Symbols were used as indicators of status, such as designing of the house, the pattern of one’s clothes, ornaments etc. The rich material culture of the Nagas was like the pages of a book in which the order of their world was recorded and transmitted through a variety of outlets as communications mediums. For examples, Rituals, festivals, carvings, arts and crafts, weapons, tools and equipment, clothes and oral traditions. These communication mediums were the reflection and embodiment of their thinking and ways of life. They were handed down from one generation to the next<sup>26</sup>.

Among the Nagas two categories of clansmen had the right to adorn themselves in a particular way “The head-taker and the giver of ceremonial feast” for personal material cultures. It was a multiplicity of clothes rather than ornaments which were awarded for feast of merit and ornaments rather than clothes for head hunting. Head hunting stimulated wonderful dances and artistic production. The finest cloth and

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<sup>23</sup> Paige L. Hanson, et.al Available at: [www.personal.umd.umich.edu/~cfinlay/sumptuary.html](http://www.personal.umd.umich.edu/~cfinlay/sumptuary.html) retrieved on 6/7/16

<sup>24</sup> Cornelia 2004 clothing as medium of communication. Available at: <https://www.Unilu.ch/fileadmin/shared/publikatronem/bohn-clothing-as-meduim3.pdf> Retrieved on 20/9/16.

<sup>25</sup> V. Nienu 2015. Naga cultural milieu P. 252.

<sup>26</sup> V.Neinu 2015. Naga cultural milieu P. 250.

elaborate personal ornaments of tiger teeth, boar tusk, cowry shells, and hornbill feathers and goats hair dyed red could only be worn as chest or hip ornaments or to be attached to a warrior's basket. In many cases not only they, but their wives and even members of their families were entitled to distinct items of dress<sup>27</sup>. The practice of piercing teeth, shells and bones and stringing them, singly or multiple, to make a pendant or necklace is the oldest known form of personal decoration after body painting. This behavior required recognition of the potential of these objects to be modified by piercing, strung together and worn and recognition of a symbolic importance in wearing. The individual wearing a necklace would have enhanced in some way that could include some aspect of status related to social structure; and or it could give status related to social structure; and or it could give status to the creator, who may or may not also have been the wearer<sup>28</sup>.

In traditional Naga life, their prominent feature is the giving of feast of merit which reflects magnificence, elegance and lavish Naga way of life. After performing a series of rituals for such feast, a domestic animal Mithun is sacrificed. The villagers are regaled with wine and food, serving them rice and meat. 'The feast endows the donor with great honor and by virtue of this becoming a leading celebrity, he can wear special attires and ornaments, he can adorn and beautify his house in special styles obtaining a high dignity and status in social life.'<sup>29</sup> The wearing of bands round the ankles, knees, wrists and elbows, which is clearly to protect the sinews and muscles from strains. TC Hudson (1996) writes, the Nagas wear black rings of cane round the knees as some says, to give strength for climbing<sup>30</sup>. The Malays use to wear bands and ligatures to protect the muscles and prevent strains, for instance, around the wrists and below the knee<sup>31</sup>. Among the Konyaks a neatly weaved cane rings called yantak, is worn by men right below the knee. The kings and his warriors wear special cane rings called 'Yanjo' on their arms and legs which are black in color to signify their

<sup>27</sup> Milanda Ganguli, 1993. Naga Art.P. 2

<sup>28</sup> Desmond Morris, et.al. Available at: [http://en.org/wiki/Dress code](http://en.org/wiki/Dress_code). Retrieved on 7/8/15.

<sup>29</sup> Kishor Yadav. 1999. Folklore and its Motifs in Tribal literature. P, 110.

<sup>30</sup> Budha Ka 2011. Tracing the traditional Dresses and ornaments of Zeliangrong Part1. Available at: [www.e-pao-net](http://www.e-pao-net) Retrieved on 12/2/13

<sup>31</sup> Skeat Blagden, 1906. Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula.

bravery<sup>32</sup>.

In many cultures throughout the world various segments of society have been clearly differentiated by their dress. Distinctive national fashions or folk costumes developed over hundreds of years, and in many countries traditional fashions are worn for special holdings and for ceremonial occasions. There existed distinct differences between male and female attire. In spite of the absence of literature in the Naga society, the signs and symbols used in their dresses and ornaments worn by different people according to their clan, wealth, bravery and achievements shows who they are, which clan they belong to, their social status, their background etc. This legacy is kept alive as communication mediums through continuous usage.

In every land and every period of history the way people dress was affected by various social, political, economic, and geographic conditions as well as by artistic or aesthetic ideals. The prevailing style of dress may have reflection of the political and social change or the industrial advancement of a given period or group of people. Although distinctive dress is still predominant in some countries and regions, for the most part fashion in the 21st century has become international and is dominated by the culture of the western world.

The custom of wearing body ornament had begun with the imaginative Homo sapiens. As recorded in history, there are excavations in terms of beads necklace, carved from the tusk of a mammoth, a string of snail shells and also necklace made of pointed teeth of predatory animals, foxes, wolves, bears etc. There must be reasons for using all this ornament. In some case, they might have used them to ensure the success of the hunt by depicting animals being killed through the efforts of hunters which was practiced by their ancestors. For the Nagas ornaments are more than a matter of aesthetic, it is the identity of individuals and groups, it helps make statements, and definition. Indeed, ornaments are part of the definition of being truly human, because it is only from a corpse that ornaments are removed. But even after his death all his

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<sup>32</sup> Y. Chingang Konyak. 1986. From darkness to light. P.60

material things are displayed on his grave, and from that people will know what status he hold in his community.

Adornment and decoration of human body features in all known cultures and societies and the practice is as old as recorded history. It is said that the use of ornaments preceded the use of garments and its purpose was to emphasize social position by a great display of trophies, charms and other valuables and to enhance attractiveness. In any societies particularly in tropical and mild climate, adornment is far more important than clothing<sup>33</sup>. Through ones adornment, one can distinguish the powerful from the weak, the rich from the poor, the young from the old, the religious from the irreligious etc.

Tattoo or body art is a visual language and it is a form of communication. “There is no culture in which people do not, or did not paint, pierce, tattoo, reshape, or simply adorn their bodies”<sup>34</sup>. Body art communicates a person’s status in society; displays accomplishments; and encodes memories, desires and life history. “People often use body art as a way of signaling cultural differences, people often use it to identify, eroticized and ostracize others. Tattoos, scarification, or head shaping may be a sign of high status in one culture and low status in another, but to an outsider these practices may appear to be simply mutilation”<sup>35</sup>. Among the Nagas tattoos are designed to convey symbolic messages by the wearer to others. Among the eastern Nagas a tattoo can indicate that he is a warrior and also acts as a symbolizer of status. The upper konyak or the Thendus do not tattoo their face where as the lower Konyak or the Thenko have tattoos on their face. Among the Konyaks’ if a man was able to collect more than ten heads, the tattoo of toklei would be marked on his back. Chang warriors tattoo the tiger and the ostrich feather on the chest as a symbol of strength.

Even without written documents one can speculate that in earlier days dyeing procedures were carried out by the emersion of fabric in a dye bath prepared by the addition of suitable plants and roots to boiling water. Evidence derived from modern techniques to determine the presence of pigments in prehistoric textiles tells us that

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<sup>33</sup> Ram Chandra Das, 1996. Social and cultural Anthropology. P.161

<sup>34</sup> Enid Schildkrout 2001. Body Art as Visual Language. Available at  
:http://anthropology.si.edu/outreach/ant note/winter01/anthnote.html . Retrieved on 14/6/15

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

man reached very high technical levels in the application of dyes to his woven goods. The sources of dyestuff used reached nearly one thousand different plants, vines, shrubs, trees, shell fish and insects<sup>36</sup>.

The Simon commission report commenting on the Nagas writes, "These races must be among the most picturesque in the world," and on shawls and ornaments, Dr. Hutton writes, "All Naga tribes have a most remarkable appreciation of the effective and picturesque in their use of color, is usually an extraordinary good taste and particularly well adopted to the surroundings in which it is displayed".

One of the earliest casualties to the tee-shirt and jeans brigade was the **kimono** the Japan's most beloved garment. Worn by men and women for thousands of years, it is considered one of the most elegant and elaborates costumes in Asia. Its demise had its beginnings in the Meiji restoration. Foreign influences ran rampant at the time and the Government was officially encouraging its people to take up western dress and habits to aid the industrialization effort. They even instituted a law requiring officials to wear western clothing at official functions. Unfortunately, as the twentieth century continued and western fashions and habits were imported wholesale into the East, the cheongsam steadily declined in use. It was perceived as old-fashioned and embarrassingly ethnic and even today, most Chinese women only wear it for special occasions. Many of the younger generation are apt to modify the traditional form to more modern ideas of fashion much to the dismay of their more conservative parents.

Nowadays, the tee-shirt and jeans combination is almost a global uniform and many people fear that as the world becomes more closely linked on every level, there will be more pressure for each culture to abandon many of their traditions for the sake of uniformity. Early in 2000, UNESCO officials called for efforts to preserve and protect the traditional costumes of ethnics groups around the world. A number of countries are already taking such steps and we can only hope that fifty years from now, there will still be a few people around who are still proud to wear their traditional

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<sup>36</sup> Leggett, 1994. Man's prehistoric and historical use of color. Available at: [www.cochineal.info/pdf/ch-1-Man's-use-of-colour-cochineal-Thesis.pdf](http://www.cochineal.info/pdf/ch-1-Man's-use-of-colour-cochineal-Thesis.pdf) Retrieved on 12/2/16

costumes<sup>37</sup>. Among the creative aspect of the Serbian nation, traditional attires occupy one of the most important places because of their role in everyday life, their significance for ethnic identity, and their value artistically and aesthetically<sup>38</sup>. Apart from the special traits of costumes which varied from village to village, there were also other differences between villagers and urban dwellers in terms of the way they dressed. The dress worn by the rural dwellers were mostly the produce at home through cottage industry. Experience and tradition were passed from elder to young through generations. The delicate colors of the yarns in weaving, achieved through the traditional process of dyeing with natural dyes, contributed greatly to the highly refined harmony in color.

Symbols as practiced by the Nagas served as Cultural objects or items that acted as triggers to remind themselves of the culture of society's rules and beliefs, amongst others and to keep the community aligned for balance and harmony. Symbols were used as indicators of status, for example, articles such as houses, clothing, weapons, and other important objects served as symbols that applied a certain level of social status.

In modern Naga society, people wear both western clothing and traditional attire. The various traditional attires are worn for ceremonies and special occasion like wedding and festivals. Western clothing is worn more often in day to day life. Both male and female favours western style of clothing in their daily lives due to the comparative convenience and the influx of fashion. The new generations of weavers make use of different kinds of natural as well as synthetic yarn to weave new patterns and designs that are fashioned to suit the latest trends in clothing, accessories and furnishings. By producing fabrics that blend ancestral motifs with the present, the Naga weavers play a major role in keeping tradition alive while at the same time adding and enriching it with their continues creativity and innovations.

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<sup>37</sup> A.H. Anur, 2004.Traditional costume of Asia.2004.

Available at: <http://www.Holidaycity fla>. Retrieved on 13/4/15

<sup>38</sup> Jasan2012. Traditional attires of Serbian history. Available at: <http://www.srpskoblogo> Retrieved on 13/4/15



With the influx of modernization and westernization the indigenous attires and cultural artifacts are fading away from most of the society whether east or west, north or south of the globe. Amidst such global cultural fusion “Naga cultural attires and musical instruments” have been well augmented in documentation of such attires and artifacts. It provides a good picture and insights of the Nagas’ love for color, designs, artifacts, creativity and above all the sociological meanings attached, so that any researcher whether native or outsider would collect the much needed information without much pain<sup>39</sup>. (K.K. Sema) Oral tradition lost its value with the advent of Christianity and that Nagas are at a crossroad unsure of whether to follow the Naga customs and traditions or the modern system of administration<sup>40</sup>. V. Nienu wrote that, Naga tribes have seen a renaissance of traditional ways like the tendency towards the resurgence of Naga cultural movements, by focusing on the recently instituted Hornbill Festival, by the Government of Nagaland, even if done purely for attracting tourists or on other hand a renewed pride in the old ways taken by many tribes seeking to restore their traditions and cultural practices, the effort is salubrious<sup>41</sup>.

Having explored the importance of attires around the world and its significant cultural meanings we may define attires and cultural artifacts in the context of the Naga society. Attire plays a very significant role in every culture and communities. As V.Nienu wrote in his book *Naga cultural Milieu*, Naga cloth is like a book, it contains historical and biographical accounts of the wearer, particularly, those of the headhunters and of the performer of the Feasts of Merit<sup>42</sup>. The Naga traditional attires has full of semiotics, it assumes the visual images and its respective signs can be read similar to a text. Fashion and body adornment not only have a language of their own, but can be read as an explanation and text of one’s personality and character. Cultural semiotics is therefore an important part of visual rhetoric in Naga culture because it allows us to take simple signs and codes and turn them into an actual conversation.

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<sup>39</sup> A . Lanu, 1999. Traditional attires and musical instruments.

<sup>40</sup> Nagaland Post. Seminar on Preservation of Naga oral tradition. Dated : 24/9/2011.

<sup>41</sup> V.Nienu, 2015 *Naga cultural milieu* P. xx.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid* 288

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. Study the semiotic convergence of various symbols and patterns of Naga attires into a sociological meaning.
2. Examine the types and pattern of traditional attires.
3. Examine such attires vis-à-vis social strata
4. Study traditional methods of dyeing and weaving (Methods to spun cotton, how to make yarn, making dye and weave into clothes.)
5. Examine the impact of globalization on Naga attires and fashion fusion thereof.

## **SCOPE OF STUDY**

The study is multi-faceted and ushers the following scope.

1. Enables the students and general readers to understand more about the tribal attires and its sociological meanings.
2. Provides a reference point of information on traditional attire in general for all those interested to learn more about our Naga attires.
3. Adds to the growth of semiotic literature and provide light to such fading cultures like Nagas.
4. Exhibits the rich culture vis-à-vis explores marketable avenues in the global fashion arena.

## **AREA OF STUDY**

This study attempts to provide a comprehensive understanding of various attires and artifacts of the entire tribes of Nagaland, thereby to retrace the semiotic meanings that are endangered, if not severe. The universe of study is the state of Nagaland, however for all practical purpose the study was focused on four tribal communities of

Nagaland who covers four districts of Nagaland. They are Ao tribe of Mokokchung district, Chakhesang of Phek district, Chang of Tuensang district, and Konyak of Mon district. The sample communities in question for these present studies were selected on the bases of geographical and cultural affinity. When Nagaland is seen from a birds' eye view geographically one can divide the whole state into three zones such as Eastern Nagaland, Central Nagaland, and Southern Nagaland. The Chang and the Konyak communities represent the Eastern Nagaland, whereas the Ao community represents the Central Nagaland and the Chakhesang represent the Southern Nagaland. The ideal segmentation into three zones is also because there are certain cultural similarities in terms of language, artifacts, meanings etc. within each zone.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Since, the communities in question for present study are comprised of many villages, it would not be feasible to cover all the villages, and therefore a sample village in each of the four districts is selected. Thus Ungma village for Mokokchung district was selected keeping in view the very fact that Ungma is the traditional village and claimed that all Ao villages if not mostly have been migrated out from this village. Therefore socio-culturally all characteristic features of Aos are inherent in it. Similar is the case with the other sample villages such as Tuensang village for Tuensang district, Chui village for Mon and district who command respect in their respective community because of being their traditional village. Moreover, the Ketsapo village of Phek district which represents the Chakhesang community is also because of the very fact that Village Development board (VDB) in Nagaland was first introduced in this village and also the village bears all traditional characteristic of the Chakhesang. This instant study has depended mainly on two sources of information; primary and secondary sources. Primary information was collected through the use of interview and observation techniques, and in both techniques structured and unstructured manners was actively applied. Sufficient secondary information was also used to complete the work for which books, journals, news papers, and any other

electronically printed materials that fits the study was of great help.

Having said, this study has focused on indepth interview so as to obtained authentic and relevant primary information. Therefore, in the instant case, information were sought from people having special knowledge on the subject matter such as; the Anghs especially for Konyak, village elders, local craftsman, Artist of cultural performer or women weavers or self help groups (SHG) whose projects concerned weaving etc were interviewed. Moreover, irrespective of the place of residence, level of income or position held in society, special effort were also been endeavored to interview extensively to those personalities of the sample communities whose contribution in the field of Art and literature has been recognized by state or central government eg, Governors' awardees, 'GURUJI' title awardees from NEZCC Dimapur, or Sangeet Natak Akademy, New Delhi etc.

## **Chapter-II**

# **FEAST OF MERIT AND ITS SOCIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

## **Feast of Merit**

Traditionally feast of merit have always played an important part in the life of the Nagas. In traditional Naga life one of the most prominent features to exhibit one's riches/wealth was by way of giving the 'feast of merit' which reflects magnificence, elegance and lavish Naga way of life. It was the custom of the traditional Nagas for sharing one's wealth by offering feast to the village community. Therefore, this act becomes an integral part of the social life of the Nagas. Indeed, it is this act that determines one's status depending on the number of feasts one could draw to the village community. The more in number, the more his status is elevated. Each performance of feast is relatively more elaborate and costlier than the previous one. This is to state that, one performs the whole series in order to gain honor both in life and after death as it is so believed. Thus each series of feast also carries right to new patterns of shawls, house decoration and ornaments. Julian Jacobs therefore, in this regards states that, "this feast of merit is an optional feast performed by an individual. They are distinguished from life-cycle and from agricultural-cycle feasts, though all of them share the notion of genna and sacrifice"<sup>1</sup>. While discussing on the feast of merit it may also be noted that many scholars from outside have also taken close examination and defined according to their observation. Thus Elwin defined, "The feast of merit, which bestowed so much distinction on their donors showed that it was the distribution of wealth rather than it's possession that was important. And this distribution included everyone, not merely one's own relation and rich friends, but the poorest and the least important"<sup>2</sup>. This series is strictly prescribed and every man tries to proceed as far as his means permit him, so that he earns honor for himself in his present and after life. Through performing this feast, he gains for his clan and village the favour of the spirits and the prosperity of great men of the future. After performing a series of rituals for such feast, a domestic animal Mithun is sacrificed. The villagers are served with wine and food, thus strengthening the ties of kinship, and their wealth in the form of rice and meat, which is distributed and shared with all the classes of people. The feast endows the donor with great honor and by

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<sup>1</sup> Julian Jacobs, 2012. *The Nagas, Hill Peoples of Northeast India* (revised edition), P.7.

<sup>2</sup> Kenilo Kath, 2005. *Traditional Religious systems of the Rengma Nagas*. P.91.

virtue of this, becoming a leading celebrity, he can wear special attires and ornaments, and he can adorn and beautify his house in special styles obtaining a high dignity and status in social life<sup>3</sup>.

Feast of merit have been described in many areas of South East Asia, for instance, Nias is an Island west coast of Sumatra where feast of merit are still regularly performed. Feasting for them is a means of advancement. The feast gives (ovasa) speak with authority in customary matters and rule the village along with the chief and the consent of ordinary villagers with economic and political advantages. The host of ovasa is mainly to win prestige in the society or name and to obtain blessing or status as a whole<sup>4</sup>.

According to Shimray (1985) in his book Origin and culture of Nagas, “what the educational degree is to a student today, the feast of merit was to the Nagas<sup>5</sup> because the core of early Naga life was full of competitions and challenges. The method of celebrating the feast of merit differs from tribe to tribe but the feast of merit was common in all the Naga tribes. Feast of merit is considered as the central feature of traditional Naga life. The feast is given by a person to the whole village. It is also attached to religious, social and economic life of the people. Here the most important sacrifice is the Mithun “which is the chief domestic animal and used as currency, to settle a marriage or pay a fine, The feast bring the donor an honour both now and after death<sup>6</sup>. In order to elevate the social position and also to get blessings from the elders the feast are hosted by the rich man of the village. The feast of merit played a very important part in the religious and social life of the Nagas. There were a series of ceremonies, each one is more important than the last, culminating in the Mithun sacrifice. “Among the Nagas, feasts of merit were celebrated with great splendor and honour. It was believed that by giving these feasts the giver would gain honour in life and thereafter and win the most coveted right of wearing certain

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<sup>3</sup> Kishore Jadav, 1998. Folklore and its Motifs in Tribal literature. P.110.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Beathy, 1991.Ovasa Feast of Merit in Nias. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. Vol. 147.P. 216-235.

<sup>5</sup> R.R.Shimray,1985. Origins and Culture of the Nagas, P.108.

<sup>6</sup> Verrier Elwin, 1969The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century. P.10.

clothes and ornament and decorating the house with colors<sup>7</sup>. It was also believed that, the skulls of the sacrificed animals which hung in the outer room of the house would bring prosperity not only to the sacrifice but even to his heirs who inherit them after him<sup>8</sup>. When one was fortunate to become rich, he was never selfish to keep the fruits of his blessings to himself or to his own children but he sought to share the entire population by performing the feast of merit. “Sharing of wealth with the whole population through a public distribution system such as ‘feast of merit’ has been the most important factor which has prevented capitalism to overtake the Naga system”<sup>9</sup>. Like the rest of the Naga tribes, even among the Tangkul’s status in society was not conferred by wealth but by giving feasts and thus earn the right to certain clothes and carvings on the house<sup>10</sup>. Only married man can perform this feast of merit because his wife plays an important role for preparing the feast right from doing the agricultural work, pounding the rice and brewing the rice beer till the completion of the ceremony. She also gains the same rights like her husband to wear the ceremonial clothes and ornaments. See Fig 2.1

*Figure 2.1 shows a host of a feast giver with his wife and children from Ungma village.1947*



*Source: The Nagas Julian Jacobs 2012.*

<sup>7</sup> Tekatemjen, 1998. Studies on Theology and Naga culture. P. 80.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid p.80

<sup>9</sup> R.R. Shimray, 1985. Origin and Culture of Nagas. P.119.

<sup>10</sup> Milada Ganguli 1994. Naga Art P.41



The whole philosophy of such a feast is not the lavishness of man but the wealth of God being shared among the community, which if not shared would result in punishment on the man with disastrous end. On the feast day when the host performs the necessary religious sacrifices, he says: “It is not I that hosts, nor declare on my own. It is not I that has collected the wealth, but as you have blessed, and the people demand such feast, I’m giving.... You have given and so I give to the people, wealth that I have collected with my right hand I give you and wealth that I have collected with my left hand I eat”<sup>11</sup>.

Among the Nagas, two categories of clansmen had the right to adorn themselves in a particular way, the head-taker and the giver of ceremonial feast for personal material cultures. It was a multiplicity of clothes rather than ornaments which were awarded for feast of merit and ornaments rather than clothes for head hunting. Head hunting stimulated wonderful dances and cowry shells, and hornbill feathers and goats hair dyed red could only be worn as chest or hip ornaments or to be attached to a warrior’s basket. In many cases not only they, but their wives and even members of their families were entitled to distinct items of dress<sup>12</sup>.

One of the deep desires of every married couple in their life is to perform the feast of merit or the status ceremony which is called Zhonso ‘Mozu’ among the Mao Naga tribe. They work hard, earn and collect and as a sign of wealth, they offer and share generously their goods to the whole village and elevate their status, they also erect memorial monuments to propagate their name and their memory to the future generations and descendents. When a person earns the right to wear the Zhoso sa (shawl after the feast) he is respected, honoured and his words are taken seriously in public meetings. The material riches of a person is calculated from the external goods, such as the number of cattle, paddy fields, sons, firewood, land, amount of paddy, etc one owns. Rich people often share their wealth with the village by giving such merit feasts and gain their status from the public<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Panger Imchen, 1993. Ancient Ao Naga Religion and culture. P.137.

<sup>12</sup> Milanda Ganguli, 1993. Naga Art. P.55.

<sup>13</sup> William Nepuni, 2012. Socio- cultural history of Shupfomei Naga Tribe. P.12.

The feast of merit sound like a single event or a one day party organized for the village community. However, a close examination reveals the fact that it has a series of events covering months and years. Therefore, among the Chakhesang, Zatho is the best feast of merit offered to the whole village by the rich man. It is observed for 30 days in the month of Zathokhru (January). The entire male in the village pull a stone for the owner of Zatho and the owner of Zatho distributes fresh meat to all the male members in the village. Further Elito is a feast offered to the whole village by rich men. It is the second feast just next to the zatho feast in the village. Etshuketsutso is a wooden plank designed in the form of human, mithun and buffalo heads. It is used for decorating the front of the house. Carving mithun's head on the big wooden plank symbolizes the wealth of one who has offered feast of sedese (merit) and killed wild animals and distributed their meat to all the households in the village<sup>14</sup>.

In the similar way, among the Ao's, the sacrifice was made to the creator and pre destiner of human kind who is known as soba-tiaba for invoking his blessings upon the life and the family members of the sacrifices. In order to offer this feast, he has to declare to all his relatives that, that since God has blessed us not out of our unfair means or income, nor because of our wealth because of sobatiba. The sun and moon god gave this wealth and so we are giving this feast to him. From that day onwards the husband and wife enter genna until the final and concluding day<sup>15</sup>. What is also important to note is that, the whole process involves a strict rules of observance which are considered as genna. Of the many, one of the significant observances is that the couple abstains from each other till the series of events are finally over. It was reported during the field work that the breach of genna observance have in many instances resulted the wrath of malevolent spill leading to dead of the host. Field work data says that, violations of such functionary observance brought immediate effects on the part of the person like ultimately death either of the husband or the wife or any of the children. It must be noted that a series

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<sup>14</sup> Kewepfuzu Lohe, 2010. Socio-Cultural Heritage of Kuzhami Chakhesang Nagas. P.123.

<sup>15</sup> C.Walu Walling 1997, Sacrifice and Salvation in Ao-Naga P.32.

of events starting from *Nashi achiba* meaning cow sacrifice to *Mepu Men* meaning feast given to the locality/colony normally on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Moatsü and finally culminating the entire series by giving a Mithun sacrifice. The actual ceremony for the Feast of Merit lasted for 6 days<sup>16</sup>. It is essential to note that the series of sacrifices and feast organized are not in a single year rather it stretches for two to three years. Ao's believe that wealth is not merely the work of men but given from God. Feast of merit is a way of thanksgiving to acknowledge the blessings of the almighty to a particular person. So this is a Feast hosted by an individual for the entire community in declaration of being a rich man in the village. The feast of merit is considered the highest social status and has the deepest expression of religious sacrifice. The giver of the feast was honoured for he was rich, generous and resourceful.

The performance of the feast of merit is taken as the most important form of generosity among the Mao community. The performance are highly respected and as a honour they are entitled to wear a special kind of shawl called 'Zhonso sa' after performing the feast of merit. They decorate their houses with the skulls of the animals killed during the feast of merit so that others could count the number of the skulls to know how rich he/she was. This can be recognized as the highest sacrifice of a person to god and to his people in the community<sup>17</sup>.

The ceremonies required the killing of a large number of cattle and pigs for feasting the village community and sometimes friends from neighboring villages. An essential part of every feast was animal sacrifice. On the final day a Mithun, which is tied in front of the feast giver's house, is killed (It is tied to the forked wooden post called genna post) by the eldest clan member which belong to the feast giver and the meat of the slaughtered animal is distributed to all the members of the village. Among the Ao tribe, the feast of merit consist of a series of animal sacrifices performed over several years and included the offering of one or several mithun. The

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<sup>16</sup> Tekatemjen 1998. Studies on Theoloy and Culture. P.175.

<sup>17</sup> M. Daniel, 2008. Socio-Cultural and religious life of the Mao Naga tribe. P.93.

meat of the offered animals was distributed in the village according to the strict rules of hierarchy and kin relations while it is taboo for the feast giver and his wife to eat the sacrificial meat. The hostess of the feast giver has a great role to perform while preparing for the feast of merit. So, only a married man with a living wife can give such an elaborate feast since the wife played an honourable and important role throughout the ceremonies. She has to oversee the various works connected with the sacrificial feast like brewing of rice beer, bringing firewood from the jungle etc.

The feast entitled the donor to certain privileges which varied from one tribe to the other. But all the Naga feast givers earned the right to a special designed cloth and to decorate his house in a particular way according to the local custom. Therefore, amongst the Ao tribe the front wall of the feast giver is curved and from the roof right down to the narrow entrance there is a thick covering of neatly cut thatching grass. The ridge of the roof protruding in front is decorated with a row of crossed bamboo sticks which symbolize the joined hands of the dancers during this festival<sup>18</sup>.

Among the Chakhesang tribe, the house of the feast giver is decorated with chikka or house horns in the roof. The holes on the horn are to reduce the resistance offered by the horns to the wind and so to lessen the likelihood of their being destroyed or broken. The chikka signified that the owner has performed only a part of the prescribed series of rituals. The ends of these horns are usually square and always wider than the beam beneath them. So the house build with chikka among the Chakhesang feast giver is called kecükie (see fig 2.2). So the exterior of Naga houses varies from tribe to tribe or even within the village depending on the status of the owner i.e. through the number of feast he has given to the villagers. The completion of the feast of merit was also reflected in the material culture. Kauffman (1955) has mentioned that, along with shawls, body ornaments decorations were added to the house, like hanging of the mithun skull, erection of stone monoliths<sup>19</sup>.

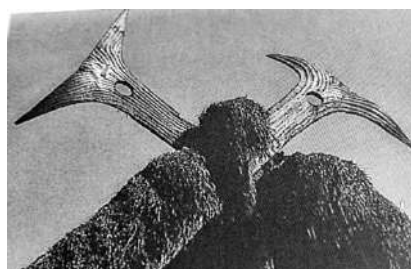
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<sup>18</sup> Milada , 1993. Naga Art. P.33.

<sup>19</sup> Marion Wettstein.2014 Naga Textiles P.125.

Among the Chang Naga tribe the houses of such giver of feasts were decorated with long tassels of hay grass<sup>20</sup>. (Fig 2.3)

*Figure 2.2 house of a Chakhesang feast giver decorated with house horn chikka. Figure 2.3 house of a Chang feast giver decorated with tassel of hay grass.*



*Sources: Naga Art Milanda.1993*

## **Patterns and Motifs**

A distinctive feature of traditional Naga dress is its use of festive colours, intricate designs and patterns, figurative symbols to communicate meaning. These garments are much more than mere adornment. Naga shawls vary from a simple white cloth made of cotton to elaborate pattern shawls. The designs vary from a formal arrangement of lines to elaborate patterns of diamonds and lozenge shape. Simple straight lines, stripes, squares and bands, varying in width, colour and arrangement are the most traditional design and motifs. Shawls and mekhalas (sarong) are generally woven in three pieces and then stitched together with the centre strip having more designed and ornamentation than the borders, which usually have the same pattern. The ordinary white or indigo blue shawl can be worn by anyone, but the decorated shawls can be worn by only certain section of the people<sup>21</sup>. There are certain shawls in every Naga tribes which imply rank and status. Such important

<sup>20</sup> Sangba Chang 80 years. Interviewed on 3/8/16 at 3pm .Tuensang.

<sup>21</sup> Mrs Asole age 45 of Ketsapo village Phek. Interviewed on 20/5/15 at 12 noon.

status shawls have special embroidered designs varying from tribe to tribe and also from person to person depending on their success in life. Each motif has a cultural tradition and a story to tell relating to the social and cultural roots. It also shows the wearer's record participation in raids, his history of offering feasts of merit, his wealth, his clan, his seniority within the clan and his place within the family. Even erection of stone monuments reflects success in one's life, hosting the feast of merit to the village community with their acquired wealth is another and bringing enemy's head, all these symbolizes success in life. Every man wears a body-cloth measuring about four feet six inches deep, and the patterns of these are numerous and often striking. They proclaim a man's wealth and prowess; some indicate that wearer or his father or both have done the mithun sacrifice; others again tell of the killing of both men and mithun<sup>22</sup>. It is interesting to note that a little girl's first garment is simply a cotton string (pezü c; ayet m)<sup>23</sup> round her waist. At about 5 yrs old she is given her first skirt, which is white in some villages and dark blue in others. It is ornamented with red embroidery, and the pattern varies according to the wealth of the father<sup>24</sup>. Rongsu-sü<sup>25</sup> (c) is the most decorative Ao cloth and the most difficult to earn, for it can only be worn by a man whose grandfather and father have both done the mithun sacrifice (see fig 2.4) This shawl is confined to the chungli villages of Akhoya, Changtongya, Yaongyimsen and Merangkong. The pattern consists of alternative narrow bands of dark blue line. All over it are thick long bunches of dog's wool dyed red, and it is edged at the ends with black and red goat's hair tassels, each tassel being ornamented with cowries.

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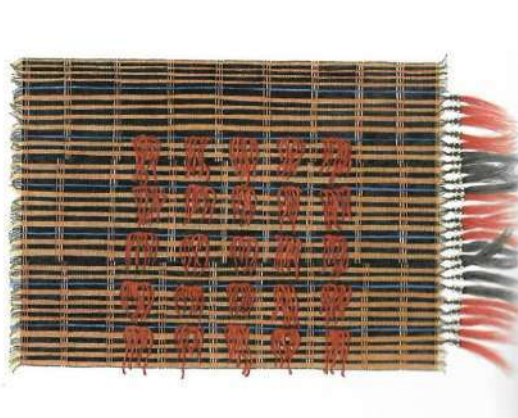
<sup>22</sup> JP Mills, 2003. The Ao Nagas, p.35.

<sup>23</sup> The Ao community is divided into two phratry, there are certain innate difference between the two in terms of language and attires therefore ( c) is indicated as chungli speaking phratry and (m) indicates of mongsen speaking phratry.

<sup>24</sup> JP Mills, 2003. The Ao Nagas p. 40.

<sup>25</sup> Rongsu-sü meaning shawl dyed in colour in Ao term. Therefore, *Rong* is colour, *su* is dye and *sü* is shawl. There are different types of shawl which has significant meaning attached to it.

*Figure 2.4 Rongsü sü men's shawl with side fringes indicate three successive generation of feast of merit and without the side fringes two successive generation of feast of merit.*

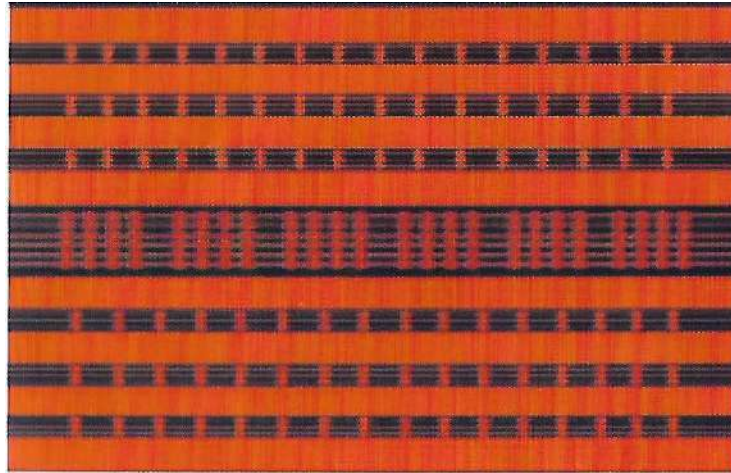


*Source Naga textiles. M. Wattstein.2014*

Aomelepsü is identical with the Rongsu sü except that it lacks the goat's hair fringes. It can be worn by a chungli man who has done the mithun sacrifice more than once himself. This shawl can be worn by men of wealth or by his sons and daughters. Among the mongsen it is call Aowasü or aowamelepsü, and is worn by women. Tapensasü<sup>26</sup>. (c) or turanamsü or waru sü (m) is the first of a well defined series of three cloths in which the motifs is light blue bands ornamented in red on a red cloth. In this cloth the bands are broad, and it can be worn by a man who has both done the mithun sacrifice, and is the son of a man who has done it. In some villages a person has the right to wear, provided he himself made mithun sacrifice five times, even if his father never sacrificed anything. (See fig 2.5) So the rules differ from village to village.

<sup>26</sup> Tapensasü in Ao local term is basically 'completeness' that is to say one who have completed the series of feast completing all formalities are entitled to wear such celebrated shawl as a symbol of one's position because of richness.

Figure 2.5, *Tabensa su*. This cloth can be worn by a man who has done both mithun sacrifice. The middle band indicates two generation of feast of merit, performed by both father and son.



Source: *Fieldwork*, 2016.

Takar laipi sü (c) has narrow blue bands and can be worn by any man who has done the mithun sacrifice himself, whatever the status of his father may have been, while man of the Imsong-pongen clan are entitled to wear it without having done any mithun sacrifices. But the Mongsen phartry do not wear this shawl. Aomelepsü or aowamelepsü, resembles the takar laipi sü but it has narrower blue bands. This can be worn by a man whether he has sacrificed mithun or not, provided his father or brother has done so. Yongmiremsü is a red cloth with narrow dark blue lines and can be worn by a man whether he has sacrificed mithun and whose father has done so before him. It is used in some villages of changkikong range. Another shawl called Yangnangsü; has a pattern consisting of rather narrow alternative bands having narrow light bands in the centre. It is worn in certain mongsen villages of changkikong range; its significance is exactly that of the shipenü as described above. All these above clothes indicate the wealth of the wearer or his family<sup>27</sup>. It may be stated the daughter of a man who has done mithun sacrifice wears a different pattern on her mekhala than the daughter of an ordinary man. The mekhala of the wife of a

<sup>27</sup> JP Mills 2003. *The Ao Nagas* P. 35-36.



man who has done the mithun sacrifice is more heavily ornamented than that of a poor man's wife, the extra ornamentation on the mekhala of a rich man's wife differ in detail from that of a rich man's daughter. Even if the daughter marries an ordinary man, she does not lose the right to wear the particular pattern her father has earned for her<sup>28</sup>.

The sash means the body hanger of casket which is worn and wrapped around the waist for carrying the basket of spikes. The casket cannot be completed without the sash or the casket without the sash is incomplete. The common men wear only one sash but the warriors who have succeeded in head hunting wears on both sides. This cloth is woven by the wife of the warrior who has observed the genna for six days before starting to weave. An unmarried girl is not allowed to weave this sash. Man is normally involved in dyeing of goat's hair. However, before undertaking such dyeing of goat's hair to make the basket one should also maintain purity by observing the genna for 6 days and moved into the jungle with all the things required for dyeing because the colouring should be done in isolation<sup>29</sup>.

*Chi pi khwu* shawl of Chakhesang Naga tribe is also called the chief of chief's shawl or the shawl of merit (See fig 2.6). This shawl is the most distinctive shawl of the Chakhesang tribe both in appearance and symbolism. The ultimate symbol of honour and privilege, and this has to be earned through the feast of merit. This shawl is woven in three parts like any other Naga shawls and sewn together. The field data says that, four or five female would sit together and stitch the embroidery in batches. It was also told that if they cannot finish the batches or series before sun set then ill luck will fall both to the wearer and weaver. So the embroidery would starts at dawn and finishes by sunset by the weavers taking minimum break to finish the shawl. Each pair of pattern was added each time he and his wife provides for the annual community feast. Motifs of orchids, Elephants, Tigers, Roosters, ivory armlets of men, cowrie shell earpiece/ pendant of women and patterns carved on village gates are embroidered on to the shawl, each motifs in pairs. The colours used

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<sup>28</sup> Mrs Sendongla. Age: interviewed on 8/4/ 17 at 12 noon.

<sup>29</sup> A. Lanu Ao, 2009. Naga Cultural Attires and Musical Instruments. P.50.

are bright orange, yellow, white, green and black. Orange symbolizes vitality and good health, yellow for prosperity and plenty, white for purity and bravery, green for life and nature's gifts while black symbolizes the sacred and strength of the soul<sup>30</sup>. This shawl is presented to the feast giver and his wife on the last day of the feast. *Mene* is a shawl used by both men and women for wrapping their private parts. *Etalashe* is a small piece of cloth or bodice

Figure 2.6: *Chi pi khwü* (Chakhesang feast of merit shawl, they also called Chief of chief's shawl).



Source: tetso sisters blogspot.

Used by women for wrapping their body. It is black in colour with yellow border. The traditional colours used in the Chakhesang tribe are mainly red, black, white, green and yellow. All the different colours are dyed by the women themselves. *Khonoma shawl* is the most common warrior shawl of the Chakhesang tribe. This shawl has a spear motif which signifies bravery in war. The *Mozaluo* shawl too is a warrior shawl and has spear motif on it along with a motif similar to piece of flesh. *Loramhoushu* is a cloth with white, red and black bands and the one with black with red and yellow hands is called *Lohe*. While *Nekhro* is a small cloth worn under the *mene* as under wear. *Tshunokeda* is a *mene*, a black cloth woven by women and decorated with three lines of cowries-shells. The motifs used by the Chakhesang's Nagas are spear, diamond, Nu kongra and the flesh motifs.<sup>31</sup> The spear in the Chakhesang shawls signifies bravery so only a warrior can use this shawl. Diamond

<sup>30</sup> Chi pi khü:2011 tetseosisters:blogspot.in retrieved 10/9/17

<sup>31</sup> Kewepfuzo, 2010. Cultural Heritage of Kuzhami Chakhesang Nagas. P.2.

motif is a symbol of aesthetic beauty and of auspicious things as it is a precious stone. The 'V' shaped Nu Kongra motif signifies a weapon used for shooting arrows in the war. The flesh motif resembles piece of flesh and hence signifies the death humans in war<sup>32</sup>. Mention may be made of the Phekheru which refers to the article used for decorating the calves; traditionally it is worn by rich male youths in the village. When it is worn for the first time, they should not remove it till it is replaced by a new one. It has to be worn at all times whether in the field or while sleeping. When he wears it the second time, however he is allowed to remove it when he is working in the field or when he is sleeping on the bed. It has different designs in the middle lines.

Among the Kuzhami of Chakhesang community, The Zathomi is the people who offered a feast of Zhatho and towed the Monolith. They offer Zatho feast (the best feast) and construct *kecukie*, *etshuketsutso*. It is a wooden blank designed in the form of human, mithun and buffalo heads. It is used for decorating the front of the house. Carving mithun head symbolizes the wealth of one who has offered feast of *sedese* and who has killed wild animals (and distributed its meat to all the household of the village this earns the position of wearing *elicura* (special shawl with elaborate design). Within the Zathomi there are three groups of people. Firstly, people who can perform the feast of merit simultaneously in two villages are entitled for construction of *kecukie* (It refers a house that is constructed with two wooden horns on the front and back of their house) and wear *elicura*. His wife is qualified to wear the *elicura* shawl. The Second are the ones who draw feast of merit or Zathomi, they are those who offer more than one feast of Zatho. Thirdly, Zathomi is one who offers a feast of *Zatho* only once in life. One of the toughest religious rituals is *zatho*. They contribute one *Zathomehe* (basket used for measuring the paddy, biggest vessel for contributing paddy to the kedo youth) of paddy every year to the *telepe* feast which is organised by Kedo. *Eliketomi* is a person who offers a feast of *elito*. The ritual of *elito* is easier as its expenditures are lesser. They are not qualified to construct the house of

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<sup>32</sup> Anjali Karolia & Richa Prakash. 2013 pp. 416-426. India Journal of Traditional Knowledge.

*kecukie*, but can construct *etsuketsutso* and wear the *elicura* shawl. They also contribute one Zatho mehe for the telepe feast. Another group is the *Padocune*. They only offer a feast of *krilo* even if they have enough land and yearly saving. It is compulsory for a person who has harvested more than 25 *abvou* to offer a feast to the village as thanksgiving offering to their god. They are qualified to wear *terurakedo* (It is a white shawl stitched with a big thread worn only by a person has offered *sedese*, *Elito* and *Zatho*). They cannot construct *kecukie* nor wear *elicura* shawl. A son can inherit the *kecukie* of his father but he cannot construct again unless he perform the feast of *zatho*. This traditional practice is not free from the onslaught of modernity and changes brought about by Christianity. Therefore, in the changed context a person who draws a community feast twice to its church members in commemoration of the birth of Jesus during Christmas is allowed to construct *kecukie* and *etsuketsutso* and is allowed to wear *elicura* shawl. Those who offer Christmas feast only once are not allowed to construct *kechuki* but are qualified to wear *elicura* shawl and put *etsuketsutso* in front of their house<sup>33</sup>.

Among the Chang community an ordinary cloth called *kaksi nei* gets its effect from use of broad band's alternating with narrow lines. On a general base of black, there are a series of narrow bands nearly a centimeter in breadth at about 8cms interval. This cloth is worn by unmarried boys and girls. *Silang nei* a blue colour shawl with no ornamentation is worn by newly married couple. One of the most beautiful shawls of Chang Naga is called the *Tobu nei*<sup>34</sup>. In fact this is the identity marker of a Chang tribe. This cloth consists of only two stripes. The upper strips are found with the following bands in order from the top. Two black bands nearly 2 cms each separated by a narrow red line, a broad red band of 8cm wide, a narrow blue line, two narrow black bands separated by a narrow red band, a broad band, two black bands separated by the narrow band and a broad blue band nearly 12 cms wide striped by a few white lines. In this blue band, a very prominent zigzag pattern in

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<sup>33</sup> Kewepfuzu 2010. Cultural Heritage of the Kuzhami Chakhesang Nagas.P.125.

<sup>34</sup> Beso Chang. Age: about 80 years. Research board of advisor, American biographical institute. Interviewed on 2/8/13 at 6.30am.

alternate red and black is woven<sup>35</sup>. The zigzag pattern in this shawl is explained as the winding body of a serpent<sup>36</sup> or it is also relate to warriors warpath design. The zigzag lines are woven uniformly, leaving a measured marginal space at both ends. If the zigzag falls short of the measured margin, it is a belief among the Chang, that the cloth should not be worn by a young man for he will have a premature death. But the restriction is not there for an old man. *Shangbu nei* is a Chang rich man shawl, (see fig 2.7) person who could perform the feast of merit was entitle to wear this shawl. The square design represents pieces of meat given to the invitees who comes from the neighboring villages to partake in the feast. It was believed that while weaving this shawl, the weaver should not eat or drink from other house or she will die after 6 days. After the shawl is woven, it is first put over a dog so that nothing bad will fall over the wearer<sup>37</sup>. *Soo nei* another shawl is exactly similar to *shangbu nei* but without the black band. This cloth are worn only by the *Ongpang* clan who belong to the priestly class for it is the duty of the elders of this clan to wash the hands of the head hunters and place the heads brought by the warriors in order of size in the Morung before any public ceremony is performed. Both male and female of *Ongpang* clan can wear the shawl. *Longkang nei* shawl is also for *Ongpang* Clan. It has a combination of very narrow bands of blue black and black with a pattern of diamond shaped design at the border. This shawl is worn by rich men who have passed the age of fifty. *Moh nei* or cowrie shawl (see fig 2.8) is one that is worn only by the people who have taken more than six heads. Before weaving this shawl a genna is observed for three days during which a cock is killed for sacrifice to mark the genna. After completion of the weaving, circles of cowries are stitched in it and inside the circles human figure representing the fallen enemy is stitched with cowries<sup>38</sup> the picture below shows about the shawl.

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<sup>35</sup> Alemchiba Ao.1968. The Arts and Crafts of Nagaland. P.40.

<sup>36</sup> Beso Chang. Age: about 80 years. Research board of advisor, American biographical institute. Interviewed on 2/8/13 at 6.30am.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> The statement was provided by one Chingmak an old Chang man, aged about 80 years on 3/5/ 2014. Interviewed at his place in Tuensang Town.

Figure 2.7 Shangbü nei



Source –Chang Traditional attires (CTS) 2016.

Figure 2.8 Mou nei



Source: Traditional attire of Chang ( CTS)2016.

Among the Konyak tribe a remarkable shawl worn by the village elders in important meetings and conferences is called *nye-myon*. It is a red cloth with narrow black lines (See fig 2.9). Nikola is a white shawl where in the middle part, there are two narrow black lines at a distance of nearly 4 cms between which a lozenge pattern in red is woven. (Usually Naga shawls and mekhela are woven separately into two or three parts and later on it is stitched together). The top and the last part are simple while the middle part has all the symbolic designs<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Mrs Wangcho. age 75 years. Mon. Interviewed on 7/5/15.

(Figure 2.9) Nye-myon Shawl of Konyak tribe



Source: Field work 2016

### **Head hunting**

The culture of head hunting is directly related to the status and position of a person among the Naga tribes. Indeed, head taking has been practiced by numerous people throughout the world from ancient times all the way to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The term describes the practice of cutting off and preserving the head or skull of a fallen enemy. In many head hunting societies taking a head is considered as a rite of manhood, denoting the transition from childhood to adulthood, and young man may not marry until they have taken one. Linda Heaphy (2017) observed that the warriors claim the head as trophies and display them prominently to increase their personal reputation and that of their tribes as a whole, with the added bonus of helping to intimate current and future enemies. Head hunting has a long history as a supremely effective weapon and those that practiced it often have fierce reputation<sup>40</sup>.

The custom of head hunting has been a very important factor in the social life of many primitive societies. Nagas were long known to have been fierce warriors. In Naga society, head hunting was associated with bravery and manhood. It is believed

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<sup>40</sup> Linda Heaphy, 2017. The Practice of Head hunting. Available in <http://kashgar.com.au/blogs/tribal-culture/the-practice-of-hunting> . Retrieved on 22/4/17

to have a link between killing and agriculture by ensuring a good harvest. “Head hunting means cutting off the head of the enemies, the enemy is killed by throwing spears at them or shooting the arrow and then the victim is beheaded with dao or the enemy may also be killed with dao alone”<sup>41</sup>. Among the New Guinea, head hunting is the most important event in the life of the community. Women also join the men folk. Only the old, children and the invalid stayed back in the village. ‘The basic cause of head hunting is the need for names in a community, something that holds true uniformity for many of the New Guinea tribes that engaged in it’<sup>42</sup>. According to Hose and Mc Dougall, the Dyaks was “passionately found of head hunting: head hunting is part and parcel of their religious rites. When a dyak wants to marry, he must show himself a hero to his intended, and the more heads he has, the more honour he receives from the tribe, and the more she admires him”<sup>43</sup>.

The Nagas, according to Verrier (1969), states that originally they did not know how to make war but one day a bird dropped a berry from a tree, and a lizard and a red ant fought for it. Someone saw the ant cut off the lizard’s head and thus men learnt to take heads<sup>44</sup>.

The important reason for the practice of head hunting was the desire of the young men as yet untried to prove their manhood and gain the right of wearing warrior’s gauntlets<sup>45</sup>. Among the men, the only way to outshine each other was through the war path and he could wish for nothing more in life than to have his success first recognized, then praised, and finally rewarded by his group. So the young man of the village, eager to prove his prowess “would long to take a head, bring it home in triumph, to be feted as a warrior, gain the privilege of wearing the coveted warrior’s ornaments and having proved his worth and manhood, acquire a

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<sup>41</sup> Joseph S Thong (2012). The Head-hunters Culture. P.11.

<sup>42</sup> Stephen W. Reed, 1952. Head hunting in New Guinea. American Anthropologist. Vol. 54. No.4. P.576-577

<sup>43</sup> William C Smith 2009. The Ao Naga Tribe of Assam P.155.

<sup>44</sup> Verrier Elwin 1969. The Nagas in the Nineteenth century P.11.

<sup>45</sup> David Vumlallian Zao, Raiding the dreaded past: representations of headhunting and human sacrifice in North East India. Retrieved on 16.6.16



bride”<sup>46</sup>. When a man desired to marry he must show himself a hero to his bride-to-be and the more heads he had to his credits, he gets more advantages than his friends by attracting the most beautiful girl from his village. Women urged men to take heads and they mock these men who doesn't possess or wear these symbols of bravery. It was also said that a young man who had not taken a head, found it difficult to find a bride. Heads were sought after during the time of epidemic or when the harvest was poor for there was believe that, bringing heads from another village injects vital and creative energy to the village where the heads are brought. Women with long hair were regarded more valuable prized position since the hair can be used for decoration in their head gear as well as ornaments. “However all heads were prized equally whether belonging to men, women, or children provided the child had cut its teeth”<sup>47</sup>. Hutton (1921) Among the Ao tribe before going for head hunting, they observed very strict genna or what is termed as anempong<sup>48</sup> in local term for three days prior to the battle as a rite sign of purification. After they return back to their village another three days genna is observed after the battle<sup>49</sup>.

Among the Konyak Naga tribe, head hunting was considered the most important duty in the social life of the Konyak. They considered the highest profession. The man who could collect (hunt) the most heads was regarded as a great Naomei or warrior and they were called a mighty man. They practiced head hunting for political, social and religious reasons. At the time of going for head hunting the women are tabooed from uttering any word for it was belief that, for such words uttered by women, their mission would fail. The Chang Naga tribe before setting for head hunting expedition has to observe genna. “They had to abstain from certain kinds of food, and also from contact with women; often they were not even permitted to speak to the members of the family. On the appointed day, according to the custom, the women had to dress the departing men. They tied the two ends of the body cloth on their chest into a firm knot, which could be opened only after their

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<sup>46</sup> M. Horam 1977 Social & Cultural life of the Nagas.P.88.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid 90

<sup>48</sup> Anempong is referred as genna, restricted to certain act, taboo for ritual feast.

<sup>49</sup> N.Talitemjen Ao, 1997. Naga Cultural Heritage P.19.

return from the war expedition. On their head they put a cane helmet, and over the shoulder hung the hunter's bag. They bid them farewell with a conventional saying: "fight courageously, and bring more heads!"<sup>50</sup>.

Head hunting was based on the belief that the soul –matter or vital power resided in the human head. By bringing a new head to the village create energy from that particular village from where the head was brought. This was essential for both human and animal fertility. It also stimulates the crops to grow better, especially when the head was that of women with long hair. When the fertility of the village was diminishing or the economy was deteriorating the people believed that it was the right time to go for head hunting in order to increase population and also to bring luck during fishing, hunting and for general prosperity of the villagers as a whole. Heads was also needed in connection with several religious ceremonies and rituals. Whenever a chief's house or morung or such houses are built, a new head was required to appease ancestral ghosts. The Dayak people who represent a group of proto-Malayans inhabiting the inner part of Borneo believed that their enemies' heads held special supernatural powers that were needed to complete complex rituals from guaranteeing a successful rice-harvest to planting the foundations of a new family long house. It also proved a tribesman's prowess and determined his position in the village. The more heads a hunter collected, the higher his rank<sup>51</sup>.

The Trophy head, after bringing to the village observed and perform several rites and rituals, the head was kept hooked in a particular tree in the middle of the village. Such a tree was called 'the tree of skull'. In earlier days in every head hunter's village a huge tree was located to hang the skulls. "The head was important because of ideas concerning a multiple soul', part of this resides in the head and is

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<sup>50</sup> Milada Ganguli, 1984. A Pilgrimage to the Nagas. P.198.

<sup>51</sup> Indoneo. Meet the Dayaks: (Ex-)Headhunters of Borneo. Available at: [www.indoneo.com/blog/indonesia/28496513-meet-the-dayaks-ex-headhunters-of-borneo](http://www.indoneo.com/blog/indonesia/28496513-meet-the-dayaks-ex-headhunters-of-borneo). Retrieved on 27/2/16.

valuable in increasing the prosperity of individuals and groups and so ensuring continuation and enhancement of life and fertility”<sup>52</sup>.

Nagas wanted a head not only for glory and magical benefits but also for the sake of the ornaments he was entitled to wear. It inspired wonderful dances and stimulated artistic production, for the most elaborate textiles can be worn by the head hunter. Small replicas of heads were craved to be worn almost like medals. Wooden pipe, bamboo mugs, baskets were designed with human figures. “Bringing heads to the village won the privileges of ornamenting spear shafts and battle axe handles with tufts of hair, black or dyed red and yellow, adorning their blankets with cowrie shells, and wearing boar-tusks necklaces”<sup>53</sup>.

The Nagas are deeply attached to their weapons. The spear and *dao* are important weapons of Nagas. In olden days the Rengma tribe was probably the only Naga who smelted iron by boiling and heating the stone, which contained iron-sand. They are considered the best Naga blacksmiths. The spears used for ceremonial purposes are decorated with goat’s hair on the shaft. The *dao* is a multi-purpose weapon. It is considered as the most important weapon for Naga men. It is used for cutting trees and fowls, chopping meat, carving-wood and killing enemies. It consists of blade and wooden-handle. The shape and design varies from tribe to tribe. A complete spear is made of iron which is used for hunting and in wars. The shaft of an Ao spear is about six feet long. The most popular type of ornamented shafts is known as *rongnü* (c), *rongmi* (m). About three and a half feet of the shaft, except for a space for the hand, is covered with red pile, ending at the bottom in a deep fringe of red goat’s hair. Short red goat’s hair is bound on with fine string and then clipped even, so that it forms a sort of velvet pile. Another *pand tangnü* (c); *khamtami* (m) has about a foot of red pile at the top. Both varieties of spear can be carried by anyone who has earned or bought the right to wear warrior’s ornaments. Another type of spear called *rongmangrongnü* (c); *rongmangrongmi* (m) where the hair is red with a

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<sup>52</sup> Andrew C West, 1985. Nineteen Century Naga Material Culture.  
Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40830119>  
retrieved on 7/9/16

<sup>53</sup> JP Mills 2003. The Ao Nagas.P. 47.

broad band of black hair, may be used by a *chungli* man, even though young, provided his father has given the full series of feast of merit, but among the *mongsen* phratry it is confined to old or middle-aged men who have earned the right to put on a warrior's dress. Spear which is made of iron is called *nüsungsü* (C) or *ayinmichang* (M). Among the *chungli* it is owned by the oldest man of a clan in the village and after his death it is passed on to the next oldest member. But among the *mongsen* a man who has taken heads and done the mithun sacrifice can use such a spear<sup>54</sup>.

Loin clothes are strips of clothes worn by not only the Nagas but people living in the hill tribes of South Asia, like Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, Indonesia and India. It is a piece of cloth used by man to cover their private parts. Tassels, cowrie shells and brass medallions are added to infuse symbolism and beauty into the loin cloth. Verrier Elwin in his book *The Nagas in the nineteenth century* wrote that, the Nagas can be divided into two great sections. The kilted and the non-kilted<sup>55</sup>. The kilted belongs to the Angami Nagas along with eastern and western Angamis that includes Chakhesang, Mao etc. The kilt is a strip of dark blue or black cotton cloth from 3 ½ to 4 ½ feet long, and 18 inches wide. It passes round the hips overlapping in front, and is usually fastened on the left side: the lower inner corner is drawn tightly between the legs by means of a string which passes up behind and hangs over the waist belt. When a man becomes a warrior and has taken a head, he acquires the right to decorate his kilt with three rows of cowries; and in the case of a very distinguished warrior, four rows.

The non- kilted belongs to the rest of the Naga tribes where they use only the loin clothes generally it is black in colour and it is also embroidered with cowries. While women weave the apron, tradition demands that only the men have to sew the cowries himself. The cowries are rubbed on stone before being embroidered so that they may stick well. The cowries' decoration is quite popular among the Nagas and it imparts to the kilt the character of Togo virility, signifying his success in love or war.

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<sup>54</sup> Mills 2003. *The Ao Nagas*, P.6.

<sup>55</sup> Verrier Elwin, 1969 . *The Nagas in the Nineteenth* P.46.

Among the Chang tribe, after the apron is embroidered with cowries, it has to be adorned with brass discs as a part of ceremonial dress for the great warriors.

### **Naga Attires vis-a-vis semiotic meaning**

Attires can be said as an outfit, a dress or ones clothing. In the most general sense of understanding one can say it is a dress one wear. Every human society has its own way of dressing which may or may not have any socio cultural meaning bearing on it. The socio culture of a given particular society may define certain dress code for example among the Muslims and especially women, Hijab a head dress, or a loose long dress that cover the entire body has its roots in the religion and therefore socio culturally enforced. Thus Muslim woman defying the socio cultural norms some time invite its consequences. There are many attire or dresses which has no meaning and therefore it is the choice of the individual to wear depending on whether he/she likes it or not. Nagas have attires which they called as traditional attires. These traditional attires have sociological significance and semiotic meaning unlike many dresses. Historically speaking, the influence of Christian missionaries on the one hand and the colonial administration on the other has marked the epoch of tradition and modernity in the Naga context, thereby slowly but steadily diminishing the use such attires.

Traditionally speaking, social stratification among the Nagas was manifestly observable. This means to state that, people's rank and status could easily be distinguished from their daily dress, especially distinction between the ordinary people and the wealthy class of people. It was possible to identify, by simply looking at the shawl of the wearer, the tribe he belong to, his clan, his status and the number of gennas he had performed which is not possible in the present society. Men's identity was depicted in the shawls he wore. Dresses and ornaments are important aspects of civilization and their shapes, sizes and styles depend upon the place where they reside. Even among the Naga society, an attire of a person, tribe, and clan could be read much like a conversation; highlighting certain codes and symbols to represent ones identity. It comes from the semiotics of the culture that a person

comes from. The motifs identify the identity of a person, and acts as a determinant of status. 'The ornaments and particularly the cloths of the Nagas reflect a concern for minute identification of social organization and social status. The designs and colours of cloths symbolize ascribed status such as village, clan, and morung membership, and achieved or prestige status arising from head-taking and feasting exploits'<sup>56</sup>. From birth till date, ornaments marked the stages of a Naga's life. Feast of merit was an important platform to earn particular type of cloth and ornaments. Many parts of the body especially among the trans-Dikhu tribes were decorated with tattoos as many of them hardly wore any clothes. Their body was covered only with layers of necklaces and ornaments especially among the women groups. Many of the symbols speak about the past. It includes a motif which appears like cucumber seeds; therefore AOs called it as 'Zungijang'. Animals like tiger, mithun, elephant, and cock in Ao tsungkotepsü shawls symbolize and represent a social position or wealth but mostly because of headhunting. Mithun represents wealth of the wearer, the elephant and tiger denote his prowess in hunting and the human head signifies success in taking heads. These are painted in black on a white band. Stories were told using symbols to illustrate character of events. The median band is painted with a black who includes figures of mithun symbolizing wealth of the wearer, elephant and tiger to symbolize valour of the man, human head along with spears and daos representing success in head hunting and pictures of cocks, because cock sacrifice forms an essential part of every Ao ritual and ceremony<sup>57</sup>. This is an exclusive male shawl and could be worn only by one who has taken heads in war or performed the feast of merit. A rich man can paint mithun head and jabelli, the traditional Ao currency and if a man is a ruler (Tatar), he is entitled to wear the shawl with pictures of the sun, moon, and stars and oyim/yimyo ozü and meripong hornbill. These are symbols of war heroism and leadership. The horn also indicates that the wearer had

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<sup>56</sup> Julian Jacobs, 2012. *The Naga Textiles* P.65 .

Beso Chang. Age: about 80 years. Research board of advisor, American biographical institute. Interviewed on 2/8/13 at 6.30am.

<sup>57</sup> G.H.Ghosh 1995, *Tribal and their culture in Manipur and Nagaland* vol.III, p.173

done the mithun sacrifice<sup>58</sup>. If a man is a warrior and a rich man, he can put all the symbols in the shawls. Only a man of war and of social status is entitled to wear this shawl, so it is also called nokinketer Sü. This is an exclusive male shawl and could be worn only by a person who has done a mithun sacrifice, that is feast of merit or a head hunter. (see fig 2.10)

*Figure: 2.10 Tsungkotepsu shawl is a decorative warrior shawl. It is an exclusive male shawl. It is one of the most characteristic clothes of the Ao tribe.*



*Source field work 2017*

The most distinctive feature of the design is the exclusive right of the individual over a design achieved by sheer individuals' efforts, wherein the family or clan specificities do not intervene. Thus, status, office and role were the main aspects through which the individual achieved recognition in the society. It must be noted that such shawl is meant for man. However, a contrasting to the statement is also placed here that is women of Anichari Clan of Longkum village enjoys the privilege to wear this warrior's shawl and the reason being, a woman of the Anichar clan was attacked by a hostile head hunter one day but she dare to fight him back and in revenge for the attack, she chopped his head down. That is how the woman of Anichar clan was allowed to wear the warrior/ head hunter shawl<sup>59</sup>.

But among the Konyak Nagas, the king or Angh is the supreme head. The Angh's house is the largest in the village. In Chui Village, the Angh's house stands in the highest point of the village. The whole house is longitudinally divided into two parts. One part is left as an open space, and the other is divided into different

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<sup>58</sup> Pursowa 2011, The Ao-Naga Traditional Dress as a medium of communication in the society. P.27.

<sup>59</sup> Marion Wettstein 2014 P.169.

chambers for different purposes. The first chamber is the court Chamber (*wanguo*); where there is a fire place and the king has a permanent seat in that place. As he sits there he is surrounded by his guards and court members. All the decisions of the kingdom are made in this room. The second chamber is the king's special chamber where all his important properties are stored. The third chamber is the king's bedroom, the fourth the queen's chamber, the fifth the royal kitchen, the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth chambers belong to the concubines. The eleventh chamber is a room where the concubines do their handiwork; and the twelfth chamber is a place where the '*shum*' (a long log which consist of 6 to 8 holes used for pounding the paddy)<sup>60</sup>. So in this way the palace got the highest place like the court and the lowest the working room too.

The houses of the more well to do are readily recognized by their size, and more especially their prominent bow fronts and conspicuous embellishments. Usually a cooking pot turned upside down, bound on the gable, and symbolizes hospitality. Under the bow fronts are set crotched trunks of trees, memorializing heroic deeds or special feasts given to the village<sup>61</sup>.

The structure of a house, symbols depicted in the clothes, the elaborate designs on a men's apron, tattoo in the chest, ornaments, the bamboo mug or design on the *dao* holder etc functions as a denominator/ indicator of social status in Naga society. The right to wear the ordinary ornaments of a warrior like boar tusks, gauntlets etc can be bought by a small payment to the village elders. In the olden days a poor man who was fortunate enough to take a head would often sell it and all his rights to the rich man. The purchaser, after the usual ceremony and feast to the elders, was regarded as the taker of the head. But the clothes and ornaments worn by the rich man cannot be bought.

Even the designs in the loin clothes were according to the status of a person. The rich and the warrior use elaborate designs like, cowrie shells, tassels, beads and brass medallions whereas the poor man's loin cloth was simple and non descriptive

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<sup>60</sup> Y, Chingang 2008. The Konyak Naga. Yesterday and Today. P.16-17.

<sup>61</sup> M.M Clark, 1978. The corner in India P.43.



one<sup>62</sup>. Thus the kind of dress and ornament themselves spoke about the kind of social and political background of men and women in the society.

In olden days the status of the women were shown through the clothes they wear specially during the time of festivals and special occasion. The commoner clothes were worn by women whose forefathers or father did not perform any mithun sacrifice, and the decorated attires with horn bill feathers are worn by the wives and daughters of the rich men. *Aomelepsi* with its tufts of red goat's hair may be worn by rich man daughters during festivals. This is provided by her father or brother who had done the feast of merit. The most developed system of cloth designs as indication of status are found amongst the Aos' who have a wide variety of significant colours and designs, each meaning something very specific. The aosü cloth for example, is worn by a man who has done mithun sacrifice at least once, but is also worn by his daughters, and his sons-that is, his lineage descendants<sup>63</sup>. (See fig 2.11).

*Figure 2.11 Azüjangnep sü can be worn only by the feast giver's daughters.*



*Source: Field work 2016*

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<sup>62</sup> Chingmak Chang interviewed on 21/1/15 at 3pm.

<sup>63</sup> Julian Jacobs 2012. The Nagas Hill peoples of North East India. P.65.

Figure 2.12. This is called *takatsür supedi*. Mekhela worn by the daughter and wife of a rich man.



Source: Field work 2017

The decorative warrior shawl *Tsungkotepsü* is one of the most characteristic clothes of the Aos. The cloth has a median white band and on either side of it are horizontal bands of contrasting black, red, and white. There are five broad red bands close together at the top and bottom, six narrow red bands close together at the top and bottom, six narrow red bands close to the broad white median band. ‘The identity element of wealth seems to have been a collective identity on the level of the family following patrilineal descent. A shawl not only represented who a man was (e.g. the son of one who has performed a full series of mithun sacrifices), it reminded him also of who he ideally should be (one who has performed a full series of mithun sacrifices like his father and possibly his grandfather)’<sup>64</sup>. The *rongsü* shawl is such kind of shawl which can be worn only by a man whose grandfather and father have both done the mithun sacrifice feast and who has done it himself. The pattern consists of alternative narrow band of dark blue and red with an occasional light blue line. This shawl has a thick long bunches of red hair and it is decorated with black and red goat’s hair tassels, each tassel is ornamented with cowries shells.

The “*Chuchu supangsu*” shawl can be worn by men of Mulir clan as of right. The cloth itself cloth itself is red with very narrow dark blue bands and a broad white

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<sup>64</sup> Michael Oppity, et. al., 2008. *Naga Identities*, P.136.

median band embroidered with large red lozenge, the blue bands indicate that the wearers has not only taken heads in war, but has performed the feast of merit”<sup>65</sup>.

The daughter of a rich man who has done the feast of merit or mithun sacrifice weaves a different pattern on her skirt and more elaborate than the daughter of a poor man. The wife of a rich man is heavily decorated than the wife of a poor man. The designs of the rich man’s wife skirt or mekhala differ from that of his daughter. The clothes used for covering the bodies of women are usually simple white and dark blue pieces of cloth bound tightly round the body under the armpits. ‘It is called Tukutsukresü in Ao dialect and it is worn by the girl after puberty. While weaving this cloth the mother has to abstain from sex for 6 days’<sup>66</sup>.

On special occasions, they wear different shawls according to their designated positions in the society. Men wear shawls which cover their bodies from right to left. Women wear shawls which wrap their bodies from left to right. The males wear the dices of elephant tusks on their arms above the elbow. Among the Chakhesang Nagas; men also wear *thsunokeda* mene, which is wrapped around their waist and goes down to their knees. A man also wears *phekheru* in their calves. They also wear *tsupha* which decorates their neck and seashells on the back, which are known as *tekhu*. Only successful hunters’ use necklaces made of wild boar tusks and those who are successful in making love with different women wear four lines of cowry – shells in the mene. *Tshunokeda* is a black mene worn by man decorated with three lines of cowrie shells. A person who wears four lines of cowry –shell in mene shows achievement in love making with different women in three areas i.e. (a) One who has had sexual intercourse with two girls with the same name. (b) One who has had sexual intercourse with two sisters of the same father. (c) One who has had sexual intercourse with a woman and her daughter<sup>67</sup>. See fig 2.13

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<sup>65</sup> Richa Prakash, et.al., 2003. Handcrafted shawls of Nagaland. *International journal of scientific and research* Publications, Vol. 3 ( 8).p. 1-3

<sup>66</sup> See A. Lanu Ao, 1999 Naga traditional Attires and musical Instrument. P.91.

<sup>67</sup> Kewepfuzu 2010. Socio-cultural Heritage of Kuzhami Nagas. P.39

Figure 2.1 *Tshunokeda* is a black mene worn by a man with four lines of cowrie shells, which signifies as prowess in love.



Source: Field work 2015.

The women wear *Mehapulo mene* which is wrapped around their waist and it comes down to their knee.

The feast of Merit allows all male members irrespective of class, clan to climb up the social status. It is an achieved status. However, among the Konyaks since the society is autocratic, the feast, culminating in the dragging in of a log gong and the erection of a carved post in front of the house are opened only to the male members of the Angh clan<sup>68</sup>. The feast of merit is very significant and symbolic. It is in such occasion that all the members of the village irrespective of status come together and enjoy the feast given by the feast giver of the village. It is also during such occasion that many past enemies become friends and reconciliation takes place.

The ceremonies both mark and create distinctions in social status. The feast converts material wealth i.e. the cattle, pig, rice, rice beer into social status. A man who has enough wealth to give a feast was regarded as a man possessing fertility and his wealth is a sign of this. The feast is therefore, recognition of his ritual status and, a mechanism for spreading his fertility among his fellow villagers. Here the Feast of Merit tends to take place at the same time as significant agricultural-cycle rituals and secondly the post that are erected are said to be basically sexual in shape. The Sema forked Y-posts are symbols of the female sex, and the Angami erect two stones together- a male and a female. It is through their planting in the earth that the Feast-

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<sup>68</sup> Angh Aching of Chui village interviewed on 21/4/15 at 2pm.

giver transmits his fertility into the common land of the village. An interplay relating to fertility, human sexuality and agricultural fertility is being made<sup>69</sup>. While preserving the history of symbols depicted on clothes, houses and certain implements of daily use, they also function as denominators of social status.

### **The Art of Tattooing**

Besides the sociological importance of feast of merit and headhunting and its corresponding to various rewards of different patterns of shawls, an important aspect of Naga culture is the practice of tattooing.

Since time immemorial, tattoos have played a major role in the heritage and history of almost every culture around the world. 'Tattoo is the insertion of ink or some other pigment through the outer covering of the body, the epidermis, into the dermis, the second layer of skin. Tattooist uses a sharp implement to puncture the skin and thus make an indelible mark, design, or picture on the body'<sup>70</sup>. Different tribes and cultures throughout history have used tattoos to symbolize different meanings. To the wearer, tattoo not only enhances the beauty of the human body, but marks social status, conveys symbolic hidden meanings, and proclaims its maker's artistic ability

Tribal tattoos hold the mantle of being the first tattoo designs to ever grace the face of the Earth, and their origins can be traced back to various tribes in North America, South America, Africa, Europe, Japan, New Zealand, Cambodia, Taiwan, and Philippines. Many tribes also believed that having certain marks on the body will prevent evil spirits from attacking the people<sup>71</sup>.

The Polynesians were the people who supposedly started the ritual of creating these tattoos, and every design is said to be a derivation of their tattoos. Tattoos were

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<sup>69</sup> Julian Jacobs 2012. The Nagas Hills peoples of North East India. P.118-119.

<sup>70</sup> Enid Schildrout, 2001 Body Art as Visual Language.

<http://anthropology.si.edu/outreach/anthnote/winter01/anthnote.html> retrieved on 15/9/16

<sup>71</sup> Rahul Thandani. Available at: <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/tribal-tattoo-meaning.html>. Retrieved on 15/3/15.

drawn to signify the rite of passage into puberty in many Polynesian societies. There are certain tribes where only men get tattoos. As tattoos are considered as the primary form of art, the different Polynesian tribes have adapted intricate and detailed designs.

The history of these tattoos even dates back to the Egyptians and since then, such kinds of tattoo designs have been found in various cultures across the world. The symbolism of these tattoos is extremely hard to decipher in this day and age, but the underlying concept of these tattoos and meanings was to simply display an individual's social standing. In tribes of hunters, a person's achievements were graphically illustrated by the drawings on his body, and the more tattoos a person had, the more respect he gets. Leaders of the tribes had darker and more powerful designs, and even the witch doctors and medicine men were decorated with distinct designs. It may be mention here that the spread of Western cultures slowly killed these superstitions and beliefs, and gradually a steady decline in the art of tribal tattooing was observed. As a result, the emergence of these tattoos today stems more for decoration purposes, rather than a display of position or rank. Many superstitions that accompanied these tattoos have almost completely got lost in the pages of history. For some people the tattoo is an ornament, for others, symbol carrying information about the man's life which symbolizes the identity of particular tribe.' For the Maori, who are living in the southern part of the Oceania, the tattoos are a way of communication with the world and one of the head of the tribes declared that no man in the world has the right to use the sacred ornaments for decorative purposes<sup>72</sup>.

In the Marquesas, tattoo seems to have been intimately associated with gender, wealth, and status, but not necessarily chiefly rank. Acquisition of tattoo in honor of special events such as chiefly rites of passage, victories in battle, or participation in feasts, commemorated the event and symbolically represented it. Maori designs were individualized. Maori chiefs drew their facial tattoos as signatures to sign documents during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The association of Maori tattoo with carved figures is also seen in the carved house posts of meeting houses, where the buttocks of the ancestral figures have tattoo designs, echoing the tattoo buttocks of important men. In Samoa tattoo

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<sup>72</sup> [www.olegcherne.ru/articles/46-mpko-/](http://www.olegcherne.ru/articles/46-mpko-/)retrieved on 8/10/15

generally extends from above the waist to the thighs. Tattoo is publicly exhibited when a man accompanies a high ranking female dancer. Only men from certain status were required to put tattoo<sup>73</sup>.

Tattooing is common among the Naga tribes of Konyaks, Changs and Phoms. Both men and women are tattooed. But among the Sangtam and Ao tribes, only women are tattooed. A girl after she is being tattooed became a full-fledged member of her community and she is allowed to grow her hair, and must also observe the food restriction in the clan. Among the Konyak community, tattooing is another feature of dressing which confers much dignity on a person. Symbols are also used to communicate the social status of a person. But tattooing can be done only when one has taken the head of an enemy. Among the Konyaks, a person who could bring enemy's heads from the raids only is entitled to put tattoo on their face and chest. His wife also gets the privilege of tattooing on her body. However, if no head is available, the konyak man gets his tattoo marks after a pretended killing of wooden figures or effigies of the enemies<sup>74</sup>. In the past a tattooed person can be identified whether he belongs to Thendu or Thenko or how many heads he has killed by the pattern of tattoos he put on his body. The Thendu has marks on their face, while the Thenko does not. Women of both groups has tattoo on their legs but women of Thendu group tattooed their face also. If a man could kill more than ten heads of his enemies, the tattoo of 'Toklei' would be marked on the back of the body or yanmeng (brass heads) on his neck to show his achievement as a warrior<sup>75</sup>. From the field data it was found out that, among the Konyak girls, the presence or absence of a tattoo on the back of the knee signifies married or unmarried status. This means that only married girls tattoo the back of the knee.

Ao men are not tattooed. Only women are tattooed on the face, neck, breasts, arms and legs as soon as they reached puberty. The marks on the face are slight, and

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<sup>73</sup> Tattooed beauty..A case study of the pacific-Adrienne L.Kaeppler.

<http://anthropology.s1.edu/outreach/anthnote/winter01/anthnote.html> retrieved on 26/10/14.

<sup>74</sup> Nokpai Konyak age 37 years. Interviewed on 21/4/15 at 7pm.

<sup>75</sup> A. Yanang konyak 1986. From Darkness to Light.P.7.

are confined to four vertical lines on the chin. It takes five years to complete the whole process of tattooing. The pattern slightly differs between the Chungli and Mongsen groups. The Chungli women bear's three parallel black lines vertically on the chin, criss-cross lines on the chest, on the leg below the knee but three lines horizontally at the back side below the knee. But the Mongsen differs by a criss-cross line at the back side of the leg which is considered as more beautiful<sup>76</sup>.

When a girl is about ten years or eleven years old, her legs are tattooed up to the bottom of the calf; the next year her chin, chest and the fronts of her shoulders are completed; in the third year the patterns on the calf is done, and in the fourth year her knees are tattooed; in the final year her wrists and stomach are ornamented<sup>77</sup>. Mrs Nungshila<sup>78</sup> started tattooing from the age of 7years. According to her a girl from a rich family starts tattooing from an early age, so that it is completed before the time of marriage. Only ones the tattoo is completed marriage can take place. The only addition an Ao girl had after marriage is a tattoo on her wrist. Tattooing the body was an added beauty and also a sign of becoming full-fledged womanhood. One of the interesting findings is that tattooed women were restricted to certain food items such as scale-less fish, intestine of all animals, chicken and even crab etc. which Ao's considered such food as unhealthy for those tattooed body.

The shoulders of eastern Naga women are tattooed with diamond patterns, three horizontal lines are taken across the body above the breast, between which eight lines go down to the waist narrowing gradually to a point: The leg tattoo is drawn on the thighs consisting of close vertical lines and on the calves of horizontal lines, with a small break occurring in each on the shin bone.

It was compulsory for the Chang Women to tattoo their body. Facial tattoos and the tattoos near her chin represent her clan. The four clans among the Chang tribe, the Ongh, Lomou, Honghang and Khangshou clan have identical forehead

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<sup>76</sup> Panger Imchen 1993. Ancient Ao Naga Religion P.141.

<sup>77</sup> Mills2003 The Ao Nagas, P.30.

<sup>78</sup> Mrs Nungshila age about 85 years from Ungma Village interviewed on 7/7/17 at 2pm.



tattoo known as khungbub which has a lozenge shape. The tattoo on the chin differs from clan to clan known as kaobub. Ongh woman has three wavy horizontal lines on her chin whereas the Lamou clan has an X-shaped tattoo between two simple vertical lines. Honghang woman chin tattoo is identical to the Lomou and Khangshou chin tattoo. Thus their facial tattoos represent her clan. In the case of Chang only man of warrior are entitled for tattoo their body<sup>79</sup>. A bamboo mug (usually for drinking rice beer) decorated with poker design called *Dobu Thung* was an exclusive privilege for a head takers among the Chang Naga, although the tattoo like design is not on his body but its right is exclusively reserved. Similarly, the head takers were also honoured with various designs in their daos and spears. In the case of women tattoos among the Nagas, it is a kind of rite of passage but for men tattoos tend to be more representational, and shows as an achieved status. Thus, all these show how Naga traditional culture of tattooing carries semiotic meaning.

### **Ornaments and status symbols**

“All societies have always used symbols, the interesting thing is to decipher what they mean, not how they may have originated”<sup>80</sup>. In the tribal societies ornaments can symbolize valorous deeds, social status, and wealth and clan identification. For the Nagas, dresses without ornaments are incomplete. Like the clothes ornaments gives the identity of the individual and his ranking in social status. Men’s ornaments are made of metals, bones, cowries, shells’ cane, leather, orchids and wood. Ornaments worn at the necks are mainly strings of beads, shells; cornelian stones, boar tusks and horns. Naga Women wear ornaments like earrings, wristlets and bracelets of brass or copper etc. Ornaments are more than a matter of aesthetics. It defines the identity of an individual and groups. Some Naga ornaments can be worn by anyone as and when they like. But most Naga ornaments have a particular meaning, and they are therefore ‘powerful’. The right to wear them is strictly controlled and they believe that there is some source of power within it and they have

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<sup>79</sup> Impongsoed Chang 80 years. Interviewed on 5/5/15 at 2pm.

<sup>80</sup> Julian Jacobs 2012. The Nagas Hill Peoples of Northeast India, P.103.

to handle with care. “Among the Lotha’s, a man who wears the head taker’s tusk, necklace or ivory armlet, is careful to buy them not directly, but through an intermediary, who will attract to himself any evil which may be contained in them; the Sema warrior may not wear the tusks of a boar he has himself killed, even if he is entitled to this ornaments; the Angami man entitled to wear hornbill feathers may not do so in the period between sowing the millet and harvesting the rice”<sup>81</sup>. Children like adults, also show their status through ornaments. Thus, an Ao boy at three months starts to wear a goats’ hair earring, which is only discarded when he is admitted to the morung at puberty<sup>82</sup>. Rengma girls wear particular skirts and ornaments indicating their unmarried status and their heads are shaved until marriage.

Earrings are the most important ornament worn by the Konyak Nagas. When a child is a month old, ear holes are made at two places, a hole on the ear lobe and the other on the top. The women wear two narrow, circular, wielded coils of brass, measuring about three inches in diameter, eventually resting on the chest. The ear hole is made large to accommodate a tube, half an inch in diameter. Mostly elderly people put on a piece brass curled coiled at one end or in the form of a circle with a few heads hanging on it. Or an animal’s bone, ruff of dyed goat’s hair, or horn of wild goat, are used as an ornament worn on ears. An addition to these earrings suspended from the ear lobe, more ear-rings are worn at the top ear hole, so as to decorate the ear<sup>83</sup>. Among the Nagas few tribes like the Aos, Sangtams, Yimchungers and the Phoms etc wear the crystal earrings, which are called tongpang in Ao vernicular. They believed that the crystal earring has a magical power<sup>84</sup>.

In ancient times, it was believed that besides enhancing its beauty, decorating the body gives an additional strength and power. Even today many tribal societies use flowers, wild berries and fruits, celebrate nature and growth while feathers are valued for their colour and for the flight. Seeds, even beetle wings are used as

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<sup>81</sup> Julian Jacobs 2012 *The Nagas Hill Peoples of Northeast India*. P.106

<sup>82</sup> Mrs Nungshila age 85 years interviewed on 7/7/17 at 2pm.

<sup>83</sup> Mr Wangcho 80 years interviewed on 7/5/15 at 11am.

<sup>84</sup> A Lanu Ao 1999. *Naga Cultural Attires and Musical Instruments*.P.83.

embellishment and decoration. Each ornament was a symbol of the rank and status of the wearer. Thus, the thorough purpose of ornamentation was not only to satisfy an instinctive desire to decorate the body; it was also invested with symbolic significance<sup>85</sup>. The ears are decorated with a tuft of cotton wool or red cloths rolled together and are stuff into the ear lobe. The armlets are made of brass or ivory. The yellow stems of the wild orchid were also extensively used for weaving helmets, arm and leg bands and also to make earrings. The Konyak Naga tribes are well known for its traditional handmade bead jewellers. The beads are made of some kind of stone or shells. They get the raw material from the nearby plain area of Assam. Bead work has been an important part of the Konyak culture for many years. The women folk wore more necklaces and other ornaments rather than clothes (see fig 2.14). The entire bead works are made by women but is worn by both men and women. They make colourful necklaces; bracelets and the rich Konyak man now a day's prefer the sashes made of beads which are more expensive and time consuming, than the woven one but it is consider as a status symbol. Women wears long strings of large beads and the most favored colours are blue, yellow, and red, black and white. They also wear necklaces made of woven cane strips, into which small glass beads of various colours are attached. The Angh wives also wear a beaded necklace call *liklep* which resembles a colourful wreath with intricate design.

*Figure 2.14. Necklaces, belts and earrings made of beads by Konyak women.*



*Source: Field work 2016.*

<sup>85</sup> Jewellery Ncert.nic.in/NCERT/i/Kenc.pdf. Retrieved 8/10/15

Besides ornaments, Naga women use hair band to beautify themselves. Among the Ao community the two phartry Chungli and Mongsen are identified through the colour of their hair band. The Chungli used black hair band which mostly is made of fallen hair that had been collected from fallen hair or nowadays it is made of black threads. The mongsen phartry used white colour hair band made of white thread. This hair band is called *kupok* and it is an identity marker between the Chungli and mongsen phartry. Chakhesang women also make the hair band called *pizhie*, by collecting their fallen hair or sometimes they used white thread to make the band. The Konyak women used strings of thread besides a variety of leaves for making their hair band and it is called *shangwi/ sangtum*. The Chang women also use both the fallen hair and thread to make the hair band and it is called *kotep* in their vernacular dialect. Men also wears similar necklace. They also wear special type of necklace which is made of molded brass made into a slender bar hanging down from a long strap. On this bar sticks are effigies of brass (Yanmeng) human skull, gongs, and knobs. The number of skull present on this bar necklace represents the number of enemy's heads killed during raids and wars etc. Miniature trophy masks made of brass are worn as a pendant in the necklace by Naga warriors. They are symbolic of their bravery as head hunters. Nowadays traditional Konyak sarong designs are also made of beads. It is stitched into the plain woven sarong but many cannot effort that because of the high price. The jewellery they created is not only beautiful but also has an important cultural significance. An individual belonging to higher status like the wife of an Angh will wear more intricate and thicker design then the commoners. Necklaces made of pearls are regarded as the most valuable of all necklaces; those person wearing pearl necklaces are recognized as from a rich family.

(See fig: 2.15, 2.16) This all shows the richness of Konyak's in their attires.

*Figure 2.15 – The brass necklace with number of skulls called Yongmen and tiger teeth are worn by the Konyak warriors.*



*Source: field work.2016*

Konyak Angh wears a greenish blue colour type of necklaces or beads below his knee to identify themselves from commoners the picture below is self explanatory.

*Figure 2.16- The blue colour beads on the knee distinguish an Angh from the commoner.*



*Source:field work 2016.*

The leg rings made of cane are worn both by the Konyaks and the Chakhesang tribes. It is called ‘Yantak’ in Konyak dialect which is worn by men below the legs. Mostly they used red and black colour. The Anghs and the warriors wear a special ring called ‘Yanjo’ which is black in colour not only on their legs but on their arms too, which signifies their bravery. The lost wax casting method was used by the Konyak to produce small brass heads worn by successful head hunters as breast ornaments. Metal chased arm ornaments usually were not locally produced but handed down from ancestors who had received them as gifts from neighboring tribes

and some say, from the kings of Cachar and Assam<sup>86</sup>. An Angh's wife also wears warrior's breast ornaments. Breast ornaments with boar's teeth or tiger teeth are worn by the warriors of Konyak tribe. An Angami warrior's ear ornament known as warriors ear (terho-uyie) are made with red dyed goat's hair, Job's tears' seeds and beetle wings. Various Naga groups have used beetle elytra from *Sternocera* as well as *chrysochroa bivittata*,<sup>87</sup> along with other ornaments to decorate their bodies according to their social status. Among the Naga tribes- beetle wing decoration are used by the Angamis, the Rengma, the Zemi, the Sema and others from Manipur. An individual, who has performed the feast of Merit or an active head hunter, had the privilege to wear the beetle wings and thus elevates their social status.

Even among the many communities like the Kenyal, Bidayut and Kelabit inhabiting the Borneo island of Indonesia, beads have been a symbols of status and wealth, necklaces, skullcaps and girdles are handed down from generation to generation. Beaded baby carriers are used with shells and animal's teeth attached, which make a rattling sound to frighten away the evil spirits. The quality of the pattern is used to reflect the status of the owner. Only upper classes are permitted to have bead work depicting high class motifs such as human faces or figures<sup>88</sup>.

T.C Hudson in his book *Naga Tribes of Manipur* refers to men wearing on festive occasions, cloaks embroidered with a fringe of green beetle wings. The Angami head hunters wore ornaments in which a button- like rosette composed of beetle wings surrounded by white seeds and a ruff of scarlet goats' hair was worn in front and pegged into a boar's tusk which hung behind each ear lobe.

Etsümu is also an earring made of conch shell; Laprimena is a round ring of brass used for earrings. Girls, generally uses coiled brass-lets on the upper arms and brass ring on each lower arm. Menaketi is a long string earring made of different beads. This earring is only for unmarried women. So once she is married she has to

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<sup>86</sup> Michael Opity. et. al .2008 *Naga identities*. P.343.

<sup>87</sup> Victoria Z Rivers. <http://www.insects.org/ced2/beetles-tex-html>. Retrieved on 24/11/14

<sup>88</sup> [www.Footprinttravelguides.com/asia/malaysia/sarawak/background/culture](http://www.Footprinttravelguides.com/asia/malaysia/sarawak/background/culture) retrieved on 29/9/16

remove it from her ear to show that she is no longer a youth. Tsüpha is a huge necklace of six or seven strings of conch-shell beads, black beads and cornelia in rows threaded on the same pattern with the cornelian in front, passing through transverse pieces of the horn or bone at intervals. These pieces of horn or bones serve to keep the lines of beads apart<sup>89</sup>. Tekhu is a pair of white shells used by girls to decorate the back of the shoulders.

The Chang Naga women headgear is known as Lilangkala khun. Only recently this headgear has been revived after a research of nearly fifty years by a retired teacher Impongsoted<sup>90</sup>. The headgear is designed with all the tattoos of female chang tribe. It is made of cane with meepung (*Caryota wallichii* hairs) and bamboo threads. Different natural dyes are used to design the head gear. Local name such as Vailuh ( *Rubia silimensis*) a natural yellow colored staining agent, Lahm (*Flaco centus*) Black colored natural staining agent and Lakek (*Juglean regea*/walnut) a natural black colored staining agent all these are extracted by boiling in the water. The headgear is designed using all tattoos of female chang clans. Chin female tattoos of Oungh clan known as 'Kaophai Nong' and chin female tattoos of other clan known as 'kao pub' is used as design. Cheek tattoos of chang female known as Senjit pub and forehead tattoo called 'khungpub' are also used.

Ear ornaments made of brass discs and red goat's hair, are to be worn exclusively by women of the Angh clan. Man's bark belt with symbolic depictions of human figures is worn exclusively by the Konyak warriors. Angh's belt is made of coins. Walking stick with double pointed head and a human figurine and decorated with goat's hair are used by the Angh's wife. Ao men's ornaments were always to some extent connected with the head hunting or feast of merit, women's necklaces and crystal earrings could be purchased by anyone who could afford it<sup>91</sup>. Chang women are the only Naga women who use a head scarf called kodai it is used for

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<sup>89</sup> J.H. Hutton 1965. The Angami Nagas, P.33

<sup>90</sup> Mr supongsetu Interviewed on 5/5/16 aged 80 years old at 2pm.

<sup>91</sup> Michael Oppity et.al 2008 Naga Identities P.143.

protecting from the sun and dust. A necklace with a bell on the tip called themdao is worn by the female. The daughters of the rich man wear the necklace below the navel where as the daughter of an ordinary man wear it above the navel. Another necklace called namdan is given by the girl's parents during the time of marriage, but the husband has to return it back to them after her death. Dokchi necklace made of three conch shell is worn only by the daughters of the rich man among the Chang tribe. Brass armlets are presented by the rich parents to their daughters but after her death the bracelet worn in the right hand has to be given to her maternal uncle and the left to her niece<sup>92</sup>.

The Konyak Nagas ornamented even their teeth by artificially blackening them. They used a paste called Fanyak.” when a piece of bamboo is burnt and the flame is heated to a piece of iron, preferably a metal (yang), the juice due to the heat comes out like dew. That watery substance is taken out with the help of a finger from the metal, and put in a piece of bamboo made for this purpose. By then it is sticky and glows. With the help of a finger, it is applied on the teeth, thus blackening them<sup>93</sup>.

Some Naga tribes like the Ao, the Sema, the Lotha, the Angami, the Rengma, and the Chakhesang use the coronet (it is round in shape made of slit cane and tinge them up by cotton or woollen thread in such a way it fits the user's head, then the bear skin is pasted into it and then trimmed uniformly by dao in such a way that the front side of the coronet is little longer then the back.) in all special occasion by putting the horn bill feathers into it. It is called Temku in Ao. A significant aspect of Naga culture is also the use of hornbill feather. The hornbill is a particularly important bird for all the Naga groups. Its long tail-feathers are a part of ceremonial or ritual dress. These feathers are considered as a symbol of honour, richness and also indicate high status achievement through the feast of merit or as head hunter. Like the Nagas, even the Moaris of New Zealanders also used the feathers of hornbill

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<sup>92</sup> Beso Chang aged 80 years interviewed on 2/8/13 at 6.30am.

<sup>93</sup> Y. Chingang Konyak 2008, The Konyak Naga . Yesterday and Today. P.58.



to signify a person as a warrior.<sup>94</sup> All Naga tribals whoever is entitled to use such feathers take it as a pride during the time of their respective traditional festivals. An Angami warrior decorates his headdress with the hornbill feathers according to head taken. Konyak warriors put two feathers in his headdress to show his warrior status. A Lotha Naga tribe put one feather of hornbill to show that he has taken a head or touched an enemy corpse. Sangtam Naga tribe put two feathers in head dress to show that he has performed third of five feasts of merit whereas amongst the Sema Naga tribe three feathers are used in their head dress to show the warrior status<sup>95</sup>. During the Naknylam festivals the Chang tribes wear a particular headgear known as Heiloikhon and over it the dancer put the hornbill feathers. It is also worn by the wives and daughters who have done the feast of merit. Among the konyak the daughter of a warrior chief can wear the feathers on her head dress while the same is in the case of Ao tribe; the wife of a giver of feast put such horn bill feather on her hair during the time of festival. The feathers increases according to the number of mithun she and her husband sacrificed for the feast. In this regard, studies collected from the data confirmed that people like Chenkokla and Mayangsangla of Ungma village were adorned themselves with more than ten hornbill feathers. Rich Ao women also wear the tail of the Drongo, which in their local vernacular is called as *Yimyu-pen*<sup>96</sup> in Ao dialect. With the help of a thread of any colour eg, black, red, white or yellow one can make tie the tail and wear it in the ear as an ornament. The Drongo is regarded as a special and peculiar bird because of its tail being sharply pointed uniformly and it is very difficult to catch. So it was often worth the value of a mithun and the head of a warrior. Most Naga ornaments have a particular meaning and are used as a powerful assertion of the wearer's status. Brass rings and crystal

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<sup>94</sup> J.P.Mills 2003 The Ao Nagas P.45.

<sup>95</sup> Julian Jacobs 2012 The Nagas Hill Peoples of Northeast India. p.108. London: Thames& Hudson.

<sup>96</sup> Yimyu is a name of a bird found in hilly areas. Tepen means tail; yimyu-pen is therefore tail of that particular bird. This bird has beautiful long tail, Ao Naga tribe wear this tail especially during festivals or any other special occasion. Indeed, this is used as a personal décor.

ear ornaments, and long chains of little bells on her chest are also worn by the rich Ao women folks. (Fig 2.16)

Figure 2.17 Ornaments worn by rich Ao women.



Source: Miranda Ganguli 1993.

An Ao woman wears red cornelian necklace around their neck irrespective of their social status. On the upper part of their ear they wear brass rings about four inches in diameter. These are made of three twists of thick brass wire, and after being passed through the ear are supported by a string going over the top and round the back of the head. The lobe of the ear support large crystal ear ornament. This was also an identity marker between the mongsen and chungli phartry. There are different necklace worn by the Ao women. A plain string of cornelian beads called *Musemzüik*, *Lakep*, *wangküm*, or *Lakep michi*, *Mejungsangshi* all these necklaces can be worn by any woman if they can afford, in many cases it is being inherited from their mothers. A particular type of necklace called *Yiptong wangküim* is restricted to the daughters and wives of men who have done the mithun sacrifice<sup>97</sup>. ‘The Aos considered *Sangshi* as the most expensive necklace that only rich could afford to have it simply because it is made of brass or silver. A particular earring known as *Ozü naro* (literally bird’s flower, *Ozü*=bird, *naro*=bird, metaphorically young ones are called as bird, therefore flower worn by bird) is worn by both boys and girls at their young

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<sup>97</sup> Pursowa (2011) .The Ao- Naga Traditional Dress as a Meduim of Communication in the Society. P.6.

age. It may be noted here, among the Naga tribals in general and Aos in particular, social stratification and hierarchy not based on caste or birth but on achievement basis was strictly followed. Therefore, even on children's way of dressing and accessories one finds such distinction quite early in age, for e.g. among the Aos, children of rich parents and especially of head hunters, wore tail like earring which is red in colour. However, in case of poor children such earrings were black in colour. Later as they grow up they wear an earring made of red colour cloth rolled into a thump size only to fit in her pierced ear. A rich man's daughter would wear a crystal earring. Further, the wife or daughter of a man who has done the mithun sacrifice may have her ornaments designed with a pattern of incised lines. An Ao women at least wear a string of necklace and it is said that only from a corpse such the beads were removed<sup>98</sup>.

While attempting to understand the significant meaning of Naga traditional attires an instance can further be drawn here, Ao Naga men wears *Kumpang* (armlet) which is made of ivory. This can be worn in both the arms by Imsong-Pongen clan and Longkumer clan respectively. However, a Jamir clan can wear only in one arm provided he had performed a feast of merit. This would mean those who could not performed feast of merit among the Jamir clan are forbidden to wear this armlet. There is also another armlet known as *Merang kumpang* meaning armlet made out of metal. This armlet is a privilege armlet of the Imsong-Pongen clan simply because this clan is being considered as the eldest or senior most in the phratry system by the Aos. Much like the Aos, the Konyak tribe also wears an armlet called '*Leakwaan*' while performing war dance. However this can be worn only by a warrior but limiting on one arm only. The privilege of wearing on both arms is reserved only to great warriors, noblemen and the Anghs as a sign of their bravery<sup>99</sup>. Among the Chakhesang tribe, *Tsupha* is a huge necklace made of six or seven strings of conch – shell beads, black beads, and cornelian in rows threaded on the same pattern with the cornelian in front, passing through transverse pieces of the horn or bone at intervals. These pieces of horn or bones serve to keep the lines of beads apart (Hutton). Tekhu

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<sup>98</sup> Mills Ao 2003. The Ao Naga P:58.

<sup>99</sup> Chingang Konyak, 2008. The Konyak Naga. Yesterday and Today. P.5

is a pair of white shells necklace used by Chakhesang girls to decorate the back of the shoulders.

A necklace made of boar teeth called *Shipo* in Ao vernacular is worn by all man irrespective of clan or status. Whereas necklace called *Lakap Molung* made of seal bone and is worn normally in a criss-cross shape is meant only for rich man so also is *Perm zük* or *Musem zük* is exclusively meant for the head hunters. The Aos considered the bell necklace (Changtong) as one of the most important ornaments for both man and woman. This is worn by those people who have performed the feast of merit and of course the warriors too. During any festival or ceremonial occasion such necklace are worn by both husband and wife<sup>100</sup>. Moreover, many Naga tribes use a decorative head gear which is a ceremonial hat indeed, with having a cone-shaped. It is made in two layers, the inner layer provides the structure and the outer layer is mainly decorative. The outer layer is made from dyed strips of bamboo or cane, and decorated with yellow and black strips. The yellow strips may be bamboo or cane, but more often, they are the skin of an orchid stem, which turns bright yellow when dry. The red and black dyeing of bamboo and cane using natural dyes is the most significant aspect of these hats. It must be admitted here that it is not the interest of this study, in fact, to demonstrate how the head gear is made. But what is interesting to say here is the very fact that these tribal produces object woven by bamboo split, cane and orchid stem which are inexpensive and readily available around them. However, when this become a finished product with a little bit of decoration adding wild boar teeth and some red hair over the conical shape basket it becomes a symbol of power and status. Society attributes symbolic meaning to such object so that the wearer of the head gear also feels the same power and status. It may be mention here, in many society head gear is worn only by privileged people or the native people, and in this Simon M Smith has this to say, “The headdress is reserved for our revered elders who, through their selflessness and leadership, have earned the right to wear one. It’s a spiritual garb, not just cultural; it’s not merely an addition to one’s attire. Wearing one, even an imitation headdress, belittles what our elders have spent a

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<sup>100</sup> Mrs. Sendongla interviewed on 8/4/17 at 1pm.

lifetime to earn”<sup>101</sup>. Head gear is too significant that among the Ao Naga, only those who bring enemy’s head as trophy were entitled to put six feathers of hornbill signifying their bravery. Sociologically speaking, therefore, those who are not entitled for head gear cannot command the respect of the people in Naga society.

*Figure: 2.12 the Ao Naga Warrior is entitle for six hornbill feathers.*



*Source: field work 2016*

Much is said about the Naga attires and still the list continues. A legging is an item in the list of ceremonial attires which are normally worn on special occasion. Leggings are made by older man, and during the time of making the legging one must abstain from sex for a certain period of time and were not allowed to participate in any funeral functions<sup>102</sup>. It should be noted that different tribes have different types of leggings. Tribes like the Changs, Phoms, Yimchungers, Sangtams and Khiamungan make their leggings from bear skin. Among the Aos, Chakhesangs, Semas, Angamis and Rengmas leggings are made of cane fibres, both white and red, also with yellow skin of orchid.

The shields were considered one of the most important weapons during the olden days because they carry with them whenever they go out for head hunting. It

<sup>101</sup> Simon Moya Smith. [www.mtv.com/news/18375778/why-you-should-not-wear-headaddresses](http://www.mtv.com/news/18375778/why-you-should-not-wear-headaddresses) Retrieved on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

<sup>102</sup> A. lanu 1999. Naga Cultural Attires and Musical Instruments. P.67

was used as a protective shield from the enemies. Before going to war the shield is sprinkled with water to make it slippery and sticky. After the war, the shield is sanctified by worshipping it and kept at its usual place near the fire place. Shields are also used during the time of tiger hunting in order to protect themselves from the teeth and claws of the tiger. Naga traditional attires are not complete without *Nokleptsü* or the dao box. A dao is an essential tools or apparatus that a man should always carry with him chiefly because tribal Nagas being an agrarian society much of their daily works in the jhum field needed dao on the one hand and on the other, they also have had the culture of head hunting therefore dao was the most handy weapon for them. Dao need to be safely carried in a box or holder when he is not in use<sup>103</sup>.

Successful Naga warriors not only acquired the right to wear special dress and ornaments but had additional privileges. Among the Changs, the bamboo drinking mugs decorated with poker-work designs called *Dobu Thung* which means decorated mug. This was originally made exclusively for the use of the head takers. This is indicated by a variation of the pattern tattooed on the chest of Chang warriors and spears and *daos* used by them. The poker work ornamentation is made also on the wooden sheath for holding a *dao*<sup>104</sup>. Thus, all Naga tribes are endowed with rich and colourful attires with having respective meaning attached to it. Our preceding discussions have clearly exhibited that Naga attires are not without any significant meaning. Every pattern and motifs, designs and symbols carry a semiotic meaning. Thus, it proofs to our assertion made in the introduction of this study that Naga attires have significant sociological meaning remain valid. Further, one should also keep in mind the earlier assertion, that such traditional attires bearing sociological meaning are fast disappearing if not severely affected with the onslaught of many external forces stands true. In this Prof. Furer Haimendorf, a well known Anthropologist, who studied the Nagas in different phases of their transition from obscurity to prominence, is of the opinion that the major factor which has been

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<sup>103</sup> Guru Sangyusang pongen, of Ungma village has interview on 6/6/16 at 9.00 am

<sup>104</sup> Milanda Ganguli 1993, Naga Art P.13.

responsible for ‘adulteration for Naga culture’ is Christianity. Feast of Merit has lost their vitality owing to non participation of the Christians. Missionaries introduced tea to replace home-made beer<sup>105</sup>. It must be noted, a culture in practice when ceased to operate let to extinction of the meaning. So with the arrival of Christianity, social implications have changed. With the loss of head-hunting, and the Feast of Merit status, the restrictions governing which textiles can be worn by who has all melted away. “Seeing believes”, thus, some of the major shawls and attires including tattoos we have discussed in the preceding pages are displayed here as under. In earlier days a person’s clan or phartry can be identify through her tattoo especially among the girls.

*Figure: 2.19 tattoo belong to Mongsen phartry of Ao tribe.*

*Figure: 2.20 tattoo belong to Chungli Phartry of Ao tribe.*

*Figure: 2.21 tattoo belong to Ough clan of Chang tribe with three wavy horizontal lines on her cheek.*



Source- Pic 2.19, 2.20 L.Sosang Jamir.2005

Source- Pic 2.21 k.Chang. 2015

<sup>105</sup> Prof. Furer Haimendorf cited in Naga tribes of North East India, Rizvi.S.H.M &Roy Shibani 2012. P:34 .

*Figure:2.21 Important shawls of the tribe under study.*



**Chang Shawl**



**Ao Shawl**



**Konyak Shawl**



**Chakesang Shawl**



# **Chapter-III**

## **Indigenous methods of dyeing and its ritual observance.**

## **Introduction**

Though not exclusively, yet much is said about weaving among the Naga tribals and its significant sociological meanings in the preceding chapters. Here in this chapter our attention would be on the methods and procedures of dyeing the yarn into different colours. To say that Naga cultures are colourful is to say that their traditional attires, shawls etc are colourful. One would unmistakably identify the use of many eye catching colours combination in their dress. Our concern here is therefore, how such colours are developed indigenously and what are the materials used in dyeing the yarn on the one hand and on the other, since, unlike many cultures, Nagas have strict observance and rituals at the time of dyeing colours, therefore it need to understand such process in a closer examination. One cannot understand dyeing of colours without knowing the art of weaving and its different patterns and colours mixing in order to produce a desired material. Therefore in this chapter we shall attempt to understand colour dyeing vis-à-vis different process involved in making the cotton ready for use.

Since the present chapter deals with the dyeing of colour, it only appears appropriate to understand here how different cultures of human societies around the world in general and Nagas in particular have attributed various meanings to different colours. Well, Nagaland is made up of sixteen different tribes namely Chang, Chakhesang, Yimchunger, Angami, Zeliang, Phom, Khamniungan, Sangtem, sumi, Pochury, Lotha, Ao, Dimasa Kachari, Konyak, Rengma and Kuki that makes up the colourful culture of Nagaland. The rich culture and traditions, loyalty and hospitality are some hall mark of these tribals. One of the major traditional arts in Nagaland is the art of weaving which is done by the women among these tribals. The most prominent item of Naga dress is the shawl. Each tribe and sub tribes produce their own and unique designs and colours of shawls, sarong (waist cloths) with decorative objects such as spears, animals, birds and even planetary objects such as sun, moon and stars. Of the many, as it has been already

discussed in the preceding chapter, some of the shawls known for its decorativeness are Tsungkotepsü and Rongsü of the Ao tribe, Sutam, Ethasu, Longpensu of the Lothas, Supong of the Sangtams, Rongkhim and Tsüngrem Khim of the Yimchungers, the Chakhesang Chipikhwu etc. These are some few colourful merit shawls with thick embroidered animal motifs all these represent the richness of these culture. The Naga culture which also includes songs, dance and music is an essential and integral part of its tradition. Such cultures are enriched more because of its colourfulness. The dresses and attires are displayed in multi colours which speaks volumes of their identity and persona. Nagas have a rich tradition of maintaining their unique heritage and customs. In spite of the tremendous modernity entering into their way of living, yet people have preserved their customs and legacy and have kept the torch of their tribal identity lighted. It may be stated, each of the tribes and sub-tribes in the state have their own way of cultivating their individual culture. In addition to their traditional ceremonial attires which are different for each tribe, there are multi-coloured spears, daos with dyed goat's hair, exotic headgears and ivory armlets. Needless to mention, one has to prove their bravery, in order to wear these.

As discussed, Naga cultures and dresses are colourful is not a unique and isolated case. Around the world different societies and cultures have attested different colours and meanings to their cultures therefore among the Chinese red is associated with happiness and good luck, while in the west it is associated with mixed signs as danger, love, passion, excitement, sacrifice, stopping, Christmas and power. In many Asian cultures it is associated with joy, bridal, celebration, long life and purity to name a few<sup>1</sup>. In each of the culture people have their own way of making colours either indigenously developed or through modern scientific techniques. The Naga tribals have their own way of making colours for purpose of dyeing yarn or even goat hair for final production of their attires. Some of the very prominent colours used among the Nagas are red, black, white, green, indigo etc. these all signifies power, status, prosperity, hospitality, etc. A rectangular piece of cloth called shawl woven in

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<sup>1</sup> Learning how culture thinks about colours\_www.wikipedia,meaningingretrieved on 6/6/17.

different colours of yarn with motifs and patterns makes their attires such as shawl and sarong (wrap around). Goat hairs dyed in red colours are also used in spear, head gear and sash especially among the Chang tribe. Among the Aos headgear are normally made of bear skin hence black in colour. Once they attached the significant meaning upon such attires it signifies the position of the person who wears it. It may be noted, to take one example a sap collected from a particular tree called as *Tsüngko* in local vernacular is dissolved into an ash of a bamboo leaves. When these two are mixed it then produce black colour. Indeed, the colour does not fade away easily as all painting in the shawls is done by this composition. We shall discuss more in detail about colour making technique in the pages to come.

### **The Culture of Weaving**

As stated above, dyeing of colour cannot be understood completely without getting into the process of producing thread from cotton thereby weaving. It therefore appears essential to divulge at certain length in this process. Indeed, weaving is an age old practice and it is probably the oldest and one of the most universally practiced crafts. Weaving is a method of fabric production in which two distinct sets of yarns or threads are interlaced at right angles to form a fabric or cloth. Clothes is usually woven on a loom, a device that holds the warp threads in place while filling threads are woven through them. A fabric band which meets this definition of cloth (Warp thread with a weft thread winding between) can also be made using other methods, including tablet weaving, back strap or other techniques without looms. The way the warp and filling threads interlace with each other is called weave. The majority of woven products are created with one of these basic weaves: plain weave, satin weave or twill. Woven clothes can be plain (in one colour or a simple pattern) or can be woven decorative or artistic design<sup>2</sup>.

Handloom weaving is an important element in the everyday life since this being one of the largest families based traditional industry in the North East Region.

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<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/weaving> retrieved on 20/9/16.

The products are enormously matching with varied cultures, languages and dialects. Ranjana Devi in this regards remarked that ‘the unique creativity and skill of the weavers will be found in each and every design’<sup>3</sup>.

The art of spinning, weaving and dyeing particularly among the tribal Nagas and North east India in general remain an exclusive domain of the Women. But in other parts of India weaving is taken as a profession by men. The weaving sector in India has a long tradition of excellent craftsmanship. In most part of India, apart from certain specific operation such as spinning, winding and other preparatory work, weaving was never identified with women, who received less remuneration than men workers<sup>4</sup>. However, in the context of tribal Nagas weaving is exclusively a woman’s domain and is still a traditional home grown skill especially among the rural women. It is a traditional skill handed down from one generation to another. Among the Ao Naga tribe, therefore, handloom equipments are passed on from mother to daughter as a descent. In Naga tradition it is indeed, taboo for a man to weave clothes. Generally it is belief that weaving by man could make himself and society feel feminine, more than that, Nagas being head hunters traditionally, therefore indulging in feminine work would disable them to pursue manly activities like hunting, fishing or head hunting.

While on the other hand, painting on the clothes with certain indigenous product and stitching of cowries shells on their loin clothes both kilted and un kilted are done by man. Among the Maya societies, both in ancient and in modern, weaving reveal a deep symbolic nature that embodies numerous aspects of the culture. The most basic parts of the traditional Maya midwives, said to have the powers of the moon- a goddess and also a weaver-to readjust breech babies in the womb. Once the loom posts are set in place and ready for the weaving to begin, they are labeled as

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<sup>3</sup> N. Ranjana. Devi P 94. Status of handloom sector in NE India; need for institution support for development in the journal of Vivekananda Kendra institute of Culture. Guwahati

<sup>4</sup> Baud, 1991; Parikh, Garg and menon, 1991; Shram Bureau, 1995. In Ch. Victoria Devi Handlooms for livelihood in North-Eastern Region: Problems and Prospects.

having a head, heart, and feet, associating the cloth with a human individual<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, as textiles are first born through the weaving process, they become reborn when they are turned into garment and worn<sup>6</sup>.

The traditional weaving among the Nagas employs the loin loom or back strap techniques which have been practicing since time immemorial. In other parts of States in India, weavers used fly shuttle, throw shuttle and pit-looms etc. The back strap loom is also used by the weavers in Mexico, Peru and Guatemala.

Weaving is an integral part of Naga way of life. Like most other crafts among the Nagas, the textiles production is organized along household chores. Weaving patterns contains centuries old symbols and motifs with symbolic meanings. Many Naga tribes believed that the origin of spinning and weaving is associated with some supernatural being that has inspired them to invent the art of weaving. According to an Ao Naga legend, it was during their settlement at Chungliyimti that the daughter of the first man of the Imsong-Pongen clan name Longkongla who had magical power and had close ties with supernatural world invented the technique to separate the clans from each other through textiles<sup>7</sup>.

The traditional weaving process such as picking cotton, sprouting, ginning cotton, carding and fluffing cotton, spinning cotton into thread, dyeing, starching, winding threads into skeins, preparing the wrap for weaving and finally weaving cloth was widely practiced by Naga women. Women were expected to know all the traditional skills like spinning, weaving, dyeing, pounding rice; husking rice etc. The art of weaving is handed down from one generation to the next or from mother to daughters. Traditionally, among all Naga tribes, "During courtship at the girl's house, the men like to find out how she can work at home and in the fields and how quickly she can spin and weave clothes"<sup>8</sup>. Every woman was trained to weave as they were supposed to weave the clothes of the family, so that they don't have to

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<sup>5</sup> Pretchel and Carisen 1988 P:124. The Development and Symbolism of Maya Textiles. By Emma Tuthill. [anthrojournal.com/issue/October2011/article/the-development-and-symbolism-of-maya-textiles](http://anthrojournal.com/issue/October2011/article/the-development-and-symbolism-of-maya-textiles)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p, 130. Retrieved on 27/7/16.

<sup>7</sup> Naga Textiles 2014 MarionWettstein P.56.

<sup>8</sup> S.H.M.Rizvi and Shibani 2012 Naga tribes of N.E.India P.76

procure from other weavers and make themselves self sufficient. Weaving also enhanced the status of women. Each weavers depending on her weaving skill fits into different rank. Each pattern carried significance and that the finished textile can be read like a story. An Ao girl learned the art of weaving at the *Tsuki* or the female dormitory. Our field data points to the fact that women learn weaving at their very young age. Thus, Mrs Noksenla<sup>9</sup> a weaver started weaving at the age of 14 years and got married at the age of 18years. Whereas, among the Lothas, it is considered that a woman is not ready for marriage if she did not have weaving skills. A woman was ready for marriage only when she could weave a man's loin cloth. A Zeliang woman would traditionally present a shawl woven by herself to her groom<sup>10</sup>. A Chang Naga groom also wears the shawl called *Kaoashiubunia* woven by the bride on the wedding day. In fact it was one of the criteria used in the selection of mate among the Nagas. In some tribal Manipuri community, marriages were solemnized only with persons living in these villages who had weaving skills. Girls who master in the skill of weaving were taken as a preference as brides<sup>11</sup>. In earlier days, at the time of marriage young brides were presented with weaving equipments by their parents irrespective of social status and as a gift to her in-laws, she has to take the clothes woven by her. All these shows the significance and importance attached in weaving in different society.

Back strap loom is simple to construct and easy to operate. They have neither permanent fixtures nor heavy frames and so they are easily portable. It is also cheap and mobile. It can be handled by a single woman. The products woven on it varies in texture, colour and design. The weaver can roll it out and carry with her. She can weave outside basking in the sun or weave it inside her house during rainy or hot seasons. In earlier days weaving also played the role of socialization, as grandmothers, mothers and daughters sit with other family members to make the

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9 Mrs Noksen a weaver interviewed on 19/2/15

10 Dr Lungsang Zeliang 2014 . Naga Women in Traditional Values and Practices and their Relevance in Modern Context in Benjongliba (ed.) Naga Society Culture, Education and Emerging Trends.

11 Gailangam 1997 in Handlooms for livelihood in North-Eastern Region: problems and prospective. Chi Victoria Devi journal of Rural Development, vol, 32, No(4) pp, 427-438 NIRD, Hyderabad retrieved on 18/5/16

garments they discuss style, techniques of weaving and most importantly about social etiquette, the custom of marriage, child birth etc. “The socialization of Naga girls includes instruction by their mothers in weaving, an industrial art belonging exclusively to women”<sup>12</sup>. Although the loin loom is a simple device it can weave many intricate designs according to ones tribe and clan. The motif and designs are not just created by the weavers but each motif has a symbolic cultural meaning attached to it. ‘Back strap loom permits more artistic control, therefore enabling the weavers to experiment with new motifs’<sup>13</sup>. All traditional shawls and mekhalas are woven with the help of back strap loom. A number of traditions and beliefs are associated with the weaving and wearing of the traditional dress. The Chang warrior shawl called *Tobunei* requires all the zigzag lines to fall uniformly, or else the young warrior may die a premature death. When a Konyak Woman gets married she wears a white shawl called *shatni* which is preserved and kept to be used only to wrap her death body. Among the Ao’s convention demands that a rongsu sü shawl be worn only if the mithun sacrifice has been carried out over three generations. While weaving some shawls especially for head hunters shawls or the ceremonial shawls after the feast of merit, the weavers has to observe certain genna till the completion of the shawls. Earlier days Naga women weave clothes for the entire family but today women buy their dresses in the market rather than weaving on family loom because they find it cheaper and more convenient to wear then the heavy hand woven clothes. Besides dyeing of yarn, painting on the men shawls with various figures is practiced by the Aos, Lothas and Rengma tribes. They use certain specific composition to form a colour.

## COTTON

When one talks about dyeing colours among the tribal Nagas it is also necessary to make a mentioned at certain length the use and cultivation of cotton. Since cotton is the only source to make yarn for the tribal Nagas therefore traditionally every

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<sup>12</sup> [www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Nagas.aspx](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Nagas.aspx). retrieved on 17/7/16

<sup>13</sup> Schneider 1987. The Anthropology of cloth. P:423. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2155878> retrieved on 12/4/16



household would attach, in their jhum field, a small corner designated to grow cotton. Such harvest was sufficient for their domestic needs. Moreover, technology know how to make yarn from different sources was unknown on the one hand and on the other these tribal's life were simple enough that contented with what they have. It must be noted, cotton is used in different manners around the world according to their culture, for some it is used in ritual while others simply used in manufacturing yarns.

Among the pueblo Indian, cotton is used in every ritual. It is a sacred feather of life, the breath of supernatural. It symbolizes clouds and snow and is often stuck on the horsehair beards in place of eagle down. The tops of certain masks are covered with raw cotton to indicate that those gods are associated with rainmaking. Handmade cotton cord is always used in prayer plumes and for the purpose of fastening together feathers used for ornaments<sup>14</sup>. Cotton and clothes were an important products during the late pre colonial Period. Cotton is the oldest raw material used by the people for weaving fabrics in North East India. Cotton were grown abundantly in Nagaland until recently, however the easy availability of different synthetic yarns in the modern times has slowly but steadily disappeared if not severely affected the culture of growing cotton. Needless to mention, today, only few pockets in the state grow cotton for domestic use. Traditionally, cotton textiles have played a significant role in Naga society. Women weave mostly from cotton fabric and then dyed into different colours at home. Our field data shows that only few pockets that are still into cotton cultivations in the state, they are Noksen town a sub-division under Tuensang district of Nagaland, cotton cultivation is practised by many farmers with the initiative taken by state government, Department of Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) unit of Tuensang district. Also places like Yoruba village under Phek district of Nagaland and Pathso village under Noklak block in Tuensang district of Nagaland respectively are into cotton farming in considerable scale. It may be noted Pathso village have taken a major initiative by way of opening a cotton farming school by the villagers with an

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<sup>14</sup> The Pueblo cotton and weaving project-Green Fire Times. [Greenfiretimes.com/2012/08/the-pueblo-cotton-and-weaving-project/](http://Greenfiretimes.com/2012/08/the-pueblo-cotton-and-weaving-project/). Retrieved on 27/10/15.

objective to impart skill training on growing cotton since the practice was almost fading away from the Naga traditional culture. This all adds to the very fact that cotton was used by the Nagas for their fabric since traditional time. Besides making of yarns for domestic purpose, cotton organically grown have high demands in the international market therefore not just making yarn for domestic consumption but it can give opportunity for big time entrepreneurship as well<sup>15</sup>. Normally, cotton seedlings are planted in the month of March and harvested by October, Mrs Ongbou (a weaver) have this to say, and ‘only during winter the cotton is graded and spins into yarn and dyed. Normally dyeing of cotton to not take place because starting from the month of February since it is time for jhum cultivation, more than that, it was a belief among the tribal Chang community that the crops would get stained if dyeing takes place during these months<sup>16</sup>.

Nettle fibre is mostly used by the Eastern Naga tribes of Nagaland. Besides cotton, nettle fibres and the fibre of wild jute are grown by few tribes. Himalayan nettle plant or Allo (*Dirardinia Diversifolia*) which is covered in thorn stingy hairs is still used among the Khiamungan tribe of Tuensang district. The nettle plant is found all over the temperate areas of the world. Evidence from Neolithic settlements in Switzerland shows that nettle was used to make cloth before linen or wool. But nettles lost their popularity when cotton arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, because cotton was easier to harvest and spin<sup>17</sup>. The nettle plants are first cut and are kept to rot. After that the fibres are taken out and are woven into rough blankets, shawls and bags. Now the villagers are trying to revive the lost tradition by encouraging its members to harvest the nettle plant which grows abundantly in the jungles. In this Mr Shilem has commented, few years back during the youth conference in the village, sashes were woven by the women folk out of the nettle plant and it was given to

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<sup>15</sup> Interviewed with Sonnie Kath age around 35 years, a young lady entrepreneur from Dimapur, who is also the proprietor of the ‘Exotic Echo Deizephe’ of Dimapur district Nagaland. On 8/11/16 at 1,30 pm.

<sup>16</sup> Interviewed Mrs Ongbou 80 years a weaver since 12 years old. Dated 5/5/14. 7am.

<sup>17</sup> [www.Swico.com/products/016nettle](http://www.Swico.com/products/016nettle) dated 22/3/14

each youth to remind them of their old tradition<sup>18</sup>. Ganguli in her book '*A Pilgrimage to the Nagas*' has mentioned, "In some Noklak houses one may still see rough cloth made of bark and nettle fibre used for covering the body against cold and are used as blankets. The black dye made with a strong solution of boiled indigo leaves,

Women are responsible for all stages of preparing cotton thread, from ginning and carding to spinning, dyeing and weaving. It is the women who have to cloth the entire family right from the everyday wear to the traditional attires to be worn during festivals.

### **Ginning**

Ginning would means removing the seeds from the harvested cotton balls. We can also call it as deseeding of cotton seeds. The warmer and drier the cotton, the easier it becomes for deseeding. Carding is to comb out the tangled fibers, and finally spinning. All this three process are carried out at the same time by the women folks. All these process are done during dry seasons when there is minimal farming activity. Some Nagas women gin the cotton by a cotton-gin consisting of two wooden rollers geared to revolve in opposite directions and turned by a crank with the right hand. Then it is carded by a small size bow. The clean cotton is gently rolled by hand with the help of a round stick over a flat stone or plank into sausages like slivers about 20cms long, after which it is to be spun into thread<sup>19</sup>. After deseeding, the cotton has to be fluffed. Fluffing makes the cotton soft and parallel to one another and easier to spin. For fluffing cotton among the Nagas, a woman takes a hand full of cotton and places it on a winnowing tray. With a help of a bow she plucks the string into the cotton and it is repeated many times till the cotton is soft enough to be spun.

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<sup>18</sup> Interviewed Mr Shilem a social worker age around 40 years dated 3/5/14.

<sup>19</sup> Alemchiba Ao1968. The Arts & Crafts of Nagaland. P.6.

## Spinning

Mahatma Gandhi saw God in every thread that he drew on the spinning wheel; its music was like a balm to his soul. He also pointed out the therapeutic use of the spinning wheel it was a nerve relaxant and could help in gaining steadiness of mind, and in controlling passion... “the yarn we spin is capable of mending the broken warp and woof of our life”<sup>20</sup>. Spinning like weaving and dyeing is performed by women. The process of spinning among the Nagas is primitive and only few tools are used. The harvested cotton is usually dried and de-seeded. The cotton seeds are removed by rolling on a flat stone with a rolling pin. Mostly this is done by older women in every Naga tribes, these is so because they are old therefore physically not fit to be in the jhum field. The second step in the process is to gin the cotton by a cotton ginning machine consisting of two wooden rollers geared to revolve in opposite directions and turned by a crank with the right hand. The cotton after it is ginned is carded by a small size bow, and then it is gently rolled by hand with the help of a round stick over a flat stone then it is rolled into yarns<sup>21</sup>, The Naga spindle is very primitive. It is made of long spike of hard wood. Above this there is another round flat stone spindle-whorl cut trimmed, and bored in the middle, through which the wooden stem is passed from the other end. This stone weights the spindle and for a long time, the point being potsherd covered with a cloth to keep it from moving. The thread is gradually wound round the wooden stem as it is spun. From the spindle, the thread is wound on to a sort of doublet-shaped stick. From this it is unwound and steeped in hot rice starch so that it will harden as it dries off. It is wound to a light bamboo frame<sup>22</sup>. From this frame it is now roll into a ball ready to use. See fig: 3.1

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<sup>20</sup> Satish K. Kapoor. Spinning the wheel in freedom struggle  
<http://tribuneindia.com/1999/99aug15/Sunday/head.htm> retrieved on 27/10/14

<sup>21</sup> Mrs Ongbou chang.

<sup>22</sup> M. Alemchiba Ao. P. 6

Figure: 3.1 shows the various tools used for weaving and spinning.



Source- Chang traditional attire.(CTS)2016

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this original method of deseeding cotton was abandoned by the Nagas in favour of mechanical gins imported from Manipur, Assam or Myanmar<sup>23</sup>. This was much faster and easier to manage than the manual one.

## DYEING

Dyeing is a process in which yarn or fabric is immersed in a solution produced by boiling up selected raw materials or dye stuff. The practice of dyeing came before spinning and weaving and was mostly used by primitive people to stain themselves or the skins they were wearing<sup>24</sup>. Dyeing is an ancient art which predates written records. Till the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century natural dyes were the only source of colours used for dyeing clothes. Natural dyed fabrics were used as aesthetic value, symbolic power and therapeutic functions. Natural dyes were practiced almost in every part of the world. Natural dyes occupy an important place in human culture

<sup>23</sup> Marrion Wettstein 2014.Naga Textiles.P. 64.

<sup>24</sup> Demi Walkins. The Traditional technique of hand dyeing. [www.academia.edu/5057219/ the tradi](http://www.academia.edu/5057219/the_tradi) accessed on 27/11/15.

and dye yielding plants were probably discovered early through human curiosity, use, reuse and trials<sup>25</sup>. In earlier days dyes were associated with different cultural practices and rituals especially among the primitive tribes.

The Egyptians, the Chinese, the Greeks, the Romans and many other cultures were well familiar with the art of dyeing. Greek mythology includes Ariadne, the goddess of spinning and weaving, the daughter of Idon, the dyer of wool. Historic classics of the Chinese mention the dyeing of silk in various colours as back as 2600 BC<sup>26</sup>. The natural colours of the yarn in weaving are achieved through the traditional way of dyeing from natural materials including barks, leaves, flowers, fruit, roots, tubers, leaves by pounding and mixing and soaking the clothes. Each tribe has different methods to dye the clothes even if they used the same leaves and barks. Dyes are one of the most important uses of the plant, as it relates with cultural practices, rituals, arts, crafts, fabrics to satisfy personal embodiment. Dyes derived from natural material such as plant leaves, roots, barks, insect secretions and minerals were the only dyes available to mankind until the discovery of synthetic dyes.

Before the discovery of synthetic dyes, Europeans dyeing technology was based on three primary colours. Blue was obtained from indigo; reds were obtained from the kermes insect, from the root of the madder plant, and from the so called brasil wood and yellow were extracted from weld Persian berries, saffron and dyers broom. India is endowed with a wealth of natural flora and fauna, which provide the basic resources for a rainbow of natural dyes. Natural dyes are environmental friendly e.g. turmeric, the brightest of naturally occurring yellow dyes is a powerful antiseptic and revitalises the skin, while indigo yields a cooling sensation. The local dyers of Arunachal Pradesh mix the natural dyes with animal residues and bovine urine which yields fast colour. Another process is the hides of buffalo, ox or yak is burnt and about 50 gm of the ash is mixed with the gall bladder of some locally available fish and then it is crushed with leaves of *Solanum indicum*. The mixture is

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<sup>25</sup> Canon and Cannon 2003; Dogen et al.2008. P:15,16.[www.swico.com/products/o16nettle](http://www.swico.com/products/o16nettle) retrieved on 22/3/14

<sup>26</sup> Li Fang Chen and Cheng Chuko. The Art of dyeing in the context of crafts, design and aesthetics.[Ocean67.miracle@msa.html.net](mailto:Ocean67.miracle@msa.html.net) retrieved on 2/2/16

thoroughly mixed in about 1 litre of water and boiled till it becomes thick. Then it is squeezed through a cloth to separate the liquid dye. The addition of few drops of bovine urine helps in quick drying of the dyed material<sup>27</sup>. Indian dyers used safflower yellow, bastard hemp, and various other native plants that imparted colour. Henna was used for colouring orange, while red was obtained from madder and lac dye from insects. Indian yellow, which was produced till 1908 is claimed to have been originally manufactured in rural India from the urine of cattle fed only on mango leaves and water. The urine would be collected and dried, producing foul smelling hard dirty yellow balls of the raw pigment, called “purree”<sup>28</sup>. Cow urine dries the fresh dung properly. The dried dung’s are collected and then put into the boiling water, stirred and strained through a simple filter to add it at the time of colouring the objects. Even among the tribals of Uttarakhand, they used light solution of organic manure, cow dung or urine, curd water, ash of wood or bark, rock salt, lemon juice, lime water etc are the common mordents they used. Primitive methods of mordent utilization also include keeping the dye solution in earthen, iron, copper or aluminum pots and to add tanniferous materials like extract of tea, coffee etc<sup>29</sup>.

Our data from the field points these interesting facts that mordant are substances which are used to fix a dye to the fibers. Traditionally mordents are found in nature. Wood ash or stale urine has been used as an alkali. Mordant and acids could be found in acidic fruits. Since ancient times In India, common substitutes for a selection of mordents are, organic manure, cow dung or urine, curd water, ash of wood, salt, rock salt, lemon juice, lemon water are used. Among the Ao Naga salt and lemon juice is used as fixture to dye clothes. The red colour ink was made of animal blood mixed with salt and lemon juice. Black colour was made of powdered charcoal mixed with salt and lemon juice<sup>30</sup>. Till recently among the Ao tribe, black

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<sup>27</sup> Debajit Mahanta and S.C.Tiwari Nature dye-yielding and indigenous knowledge on dye preparation in Arunachal Pradesh. North East India. Arunachal Pradesh state council for science and technology. Vivek- Vihar. Itanagar. Retrieved on 22/5/16

<sup>28</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian-yellow> dated 11/11/16 .

<sup>29</sup> R.D Gaur 2008. Traditional dye yielding plants of Uttarakhand pp-154-65.

<sup>30</sup> Interviewed Guru Sanyusang age 70 years from Ungma village on 16/6/15

colour was produced by mixing a sap from a tree called *Tsungko* with that of ashes of bamboo leaves, but this was only for painting the warrior shawls and for dyeing clothes. According to Sonia<sup>31</sup> she used cotton that grows in her farm and natural dye for the yarns. First they soak the yarns in cow dung which act as a fixative that is for increasing fastening properties and after few days, it is washed with clean water and dries the yarn in the sun. They use the bark of the alter plant after dying in the sun for red colour. They use the leave of the indigo plant for green colour and can mix the colours for different durations to get various shades of colours. After drying the different dyes they boil and store in a big drum for the final dyeing of the hand spun cotton yarn. Then they are dried in the sun. The dyed yarn is then woven into fabric on the loin loom and finishes into a world class organic, hand spun, naturally dyed home furnishing and other utility products. Every Naga tribals have their own techniques of dyeing colours which have been transmitted from generation to generation. Textiles can be dyed as raw fibre, as spun yarn or after weaving which is called piece dyed. According to Sonnie, she follows the spun yarn or yarn dyed process. Which means that, the yarns are dyed before it is woven into clothes. (fig:3.2).

*Figure:3.2 yarns are dyed in different shades of natural colour.*



*Source: Field work 2016.*

Among the Ao Naga tribe Akhoya was the only village that caters to the entire Ao villages for dyeing indigo colours. In an exclusive interview with Mrs

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<sup>31</sup> Sonia Kath interviewed on age about 35 years. Proprietor of Exotic Echo and a business entrepreneur for local indigenous products specially hand woven materials. Interviewed On 8/11/16 at 1.30 pm.



Senlila<sup>32</sup> the only surviving colour dyer from Akhoya village, she recounts how women from different Ao villages like Ungma, Longsa etc use to come down to their village to dye their cotton woven clothes. During such occasion the ladies will go and work day long in the dyer's field in exchange of their service. Her reminiscences about how she started helping her mother in the dyeing process at her very early age of 8 years. That, indigo plant which is called *Mosak* in Ao Naga vernacular, is kept in the shade for two to three days to dry out the moisture after bringing from the field. The leaves are then grinded in a big hallow cut off from the trunk of a tree. The pestle is also made of wood but to make it heavy the tip of the pestle is made of iron. The leaves have to be grinded and kept in a mat for a day to release the moisture. Then it is rolled in the palm leaves tightly. Again after a day or two the indigo mixture will start giving out heat. So the palm leaves are open and then the mixture is stirred properly and rolled them back again in the palm leaves. This process is continued till the indigo leaves are dried. She stored it in a palm leaves or in sacks, and sells the dried indigo for Rs 500 per kg( see fig: 3.3and fig: 3.4). According to her the older the dried indigo, the richer the colour is.

Figure:3.3. Fresh indigo leaves. Figure: 3.4 dried indigo leaves ready for dyeing clothes, and the dried leaves are preserved in palm leaves.



Source: fieldwork 2016.

<sup>32</sup>Mrs Senlila a dyer from Akoya village. Aged 67 years interviewed on 12/06/2.30 pm

In olden days, the dried indigo was soaked in hollow of a tree but now she use big plastic buckets which is lighter to carry. The dye stuff is made with 10 kgs of dried indigo and 4 kgs of wood ash into the bucket. Normally a good quality wood are burn to collect the ash so as to get good result. Fires are not to be lighted with kerosene else the ash gets spoiled, nor should fish or meat be cooked in that fire. The essential process of dyeing requires soaking the material containing the dye stuff in water. The water for soaking the dye is fetched only from a particular well call *Waro tsubo* (literally crow well) which is about 2 kms from the village. It was experienced that, if the water was fetched from different well then the dye does not gives a good result. The water is put till the rim of the big bucket and then the clothes are soaked for few hours. The threads are bathed in dye twice or till the desire colour is obtained. The water is squeezed after its removal from the vat<sup>33</sup> again water is added then the indigo residues are mixed properly then another batch of clothes is soaked again. According to her the actual process of dyeing requires a good supply of fresh water in order to have a good quality. What has changed today in this context is that since nobody cultivates cotton among the villagers so she buys from Assam and Dimapur market. However, out of her long experience in the profession of indigenous colour dyeing she opined cotton available in the markets are relatively of poorer quality therefore turning out to be a much time consuming job. The dyed products are spread out in the sun to dry evenly by turning over from time to time. One thing that regrets her is that after her dead, there will be no one to replace her from the village. Therefore the indigenous culture and tradition of dyeing would be lost. Many a time she attempted to train the young girls of her village but could not convinced any one and showed no interested. They find it very time consuming and not interested at all. This all shows that there is a tremendous social change taking place and life is easier because of industrialization. This is how she recounted and shared her work and memories. It may be noted the Indigo plants are planted during the months of March to May. The dyeing process takes place during the month of December to March.

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<sup>33</sup> Vat dyeing is for indigo. Dye baths are called vats.

*lam* in Chang vernacular is the name for indigo plant. Mrs Asongla<sup>34</sup> remarked blue colour dye is kept in the earthen pot for 5 days before soaking the cotton. For black colour it is soaked in the same pot, but more fresh leaves are added and boiled together. For white colour the yarn is soaked in a starch made of maize flour. For red colour a plant called *Whyluh* (in chang dialect) is used. The inner layer of the plant is red and it is cooked along with the cotton yarn till the right shade is obtained. Mrs laiyang<sup>35</sup> a weaver since the age of her 15 has this to say; to dye back colour the Konyak used a bean like seeds which resembles the *Rungchak* (betai) beans. For making of red colour a climber plant is used which is called *Why* in local dialect. While for orange colour a root that resembles ginger called *vinaiti* in their local dialect is used.

Today dyeing is complex, specialized science. Nearly all dye stuffs are now produced from synthetic compound. With the coming of the colonial rule, chemical dyes were available in the market and slowly changed the colours of the clothes from the natural dyes. But many practitioners of the craft of natural dyeing maintain that natural dyes have a far superior aesthetic quality which is much more pleasing to the eye. The natural dye has more market values due to environment and health benefits. So in order to make the clothes more marketable use of natural dye should be encouraged.

## **RITUAL AND DYEING**

Rituals are dependent upon some belief system for their complete meaning. Positive rituals are linked with consecrating or renewing an object or an individual, negative ritual are always in relation to positive rituals behavior. Avoidance is a term that describes the negative<sup>36</sup>. Among the Nagas, the term *genna* is used which means to be avoided or forbidden during certain rituals. Like weaving and spinning the whole process of dyeing are carried by Naga women. Yarns are dyed before weaving into clothes. The dyeing process takes place after the yarn is transferred into skeins.

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<sup>34</sup> Mrs Asongla aged around 70 years interviewed on 20/2/15 at 11am.

<sup>35</sup> Mrs Laiyang age 55 years a weaver since the age of 15 years interviewed on 21/4/15 at 3pm

<sup>36</sup> Kishore Jadav 1998. Folklore and its Motifs in Tribal Literature.P.45.

Weavers use dyes made from roots, bark leaves and other vegetation. Dyeing often take months and the cotton yarns is dyed many times to get the right shades. Use of dye or any colour is restricted till the harvest season, because it was believed that, it will have some effect on the crop. The whole processes of dyeing are carried by women and they have to follow certain restriction so that nothing misfortune will happen to them in this process. Both the cultivation of the indigo plant and the production of the blue dye are the exclusive occupation of women.” For men the indigo plant is taboo and they are not even allowed to touch it. It is believed that if a man tries to dye even a small quantity of yarn he will have no luck in hunting and fishing<sup>37</sup>. Superstition and belief also dictates the selection of colour. The red dye being of blood, a young woman dyeing this colour is believed to die a violent death or lose her head in a raid. So only old women or old widow dye the red colour. It is said the Lotha tribe never make red dye. They in fact buy it from the Ao tribe. Red is an important colour in Naga textile. Though it was not used so frequently like blue or black colour but it was used in small part in all shawls with black, blue or white background. The colour red is associated with blood, fire and fertility and life force of many cultures throughout the world<sup>38</sup>.

Pregnant women are taboo to dye less the foetus is affected by the colour. Women in some tribes are required to practice abstinence from sex; they must not eat beef, dog’s meat, mutton, dried fish and other pungent food, until dyeing is completed. A kind of belief that Aos practices during the time of dyeing is that no stranger should watch the process or else the colour would not come out well. Moreover, the process of dyeing colour was mostly carried out by older women since popular belief dominates their brain that one has to be sanctified during the process of dyeing. Surem sü is a shawl dyed in indigo. Sü means shawl and rem means

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<sup>37</sup> Milanda Ganguli 1993. Naga Art P,65.

<sup>38</sup> Elena The Art Of dyeing.P:4 <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7263304-cochineal-red> retrieved on 16/6/15

immersed. This can be worn by all section of the people irrespective of clan and gender. It is also called *mosaksü* or *mosü*.<sup>39</sup>

A similar belief is also seen even among the Koreans, that only widow prepare and sold the dye. If a married woman prepares it, then she should occupy a separate room from her husband till it is entirely prepared. The dyeing job is so vulnerable that if a person die in the house or even a corpse pass the door while being prepared, it will be useless as a dye<sup>40</sup>.

Blue and red are the only two colours the Ao's knew according to J.P Mills. The blue dye is obtained from the leaves of *Strobilanthes flaccidifolius* known as *osak* in the local dialect. Among the Nagas the plants used primarily for dyeing blue or near black is often reported to be wild indigo species with botanical name, *strobilanthes, flacidifolius* and English name Chinese rain bell<sup>41</sup>.

Among the Aos “the red dye is obtained from the root of a creeper called *aozü* This is thoroughly dried and pounded and mixed with the dried and pounded leaves of a tree called *tangshi* and the outer layer of the husks of the acid berry of a tree known as *tangmo(c)* or *tangba (m)*. Water is added to this mixture and the thread or hair which is to be dyed is boiled in it for about half an hour. It is then taken out and dried and brushed clean”<sup>42</sup>.

The techniques for dyeing yellow and green are recorded for some Groups, namely the Rengma and Angamis. The Rengma used the blossom of a tree locally called *nikhang* or *atonsu* which flowers in spring. The yarns are soaked in cold water between layers of flowers. Angamis prepared it from the wood of a plant locally called ‘*athuo*’. The wood portion of the plant is light yellow in natural colour. The bark of the plant is first removed with a *dao*; the wood is then sliced into chips, which are boiled in water with the thread. The thread is then taken out and kept in the sun.

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<sup>39</sup> Panger Imchen 1993, Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture P.141.

<sup>40</sup> Native dyes and methods of dyeing in South Korea.P:454. <http://www.jstor.org/stable2842016> retrieved on 3/11/15.

<sup>41</sup> Marion Wettstein 2014. Naga Textiles P.72.

<sup>42</sup> J.P. Mills 2003. The Ao Nagas P:93.

One of the commonest methods of preparation of blue dye is to boil the leaves in water in a big pot, and then the cloth or thread to be dyed is dipped in it and boiled for nearly an hour. It is then taken out and dried in the sun. If the colour does not take properly, the same process is repeated twice or even three times<sup>43</sup>.

Dyeing is also a representation of contemporary culture. Among the Chinese as early as Zhou Dynasty, social statuses were distinguished through colours of the garments. During Han dynasty dyeing plants were more valuable than rice corn. Social demand for dyeing plants being so high, colour dyed by dyeing and printing craft of Han Dynasty began to differ in shades and dyeing and printing craft of that time became mature in this way. Colours were green, red, bright red, light red, yellow red, amethyst etc. In Qing dynasty, colours were used according to official status. For instance, the highest status would use bright red, blue cyan, bright yellow, glossy dark green, golden yellow, deep blue, gravel green, beige, gravel blue, cerulean etc. Official colours were bluish white, brown, deep cyan, bright yellow, jasper, golden yellow, cardinal etc. Colours were deliberately used to express status and symbolic meaning<sup>44</sup>.

According to Mr Impongsoted<sup>45</sup> a social worker, the Chang Naga tribe, normally extract the yellow colour by boiling the *Vailuh* (*Rubia silimensis*) and black colour is also extracted by boiling the *Lahm* leaves (*Flaco centus*) or some time black colour is also extracted from wild walnut (*Juglean regea*) which is called *Lakek* in Chang local dialect.

The uses of organic dyeing have diminished over the generations due to lack of documentation and easily available of cheap synthetic dyes with varieties of colours to choose. Post independent era of development brought some changes in the weaving traditions and technology and at present women depends largely on market for raw material. However, a brighter side of the story is that, nowadays, with the encouragement from many educated people and also due to the demand from the

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<sup>43</sup> Alemchiba Ao 1968. The Arts and crafts of Nagaland P:9.

<sup>44</sup> Li fang and Cheng Chuko. Ibid Ocean67.miracle@msa.html.net retrieved on 2/2/16

<sup>45</sup> Impongsoted Chang age around 75 years a retired teacher and a writer interviewed on 5/5/15 at 2pm.

outside tourist some private enterprises like Exotic Echo have taken up the traditional way of dyeing at a relatively larger scale of production than before. This indeed is encouraging and need to applaud for preserving the traditional methods.

According to Greenpeace reported<sup>46</sup>, the textile industry's impact on the environment in terms of water and land use, energy efficiency, waste production, chemical use, and greenhouse-gas emissions is alarming. On the other hand, Groups like Slow Colour are trying to tackle this problem (environmental affect challenge) as their website explains. "Slow Colour rejuvenates centuries-old fabric dyeing techniques and hand looming traditions, protects the environment and creates fabrics that are healthy for life. Slow Colour connects artisan to audience, tradition to global market". Peru is also home to the small-scale but powerful work being done by artisans like weavers in Chinchero, especially in terms of how their work supports and preserves the biodiversity of the region. Today a dyeing workshop run by the Centre for Traditional Textiles of Cusco (CTTC) a group that supports and promotes traditional weaving and spinning has drawn more than 100 people to the area to master the centuries-old traditional technique of making naturally dyed wool. Participants tend the vats of boiling water and work with the dyestuff, which includes chillca flowers from the nearby mountains, used to produce the colour green; shapy, a vine that makes the colour pink, collected from the jungle beyond the neighbouring community of Accha Alta; and the insect cochineal, which feeds on cactus and is ground to make the colour red<sup>47</sup>.

Due to population growth and with the increase in textile factories people prefer to buy traditional textiles made by machine which are lighter than hand looms and are cheaper too. Machine made clothes are wearable in all season and can also make them into a dress. But one should realise that the more textiles industries, more bales of cottons are used for synthetic dyeing and for which reason natural dyeing and cottage industries both in the rural and urban areas remain severely challenged.

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<sup>46</sup> [www.Greenpeace.org/international/en/publication/campaign-reports-on-toxic-reports](http://www.Greenpeace.org/international/en/publication/campaign-reports-on-toxic-reports) retrieved 9<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

<sup>47</sup> Spinning the future: [www.huffingtonpost.com/forest-trends/spinning-the-future](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/forest-trends/spinning-the-future) retrieved on 14/03/15.

With the coming of the colonial rule, chemical dyes were available in the market and it has slowly changed the colour spectrum of locally woven textiles; soon pre-dyed yarns followed which were of a different fibre than the locally spun ones<sup>48</sup>.

At present the Nagaland Government department of Industry has also taken initiative by giving training in power loom and hand looms to young girls having certain qualification with monthly stipend. But the back strap loom is very much a multipurpose tool since the other commercial looms are designed only for certain weaves only. Thus, Sonnie Kath has commented “the fly shuttle or shuttle looms are alien to our culture and blindly promoting them will not serve any purpose especially for those who are engaged in the back strap loom. Therefore the indigenous loin loom/back strap loom should be given more importance and even in schools a subject should be taught as vocational subject instead of knitting in order to preserve our dying art and keep our tradition alive<sup>49</sup>. We have to educate our people to promote and preserve indigenous textiles in today’s world. Mostly tourists prefer to buy authentic traditional woven items instead of modern one.

“Organic dyeing not only helps preserve the traditional art of weaving and design, but also provides employment and yields economic and ecological benefits”<sup>50</sup> Mahatma Gandhi was convinced that the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving would make the largest contribution to the economic and moral regeneration of India.” The spinning wheel represents to me the hope of the masses. The masses lost their freedom, such as it was with the loss of the Charkha. The Charkha supplemented the agriculture of the villagers and gave it dignity. It was the friend and solace of the widow....Charkha included all the anterior and posterior industries- Ginning, carding, sizing, dyeing and weaving. These, in turn, kept the village

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<sup>48</sup> Marrion Wettstein 2014. Naga Textiles P.55.

<sup>49</sup> Sonnie Kath Age 35 years. age about 35 years. Proprietor of Exotic Echo and a business entrepreneur for local indigenous products specially hand woven materials. Interviewed On 8/11/16 at 1.30 pm.

<sup>50</sup> Debajit Mahanta and S.C Tiwari. [www.iisc.ernet.in/currsci/may102005/1474.pdf](http://www.iisc.ernet.in/currsci/may102005/1474.pdf) retrieved on 15/3/15.



carpenter and the blacksmith busy”<sup>51</sup>. From the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the market for natural dyes in the fashion industry is also experiencing resurgence. Western consumers have become more concerned about the health and environment impact of synthetic dyes in manufacturing and there is a growing demand for products that use natural dyes. Thus, steps should be taken for documenting the traditional method of natural dyeing, extraction and processing, otherwise, slowly all the vital information will be lost along with the older generation if it is not preserved in proper manner.

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<sup>51</sup> [http://www.tribuneindia.com/1999/99aug Sunday/head.htm](http://www.tribuneindia.com/1999/99aug%20Sunday/head.htm) dated 27/10/14.

# **Chapter-IV**

## **Impact of Globalization on Naga Attires.**

## Globalization

Globalization can be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa<sup>1</sup>. People around the world are closely connected than ever before in the history of mankind. The world has become a global village due to globalization. The era of globalization is fast becoming the preferred term for describing the current times. Just as the depression, the cold war era, the space age and the roaring 20's are used to describe particular periods of history; globalization describes the political, economic and cultural atmosphere of today<sup>2</sup>. Cultures are constantly undergoing change at a very rapid rate in today's world. Globalization brought social, cultural, political, economic and ethical changes in our society. It generally refers to the expansion of global linkages, the organization of social life on a global scale, and the growth of a global consciousness. Goods and services produced in one part of the world can be procured from any part of the world. This is an era of globalization, "Globalization has been brought about by the development of a worldwide network of finance and capital. It represents historical continuities with colonization and the neo colonialism of the latter part of the twentieth century<sup>3</sup>. It is also a process whereby the exchange of ideas and things are exchanged between people in a faster rate covering longer distance. Globalization affects people from all walks of life in respect to ones culture, fashion, preference etc. Globalization in the era of hyper communication is creating a new "world in dress" breaking down conventional fashion boundaries. Globalization has influenced the decades of clothing trends, with the incorporation of Middle Eastern and Asian dress into mainstream. European, American, Australia and Asian fashion<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Giddens. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/globalisation> retrieved on 9/6/17

<sup>2</sup> [www.globalization 1.01.org/uploads/file/culture/cultall.pdf](http://www.globalization101.org/uploads/file/culture/cultall.pdf) retrieved on 11/4/17

<sup>3</sup> Tapestry of culture. An introduction to cultural Anthropology. P330.

File:///c:/Users/hp/downloads/The %20Tapestry%20of%20Culture-%20An%20Introduction%20to%20Cultural%20Anthropology%20-%20Abraham%20Rosam,%20Paula%20G.%20Rubel,%20Maxine%20Weisgrau%20-%20goggle%20Books.html retrieved on 2/11/16.

<sup>4</sup> Fashion <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:2005-in-fashion> retrieved on 12/11/16

Globalization takes a society from a national to international level. Robert. j. Samuelson wrote, Globalization is a double edged sword. It's a controversial process that assaults national sovereignty, erodes local culture and tradition and threatens economic and social stability<sup>5</sup>. Globalization can both be destructive and enriching. It is destructive because small business establishments cannot compete with the multinational companies in the global market. But at the same time globalization opens the avenue for new ideas and concepts by strengthening the finest values of humanity. Globalization has been brought about by the development of a worldwide network of finance and capital. It represents historical continuities with colonization and the neo colonialism of the latter part of the twentieth century<sup>6</sup>.

Cultural globalization refers to the transmission of ideas, meanings and values around the world in such a way as to extend and intensify social relations. It involves the formation of shared norms and knowledge with which people associate their individual and collective cultural identities. 'Many societies particularly indigenous peoples view culture as their richest heritage, without which they have no roots, history or soul. Its value is other than monetary. To commodity it is to destroy it'<sup>7</sup>. Cultures are constantly undergoing change at a very rapid rate in today's world. It brings increasing interconnectedness among different populations and cultures. This has increased cross-cultural contacts but may be accompanied by a decrease in the uniqueness of once-isolated communities. Sakirozu Dogru in his article Ottoman Costume in the context of modern Turkish fashion design wrote that, "globalization is not leading cultural homogenization but on the contrary, stimulates cultural heterogenization through the (re) invention of, and emphasis on, local cultural heritage and vestimentary traditions, as a powerful means of distinction<sup>8</sup>.

In the present phase of globalization the collections of Naga art are being made by private collectors for sale in the fast expanding international market for

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<sup>5</sup> Nishi k. Dixit 2006 Tribes and Tribals struggle for survival, P.29.

<sup>6</sup> Tapestry of culture. ibid P. 330.

<sup>7</sup> Maude Barlow 'The Global Monoculture'. [www.globalpolicy.org/globaliz/cultural/2001/1001](http://www.globalpolicy.org/globaliz/cultural/2001/1001) retrieved on 11/4/17

<sup>8</sup> SakirOzu Dogru Ottoman Costume <http://books.google.com.in/books?.id> retrieved on 12/4/16.

tribal art. Technologies have accelerated and expanded the distribution of cultural items beyond communities and nations. It also accelerates the movement of ideas and exchange of commodities over vast distance. In today's global world, the media provide access to far off places. One need not travel to far off places; they can comfortably sit in their room, switch on the travel channel and see places. Barker (1999) called this 'the arm chair traveler' in a mediated world. In a global, it is largely through the media that people are exposed to symbols and thus develop their culture, fashion, preference etc. The buyer or collector does not need to physically go to a shop or travel searching for a particular material or artifact; he can browse through the internet and with a click of a mouse he can purchase the things with his credit or debit card. Even the seller has to just click the items and upload it in a relevant web site. At present there are many websites in which Naga artifact, Naga indigenous foods are available with a click of a mouse in websites like, ilando, Giskaa, [www.littlehillpeople](http://www.littlehillpeople) etc. Political theorist Frederic Jameson presents this as two competing future visions: one of a corporate-dominated monoculture, where nations and cultural groups alike are deprived of autonomy and identity, and another of a vibrant celebration of pluralism, in which various cultural groups are in direct and harmonious contact with one another, free from limiting political forces such as national governments<sup>9</sup>.

Westernization has greatly affected our traditions, customs, family and our respect and love for others. The values and hospitality for which Nagas were well known in the past are slowly vanishing and western culture is taking place. People blindly follow the Western culture without knowing its serious consequences. Westernization can also be related to acculturation also. Acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between cultural groups and their individual members<sup>10</sup>. Culture is largely based on traditional, cultures have traditional practices for centuries but when people become too modern those cultures become assimilated with the dominant culture that is

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<sup>9</sup>File://h://Globalisation%20and%20its%20Effects%20%20cultural%20Diversity%20ETEC%20510.html retrieved on 15/4/17

<sup>10</sup><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/westernisation> retrieved on 6/5/17

western culture. J.W Powell coined the word acculturation in 1880 defining it as the psychological changes induced by cross-cultural imitation<sup>11</sup>. It can also said that acculturation is a direct change of one's culture over another culture through dominance like military coup, imperialism etc. Through acculturation there is change in the food habit, clothing, language, music, technologies, tools etc. Furer-Haimendorf therefore believed that there was no permanent place for archaic, isolated societies and asserts that, these cultures, however vigorous and colourful, must gradually give way before the impact of one or other of the great modern civilization<sup>12</sup>.

The coming of the Christian missionaries and the people converting to Christianity has made many changes among the Nagas. The stress on personal salvation has introduced a new individualism in place of the former community spirit. The American Baptist missionaries who came during the colonial rule banned songs, dances, music, destroyed sacred stones, burnt morungs and "the entire culture of the hills with its rich tradition of song and energetic dances in one mighty sweep. With this the colour and gaiety departed from Naga life"<sup>13</sup>. Christian hymns have taken the place of the folk songs; many dances, which were celebrated during head hunting raid and feast of merit, are no longer performed. Some shawls were banned because they symbolized an older way of life and world view; with the changes in the belief system, many of these shawls lost their symbolic meaning and so the patterns and designs began to be forgotten. Westernization has greatly affected our traditions, customs and our family. Naga's way of doing things became primitive, uncivilized and unacceptable in public domain. Western culture has precariously contaminated our Naga traditional values. Now we have lost the power and sense of cultural continuity. The values and the life styles associated with these traditions have been assimilated. After the colonial period western clothing has replaced the traditional attires which were considered as a symbol of modernity and social advancement. In

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<sup>11</sup>File:///c:/users/hp/downloads/Acculturation%20-%20wikipedia.html. Accessed on 12/3/17

<sup>12</sup> David vumlallian Zaou head hunting and human sacrifice in north east India. [www.academia.edu/5650002/Raiding-the-dreaded-pastrepresentation-of-headhunting-and-human-sacrifice-in-north-east-India](http://www.academia.edu/5650002/Raiding-the-dreaded-pastrepresentation-of-headhunting-and-human-sacrifice-in-north-east-India) retrieved on 16/6/16.

<sup>13</sup> H. Horam, in ABC of Naga culture & civilization P.39 Haskar Nandita.2011. ABC of Naga Culture & Civilisation .

this regard, Horam viewed, Modernity has brought a new form of culture which includes the culture of the alphabet and comic books, of pop music and transistor radio, of television and magazines, of individualism and economic competition, of mass production and the ever-accelerating speed of life<sup>14</sup>.

Westernization is a danger to cultural diversity. Prof Ali Mazrui of Binghamton University uses term "hegemonization" to describe the same phenomenon. By the twenty first century people dress more alike all over the world than they did at the end of the nineteenth century (homogenization). But the dress code which is getting globalised is overwhelmingly the western dress code (hegemonization)<sup>15</sup>.

Westernization is often regarded as a part of the ongoing process of globalization. This theory proposes that western thought has led to globalization, and that globalization propagates western culture, leading to a cycle of westernization<sup>16</sup>. One of the worst effects of globalization in Naga society is the cultural transition from traditional to modern. Local diverse cultures are replaced by mass culture. The traditional way of life has been replaced by western way of life. That is the influence of the western civilization in our culture, indirectly through globalization. As a result of globalization, many indigenous groups are being more widely exploited through the tourism industry. Nagas traditional cultures get assimilated with the dominant culture. Indeed, this is one of the reasons younger generations are now out of touch with their cultural, social, political traditions. The process of de-territorialisation started during the colonial era but today the intensity and scale makes its impact far deeper. Some people argue that de-territorialisation is a defining feature of globalization. The process has led to an emerging worldwide synthesis of cultures and cultural patterns and an overall westernization of global culture. The process by which global western culture enters the local culture is called re-territorialisation of culture. The mass media plays a central role in both de-territorialisation and re-

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<sup>14</sup> H. Horam Naga polity 1975 P.107

<sup>15</sup> [www.academia.edu/4770279/Does-globalisation-pose-a-threat-to-cultural-diversity](http://www.academia.edu/4770279/Does-globalisation-pose-a-threat-to-cultural-diversity) retrieved on 10/6/17

<sup>16</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/westernisation> retrieved on 16/4/17

territorialisation of culture. Once a local culture is a part of the global community the process of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation continues as the global culture from and feeds all the communities that take part in it. There is an urgent need for Nagas to study the impact of de-territorialisation on their society and culture<sup>17</sup>.

Globalization contributes to the alienation of individuals from their traditions may be modest compared to the impact of modernity itself. Cultural globalization has increased cross-cultural contacts but may be accompanied by a decrease in the uniqueness of once isolated communities. Cultural globalization involves the formation of shared norms and knowledge with which people associate their individual and collective cultural identities. This continuously connects people from different populations and cultures.

One of the most important aspects of culture is the clothes that one wears. Today many Nagas due to modernization lives a highly sophisticated life and many among the young generation are being swayed away by the impact leaving behind their past rich heritage and culture<sup>18</sup>. The import of used clothes from western and eastern countries which are locally called as second hand clothes has also accelerated the adoption of western dress from all economically section of people in Nagaland. Globalization has led to cultural convergence everywhere. Now the people from all over the world irrespective of culture or nation prefer to wear the same brands like Nike, Adidas, and Reebok etc for instance. Now the similarities are with aspects like consumer preferences, beliefs, aspirations and values. Technology which is not deemed to be culturally neutral, promotes the ideals, ethics and standard trumpeted by the dominant society. This provides finger-tips access to a range of cultures, however also dissolves cultures into single supermarket brands<sup>19</sup>. The main segments of indigenous society that are specially targeted by multinational corporations are the young adolescents who are far more susceptible to targeted consumerism and as a result, may find that western consumer ideals may be more appealing to them than

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<sup>17</sup> Nandita Haskar 2011 ABC of Naga Culture P,103.

<sup>18</sup> N Venuh 2014. People, Heritage and Oral History of the Nagas P:V111

<sup>19</sup> Daes 2004 in globalization and its effect on cultural diversity. file:///H:/Globalization%20and%20its%20Effects%20%20cultural%20Diversity%20-20ETEC%20510.html retrieved on 14/4/16.



their own cultural traditions. They are easier to convert because their personal identity is not as set as that of an adult in their community. Sao Chingmak a college student said that, he and his friends felt that to be considered a 'hip' they have to wear branded clothes like Levis, Puma, Reebok etc which now they can order through online like Amazon, Jabong etc. Pop culture is manifested around the world through movies, music, newspapers, television, fast food, clothing, video games etc. this scenario is not an isolated case when it comes to Naga context. Therefore, former Canadian P.M. Kim Campbell observed that 'images of America have emigrated to the world, allowing people to aspire to be Americans even in distant countries'<sup>20</sup>.

The fear of many indigenous groups is that this global pressure on their culture is only going to lead to the erosion of their traditional values to the point that the diversity of culture in the world will be slowly whittled away to the point that there will be only one large homogeneous culture worldwide<sup>21</sup>. Tradition and cultural traits are considered as an identity of any Nation. But now, it has been replaced by western culture. As a result of cultural globalization, the movement of the people from the rural to urban setting has caused a significant depopulation of the people in rural area. Many Nagas are not aware of the Naga culture due to the fact that cultural knowledge and practices are not included in most of the school syllabi. So there is a dire need to preserve Naga cultural identity.

In the past a person established his status in the society by sharing his wealth with his community is often said, since his interest was community based but in the present society, a person has become individualistic and self centered. Culturally, globalization may connect some cultures or people, and understanding of cultures become easier but it often pressures or ignores culture boundaries. It often threatened the existing culture by the popular culture. That is, most of the primitive cultures are extinct or in the verge of extinction by the western culture. Food habits, languages, arts and ethics are assimilated among most of the indigenous culture. There is another aspect of colonialism that has had even a deeper impact on Naga society-the

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<sup>20</sup>Barthin (1998) in culture and globalization. <http://www.globalisation101.org> retrieved on 8/5/17

<sup>21</sup> Globalization and its effect on cultural diversity .ibid

imposition of a foreign language thereby devaluing Naga languages. It is through such imposition that colonialism colonized the minds of the colonized<sup>22</sup>. The most important part of Naga culture is the treasury of songs, stories, oral traditions and they can access only if the Naga languages are kept alive.

Like many other aborigines of the world, the Naga culture is under threat from many circles due to globalization. The popular culture has become the western culture for many. Now every society is caught in between tradition and modernity because of which Naga society is now turning to a different phase of development. Many of the original attires and culture heritage have disappeared due to the influence of westernization on traditional value systems. However, some educated and eminent leaders are taking initiatives to encourage the tribal people to revive and safeguard its cultural heritage. For instance, Hornbill festival is the time where each tribe showcases their cultural treasury of dance, songs, games and gate pulling ceremonies are performed. Privileges' are extended to the village chiefs and Anghs to inaugurate the Horn bill festivals with traditional Blessings. Each Naga tribe also builds their own traditional morungs with log drums. Both domestic and international tourists come to witness this festival which lasts for 10 days. The state government has opened a separate directorate of Art and culture in order to promote and uplift the traditional culture of the tribals. The rich culture and traditional heritage can also be preserved by creating awareness among the people by organizing seminars, workshops and cultural programme. It should also be introduced in the school curriculum. It should be the responsibility of every one to make people aware that while westernization and influx of fashions has continued at a rapid space the Naga traditional attires are dying due to assimilation with the western culture. The rich diversity of Naga shawls is giving way to standardization. Now any person can wear the Tsungkotepešü shawl or the warrior shawl. These shawls, once held at high esteem, have become a commodity in the market. Globalization has also ushered new opportunities for innovation in weavings. The traditional practices and outlook of society is fast changing while in the meantime

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<sup>22</sup>Nandita Haskar 2011 . ABC of Naga Culture & Civilisation P. 41.

acculturations are rapidly progressing. The resultant impact of globalization on Naga culture is seen manifestly in many areas such as designing of new motifs and patterns, dresses and outfit of different seasons etc. what is more important is that as discussed earlier the meaningful attires such as shawls and mekhalas are mix-match only to produce a miss-match hence meaningful attires turns to a mere market commodity(see fig 4.1) Women's mekhala which is a clan based identity marker has lessened its significance once it reaches the market because of the fact that in modern market system monetary value supersedes cultural value.

*Figure: 4.1. Designs from different tribes are woven into the skirt resulting in a loss in the clarity of identity and meaning.*



*Source- Naga textiles.M.Wettstein 2014*

Thus sociologically speaking, the dysfunctional aspect of globalization in this regard is that it has lessened the adaptation of the younger Naga generation to its own cultural values.

### **Modernization**

The term “Modernization” is referred to a gradual transition of society from traditional or pre-industrial towards modern. A traditional society is based on agrarian while modern society is organized by industrial functions. Traditional societies have a unified and single system, the power remains in one hand while at

the opposite end modern societies are based upon plurality and heterogeneity<sup>23</sup>. Modernization is considered a transition from traditional towards modern society. Thus it affects the socio-cultural patterns of the society. It is known that modernization as far as technology and science are concerned, emerged after the industrial revolution, which was triggered by the invention of spinning machinery in England during the late eighteenth century. It also refers to process whereby a society becomes modern and rational. It is a current term for an old process of social changes whereby less developed societies acquire the characteristics common to more developed societies<sup>24</sup>. Therefore it refers to the changes not only in the external structure of social institutions but also the internal attitudes and beliefs. Modernization is a process of changes in economic as well as cultural aspects of the society<sup>25</sup>. The traditional society apply the scientific knowledge that they learn from the modern society and apply it in their own society by transforming and creating changes in their social, cultural pattern, religious system and normative structure. Modernization also characterized by universalistic legal norms, expansion of communication network, technologic urban centre and also modern political institutions having democratic and secular principle. Yogendra Singh<sup>26</sup> in his modernization of Indian Tradition tried to give conceptual analyses of “modernization”. To him modernization “symbolizes as a rational attitude towards issues, and their evaluation from universalistic and not particularistic view point.” He held that the concept of modernization is rooted in the scientific world view i.e. it is ‘associated with diffusion of scientific knowledge, technological skills and technological resources of a particular society’. So according to him modernization in its ideal form is a universal cultural phenomenon. That is, modernity like science is not an exclusive possession of any one ethnic or cultural group but belongs to the humanity as a whole. Many times’ modernization has often been confused with

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<sup>23</sup>Charton and Andras 2003. 394-397. [www.theexplorerpak.org/PDFs/PDF%20Files%20vol-1%20issue-10/EJSS%2082%20IMPACT%20OF%20MODERNISATION%20AND%20CHANGING%20TRADITIONAL%20VALUES](http://www.theexplorerpak.org/PDFs/PDF%20Files%20vol-1%20issue-10/EJSS%2082%20IMPACT%20OF%20MODERNISATION%20AND%20CHANGING%20TRADITIONAL%20VALUES). accessed on 12.2.17

<sup>24</sup> C.N Shankar Rao 2006. Principles of sociology with an introduction to social thought P. 317.

<sup>25</sup>Haviland 2002. Cited in Mahammad Shahzad, Impact of Modernization and changing traditional values of rural set up in District khusab.

<sup>26</sup>Yogendra Singh. 1986 Modernization of Indian Tradition.P.61.

westernization but they play a different role in people's life respectively. Through modernization the society tries to get all the benefits for their betterment by utilization of its own resources and manpower. Through this the society become sustainable, healthy and self reliant.

### **Westernization**

While modernization is about rationalization, association with scientific knowledge technological skill, Westernization on the other hand is adopting the life styles of the western society in fashion, food habits etc. Prof Hideo Kishimoto also pointed out the difference between modernization and westernization in the following ways. Westernization would mean that a certain indigenous cultural element of the traditional East is replaced by the penetrating western element and the functional role of the farmer is taken over by the latter. Modernization on the other hand, basically means to remold a cultural system into a new mode.<sup>27</sup> Throughout the world indigenous cultures are under pressure from the forces of modernization and globalization. Clothing has changed dramatically over the centuries, although its ancient role as an outward indication of the status, wealth, and beliefs of the wearer is as important as ever. During the Industrial Revolution the textile industry was the first to be mechanized, enabling elaborate designs at a faster rate. Globalization and technology brought machine made products available throughout the world. The invention of flying shuttle loom in place of traditional loom was one of the greatest inventions of Industrial Revolution which can produce hundreds of meters of clothes within a short span of time by a single weaver. This has destroyed the cottage industries and many artisans and weavers became poor because they could no longer compete with the machine made products which were cheaper than the clothes woven by the weavers in their loom and thus it affected the workers financially, mentally and socially. Thus, modern technology has affected the traditional set up of society thereby priorities of people have changed. Modernization originally referred to the contrast and transition between a 'traditional' agrarian society and the kind of

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<sup>27</sup>Traditional cultures and modernization: several problems in the case of Japan. Hirai Naofusa. [www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cimac/hirai.html](http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cimac/hirai.html). retrieved on 15/3/17

‘modern’ society that is based on trade and industry<sup>28</sup>. It is considered a transition from traditional towards modern society. It emphasizes a new thinking and a new outlook to life. So it affects the socio-cultural patterns of the society. ‘Modernization stands for discriminate selection between what is worthy and what is unsuitable in a particular situation. For example, Japan is a non-western nation but offers much to be accepted for modernization of a society. Modernization involves accepted of material ways of developing economy and change in outlook and attitude of the people’<sup>29</sup>.

Western culture is a part of globalization and it is replacing indigenous culture rapidly with the western way of life. Westernization traces its root back to ancient Greece, the birth place of western culture. The Roman Empire took the first process of westernization as it was heavily influenced by Greece and created a new culture based on the Principles and Values of the Ancient Greek society<sup>30</sup>. M.N Srinivas defined the concept of Westernization as, “the changes brought about in India society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, the term subsumes changes occurring at different levels i.e. Technology, institutions, ideology and values<sup>31</sup>. M.N Srinivas through this concept wanted to give a systematic explanation as to how westernization as a process has its influence on deep rooted Indian values. Westernization is a process in which societies adopt western cultures even in rural areas such as industry, technology, law, politics, economics and lifestyles, clothing, language etc. Westernization has become common all over the world and especially in places like Nagaland state too. British rule in India have brought about radical changes and revolution in technology and communication sector such as machines, industry, railway etc. thereby changes in the lifestyles of the people of India. The impact of modernization coupled with westernization and globalization have resulted in many of the non-western societies to imitate like a westerner. While saying so, many of the traditional attires of the Nagas which carries

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<sup>28</sup> Mahammad Shahzad. *ibid*

<sup>29</sup> Joseph S. Thong & Phanenmo Kath 2011. *Glimpses of Naga Legacy and Culture*. P.223.

<sup>30</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/westernisation>. retrived on....

<sup>31</sup> Yogendra Singh 1986. *ibid* P.9

sociological meanings has to a great extent modified or even mix-match thereby resulting a miss-match. See fig 4.2

*Figure 4.2 A pant suit search out of Konyak warrior shawls.*



*Source- Naga textiles. M. Wettstein 2014*

Aseno<sup>32</sup> was of the opinion that, we are exposed to myriad of culture and our people especially the youngsters are blindly following without knowing the consequences. What is even more trending to the younger generation particularly among the Naga youth is the imitation of Korean culture. Korean culture has so much penetrated in the Naga society; Naga youngsters whether ruralites or urbanites are so obsessed with their fashion, food habits, even language etc. the argument is borne by the fact that youngsters look and dress, their hair dyeing style, even to the extent of learning Korean language substantiate our argument. It is therefore not surprising to even have institute to learn Korean language, restaurant like KUC (Korean Uncle cafe). Indeed, there is a wave of koreanization of culture among the tribal Naga youth. The medium of transmitting such culture is chiefly because of television channel like arirang, and of course the use of internet. Recently there was a cosplay competition at Kohima where the winner will win a free ticket to South

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<sup>32</sup>Aseno age 35 years from Ketsapo village Phek interviewed on 20/5/15

Korea for the final competition. Globalization is held responsible for all these positive or negative influence.

Under the pressure of modernization and technological development many traditional ways of dyeing and weaving among the younger generation are on the verged of extinction. The present generations are not interested in weaving or dyeing since their needs and wants are readily available in the market. According to Mrs Bendangla<sup>33</sup> the traditional attires are facing decline among the youngsters and she has blamed it on the mothers saying that, if the mothers are not interested in weaving how can they teach it to their daughters? Globalization has enabled with all imported clothes, weaves or coloured thread right in the door step. Today, life has become so dependent on technology thereby making life so easy. It only appears pertinent to mention here that in this age of globalization excessive dependence on such manual production clinging to tradition methods of weaving and dyeing only appears laborious and time consuming hence unproductive economically. However, contrary to the statement is what often encounters. It is observed that in many occasions especially during tribal festival, tourist who visits Nagaland are often attracted by the colourful patterns and designs of the shawl hence they go hunting for hand-woven and dyed materials. The same is true when Sonia,<sup>34</sup> a local entrepreneur was of the opinion that there is a big avenue to export traditional Naga shawl outside the country and therefore should encourage the local people, train them and make them self reliant. Mrs Sendongla has a group of weavers working under her at her native village Ungma to cater to her needs and sells it to both domestic and foreign tourists. These weavers weave the Tsungkotepsü(Warrior) shawl and traditional Ao mekhala. She takes care of the quality control. Many locals buy from her for personal use as well as for presentation. Attempts are made at different levels and in different platform by various organizations like the International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP)<sup>35</sup> to safe guard the member countries pertaining to cultural issues, protecting cultures endangered by globalization and raising awareness of the importance of

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<sup>33</sup>Mrs Bendangla aged 70 years Interviewed on 8/4/17 at Mokokchung.

<sup>34</sup>Sonnie kath age about 35 years. Proprietor of Exotic Echo and a business entrepreneur for local indigenous products specially hand woven materials. Interviewed On 8/11/16 at 1.30 pm.

<sup>35</sup>[www.globalization101.org/conclusion-5/](http://www.globalization101.org/conclusion-5/) retrieved on 15/4/17



culture. Yet the talents are gradually disappearing in the face of machine-made goods and its inexpensive clothing and also due to lack of documentation of our indigenous products. According to Dr Arenla<sup>36</sup> the Watsü Mundang (apex Ao women organisation) has also set up a documenting committee to document all the Ao traditional shawls and mekhala so that they can patent it in the later stage. Among the indigenous communities, including the Naga tribals, clothes often revealed a person's identity regarding his social and economic position within the community; however this is no longer much relevant in the present times. With globalization people's perception and attitudes are turning more individualistic in nature therefore community feelings and the spirit of one's attachment to its traditions are disappearing steadily.

Social change is inevitable in every human society as change is the law of nature. Various cultures and civilization can be held responsible for bringing socio-cultural change to the Nagas because of their contacts and association in different period of time and in different manners. The earliest exposure to the outside world for Nagas was with the Ahom-Naga relation and later on the colonial administrator and of course the American Baptist Mission. One of the major forces undeniable to Naga culture was the British administration. The aim of British policy was to bring the whole of the Naga Hills under their control and to lead the Nagas towards civilization and peace by winning their trust. Thus David Scott, a British administrator in North East India Wrote "I'm satisfied that British government can established its administrative posts in Naga Hills. Nagas will soon become friends to British administrators and thus, we must do our best for the Nagas that our political power may permanently obtain in Naga Hills"<sup>37</sup>. They slowly tried to get the confidence of the people by establishing schools, provided free books and slowly changed the Naga culture into western way of life. But the Naga encounter with colonialism has nothing to do with the wearing of western clothes. It was told that the British administration often banned the Nagas from wearing Western dress. 'In the British created Naga Hills District, the Deputy Commissioner banned Nagas from

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<sup>36</sup> Arenla about 45 years old. Interviewed on 12/6/17 at 6 pm.

<sup>37</sup> Mar Pongen 2011. Morung Speaks P. 46.

wearing Western dress. The regulation stated that “no student to dress in the western way and to have his hair cut in the western mode” If any Naga was caught dressed in Western clothes or not having a tribal hair cut he would be fined Rs 2, which was a large amount in those days<sup>38</sup>. The introduction of Christianity in the Naga Hills by the American Baptist Missionaries starting from 1872 have reformed and transformed the life of the Nagas in many aspects. Indeed, change in the way of life, food habits and dress were all initiated by the Christian missionaries for which they are credited whether for worst or for best.

The Naga society is going through a historical phase of change and transformation where most of the old traditional way of life is replaced by the new culture. With the introduction of education by the Christian missionaries, education became the agent of change and modernization in Naga society. With the onset of modernization, Nagas have started adopting new mode and standard of living. Culture traits, value system and dress pattern have changed due to modernization. Education has spread all over the land therefore, one can safely say that and at present there is no village in Nagaland without a primary school. With modern living, morung<sup>39</sup> has disappeared from almost all the Naga villages. Modern way of life and also due to lack of economic incentives for cultural activities, Naga youth both in the urban and rural environment have already lost touch with their oral traditions and it is only few older generations who holds few tales and songs and history. It must be mentioned here that morung education where people learn social values, history, governance including their culture of singing and dancing from their elders all these have now become a story of past. The traditional outlook of the society has fast disappeared including the social ethos and values, if not severely affected. People have become more individualistic in nature. One of the major impact due to external forces was the disappearance of the feast of merit and head hunting which was community based. Admittedly, headhunting is inhuman and therefore colonial administrators have used

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<sup>38</sup> T. Aliba Imti, *Reminiscence* 1988 Impur to Naga National Council P.38.

<sup>39</sup> Morung the Bachelor's Dormitory was the centre of education, ceremonial and festival function, recreation club, a guard house and centre of art and discipline in the traditional society. P,244 *Glimpses of Naga Legacy and Culture*.

its force to stop. The spirit of sharing is minimally practice compared to the past. What is significantly important in the instant study about the practice of feast of merit and head hunting is that, as discussed in the preceding chapters, the pattern, motifs and symbols inscribed in the attires especially in man's shawls are determined by these two events. In this Mr. Sangyusang<sup>40</sup> has this to say. All Naga attires specially the Ao Nagas has a meaning. The inscription of sun, moon, elephant, tiger, hornbill bird, etc signifies of the wearer being personified to such objects which convey a message of the wearer's power, strength, and position. Today, it has lost all its significance in the face of modern world.

The contact with the west led to the disruption of the traditional way of life for the Nagas. Along with the Christian religion, western culture, people's way of thinking and customs were taught to a new direction thereby giving a sense of new outlook. For instance, successful headhunting was a pride in the context of traditional Naga culture, however in the gospel of Christian teaching it is not just a crime but a sin. Therefore, when the gospel of Christianity enveloped the wild Nagas it steadily changed their worldview. One of the initiatives towards Christianization by the missionaries was also by way of discouragement for wearing traditional dresses during the earlier days. Indeed, that was the beginning of the end to traditional ways of life. Such acts are clearly evident; during the first Christian conference which was held from 12<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> March 1897, the main discussion was the issue of wearing only the Assamese costume both by the Impur Mission Students and the Christians. All men had to wear dhoti instead of loin cloth (langtem) and women had to wear sari instead of mekhala (teberemsü). Rejecting traditional costumes and adopting the exclusive use of Assamese dress was another area that the Naga Christians understood as a sign of adopting new life in moving from primitivism to modernity<sup>41</sup>.

The process of Christianization has also affected the culture of Naga society. The primal religion and culture are interdependent in Naga society. Therefore, by giving up the traditional religion and culture it resulted gradually subverting its roots. To see from a religion point of view it sounds correct to state that the early

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<sup>40</sup> Guru Sayungsang. from Ungma Village, Age about 73 years, interviewed on 16/6/15 at 9am.  
<sup>41</sup> Mar Pongen 2011. Morung Speaks P.78.

missionaries made the Nagas felt that whatever habits they practiced were considered as sin hence encouraged in giving up. A socio-cultural point of view in this regard may not agree so, since it uproots one's culture and tradition. Indeed, uprooting of culture results in identity crises or cultural crises. What was the understanding or belief to a Naga for converting to this new religion was that, the customs of the white man, often believes that by their observance he not only escapes a painful fate after death, but ceasing to be a real Naga, becoming nearer the admired example of the missionaries<sup>42</sup>. In the context of Christianization a Naga's way of doing things appeared irrelevant and primitive, outdated and unacceptable in the larger public domain. Therefore, many indigenous customs and traditions were lost in this way. Many precious ornaments and artifacts' were also burned or buried thus along with all these the tradition also died. While discussing the impact of Christianity upon the Nagas, Mrs Adao Konyak<sup>43</sup> recounts how during the early 70's when Christian revival came to Mon district of Nagaland. She remarked that people were asked to destroy their traditional artifacts' that are related to head hunting and feast of merit saying that it is evil and unclean. Many people who were intoxicated by the wave of spiritual awakening called "Revival" had to literally go to the jungle and buried the teeth of the wild boar and armlet made of elephant tusks, skulls of human and animals or burned. Years later when they sober down with such spiritual intoxication they went to collect the buried artifact but to their dismay everything was stolen. A rice beer which was once considered an indigenous drink without which no rituals were complete is replaced by black tea and folk songs with Christian hymns. The house decorations with animal heads, human heads which the Nagas valued as their trophies of valor and the Mithun heads which were a symbol of their prosperity as well as objects of art, have all been destroyed. Even the wood carvings on the pillars of their houses were ordered to burn down in many places. They were discouraged to weave the beautiful ceremonial clothes of the warriors and feast givers. Their beautiful ornaments of great artistic and human value like cowries, ivory, hair of enemies and horn bills feathers were all burn down. The art of dancing and colourful

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<sup>42</sup> C.V Furer-Haimendorf, Return to the Naked Nagas in Morung Speaks P.53.

<sup>43</sup> Mrs Adao Konyak age about 75 years. Interviewed on 20/4/17 at 2pm

social and agricultural ceremonies were all given up<sup>44</sup>. This also resulted in wearing less frequent of such traditional dresses and many of the seasonal activities like observing genna, taboos and festivals and rituals which was part of their life got discarded. Rituals especially during the time of death, birth or while going for head hunting or preparation of feast of merit were all abandoned. The conversion of Nagas from animism to Christianity by foreign missionaries led to conflicts of interest and living style between the new converts and the Nagas practicing their old religion. The conflicts started due to forbidding of rice beer, banning of feast of merit and traditional songs. It also entailed the converts refusing to undertake social obligations designed to contribute to community solidarity. It may be mentioned here, such conflicts were settled in most instances in the presences of British administrators. A pioneer Naga lawyer one Tajen Ao<sup>45</sup> have compiled more than 50 court cases between the early Ao converts and the non- Christians that were registered in Mokokchung court beginning from 1912 over the issue of Christian boycotting traditional festivals and other traditional practices. Interestingly, his findings shows that many a times non Christian won the court cases because British administrators were in favour of traditional practices and they were opposed to the destruction of Naga culture by the missionaries mainly on the ground that it is important to preserve the Naga tradition from the anthropological point of view. Thus, Christianization has ruined the Naga traditional culture. For e.g. the life styles of the people like respecting the elders, importance of family, marriage system, festival etc has change tremendously. It may also be mentioned that in earlier days all the social education was taught in the morung for the boys and in tsuki (girls' dormitory in Ao dialect) among the girls by the elders. However, introduction of modern educational institutions have let to dismantling of such institutions slowly but steadily. Thus, institution of morung and tsüki has become only a story of the past history.

The scientific invention and technological revolution around the world has impacted every human culture and society. The introductions of internet facilities

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<sup>44</sup> Joseph S. Thong.2012. Head-hunters Culture. P.160.

<sup>45</sup>Tajen Ao 1984 Christianity versus Ao Nagas, Mokokchung, cited in ABC of Naga culture and Civilisation. P,158.

have not spared even the remotest village. Indeed, it has both positive and negative impacts. What is important in this study about such impact is that; how such technology innovation has let to distance one from its own culture. Internet has enabled to access, besides many other, social media such as face book, tweeter, etc. what is significant about this point is that the younger generation are more involved into such world. Introduction of sky television is another major factor influencing them. Indeed one must also acknowledge that through such medium exchange of ideas and understanding of other culture is possible. However, what concerns in this study is the very fact that much of the western cultures or even eastern such as Korean cultures are influencing the Naga younger generation. In recent times, Korean cultures are often regarded as trend of the day while native traditional dresses as a marker of the old traditions or fashion and avoid wearing it. What is advertised in television or through other form of mass media becomes the latest fashion for the younger people. While dealing with globalization, understanding of cultures becomes easier, but in some instances, it is threatened by the western cultures which are dominating the indigenous culture. This let the Naga tribal cultures to the verge of extinction. Whenever culture traits spread from one culture to another it can be called diffusion and when the whole system of life in a culture begins to change under the influence of any other culture it is known as acculturation. In the midst of globalization Naga society and culture remain constant onslaught in all fronts such as languages, foods, arts, ethics and dress.

In modern Naga society, no doubt people wear both modern and traditional dress. However, the influence of western culture exhibits largely therefore the glimpses of traditional attires are not much visible in the everyday life of the people. Nowadays traditional attires are worn only during special occasions like festivals. People wear traditional shawls, mekhala or wrap around skirts mostly on special occasion such as weddings, church and for traditional meetings. However, it may be noted, people of older generation in many of the rural villages still continue to wear such traditional attires, jewellery in their everyday chores. In the discourse between tradition and modernity our data from the field points to various facts and reasons.

Mrs Songla<sup>46</sup> and Noksenla<sup>47</sup> have this to say, they have never tried wearing pants since they belong to the older generation and they will never try wearing it. The desire for modern life style is expressed by women through the mode of dresses they wear. Therefore, Amongla Chang<sup>48</sup> a school teacher would mostly wears western clothes for more practical reason such as inexpensive, light, comfort etc. Ashum konyak<sup>49</sup> opt for western dresses mostly because it is comfortable and convenient. Adano<sup>50</sup> a weaver also said that she likes to wear pants at home instead of mekhala since she can move freely especially while weaving. But she prefers to wear mekhala when she goes out of the house. Even in remote area like Ketsapo village in Phek district, most of the women folks in the village are seen doing household chores wearing pants which could not have been imaged 20 years back. But all those women when interviewed have revealed their opinion about they prefer to wear their traditional mekhala during special occasion and festivals. Wearing mekhala connects them to their roots and tradition and ones cultural identity. They feel a sense of belonging to each other wearing mekhala during their social gatherings. So even if they wear the western clothes most of the time, cultural imperialism has not occurred because they have not lost their Naga culture. These few respondents have thus provided a mixed opinion where some prefers traditional dress while few others like western dresses. This also led to our conclusion that dressing is an individual choice and society to not enforce any dress code unlike many others. It is also largely for this reason the present generation prefers to wear western style of clothes in the work place as well as in everyday wear. Women prefer to wear pants and skirts which they find more convenient and comfortable whether at home or in their work place, even in remotest villages' impact of such external forces have not been spared. Therefore, instead of mekhala or warp around, women mostly wear cotton pants, jeans etc. in fact there is no much difference between a man's clothing and women's clothing which was not the case during earlier times.

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<sup>46</sup>Songla a weaver age around 70 years interviewed on 5/5/14 at 9am

<sup>47</sup>Noksenla a weaver aged around 72 years interviewed on 5/5/14 at 10.30am.

<sup>48</sup>Amongla Chang a school teacher and a designer aged around 40 years. Interviewed on 2/8/14

<sup>49</sup>Ashum Konyak a teacher age around 47 years, interviewed on 20/4/15 at 11am

<sup>50</sup>Adano a weaver aged around 50 years, interviewed on 19/4/15 at 1pm.

Fashion industry has exploited to a great deal the priceless value, the unique and ingenious minds of the people. These are often expressed through the ramps. The fashion designers mostly advertise traditional heritage as a visual source instead of its ideological and religious value. Selected attires which were worn only by people who could perform the feast of merit or the person who could bring head trophies to the village and earned their status have all vanished if not severely threatened (see fig 4.3). This would mean that; for heaven sake head hunting has ceased, today's generation have forgotten the semiotic meaning which describes the hard earned value and dignity of a person.

*Figure 4.3 this dress is made out of Ao warrior shawl and Tangkhul feast of merit shawl. Which has devalued the hard earn symbolic shawl.*



*Source: Naga textiles.M. Wettstein 2014*

It must be noted, the preceding discussion do not aim at reviving the culture of headhunting, it only aim to draw lights on the social values and dignity one adhere to in society. All Nagas valued their traditional attires as their life line or blood line. There were days when no one dares to touch certain objects which were used only by



the warriors. Beso Chang<sup>51</sup> said that things like spears, dao or head baskets (used during the raids to collect the enemy heads) cannot be touch by ordinary people. Only certain weavers would weave clothes with observance of so many taboos. Indeed the world view and belief system of the Nagas were so idealistic in nature that have dominated all his thinking.

The introduction of Christianity has removed such superstitious beliefs. Therefore, now in the modern society any person irrespective of tribe, clan or status can wear it provided he has the purchasing power. The meanings attached with each motifs and design has become meaningless. With the inception of modernization, considerable change has taken place and the change of ownership also determines the value of a thing. 'The designs and decorations, the carvings used in the traditional Naga houses which symbolized one's riches, status and position in the society is no longer found in their houses building and decorations. Today it is not one's status, achievement and position, but it is one's money and riches that are given more value and status<sup>52</sup>.

In Nagaland, integration of the tribal lifestyle into modern society is an everyday reality. With greater access to market facility, economic opportunities etc have greatly influenced the innovative adaptation of traditional designs and motifs to meet the growing market demands. Nagas have started adopting new mode and standard of living with modernization. The contact with the west led to the disruptive of the traditional way of life for the Nagas. Traditional dresses are worn less frequently, and seasonal activities were abandoned. The patterns and motifs used in the traditional dress were according to ones clan, a person's rank and status (warrior or feast giver), that could be easily distinguished from their daily dress, especially for the ordinary and upper class. The man who got the highest respect was the man who gave feast of merit in which he and his wife shared their wealth with the entire village community. But now it is wealth that possesses the most are given the highest

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<sup>51</sup>Beso Chang age 80 years old. Member Research board of advisor. American Biographical institute. Interviewed on 2/3/13 at 6am.

<sup>52</sup> L. Imsutoshi Jamir 2000 Communication in Action. P.78.

status and respect. When tradition begins to get replaced by what is considered to be modern, the benefit of what was considered traditional order has also disappeared. It has ceased to be an identity marker for the tribes, clan and villages among the Naga tribes.

It is obvious to note that because of modernization and the subsequent devaluation of the old ornaments a decline of such onetime glorious and colourful dress is seen whereas most of the clothes and shawls are becoming very popular even to the extent of foreign markets.<sup>53</sup> Today markets are flooded with the imitations of the Naga shawls, mekhala and artifacts made with cheap quality products, and as a result, they have lost their distinction of tribal or clan characteristics. Any person irrespective of class, clan or tribe can buy and wear it; little did they realize the significant meaning of the cloth. G.L Khing has his view on this 'The sacredness of Tribal Attires'-that, all Naga tribes' value traditional attires as their life-line and life-blood. We should take every care to wear our traditional attires as per the occasion and as one's standard/status of life. We need to value tribal attires as they are the best exposition of our identity. Modernization of culture is appreciated but no one may like your false identity<sup>54</sup>.

Accessibility of markets and improved communications has encouraged contacting with the outside world. The fundamental difference has come in shifting the gear of life from war to peace, the cessation of head hunting and the gradual disappearance of the feast of merit, a paradigm change of society is not without any ramification. It is no longer possible to wear some of the finest products of Naga textile art, Wood-carving too has suffered for the same reason. The architecture of houses has changed; for certain features could only be added by families who had earned the right to do so that through performing the feast of merit, it was during post independence period that the Nagas received greater influence. Smith believes that globalization began in the West and therefore it is their ideas, ideologies, values and

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<sup>53</sup>Panger Imchen.1993. Ancient Naga Ao Religion and Culture. P.143.

<sup>54</sup> The Sacredness of Tribal Attires by G.L. Khing Kohima Eastern Mirror dated 28/4/17.

lifestyles that are promoted and evangelized throughout the rest of the world. Therefore the dominant culture tends to supersede all others<sup>55</sup>.

### **Cultural Fusion**

The noun fusion comes from the Latin word fundare, meaning melt, so fusion is the act of melting things together<sup>56</sup>. Cultural fusions are the mix of two or more cultures. Due to modernization, westernization and globalization there is so much intermingling of people from different races and life styles that no country can claim to have a distinct culture of her own. Fashion designers are combining the ethnic motifs with the western outfits and coming up with innovative designs which results in fusion design. Like a painting, song or dance fashion also plays a main role in the fusion of different cultures and influence different walk of life. In the modern era, if we see the fashion scenario we see fusion fashion. Jay Misra, A fashion designer states that, ‘fusion fashion is nothing but mixing two different styles of clothing to give the attire a chic and different look’<sup>57</sup>.

The main result generated by such fashion representation is a new hybrid global identity, based on the issue of trans-nationality. The hybrid fashion or the cross culture fashions are adopted everywhere because culture has been homogenized ‘if our garments reveal our gender, sub-cultural affiliation, class and age, allowing other people to identify where we come from and who we are, mixing our clothes with accessories from different countries can help us defying space, geography and history, becoming part of a collective, multicultural identity’<sup>58</sup>. The figures in the following pages show some of the images of cultural fusion created by fashion designers. (See fig: 4.4)

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<sup>55</sup> Smith 2000 in Globalisation and its Effects on Cultural Diversity.  
File://H://Globalisation%20and%20its%20Effects%20%20@0cultural%20Diversity%20-%20ETEC%20510.html retrieved on 5/12/2016

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/fusion> .retrieved on 12/3/17

<sup>57</sup> [www.bkhusk.com/dev/ontext/fusion-fashion](http://www.bkhusk.com/dev/ontext/fusion-fashion). retrieved on 12/3/17

<sup>58</sup> Jean Paul Gaultier-Irenebrination <http://irenebrition.type.com/irenebrination-notes-on-a/20/0/04/transnational-i>

*Figure:4.4.Modern gown designed stitched out of Tangkul shawl of feast of merit*



*Source:Naga textile.M.Wettstein 2014.*

As mentioned in the preceding discussion, with the advent of Christianity and spread of English education, the Naga tribal started to modernize their way of life and thus losing many of its tribal customs and traditions. It is evident to say that fusion and confusion of traditional Naga way of life and western culture became noticeable with the advent of Christianity. One of the views held by the missionaries during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was an assumption that western culture and tradition was the best for the whole world<sup>59</sup>. The Naga culture started to assimilate with the Western way of life, now people no longer wear their traditional attires as everyday wear. Since 1890, fashion expresses tremendous influences from the Eastern culture in the western dress resulting from the artists and designers renowned interest in Art Noveau<sup>60</sup>. Eastern and western cultures engaged in an important part in the fashion trends of today. These two are fused in the fashion industry in many ways, the British borrowing from the Russian, Indian from the French etc<sup>61</sup>. Fusion is the future of fashion, wherein you can pick elements of different garment and

<sup>59</sup> American Baptist Missionary Union, Minutes of the seventh Session of the Assam Mission, December 27,1902 to January 4,1903. P.71 in Morung Speaks by Mar Pongener.

<sup>60</sup>Priyanka Arora [www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/380/fashion-fusion-from-east](http://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/380/fashion-fusion-from-east) retrieved on 20/3/16.

<sup>61</sup>Priyanka Arora *ibid.*.

interpret them, to give them a brand new look<sup>62</sup>. The fusion style of dressing symbolizes more freedom and convenient especially for young girls and modern women. Combining a Naga necklace and earrings with a tee shirt and jeans, or wearing a Naga shawl with a dress etc are perceived to be more modern and progressive. Therefore, keeping in mind the people's perception and understanding in latest fashion trends, a local entrepreneur from Dimapur, Nagaland, Ms. Sonnie, along with her designer friend Bambi<sup>63</sup> has come up with an innovative design in the form of poncho (piece of cloth loosely wrap the body) with Naga shawls which is lighter and more convenient to wear with a mekhala, pants or skirts. 'Clothing is said to be part of person's identity'. So by looking at ones dressing one can assume that, she is modern, westernized as well as traditional at the same time. The emergence of women's "power suits" in the 1980s signified another form of global conformity. Stylised trouser-suits, with silk scarves and colourful blouses are now worldwide symbols of modernity, independence, and competence<sup>64</sup>. True cross-culture fashion fusion is a blend not just between different areas of the globe, but of the ideologies and motivations associated by each region's native people<sup>65</sup>. Fusion also means blending together two distinct styles to merge together, wearing something trendy with a cultural twist that gives a hybrid look. We live in a world with rich culture and dynamic variation, racial diversity is rapidly becoming celebrated especially in the world of fashion. Culture cannot remain static; it has to move along with the trend. Fashion is now used as a catalyst for culture appreciation with a number of designers, photographers and models all embracing the unique traits of multiculturalism. Multicultural fashion enables us to embrace different cultures in a unique way.

Fusion combines cultural attires and also made use of tribal textiles and embroideries that can be adapted to western silhouettes, shapes and figures. We live

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<sup>62</sup>Niket Mishra in Ashima Batish Fusion means fashion. Tribune life+style Thursday feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012. Retrieved on 7.9.16.

<sup>63</sup>Sonia and Bambi are local entrepreneurs who also involve in designing of dress and internal home decor from the traditional shawls pattern etc.

<sup>64</sup><https://www.britannica.com/science/cultural-globalisation> retrieved on 22/7/17.

<sup>65</sup>Marissa Brassfield Nov 20, 2008. [www.trendhunter.com/slides&show/high-fashion-culture-fusion](http://www.trendhunter.com/slides&show/high-fashion-culture-fusion) retrieved on 20/6/16

in a m lange culture where every culture has been homogenized. The apparel and accessory segment among the Nagas, like many other traditional product segments, is undergoing an astounding change of perception. Naga society has undergone considerable change over the last few decades. Man has changed himself from the primitive style of living, that is, from bare chest with loin clothes to wearing suits, shirt and pants, one have come a long way. Due to the exposure to national and international fashion shows, many designers today, has been inspired to intermingle Western, Indian and traditional Naga attires by creating a fusion fashion which is considered as an everyday wear(see fig 4.5 and fig 4.6). While it continues to enjoy the position of being an enhancer of beauty, the new-age consumer perceives fashion as a must, manifesting the weaver’s attitude, personality and lifestyle.

*Figure 4.5 is a skirt and jacket made out of Ao Naga women traditional Shawl and Mekhala.  
Figure 4.6 is a western style dress made out of Ao Naga women traditional shawl and mekhala.*



*Source. Aren Changkiri*

The fashion trends which mostly come from the west cannot be ignored since it has been accepted universally from all section of society and culture. It is a means of transforming tradition and integrating it into a contemporary life style. The local designers are creating fashionable western and Indian traditional clothes with the tribal prints. Tribal ornaments which were worn only by the man and women of higher status have lost its significance now. In most of the fashion shows models are seen wearing the traditional necklaces and earrings with western gowns, dress or pants. For fashion designers mostly apply the traditional heritage as a visual source instead of its ideology and symbolic traditional meaning. Therefore, many local weavers and designers have modernized the traditional outfit by depicting it in

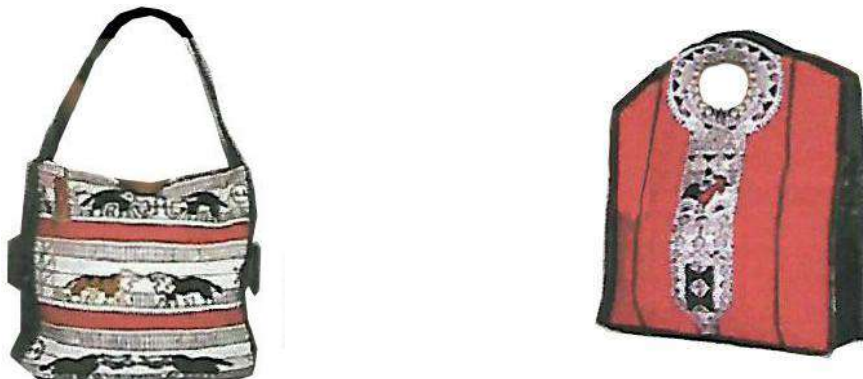
combination with western accessories like woven hand bags and jewellerys( see fig 4.7) that matches with the mekhalas which of course has no significant meaning to the wearer.

*Figure: 4.7 Konyak mekhala suits with matching bags.*



*Source-field work*

*Figure: 4.8 is a shopping bag made out of Ao warrior shawls. This was considered auspicious and had traditional value and meaning.*



*Figure : 4.9 is also a bag stitch out of Chakhesang Warrior shawl known as Khonoma shawl.*



*Source-Karolia & Prakash*

A special invention made from a mix of traditional textile elements and western-style clothing is the manifold variations of men's waist coat<sup>66</sup>. The design patterns are taken from the man traditional shawls and it varies from tribe to tribe. It is a fusion casual wear since youngsters prefer to wear with jeans and pants along with shirts/tee shirts and sneakers or shoes. Today, most men prefer to wear the waist coat instead of the shawls, for they find it more convenient to wear. However, what remain interesting is that the older generations or elders, in any kind of community meetings, are seen mostly in their traditional shawls this only shows that traditional attires have not been totally wiped out. Waist coat, a modern design whose patterns and motifs are of traditional shawls, therefore represent as a link between old and new generation. It may be noted this waist coat are popular among the younger generation. Mrs. Sendongla former President of *Watsü Mungdang* (apex Ao women's Association) with regard to fusion of dresses was very much against the idea that is, stitching of waist coat/Jacket from traditional shawls since it bears no symbolic meaning whatsoever, since traditional shawls, especially Ao Naga tribal shawl has a significant meaning and a history attached to it since the time of *Chungliyimi*<sup>67</sup>. She further remarked that such traditional shawls need to be respected with outmost care. Cultural fusion and new innovation are the trend of modern time therefore what even appears interesting is the blend of tribal culture in neck ties. That is to say, these neckties are depicted with traditional motifs of different tribes which can be worn during both formal and informal functions along with the waist coat. So neckties can also be an identity marker for the tribals.

Naga fusion fashion or modern ethnic dress is characterized by using traditional Naga textiles and cutting them to body shape or transforming traditional textile patterns into mostly western style dresses. Many youngsters felt that traditional attires are restricted to the older groups and therefore considered as primitive, outdated and so they prefer to wear western type of clothes. But when these clothes are sold as fusion wear then it is accepted among the younger consumers because they think that, it is more westernized and modern. During the

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<sup>66</sup> Marrion Wettsein 2014. Naga Textiles P.277.

<sup>67</sup> The mythology place of an Ao.



late 1990's the *Watsii Mungdang* had imposed restrictions on the Ao Naga designers that their traditional dresses like mekhala should not be stitched into western style dresses. However, nothing much was done to this effect. Moreover, the influences of modernization and globalization have even led to the change of their perspectives. Therefore, it may be noted, in every beauty pageant organized by different organizations and societies, ethnic attires and fashion fusion constitute a major ingredient of the show. However, such shows and pageant do not go without any criticism especially from the older generation who knows the semiotic meaning of the Naga traditional attires. In this regards Mrs Sendongla has this opinion, "Traditional clothes should not be cut into pieces. Our forefathers have taken so much pain to earn a particular type of shawl either through giving feast of merit to the entire village or by bringing the enemies head. So we should honor and respect it." Indeed, all the motifs and patterns inscribed have a symbolic meaning and this can convey a message only when it is woven systematically and worn as a mekhala or shawl. But when these shawls are cut into pieces we disrespect them and it does not hold any meaning. Therefore, according to her we can stitch fusion clothes out of the modern shawls only, because such shawls does not bear any meaning. The traditional one should always be kept intact. With open markets and changes in the social structures of the people and clans, modern mekhala comes in different colours, designs and different motifs of everyday objects are added in the textiles. Fusion fashion does not mean only imitating the western wear but it also means keeping in touch with the tradition and with the global fashion trends every where we can see and feel its effect even in Nagaland too. Thus, even if the youngsters wear the western clothes most of the time, yet cultural imperialism has not swiped out the indigenous culture totally. This is borne by the fact that traditional use of patterns and motifs are still visible in modern designed cloths though not in original format. It can therefore be argued reasonably that Naga traditions are manifested in a modernized manner. See Pic: 4.10

*figure: 4. 10 The mekhala and poncho is a new fusion of Konyak traditional mekhala with new colours and beads..*



*Source- Naga textiles*

Asangla Chang<sup>68</sup> remarked that, “designer of fusion fashion means transforming tradition into a contemporary life style. Fusion fashion has become a marker of modernization. Generations are changing and Naga society is becoming more open minded, therefore change is a part of tradition”.

### **Marketability of Fusion Attires**

Spinning and weaving were the only significant industry in the Naga Hills till independence. Traditional arts and crafts have been declining because of the flooding of the region by factory made clothes and articles. At present Small scale and cottage industries are coming up in good numbers throughout the state. Attempts were initiated by Nagaland Government to set up Weaving-cum-production centers at different districts in Nagaland. Naga shawls are selling internationally and the unique fusion wear of Naga fashion style that blends tradition and modern wear are the latest interest of many local designers where the models and celebrities are sashaying down the ramp. Individuals today are clear what they want and they can customize their own design. The notion often remain with younger generation that traditional attires are meant only for older folks and reserved only for special occasions have given a new leap when the indigenous designers mix the tradition with modern outlook and

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<sup>68</sup>Asangla Chang aged around 35 years is an indigenous designer and event organizer for fashion and beauty pageants. Tuensang, Nagaland. Interviewed on 12/10/16 at 2pm.

push its product as an everyday wear brand it then becomes marketable. Indeed this has become highly demanding in the market especially among the younger people. What is more interesting in this context is that such products go online sale besides being available in the market. Today, online shopping has become a way of life for many, Nagas are not excluded from such practices, shopping sites such as Amazon, Jabong, flipkart etc are commonly used and the customers are clear what they considered essential and comfortable. For generations are changing and the society is becoming more open minded. The concept of modern fashion designing is such that fusion clothes should be wearable, durable, comfortable and affordable too. An indigenous designer Atsung Jamir<sup>69</sup> in this regard opined that designing needs updating by creating or conceptualizing new designs keeping in view the mindset of the people, their liking and most importantly the competitive spirit of market. He further went on to state that his product item such as mekhalas are regularly sought by many Naga ladies especially those from Dimapur, because the materials and products are light, washable and attractive and can be worn on any occasion. The products are priced at a range from Rs. 2500 to Rs. 3500. Some of the latest designs available during the time of this interview were Traditional Naga motifs in the fly shuttle weaves with the use of dobby and jacquard design. His required raw materials are supplied from Ahmedabad in Gujarat. One of the most beautiful and eye catching fusion product from the indigenous attires is made out from the Konyak Naga mekhala with matching shawls, bags and purse these are woven at Abangayo<sup>70</sup> loom in Mon district of Nagaland. These suits are priced at Rs. 5000 and above. What is interesting in their skill is that, instead of weaving the intricate design into the Mekhala, the modern Konyak weavers stitch the traditional colourful intricate design with beads into the plain woven clothes. It is time consuming and expensive but the finished products are very attractive. They also stitched beads to an ordinary purse with traditional design thus making the product amazingly beautiful that any lady would want to hold it. These products are priced at Rs. 1500 and above. The talents of Naga designers do not stop here. Greeting cards for all occasion with tribal shawl

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<sup>69</sup>Atsung Jamir aged around 53 years is an indigenous Naga designer based in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Interviewed on 12/5/17 at 7pm.

<sup>70</sup>Abangayo a local entrepreneur from Mon town interviewed on 21/4/15 at 1pm.

themes are designed by Akhono Kulnu ,marketed in the name of *Soyachunks*<sup>71</sup>( see fig 4.11) Coffee mugs are also designed with Naga traditional shawls which are easily marketable as a gift or souvenirs along with tee shirts with Naga tribal designs all these fetch good money.

*Figure 4.11: Coffee mugs are designed with traditional shawls and are sold as souvenir items. Figure 4.12 Tee shirts sold with Naga tribal design and print especially during horn bill festival.*



*Source- Soyachunk online marketing.*

Mention must be made here of one Alem Ao<sup>72</sup>, who designed wooden belt and wooden necktie with having an indigenous motifs are at high demands in places like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata even abroad in China and Morocco are classic example how Naga attires and handy craft are marketed. His specialty in other items are; gift items like hand bags, magazine stands, photo frames etc made from materials like, bamboo, wood and cane. The lists of such talented personalities are endless. It is

<sup>71</sup>Soyachunks [www.nagaland.ilandlo.com](http://www.nagaland.ilandlo.com) retrieved on 10/6/17

<sup>72</sup>Alem Ao aged around 40 years is a recipient of both President's award for his excellent handicraft in 2001 and Governor's awardee 2004.

worth mentioning here of one Chubalem Kichu<sup>73</sup> who sales her hand crafted earrings online as Berem accessories. The speciality of her products is that, the earrings resemble the traditional ones with a modern touch. People across society orders it online because what is interesting is the fact that prices are very reasonable when compare with others, the products are sophisticated with varieties of colour choice. These can be mixed match with different dress, pants or mekhala. The products have the fusion of both traditional and modern outlook. Precious me love is an all girls' team from Nagaland based at Dimapur, that sells Naga fashion designs, vintage clothing, and fashion accessories from different designers to handmade dolls through on line. The doll made in Nagaland is marketed as *Nungshiba*( see fig 4.13). (Meaning love in Manipuri) in honour of their first crafts designer Babita Meitei from Manipur. Inspired by the beautiful tribal women of Nagaland, each doll is beautifully designed wearing the traditional mekhalas with intricate patterns of beads and hand stitch designs<sup>74</sup>.

*Figure 4.13: Nungshiba dolls promoting Naga traditional mekhala which are sold as a gift item.*



Nungshiba dolls



*Source: Precious me love online marketing.*

Given these amounts of talents among the tribal Nagas, as mentioned above few, if empowered and capacitated then fusion of Naga traditional attires with modern designs can be a progressive vocation. Traditional art and artifacts' can be a

<sup>73</sup> Chubalem Kichu aged around is a resident of Mokokchung town and is known for her designs @ Berem Your Accessories sales online retrieved 18/6/17

<sup>74</sup> www.Preciousmelove.com retrieved 24/7/17.

rich source of income for successful and innovative entrepreneur in this world of globalization.

The Nagaland Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation limited (NHHDC) has been investing in production activities, procurement of finished goods as well as implementing a variety of activities aimed at developing the handloom and handicraft sector of the State. The dynamics of domestic and international market signals that the artisans have to be updated from time to time by sending them to attend workshop and orientation in concern subjects and fields in order to develop their skills. Naga Textiles specially shawls, bags, cushion covers and table runners are in huge demand both nationally and internationally (see fig 4.14) However due to low scale production it is difficult to meet the demand. So in regards to this Kos Zhasa fashion and textile designer point out that, commercialization is the need of the hour. We have not been able to catch the market due to high price and little production so the products should be woven with the use of fly shuttle which can easily replicate the original Naga design and also produce high quality home furnishing like cushion covers, runners, curtains, bed spreads etc<sup>75</sup>.

*Figure: 4.14 Cushion covers, bags and table runners made out natural cotton, dyed with natural dye with modern traditional design that are source out outside the states.*



*Source- Exotic Echo.*

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<sup>75</sup> Kos Zhasa fashion and textile Designer.Naga textiles and Beyond. [morungexpress.com/naga-textiles-and-beyond/](http://morungexpress.com/naga-textiles-and-beyond/) retrieved on 3/3/15.

# **Chapter-V**

## **Summary and Conclusion**

### **Socio-culture of Naga a retrospect**

The People of Nagaland have a rich and varied cultural heritage. The inborn skills of the Nagas in basketry, pottery, cultivation, spinning, weaving, dyeing, wood carving and metal work etc have made them self-sufficient for centuries. The 16<sup>th</sup> major tribes and a host of sub-tribes of Nagaland have their own unique and distinct customs and traditions which are reflected in their traditional attires. Handlooms form an integral part of the cultural life of the people and every household possesses handloom for spinning and weaving. A distinctive feature of traditional Naga dress is its use of festive colours, intricate patterns, motifs and patterns that signifies certain symbolic meanings. The interesting part of the Naga traditional attires is that every tribe, sub-tribes and clans have a distinctive patterns, motifs and designs which carry a different sociological meanings and interpretations. Such symbolic meanings are reflection of their past as head hunters and also as the giver of feast of merit in their community.

In spite of the fact that, the Naga traditional attires are full of meanings with symbolic interpretations, it is observed that the colourful cultures are slowly fading away from the society. Our preceding chapters have discussed that traditionally Nagas had their own script which was written in an animal's skin. It can only be rhetoric to say that those scripts that Naga once had was eaten by a dog hence lost their script. Our simple assertion made in the beginning that because Nagas have no scripts of its own therefore their socio-cultural expression through the use of symbols like animals, birds, planetary objects like Sun, Moon, Stars etc, the use of human head, the spear and dao etc all these have a significant semiotic meaning in the context of Naga society is reaffirmed once again from our discussion. While clarifying our earlier argument that Nagas have rich oral traditions is well justified because of the simple fact that they do not have a script of its own therefore all history, culture and traditions were based on oral traditions and handed down from one generation to another through folklores, songs, narratives etc.



Much is said and discussed about the social and cultural life of the Naga people both traditional and modern in various contexts in the earlier chapters. What is only needed here is to recapitulate so as to have a meaningful summarization of the entire study. It is sufficient to say that Nagas had a very simple life traditionally, however, a closer examination have revealed the fact that these tribal's have their own ways of life, their social structure, the mode of social function and cultural significance to speak sociologically. Traditionally, Nagas lived in the villages and even today village is the nucleus of all social organization, if not, mostly. Politically, every village is a well organized village and has its own system of governance which has, since time immemorial, been into practiced. Economically, the village was self sufficient while for many it was more than self sufficient thereby enabling them to organized the most acclaimed riches through feast of merit. It must be stated here that, among the Nagas two categories of clansmen had the right to adorn themselves in a particular way for personal material culture. A head hunter who brings enemy's head as trophy was entitled with certain ornaments that society confers upon him. for instance in the Ao culture and practice a head taker is entitled to attest six pieces of hornbill feather on his headgear whereas for a giver of feast of merit it was that rich man's shawls rather than ornaments. So this was an identity marker for them set aside from rest of the common man. These points proves that though Nagas society is said to have organized around the principal of an egalitarian and democracy, (with some few exception) that all are equal, yet some are more than equal, there is this in the air about the class distinction for those riches who perform feast of merit and the braves who takes enemy's head as trophy.

The Naga traditional attires carries full of symbolic meanings as asserted earlier. This is to state that in traditional time one's attire and ornaments was used to mark its identity. Through a person's shawl an individual could be identify whether he/she is from a rich or poor family and also whether he was a head taker or a giver of feast or just a commoner. Nagaland is a land of festivals is rightly termed this is true because each of the tribe has its own cultural festival, what is interesting about the statement in this study is that, the attires, ornaments and mekhalas, shawls etc are

all displayed according to one's achievement and position. As part of their culture during such festivals men folk would sing the songs of merit and bravery and along such tunes they dance and engaged in marry making. Side by side women also engaged themselves in singing and dancing.

Each Naga tribes have varieties of colourful traditional attires belonging to different clans and sub clans. Every time a person performs a feast of merit, he and his wife are honoured with different pattern of clothes by the villagers. While saying so it must also be noted that even the daughter of whose parents have performed feast of merit is entitled to a special designed patterned on her mekhala so as to mark her status when compared to her friends whose parents have not. So also, a rich man's wife is heavily decorated with ornaments and horn bill feathers whereas a poor man's wife does not. Different way of dressing patterns differentiate between the poor and the rich. Therefore, a Chang Naga woman wearing the necklace below her navel is normally understood to have been from a rich family while for those who wears above her navel was an indication of being from poor family. It is sufficiently mentioned that in the past people's rank and status could be easily distinguished from their dresses they wear. A poor man's attires are simple; his shawls are without any designs where as a rich man's attire is complex and his shawls woven with different patterns and motifs inserting various objects and signs and also colourful. While dwelling on this discussion a further relevant question arises as to who maintained the propriety of who should wear what? And what was the course of penalty in case of violation? Our data from the field indicates that since people lived in small village community everyone knows who is who therefore the question of moral infringement towards propriety in dressing was either very minimum or even do not exist at all. Unlike modern society, parental role in educating their children was very minimum however the institution of *tsüki* (girl's dormitory) and *Arju* (boy's dormitory) was strong enough that everyone learns the social etiquettes, moral responsibility, and norms and values of the community. This is to say that society itself was vigilant in moral policing. Much has been discussed about attires including shawls for man and mekhala for woman. What only need to clarify here is that Naga society is based on

clan system therefore in the case of women, and especially with Ao women's mekhala (sarong), the daughters cannot share the same patterns and motifs with her mother's mekhala. This is to say that, like all other Naga tribe, theirs is a patrilineal and follow the principal of exogamy whereby children takes the father's title.

While discussing about Naga traditional attires it would be improper and unfair to isolate the case of cultural function of the feast of merit. Since much of the attires, patterns and motifs are connected to this feast of merit. Like all known human societies of the world, Nagas too had their simple economic subsistence based on shifting cultivation. Although the entire process of production, distribution and consumption was at a very meagre standard, yet some could possess wealth relatively more than the others. On the other hand, Naga have been living in an organized society since time immemorial. However, in an oral tradition there is no proper record as to when the practice of feast of merit started. In the case of Ao tribe data points that the practice of feast of merit started at Chungliyimti the first Ao village founded since its origin at *longtrok*. However, the year, date and time remained a mystery. Whatever the case may be with regard to its commencement, the practice of feast of merit was one of the biggest the most elaborated rituals like functions. The study has found out that any couple preparing for feast of merit first need to perform a series of ritual sacrifices followed by feast to the community and it normally takes few years. The first step in the process of Mithun sacrifice starts with *Mepu Amen* meaning a community feast but here it is only the colony/sector people and not the whole village, the host contributes a pig for the feast. Normally this feast was organised on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Moatsü festival among the Ao community that is on 1<sup>st</sup> day of May month. The second stage is called '*Nashi achiba*' meaning cow sacrifice. A cow was slaughtered with all ritual observance and the meat was distributed to all relatives, friends and neighbors including in-laws etc. this first stage is the trial for the main event. Here the couple asks for abundant blessing and long life so that they can successfully complete the entire process of feast of merit. The final stage occurs, that is the Mithun sacrifice where the feast is organized for the entire village community in a very elaborate and lavish manner. These series of events involves

strict rules of observance where the couple should also abstain from each other. Failure to observance of such genna invites the wrath of malevolent spill. The feast of merit ends with pulling of monolith stone by the community members as a mark to confer the social honour to the host among the Chakhesang. While the distinctiveness of the act of feast of merit is the earning of social honour and prestige by way of having a significant shawl with patterns and motifs specially designed. In that the ornamental shawl was exclusively reserved only for the giver of feast of merit, thus Aos have *tapensa sü* (*tapensa* means complete, *sü* means shawl, therefore it is a shawl meant for those who have completed the ritual process of performing feast of merit) or the *suchir sü* (shawl for those who gave Mithun sacrifice). The shawl is a combination of red and black in colour and decorated with cucumber seed like figure. *Rongsu sü* is another ornamental shawl worn by the Aos. This study have found out that *Rongsu sü* is exclusively reserved for those who have performed the feast of merit in the family line consecutively for three generation i.e, by the grandfather, by his father, and by himself. Among the Chakhesang tribe Terurakedu is a white shawl stitched with a big thread worn by only a person who has offered all the series of feast of merit. While it is also essential to note that an aristocratic shawls generally worn by the Konyak Angh is called *Meyni*. It is a combination of black and red bands. The status of the shawl is enhanced by stitching four lines of cowrie along the shawls. Fringes of red woollen are tied at regular intervals in all the cowrie lines. Naga shawls are also reserved for head hunters as mentioned earlier and these are earned through its bravery. Normally, head as trophy was obtained while on a prey or on a village raid. To see the act of head hunting from the human perspective was something unimaginable. However, it was also found out that especially village raids were never conducted without any reason. It is sufficient to mention that Nagas adorned themselves with ornamental shawls especially for feast giver and head hunters. What only need to clarify here is about the different patterns of shawls they wear. For instance, The Ao *tsungko tepsü* is also known as a warrior shawl. The shawl is depicted with the pictures of planetary objects like sun, moon and star the symbols of animals, birds and many more objects which carries significant meaning that are used normally as metaphorical in the social usage of language. *Shangbu nei*

is a warrior shawl worn by the Chang tribe who had taken its enemy's head as trophy. It must also be mentioned here that, a weaver while weaving this clothes is strictly prohibited to eat or drink from other's house till she finishes the shawls. *Moh nei* or cowrie shawl could be worn only by a man who has taken six or more heads. A strict genna was observed for three days before the commencement of weaving the said shawl. In that, a fat fully grown cock is killed during that time and the weaver should eat only that meat till she finished weaving that shawl. After completion of the shawl, circles of cowrie shells are stitched and within that, human figures and fallen enemies are stitched. The Ao tribe has this shawl too; *Azü jangnup sü* is a shawl which is mostly of red and black stripes with a yellow in the black stripes. The poor may have only one design woven into each of the two breaths. The wife and daughters of a rich man may have three or four designs woven into each of the two breadths. This can be worn only by the grand daughters of the feast givers.

The cowrie signifies a sign of marital achievement, while the fringes signify the riches and popularity of the wearer among the Konyak. A shawl called *Nyaunyi* is worn by the rich Konyaks. This is a combination of red bands and black lines. Whereas, the most common warrior shawl of the Chakhesang tribe is called the *Khonoma* shawl. The shawl has spear motif which signifies bravery in the war. The *Mozaluo* shawl is also a Chakhesang warrior shawl. It has spear as well as a motif similar to a flesh woven to the shawl.

A significant aspect of Naga culture is also the use of hornbill feather. The hornbill is a particular important bird for all the Naga groups. Its long tail-feathers are a part of ceremonial or ritual dress. The hornbill feathers indicate high status achieved through the feast of merit or as a head hunter. For example an Angami warrior decorates his headdress with the hornbill feathers according to heads taken. Konyak warriors put two feathers in his headdress to show his warrior status. While an Ao man and woman of feast giver adds one feather every time the couple perform the feast of merit. If the number of feast increased to ten times then they are entitled for ten feathers. Most Naga ornaments have a particular meaning and they are powerful. The right to wear them is strictly controlled. Each ornament was a symbol

of the rank and status of the wearer. Thus ornamentation was not only to satisfy an instinctive desire to decorate the body; but it was invested with symbolic significance. Children like adults also show their status through ornaments.

One of the social distinctions between the rich man (feast giver) and the brave man (head hunter) among the Nagas in general and the Ao in particular in terms of attires they wear is that; according to Mr Imtiluien<sup>1</sup>, both feast giver and head taker adorn themselves by wearing shawls that has inscribed with figures of mithun, horn bill, lion, tiger, star, moon, sun etc. they both wear hornbill feathers in their head gear. However, what significantly distinguished the head taker from the rest is the head basket tied at his back. One of the finding in this study is that in terms of status between the feast giver and the head take it was always the head taker who has the highest social standing. The reason being, the head takers rendered his service in protecting the village community while the feast giver works for his own riches. Thus, this marks the social distinction or stratification among the communities in question and Naga tribes in general.

The above discussion therefore fulfill our objectives of examining the various types of traditional attires and also confirmed that such attires marked the social stratification among the communities under study. Thus, these few points of discussion sub-sum our findings on the feast of merit.

Besides the sociological importance of feast of merit and headhunting and its corresponding to various rewards of different patterns of shawls, an important aspect of Naga culture is the practice of tattooing. Indeed, Nagas are not an isolated case of practicing tattooing rather it is even seen in many advance society too. Since time immemorial, tattoos have played a major role in the heritage and history of almost every culture around the world. 'Tattoo is the insertion of ink or some other pigment through the outer covering of the body, the epidermis, into the dermis, the second layer of skin. Tattooist uses a sharp implement to puncture the skin and thus make an

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<sup>1</sup>Mr Imtiluien is a craftsman from Ungma village, he is a professional craftsman in traditional Naga attires. Age about 77 years. Personal interview on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

indelible mark, design, or picture on the body. But why do people practice tattooing? is still unresolved. While pondering upon this issue it must be noted Tattooing and body piercing have a long history and are well known from various cultures in Asia, Africa, America, and Oceania. Evidence suggests that tattooing was in prevalence in Europe, dating back over 5000 years. Although the appearance of tattoos and body piercings varied geographically, they always possessed a very specific meaning for the particular culture. Piercings were often used in initiation rites, assigning their bearer to a certain social or age group, whereas tattoos were utilized to signal religious affiliations, strength or social status. In Europe, the practice of tattooing was predominant among sailors and other working class members from the beginning of the 20th century onwards. Later on, tattoos assigned affiliations to certain groups, such as bikers or inmates. In the 1980s the punk and the gay movement picked up invasive body modification, mainly as a protest against the conservative middle class norms of society. As stated above, in different context and in different geographical areas and according to the culture of the people tattoo has its significance. Among the eastern Nagas, man has the privilege to tattoo however the privilege was limited to head takers. The bamboo rice beer mug decorated with poker design called *dobu thung* was only for Chang Naga head takers. The head takers were also honoured with various designs in their *daos* and spears. Among the Ao tribe, man did not tattooed their body in any form rather girls were tattoo indeed it was used as an identity marker between the chungli and mongsen speaking group. It may be noted, Aos have a phratry system called as Chungli and Mongsen speaking group. By way of conclusion it may be stated here that an Ao girl was not ready for marriage if she is not tattooed. Tattooing the body was an added beauty and also a sign of becoming fully fledged womanhood. One of the interesting findings is that tattooed women were restricted to certain food items such as scale-less fish, intestine of all animals, chicken and even crab etc. which Aos culturally considered as food unhealthy for those tattooed body. What is culturally important about tattooing is that, the two phratry although both belonged to Ao community, the innate differentiation exist which is marked by the patterns and styles of tattoo. A head takers wife gets the privilege to tattoo her face along with her husband among the

Konyak, Chang and Phom tribes respectively not just for personal adornment but for status. All these shows how Naga traditional culture inscribed in different patterns, motifs and designs carry a semiotic meaning.

One of the important aspects of Naga culture is its engagement in colour making or better known as dyeing. The methods of processing, spinning and weaving cotton are simple, but the motifs, designs and patterns that are woven are quite complex and intricate. Our preceding discussions have showed that weaving, spinning and dyeing remained an exclusive domain of the Naga women. The Nagas have their own way of making colours to dye yarn for weaving clothes and also to dye the goat's hair for final production of their attires. Some prominent colours used among the Nagas are red, black, green, white and indigo. Our data from the field have pointed out that many communities including the tribes in question during the time of dyeing practice the culture of abstinence. They are prohibited to eat beef, dog's meat, mutton, dried fish and other pungent food. Superstition and belief also dictates the selection of colours. Only old women dyed the colour red since it was believed that red is associated with death. In saying so, if any young woman engaged in dyeing red colour was believed to be surely killed in a raid. Pregnant women were also tabooed to use the dye lest the foetus would be affected by the colours. So we may say that mostly the process of dyeing was carried out by older women or widows, as they believed that one has to be sanctified during the process of dyeing. The process of dyeing in indigo varies from tribe to tribe for some they boil the indigo leaves along with the shawl till they get the right colour. While for some they soak clothes in dried indigo with wood ash mixture. This is repeated till they get the desired colour. The Rengma Naga use the blossom of a tree locally known as *Nikhang* or *Atsonsu* for yellow dye. The yarns are soaked in cold water between layers of flowers. In the past weaving was a criterion for a girl to get married. As pointed out earlier in our discussion, during the time of marriage young brides were presented with weaving equipments by their parents irrespective of social status. More over a young Chang boy would expect a shawl from his bride a shawl woven solely by her. All this proves that weaving was a criterion for getting married for a woman. The



above points of discussion fulfill our objective of understanding the traditional methods of weaving and dyeing of colours.

What is essential to know here is that, sociologically speaking, no human society is static therefore Naga society is also changing. With the coming of the colonial rule, chemical dyes are easily available in the market and the colour spectrum of locally woven textiles has changed. With the increased in population and cheap availability of mill made clothes people prefer to buy them since it is cheap and wearable every day.

Throughout the world indigenous cultures are under pressure from the forces of modernization and globalization. So with the onset of these forces in Naga society, well knitted social institution and customs have been replaced by the culture and values of the west. It is heartening to say that many traditional ways and methods of dyeing and weaving are disappearing. The Naga society is going through a historical phase of change and transformation where most of the old traditional way of life is replaced by the new culture. Along with the Christian religion, western culture, thought process and customs were introduced. The Christian missionaries thought that, the Nagas way of dressing were too primitive, uncivilized and revealing so they discouraged them to wear the traditional attires in the church and any formal gatherings and that was the gradual end of the traditional way of life. Along with that the art of dancing, colourful agriculture ceremonies were all given up. So traditional dress were worn less frequently and many of the seasonal activities among the Nagas especially during the time of death, birth or while going for raid or preparation for feast of merit were all abandoned. We may therefore sub-sum this point of discussion by saying that Westernization and Christianization has in a way ruined the Naga traditional culture.

The third wave of cultural dilution is due to globalization. Our cultural norms, socialization process and values have all been affected in the face of globalization. Today societies uphold the principle of secularism and multiculturalism. While encompasses a multitude of varying ways of life and

lifestyle most people are shaped by more than a single culture which is brought by globalization. Globalization in its broadest sense is the free flow of ideas, knowledge, creating a boundary-less world. In that the very essence has brought countless impact on the Naga traditional attires. Globalization has also ushered new opportunities for innovation in weavings. Traditional societies are changing and borrowing the cultural traits from modern societies. The resultant impact of globalization on Naga culture is seen manifestly in many areas such as designing of new motifs and patterns, dresses and outfit of different seasons etc. what is more important is that as discussed earlier the meaningful attires such as shawls and mekhalas are mix-match only to produce a miss-match hence meaningful attires turns to a mere market commodity. Women's mekhala which is a clan based identity marker has lessened its significance once it reaches the market because of the fact that in modern market system monetary value supersedes cultural value. Thus sociologically speaking, the dysfunctional aspect of globalization is that it has lessened the adaptation of the younger Naga generation to its own cultural values. The spread of the idea of Westernization, Modernization and Globalization has led to an emergence of new concept called Fashion Fusion. The modern fashion designing industry creating a new concept of fusion fashion is indeed committing a mockery to the traditional values of Naga society hence further research in this area would be necessary in order to address the sociological and semiotics concerns.

We have debated considerably on the impact of Westernization, Modernization and Globalization with regard to Naga traditional attires. This study has shown that the Nagas society and culture have undergone a considerable change especially in terms of traditional attires over the last decades and it has become a victim of passive acculturation. Young generations have expressed its relation more to modernism as an escape, rather than to attend ancestral duties and customs. The value of traditional costumes and there meaning seems no longer relevant for the Nagas striving to make their lifestyle comparable with modern societies. For the Nagas like many of the people, integration of the tribal lifestyle into western way of life is an everyday reality.

The practice of using natural dye has decreased tremendously among the Nagas due to use of synthetic dyes. In the past Naga women used hand-spun cotton, and grew it in their back yards but now except few places in Nagaland cotton is no longer cultivated because of easily available of synthetic yarn with attractive shades.

Today the concern over the disappearance of our traditional elements is one of the most complicated and challenging issues facing the Naga society. Today there is a growing concern among the Nagas to explore and to employ the traditional cultural elements in order to use them meaningfully in our society. What matter most is our traditional loom is attached to our culture, sentiment and emotion along with livelihood of the weavers. If we want to save our heritage and craft by keeping on the legacy of our ancestors then, we must protect the talent of our weavers as many weavers are moving from the weaving profession. Young weavers especially in the rural areas should be identified and encourage them to continue these tradition and also experience the joy, sense of identity and accomplishment that spinning and weaving can bring to their lives. Weaving should not be just considered as a skilled craft, but also a vocation. Money earning through weaving can improve the quality of life and can contribute actively in her family economy. Earning through such source can be a contributor towards her children's education, access better health care and make them independent financially.

Though machine products have dominated the world economy, yet there is always demand for pure handlooms product even at the national and international level. Instead of destroying our deep rooted heritage of weaving we should rather build it as an integral part of our economy. Our experience have proof beyond doubts that tourist visiting Nagaland have always like to have some handloom products weaved indigenously and not machine produced. This shows about its amble scope, however marketing is a very important component, one has to explore the market to introduce the traditional products. To enhance marketability texture, colour should be attractive. The quality of the handloom clothes depends on the skill of the person who makes them and on the quality of the yarn used. We should promote textile to meet strong commercial international demand with particularly emphasizing on

design and quality. In the long run this will also preserve and revive our traditional textile since it is our cultural heritage. In the present society it may not be practical to wear our traditional attire on a daily basis but we should preserve the traditional clothing as a part of our culture and nationality which defines us as a race. In order to produce culture, we need more than talking about folklores, and songs or the traditional way of weaving but we need to start documenting our present stories, fashions and ideology from now on for our future generations.

Studies found that, the show casting of beautiful Naga cultural shawls in the form of gowns, dress and skirts by models in the ramp is a high degree of violation against the deep rooted Naga heritage and therefore insulting its sacred value. Therefore it is suggested that each community or tribe should maintain a unique repertoire of motifs, designs and its symbolic meaning attached with it. Elders from each tribe should guide and teach the young aspiring weavers the ancient designs, techniques and styles which are on the verge of extinction. Reference catalogue for each community should be maintained by documenting every design as well as the modified designs of each tribe.

Textiles that were traditionally associated with the warriors status or were presented to only distinguished people is now associated with achievement in the sphere of education. For example the Chakhesang Naga warrior shawls are now worn by the graduates. In the similar vein with Chakhesang community, therefore it may also be suggested that traditional attires specifically those shawls of merit if allotted to certain category that have attained a very high academic degree be conferred the right. The fact of the matter is because today after the introduction of Christianity such practices of feast of merit and head hunting have fast disappeared and have remained only a story of the past.

In olden days wealth and heroism were important part of identity and thus were encoded in dress and ornaments they wear. Today the cultural festivals provide the platform to display traditional costumes in general. Today's concern over the disappearance of their cultural elements is one of the most complicated and

challenging issues facing Nagas. Unless the gap is bridged between the tradition and modern, the varied motifs, patterns will become just a heritage that will be relegated to museums. Motifs are a dominant component to interpret symbolic meaning of the wearers. So the uniqueness of each tribal motifs and pattern makes tribal attire a valuable heritage.

This very special heritage which has been passed on to us by our forefathers needs our love and respect. Only with respect, the need for preservation will arise. The present generation has a very important duty to preserve and promote it, without which our textiles will die out and in the process not only our identity but the coming generations identity will be lost forever. The textile products have to be diversified in tune with the changing times. New product range needs to be developed using new technology. Patenting is very important in order to preserve the traditional attires. Unless it is patented then the hard earn patterns and motifs of our ancestors will be easily copied and taken by other communities.

### **Tattoos as a cultural rhetoric**

A Tattoo, like ear piercing, was only acceptable in the Western Culture among subculture groups like sailors, prisoners, bikers, and mobsters. Again, like piercing, the homosexual subculture began the tattoo movement to the mainstream.

According to "The Progression of the Tattoo," tattoos are now considered a "unique decoration" in the world of body art because they stay with the person forever. Many people find this idea appealing, and seek to tattoo on themselves to convey a message that will never leave them. This idea of non verbal expression through body art began to be more popular in the mainstream culture of today's Generation whether in America or the West. The cultural rhetoric of tattooing in this sense can be seen as a divergence from the main culture. In this sense, tattooing, like body piercing, can be seen as liberation from the mainstream culture in America and in the West.

Today, when popular culture is at its peak, tattoos can also be considered a sign of conformity to the cultural rhetoric. Well, it must be kept in mind that at the beginning

of the recent tattooing revolution in the West and America, getting a tattoo was a clear sign of deviation as stated above. Today however, tattoos have made their way into the popular culture thus advertisements have begun to use tattoos in their marketing to appeal the consumer. Today, celebrities, Iconic personality in popular culture or even a common man in the street are seen not without a tattoo is a sign of their conformity to their culture. Nagas who have tattooed on their face and on their body before the arrival of Christianity was a non verbal cultural expression about their being a chief of the village, a warrior, or even a sign of attainment of womanhood. Sociologically speaking, people who tattooed on their body were not the victim of fashion but an active member of society who responded according to the social and cultural values.

Tattoos and body piercing works alongside the brands and styles of clothes one chooses to wear to create a rhetorical statement about the kind of person one is. In that sense, if clothing makes up the "sentences" in the grammar of fashion, than surely it can be argued that tattoos and body piercing are the "punctuation" in those sentences.

### **Fashion vis-à-vis Semiotic**

Semiotics assumes that visual images and their respective signs can be read similar to a text. Fashion and body adornment not only have a language of their own, but can be read as an explanation and text of one's personality and character. Cultural semiotics is an important part of visual rhetoric because it allows us to take simple signs and codes and turn them into an actual conversation. Often studying visual rhetoric includes studying compositions, art, advertisement, film, and many other objects created. Not only can the things created around us be analyzed in regards to their visual rhetoric, but the things in themselves, and the way they are presented can also present a coded and signified message. Each person has a unique personality, set of beliefs, opinions, and in order to convey that identity we use our body as a canvas to project that identity.

Elizabeth Wilson States: "In all societies the body is 'dressed' and everywhere dress and adornment play symbolic, communicative and aesthetic roles. Dress is always 'unspeakably meaningful.' The earliest forms of 'clothing' seem to have been adornments such as body painting, ornaments, scarification (scarring), tattooing, masks and often constricting neck and waist bands. Many of these deformed, reformed or otherwise modified the body"<sup>2</sup>.

The rhetoric of a person, and their appearance, can include many factors. One can represent themselves with their clothes in many ways, with jewellery, adorning themselves with symbols, hairstyles as well as many other rhetorical items. Although many individuals may debate as to whether these past cultural trends can be included as clothing/dress, for the sake of our argument all of these things call into the visual rhetoric of the body and the way a culture or individuals choose to represent themselves. This act of representing, and presenting ones rhetoric through clothes, or other body adornment, Rampley (2005) calls self-fashioning; which he believes can articulate subtle and important characteristics of individuals including personality, mood, and even emotions.

### **Encoding fashion**

Not only can particular styles of clothes define a person as an individual, but also as a part of a group. According to Pauline Thomas, "Fashion is a language of signs, symbols and iconography that non-verbally communicate meanings about individuals and groups." Depending on the context clothes and other defining objects can also mean very different things. The entire dress code and the object of examples Nagas have used therefore are within our own culture that effectively communicate a specific notion of identity through specific rhetorical cue, an example is the use of hornbill feather. The philosophical understanding of hornbill bird in the context of Naga culture is such that this bird is the leader or king of all birds therefore using its

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew Rampley. (2005) Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, concepts, contexts. Press. Pp 67-84.

feather symbolizes as leader or king in their community. Fred Davis has discussed the way that clothes and fashion can represent identity through the semiotic notion of code. In the light of the above statement, it is not an uncommon practice among the Nagas to have attires including shawls and mekhalas which marked the identity of the wearer while signs and symbols express the semiotics meaning of the dress.

However, the problem of understanding fashion in its apparent vagaries is the lack of exact knowledge of the unconscious symbolisms attaching to forms, colours, textures, postures, and other expressive elements of a given cultures. The difficulty is appreciably increased by the fact that some of the expressive elements tend to have quite different symbolic references in different areas. For instance, the use of human head, the use of tiger and lion, and the use of hornbill in the Ao Naga shawls may read altogether a different text for those who are new to this culture and may understand the wearer as cannibal, as animal poacher, if the person is an animal activist etc. Although one can give meaning to semiotics, but the danger is signs can change and this applies to trends as well. While saying this, it should be stated here, woman in Naga tribe do not wear mekhala in a skirt style or in a sari style rather it has its own way which are socially accepted ways of dressing in every tribal norms. Fashion design and symbolic adornments can have very definitive symbols, but depending on the time and place those symbols can be constantly shifting and changing. Therefore, the larger question is, well the meaning remain the same when a new fashion design is created by a mix-match of Naga traditional cloths? Can the cultural value of the society be shifted towards new trends? These few questions are left to the future researcher.

### **Clothing as a Form of Non-Verbal Communication**

It is sufficient to mention that clothing carry semiotic meaning. What only need to clarify here is that at this point one should understand that non-verbal communication is unavoidable. Regardless of whether or not the message is intentional, we continue to communicate with each other long after our mouths close. “It is impossible to wear clothes without transmitting social signals,” claims human



behaviorist Desmond Morris. Even choosing not to wear clothes also sends out a message. Therefore, the decision each individual makes about his or her appearance through clothing sends the viewer a message. This includes people who claim they pay no attention to their clothing with regard to its communicative value equally sends out message about his/her attitude. This is quite true while attempting to understand the Semiological meaning of clothing.

A guy with long hair and a full beard who insists that he will not shave for any reason may be quick to change his decision if such appearance conveys the message of a terrorist. When going into a job interview a candidate may opt for a suit and tie instead of sweatpants and flip-flops. As the weather started to get warm the shops fill with pastels and brightly coloured clothes. In order to avoid trends, a young woman chooses not to conform by donning jeans and a tee-shirt. These situations are examples of how we use clothing to communicate. On a cultural level, the man with the beard understands that maintaining certain hairstyles sends out a certain message through non-verbal communication. Not wanting to be misunderstood or perhaps to send out a different nonverbal message, the importance of nonverbal communication is something acknowledged for all. Not only are these examples of trends, or avoiding trends, they convey a message depending on the culturally accepted codes that they apply within the culture.

### **Cultural Applications of Fashion Semiotics**

One common definition of culture is described as the values, norms, institutions and artifacts that are passed on from one generation to another by learning alone. Often the interrogations of cultural meanings lead to categorizing and dividing into subsystems such as “sociological” and “technological”. These subsystems address people and their interactions with each other, and material objects and their uses, respectively. Therefore, when we speak of culture and our clothing for instance, no amount of dividing and categorizing can mitigate the deep and rich cultural milieu that surround the ‘all American blue jean’, ‘a perfect pair of blue jeans’. These metaphors are widely shared in the American culture and are so deeply internalized

even in their consciousness. The analysis of blue jean culture in America is an example to comparatively understand in the Naga cultural context. No doubt, Nagas have had serious impact on culture due to Christianity and western culture. Much of the dressing styles have changed including the haircut style. One cannot actually draw the line of distinction in dressing who is an American and who is a Naga in a normal daily life be it in church, school, market place, office etc. The important point of divergence from the above discussion is here; every Naga would be seen in his/her clothing/dressing a tribal or indigenous print if it is a tribal events or a meeting called by tribal Hohos. These marks the difference of how deeply inculcated the cultural values in our fashion semiotics.

The fashion of individuals, of a group, or a nation, reads much like a conversation; highlighting certain codes and symbols to represent sentences that are able to explain identity. A person can use their clothes and their overall fashion to represent power, status, differentiation, character, mood, apathy, or rebellion all in many different manifestations. Although a person can change the conversation of their clothes on a daily basis, the origin of what is said comes from the semiotics of the culture that person comes from. Just as semiotics can change with time, fashion and its meaning changes, at times it seems daily.

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### **Personal interview**

1. Amongla Chang age around 40 years. Former president Chang women Association and also a weaver since the age of 20 years. Interviewed on 2/8/14.
2. Aongla chang a teacher and modern mekhala designer from Tuensang. Age about 40 years old, interviewed on 5/5/14.
3. Atsung Jamir aged around 53 years is an indigenous Naga designer based in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Interviewed on 12/5/17.
4. Abangayo a local entrepreneur with handloom production centre. Mon town interviewed on 21/4/15.

5. Asangla Chang aged around 35 years is an indigenous designer and event organizer for fashion and beauty pageants. Tuensang, Nagaland. Interviewed on 12/10/16.
6. Adano konyak a weaver from Mon. Age around 75 Years, interviewed on 20/4/15.
7. Adao konyak a weaver and local entrepreneur who source out necklaces and bags made of beads. Interviewed on 19/4/15.
8. Aching Angh of Chui village, age around 45 years. Interviewed on 22/4/15.
9. Akoi Chakhesang age around 45 years. VDB secretary Ketsapo village. Interviewed on 19/5/15.
10. Ashum Konyak from Mon is a teacher and member of a self help group. . Age about 47 years old interviewed on 20/4/15.
11. Aseno age 35 years from ketsapo village. Interviewed on 20/5/15.
12. Asole from ketsapo village is a weaver. Age around 45 years. Interviewed on 20/5/15.
13. Asongla Chang still a weaver at the age of 70 years from Tuensang village. Interviewed on 20/2/15.
14. Beso Chang age about 80 years is a Member of Research Board of advisor, American Biographical institute, interviewed on 2/8/13.
15. Chingmak Chang an old man from Tuensang Village, age around 80 years interviewed on 3/5/14.
16. Chingmak a Dobashi from Tuensang Village. Age around 60 years interviewed on 21/1/15.
17. Arenla age about 45 years a teacher and former Watsu president interviewed on 12/6/17.
18. Bendangla aged around 70 years a Social worker interviewed on 8/4/17.

19. Guru Sanyusang Pongen from Ungma Village, Age about 73 years, interviewed on 16/6/15.
20. Imposoted Chang age about 80 years a retired teacher, a writer and secretary of Chang literature board. Interviewed on 21/1/15.
21. Imtiluien a craftsman from Ungma village. Age about 76years. Interviewed on 12/7/17.
22. Laiyala from Mon age about 55 years and a weaver since the age of 15 years. Interviewed at her farm on 21/4/15.
23. Nungshila age about 85 years from Ungma village. Interviewed on 7/7/17.
24. Noksenla a weaver age around 72 years. Interviewed on 5/5/14.
25. Mrs Ongbou from Tuensang village age around 80 years and a weaver since the age of 12 years. Interviewed on 5/5/14.
26. Sangba Chang about 80 years from Tuensang Village. Interviewed on 3/8/16.
27. Sendongla age about 70 years from Ungma village. A local entrepreneur and a former president Watsu Mundang. Interviewed on 8/4/17.
28. Selichem from Tuensang a teacher. Age about 55 years interviewed on 5/5/15.
29. Sonnie Kath age about 35 years. Proprietor of Exotic Echo and a business entrepreneur for local indigenous products specially hand woven materials. Interviewed On 8/11/16.
30. Shilem age about 40 years from Tuensang. A social worker and student leader. Interviewed on 3/5/14.
31. Senlila age 67 years from Akoya village Mokokchung. A dyer till date. Interviewed on 12/6/17.

32. Songla Chang age about 70 years a weaver. Interviewed on 5/5/14.
33. Saochingmak age around 20 years, a college student. Interviewed on 6/5/16.
34. Moanaro Chang age around 42 years. A teacher and design modern Chang mekhala and necklaces. Interviewed on 2/7/14.
35. Nokpai Konyak. Age around 38 years a business entrepreneur from Mon. Interviewed on 21/4/15.
36. Nungshila age about 85 years from Ungma village interviewed on 21 june 2016.



## Word Glossary

1. *Abvou* (Chakhesang) A basket for measuring paddy.
2. *Anempong* (Ao) means a taboo or restriction impose on the family of a feast giver or the whole village.
3. *Angh* (Konyak) Chief/King of tribe.
4. *Aosü* or *Aomelepsü* (Ao) is same with rongsu sü but without goat's hair fringes.
5. *Ariju* (Ao) means morung.
6. *Chi pi Khwü* (Chakhesang) is a chief of chief shawls.
7. *Chika* (Chakhesang) is a house horn used by the feast giver.
8. *Chuchusubangsu* (Ao) is a man shawl worn by men of Mulir clan.
9. *Chungliyimti* (Ao) The first settled village.
10. *Dao* (Nagamese) machete.
11. *Dobu thung* (Chang) is a poke mark design in bamboo mugs especially for the head hunters.
12. *Dokchi* (Chang) necklace made of three conch shell is worn only by the daughters of a rich man.
13. *Elicura* (Chakhansang) is a feast of merit shawl.
14. *Elito* (Chakhesang) is the second feast in the series of feast of merit.
15. *Etalashe* (Chakhesang) wrap around bodice for woman.
16. *Etshuketsutso* (Chakhesang) a wooden plank curved with figures of human, mithun and buffalo heads.
17. *Fanyak* (Konyak) is use as tooth paste to blacken their teeth.
18. *Genna* (Nagamese) Something forbidden and restrictions.
19. *Heiloikhon* (Chang) is a man's headgear.
20. *Jabelli* (Ao) traditional currency.
21. *Kaoshiubunia* (Chang) is a shawl woven by the bride for the groom.
22. *Kecukie* (Chakhesang) house decorated with house horn both front and back.
23. *Kedo* (Chakhesang) Sector or colony.
24. *Kodai* (Chang) is a head scarf for woman.
25. *Kumpang* (Ao) is an armlet made of ivory worn by man.

26. *Küpok* (Ao) means head band for woman.
27. *Lakap Molung* (Ao) is a necklace made of seal bone and is normally worn in a criss-cross shape.
28. *Lam* (Chang) indigo plant.
29. *Langtem* (Ao) *Loin cloth*.
30. *Leakwaan* (Konyak) is an armlet worn by man.
31. *Lilangkala khum* (Chang) is a woman head gear.
32. *Longkang nei* (Chang) Shawl of Ongpang clan.
33. *Mekhala* (Nagamese) is a sarong or wrap around skirt.
34. *Mene* (Chakhesang) is a small wrap around cloth for both man and woman.
35. *Mepu Amen* (Ao) a feast given to their colony people.
36. *Merang kumpang* (Ao) is a metal armlet.
37. *Mithun* (Nagamese) *Bos frontalis*-The national animal of the Nagas.
38. *Moatsu* (Ao) Ao festival
39. *Mozaluo* (Chakhesang) a warrior shawl.
40. *Musemsuk, Lakep, wangküim, Mejungsangshi* (Ao) necklaces worn by woman.
41. *Naknylam* (Chang) is a festival.
42. *Namdan* (Chang) is a necklace given daughter by the parents on her marriage.
43. *Naomi* (Konyak) warrior
44. *Nashi achiba* (Ao) second feast in the series of the feast of merit.
45. *Nokinketer sü* (Ao) Warrior shawl.
46. *Osak* (Ao) indigo plant.
47. *Ovasa* (Sumatra) Feast giver.
48. *Ozü naro* (Ao) is a children's earring.
49. *Padocune* (Chakhesang) is a thanks giving feast.
50. *Perm zük* (Ao) is a necklace exclusively meant for head hunters.
51. *Phekherü* (Chakhesang) men's legging.
52. *Rongsu-sü* (Ao) a shawl dyed in colour.
53. *Sangshi* (Ao) is a necklace worn by the rich woman.
54. *Shangbu nei* (Chang) is a warrior shawl.
55. *Shatni* (Konyak) is a shawl given daughter on her wedding day.

56. *Shipo* (Ao) is a man's necklace made of boar's teeth.
57. *Soba-tiba* (Ao) the pre destiner of humankind.
58. *Süchir* (Ao) person who sacrifice Mithun.
59. *Sürem sü* (Ao) shawl dyed in indigo.
60. *Tapensa sü* (Ao) a shawl earned because of completing all required rituals and series.
61. *Teberem sü* (Ao) *Sarong or wrap around skirt*.
62. *Telepe* (Chakhesang) a feast organised by the Kedo youth.
63. *Terüirakedu* (Chakhesang) is a white shawl stitched with big thread worn feast giver.
64. *Themdao* (Chang) is a female necklace with a bell on the tip worn.
65. *Tshunokeda* (Chakhesang) is a black mene worn by man decorated with three lines of cowrie shells.
66. *Tsüki* (Ao) is a girl's dormitory.
67. *Tsüngko* (Ao) a tree from where sap is collected for making paint.
68. *Toklei* (Konyak) Skull.
69. *Waro tsübo* (Ao) name of a well in Akoya where they draw water for dyeing.
70. *Watsü Mungdang* (Ao) an Ao apex women body.
71. *Yangmen* (Konyak) is a brass necklace with effigies of human skulls worn by head hunters.
72. *Yangnangsü* (Ao) is a feast of merit shawl worn in certain village in Changkikong range.
73. *Yanjo* (Konyak) black cane ring worn on arms and legs to signify their bravery by king and warriors.
74. *Yantak* (Konyak) cane rings worn below knee by man.
75. *Yimyu-pen* (Ao) tail of Drongo bird.
76. *Yiptong wangkiim* (Ao) female necklace mean for rich family.
77. *Yong merem sü* (Ao) shawl with narrow dark blue lines mean for people who do mithun sacrifice.
78. *Zatho* (Chakhesang) is the highest feast of merit.

79. *Zathomeha* (Chakhesang) a basket made of bamboo split use for measuring paddy.
80. *Zathomi* (Chakhesang) person who offers feast of merit.
81. *Zhonso sa* (Mao) Feast of merit.
82. *Zhosa sa* (Mao) Shawl of feast of merit.
83. *Zungichang* (Ao) *Cucumber seeds*.

## **APPENDIX**

### **General Questions Asked During The Time of Interview (Data Collection)**

1. How often do you wear your traditional attires?
2. Do you wear your traditional attires of your own clan or others?
3. Is there any restriction of wearing traditional attires of other clan in your community?
4. Do you think that Naga attires reflect our cultural relation?
5. As a craftsman (women) have you ever got any chance to undergo training for enhancement of skills. (handicraft, carpentry, handloom weaving etc)
6. Is there any marketing shed or shop in your locality where you can sell your finish products?
7. Mostly who buys your products (local, tourist, whole seller)
8. Do you agree that traditional items these days have become only a gift item?
9. Do you agree that Naga ornaments are too ornamental and it cannot be wearable every day?
10. Do you agree that due to modernization the youngster are losing interest in learning the art of making traditional attires?
11. Who do you think would be the best agent to teach the younger generation the art of making the traditional attires (village elders, government, NGO, parents etc)
12. What are the problem and challenges you face while making the traditional attires?
13. What role do you play as a member of SHG?
14. Have you been selected by the government to exhibit your products in the Expo? If so when, what did you exhibit, and how you were selected?
15. Is there any banking facility in your village where you deposits your money? And have you ever taken any subsidy?

16. Does the traditional design with modern fashion technology still carry the same meaning?
17. What is your opinion about the Naga traditional attires being facing a decline among youngsters?
18. Nowadays Naga women wear different colour Mekhalas (not original) woven with the same technique and designs. do they still considered traditional?
19. Designs can be divided into three i.e. Traditional, The design and modifier. Can the watsü mungdang supedi be called traditional or modifier.
20. What happens to the old mungdang supedi. Do they still hold the same value as the old one?
21. Is it compulsory wear supedi (mekhala) during watsu mundang?
22. What about the necklace, earrings and head gear?
23. Impur women Mundang has made a resolution many years back that a bride should wear only Ao supedi and not western gown at the time of marriage. How relevant it is in today,s context? Give your opinion.
24. What about men's shawl? Do the women still design them?
25. What about the waist coat and neck tie?
26. Etsung su shawl is stitched into blouse and kurtas. Do the mundang have any restriction on it?
27. In the past textiles were considered as symbols of material wealth and signs of status in general. What is your opinion today?
28. What is your opinion on seeing models from other community show casting our traditional attires in fashion shows?
29. What is your opinion on western wears design from our traditional print on shawls during fashion shows and beauty pageants?
30. How far does the watsü mundang check the quality of hand woven shawls and mekhala?
31. What about dyeing? Does the Mundang encourage traditional dyeing method?

### **Questions for Female respondents**

1. How often do you wear your mekala? Do you feel comfortable by wearing it?
2. Can you distinguish the patterns of each tribe from the mekala? If yes, how can you differentiate from one tribe to another?
3. How old were you when you start weaving?
4. Do you think the knowledge of growing cotton should be continued or not?
5. What are the tools uses for spinning cotton?
6. What is the name of the plan called in your dialects that is used for dyeing cotton?
7. What are the traditional processes of colour dyeing? What are the taboos your normally observe while dyeing the cotton?
8. Can you name the instrument use for weaving attires like shawls, mekala, etc in your dialect? How long does it take to wave a traditional mekala/shawl?
9. How much do you earn by selling them?
10. Do you agree that the talent for making traditional attires is gradually disappearing due to machine made cloths which are inexpensive clothing?
11. Have you undergone any training to use power loom? If yes, where and who sponsored it?
12. Where do you get the beads (materials) to make necklace?

### **Questions for male respondent**

1. Do you have close cultural affiliation with traditional attires of your tribe?
2. Where do you get (boar tusk or materials) to make necklace? If not available what are the alternatives?

3. From where do you get the raw materials to make dao?
4. Do you still have local blacksmith to make dao and spear in your village?  
If not, what are the sources for making such materials?
5. What is the price for a dao and spear?
6. In your opinion how important is the role of man in designing and modifying traditional attires?
7. Do you get loans or grants from the government to purchase machines, tools and implements? If yes how much and when did you get?
8. Did any NGO or govt. officials conduct any workshop in your village to update your crafts? If yes, when, which year?
9. What is the price of a head gear?
10. Which do you prefer wearing waist coat or traditional shawl during festival and why?
11. Our traditional attires (especially for man) are decorated with all the wild animals, human skull, hair, etc, etc, which some time it look scary. What does all these means?

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