

***AN ENIGMA OF EPISTEMOLOGY: AN ECLECTIC ANALYSIS OF SANGTAM  
NAGA FOLKLORE***

**(Dissertation submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English)**

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**2020**

## DECLARATION

I, Ms. Tainla Longchar do hereby, declare that the subject matter of my dissertation entitled *An Enigma of Epistemology : An Eclectic Analysis of Sangtam Naga Folklore* is the bonafide record of work done by me under the supervision of Prof. Nigamananda Das and that the content of the dissertation 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 dissertation has not been submitted by me for any other research degree, fellowship, associateship, etc. in any other university or institute. This is being submitted to the Nagaland University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English.

13<sup>th</sup> August, 2020.

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled *An Enigma of Epistemology: An Eclectic Analysis of Sangtam Naga Folklore* is the bonafide record of research work done by Ms. Tainla Longchar, Regn. No.58/2020, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during 2019-2020. Submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in English, this dissertation has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other title and that the dissertation represents independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my supervision. This is again certified that the research has been undertaken as per UGC Regulations May 2016 (amended) and the candidate has fulfilled the criteria mentioned in the University Ordinances for submission of the dissertation. Plagiarism test of the dissertation was conducted as per UGC Regulations 2018 and 0% of similarity was detected.

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## **Preface**

There is a sense of urgency to learn more about the culture and tradition amongst the Nagas and also to document it since the most common mode of transmission of knowledge is the oral tradition. In spite of the adoption and spread of western education and access to modern technology, there has been a slack in the documentation of oral tradition by the Nagas. Most of the tribes still do not have a properly documented record of one's own folklore. This has created an alarming sense of urgency as the tradition of storytelling itself is waning. Thus, the need to preserve becomes a necessity before any more diffusion or gradual and complete loss of the lore occurs with the passage of time. It is further felt that preserving in print and digital format will act as a means to remind, educate and enlighten the present generation as well as posterity about their culture. One such attempt has therefore been made in this dissertation with the belief that in doing so, their rich culture can be handed down to their progenies without losing its essence.

This dissertation is an endeavour to study and explore the Sangtam-Naga folklore and its relevance in their life and society to this day. It also attempts to preserve and document their lore in written form. Though there are a few written records, it is recorded in the Sangtam dialect which has limited its reach to the non-Sangtam speakers and the recorded lore calls in for further illustration as it has been recorded in the simplest forms of writing.

There is also the necessity to understand the Sangtam folk tradition in its entirety which has beyond doubt fashioned and moulded the Sangtam way of life since the earliest time. A better understanding of their history, culture, social norms and mores can be acquired while reading and referencing the folklore in the form of oral devices/ means, which has enabled them to hold the fabric of the society together for succeeding generations. As such, an exploration of the folk way of life is deemed essential and of utmost importance.

Unfortunately, there has been a breach and regression in the transmission of knowledge especially folklore from older generation to the present. On account of lack of enthusiasm and initiative to know and to record the valuable lore, many have been lost in the process. Thus, there seems to have been an estrangement with our past on account of such factors.

Another factor may be attributed to modern education system and adaptation of the western way of life, which has replaced the traditional way of story-telling and narration. However, it is the knowledge gained through these oral modes that the historical lineage of the people and also the entire epistemology of the tribe which has been handed down from generations are reflected and can be comprehended.

To analyse and interpret the folklore of a tribe that is not my own and moreover recording in a language that is not ours, i.e., English, has been one of the major challenges that I experienced. However, it is hoped that a study like this will stimulate the thirst for more knowledge of the tribal people and the enigmatic nature of the epistemology that the tribe possesses and can impart to the people from outside. There is also the possibility that an increase in interest and studies of the tribal folklore would elevate its status from mere tales, sayings and songs to one where they are recognized as integral parts of those societies and also understand the importance and impact of folklore of any tribal society.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Nagaland is one of the North Eastern states of India. It is located in the Eastern most part of India surrounded by Myanmar in the East, Assam in the West, Arunachal Pradesh in the North and Manipur in the South. The people are mostly of Mongoloid origin. A total of twelve districts make up the state. They are further divided into tribes out of which sixteen major tribes are Angami, Ao, Chakesang, Chang, Kachari, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sema, Yimchungrü, and Zeliang. All the tribes have certain costumes and practices, which are almost similar in nature; for example, every tribe practised head hunting in the ancient times, used ornaments, have their own traditional gears, etc. Oral tradition was practised by all the tribes to pass down knowledge and experiences from one generation to the next where men and their memories were considered as sole knowledge keepers. Thus, folklore plays an integral role in the social and cultural life of the Nagas.

In most societies, over succeeding generations, myths, legends and similar other oral narratives have been passed down through the medium of folklore. The word 'Folklore' was first coined by William John Thoms in an 1846 letter to the Athenaeum. "Folklore is the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people; it encompasses the traditions common to that culture, subculture or group." (Propp, 3) These includes oral traditions such as tales, proverbs, sayings, riddles, idioms, songs, jokes and so on. It also includes the material culture and the customary lore, the norms and rituals. Folklore also encompasses the transmission of these artifacts from one region to another or from one generation to the next. Folklore therefore comprise of experiences of events in the past which are preserved in oral mode and transmitted verbally as cultural items from one member to another and passed on to the progenies.

The term folklore in short is inclusive of various genres of oral texts and folk traditions. The verbal folklore which consists of the tales, proverbs, common sayings, expressions, songs, etc. forms an important aspect of any folk society. As such, the Sangtams have also passed down their traditions in the form of folk narratives over generation by word of mouth/ verbally. The Sangtam dialect like the rest of the Naga tribal dialects is still in its infancy when it comes to written records as a means of passing down knowledge from one generation to the next. As such, most of the times it is possible only via oral

communication like folktales, folksongs, and proverbs and adages. These are not mere products of fanciful thoughts but rather they are knowledge and wisdom garnered through first hand experiences and is time tested. They also reflect the cultural ethos of the society. Hence, these are cherished and narrated usually by the elders to the younger generations.

## **Sangtam Folklore**

### **1. The Tribe**

The Sangtam tribe is one of the sixteen major tribes of Nagaland and they inhabit the Eastern part of Nagaland along with five other tribes - Chang, Khaimniungan, Konyak, Phom and Yimchunger. Together these six tribes are known as the Eastern Nagas. The Sangtams at present are located in two districts of Nagaland- Kiphire and Tuensang. The Eastern Sangtams (Kiphire district) share borders with the Yimchunger tribe in the East and North, the Sumi tribe in the West and the Pochury tribe in the South. The important towns in this area include Amahator, Longmatra, Seochung, and Singti with Kiphire town as its district headquarters. Zingki river which is one of the biggest rivers in Nagaland flows in Kiphire district in the Eastern Sangtam region. The Northern Sangtam region shares its borders with the Chang tribe in the East, the Ao tribe in the West and the Sumi tribe in the South-East with Longkhim and Chare as its main towns. The Tizu river and the Dikhu river flows through the Northern Sangtam region in Tuensang district. Kiphire is the main official district headquarters for Sangtams while Longkhim town under Tuensang district is the headquarters of the Longkhim-Chare region of Northern Sangtam. Despite the distance of 156 kilometres between Longkhim and Kiphire, the Sangtams are united through cultural and lingual bondage and they are known by its collective name as Akehta Sangtam (United Sangtam). The Sangtams belong to Tibeto-Mongoloid stock and are physically well-built and stout.

### **2. Migration**

Regarding migratory routes of the Sangtams, the most commonly accepted version is that the Sangtams were also among the groups of Nagas who migrated probably from south East Asia via China. They had crossed rivers like Chindwin and Irrawaddy and reached Burma (present day Myanmar). They migrated further towards Mikhrimi (Maikhel) and settled there for some time. From Maikhel, the Nagas migrated towards

the hilly region and finally settled down at a place, which is in the present day called Khezhakenoma. Eventually, from there the people dispersed in different directions in groups.

Sangtams were a part of the group who migrated from Khezhakenoma. They settled at Shuhumükoh, Mütsali and again moved to a place called Khuza, but they did not stay long and splintered into two migratory groups. One group moved up along the Kihrü (Tizu) river and settled at a place called Jutruhngnyang. The other splinter group did not cross the river but moved westwards settling in Kilorü, Tukunasa and finally settled at Ningneng (Nunumi) village. Due to certain social disturbances, the Sangtam group could not continue to settle in this village and furthered splintered into two groups. One group migrated towards the East and finally settled at Yangthrü (Thsinga) and the other group moved northwards and finally settled at Hurong village, which is now abandoned and located near New Tsadang village.

The migratory group consists of six major groups (shuh).

### 2.1 Yingphi Shuh

This group of Sangtams settled at Jutruhngnyang. But owing to a prophecy about some impending natural calamity, they moved eastwards and established a village called Yangphi.

### 2.2 Thsinga Shuh

One group of Sangtams from Ningneng village migrated Eastwards and settled along Chinghiki/ Thsingaki/ Tita river, which flows through present day Kiphire district. The settlements established during their migration from Ningneng to Yangthrü were Sota (Shotomi), Throngkiwaya (Tokihimi), Juwaya (Lisheki) and finally to Yangthrü. As Yangthrü was situated in a very shallow area, they moved to a higher area and founded the present Thsinga village called Thsinga Shuh.

### 2.3 Hurong Shuh: HurongYanghi/ Old Hurong

The group of people who migrated from Ningneng (Nunumi) village moved towards the North and established villages like Singkomg (Sukomi), Rotorü (Rotomi), Litsa (Litsami), Limulok (Emlomi), Sirongrü (surumi) and finally settled at Hurong village, which is now abandoned and located near New Tsadang village under Longkhim sub-

division in Tuensang District. However, on hearing the news of the impending attack by the neighbouring tribe, i.e., the Aos, the villagers abandoned the village and migrated to Yanghi/ Yehemi village. From Yanghi, some Sangtams migrated to Yangchungyanghi/ Langa which was occupied by the Yimchungrü group but they could not assimilate for long. Therefore, the Sangtams founded a new village called Yangchungthreh. However due to difficulties faced in matters of cultivation and dialectical variations, they moved to a new location which is now the present Hurong in Amühator area under Kiphire district. This group of Sangtams is called as Hurong Shuh.

#### 2.4 Phir Ahir/ Phi Shuh

The Sangtams who were still living in Yanghi/ Yehemi came together with Sangtamshuhs of Khrimito, Langa and some others to establish Sangdang (Singdang) village, which is now renamed as Satami under Zunheboto district. Due to certain social implications, this group of Sangtams decided to migrate towards North crossing Tizu and settled at Kuyingmüsing. But they were constantly harassed and harried, where children were killed by the villagers of Sungralongjo, a neighbouring village. Thus ultimately, Kuyingmüzing villagers attacked and ousted the Sungralongjo villagers and they began to settle in their area and named the place as Phirü Ahi. From this, the villages under Longkhim and Chare area were established and they are referred to as Phi shuh.

#### 2.5 Phelungre Shuh

It is not known clearly as to how and from where the Phelungre village or people came from. However, as per oral history, the village is also one of the oldest Sangtam villages. The history tells that this village is also an origin village where people lived in a nearby hill called “Thrangphu.” One day, people saw smoke emitting out of this present village site. They went to investigate it but could not find anything regarding its source. This happened the next day as well. So, they made a big fire from dried bamboo leaves to mark the spot and left. Again on the third day too, they saw smoke emitting near the spot where they had made fire the other day. As the people went to the site, they saw humans with feathers on their body and had “thoh” (reeks) covering their fingers. There are at present about 18 villages who are known as the Phelungre Shuh.

## 2.6 Sanphur Shuh

The formation of Saphure village is still unknown. However according to oral history, it is said that this village existed since time immemorial. There were three khels/ colonies, which were occupied by three persons and hence the village derives its name from it where 'San' means three and 'pur' means scattered. It is said that the people belonging to different colonies would dry their paddy beneath the Sun in three different mats every day. There are about nine offshoot villages of Sanphur.

### 3. Origin of the name of the tribe 'Sangtam'.

As per oral history, the word Sangtam is derived from the word *Singtang* which means a kind of raised wooden platform from where the entire surrounding area can be viewed (Tsalongse,9). The ancestors had the tradition of residing in houses whose floor was elevated above the ground, which was called *singtang*. The name Sangtang village hence came to be derived from the word *singtang* (Tsalongse,9). This village is said to be located in the Sumi region near the present day village of Satami under Zunheboto district from where the Sangtams migrated further.

### 4. Socio-political life of the Sangtams.

There are six major clans amongst the Sangtams- Dhongrü, Jingrü, Langtidhongrü/ Langkidhongrü, Mungzarü, Anarü/Yingphidhongrü and Rudidhongrü clans. The common dialect of the Sangtams is known as Sangtamyu which is spoken by around 90% of the population. There are some offshoot dialects which are spoken only in particular villages (sanphure shuh). According to 2011 census, the total population of the Sangtams is around 60,000(approximate). There are around 35 villages and 4 towns under Kiphire district, 22 villages and 2 towns under Tuensang district and 4 villages under Dimapur and Jalukie areas (Tsalongse,14-15).

Name of Sangtam villages/ towns under Kiphire district, Tuensang district, Dimapur and Jalukie areas.

Kiphire district area (Eastern Sangtam)

#### **Kiphire area**

Sl. No                      Name of the village/town                      Sl. No                      Name of the village/town

1	Kiphire town	4	Longthonger village
2	Kiphire village	5	Phelungre village
3	Langkok village	6	Singrep village

### **Seyochung area**

Sl. No                      Name of the village/town                      Sl. No                      Name of the village/town

1	New Monger village	5	Thangthür village
2	Old Monger village	6	Thsingar village
3	Seyochung town	7	Yangzitong village
4	Seyochung village	8	Yingphir village

### **Longmatra area**

Sl. No                      Name of the village/town                      Sl. No                      Name of the village/town

1	Longmatra town	6	Sangtsoze village
2	Longmatra village	7	Sanphur village
3	New Longmatra village	8	Tethuyo village
4	Ngoro village	9	Tsongphong village
5	Pongren village	10	Tüthezü village

### **Singti area**

Sl. No                      Name of the village/town                      Sl. No                      Name of the village/town

1	Langzang village	4	Singti town
2	Natsa village	5	Singsi village
3	Singsivillage	6	Yangsekyü village

**Amühator area**

Sl. No                      Name of the village/town                      Sl. No                      Name of the village/town

1	Amühator village	6	Kisetong village
2	Changchor village	7	New Risethsi village
3	Hurong village	8	Old Risethsi village
4	Kichang village	9	Yingshükur village
5	Kior village		

**Tuensang district area (Northern Sangtam)****Longkhim area**

Sl. No                      Name of the village/town                      Sl. No                      Name of the village/town

1	Angangba village	7	Müngakhi village
2	Chimonger village	8	New Müngakhi village
3	Chungtor village	9	New Sangsomong village
4	Holongba village	10	Phirü Ahir village
5	Lirise village	11	Sangsomong village
6	Longkhim town	12	Yangli village

**Chare Area**

1	Aliosopor village	7	New Chungliyangdi village
2	Chare new town	8	New Tsatang village
3	Chare old town	9	Trongar village
4	Chungliyangdi village	10	Tronglongsor village
5	Kiding village	11	Tsarü village
6	Longkhitpeh village	12	Tsatang village

**Under Dimapur district and Jalukie area**

Sl. No                      Name of the village/town                      Sl. No                      Name of the village/town

1	Jalukie-Sangtam village	3	Sangtamtilla village
2	Mürise village	4	Tsithrongse village

## 6. Geographical location.

Longkhim town as the district headquarters under Tuensang district is located at an altitude of 1676.40 metres and has a cold climate almost throughout the year. Kiphire which is located at a lower altitude of 896.42 metres has comparatively warmer climate. The area is covered with evergreen forest with an average rainfall of 250 centimetres. (Tsalongse, 7).

## 7. Flora.

Trees like pine, oak, walnut, alder etc. grow in the forests. Cotton, bamboo, orchids and ferns etc. are also popular in the Sangtam area. While the cultivated crops include rice, maize, millets, jobs tears, grams, yam, wheat, garlic, ginger, sugarcane, barley, chilly, sweet-potato, potato, pumpkin, squash, variety of beans etc. Yam, taro, maize and kidney beans are one of the most popularly cultivated vegetables. Rice is the staple food for the Sangtam people in general. Fruits like lemon, gooseberry, passion fruit, watermelon, banana, cucumber, papaya, guava, plum, peach, mango, orange, apple, wild apple, pear, mulberry, lychee etc. are grown in the Sangtam area.

## 8. Fauna.

Major portion of Sangtam land is covered by dense forest and jungle. This serves as a natural habitat for a variety of birds, animals and reptiles. Animals like barking deer, stag, wild boar, black bear, jungle cat, monkey, wolf, fox, hoolock gibbon, porcupine etc. are found in the forests. Also birds like parrot, wood pecker, cuckoo, wood pigeon, jungle fowl, great barbet, owl, vulture, tragopan, eagle, dove, bulbul, painted francolin, swallows, sparrow, amur falcon, white breasted laughing thrush, quails, bulbul etc. can be heard chirping in the forest. Tiger, leopard, hornbill, elephant etc. were found in the earlier years but due to the ecological imbalance and the selfish ways of men to procure money and also to use as decorative items and pieces such as elephant tusks for arm bangle, hair of bear for traditional head gear have either lead to extinction or rarity. There is also the matter of loss of natural habitat of the animals due to wanton felling of trees for timber and clearing forest areas for cultivation. To add to the injustice done to

the animals, men's brutal act of hunting animals for flesh has contributed a lot to decreasing of certain species. Domesticated animals and birds include cat, dog, goat, guinea pig, cow, buffalo, albino rat, rabbit, hen, duck etc.

Since some of the major rivers in Nagaland flow through the Sangtam area, fresh water fishes of different species, crabs, shrimps, frogs, edible snails etc. are found in abundance.

## 9. Agriculture.

Jhum or shifting cultivation is practiced by the Sangtams. The cycle of shifting takes around 9-10 years but the fertility of the soil retains its best till three years. Mixed cropping is usually practiced in the fields. The most commonly cultivated crops include jobs tears, millets, maize, barley, yam, taro, potato, sweet potato, ginger, garlic, pumpkin, cucumber, sesame, gourds, brinjal, tomato, mustard and varieties of beans, which are grown along with rice in the fields.

It is customary for the Sangtams to help one another in times of need. Therefore, even when it comes to agricultural practices, the ones who have huge tracts of land for cultivation and harvest in plenty help the needy. They do so by lending their grains and also making payments with grains in lieu of labour. This they do with the belief that the village community as a whole will prosper. The Sangtams also consider the process of cultivation and harvest to be sacred and hence follow certain rites and rituals during harvest (Tsalongse,30):

1. The animals taken to the field for sacrificial purposes should always be spotless and clean. This is a ritual for abundance of harvest.
2. Only the best or new straps should be fastened to the baskets during harvest. If basket straps are broken, it is regarded as a sign for scanty harvest.
3. The thrashing stick should never be broken and therefore handled with utmost care.
4. Meat of wild animals should never be brought to the field-shed (hut) during harvest.
5. Stuffs that emit bad odour upon burning should not be burnt in the fireplace.
6. The basket should never be placed upside down anywhere while taking rest or breaks while working in the field.

7. A sickle should be handled with care to prevent it from breaking.

8. Married couples should maintain celibacy during this period.

### **10. Dress culture.**

During the time of the ancestors, cloth was a rare commodity and hence it was used only to cover the private parts of the body and the rest of the body was left almost bare. It was only in later years that they discovered cotton and began to weave shawls, mekhlis (sarong), loin cloth etc. since then separate clothes were woven for male and female. Menfolk wore loin cloth and girded their body with shawls which is known as Shüra, women wore Shümükhyah on the upper part of the body and Jingshüh (sarong) was used to cover the lower part of the body.

Women were prohibited from wearing men's clothes and vice versa. Commoners were also not allowed to wear a rich man's dress. This was so because a man was entitled to wear a certain cloth only if he had offered the Feast of Merit to the villagers or have brought home a certain number of enemy's head. Hence, people were expected to wear dresses as per one's social status and position. (Tsalongse, 42 )

### **11. Marriage.**

Marriage and family holds an important status in the society of the Sangtams. It is the medium, which allows a man and a woman to live together and procreate without attracting social stigmas. It also accords legitimacy to matters of inheritance whereby only the biological sons of a person can inherit the father's land and property. Thus, marriage is an institution, which is held sacred and for it to be legitimate, certain rites, rituals and customs have to be performed and followed.

#### **11.1 Engagement.**

Sangtams follow patriarchal system of marriage. On reaching a marriageable age, the parents after consultations and due consent of the son would arrange the marriage. As the Sangtam saying goes, "A round basket can be fitted only in a round basket," (Tsalongse, 14) it was customary that the rich would seek for a bride born of rich parents while the poor were considered to be more compatible with the poor. Thus, social status and lineage of both the families were of utmost importance with regard to matters related to marriage.

Matrimonial engagement is usually done with the assistance of a match maker who is called *langtsehri*. He serves as a link between the two families and it is his responsibility to convince the family members of the girl. If and when the girl and her parents agree for marriage, a spade or dao is presented to the girl's family as a sign of making it official. This practice is called *idsemüseh/ kumüseh*. A day is set when the girl along with her family members and the match maker will be invited to the boy's house for a feast known as *kuhdrangyah/ sheng-kengba*. This visit is called *kudrangyah* and prior to it the girl is not allowed to visit her fiancé's house.

After the *Kuhdrangyah*, the bride price *mii* is set, which is usually four to eight animals usually mithun or pig depending upon the status of the girl's parents. This would be delivered to the girl's house by the boy along with his relatives and a messenger as witness. A pig would then be slaughtered and they would feast together at the girl's house. The girl is prohibited from eating the meat as the meat is a part of her life price. The girl's parents will send one hind leg to the future son in law's parents as a gift. This practice is called *Akhu tsunyah shuhjing* (first gift for the in-laws)

### 11.2. Wedding.

The wedding day is usually selected during the periods of new moon. On the wedding day, the bride with her parents, relatives, friends and villagers (if from different village) would go to the house of the bridegroom with presents like meat, rice, vegetables, baskets, utensils, ornaments of precious stones, traditional attires etc. It was a practice for an elderly woman to lead the bride while entering the bridegroom's house and it was a norm to step in with the right foot first. The bride's parents would provide her with all the household materials required to establish her new home. All villagers and well-wishers were invited to the wedding feast. The bride is usually accompanied by her cherished friends as bridesmaid.

After the conclusion of the marriage feast, the parents and relatives of both sides along with the bride and the groom and the match maker sit together to engage in an intensive deliberation and discussion. During this time, all matters regarding matrimonial laws which include matters regarding issues like separation by divorce or even death. The bride and groom are also imparted advice on how to lead a successful married life together.

## **12. System of Inheritance.**

The Sangtams follow a patriarchal system of lineage and inheritance as well. It is therefore usually the sons or brothers who inherit the assets and also bear the debts of that has been left by the father upon his demise. The assets may include estates, fields, plots, reserved plantations, domestic animals, household belongings like spear, dao, shield etc. and even money. In the case where there is no male son, the assets will be inherited by the brothers, nephews or even clansmen of the deceased father. Adopted sons or people of other clan do not have the right to inherit the property. In case of more than one male child, the property is to be shared among the brothers on mutual understanding. The youngest male child is designated to look after the parents at old age and hence he is entitled to inherit his father's house at the demise of the father. Daughters have no entitlement for inheritance except presents at the time of her marriage in the form of rice, furniture, dresses, cookery items etc. The servants are not entitled to get inheritance from the master. Even the children are not allowed to claim any assets from parents while they are still alive.

## **13. Burial system.**

In olden times, dead bodies were not buried rather they were rolled in a mat made of bamboo and kept over a wooden platform. Fire was lit underneath and it was kept going for several days so as to let the corpse dry up without decomposing. Certain fluids that oozed out during this process were collected in a long bamboo tube. Once the corpse was completely drained of all fluids and fats, the dried bones were disposed off in the jungle. But this practice changed with the introduction of Christianity to the Sangtams.

After accepting and adopting the Christian belief the burial system of the dead was adopted. The dead were buried in the ground in graves dug for approximately five to six feet in depth. The dead bodies were covered with bamboo or wooden slits before the grave was covered with earth. A dog or chicken was usually killed and kept near the graveyard to accompany the dead person's soul. Some people used to build tombs over the grave. Vegetables, grains, meat and wine were usually hung on poles. The graveyards of chiefs and warriors would be marked by keeping traditional attires, daos, spears, shields and skulls of animals on large tombs to glorify their achievement.

#### **14. Formation/ establishment of new villages. (Yangsi thriba yangthsa)**

The village plays an important role in maintaining the ecological balance as it is a place which is covered by greenery, providing shelter for various animals as it is less crowded compared to the urban areas. Not only this, the village for the Sangtams is also an important political and social institution. It helps in safeguarding the security of the individuals and the community. Most of the villages are located on hill tops/ hillock to keep themselves safe from the tribal enemies.

For the establishment of a village certain customary norms need to be taken into account:

1. The new village to be established is preferably on a hilltop as it provides security by enabling the villagers to see the approaching enemy in times of danger or attack.
2. Agriculture being the main source of livelihood, establishment of villages in fertile soil is very crucial. The fertility of the soil can be tested by digging out a portion of the soil. If the soil that had been dug out can be refilled in the same pit, then it can be considered that the soil is fertile.
3. Water is essential for survival and hence the availability of water in the form of natural streams flowing close by had to be taken into account.
3. The villages could be established in ancestral land or some other places which are unexplored. Sometimes the lands could be in remote places which are far off from their native land and share borders with another tribe. Making friendship and strengthening the bond with the neighbouring tribe/ village thus becomes essential. As a token of friendship and seeking protection from enemies, they gift Tümzyu which contains different portions of cooked meat.

Tradition has it that for the establishment of a new village it is mandatory that members of all the six clans (hung dhüroh), i.e., Dhongrü, Jingrü, Langtidhongrü/ Langkidhongrü, Mungzarü, Anarü/Yingphidhongrü and Rudidhongrü clans should be present. Like any other Naga tribes, the Sangtams also live close to nature and every activity is performed in consonance with the laws of nature. Hence the initiation to establish a new village is usually taken up in the new lunar cycle. The Dhongrü clan is endowed with the authority and responsibility to perform the ritual rites called Bholu

Jiba. The leader of the group automatically becomes the village chief. Tools, utensils, food provisions, meat etc. are carried along with a live dog and a live rooster. On reaching the spot, the jungle is cleared off and a huge bonfire is made to raise huge smoke symbolic of the settlement of the people in the new village.

The performance of the rituals by the Dhongrü clan involves the following steps:

1. A huge bonfire is made near the Bholu i.e the platform where the rites are performed.
2. An egg is broken and sprinkled around the Bholu.
3. A live rooster and a dog are tied to the Bholu to be offered as a sacrifice.

The priest implores to *Lihjaba* who is the creator god by saying that they have come to establish a new village by cleaning the dirt and feces of animals. He also seeks protection from all dangers and enemies and to bless the village abundantly. The live rooster is unfastened and its feathers are spread on the Bholu after which it is killed. This will be followed by the gathering of the people around the fire and the dog will be burnt alive. Sticks and warring tools are held to prevent the dog from fleeing. Despite that if the dog escapes, it is regarded as a sign of defeat from enemies in the near future. These rituals are followed by cooking and preparing of meal to be shared among the group members.

Clearing and distribution of plots for settlement are done which generally include the village fence (Yang tbü), village guard house (Rosheng vü müdüm), village granary (Shihyoo), division of sectors (Pungyung changnung), a plot for the village chief (Yangziba linung müdüm), and village graveyard (Pungyung changnung).

The village is either named after the chief/ leader of the group or the geographical location or landscape. It is also the village chief who would oversee the area for cultivation (Luhtsu) and distribute the fields to the villagers which in turn becomes their personal property (vithung). For this reason those people who are directly involved in the establishment of the village have more land than the rest who comes later to settle. The house for the village chief is first built collectively followed by the village guard house. The individual residence would be constructed only after the completion of these tasks. The latest village that has been established / govt. recognized in the Sangtam area is New Chungliyimti village under Longkhim area of Tuensang district in 2004.

## 15. Festivals of the Sangtam Nagas.

Festivals are an expressive way to celebrate the glorious heritage, culture and tradition of a particular group of people. They add structure to our social lives, and connect us with our families and backgrounds. The legends, knowledge and traditions are passed onto next generations through the celebration of festivals.

The Sangtam Nagas celebrate three major festivals in a year and these are cultural in one way or the other. They have a distinct way of celebrating these seasonal festivals which reflect the attitude of people towards nature since it has own significance in relation to agriculture. These are celebrated either in reverence or as a kind of jubilation for the prosperity and nature's blessings in bounty.

### 15.1. Tsohsu festival.

Commonly known as 'vi thung' this festival is celebrated during spring season from 12th -15th of March every year before sowing of the seeds in the fields. It marks as an invocation of God's blessings for abundance of harvest and protection from natural calamities in any form.

As a preparation for the festival, the priest would announce to the people in the village to construct new huts in their respective fields for the upcoming celebration of the festival in three days. The villagers are expected to follow the guidelines given by the priest since a breach of it will invite penalty to oneself. The village priest is the first to get his field readied for the sowing of the seeds by constructing the hut and none are allowed to construct on that particular day except the priest.

The following day is the day when all the villagers would participate in going to their fields and construct the huts in preparation for the future. As the folks are engaged in constructing, the priest would sow the seeds in his new field. He would then utter the line "ü hah! Now in this field I have sown the seeds but these seeds are bitter." This is said so as to prevent the birds, insects and animals from attacking and destroying the crops. The villagers would then eat and drink rice beer which they have brought along. They would also visit the neighbouring huts and exchange the meat and rice beer. After the long day's work, the villagers would return home by chanting together melodiously. The priest would then observe sabbatical for six days.

### 15.2. Hünapungbi festival.

Celebrated during the second week of August every year, Hünapungbi is a festival that is much awaited by the children as well as the parents and elders. On approaching the time for the festival, the priest makes an announcement to the villagers that after four days i.e zinyu, the festival would commence.

On the first day, before sunrise each family catches a rooster that they had been rearing. One of the legs of the rooster would be tied to a rope and the other end of the rope to a fixed stick to prevent the rooster from escaping. At dawn, the children would gather on the village main road or the village playground with their own roosters and the most awaited cock fighting competition would be held. The first day would be concluded with the children returning home with their respective roosters after witnessing and enjoying the game the entire day.

The second day is mostly an affair that involves feast. The rooster that had participated in the cock fighting competition the previous day would be killed in every house. A delicious dish would be prepared for the entire family members to partake. The parents would put the liver, one piece of the thigh and another portion of the flesh which is collectively called akhungarü tphüni along with rice in a banana leaf which is called khole. The children would then again gather and enjoy the morning meal together. As a sign of respect for the head of the family, the head portion of the cooked chicken is always served to the father. In return, the father would bless the family in the name of Hünapungbi festival.

The concluding day is marked by the villagers taking another day off from their fields and gathering together and spending time in recreation and other merry making as such.

### 15.3. Mungmung festival.

The most important festival of the Sangtams is the Mungmung festival which is celebrated in the first week of September annually. This festival is connected with food production, blessing and prosperity. The pre-dominant theme of the festival is the worship of the god of the house and three cooking stones in the hearth of every kitchen.

The village priest is the designated person to perform the rituals before the festival begins. On the first night of the preparation for the festival, an elderly man from Anar

clan would announce “u-hui! Zangnyu mungmungnung ele-he” which means that after five days Mungmung will be celebrated. This announcement at midnight indicates the separation of the death from the living. The next day also the old man would make the same announcement signaling the countdown of the five days to begin the festival.

#### Day one ( Jangshika)

The introductory day of the festival is marked by closure of all transactions of farming and other related activities like purchase of domestic animals. The tamed animals like cows and mithun are roped. The villagers engage themselves in collection of firewood, and harvesting the vegetables from the old fields.

#### Day two (Singkihthsa)

The activity of collecting of water and firewood is continued by the villagers. The domestic animals that are chosen to be consumed during this festival are slaughtered on this day. After setting aside a separate portion of meat for the festival, the weeding group (ati/akhingrü) would equally share the remaining meat amongst themselves. They also cook some meat to celebrate a feast together. It is prohibited to eat the Mungmung sacrificial meat (Amamoh shuh) which has been kept aside for the next day as it is regarded as a sacred meat. The affluent families slaughter the domesticated animals and share it with their relatives and neighbours.

#### Day three (Müsüh-Yangtöp)

On this day, early in the morning an elderly woman in the village would be the first person to draw water from the village well. She will be followed by other women to draw water. While carrying water in bamboo containers called tahzi/sipong from the well to the house, the old woman would put a kind of leaf called dsümpiva in between her head and the strap of the bamboo basket where the bamboo water containers are being carried. This is done with the belief that doing so would prevent diseases.

The day is specially marked as a day of giving offerings to the three hearth stones in every house in the morning. It is carried out in every household by the oldest woman of the family. The worshipping of the three hearth stones is done in this manner:

In one plate called khole sticky rice, meat, liver and rice beer are collected for offering to the three hearth stones. No one is allowed to eat anything before the offering has

been made to the three stones. It is believed that the creator god Lihjapa lives within these three hearth stones in every house. Only after the offering and rituals are performed, the family members and domestic animals are allowed to eat. The offering is done so as to invoke blessings and prosperity.

The children also play different games like tug-of-war, top-spinning, indigenous game (Khüling dheta) etc. Some people dance and sing folk songs on this day and enjoy the festival.

#### Day four (Kihkhalangpi)

On this day all youth and menfolk would go and clean the foot path leading to the village well. The village priest would be the first person to start cleaning the road. Lunch for this day is prepared by contributing meat and rice and it is cooked in the house of an elderly man. The house wives puts chilly, ginger and cotton into the splits of a plant called Tsihdong and it is placed near their houses. Some people use ragweed, a stinking plant called Dhrongpha to hang it at the top of the entrance which is usually a kind of projection at the front. This is done in order to be free from fever after the Mungmung festival and also for protection of crops in the field from natural calamities.

#### Day five (Shülang wüba)

During the Mungmung festival the people who live in the neighbouring villages visit their parents, relatives and friends on account of the festival. They bring along meat and rice beer and exchange and eat together on this day.

#### Day six (Aka Singkihthsa)

People can start going to their fields from this day for harvest. They can also resume their other daily activities and businesses like going to the jungle to fetch firewood and to both the old and the new fields to collect vegetables.

This marks the culmination of the six days festival of the Sangtams. This festival is the longest celebration as a festival amongst the Sangtams and is celebrated with much enthusiasm and fervour.

## 16. Feast of merit. (Anyidsi-yongdi)

The Feast of Merit also known as the Feast of Honour was one of the most distinct traditional practice amongst the Sangtams. This was done with the generous philosophy that wealth should be shared and celebrated amongst all and also as a means to acquire fame and recognition. During this celebration, the village folks would participate in merry making in the form of singing, dancing, feasting etc. It symbolizes both achievement and prestige as the host would gain not only fame and popularity but also respect and honour in doing so. It was also offered to seek more blessings from god. The host would also be awarded with and allowed to wear a specially woven shawl which was supposed to signify the achievement of a great accomplishment. It was a source of admiration since a common man was prohibited to wear it. The prosperous men who offered the Feast of Merit were also allowed to live in a particularly designed house called Shara thung kuh or alahmüking kuh. Such houses were constructed with interlaced bamboo splits at the roof of the house also called a “Y” post with a bunch of thatch which would be hung on the front side of the house. Skulls of the slaughtered animals during the feast were also used to decorate the house. Thus, much great honour and respect was bestowed on the one who hosted the Feast of Merit because in order to successfully host such a grand occasion it required a lot of material wealth and labour.

According to the tradition of the Sangtams, there are three types of the Feast of Merit, namely Yongdiba/ Langthsaba, Anyidsiba and Püh-humba/thatsu. This Feast of Merit is an important event in the social life of the Sangtam Nagas.

Thus, a careful study of the different activities and practices in the socio-cultural life of the Sangtams will show us that they have a rich and unique culture and tradition of their own. These customs and practices have been observed and followed through many succeeding generations. It has survived the test of time and most of it is still in practice by the people. It also acts as a guideline while dealing with any issues pertaining to customary law and order even in present times. Hence the study of the folklore becomes essential if one is to properly understand every aspect of the Social and cultural life of the Sangtams and why and how certain beliefs, practices and traditional norms came into existence.

## CHAPTER 2

### FOLKTALES OF THE SANGTAM NAGAS

Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary defines folktale as “A very old traditional story from a particular place that was originally passed on to people in a spoken form” (Stevenson, 513 ). Folktales are therefore closely related to the art of storytelling traditions which may include legends and myth, fables and fairy tales. The main feature of the folktale is its oral tradition, which means that it is practiced by the elderly people in passing down tales from one generation to the next by word of mouth. Folktales were often employed to share a common history, to reinforce cultural values or highlight important traditions. Folktales are highly stylized and artistic narratives whereby there are also animal characters with human attributes. The characters, allegories and symbols are pregnant with meanings. The tale also reflects the socio-cultural condition in a complex way because it does not only reflect reality but as a creative art it contains psychological projections of the characters which are often types. A careful interpretation and analysis of the tales reveal important elements or spots of culture and expose the symbolic world of culture.

Sangtam folktales have also come down the ages in a similar way through the word of mouth. However, classification of folktale is one of the first and most important steps of study. To quote Vladimir Propp in *Morphology of the Folktale*:

“Since the folktale is exceptionally diverse, and obviously cannot be studied at once in its full extent, the material must be divided into sections, i.e., it must be classified. Correct classification is one of the first steps in a scientific description. The accuracy of all further study depends upon the accuracy of classification...The most common division divides the folktale into fairy tales, tales of everyday life and animal tales.”(4-5)

Thus, the folktales of the Sangtams can be therefore be classified into different sections based on the theme. They can be classified as nature tales, stories of children, cruel in-laws tales, fables and assorted tales.

#### 1. Nature tales:

##### 1.1. Müföh and Xuh.

1.2. The Fly and Rat.

1.3. A Bird called Pipui.

## **2. Stories of children:**

2.1. A Boy that Transformed into a Bird called Dekhe.

2.2. The Two Orphans.

2.3. Thongrünoking.

## **3. Cruel-in-law tales/ orphan tales:**

3.1. Evil Deeds do not go Unpunished.

3.2. The Two Brothers who Transformed into Monkeys.

3.3. The Separation of Two Brothers.

## **4. Fables:**

4.1. The Repentant Fox.

4.2. The Toad and the Frog.

4.3. The Ant and the Grasshopper.

## **5. Assorted tales:**

5.1 Even if We Work With Torches Lit, We Will Reap only that Which is Predestined.

5.2 The Sun and the Rooster.

5.3 How Men and Tiger became Enemies.

## **1. Nature tales:**

1.1 *Müfüh and Xuh.*

Before men learned how to build machines and fulfill his needs through artificial means, his existence was dependent upon nature and what he could hunt, cultivate and forage. The close affinity with nature allowed him to observe the varied natural

phenomenon happening around him and also seek and learn philosophical life lessons from it. One such process of learning from nature is the story of *müföh* (bonsum) and *xuh* (bamboo). The story goes that long long ago in a certain part of a thick forest there lived *müföh* and *xuh* as neighbours. They happened to be good neighbours and always helped each other in times of need or trouble. It is said that they both had their own unique physical and mental quirks and traits which were quite opposite in nature. Physically, *müföh* was healthy and handsome. But his friend *xuh* was the opposite; he was lean and thin. When it came to matters of mental ability, *müföh* was not very bright and a simpleton while on the other hand his friend bamboo was really intelligent and smart. But inspite of the differences they were good friends and neighbours and lived next to each other harmoniously.

One fine day, a creeper plant called *Singkhum* who was a gypsy and did not have a home to call his own came to *müföh* seeking shelter. The ensuing conversation between *müföh* and *singkhum* was overheard by *xuh*. Being intelligent and wise *xuh* could foresee that no good would come from providing shelter to the homeless gypsy and so he called his friend *müföh* to his place and advised him, “Once we allow this *Singkhum* to live with us, then we will surely be killed by his roots. So you should not permit him to reside with you.” *Müföh* took the advice of his friend *xuh* and he politely refused to grant *Singkhum*’s request. When his plea was declined by *müföh*, the creeper *Singkhum* next went up to *xuh* and made the same request. But *xuh* also sensing the outcome in the near future, politely refused saying, “My dear friend, I am supposed to set out on a journey in the next couple of days so I cannot allow you to come and stay at my place.”

When *xuh* refused to accept his request, the creeper *singkhum* went back to *müföh* once again and made another sincere request saying, “I am a gypsy, an orphan and homeless. I have neither food to eat nor cloth to wear, please let me live with you.” Hearing these pitiful words *müföh* felt pity and forgetting his friend’s advice, he permitted *singkhum* to live on one its branches for a while. A few years passed by with *müföh* not feeling any harm being caused upon him by letting *singkhum* live with him. But gradually *singkhum* grew its roots deep and firm and its leaves also developed and spread all over the branches of *müföh*. As a result very soon *müföh* was choked to death by *singkhum*.

Based on this folktale, Sangtam parents advice their children saying, “It is better not to associate with people with flawed nature even if one feels compassion for them so as not to land oneself into trouble.”

### 1.2 *How the Rat got its Name Yongmüza.*

As per the Sangtam tradition only men used to sharpen cutting edge of tools. The fly being a woman and only a widow, was unable to sharpen her dao. As there was no one to sharpen her dao, and the rat being a man, he invited him to her house one day. As the rat came to her house, on her request, she requested him to sharpen her dao with the promise of a gift in return to the rat. She said to the rat, “Dear rat, I am a widow and I have no man to sharpen my dao. Therefore, if you help me, I shall give you a special rice beer in return.”

The rat on hearing this replied, “First I shall drink the rice beer, after that only I shall sharpen your dao.” She agreed and hence served a full mug of rice beer to the rat. The rat drank it to his full satisfaction and then hurriedly went away without sharpening the dao.

The poor widow fly was very annoyed with the behaviour of the rat. So, out of anger, she gave him a name *yongmüza* which means ‘drank but not sharpened.’ Since then the rat has been called as *yongmüza* by the Sangtams even to this day.

### 1.3 *A Bird called Pipiu.*

Once all the birds that lived on earth convened a meeting. It was also mandatory that every bird had to participate in it. However, as it was not feasible for everyone especially the young and the aged to attend the meeting, it was decided that each group would send their elected representatives. Thus, on the day of the meeting they discussed on various agendas one after the other. One of the most important one was the “Solution of drinking water crisis.” One of the participants stood up and said, “During the dry seasons we always face scarcity of drinking water. We have to undergo innumerable sufferings due to this. We must find a solution.”

All the participants in the meeting suggested a number of ideas on how to solve this problem since this was not for the birds alone but a common problem ailing all the creatures that lived on earth. After serious deliberations, they finally came to a decision

that on an appointed day all the birds on this earth would dig a well in their own respective places and severe action would be taken against anyone who failed to comply with it.

All the representatives at the meeting agreed and thereafter the meeting was concluded. On the appointed day all the birds from all over the world dug the well except the one bird called “*Pipiu*” (tsanglaoquh). The *Pipiu* could not participate in it due to an important engagement on that day. All the other birds that had dug the well got furious at him. So they decided that *Pipiu* must be prohibited to drink water from the well dug by them. Consequently *Pipiu* had to depend solely on rain water and on drops of dew for his survival.

Since *Pipiu* could not go to the well and drink water from it and the rain was irregular he would pray to god to send rain from the sky by singing “tsingür-tsingee-tsingee” whenever it felt thirsty. Even today, it is believed that it causes rain whenever *Pipiu* sings “tsingür-tsingee-tsingee.” It is also considered a bad omen when *Pipiu* sings “tsingür-tsingee-tsingee.”

## **2. Stories of children:**

### *2.1. A Boy that Transformed into the Bird called Dekhe.*

Once there were two brothers in a village who were orphans. They lived a life of misery and poverty since their parents had died very early. In spite of their difficult circumstance, they lived a life of honesty and integrity. The brothers relied upon themselves and worked hard in their field for survival.

As always, one day they went to their field for weeding. The elder brother entrusted his younger brother to look after their lunch packet in the hut. When it was noon, the younger brother felt hungry as it was time for lunch. So, he called his elder brother but his elder brother replied “Please wait for a while, I have not finished my work.” Since the younger brother was feeling very hungry and was impatient, he called out to his elder brother again but the second time too the elder brother replied the same. After some time, he called out to his elder brother for the third time saying “*Ima, Ima, Ima*, (brother, brother, brother) come soon, I am too hungry.” The third time too, the elder brother responded just like the previous two times. The elder brother did not turn up to the hut even when it was dusk since he wanted to finish off the work first and this made

his younger brother very upset. Finally he climbed up a tree called *khingkhasih* that was growing nearby their hut calling his elder brother for lunch crying out “*Ima, Ima, Ima.*”

It was for a while that he sat on the branch of the tree crying out “*Ima, Ima, Ima*” and gradually he began to transform into a small bird. After transforming into a bird his voice changed to “*Dekhe*” and he started jumping from branch to branch on the *khingkhasih* tree chirping “*Dekhe, Dekhe*” waiting for his elder brother.

The sun had set and it was already evening when the elder brother finished his field work. As he returned to the hut, he could not find his younger brother there. While he was looking for his younger brother, he came across the small bird that was chirping “*Dekhe, Dekhe*” and jumping to and fro on the branches of the *khingkhasih* tree. It took a while but ultimately he realized that his younger brother must have transformed into that bird. He deeply regretted his being late in returning, but it was too late. He came to the conclusion that what had happened was irreversible and that there was nothing he could do to change it. Before leaving the hut, he ate half of the food that was in the lunch packet and left the other half on the branch of the plant. Thereafter he left the hut for home leaving his younger brother who had transformed into a bird. After a few days, when the elder brother went back to the field he found that the leftover meal which he had kept on the branch of the *khingkhasih* tree had been fermented.

The Sangtam people believe that due to this incident the quantity of rice beer will be increased if the yeast is prepared with the seeds of this plant. Even today, the Sangtam people use this seed to prepare the yeast to increase the quantity of rice beer. Moreover, from that day on, the small bird was named “*Dekhe*” due to its chirping sound. Since it is believed that the bird transformed from a human being, it is revered. Hence, except elderly people, it is considered taboo for the young to eat its flesh.

## 2.2 *The Two Orphans.*

Long time ago, there were two orphans. They had to work on the field for their survival since there was none to look after them. They never complained about their fate though life was harsh for them rather they worked diligently. On a particular day, after working the entire day under the scorching heat of the sun, they returned home exhausted and hungry. To their utter surprise, they saw that their kitchen floor had been swept clean and all things tidied up. This caught their curiosity and they were inquisitive as to who

could have done them such an unexpected favour. This happened for some days and it made them more curious.

One day they hid themselves somewhere in a corner inside the house. As they awaited the arrival of the mysterious person to show up at their kitchen, they were taken aback to see that it was none other than their parents. The father began to sweep near the pillar in a corner and the mother near the hearth. Seeing them, they whispered to each other to catch hold of their parents. The orphans clutching and holding on to their parents earnestly requested them to take them to the place where they lived.

The parents did not have a heart to refuse them so they agreed to take the boys with them. They happily went to the celestial village with their parents but their happiness was short-lived. The people from that village reprimanded them for killing grasshoppers and other insects. They chided them by saying “These two boys used to kill us, so they must be sent back to their village”. Disheartened, the parents said to the boys, “The villagers are unhappy with us because you used to kill them. So, both of you take the bundle of cane and go home. As soon as you reach home make fire with this cane. After the fire starts burning you call your uncles. They will come to your aid and surround the fire. But they will be injured by the cane and as a result of it both of you will die. When you die, you will come back to this village and live together with us”.

As advised, the boys carried the bundle of cane and went to their village. Accordingly they burnt the bundle of cane and called their uncles to come and surround the fire. Immediately after they surrounded the fire, the cane burst off and injured all of them. But for the orphans they both died and their souls went to the celestial village where their parents lived. Thereafter they lived together with their parents forever.

### *2.3 Thongriinoking.*

When his parents went to work in the fields, the boy was left alone at home all day to look after his baby brother. The boy tied his brother to his back with a cloth so that his back would be free. And he wanted his hands free so that he could do what he loved doing, which was to make a dao. This is what he liked to do, to listen to the spirits as they instructed him on how to strike the metal on the stone and fashion out a dao. The contact of metal on stone produced a ringing tone and created exciting sparks and the boy thrilled to hear and see this. But sometimes the sparks would fly out and burn dots

on his baby brother's face and on the sling cloth where he sat. One day, many sparks flew out and burned his brother's face, and the cloth. Their mother on seeing them when she got back home, scolded the boy bitterly for not taking better care of his brother and also spoiling the cloth. The boy was unable to tell his mother a word of what he did everyday while she was gone. He could not begin to explain what he was being instructed by unseen powers, that he loved the sound of the metal against the stone, that he felt alive doing that. So, taking what metal there was and some stones, he left his home and his village that night, travelling on till he came to a village in the lands of another tribe.

There it is said, he lived and made many daos and showed to people how to make them, and soon everybody came to know that the best daos could be got from this village. The only stone that the boy could not carry was the biggest one, so it remains there in PhirAhi village bearing all the marks of the boy's industry. People name it Thongrünoking, after the boy's clan name Thongrü and the word 'dao' nok and the word 'hit' king. When they first saw it and realized what he was doing, they said, "O, we didn't know, we did not see what he was doing, and his mother scolded him and he went away." They wished that he could have told his mother, "Mother, I am making a dao," and then his mother would have seen that, and understood everything and he would have remained in the village. But, things are the way they are.

### **3. Cruel-in-law tales/ orphan tales:**

#### *3.1 Evil Deeds do not Go Unpunished.*

In a village in Sangtam area, there once lived a happy couple. Unfortunately, after giving birth to a baby girl, the wife fell ill and passed away. The husband could not take care of his daughter properly and it caused him great grief. Thinking that re-marrying would ease the task of taking care of his child, he married another woman from the same village. Unfortunately the woman he chose for a wife was not a good person. In the presence of her husband, she pretended to show affection towards the child and cared for her but in his absence, she always ill-treated the daughter. Whenever she misbehaved or committed even the tiniest of mistake, she reprimanded her very harshly. She used insulting words when scolding her, did not feed her properly and gave old and ragged clothes to wear. This made the daughter very sad and she lived a life of misery. Gradually, the father came to know about the ill-character and misbehavior of the wife

but he patiently observed all that was happening in the hope that one day she would change her character.

One day the husband had to set out for a journey to the neighbouring village. Before moving out, he asked his wife to take care of her step-daughter, to which she agreed. But the seeds of evil had already been sown in her mind and she had already planned to kill her step-daughter. Failing to attack and kill her without a genuine reason, she devised a plan to kill her. On the pretext of pounding the rice, she called out the step-daughter to come and assist her. She told her step-daughter that they will pound the rice in the mortar (thsang). While they were pounding the rice, she asked the daughter to push with her hands the rice grains which had spilled out back into the mortar. As she did so, her step-mother crushed the hands of the step daughter with the pestle. Her hands bled profusely and she cried bitterly in pain but the step-mother paid no heed to her plea to relieve her of the work. Rather, she told her step-daughter to push the rice into the mortar with her feet. As she did so, the step-mother again crushed the feet of the step-daughter. As a result of the severe torture meted by the step-mother, the step-daughter died on the spot.

Thereafter, at night the step-mother secretly took the corpse to the dense forest and buried it there. After a few days, in that very spot a beautiful flower began to bloom. It so happened that the father had to pass by the very spot where the flower was blooming while returning back home from his journey. Thus, when he saw the beautiful flower blooming, he wanted to pluck it. As he attempted to do so, the flower said, "My father, do not touch me. In your absence, my step-mother had killed me." Thereby the flower narrated the incident to her father in detail.

After reaching his village, when he did not see his daughter at home he asked his wife "Where is our daughter?" in response she said, "I do not know where she has gone." Then he recollected the incident, which had been narrated by the particular flower on his way back home. Thereafter, he confronted his wife and directly told her that he knew that she had killed the daughter during his absence. He further made up his mind to avenge his daughter's death.

The following day he took his wife to the thick forest and leaving her alone in the forest, returned home. Hunger and exposure to the elements soon took the life of the

evil step-mother and news of which reached the fathers ears. Thus, the evil woman met a dreadful end as was deserved by her dreadful deeds.

### 3.2. *The Two Brothers who Transformed into Monkeys.*

A mother is the source of care, love and affection. The void left by the absence or demise of one's mother cannot be filled by any treasure on this earth. It is especially heart breaking when one loses their mother when they are young and such circumstances might compel that person to wane away. One such instance is the story of two brothers who were transformed into monkeys. It so transpired that in a small village there lived a man and his wife and they were blessed with two sons.

Unfortunately through a cruel twist of fate it so happened that the mother died when the boys were still very young. After the demise of the mother, the father was unable to look after all their needs and provide proper care by himself. Thus, the boys were left in a pitiable state. The father could also see and feel the misery of his children. Finally he could bear it no longer and so he thought that if he re-married a new wife, she would be able to take care of them. Thus, he got married again but unfortunately the step mother turned out to be a wicked woman. She was spiteful and always showed step motherly treatment towards the boys. Her one selfish thought was on how to get rid of the boys forever. One day she suggested to her husband that their two children should sleep in the field for cultivation. Unaware of her trick, he obliged. So the next morning, he took his sons to the field and told them that they might have to sleep in the field for work. They were very obedient to their father so they agreed. Their father returned home in the evening leaving his sons behind in the field. The next day, the father arranged lunch for his sons but in the absence of her husband, the step-mother ate up their lunch and filled the lunch basket with ashes and bamboo shoot and went to the field, she served them with these as their lunch and said, "This is the lunch sent by your father. So you may eat it." (Chodongse, 59).

In this way, every day the sons saw only ashes and bamboo shoot for their lunch. Since it was not possible to eat those, they would throw them away near the hut. For their survival, they would trap birds around the field and ate those trapped birds and vegetables as their food. For many days they did not eat curry and rice. But they did not grumble about it. They always worked in the field to complete the task assigned by their father. The sons also used to send some of the birds they caught to their father through

their step-mother. They would tell your step-mother to convey messages to their father to send rice and curry for their lunch but she never brought them. As a result of it, they became very thin and weak. They suffered miserably and their looks also became like monkeys. But their step mother would only say, “Your father is telling you not to come till you have finished the field work.” (Chodongse, 59 ).

Their father heard from some source about the fate of children in the field and was worried about them. So one day, he secretly prepared lunch for his sons and went to the field. When he reached the field, he could not recognize his sons. He only saw ashes and bamboo shoot around the barn. Learning the truth from his sons, he got angry with his wife. He shed tears and said, “My dear sons whenever you see pumpkin, cucumber, maize and other crops in our field, you can eat them as much as you want.”

Unfortunately, the two sons transformed into monkeys. The father pensively returned home in the evening. On his way he collected many fruits from the jungle but he did not eat any rather he gathered them in his bag. In a pensive mood he kept recollecting the incident that had been narrated by his sons. He was filled with so much of disgust with his wife for the inhumanly treatment towards his sons and was unable to forgive her and wanted to do away with her. As this thought ran through his mind, he saw a big snake under a tree. With a determination to put an end to her life he approached the snake and said, “If you kill my wife, I shall give you good food.” The snake agreed to this. The man then put the snake into his bag and covered it with fruits. No sooner than/then he reached home, he told his wife to remove the fruits from the basket one by one. As she put her hand into the bag, the poisonous snake bit her and she met the tragic end of her life as a consequence of all the wrongs that she had done to the two sons.

### *3.3 The Separation of Two Brothers.*

Once upon a time, there lived two orphan brothers in a certain village. They lived together in the same house and after a few years the elder brother got married. The younger brother loved his elder brother very much but unfortunately his sister-in-law always ill treated him as they lived together. One day, she said to her husband, “Your younger brother is very lazy and disobedient. If you do not get rid of him from the house, I shall go away.” The elder brother was blinded by his devotion to his wife and so the next morning he said to his younger brother, “Today we shall go to the forest and do some work there.” The two brothers went to the thick forest and on reaching there,

they climbed up a big tall tree with the help of Athümpong (bamboo spikes). After reaching the top his elder brother said, “You eat your lunch here. I shall come back soon.” While climbing down from the tree, he removed all the athümpong so that his younger brother could not climb down. Then he hurried back to the village. When it was about to be evening and his elder brother did not return the younger brother called out to his elder brother but there was no response. He cried out bitterly but still he did not get any response. He tried to climb down but could not because his elder brother had removed all the spikes. There was no one to help him to climb down the tree and he thought what to do. When he looked down, he saw many animals and birds passing through. They were returning to their respective resting places. So he requested them to help him down from the tree but none were able to help. Some kind-hearted animals took pity on his plight and suggested that the flock of birds called zuzubelarü might be able to take him down. So, he waited anxiously for the arrival of these birds. As he was waiting, suddenly the flock of zuzubelarü passed by singing zu-zu-zu. He requested them to take him down with a promise saying, “If you take me down from this tree, then in winter I shall offer to you a great feast.” They agreed but since he was doubtful of their ability to bear his weight, he asked them to remove a big stone that was lying down near by the tree before helping him down. The birds easily lifted the stone chanting zu-zu-zu and carried it away to another place. Since they had proof of their strength he asked the birds to take him down from the tree. Accordingly, at once they flew up and carried him down to the ground. He was so grateful to the birds for their kind-hearted act.

Thereafter he went to a village that was not very distant from the forest. There he build a home and cultivated a field. With hard work and determination, within a short period of time he became a rich man. As promised when winter approached, he prepared a feast for the zuzubelarü. Beside these birds, he invited many friends and relatives including his elder brother and sister-in-law. All the guests enjoyed the feast with great joy and merriment. At the feast he gave special food and rice beer to his elder brother but only bones and ordinary rice beer to his sister-in-law. After the feast, he said to his elder brother and sister-in-law “While going you must not go together. You must take different roads. I shall send my dogs to keep an eye on the both of you and you should feed them on the way.”

As his brother and sister-in-law were ready to go back to their village, he packed them lunch to eat on the way back home. For his elder brother, he put meat with bones and ordinary rice but for his sister-in-law, he packed sticky rice and meat without bones. At the time of their departure, he ordered his dogs, “You go with them after they finish eating their lunch packet, you kill them”. His elder brother and sister-in-law began their journey back to their village by taking two separate roads. On the way, the dogs followed them as directed by their master. On the way both of them fed the dogs with portions from their lunch packets. As the dogs took time to finish off the bones and rice from the elder brother’s lunch packet, the dogs did not kill him. But the dogs could easily swallow meat without bones and the sticky rice from the lunch packet of his sister-in-law. So, the dogs chased after her and killed her. When the dogs returned to their master he asked them about what had happened on the road. The dogs said, “We have killed the wife as you have instructed”. As evidence, the youngest dog vomited the finger of the wicked wife. The younger brother scolded the dogs saying I was just joking but you have really killed her.” The dogs believed what their master said and regretted what they had done. And that was the tragic end of the cruel sister-in-law. Since they could do nothing to resurrect her, they felt themselves no unworthy to live in the house of the master. They ran away to the jungle and soon transformed into wolves. When the dogs did not come back home for a long time, the rich younger brother went in search of them. At last he found them as wolves.

#### **4. Fables:**

##### *4.1 The Repentant Fox.*

Once, a fox lived in a village as a member of the village community. He was however very cunning and untrustworthy because he had always betrayed others. By being cunning and deceitful, the fox amassed large quantity of wealth and led a life of luxury. Moreover the fox associated only with other wealthy people and did not care for nor helped his own brother who was poor. All it ever thought was about its own well-being. The villagers soon got tired of his cunning ways and tricks and hence decided that it was unsafe for the villagers if such an untrustworthy member lived in the village. Therefore, the village community planned to get rid of the fox.

Shifting cultivation was practiced by the people and also the village community also had a common field and everyone used to work together in the community field on

fixed days. As is common in this system of cultivation, in order to clear an area for a new field, they used to set fire to and burn the trees and shrubs during the early spring season. Thus one year when the season for burning a new field came, the villagers went to a part of the forest and set fire on it. The fox and his elder brother too went along with the rest of the villagers. The trees were to be cut down to be used for timber. So, the village elders assigned the job of cutting down the trees to the fox saying, “you are the right person who can cut down the trees in the field.”

The fox agreed to do the task assigned to him by the village elders. He went straight to the middle of the field and started cutting down the trees. While cutting down the trees he chanted “Hulo O-Hee-Oho-Hee-Helo” to imply that he was working tirelessly and also to imply that he was cutting down the trees by his own self.

While he was busy cutting down the trees, the villagers set fire from the lower part of the field with the intention of burning him to death. The flames gradually surrounded the entire area with the fox stuck in the middle and continuing to cut down the trees. When the fox realized that the fire was approaching him and he had nowhere to escape it dug a hole beneath a big tree. The fox would dig the earth for a moment and then he would cut the tree again chanting the same rhyme “Hulo O-Hee-Oho-Hee-Helo”.

Finally the fire reached the spot where he was cutting the tree. The fox immediately entered inside the hole which he had dug and hid there. But the villagers thought he was already engulfed by the fire.

After the fire subsided, the fox hurriedly ran to the main road and laid down flat in the middle of the road pretending as if he was already killed by the fire and that someone had thrown its dead body there. He also applied some fermented soya beans in his mouth to attract flies. As he laid there on the road, the flies came buzzing around his mouth. When evening approached, the villagers returned to the village. Thus, on their way back they saw the death body of the fox lying there on the road. When they saw it some of them said, “We must not touch him because he was killed by fire.” While some others said, “The tricky fellow is lying here.” Still some said, “He deserved to be killed.”

Lastly, his elder brother also came and saw him lying on the road. He then plucked some tree leaves and chased away the flies that were buzzing around his mouth. With

the same leaves he beat his younger brother's body as a sign of sanctification murmuring "You were rich and had many wealthy friends, but had neglected your elder brother in his bad times. When you were alive, you never knew your elder brother. Today you were killed by the fire, but no one mourned for your death nor touched your body. But I, being your elder brother will take care of your death body."

On hearing this, the sly fox got up and embraced his elder brother and repented with tears, "I am not dead brother. I had only been testing the people. Today I have learnt a good example. When the ill fortune comes in life there is nothing like one's own brothers and sisters."

The fox deeply regretted neglecting his elder brother all those days. With a regretful heart, he carried his elder brother on his back as a token of repentance and they headed to the village together.

The fox being rich ordered his servant to slaughter the fattest pig in his house. He then butchered the meat into parts and gave the best portions to the elder brother saying, "I apologize; when I killed or trapped animals I did not share the meat with you. When I offered the feast to the village, I did not gift you meat."

The remaining meat he gave some portions to his friends who had remained loyal and spoken in favour of him. He gave bones to those who had spoken against him on that day. After this incident, the fox realized the importance of brotherly love and began to show great care towards his elder brother. He also realized the importance of distinguishing between true friends and fair weather friends.

#### 4.2 *The Toad and the Frog.*

Once, a family of toads and a family of frogs lived side by side as neighbours on the bank of a river. Both the families had girl children who were of the same age. The girls were playmates and usually spent time together. After a few years, the female frog got married and in due course of time gave birth to two beautiful daughters. However the girl toad due to her ugly features was not liked by anyone and no one wanted to get married with her. As the daughters of the lady frog reached girlhood, they became as beautiful as their mother. Their father took pride in their beauty. So, he prepared a grand feast to celebrate the birth anniversary of his youngest daughter. Many guests

were invited but the spinster toad who was a good friend of the wife during their childhood days was not invited and left out.

The feast and celebrations continued long into the night. The guests merrily enjoyed the celebration by eating, drinking, singing and dancing together. Thus they created quite a din. The spinster toad also heard all the sounds of merry making and wished she could join the party too. But alas! She could not do so as she was not invited. Thus to appease her yearning to be a part of the celebration she decided to quietly go out and watch them from a distance. That is when the mother frog saw her and approached her. On seeing this, the toad expected some courtesy from her old friend. But, instead of inviting her to the party, the mother frog said with a sneer: “you are uninvited because you are so ugly! Your presence here would be so disgraceful. So go away from here.”

In utter shock and disappointment, the spinster toad left the place immediately. She was taken aback because she never expected such a scornful expression and treatment from her former friend.

A few days after the incident, it was evening and the toad was feeling very lonely, so she went out for a stroll. After walking for a while she stopped to rest upon a rock by the bank of the river. Incidentally, the family members of the frog too came out to the same location where the toad was resting. They sat there in a row, merrily croaking together and displaying their beauty. Their croaking was so loud that it could be heard even from quite some distance. The poor toad sat there silently listening to their croaking.

Since the frogs croaked so loudly, a man heard their voice from the village. When he heard the croaking he wanted to get hold of the frogs and cook them and prepare a delicious meal for himself. So he went to the river bank and searched for the frogs with light from with his tsibong (a bundle of sticks bound together tightly and burned as a lamp) he caught the frogs one by one and roughly threw them down to the bottom of the basket. As the man searched for more, he saw the toad sitting on the rock. By seeing the toad, he said to himself “This is not edible. Its skin is too coarse.”

So saying the man left with the frogs sparing the ugly toad. Seeing what had happened the toad murmured to herself “Pride goes before a fall.”

### 4.3 *The Ant and the Grasshopper.*

There once lived a grasshopper and an ant who were good friends. Even though they lived in different places they kept in touch by regularly visiting each other. One summer the grasshopper went to visit the ant. After exchanging pleasantries, the grasshopper said to the ant, “Oh! My friend! Why do you always keep yourself busy in your work?” The ant replied, “Grasshopper, my bosom friend, I collect soil to build and repair my house and gather food grains during summer for the winter months.”

On hearing the ant's reply the grasshopper sneered and mocked the grasshopper by saying, “Life should not spent being constantly at work. One should also relax and sing song joyfully too.” The ant quietly replied, “If only you work hard during the summer season, then when winter comes you will not have to face starvation.”

Hearing the ant's reply the grasshopper felt insulted and walked off in a huff.

Thereafter, the grasshopper being very proud hopped and crawled over the leaves of trees and snags, merrily singing songs and roaming here and there. That is the manner in which he wasted all his precious time the entire summer. But for the ant, he kept working diligently day and night even exposing himself in the scorching heat of the sun. He even worked and toiled in the heavy rain collecting food grains for the winter season. Whenever he had spare time, he would not relax but kept busy constructing and making repairs to his house.

As winter approached, the leaves of the trees were withered and ripened fruits were fallen on the ground. By and by the land became dry and desolate. All the leaves on the trees had dried up and become brown; summer was over and food had become scarce. As a result, the grasshopper could find any food for survival. He searched for food high and low but couldn't find any. Gradually the grasshopper became weaker and weaker and even its face started to become pale because it could not get regular meal anymore. Finally he could not even muster the energy to move his limbs. Desperate and hungry, he flew from tree to tree in search of food using up the last of his energy. Finally he fell to the ground and in exhaustion and hunger he breathed his last breath. But for the ant, since he had gathered and stored food grains in his granary during the summer he had bountiful food in his house. He ate as much as he desired and lived without any hardship. One day when he went out of his house for a stroll, he saw his friend the grasshopper lying dead. He felt pity for the fate that had befallen his dear friend but

there was nothing he could do. He surmised that the ill fate that had befallen his friend was self-invited and if only the grasshopper had heeded his advice, it could have been avoided. Thus, filled with much regret and pity he went back to his house.

## **5. Assorted tale:**

### *5.1 Even if We Work with Torches Lit, We will Reap only that which is Predestined.*

In the early period, it was a tradition for the people to compete for assets in terms of livestock and grain. In order to display their achievements and wealth the rich offered feast of merit to the community and provided rice grains to the needy. This was done so as to become popular and gain fame in the community. Thus, in order to become rich one had to work harder than others. Moreover, in those early days there used to be dearth of cultivable land and hence one had to toil more than the requirement if they wished to squeeze as much harvest as they could from their fields.

During those times, in a small village there lived a hardworking man called Thsihpichum. He was blessed with a loving family and had many children. One particular day, it struck his mind that he should become one of the richest men in his village. He therefore resolved to take it as a challenge to display his feat to his friends. He began to spend most of his time working in the field. He worked tirelessly and even slept only in snatches. In his endeavor of becoming a rich man the rice beer mug served as a motivating factor. Whenever he worked in the field, he would keep/place the mug a certain distance away from him and would not touch it till he had completed the work upto the designated place. When he reached the spot, he would lift the rice beer mug and drank from it. He would then relax for a while to recoup his energy. This way of setting a goal helped him to cultivate a large area of the field in a single day's work.

His hardwork no doubt helped him gather large quantity of food grains in his granary. This gave him a sense of contentment and enthusiasm. He then thought with confidence, "I must become the richest man in the village and for that I should work ceaselessly. I must devote more time in the field by working even at night clearing off weeds. "

One evening he sent his wife and children home to take rest and told them to bring his lunch the following morning. No sooner had they left, he made bamboo lamps to burn at night. He lit up the torch and kept it in front of him. Moreover to ensure that he did

not tire himself easily, he began to work by chanting loudly “Hoey, Hoey, Hoey”. As he continued working he heard a strange voice, “Oh! Thsihpichum, Oh! Thsihpichum, even if you spend most of your time working, you will receive only as much as is destined for you like everybody does.”

This perplexed him and he paused in his work and stood there trying to reason out what he had just heard. As he remained motionless, he again heard the same voice say “Oh! Thsihpichum, Oh! Thsihpichum, even if you spend most of your time working, you will receive only as much as is destined for you like everybody does.” Finally, he realized that it was no other than the voice of Luh Tsingrang (god of the field). Heeding the advice of the god he thought and came to the conclusion that, since now that he had become one of the richest men in the village, he should be contented. Consequently, he decided to spend only the requisite amount of time working in the field and devote his time to other social responsibilities too.

### *5.2 The sun and the rooster.*

In the beginning God created everything including the sun and the earth and everything within it. Everything was created with a purpose and with their own roles to perform. But after some time there arose amongst some animals a dissension against the sun as it was sending strong heat upon the earth causing lot of discomfort to all creatures. They began to boastfully proclaim that they could live on earth without the sun. When the sun heard these boastful words, it got angry and disheartened with their boastful utterance. So in ire it decided not to appear and give light to the earth anymore, hence it disappeared and consequently there was complete darkness.

The disappearance of the sun had caused utter darkness to engulf the earth. During the period of darkness, all the humans, animals, insects and whatever creatures that lived on the earth faced a lot of unbearable miseries and problems. Whatever they had gathered for their livelihood such as food, firewood, water, grains etc. were exhausted. Many people became homeless as they could not trace their way back home once they stepped away from it. They felt hungry and thirsty but helpless as the earth was in complete darkness. Thus, there occurred chaos and confusions among the creatures on the earth. So on the third day all the creatures that lived on earth such as humans, animals, birds and so on convened an emergency meeting. In the meeting, they resolved to request an appointment from the sun and apologize and also beseech it to reappear on the earth.

On the appointed day, all the delegates of humans, animals, birds and insects went to the sun and made a fervent request to forgive them for their boastful utterance and requested him to come back. But the sun remained adamant and did not listen to their plea instead he simply replied, “I always give my energy and light to all of you but you have done nothing for me.” He further said, “You create light by yourselves and thus do your work!” the delegates had to return home without any fruitful result. Furthermore there was no other means left for them to appease the sun.

Thereafter, all the creatures on earth unanimously decided to make another attempt by sending the rooster as their spokesman to approach the sun once again. The reason for selecting the rooster was that, he was innocent, stately and polite. The rooster humbly said, “I am a small creature unfit to convince the mighty sun but if all of you insist, then I will do my best to convince the sun.” So the rooster agreed to go and appeal to the sun on behalf of all the creatures. The rooster preened his feathers to the best presentable appearance and proceeded to the sun to deliberate. The rooster said, “Almighty sun, the creator God had created you in a very special way. You are mild, affectionate wise and good looking too. You do good job for others without expecting anything in return. But we have made a great mistake by complaining against you. A small creature like me is not worthy of approaching and requesting you but I have come to request you to kindly forgive us and come back.”

The sun replied, “I have given the best of me to give light and heat to the earth but everyone in it has complained and blasphemed my name. So I will never come back to the earth”. The rooster replied, “Mighty sun, if we were wise like you, we would have never committed this mistake. But now all the creatures have realized their grave mistake and are regretful for what they have done. Therefore, I promise on behalf of all the creatures that we will never complain against you. We will thank you for your return to the earth. All the creatures have fervent hope that you would return to the earth, shining and glorious. If you do not come back to the earth, we will neither see your light nor feel your warmth and all big and small creatures will surely die.”

The sun retorted, “Whatever and however you may request I will not return for I am deeply hurt.”

Rooster again said, “Mighty sun if you come back, I will praise your name on the whole of the earth. I will announce your coming and going and will crow to mark your

presence wherever you are. Therefore, I request you to come and go on a cyclical basis.”

Sun replied, “If all the creatures were wise like you, I would have already come back to earth. But alas! There is none like you.”

Even though the rooster pleaded for a long time it was all in vain and the sun could not be convinced. The rooster was much disappointed as the sun remained adamant.

Finally the rooster said, “Well if you are not ready to listen to my plea, I have nothing more to say. I have come seeking for you through the darkness. I will now return to the earth but if I am attacked by wild cats along the way, you will bear the responsibility.” Saying this, the rooster left the sun and returned to the earth.

On his way while returning to the earth, the rooster suddenly screeched with a sharp sound acting as if a wild cat had attacked him. The sun heard the rooster screech and thought that a wild cat must have attacked the rooster for real. The sun came out to investigate about the situation the rooster was in. That is when the sun realized that it had been tricked and that it was already giving heat and light to the earth. Since then, the sun decided to make a comeback but on a cyclical basis like the rooster had suggested. Thus, that is how the division of day and night on the earth came about.

From then on the rooster would crow every morning before sunrise to welcome the sun. As promised, the rooster would also crow at noon and in the afternoon. All the creatures on earth were thrilled and jubilant and honoured the sun. The sun and all the creatures were well pleased with the rooster and so they decided to give certain privileges to the rooster.

1. In order to save the life of the rooster from its predator- the wild cat, the rooster was allowed to stay near human habitation and live on the husk of grains or rice etc. instead of going to the forest for food.

2. The rooster being a good friend of the sun, whenever there is heavy rainfall damaging the crops in the field, people take the rooster to the field and perform rites by offering the rooster to the sun to stop the rain and also during drought they offer the rooster to the sun to send rain.

3. The rooster is also used as offerings in most of the important rites and rituals.

### 5.3. *How Men and Tiger became Enemies.*

It is believed that in days of yore humans and wild animals shared the same natural habitat and were constantly crossing each other's path. The law of survival of the fittest reigned supreme and humans were at the top of the hierarchy and every other creature was always on the lookout for ways and means to become the dominant being. It was under these circumstances that one day a wolf was wondering in a dense forest when he met a tiger. Taking advantage of his meeting the tiger, the wolf said to the tiger, "you have the power to kill men but till this day I have not been able to kill even a single one. So kindly share with me the idea and the means through which I may also be able to kill man and devour him." The tiger replied "Well Mr. wolf it is simple." Hearing these words the curiosity of the wolf was piqued and so he asked "How is it simple?" Then the tiger explained "When you see a man on the road, you ambush him from above and kill him by springing on his back." The wolf was thrilled on hearing this idea and hence the next day early in the morning, the wolf set out looking for a chance to put into practice whatever he had learned from the tiger and attack and kill a man. As he was anxiously waiting for a man to show up, he saw an old man coming down the road with a bamboo basket on his back. As instructed by the tiger, the wolf hid in a bush above the road and attacked the man by pouncing on his back. But when he pounced upon the man from behind, instead of killing the man, he fell into the bamboo basket which the man was carrying on his back. When this happened, the man immediately threw the bag with the wolf inside it on the ground and chased it away after a sound thrashing. The man suspected that the tiger must be behind this trick of the wolf. It infuriated the man and since then the man also began to look for the chance to kill the tiger. The tiger also came to know about this plan of man and it also decided to kill the man before the man killed him.

Soon the day arrived when the tiger and the man came across each other. The tiger immediately charged and pounced upon the man but the man evaded its attack and escaped unharmed. The man instead of running away took an attacking stance, readied his weapon and counter attacked the tiger. Seeing the bravery of the man, the tiger got terrified. The tiger was so overcome with terror that it turned tail and ran into the thick jungle. Since the day of this incident, the tiger did not dare to come out from the jungle and that is how to this day man and tiger remain as mortal enemies.

Even though most of the folktales may be based on superstitious beliefs and are sometimes irrational, no doubt folktales still continue to serve as timeless stories which help us understand, influence and reflect on our total way of life including our discernment and approach towards life in general. Besides considering folktales as a source of entertainment especially for children, it is also through these folktales that the rich culture and tradition of a certain group/community of people is preserved and it acts as an asset to the community. The stories are narrated not just for the sake of entertaining but there are underlying meanings in the stories being narrated whereby the listeners learn many life lessons. It enables the younger generation to learn from the stories which are imbued with moral lessons and wisdom which would help and guide them in cases of decision making in life. Folktales help in modeling the behaviour and attitude of people by helping them to draw a parallel between the situation and the condition. It also enables them to prepare for life in case similar situations arise or also to avoid such situations which may be unbeneficial to oneself and to others. By drawing a parallel between the characters or theme in the tale to similar real situations in life, one can take the right decision or choice on how to navigate through the situation. Folktales may also help people to incorporate certain character traits which may be beneficial to oneself and the community at large. Character traits like humility, love, trust, perseverance, hardwork, sincerity, empathy etc. can be modeled basing on the tales that had been heard. Hence, despite the art of storytelling slowly vanishing and decreased number of listeners due to the various activities and developments in all areas be it science and technology or socio-political affairs, folktales still continue to be cherished and sought for by the Sangtams. This is so because folktales are not merely tales to please the listeners despite their irrationality or lack of scientific temperament but to a discerning ear they contain many wise lessons and instructions and also act as a means to understand the past and connect to the present.

## CHAPTER 3

### MYTH, SUPERNATURALISM AND FABULISM IN SANGTAM NAGA FOLK TALE.

#### **Belief system of the Sangtam Nagas as reflected in the folktales.**

Belief in the existence of supernatural powers and forces in nature seems to hold a special sway on the traditional and religious beliefs of the Sangtams. Pagan way of life/animism seems to have dominated their every aspect of life until the dawn of Christianity around 1918. It was only on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1918 that a man named Sekyüling and his family from Sangtam village of Tsarü (present day Chare) returned to his native village from Mokokchung district. While in Mokokchung, he is believed to have been seriously ill and owing to his illness, he converted to Christianity with the belief that he will be healed. On returning to his native village, he began to spread the word of God to the people. This day of his return is commemorated by the Sangtam church as the coming of gospel to the Sangtam region. Hence before this period, people worshipped different gods which were based on the observations of nature and its various phenomena.

People believed in the existence of a number of gods and this formed the key element of their religious activities. The people also believed in the superiority of the gods over mankind and hence they revered the gods as the guiding principle of their overall being and existence. The word “Tsingrang” is used in an equitable way by the Sangtams to refer to any such deity (Sangtam Literature Board, 614). These gods were also honoured on the basis of their interaction with nature in their regular life. They also believed that the gods interacted with men through signs and revelations and at times even in some physical form.

The manner of worship was very simple which usually consisted of saying a prayer and offering sacrifices. The sacrificial offerings were mostly in the form of an animal; usually a live rooster, a dog, a pig or a mithun with prayers to the gods seeking protection and blessings in return.

With regard to performing the religious rites and rituals, the *Dhongrü* clan was entrusted with performing the tasks. Such performances and sacrifices were made based on the belief that pleasing the gods would bring prosperity upon them and at the same

time, displeasing them would create havoc and wrath of which the human kind would bear the consequences of their actions. The individuals were also held responsible for their actions and attitude towards the gods as his actions would determine whether they merit the protection and blessings from the gods. Sangtams also believed in Satan or the devil, who was considered evil and the harbinger of diseases and calamities.

### **1. Different *Tsingrangs* of Sangtam traditional belief system.**

Different *Tsingrangs* in the traditional belief system of the Sangtams consists of *Lihjaba*, *Nyü Tsingrang*, *Luh Tsingrang*, *Kuh Tsingrang*, *Nyübong Tsingrang*, *Michang Tsingrang* etc. The regard and giving due respect to these gods are evident from their folktales as some of the tales are directly or indirectly related to the gods and their actions on earth and mankind in particular.

In the past people believed that gods or deities took human forms and interacted with humans. The gods were believed to do such activities as a means of testing human kind and also to bless or punish them according to their deeds. The people also believed in these things out of superstitions and also because most times they could find no logical answers to the happenings around them.

All forms on earth are believed to have been created by *Lihjapa* and hence he is regarded as the supreme god. He is in fact endowed with superior power over all other gods. As the universe is believed to be created by him, ultimately he is considered as the provider of all needs. Likewise, he can even cause natural calamities to befall upon men and bring destructions. Hence, blessings or misfortunes in a person's life depend on how he held his adherence and attitude towards *Lihjaba*. He is referred to as the god of plenty and all other gods give due respect to him. As such there are tales on how *Lihjaba* had bestowed blessings and brought about prosperity to the people based on their conduct towards him.

*Nyü Tsingrang* is the sun God. The sun having possession of the ability to give light and energy freely to all creatures on earth is believed to be a supernatural god. Knowing the necessity of sun and its utility and power, the priest used to perform rites and rituals and offered animal sacrifice to *Nyü Tsingrang* especially during those years when there is a drought. It is believed that if the sun god is pleased, people would be protected from drought, famine etc.

The folktale on “The Sun and the Rooster” highlights the essential impact of sun over other creatures on earth. Even though the sun is a natural source of light that follows a routine duration of giving out its light to all and sundry on earth, the Sangtams believed in the exalted nature of the sun and considered it as a god. They held the opinion that the presence of the sun on earth can occur in a conducive phase/ manner only if they pleased the sun god. Thus, the belief which is in fact centered on supernaturalism that the sun has the ability to interact and comprehend men’s ways and words is in fact reflected in the tale. The idea of paying reverence to the sun and regarding it as the god that provides heat and light to all creatures on earth is further understood through the tale.

Questions abound in justifying the sun as a supernatural agent in the form of a god. There is no doubt that people had deep respect and regard to even the natural objects and phenomena as the sun. Creatures even could call on to sun to come back on earth which explains the prevalent connection/ knowledge that people had with nature in earlier times. The ability to interact further illustrates on how strong the people were in their belief and communion with nature. The Sangtams through such tale expounds the idea of the coherence between nature and men at such times when equilibrium had been maintained between men as the rational being and all things on earth, be it living or non-living. The closeness that is shared even with such objects has diminished at the present day owing to a lot of changes in the lifestyles of the people. Though the advanced mind refuses to believe such beliefs, the Sangtams in their own way regarded and respected objects in nature and worshipped them which at present are now losing its essence due to the selfish ways of men and scientific advancements at present.

The Sangtams feel themselves both at the mercy of and deeply rooted to nature. The people had a firm attachment to land and forest around them. Agriculture was the main activity for producing food grains and it was their source of income. Therefore, the fertility of the soil was of utmost importance. Even for the daily needs and survival like firewood and other such raw materials, they depended on the forest resources. The people then had no knowledge about fertilizers and hence believed that the quantity and quality of harvest depended on the god of field (luh tsingrang). Thus, the need for good harvest from the fields and for protection of the forest enabled them to hold reverence for Luh Tsingrang. They therefore performed rituals and offered sacrifices to appease and please the Luh Tsingrang at the beginning and at the closure of every farming

activity like slashing and burning, sowing, weeding, harvest etc. As such, respect for environment was also maintained while doing so and a balance could also be attained. The sacrificial offerings would be made in the form of chicken or pig to please the Luh Tsingrang. These sacrifices were also offered to invite the god's protection from illness and death throughout the season.

*Kuh Tsingrang* acts as the guardian of the house and is the caretaker of the entire family that resides in the house. Blessings or punishments depend on whether he is pleased or displeased. Blessings were believed to be showered upon the family that offers him sacrifices during all important occasions. Likewise his displeasure would incur punishments in the form of diseases being sent upon the household members. Therefore, every care was taken to ensure that the *kuh Tsingrang* is always appeased.

It is the rain god *Tsing Tsingrang* who showers rain to the people and the crops that have been planted in the fields. Prayers are made to *Tsing Tsingrang* seeking for productive yielding of crops and green environment. Certain rites and rituals were also performed to invoke rain as well as to prevent erosion.

Even in ancient times, the people were aware that air was essential for the survival of all things in nature. Thus, there were those that worshipped air or wind. The wind god is called *Nyü bong Tsingrang*. The priest would make sacrificial offerings to the wind god to seek its blessings as well as to keep it appeased so that disasters like cyclones do not occur and bring harm to the people and their properties.

Fire is another element which was held in high esteem by the people. It was a major source of energy which made it possible for the food to be prepared as well as provide warmth and light in the dark. Therefore, *Michang Tsingrang* (Fire god) was also worshipped by the people.

There were different ways and rituals to be performed while worshipping the different gods. These were also strictly observed and considered necessary.

### **1.1 The Origin Tale of the Mungmung Festival and the supernatural beliefs associated with it.**

One day the god *Lihjaba* visited an old Sangtam village called Horung. He was in the guise of an old man wearing torn and tattered outfit. It was dusk and he went from door

to door saying “Hühae! Is anybody there? I am a weary traveller on a journey and since the sun is about to set, will you please let me rest for the night at your place?” They responded negatively citing excuses such as, “There is a new born in our house so we cannot entertain guests”, “We have newly hatched chicks and hence providing shelter will be impossible”, “Piglets are being born in the sty and so guest cannot be entertained”, “There is sick people in the house so it is not possible”, “We are in a state of mourning”, “There is no extra bed for guests.” Thus, such proposals and arrogant replies were given. The people made excuses and denied him rest and shelter in their house and turned down his plea. Soon the sun set completely and it became dark. Worried and disappointed, he looked towards the edge of the village and there he saw a dilapidated house there. He went up to it and said “Hühae! Is anybody there?” to which someone immediately responded saying “Yes! What is it?” so *Lihjaba* said “I am a traveller on a journey and since it is already dark can I rest in your house for the night?” The owner of the house who was a widow, stepped out and said, “I live here with my daughter. My house is old and in a pitiable condition. If there is a sudden downpour, the roofs would leak and it would be impossible to sleep. Moreover, there is no food to eat but if think you can bear the inconvenience you are welcomed to come and rest for the night”. *Lihjaba* replied, “Alright. I am grateful to you and it is just for tonight” and stepped into the house.

A little later, *Lihjaba* requested the woman to cook for him as he was starving. To which the widow replied, “I have already told you that there is nothing to eat in the house.”

*Lihjaba* replied saying “It is okay. Just fill a pot with water and keep it on top of the hearth stone.”

The woman did as she was instructed. *Lihjaba* scratched and rubbed his body and produced some strange object which he dropped into the pot. As the water started to simmer, the pot was filled with rice. The widow and her daughter were amazed when they saw this. *Lihjaba* then instructed her to keep the curry pot on top of the hearth stone. The widow again replied, “I have already told you there is absolutely no food at home, not even a seed of chilly”. *Lihjaba* again said that it was okay and to just fill the pot with water and keep it above the hearth stone. The widow did as instructed for the second time. *Lihjaba* again scratched and rubbed his body and producing something

round he dropped it into the pot. When the water started to boil the pot was filled with meat. The widow and her daughter were amazed witnessing all that had transpired. That was how the three of them had a hearty meal and with their stomach filled to the full, they retired to their beds for the night.

In the morning while they were sitting down together for breakfast *Lihjaba* enquired if the widow and her daughter cultivated a field of their own. The widow replied that since she was a widow she did not own a plot to cultivate and therefore was constrained to cultivate a tiny patch of land at the edge of the other people's fields where the soil is mostly rocky. The widow pointed out the said land to *Lijahba* saying that it could be seen even from the house.

*Lihjaba* looked at the field and said, "Yes that is true and even though the field is small and the field is not suitable for cultivation, I will bless the land. So when harvest time approaches, you reap the grains everyday till you have reaped enough grains which will sustain you for a year. And when it is done, snap the ropes of the basket in which you carry your grains. As soon as you snap it, the grains will stop growing in your field." He further added that they will hear a strange sound poh-poh around their house at night and that they should not be scared but rather in the morning they should locate the spot where the sound had been emitted and they should collect whatever it is that they find there and cook it for their meal." Finally *Lihjaba* told them whatever he has confided in them should be kept as a secret.

Thus, after blessing them *Lihjaba* left the house of the widow and went away. That night as *Lihjaba* had mentioned, the widow and her daughter heard the sound and in the morning when they went and looked around the house, to their surprise they found that there were huge quantity of healthy mushrooms which had sprouted at a certain spot. Gladly they collected the mushrooms and cooked it for their lunch. This continued each morning and they relished the mushrooms since it was like meat and fish for them given that they were very poor and could not afford it. The time for the harvest had finally arrived and as instructed by *Lihjaba*, the widow and her daughter reaped enough grains to sustain them the whole year. Thereafter, they snapped the ropes of the basket and there were no more grains to reap in their field. Unfortunately, that year happened to be a harsh year for the villagers and all their crops failed.

On hearing about the bountiful harvest of the widow and her daughter, Lingjang Anariü, a prominent elder decided to visit them. He had two sons- the elder son was named Müchojümba and the younger son was named Pütu. So, he along with a few people went to meet the widow. On meeting her, he enquired as to how she had managed to reap a large quantity of grains in her small and rocky field. The widow told them about the stranger's visit to their village during summer, seeking rest and shelter and how the villagers had refused to help him. And in the end it was she who welcomed him into her home and provided shelter. She also told them about the miracles that he had performed and also how Lihjaba blessed her in return for her hospitality.

Hearing the words of the widow, Lingjang Anar was reminded of how during the summer that year an old and unkempt traveller had come to their village seeking shelter for the night and how none of the villagers had welcomed him. Lingjang concluded and said, "We haven't seen the god *Lihjaba* with our eyes but we must worship him. Maybe it was the god *Lihjaba* who had visited us that time because he had performed so many miracles at the widow's place." Therefore Lingjang decided and exhorted his villagers by saying, "Hai we have heard of the miraculous deed that had been performed by *Lihjaba* at the widow's place and her field. So next year at the onset of harvest time, let us all set aside a day before harvesting the crops and that day shall be a sacred occasion (Mungtsa-mungnung)." He declared that on that day, every household should sanctify the three hearth stones and place good food upon it. He surmised that if it was done then *Lihjaba* would be pleased and bless them with a bountiful harvest.

The following year as *Lingjang* had announced, when harvest time arrived the villagers set aside a day for Mungtsa-mungnung which was five days prior to the day on which harvesting was to commence. On that day, every household performed the rituals to invoke the blessings of *Lihjaba*. Consequently the villagers reaped a bountiful harvest that year.

For many years, Lingjang made the announcement of the day for worship and the villagers continued to reap good harvest. As the years rolled by, he became old and weak. Therefore, the responsibility was entrusted to other clan members. But unfortunately that year instead of a good harvest, all the crops failed and instead the village was afflicted with a plague which took the lives of many. Therefore, the

villagers decided to let Lingjang continue with the task of making the announcement. As a result, the villagers reaped a good harvest.

As the concluding days of Lingjang approached, he said to his two sons- Müchojümba and Pütü that after his death, his name as well as theirs should not be given to anyone in the succeeding generations. If they do so then, they will not have good health and long lives. It so happened that after Lingjang's death the announcement of Mungtsa-mungnung was made only by the Anarü clan but with the passage of time it is now being done by the elder of the village irrespective of the clan he belongs to.

Thus, basing on this story the Sangtams celebrate the Amungmung (Mungmung) festival in the first week of September every year. This festival is celebrated right before harvesting commences. Thus, Mungmung festival as one of the traditional and cultural beliefs and practices of the Sangtams is still observed and practiced today even though with the advent of Christianity most of the pagan practices are frowned upon.

Also till date, none of the Sangtams are called by the names Müchojümba and Pütü. The Sangtams also believed that the particular species of mushroom had been blessed by *Lihjaba* for the widow and the daughter and hence it was considered a taboo for males to consume it. But with the passage of time this belief has ended and nowadays it is consumed by all.

## **1.2 Amüwakeh lung (Fetish stone)**

In most Sangtam areas, peculiar stones were specially regarded as some stones were considered to be divine. These special stones were supposedly dark in colour and even roared at night. They were worshipped as they were supposed to be a source of blessings for the one who possessed it. As such, they were owned and kept carefully by the ancestral people on account of its magical power. Thus, in the Sangtam folklore, stories about certain stones which were believed to possess powers of protection and even warned people on various occasions about some impending catastrophe like attack by enemies are found.

Stone stories like “Kurere Long”, “Yingmangchung”, “Chingmelanglak” which are recorded in *Folklore of Eastern Nagaland* takes the readers back to the time when the Sangtams could rely and relate to such stones which were believed to possess unexplainable powers. These stones seemed to display mysterious powers which were

supernatural in nature. Like in the case of Kurere Long, the stone is perceived to have understood the needs of men. The ability of the stone as a medium to call upon the rain god also illustrates on how men had a close affinity with natural objects that he could even invoke a stone to come to his aid in times of hardships. This power that is endowed with the stone to bring rain which is supposed to have taken place till December 2014 on its demonstration at the Hornbill Festival is however questionable and perplexing to the readers at present as there are no logical explanations to it.

Similarly, the belief that Chingmelanglak, the female stone that saved the village from an enemy raid still fascinates the minds. The belief associated with stone being a female and pregnant when the war was on and how it fought bravely to defend the villagers seems bizarre to the readers. The practice on how the people would drop a twig on top of the stone as they jumped over the stone to get to the other side of the path to help them to make their legs feel lighter seems to be beyond comprehension at present. Whichever powers the stones seemed to embody, there are no rational explanations that can help to ascertain the supernatural powers of the stone.

No doubt all these reflect the rustic and supernatural, superstitious way of life the Sangtams once led before the advent of Christianity. But despite the existence of such supernatural powers around, men however cannot be portrayed as merely powerless and insignificant entities. Men did not live at the mercy of such forces of nature despite the close relation that had been shared between men and nature. Reading from an ecocritical perspective, such tales only reflect on how dearly men was connected to nature in those days that he could even communicate with them in the same manner as between two humans and unfortunately which has now diminished or which has become non-existent. The bond that had once been shared is now tangled and hence cannot be restored. The lore however realistic or logical it might seem to be, the advanced mind still continues to be mystified at such unnatural occurrences and phenomena as it has no scientific explanations to them.

### **1.3 Magic.**

The ancient Sangtam society being predominantly a society riddled with superstitious beliefs, every activity revolved around superstition and magic. Shamans were held in high regard and played an important role in the society. They were believed to have obtained their mysterious powers from nature. This indicates that men could

communicate and learn from nature. Witchcraft or sorcery was considered a hereditary profession as the supernatural gifts or the powers were believed to be inherited by the offspring and thus passed down from one generation to the next.

Sangtams also believe that the death and decay of men is not everything. This is further understood from the tales where it is said that men, animals and even gods lived together in harmony at one point of time. Tales like *How Men and Tiger became enemies/parted ways* also shows that there had been no clear-cut distinction; men and animals lived as one. Men also knew the art of magic and could bring back even the dead to life by recalling their soul. Certain feats were performed where the dead soul were even called back to reside in the body.

The Sangtam tale *khaku* recorded in *Eastern Naga Folklore* illustrates on how men had extraordinary powers to put an egg in a small bottle and even revive people from the death. Under ordinary situation such things seems to be impossible and incomprehensible. The contest with the magician from the plains of Assam and how Khaku outwitted the man simply strikes our minds with awe and admiration for such a man. Such powers which could be exercised by an individual is believed to have been derived through sources whereby the person possesses the tiger as his spirit animal. Thus, even in folktales mentions of ordinary men with extraordinary powers which are in fact rather supernatural and fabulist are found. There seems to be an inter mingling of the ordinary mundane beings with extra ordinary powers and abilities.

In instances where people step over the bones of the tiger or mithun, their spirits would enter their body and this would inflict severe pain in the body of that person. During such times the service of the magician is sought for and who would heal the sick and the suffering. An incantation would first be said by the magician and the germs would be sucked out by his mouth relieving the pain and the trauma.

The magicians could also supposedly communicate with the spirits. For instance, when a person falls ill, the magician is usually consulted. The magician after examining the ill person concludes that the spirit animal of the ailing person has been tied down in heaven and therefore is causing the illness. Thus, later at night the magician communicates with the inhabitants of heaven and implores them to release the spirit of a sick man that has been tied in heaven. On its release, the patient would be freed from his/her ailment.

But such practices have gradually become inexistent due to the arrival of modern education and medicines. The people have also become more skeptical of such beliefs since modern western science and education has taught them to seek scientific proof and explanation for everything they see or experience. Thus, western education and its emphasis can be said to be the reason why such beliefs and practices have gradually disappeared and how men's close relationship with nature has also been affected at present times.

#### **1.4 Life after Death**

The Sangtams believed that the soul is immortal and that there is life after death. The traditional belief of the Sangtams in life after death can be illustrated through tales as such.

The Sangtams believe that when a person dies, his/her soul goes to a place known as Asürüyang. After death, every departed soul has to cross a big river which flows as a divide between earth and heaven. It is believed that there lives a dreaded devil known as Jarongla Atpa who stands near the bridge on the river and waiting for the souls of the dead to pass through. When the departed soul reaches the river, this much dreaded devil would attack and often devour them. Therefore, to save the departed souls from this dreaded devil, the Sangtams used to perform certain rituals which they believe were supposed to trick and fool her.

Whenever a male member of the community died, they would carry the dead body in a coffin to the cemetery. The dead body would be escorted by a group of men who dressed themselves up with traditional attires. They would dance around the dead body, shouting, yelling and brandishing daos and spears as a means to threaten and scare the dreaded devil, Jarongla Atpa. Thus, it is believed that the devil Jarongla Atpa would be scared away from her spot of vigil near the bridge and the soul of the departed person could safely cross the river and reach Asürüyang, the land or village of the dead.

In instances where the dead happened to be women and children, materials such as head-dress and a variety of seed called khuling (name of wild beans) are kept by the sides of the coffin when the death body is carried to the burial place. It is believed that by placing such things, Jarongla Atpa will be distracted by those items and as she is

engrossed in looking at those things the soul will be able to cross the river peacefully without any hindrances.

Sometimes they also put a stick in front of the coffin of the dead body. They did this with the belief that the soul when it neared the bridge would snap the stick. The cracking sound of the stick snapping would make the dreaded devil to assume that the soul was busy killing lice on their hair and hence must not be disturbed. In this way the soul might get the chance to escape from Jarongla Atpa when crossing the bridge over the river on its way to the land of the dead.

Sangtams continue to believe that the soul of the departed person used to live with the family for at least a year. Only after the completion of at least one year, the departed soul would finally leave the family members forever. So that year when the harvest is completed, which signifies that the year is coming to a close, the bereaved family members used to keep rice, dresses and a few grains in the cemetery of the departed soul. This was done with the belief that the dead would consume the food and wear the dress before embarking on its journey to the land of the dead.

The traditional beliefs and tales and also the rites and rituals performed in times of death shows that Sangtams held the belief that death was not the end of everything but rather they believed in an afterlife. The ritual performed to scare away Jarongla Atpa shows that the Sangtams believed that each person possessed a soul and even if the physical body was dead, the soul continues to exist. Thus, the belief in a soul that existed after death can be seen in these instances.

## **2. Different spirit forms as believed by the Sangtam people.**

Before Christianity arrived in the Sangtam soil, the belief that humans possessed animals, insects and birds as spirits seemed to have dominated their world. These spirits in its myriad forms were mysteriously closely associated with the people. The ancestors believed in thirty different spirit forms amongst which the tiger spirit was considered the strongest and grandest form while the locust being the weakest and lowly. The Sangtams believed that in the beginning of the earth there was no clear cut division between light and darkness. Humans and animals were believed to have co-existed in a cordial manner and lived next to each other in complete understanding and perfect harmony.

This is reflected in folktales like “Friendship between Men, Dog and Pig” which is recorded in the *Sangtam Folktales*. This is an often repeated tale narrated by parents to entertain their children, where all three of them were supposed to have resided within the same house and lived together in mutual understanding. Also in tales like “Compassion of Spider”, which is another tale recorded in the *Sangtam Folktales*, the spiders being compassionate towards men protected them from evil spirits by constructing webs at men’s houses. They did so to ward off the evil spirit by making them think that the spiders have constructed the webs and therefore men no longer dwells in the house. Thus, even a small creature like the spider was believed to have shared a bond with men and helped each other in tough times back in those old days.

With regard to the close relation between men and animals, some groups of people are being associated to share souls with a particular animal. Moreover people living in clans identified their communities with certain animals. Hence, such animals were perceived as group ancestors or as guardian spirits. It was also considered a taboo to kill or eat any of these totem animals. However, the Sangtams do not have any such belief about having originated from animals or any other creatures.

All Naga groups seem to regard the ancestry of man and tiger (or leopard) as intimately related. As Hutton noted, even the Ao Nagas believe in a close tiger-man relationship. Through Sangtam tales like “How men and Tiger separated their ways”, it conveys that men and tigers once lived like brothers and shared a very firm bond of oneness. As it is, it is believed that the tiger and men lived in close affinity and were considered as brothers. The tiger had been considered as the elder brother of men.

Hutton has compiled the fullest report on lycanthropic customs among the Nagas. It can also be perceived that human beings could transform oneself into the animal form of the soul. The Sangtams like most of the other Naga tribes particularly the Eastern Nagas as mentioned in *Folklore of Eastern Nagaland*, believed in tiger spirit, which found its manifestation in the human beings.

Tigers were regarded with awe and admiration. They were considered to be the mightiest among all the animals in the forest. Thus, certain people were considered to possess the tiger as a spirit animal. Those men who possessed such tiger spirits were believed to be particular in appearance and also superior in physical strength and abilities.

The fact that a tiger has five claws on each foot is said to indicate that it can receive a human soul. According to the ancestral belief, the tiger, which embodies the man or woman's spirit is no different in appearance from other tigers in the forests except that the particular animal has a strict sense of affinity and attachment to the person whose soul or spirit he is supposed to embody. It was generally believed that injury or death of either the man or the tiger spirit would result in injury or death of the other.

People were also believed to possess the spirit of the mithun and hence the wellbeing of the spirit mithun is essential for the wellbeing of that person. It is also believed that eagles too share their soul with men. When such eagles soared up high and hovered around the village, it was believed to be symbolic of the impending death of the person who shared the eagle spirit. Hence, the person would pass away in a short while.

Even though the snake is much dreaded and despised by the people at present, in the earlier days according to the lore, snake was another spirit form of the humans. If someone hurt the sentiments of a person with a snake spirit, the person would send the snake to the field to destroy the crops as a form of revenge. Thus, people were very cautious of hurting the sentiments of persons who possessed such spirits fearing the destruction of crops given that agriculture was the main source of livelihood. It is also evident from here that since time immemorial the snake had been associated with something that is dreadful and evil and has the ability to cause much harm and disaster to people as well. Not just this, people were believed to have transformed themselves into the snake form.

The popular tale "Müshosing" as recorded in *Folklore of Eastern Nagaland* takes the readers back to the time when men could take more than one physical form and had the ability to transform himself into another form. People still recall back to the time when Müshosing of Langtithongrü clan from Phir Ahi village was a very successful fisherman. As the story unfolds, we learn that he did not till the land as most of the villagers did but rather survived and fed his family with fishes. This caught the attention of the villagers and their curiosity began to grow. The wife on being informed about the unusual ways of the husband put rice husks in her husband's bag and secretly followed him the next morning to the river Thü-ü by following the trail left behind by the husks that had dropped on the ground from a hole in her husband's bag. To her surprise, she found out that Müshosing transformed himself into a snake and dived deep down to the

river. As his horrified wife watched the scene, he caught and brought a good number of fishes in his mouth to the shore. He later curled around the fire he had made earlier and then slowly transformed to the human form. This left the wife in much astonishment and shock.

Later in the evening Müshosing cooked the fishes and served to his wife and children but none of them agreed to eat. This made him understand that his secret had been discovered. He thus decided to leave his house that night. He took his bed, Thsinghsang Chungnung which was carved out of one solid block of wood and walked out of his house. He walked down the same spot where he always fished and slowly transformed into a snake and disappeared forever.

It is believed that Müshosing's bed turned into a stone and can be found near the river. The bamboo walking stick that he left behind before crossing the river is believed to have grown upside down and it had disappeared after a few decades. The pool of water at the bend of the river is called Müshosing Zyü. A big flat stone on which Müshosing used to make fire and warm up himself still remains on the bank of the river. To this day people say that his clansmen are lucky fishermen. It is believed that the clans people of Müshosing, even though they do not transform into snakes, they always net the biggest catch whenever they go fishing.

A similar tale follows on how marriages of women with snakes are believed to have taken place in olden times. One such tale can be recorded as follows:

### ***2.1 The Mysterious Marriage.***

It was an age when all creatures on earth could supposedly communicate with humans and vice versa. In such an era, on a fateful day a group of ladies were working in the field. One of the ladies had entrusted her daughter to look after her younger sibling in the hut while the mother along with friends went to work in the field. After some time, the baby started crying loudly as it was hungry. Therefore, the daughter started singing a lullaby "Oe, Oe, Oe" to soothe the baby and stop its crying. Instead of stopping the baby started crying louder and louder. The mother heard it but she could not come immediately as she was busy working with her friends in the field.

While the young girl was singing the lullaby she heard a strange voice from the corner of the field which said, "You are singing a lullaby Oe, Oe, Oe, but I shall get married

with you by any means.” She was shocked on hearing it but she could not see who or what it was who was speaking to her. As the baby continued to cry she sang the lullaby again and again. She heard the same voice repeat the same words thrice.

When it was lunch time, her mother and friends came to the hut for lunch. After their arrival the young girl reported the incident to her mother and her friends. Therefore, her mother went to the corner of the field and asked, “Who are you? Where are you? In our absence you have spoken to my daughter that you want to get married to her. So you come out and show me your face.”

As soon as she had finished speaking, a huge snake came out from the bush and said, “I shall get married with your daughter by any means.” She too was shocked to hear such shocking, unwanted words from the snake. At first, she refused to accept the proposal made by the snake. But she finally realized that refusing such request would lead to a curse befalling upon her and her daughter. So she finally decided to agree and made the decision to give away her daughter in marriage to the snake. Thereafter, later that evening the huge snake came to the hut and took away the young girl to the dense forest to live with him as his wife.

Soon after, in the late evening, the mother and her friends hurried back home and reported the incident to her husband and the villagers. Her husband and the villagers were shocked to hear such news but they could do nothing about it. After a few years the snake and his wife, the young girl, gave birth to many children who were born as snakes. One fateful day the girl and her husband decided to visit her parents and moreover the girl’s parents were yearning to meet them too.

So on the day of the visit she put all her snake children into a basket and covered with the lid and happily went to her parent’s native village. Her parents warmly welcomed her into their house. Since her parents could not see their grandchildren the mother asked her daughter “Where are my grandchildren?” She then opened the basket and found the children slithering out of the basket saying “Our dear grandfather and grandmother (ija, imaa)”, thus they started crawling all over their bodies. When the grandchildren slithered over their bodies they were disgusted. So, they removed all of them from their bodies and stayed away from them.

It so happened that the daughter did not like to live with the snakes so she secretly reported to her mother. After coming to know about her unhappiness, she advised her daughter by saying, “Tonight you make a big fire near the bed while sleeping together with your husband and children and at midnight you push them into the fire so that they will be killed”. So accordingly, she made a big fire near the bed and as advised by her mother she pushed the snakes into the fire and resultantly all of them were burned in the fire.

A few days later, the daughter was afflicted with some strange skin ailment. Her ailment grew worse during the following days and as a result of which she also expired. The skin ailment which afflicted her was due to a curse which befell her because of what she had done to her snake husband and children.

Till today, Sangtams believe that it is taboo to put a snake into the fire. A person who intentionally puts a snake into the fire will be cursed and would get severe skin infections and will ultimately die.

Supernaturalism and fabulism are the key themes on the above mentioned tales. An aura of mystery seems to fill the reader’s mind on how such transformations could take place. No doubt the Sangtams have their own philosophy and beliefs but conclusions can be drawn that such an incident of transformation cannot be understood by the modern day scientific minds and might hence appear completely unreasonable and unjustifiable in any sense. It may rather seem to contradict with the readers at present and continue to mystify them as such an occurrence is something unnatural and cannot be accepted to have happened at any point of time. Even if in the remote past where the society had been superstitious ridden and deprived of any scientific knowledge or understanding such instances cannot find any validations to support and show that it had actually taken place. It can only be assumed that the philosophy behind such tale is on how it wants to impart the message to the people that there are certain means and ways to do things differently and be more successful than others.

Whatever the efforts of Mūshosing might have been to blend in to be a normal member of the human society and the promises made by his wife, a human, at the time of their marriage; an unexplainable and monstrous relationship based on love in the end all points towards disaster or tragedy. Evidently, even though people had been deprived of the knowledge of science, our forefathers seemed to have understood that humans can

only associate with humans and act accordingly. They recognized the fact that humans can find no way to procreate in harmony with such creatures as the snake. Humans cannot co-exist with serpents in a normal context as they are of different species. And this is proved through the departure of Müshosing and disappearing forever and also the burning of the snakes at the conclusion of the tales.

## ***2.2 The Spirit Tree called Singwa.***

People also believed that there were elves, fairies and imps who were supposed to dwell in places such as near wells or in huge trees in the forest etc. On account of close proximity with nature, men also believed that there lies a spirit in every object of nature. There were particular stones or trees which were believed to possess certain charm or spirits that enchanted men. The tale “The spirit tree called singwa” is one such tale which takes people back to the time when spirits were in different forms and lived amidst men in different objects or places.

It is a fact that the plants and trees in nature are living, breathing entities. They respond and react to stimuli from their surroundings. Humans form a major part of that stimulus due to their dependence on plants and trees for food, timber for building shelter and furniture for comfort. Thus, humans and the plants and trees in nature have always shared a close inter dependent relationship and where each has influenced the existence of the other. Thus, it was very natural for the ancestors to believe that certain trees and plants had spirits through which they interact with humans.

It was in this age of belief in the existence of spirits and fairies, in a certain village lived a lass who was fair in complexion and as such considered a beauty. As was the norm during that time she, like all the lasses of her age performed her share of the household chores which included fetching firewood and water from the village well. It so happened that on that fateful day she went to fetch water from the well like she did every day. It was a sunny day and the heat and exertion of walking to the well caused her sweat profusely. Since she was already at the well and there was nobody around, she decided to have a bath to refresh herself. It is said that there was a particular tree near the well and the name of the tree was called “Singwa.” Seeing her bathe, a leaf of that tree was attracted to her and it spoke to her saying, “Will you sing a particular love song while you are enjoying your bath?” The lass was surprised to hear the leaf speaking but then she recovered herself and she started singing a love song as was

requested by the leaf. A strange feeling of happiness and joy filled her heart as soon as she started singing the song. She returned home feeling ecstatic.

That night, a fair and handsome man visited her place and he visited every night thereafter. Every night they talked and slept together but she failed to recognize the strange man. Though the man visited her every night and shared her bed, she could not muster up the courage to tell her parents about the strange man who visited her. The nightly visits continued for quite some time but eventually the burden of keeping the secret to herself was too heavy and hence she was compelled to tell her parents about the incident near the well as she went to fetch water. She also confided to her mother saying, "O! Mother every night a strange man visits me and we talk and sleep together. But then at dawn he disappears."

On hearing her confession, her mother instructed her saying, "The next night when he comes and sleeps with you, take a ball of thread and tie it to the fringe of his shawl and the other end of the thread should be tied to a basket. Do it he is leaving without his knowledge. And then by daylight, go looking for it and surely you will find him."

The next night when the strange man visited her, she did as was instructed by her mother. When morning dawned, the man disappeared as usual. When the girl along with her parents and the villagers went in search of the thread she had tied to the man's shawl they discovered that the thread was hanging by the leaf of the Singwa tree and the other end of the thread was tied to the basket. To the surprise of the villagers, they discovered that it was nothing but the leaf of the tree "singwa" who visited the lass every night on the pretext of a male lover.

The villagers felt it such a loss for the beautiful lass to be the lover of the tree while many men in the village wanted her hand in marriage. Therefore, the next day the villagers came with sharp axes and daos. They surrounded the tree and whilst chanting they began to chop down the tree. The villagers gave prior warning to the lass that she should not look at the tree while it is being felled. She obeyed the order and stayed hidden in the house. To the amazement and consternation of every one it so happened that although they kept at cutting the tree singwa the entire day yet the tree could not be felled to the ground. Unfortunately, in spite of being warned by the villagers the lass grew impatient and ultimately decided to have a look by peeping through the chinks of the bamboo matted wall. While she was peeing through the hole, a splinter from the tree

flew out and it went directly towards the hole through which she was peeping and pierced her eyes. Resultantly, she became blind which was a curse from the tree.

The story says that once the clan called Jingrū was converted from the tree called “singwa.” So till today, it is believed for someone that it is taboo for Jingrū clan to touch the tree “singwa.”

### ***2.3 The Widower and the Angel.***

In the early period, Sangtams believed that marriages took place not only between humans but it was possible to get married even to supernatural beings such as angels. Thus, there are tales on such beliefs and one such folktale is about a widower who married a fairy. There once lived a widower who led a miserable life as he was very poor. He had no children with his late wife and he lived alone.

One night as he was sitting by himself at home in front of the fireplace, he heard someone calling his name outside his door. As he went to find out who it was, he was surprised to see a fair lady standing there. The lady asked him if she could come inside his house and rest herself for the night. The widower warmly welcomed her despite his poverty. Since it was rather late, the lady was feeling very hungry and asked for food but the widower replied saying “I have nothing to offer you and I am very sorry about that.” Then the lady said, “Don’t worry, you just place a pot over the oven and pour water into it.” Thereafter, the lady scratched her head above the pot. Consequently in no time, the pot was filled full of rice. Then she said to the man “Put the curry pot over the oven.” As advised, the widower placed the pot over the oven and filled it with water. Again, the lady scratched on her hair above the curry pot and to his surprise, the curry pot was filled with pork. It was a meal which both the widower and the lady partook. Thereafter, they mutually decided to get married and live together as a family.

One morning while conversing, she advised her husband to cultivate a plot of land at the edge of their neighbour’s field. As the husband had no option, he paid heed to her words and cultivated a small plot of land as instructed. When sowing season approached, she instructed him to sow the seeds of gourds in the field. Her husband did as instructed. Besides, his wife advised him not to uproot the shoots of the gourds while cleaning the field. One day, while he was cleaning the field, he uprooted the shoots of some of the gourds. Suddenly, a loud sound of thunder was heard in the sky. On hearing

the sound of the thunder, the wife severely reprimanded her husband for uprooting the gourds. And she told him that her father was upset since the gourds had been uprooted.

When it was time for harvesting, the wife asked her husband to weave mats and build a barn. The husband replied “we have no grains for drying on the mat and store in the barn.” However, she told him to do as he had been told. So accordingly, he weaved the mats and built a barn. Subsequently, on harvest time she asked her husband to lay the mat on the threshing floor and when he did so, the wife held the gourds over her head and broke them on the mat saying, “Let this mat be filled with non-sticky rice.” As soon as she uttered those words, the mat was filled with non-sticky rice. Again she started breaking the gourds on the mat saying, “Let this mat be filled with sticky rice” and just like the previous time it happened as she said. As a result of this, they became very prosperous and started living a contented life.

With the passage of time she gave birth to a baby boy. Occasionally, she used to visit her father who lived in a celestial place. On every such visit while returning, she used to bring the leg of a mithun which they would cook and eat. The husband was never asked to accompany her but rather she instructed her husband to meet her at an appointed place on a particular mountain to pick her on her return. She also warned her husband not to come beyond the meeting place of the mountain. So whenever she went to visit her father, her husband used to wait exactly at the appointed place. This arrangement continued for some time but gradually the husband became suspicious of the wife since she went to visit her father only during times when someone had passed away in the village.

Owing to his growing suspicion the husband decided to keep an eye on his wife. One fateful day when a neighbor who was handicapped passed away, the wife as usual left the village and went to visit her father. Therefore, when it was time for her return, the husband instead of waiting for her at the appointed pick up point, went beyond the meeting place and waited for the arrival of his wife. To his astonishment, he saw that his wife was carrying a leg of his handicapped neighbor who had recently passed away. He immediately hurried back to the appointed usual meeting place. When the wife arrived at the spot he saw that the leg of the deceased had miraculously transformed into a mithun leg. The entire way back home the husband kept quiet about what he had seen earlier. On reaching home the wife prepared a delicious dinner by cooking the leg

of the mithun. The husband on recollecting what he had witnessed earlier in the day refused to eat the meat that had been served. This sudden strange behaviour of the husband made the wife come to the conclusion that her secret had been uncovered by her husband. From that day onwards, their relationship became strained and the only course left was for them to divorce each other and be separated forever.

After the divorce, the wife went away to the celestial place where her father resided and the widower was left alone with the responsibility of taking care of his child. The widower could not take proper care of the child and the child yearned for his mother. Most days the child was not properly fed and used to cry in hunger. So whenever the child was crawling in the street, searching for his mother and food, his mother used to drop an object from the sky and as soon as the baby boy saw that object, he licked it which satiated his hunger and he stopped crying. In this way the boy was fed and nourished by his fairy mother who later grew up to a handsome young man.

Most of such tales lacks definiteness in terms of time and space but the event that humans and other creatures separated their ways after being united in marriage is significant. It marks the end of union between men and any other creatures in marriage. The culmination of the union and how later they got diversified and dispersed in different walks of life is what is noteworthy here as it signifies the end of such an unnatural affair between men and other creatures.

The prevalence of such tales also shows how humans and animals have lived together in peace and harmony. In the past co-existence and peaceful balanced relationship had been maintained but now imbalance has been created on account of various factors which has led to the disappearance of the harmonious relationship that once existed between men and other creatures.

It can also be observed that with the onset of colonialism, the Sangtams as subalterns did not have any system of self-representation. Rather the Sangtams are represented as vulnerable and disempowered. To refuse or opt for the indigenous systems of beliefs and practices was not open. In fact the Sangtams as any of the other Nagas, had no power to choose but to follow and change as per the demands of the time. The influence of the church and educational system has in fact changed the way of life of the people whereby the new system are imposed as more egalitarian and compassionate system than the existing system practiced by the Sangtam forefathers. Christianity, western

ways of thinking and culture were considered to be better model in comparison with the existing culture. Often times, the older native cultural practices were considered to be oppressive, irrational and cruel. This has led to the decline of many indigenous beliefs and practices since such practices were gradually shunned and discontinued practice by people owing to the changing times. Some of the traditional practices which were prevalent and practiced earlier amongst the Sangtams are on a decline and hence an alienation has taken place wherein the colonial influence has alienated them from the culture s/he was born into. Even those people who continued to follow the earlier ways of belief system and practices were frowned at. Though some of these practices can still be considered as illogical at present, the people have failed to completely embrace the new system. This can be seen in the traditional practices and some beliefs that are prevalent in the society till date despite its oddness and irrationality.

The Sangtams in general are caught up between their native, ingrained culture and the one acquired by training from the modern education system, Christianity and its indoctrination. We find that the indigenous people have failed to keep up the entire cultural practices because in the process of assimilation with the colonial people, one unmindfully abandons one's own culture and identity as well. But at the same time, it is disheartening that one can never be fully accepted as a completely modern man or say as that of the colonizer despite the efforts and ways to inculcate the new culture and ways of life. As a result, there exists the divided nature of the Westernized native's identity which is in some cases a psychological and cultural dilemma and in other cases an empowering hybridity as a result of the assimilation where one does not totally ignore but at the same time does not fully embrace the new culture.

And hence, the indigenous people, though they try to adapt, the traditional ways still find ways in their daily practices and beliefs. Conclusions cannot be drawn that the Sangtams had been totally changed and fascinated by the western way of life. It can however be only concluded that, the people could not fully adapt the new way of life nor abandon the traditional life and culture and hence the tradition stills finds its way in the modern era.

## CHAPTER 4

### FOLK SAYINGS OF THE SANGTAM NAGAS

Folk sayings are concisely written or spoken expression that is especially memorable because of its meaning or style. It can be a witty expression of wisdom or truth. The Sangtams too have such folk sayings in the form of proverbs and adages. Proverbs are usually short and precise, comprising of a single sentence which can be easily slid into a conversation and can convey a message on what is right and what is not to be done instead of a lengthy explanation. They are wise sayings that give advice or instructions about life. For a discerning ear, these proverbs can be a source of much knowledge and sagacity/ insight since they have come about as a result of many generations of experiences and encounters.

The proverbs (*choyohyu*) and sayings (*tsitsa yu*) of the Sangtams also reflect the general human way of life of the Sangtams. These are spoken and referred to as a source of great discernment/ knowledge. They act as guiding principles that govern the general outlook towards life. These proverbs and sayings are often referred to by the elders to relate to certain situations and help in nurturing the young minds by connecting to the metaphor implied in the proverbs and sayings. In general, they are a source of life lesson, instructing people on what is right and what is wrong, which is wise and which is foolish to do etc. It enables one to be more pragmatic in one's daily encounters and activities. They are pregnant with meanings as they comprise of not just virtues which are encouraged and vices which ought to be denounced but are also exemplary on how to lead a meaningful life and react and correspond according to the situations and circumstances. Sometimes they can be witty and humorous but no doubt, there are underlying life's lessons to be learnt.

The folktales and songs usually tend to be lengthy narratives and they need to be told, sang and listened to with enough time to spare so as to understand the meanings and lessons that is being conveyed. This is where the proverbs and sayings tend to become useful and important. The proverbs and sayings are also a source which enriches the way the language or dialect is spoken since they provide the means through which the speaker can deliver the message in a precise and effective manner through a short witty sentence instead of going into a lengthy speech.

Despite the variety, the geographical locations and space of the origin and use of proverbs, proverbs are timeless as it a part of heritage and they are used widely. No doubt people hold great adherence to it and use it in real life for all those reasons. It is through these proverbs and adages that the knowledge about the rich culture and heritage can be transmitted to the younger generation and preserved for the future years to follow. The following are the aphoristic proverbs and sayings in Sangtam arranged in different categories and their English translations which deliver volumes of meanings:

### **General categorization of Sangtam Proverbs. (Choyohyu).**

#### **Saying atsa.**

1. Aparü kihkha la tüdhrüm niing.
2. Aparü madhsala mih tü yoh.
3. Atsa nguchinunglü khodesü münu mühle.

#### **Yuje.**

1. Abürü mükho la shingcholüh aparü ayübü mütsare.
2. Afühcho tsüde lüh tahre.
3. Aparü khyang thsu thricho la khüpilüh abürüsü hümre.
4. Arakheh la yuchümcho lüh mamohre.
5. Fühpü tsunung tenu chingpü tsung.
6. Jümü yu thüpmücho lüh mamohre.
7. Langpah la joba lung chahlü ayangthrinü müthikehre.
8. Ningchüh hi dhsüza amüpchehchonü mii munitichehre.
9. Tbang fühnye thsüzapung khohnye ningchüh tsü lüh sakho.
10. Yuje mücho nü ariri kuh thsacho la aparünü pümre.
11. Abürü müjü müchohpehcholüh thali mümüyahlire.

#### **Alonglüm saying.**

1. Abürü romi la anyah kehba tsü aparü dunü müdhere.
2. Khupi lüh lahtbingtsih ja nüsü shuh ahazeh chisehre.
3. Nü kang yukheh vakha tsü aparünü khihre.

4. Nüpu tbbang tütichi.
5. Xatsinü nyitsarü khyang atsingse jühde abükhyü sudu tahtsangre.
6. Yapü ashah khyüning tenü pümba tsü atsauba.
7. Yungpi tsü abakyü shulüm umpire, ta hi aparü shulum.

#### **Arangcho.**

1. Amüküprünu mürang tsang tsure
2. Bekhyah mümüirü lüh aparü mühying du rangyehnungthsa kangre
3. Chünye hünakyü khüdu tenü atu hünatrehdi khüdu tsü awüba
4. Dingding müraba singdonglü tsingxinyü bong rode mülakhuti future
5. Honlüh tahnye aririu du tahchehre
6. Idhse tsü mükong kho khanglang lüh akeng mütsare
7. Jing kyang khang besü kyangre
8. Mihchangelü amüsi mülährü dunü khingcheh tsure
9. Mührelung noh thsanye yohpü ducholü dhrongnü tsure
10. Noh tsü athsadenü mükengkhang mükongpü akeng mütsare
11. Nyü bonglüh azong nüsü mühchongtichehre
12. Yujechorü lüh sing, lung nü ming tronung thsa kangre

#### **Yuje lümlong.**

1. Abürü kuhla me jopü kuhrümrü kuhla me tütra püm.
2. Abürü mümükyühnungthsa mürü tsü tü hecheh.
3. Amüking müsih nürü khyang akhüluba nüsohcholüh mülakhüti thungsehre.
4. Amütsa shulüm yu yuchide nangtbing.
5. Aparü luhmung de nü lekhah türohpeh.
6. Anyüzehtlang fährü tbbücho lüh müxore.
7. Aparü chühbha hinung tenü lüh müshemüsuhjungba tsü atsau.
8. Anahtohrünü anahtohrü lang nücho lüh anyühdingnü yongrohla thungyohre.
9. Fühza amükyanglüh mühjichire.

10. Hüna dunü abürü jükhoki mükhümtire.
11. Khiyu ahiiti bicihicho lüh achüh axü rohphohre.
12. Khiyu amütsa nyinung tenü lüh mürongla uza khongcho nyiba tsü atsauba.
13. Kuri tsü müthungseh-enü lakhüm tsü zingli-ing.
14. Nü bha müyehtsiyade nüthsuhsü tümüyehchü.
15. Nü kuthri chah anyah tühehkeh.
16. Nüh tsü lopa rirü thsang ta atphühnahre tüthsa.
17. Tsangtüm ahi-I tülehcheh.
18. Tsuzarü münümüsuh-enü xehnipü tsü tükyah.
19. Yongkhülukih la dhrüdhru kii cholü nguh müzehre.

#### **Dohba.**

1. Dhrongkyü mükhyang chongnye münyire.
2. Misühnlü amüying chahnyesü tu mümüdhre.
3. Michangla müdhejung tahcholü iiyah pü tüyo

#### **Yudsi yura doba.**

1. Alaa tsucholüh müsaare.
2. Alih yuje mücho kengcho khyücholüh alihnü münyüre.
3. Alaa müzahkehra tsucho achangkala abürü müyugzasü mükahsehre.
4. Fühzanu ashüh müyahtpahcho lüh thali müyah nyühdure.
5. Rangmühla singsih anyuh sihba tenü khehla singsi khüdu zehba tsü atsauba.
6. Shuhzyühlüh abüdongrünü tsupü, fühza tilüh shuhrünah chahnü mükahtare.
7. Shühmüshü kyüsehcho tenü uxah kyasehcho uthring hiifüh jengre.
8. Shuhnayaha zeh du chisehnung müküpde khüpilü anümnüm miinü müchixahre.
9. Tsibong bi yuthsahnye ajehcho du maxare

#### **Akang, Asüba ko Mübü.**

1. Akang khüda jasohnung ko sümsohnung hi tsingrangba kheh la zehle.

2. Amüi tsü anahtoh.
3. Asücho me chahlüh anyüpili mütümchire.
4. Asüde apümnü kong tsü sakho alih akihchochola du pehre.
5. Asürü müphahcho lüh asürü nbünü tsure.
6. Asüba hi nyitsarü müipi khehla mürahyohjüre.
7. Asü nyümong chihde singchang chah müxihcho mii mütangnungthsa kangre.
8. Asücho jing chah tümareh.
9. Mülahchirü lüh asüde nahmüyehlrü mühlire.
10. Nü kuthsi apüm tsü nüyo, ta nü sah tsü lüh tsingrangba yo lile.
11. Nitsarünü chungre ta tsingrangbanü tikehjüre.
12. Tsingrangbanü lüh azong tsüsü khakhu nguचेहरे.

### **Tpurüthsaba ko Kukhi.**

1. Atbüicho ko amübüicho tsuzarü tsü sakho müthsare.
2. Chünye nünnü tsuzarü khyang singtang tangjükhang atu hi michah arüh kyahshangnung.
3. Chünye nünnü atsa nguchiba tsü atu nü tsurüti shulüm kuthri lile.
4. Jünirü chah shüh tphehcho lüh shühmülang kehre.
5. Kuh khüdoi thsing thsanyüro, hütsü aichi dongdi tsüsü sohnü khyüm.
6. Khüyalanü aza tsü abükyü kyo du khuhchehre.
7. Müsüh lühlohcho kukhiluh khodesü langchinü mülichehre.
8. Singking khunü tsuzarü akoring saying tsü xüpmüchong.
9. Tsuzarünü atsa nguchuba tsü tpurü khyang kuthri külüpjühre.

### **Alang papa.**

1. Abürü nahtseh lüh shohjo tsiyapü tumüthsa pü tüyo
2. Ailümrü lümlong lüh yüpjode yongmüzanü shodsire.
3. Ailümrü thsibongla lüh akhi tpehre.

4. Akhatochcholüh vohbülunnye khodesü loh müjengre.
5. Akohlungkoh dunü müpchide khongre.
6. Aparü kuh tenü abürü kuh tsü anyiyahuba thsare.
7. Abürü nyihkhong lüh mümüshuhre.
8. Arangyu tsü khüpi lüh kuhmung chah zühdere.
9. Atraba moi tsü münyüba.
10. Chünye shang hi anyah te athruhepü yopa shang lile.
11. Chünye nü nyümong thsaba tsü, atu aparü nyümong thsanung kohle.
12. Dingzi mii anangku kehre.
13. Fühza khyang shuhrünah tsakhuchü jühcholüh tsukhungkhung.
14. Fühza dunü abürü külühcho thali müyahlire.
15. Fühzanü fühza te müh-hungchire.
16. Hiifü la atsung betenü khingcheh tsiko.
17. Hüna-uzasü khüpilüh achüpla mükyühtare.
18. Hünyuh ko hüna nyü achüp khüdula mühlichehre.
19. Izi noh ala kengchicho lüh mülakhüti zahre.
20. Idhse azi tsü pa azi dunü xasahre.
21. Jingneng tsü nyitsarü shulüm athrünyi, ta kih-hüna shülümlü tsuyongnung  
atsauba.
22. Kala mükhamülacholü zagnü mühshemüsuhchehre.
23. Kexe yolalü shüpli-I nü mühmungrangchehre.
24. Khingkhasih dong chahnü khodesü ngurüsih müsihre.
25. Khula khu chungrangre, bhala bha chungrangre.
26. Khüde mikhuh phungro, hüksüla mihchang tsüsü lile.
27. Khünying mathsalü müya-müyahchi amütsau du kangre.
28. Kihjü la mungba uzanü yongkhi anümnüm la lüh müsih mungre.
29. Kih pocho la du nguhnü lichehre.

30. Kuling dupi shuh ii nyesü aku tsülüh ajehchorü dunü kyüsehre.
31. Külarülü arachicho apüm la xümre
32. Merü nüsü dee jichikhang mükyüre.
33. Mihde mihde chongbong nü tütphühzita.
34. Mihchang tru yachola mitrukih tütungyohchü.
35. Mihmüle lalü sünüsü müpümnyüre.
36. Mületsezehrü dunü phüpki shing anyizyah-uba yongchehre.
37. Mürongsing adidi pohkilü sing anümnüm tsü khupsehre.
38. Nahshükih tsü mürürü ko chongcha lirü shulüm lah.
39. Rangdhülüm la kyacho lüh uza tsü müshohjore.
40. Shuh-ii fühzanülü arü bhunung müdhere.
41. Sing khüdu chah tsingchi anyühpili müchire.
42. Shuhrünah la kyodhingpü dunü noh tsü azi-a o alü nang müdhere.
43. Thsüro chah ajüh chicho lüh aparü kanglungrü alimütsanung.
44. Uza nüsü khüpilü khongmehre.
45. Xuh rahlü khodesü müchangre.
46. Yingya khüti rorülü yingya khüdi dsire.
47. Yongkha tsü ayongrünü yongyohchüre ko achangka la yongkhanü ayongrü tsü yonyohchüpehre.
48. Yu hi ading ta hinü lasiking khakhu thrarangre.
49. Yuzeng tsü anahtoh.
50. Fühza mühying lüh rahmüchong nye korengdure.
51. Pava chahlü kih mühzüre.
52. Mikhu mükohrülü kuhlirü mükangchehre.
53. Fühza nüsü abüdongrü lüh tsüpre.
54. Fühzasü akarü lüh homazyüh müyahnung mii münguhre.
55. Noh bichikhang nohnü süre, thsuh bichikhang thsuh nü süre.

56. Nyümong mükhu shuh mükyüsehre.
57. Tsang mühmüicho lüh tsangnü drü tsire.
58. Tsang mühmürulah be la yongkhülukih pohyoh süre.

### **General categorization of Sangtam proverbs- English translation.**

#### **Courteousness.**

1. Do not muddy the waters of some other person's pond.
2. Do not rub salt on other people's wounds.
3. It is never too late to do good.

#### **Honesty and Sincerity.**

1. One cannot scold others on hitting one's knee.
2. It burns when you eat that which is stolen.
3. One might fall into the trap that one laid for others.
4. Bearing witness to falsehood will incur a curse.
5. It is better to borrow and eat than to steal and eat.
6. Misinterpreting/ misrepresenting the words/ stories of our forefathers will cause curse to befall upon us.
7. Everybody stumbles on a rock/stone that is laying on the middle of the road.
8. Bad reputation cannot be cleansed even by the shiny horns of mithun.
9. The bad reputation for stealing a needle or a mithun is the same.
10. A palatial house build through dishonest means will eventually belong to someone else.
11. Do not lick back the spit that you have spat out.

#### **Humility.**

1. The dirt on our face can be seen only by others.
2. Sometimes even a normal stick can kill a ferocious animal.
3. The story of your life is like a book that is read by others.

4. Do not beat your own drum.
5. The torch made of bamboo splits burns itself out while providing light to humans.
6. Better to sit quietly than to stand and be embarrassed.
7. A flower blooms not for itself but its beauty is for the beholder.

**Perseverance.**

1. Only the hardworking ones get to eat.
2. Those who do not value time are bound to end up holding on to the tails of others.
3. A mother hen tomorrow is better than an egg today.
4. A weak rooted tree is easily felled when the storm hits.
5. The more gold is burned the shinier it becomes.
6. Iron cannot be beaten into shape once it cools down.
7. The tongue will get wet only when the feet gets wet too.
8. Only the bold can snatch something from the middle of the flames.
9. Even a good dao left unused will be covered by rust.
10. The dao should be forged while the metal is hot.
11. Even the mountains cannot block the wind.
12. Even the wood and stones come to the aid of an honest man.

**Prudence.**

1. Do not mourn over the dead at the neighbour's house whilst there is one at home.
2. Do not tease a snake lest you get bitten.
3. Letting an inexperienced person drive a car can easily lead to accidents.
4. Turn a deaf ear to ill spoken words.
5. Do not hurt yourself while working on someone else's field.
6. Grain laid out to dry in the evening will never be dried properly.
7. Better to sit idle than to carry someone else's burden.

8. If a blind leads a blind, both are bound to fall into a gorge.
9. A mad dog should not be teased.
10. Only a hen overturns a basket and covers itself with it.
11. Narrating the undesirable stories of the past will only result in undesirable consequences.
12. It is better to listen to the birds chirping in the forest than to listen to ill intended gossips and rumors.
13. Pull the reins before the galloping horse crashes.
14. While your basket is swept away by the river, do not let your spear be swept away too.
15. Do not smear dirt on your own hat.
16. Be a builder of bridges not a wrecker of it.
17. Do not reopen old food packets.
18. Do not weave the carrying cloth of the baby before the baby is born.
19. Casting fishing nets in gutters will catch no fishes.

**Stupidity.**

1. No matter how long you cook, a wild taro cannot be cooked.
2. Only cattle stay unawares even when it loses its tail.
3. Don't bemoan if burnt while dealing with fire.

**Greed.**

1. Overeating causes choking.
2. Anyone who snatches land using dishonest means will eventually be swallowed by the same land.
3. Gluttonous eating may cause one to bite one's own fingers.
4. Once a dog tastes blood, it craves for it again.
5. A fruit in hand is better than two in the forest.
6. After the flesh is eaten by the owner, the dogs squabble over the bone.

7. Sometimes killing a wild fowl is more beneficial than hunting a deer.
8. Sometimes while trying to hunt big toothed wild boars, even the smaller ones are missed.
9. Even if we work with torches lit, we will reap only that which is predestined.

### **Life, Death and Religion.**

1. To make a life shine or dim is all in God's hands.
2. Love is blind.
3. Do not hit a dead body twice.
4. The measurement of the grave is the same for all.
5. Excessively missing the dead will lead to the dead to take us.
6. Death is put into the hands of everyone.
7. Even a twig can be the cause of death when the intended time approaches.
8. Do not hold on to the feet of the dead.
9. An arrogant person would not have anyone to close their eyes on their death.
10. All your material assets are your own but your breath belongs to God.
11. Man proposes but God disposes.
12. God can see even through mountains.

### **Parenthood and Family.**

1. Guided and unguided children are not the same.
2. If you construct a platform for your children today they will rest upon it tomorrow.
3. The good deed that you perform today will be crown for your children tomorrow.
4. Spilling the blood of one's own kin will be cursed.
5. The higher you wish to build your house, the deeper the foundation should be dug.
6. A crow always hatches its offspring in its likeness.

7. The household that has a loose hearthstone cannot stay warm.
8. Bad manners in children can only be corrected through canning.
9. The good deeds of the children are a crown on the head of the parent.

**Assorted proverbs.**

1. Do not say it is okay while your eyes are drooping.
2. The thoughts of the poor are spirited away by the rats while they are asleep.
3. The purse of the poor has holes.
4. Once spilled, the basket cannot be filled fully even after it is gathered.
5. Empty vessels make much noise when hit.
6. One's own home is more comfortable than someone else's.
7. A personal ornament is never to be lend to someone else.
8. Sometimes secrets may get shouted out from the rooftops.
9. The medicine for tears is laughter.
10. Today's era is one where white is called black.
11. The day or time you call yours today might be someone else's tomorrow.
12. Even the walls have ears.
13. Give the dog a bone and it will definitely eat it.
14. Only a dog licks back its own vomit.
15. Dogs don't bark at other dogs.
16. Snatched out of the pot just before being cooked.
17. Sometimes even chickens fight in their coops.
18. A wild cat and a hen cannot live in the same cage.
19. Tempering a hard metal too much will make it brittle.
20. Only metal can cut metal.
21. The earthworm may be detestable for humans but it is a delicacy for ducks.
22. A capsized turtle cannot turn right side up easily.
23. Other smaller birds cannot flock together with the hornbill.

24. A bitter gourd plant will never bear fig leaves.
25. A round basket can only be fit inside another round basket.
26. Where there is smoke, there is fire.
27. Repeatedly licking the wounds of a tiger will only make it worse.
28. Birds of the oceans cannot survive in small rivers.
29. Fishes can survive only where there is water.
30. No matter how uphill and downhill the chase is, the prey/game is always killed by a fateful person.
31. It always stinks wherever the mink passes.
32. The snake bites only when teased/disturbed.
33. Don't fling mud/dirt when near to each other.
34. Do not add fuel to a burning flame.
35. Nobody likes to sit on top of a burning flame.
36. The wine tastes sweeter to the one with a sweet tongue.
37. Smaller trees cannot survive beneath larger trees.
38. Tears are the necklace/ornaments of the poor and orphans.
39. Birds roosting in shrubs cannot be shot.
40. Hunting dogs can smell/sniff the prey.
41. Lightning never strikes the same tree twice.
42. Only after cutting a bone, the quality of the dao can be ascertained.
43. If horns grew on elephants, other smaller animals would not be able to survive.
44. Sometimes even birds fumble while chirping.
45. Scars of bamboo can never be erased.
46. Those that come lightly will go away lightly.
47. Man drinks wine but eventually the wine drinks the man.
48. Words are empty but it can pierce the heart.

49. Law is blind.
50. Even if a dog's tail is straightened it will curl back again.
51. Water does not stay stagnant on taro leaves.
52. A person who cannot bear the smoke emitted from a fire cannot keep a servant.
53. Even a dog recognizes its owner.
54. The last dogs do not get to lick even the leftovers.
55. Those that use dao will die by it, those that use spears will die by it.
56. Every hunt does not guarantee a kill.
57. Those who do not cherish/value food will be detested by food in return.
58. Those that waste food will die with slushy water in their mouths.

### **General categorization of Sangtam Sayings.(Tsitsa Yu).**

#### **Akünyang.**

1. Adekhingrü zaa müngangmüchongcholü aparü tenü alaa chongcha-nungthsa kangre.
2. Akanung khodesü tümüküp.
3. Amüwa tsü ajangjangnü mürore ta ihsanü yangchipü dunü nguhre.
4. Bekhyah hi ihsanü ii shangre.
5. Müküp nguchicho la tsingrangba nüsü trore
6. Nahdhingkeh mülipü khodesü nguchi tünguchi.
7. Nguchipü tsuba tsü akyüuba tsuchehre.

#### **Aparü lümlong nyichehba.**

1. Ailümrü ko jahloh-hilorü münyodhingcholü, ihsa chahsü kehre.
2. Aparü mütrorü chii chahlü sünüsü müyanyüre.
3. Bürü khyang tüpnyüh-tihnürülü amüwa duv ala nguhre.
4. Bürü chongcha tsü nüpu chongcha roh-isü müi lümchehng.
5. Kuhlirü mümüimüthsümrülü apürü du alaa mükyahshangchehre.
6. Nahshükih sho nguhnü aparü türahmütsa.

7. Nguchi atsa shulüm khodesü tümüthoh.

**Yuje.**

1. Abürünü thsamehpü aparü mütangba tsü amünyi anyüüba shitpahre.
2. Arahkkeh yu adrong yohrütanye yuje yu khüdu tsü müchürore.
3. Bürü kihyohchürülü nyümong khüdu abürü akangsü aparünü kihyohchünung thsa kangre.
4. Kuhshihrü ariri la lipü künyang liba tsü atsauba.
5. Lede arakkeh yu chorülü khüdupi yuje chode miinü apartünü müyutsinung thsa kangre.
6. Mürü kyo aparü kihyohchünung tümüküp.
7. Nüchah müyutsinungthsa arakkeh yu tucho.
8. Nüpu nguchi mükokchehcho shulüm aparü khyang mühlang tüjü.
9. Rang tsunung tenü lüh mihsa tsuba tsü atsauba.

**Yujelümlong.**

1. Achangchi münguchicheh nung thsakang nguchi tsü müdikehjungcho atsauba.
2. Ahohah pü müyonungthsa, müzahjung nguching.
3. Ajingcho müliba nguchi shulüm bekyah tüpeh.
4. Akhutsicho shulüm bekhyah peh tüthüp.
5. Akohsha nguhnung bete yubejarong chürore.
6. Amünyi nguchila khodesü hongtüzi.
7. Aparü süreko nü h mii sünung tü müküp.
8. Arorü rahla müxohnungthsa müzahng.
9. Asühcho kohro lihnung tenü mülihjungba tsü atsauba.
10. Be mührahsehrü te khodesü arangyu apüm düyo.
11. Bürü künyangsohnyüh denü aparü akang achongcha suhrola züdunung tüthsa.
12. Chomehpü meh sahnung denü lümdhingpü chong.
13. Chünyeh thsamekhkhang atu lüh müthsamehnung mükupm.

14. Düzodhingpü nguchiba tsü atsauba.
15. Emohpü yoba khu athsatsü lanü khümchore.
16. Lümüsünü khodesü adhrongcheh tükhyü.
17. Münguchehe linü lümchung tsü chung.
18. Khüdupi rihlong chüro denü akang ayung kohshanungthsa tünguchi.
19. Münguchichehnung thsakhang hi adikehdinü münguchijungba tsü atsauba.
20. Nühnü nü yangthsarü türuhvacheh, ta api chahnü amüwa khyüning müküpm.
21. Thstso dhingpü nguchiba tsü atsauba.
22. Yu nyiyahrü rah la müxohnung müküpm
23. Khanglang belang thing nü lang tsehng.

#### **Saying kangli.**

1. Ajümjümrü saying tsü apümnü thrünyire.
2. Akha aci lümlonglü sünüsü mükhyünyüre.
3. Amüthsingyucho tsurüepü yonung thsa nü saying düli.
4. Amünyi nguchinü nü thsatsüde nühnü hi rangchokhang achangka la nühnü akoh kuthri tsü thrichehnung.
5. Ashah ayah müliba nyitsarü tsü kanglungrü denü tu pa mühle.
6. Bürü chahnü jengreng ngunyühkhong akhuti nühnü aparü khyang jengreng Jehng.
7. Bürü saying amütsa tsü lüh khodesü tü dhingcho.
8. Emüthsa amütsa nguchiba la hong zichölü asüba ko akohsha du mütohre.
9. Jengreng jühnung müjhühnung tsü palu saying chah kehre.
10. Kuhthsi la ailümrü thsanye, lümlong la ailümrü tüthsa.
11. Lung kyo nü lümlong dringdring ling.
12. Nü yünü aparü müsi lihng.
13. Nüyu te müjang nü nguchi khunü nguhsöhng.
14. Nü saying tsü aparünü vakha thsa khihre.

15. Nü tsah mülíchínung mükoh, ta nü sayinglü mülíchínung kohle.
16. Yu tsü alihnü lihcho kyo tücho.

**Yudsi yura doba.**

1. Alaa be kyüchosü ilüm du ropohre.
2. Alaa müruthsachosü, akohsha hireore ko arorüsü chürore.
3. Alirünü khodesü kuthsi la nahkoh müjengre.
4. Atohrü milüh khodesü müjengre.
5. Fühpü kuthsi thüpchölü adongmücho lanü kuthsi tsü changre.
6. Kuhthsi müphah denü nü nbü tüchangso.
7. Nüh du mijeng tsukhang, aparü lüh du tsunung?
8. This tsü athsütah, ta hi yurü tükang

**Mübü.**

1. Bürü tsacho nahmoba tsü amünyi lile.
2. Dangkhidangnang tsü nü thsunohrü yola atsauba lile.
3. Dangkhidangnang nye müngnuchi khang asücho.
4. Emüthsa arakhehla yuzi tüya.
5. Nühnü choba, nguchiba hiri apüm shulüm nyümong mükhu tsingrangbanü hodingre.
6. Rangchonye ami-ili rangchong.
7. Yu tsü akang.
8. Yu hi tsingrangrü jizyüh lile.

**Müthsehmüla lo Alonglüm saying.**

1. Abürü lohla mütsacho shulüm palinü mümünyüdhingchehre.
2. Aronung shulüm lümdhingnü nü yuchong.
3. Ashahchonü yangsehnung denü lüh mehshahpü ching tsung.
4. Bürü dikehba tsü khodesü akohsha mühle.
5. Chingkichingnangrü tüthsa, ta aparü khyang anyajührü thsaang.

6. Chünyeh mülahmüsihba tsü atu sümning kohle.
7. Mülichijü thsingyude khodesü tülaling.
8. Nühnü lümba du tsü yuje-epü tülüm.
9. Nüh lili tsacho shulüm tümüthseh, dunüo atu tu kangnungnang mümüdhe.
10. Nü tsacho shulüm nüpunü sekhang, aparülü tu ningdang senung?
11. Nü khyang atsa nguchiba shulüm lede aningse jühng.

### **Shangrü ko Kuhrümrü.**

1. Aführü te mükhongcholü abürüsü afühnung du nyichore.
2. Amütsa nyitsarü te khodesü sakho tütsha.
3. Kuh mütrangtaba tsü rangnü rühyangtaba du kyole.
4. Kuhrümrü de kehtaba khu arüku du alaa nguhre.
5. Lümlong lirü de shangrü thsaang.
6. Mühlang pehjung ko hi nbüchü pehng.
7. Nü rorü de shangrü thsanung müküpm.

### **Amüi ko Kuhkangba.**

1. Ahungrü te mükhong kuh kangcholü ahung-atrah changre.
2. Amüi tsü nguchi khu nguhsong.
3. Anii pohki müliba khingkurülü sunüsü jengreng müjühre.
4. Kuhthrimüchühba tsü ahasünung kehle.
5. Kuhthriba hi limih bhamüling hinung adikehdi lile.
6. Kukhi zashocho khu tsüzarü lümlong tsü thsangnyangjühre.
7. Kuhkangba thsühdi tsü kangla thsühti adiuba.
8. Longmühlangtacho khu amüi tsü changre.
9. Mülümdhingpü nyitsarü amütsa te kuhkangba tsü mihtru michah pümcho kyole.

### **Langrüba, Yuzeng ko Yuzengyu.**

1. Akhingchi ngupü dunü yuzing tsü drüre.
2. Amütsa nguchinung la athrungrü tütsha ta atsa nguchila athrungrü thsaang.

3. Khode yuzing münyinung dikehro hütsütade athsangnyang tsü dikehre.
4. Kuhthsi müphahnü amülungla anüchirü tüttha.
5. Langnürünü thsamehba tsü singkumüle lanü shohjoba du kyole, tunüo müyürü tenü alaa ashah khyüre.
6. Nüh anüchirü thsanyükhang akhudi aparü dikehng.

#### **Kikhang ko Amüwa.**

1. Akuhrü tsü khüpilü akanung thsa kangre.
2. Amüwa tsü palu kikhang.
3. Athricholü dunüsü müyaticehre.
4. Chongcha tsü nü chah du tikehrepü tülüm.
5. Thside müdrerülü alirü müthsare.

#### **Tpurüthsaba ko kukhi.**

1. Alüm-müjngrü tsuzarü dunü tpurü ruhvachehre.
2. Amüi müliba tpurü tsükanglungrü tenü tu papa mühle.
3. Amüthsingyucho tsuzarünü aparü saying te müphishuhre.
4. Amüwa tsü nü tpurü chahnü khyünung müküpm.
5. Aroh kikhha la yongrü amüi tsü aparü denü pathsa thsare.
6. Atpa amüi tsü hon denü awüba.
7. Bürü lilitsacho shülüm lanü kukhila tüyübüta.
8. Jüniru tsü ashu lanü müitaba tsü atsauba.
9. Kukhhi azikyo thsaba hi akünyang adiuba lile.
10. Kuhthsi müphahba denü tsüzarü müphahba amii tsü adiuba lile.
11. Khanglang belang thingnü nu lang tsehng.
12. Kuthsi shangrü denü jünirü amüi tsü adiuba lile.
13. Nahnü nguhba tsingrang tsü nütpa-nüu lile.
14. Tpurü ruhvachehrülü amüwa münguhre.
15. Tpurünü thsingyude tüpungthsungrülü thsürü du mütohre.

16. Tsutpü-jüni ashuh lanü müitaba tsü atsau thsare.

**Akang ko Asüba.**

1. Akang hi khüdupi suhrore ko khüdupi du süre.
2. Akang hi nyitsarü amütsa shulüm ahasünung, ta nyitsarü atsa shulüm lü alongnyüpnung.
3. Akang hi müsuhchehnung athsah, ta thsangnyangnung tsü amüla.
4. Amünyinü achangka la asüba hire.
5. Asüba nyümong chihde sünüsü mütrahkhu mütsichehre..

**Alang papa.**

1. Achongcha hi alimih yahdue.
2. Ailümrünü hatsuhayongre, alirünü rikire.
3. Akengtarü limih la chünye ihsa lire.
4. Akünyang hi amüshuh due.
5. Amülung tsü nünhnü mümüdhekhung khüda amülungnü nühd müdhenung.
6. Amükehta khu achangnah tsü chürosahre.
7. Amükehta mülungla motsingnü mülakhüti nguchire.
8. Arah zehrünü thohnü nguchide arah müzehrülü akhekhe nguchingungthsa kangre.
9. Aparü trode ajingcho khyünung tü müküp.
10. Atsa lümpü nguchi de dunü khüpilü manümre.
11. Be müding pü emthsa yu tücho.
12. Bürü chah ngakeh du liba akanglü khodesü bürü müh-iiphühre.
13. Bürü ning alaa sejonü ajingcho khyünung tümüküp.
14. Chongcharoto tikehde khodesü müsi tösüm.
15. Chünyeh nühdü atsa nguchiba ningse tsü limih müchangtashi li du lining.
16. Fühza romih hirü dunü aparü te müshahre.
17. Fü tsaying liba tsü hon nüsü mülühcheh.
18. Khüpilü arorüh chahsü tsikehnungthsa kangre.

19. Kunu bekhyah hi atu akang shulüm arungnümba thsidi bekhyah khüdu lile.
20. Limih nyü bong te phihshuhnungthsa nü kang ling.
21. Longphihrachosü khüpilü mühtikehre.
22. Lümlong mükyahshangecho khu kutsüp kyopehre.
23. Lümtrüm nguchicho khu nguchi akoh nguhre.
24. Lümjingjung nguchiba chah khu apa tu mühle.
25. Lümkücha lanü nü thsidi bekhyah tükhükhangsoh.
26. Melangmelangnü nüyu tücho.
27. Mehshühnungede shüh thothore.
28. Nguchi khu saying tsüsü rangchehre.
29. Nguchi atsa khu tsah tsüsü tangsohre.
30. Nühnü aparü rahmütsanung shulüm khodesü tüthsingyu.
31. Nyichopü münguchinung tenü münyingchoba tsü atsauba.
32. Sechirachosü semare.
33. Tsuxahyuxahrülü tsürü du mütohre.
34. Yu mühliba tsü amarüh la pümcho kyole.
35. Müküp nguchicho la tsingrangba nüsü trore.
36. Nü chah kehba saying amütsa khu aparü tümüthikehsoh.

### **General categorization of Sangtam Sayings-English translation.**

#### **Deligence.**

1. The child of the rich will face more hardship than others if he/she is lazy.
2. Never aspire to be the last person.
3. Success does not come by itself rather it must be sought.
4. We are the ones who have to chase after time.
5. Even God comes to the aid of a hardworking person.
6. Never work by changing your aims and objectives.
7. It is sweeter to eat after working hard for it.

**Empathy.**

1. If you make fun of the poor and handicapped, the same fate shall befall upon you.
2. Nobody wants to stand besides someone who doesn't help others.
3. Those that are eager to share are blessed even more.
4. The pain/suffering of others should be pitied and considered as one's own.
5. Those that do not love their servants will only end up losing their peace of mind.
6. Do not deceive someone who is crying.
7. Never be fed up of doing good deeds.

**Honesty.**

1. Blaming others for one's own mistakes is same as committing two sins.
2. Speaking many lies cannot transform falsehood to truth.
3. Those that are dishonest will someday face the same.
4. It is better to live happily in a shack than to live unhappily in a mansion.
5. Those that lie all the time are not believed even when they speak the truth.
6. Do not try to deceive others like a serpent.
7. Do not speak lies lest people distrust you.
8. Do not put the blame on others for your failures.
9. It is better to eat in the open than to eat while hiding it.

**Prudence.**

1. It is better not to begin if it cannot be completed.
2. Be prudent if you don't want to say "Alas".
3. Do not waste your time doing worthless tasks.
4. Do not waste your time talking about the past.
5. Misunderstanding precedes catastrophe.
6. Do not be stubborn for an evil work.
7. Do not kill yourself seeing others kill themselves.

8. Be quick witted lest you fall into the enemy's trap.
9. Better to end up not buying anything than to buy broken goods.
10. Do not tell all the secrets to those with unchecked tongues.
11. One should not please others at the expense of one's happiness.
12. It is better to think and speak than to speak out a mistake and pay penalties.
13. Mistakes committed today should not be repeated tomorrow.
14. Work/action preceded by careful consideration is the best.
15. Being able to say no can save one from temptation.
16. Do not make decisions halfheartedly.
17. Make plans while considering what is ahead.
18. In a heated moment never do anything that will cause loss for a lifetime.
19. Better not to begin than not to be able to complete the task.
20. Try not to offend your rulers rather seek to gain their blessings.
21. Doing anything only after careful consideration is beneficial.
22. Beware not to get trapped by those that hear your words.
23. Look both ahead and behind while walking.

**Character.**

1. A grumbling attitude is despised by everybody.
2. A bitter mindset is despised by all.
3. Do not manifest an attitude that will wrongly portray you as an untaught child.
4. You can wear the crown of success only if you can overcome temptations.
5. A shameless person is no different than an animal.
6. If you want respect from others you should give respect first.
7. One should never copy the bad attitudes of others.
8. Standing stubbornly for wrong will lead to death and failure to befall upon us.
9. To receive or not to receive respect depends on one's own attitude.
10. Even though poor in material wealth do not be poor in wisdom.

11. Have a firm mind like a stone.
12. Win the hearts of others with your kind words.
13. Act like you talk.
14. Your manners are read like a book by others.
15. You cannot alter your face but your manners can be altered.
16. Do not be frugal with your words as if they are bought.

**Greed.**

1. Gluttony brings poverty.
2. Excessive greed leads to enmity and loss.
3. The needs and wants of the rich are never satisfied.
4. A foolish man's stomach can never be filled.
5. Wealth amassed through unfair means shall eventually be wasted away.
6. Do not lose your soul while you are chasing wealth.
7. If you fill only your belly, what will others eat?
8. Money is a necessity but do not let it become a vice.

**Religious.**

1. It is a sin to be envious.
2. Prayer is your greatest weapon.
3. Prayer not accompanied by action is useless.
4. Do not bear false witness.
5. Everything you say and do each day, God is aware of it all.
6. Endure with love.
7. Word is life.
8. Words are like God's award/ gifts.

**Pride and Humility.**

1. One is never aware of the shortcomings within oneself.
2. Speak while being mindful of the days ahead.

3. Better to beg and eat than to die of hunger because of shame.
4. It is never in vain to serve others.
5. Do not be a borrower/beggar be the lender.
6. The pride today might become the cause for shame and humiliation tomorrow.
7. Never answer back when corrections are being imparted.
8. Never be under the impression that only that which you think or know to be the truth.
9. Do not be proud of your present because you do not know what will happen tomorrow.
10. If you praise yourselves for your good work, then why would others praise you?
11. Always be thankful for all the good that comes your way.

**Friends and neighbours.**

1. If you associate with thieves then you also learn how to steal.
2. Do not share the same space with the bad.
3. Not paying neighbourly visits is similar to wishing ill for each other.
4. Having good relations with the neighbours will only bring help during troubles.
5. Be friends with wise people.
6. Forgive and forget.
7. Endeavour to befriend your enemies.

**Love and Marriage.**

1. If there is intermarriage within the clan, the clan will perish.
2. Let love be visible through deeds.
3. A woman who does not respect her husband is not respected by anybody.
4. Marrying the wrong person is a thought filled with doom.
5. Marriage is the beginning of bearing worldly burdens.
6. Divorces cause the children to astray.
7. The marriage ceremony is the greatest ceremony in a person's life.

8. Distrust causes love to end.
9. Marrying someone without careful consideration is like sitting on top of a burning flame.

#### **Leadership, Law and Order.**

1. Rule of law is feared only after punishment is met.
2. Do not be a leader in bad deeds but rather be a leader in good deeds.
3. When law and order is disobeyed, disintegration begins.
4. Do not work for the whole while selfishly looking for one's own gain.
5. The blunder committed by a leader is like falling from the tree top because of the embarrassment in front of the rest of the people.
6. If you aspire to be a leader, serve others first.

#### **Fate and Fortune.**

1. Sometimes the ones who are at the front have to be at the back.
2. Blessings depend on one's own fortunes.
3. Something that is destined to happen cannot be prevented.
4. Do not think that troubles befall only upon you.
5. Those who do not fear debt will never be prosperous.

#### **Parenthood and Family.**

1. Only an unwise child brings heartache for parents.
2. A parent that does not love their child is no different than an animal.
3. An untaught child cannot be at par with the one that has been taught.
4. Endeavour to get the blessings of your parents.
5. The love and compassion shared by those that drink from the same well is more compared to others.
6. A mother's love is more precious than gold.
7. One should not start a quarrel at home after seeing the good life of others.
8. It is better for siblings to share love from distance.
9. A small family is the source of greatest pleasure.

10. It is better to take care of one's children than one's wealth and property.
11. Look both ahead and behind while walking.
12. A sibling's love is better than a worldly friend.
13. The God who can be seen with the eyes is, mother and father.
14. Those who ill behave with parents will not be blessed.
15. Those who get offended when parents offer corrections will only meet trouble.
16. It is better to maintain good relations with relatives from afar.

**Life and Death.**

1. This life germinates once and dies once.
2. Life can be sour for the bad but very contending for the good.
3. It is easier to ruin a life than to help it grow.
4. Evil brings death and destruction in its wake.
5. Nobody can evade death.

**Assorted.**

1. Troubles are a part of life.
2. The poor are inclined towards gluttony whereas the rich tend to be frugal.
3. We live in a world of snatchers and grabbers.
4. Happiness is temporary.
5. If you do not acknowledge the society the society will not acknowledge you.
6. Disintegration stems from discord.
7. Where there is discord, evil will easily work.
8. While the clever work with their brains, the foolish tire working with their hands.
9. Do not seek to gain profits while lending help.
10. An injury can be caused even if the intentions are good.
11. Do not talk with your mouth stuffed.
12. The life that is always dependent on other people's support will always lag

behind.

13. Do not look for gains while praising others.
14. Never give up hope when troubles befall on you.
15. The good that you do today shall be there till the end of the world.
16. Only someone with a dogs face is unashamed in front of others.
17. Good health cannot be bought even with gold.
18. Sometimes shelter has to be sought even from enemies.
19. Youth is a precious time to prepare for the days ahead.
20. Live your life such that it is in sync with the times.
21. Too much excitement about something might be for naught in the end.
22. Absence of peace of mind shortens a person's lifespan.
23. Working together with similar attitude/ ideas will eventually lead to success.
24. There is nothing better than working with wisdom.
25. Do not let your precious time waste away because of your cowardice.
26. Do not speak as if in a trance.
27. The blood gets excited when the commission of a mistake is imminent.
28. Attitude can be deciphered through deeds.
29. Good deeds make the face presentable / beautiful.
30. Do not teach someone to be a cheat.
31. It is better not to learn than to learn and not do.
32. Sometimes praising too much can prove counterproductive.
33. Those who speak ill of others will only fall into trouble.
34. To be without words is like sitting in darkness.
35. God helps those who work hard.
36. Do not hurt others due to your bad attitude.

These sayings, proverbs and popular parlances are reservoirs of traditional and practical knowledge created through generations. These are not created, or formulated by a single

individual but by individuals in several generations, who have experienced much valuable lore in the courses of their encounters with myriad situations in life. Hence these are the treasure troves of precious knowledge, both scientific and superstitious, that a tribe has to rely for their own spiritual, religious and practical living and making others live.

## CHAPTER 5

### FOLK SONGS OF THE SANGTAM NAGAS

For humans singing is one of the most artistic ways of expressing feelings and emotions. It is a language, that everyone understands and all human hearts beat to it. The Sangtams have a rich body of folksongs, which has been handed down through generations by word of mouth. It was through folk songs that emotions and sentiments of a person were articulated even in earlier times. The folksongs are therefore an integral part of their daily life.

A folksong is a song that originates in traditional folk culture or that is composed in such a style. It originates among the people of a country or specific geographical area, passed by oral tradition from one singer or generation to the next, and marked generally by simple, modal melody and narrative verse. The folk songs of any place being largely transmitted orally may exist in several versions but no doubt it deals with or display/showcase the customs, beliefs, traditions, superstitions and aspirations. In short, it is a traditional song that is typical of a particular community or nation.

In most folksongs there are no specific principles or regulations to be maintained. For this reason not all the folksongs can be understood by all. Usually there is a repetition in the first line of the song. Rhyme with certain variation is maintained in the following lines and sometimes even repetition of certain lines can be found in the song. The lyrics are usually natural and fluent.

These folksongs act as a gateway to understand the socio-cultural aspects, history and language of the people. They also depict the traditional values of the community. A glimpse of the rural life can be seen in the folk music of the villages. They are not only the medium of entertainment among the rural masses but also a reflection of the rural society.

Folksongs require learning by ear. Ordinary people who were mostly illiterate usually learned the songs by memorizing them since the songs are often simple, rhythmic and easy to remember. Throughout most of human prehistory and history, listening to recorded music had not been possible. Music was therefore made by common people during both their work and leisure, as well as during religious activities. Folksongs

could either be sung by a lone singer or in groups depending on the situation or the incident and the content of the song.

The work of economic production was often manual and communal. Manual labour often included singing by the workers, which served several practical purposes. It reduced the boredom of repetitive tasks, it kept the rhythm during synchronized pushes and pulls, and it set the pace of many activities such as planting, weeding, reaping, threshing, milling etc. The songs would echo in the valleys and fields and create a harmonious melody which was heart-warming and at the same time encouraging to the fellow workers. In leisure time, singing and playing musical instruments were common forms of entertainment and history-telling — even more common than today as there was no electrically enabled technologies and widespread literacy to interrupt with the peaceful life of the people in those times.

Laments for lost battles and wars, and the lives lost in them, are equally prominent in many traditions; these laments keep alive the cause for which the battle was fought. The narratives of traditional songs often also remember folk heroes or incidents. Some traditional song narratives recall supernatural events or mysterious deaths.

Love poetry, often of a tragic or regretful nature, prominently figures in many folk traditions. Nursery rhymes and lullabies are used to amuse or quiet little children to sleep and which are also frequent feature of traditional songs.

Till today for the Sangtams, singing either of ballads, lullabies, dirges, hunting or fishing songs etc. always formed an integral part of any narrative account. It is usually delivered in the form of a poem sung by a narrator. Different occasions called for different appropriate songs, be it in times of sorrow or happiness and hence there were different occasions in which folk songs were sung. Songs therefore were used as a system to communicate with each other in important matters either in groups or individuals, for personal communication or to convey social messages. They are composed and sung by gifted people. In some cases, the flow of thought which are expressed through words are usually believed to be inspired by the spirit of god.

In fact, Sangtams have commendable literary and musical history of utilitarian education which existed in the form of *kuhying-morungs*. These *Kuhyings* were guard house as well as dormitory for the young boys and girls in the village. These *kuhyings*

were maintained separately for boys and girls who would spend time and sleep in the dormitories in groups. Kuhyings acted as institutions whereby people learned from their elders the life skills in the form of wood working, basket weaving and other such working techniques. Moral instructions and life lessons were also taught on how to lead their life purposefully and meaningfully. Stories and songs pertaining to the past were then taught in such kuhyings whereby the youngsters got to learn about the past from the elders through the word of mouth and in the form of songs. This is how the folksongs had been passed down orally from one generation to the next. The songs were also learnt from their parents and elders besides their trainers in the kuhyings.

### **Selected folksongs of the Sangtams**

#### **1. Mürürüki**

Holo iyolo ho

Holo iyolo holo iyo lo I Yang Sholo

Mürürü suhro mürürü suhro mürürü suhro I Yang Sholo

Tpürü mülipü lo nahshiki shole I Yang Sholo

Tsangjü hijü selo tsangjü hijü se Mürürü khyang tüp I Yang Sholo

Tsangthsa hithsa selo tsangthsa hithsa se atsi khong khyang tüp I Yang Sholo

I kih khasho selo I kikhashose thili I tongzi I Yang Sholo

I Sing yucho selo I sing yu cho se troli I xüpcho I Yang Sholo

Mürürü suhro lo Mürürü suhro alongminunghe, I Yang sholo.

#### **A folk song of an orphan**

Holo iyolo ho

Holo iyolo holo iyolo

Woe is my life, me Yang Sholo

A life of an orphan, me Yang Sholo

A life without parents, I always shed tears, poor me Yang Sholo.

Leftover food is always given to me, an orphan, poor me Yang Sholo.

Fresh cooked food is always given to their own son, poor me Yang Sholo.

The water I fetched is again thrown over me, poor me Yang Sholo.

The firewood that I collect is picked and I am beaten with it,

A life of an orphan is pitiable, me Yang Sholo.

The use of the line Holo iyolo ho Holo iyolo holo iyolo at the beginning of the song is to set the tone of the song. This folksong is a sad, remorseful song about a poor orphan who had been ill-treated in life. Through the song he expresses about the cold treatment that he had been receiving from others. The orphan boy sings about how he is not well fed but rather he is offered leftovers depriving him of the basic nourishments of life. Punishments are meted out to him where he is physically abused and beaten with the firewood that he had collected from the forest. For a young boy who could not be at par with his other friends, he thinks and understands that the life of an orphan is pitiable. Being deprived of even basic requirements and simple joys of life, he vents out his emotions of turmoil and suffering through the song. It is therefore filled with melancholy and sadness. As he sings the song he is definitely recollecting the sad incidents that he undergoes everyday and being an orphan, he has none to share his sorrows but only expresses through singing such songs. The intensity of pain that is reflected in the song is remarkable for it expresses his longing to be free and to be treated properly like the other children in the village where he dwells.

It may be understood that the song is a reflection on the harsh treatment that is given to orphans and as a result of which one undergoes pain and suffering emotionally as well as physically. The inner turmoil and distress of the life of an orphan is brought out and highlighted in this song. It may also be noteworthy to mention that through such songs, the Sangtams believe that a message can be reached out to the people on how to be humane and loving towards children even though they may not be their own. Each child should be treated with love and affection irrespective of the condition they are placed in is the philosophy that the Sangtams try to instill in the minds of the people. The collection of firewood by the orphan from the forest signifies men's dependence on nature for his needs in the form of food and other essentials can also be understood through this folksong.

## **2. Shu-I würi khi**

Holo iyolo holo iyolo ho

Hele iyele hele iyele he

Shuh iwü wüning ho

Tu shuh iwü wüning ho

Tu shuh I müsücho

Kuning imüsücho

Shüümü imüsücho ho

Fühza nükonü ho

Sünü kyüsehcho ho

Alise nühe

Sünü chisücho ho

Alise nühe

Khavü kharopü ho

Ashirü khyang ho

Shuh irü khyang jü ho

Ajingshü bhürü jü ho

Holo iyele hele iyele he.

Holo iyele hele iyele he.

**A folk song of a hunter**

Holo iyolo holo iyolo ho

Hele iyele hele iyele he

Let's go for hunting

What animal is to be hunted?

What animal is to be chased?

A tiger has is to be chased,

A bear is to be chased.

It is being chased with the dogs.

Who killed it?

Mr. Alise killed it

Who have speared it?

Mr. Alise has speared it.

After slicing the killed,

It is offered to an older

It is given to all hunters

It is given to the foot print tracer.

Besides agriculture, hunting had been one of the main activities amongst the Sangtams though it is discouraged now and most villages impose restrictions on hunting within its jurisdictions. People hunt animals for various reasons like for food, ornaments and other purposes.

The lyric of this folk song is in the format of questionnaires. A question is raised in the first verse and the subsequent verses are the answers to the question that is being asked. This pattern of questions and answers are maintained in the subsequent lines that follow the initial question.

This folksong is a hunter's song. It is sung by the hunters who had returned from a successful hunting expedition. It is sung to acknowledge the person who has made the kill and also talks about his skill in hunting the prey. Existence of community hunting can be understood from the first line of the song where the hunters call upon their villagers to collectively go for hunting. On all such hunting expeditions, men were accompanied by hunting dogs to hunt the prey. Tiger's teeth were popularly used as traditional ornaments which signified courage and bravery. This could be worn or adorned only by a deserving few who had accomplished some specific deeds like beheading a specific number of enemy heads or sponsoring a Feast of Merit. So also bear's fur was used in head gears, anklets and even woolen caps.

In the following lines the bravery and skill of the hunters are brought out. The sharing of the meat of the hunted animal is done amongst the hunters. The elders of the community are held in high esteem and are respected and revered. As a sign of this, certain portion of the meat is given to the elders of the community. The butchered meat

which is also given to the tracker shows that the efforts of every person who takes part in the hunt is given due acknowledgement.

This folksong highlights the closely knitted community wherein all the members collectively share the work as well as the fruits of their labour. Through this song, a sense of “we” feeling and brotherhood is thus understood to have existed in the Sangtam society. The gifting of meat to the elders also shows how the community as a whole not only respected but took proper care of the elderly.

### **3. Ihhsa akang khi**

Holo iyalo ho-e

Holo iyalo ho-e

Isa nuitsariü-o

Amüsünung kyole

Amüchangnung khyole

Nyümong khütülü lo

Ali tsang thsanunghe

Ali tsang thsanunghe

Amüsüpah-edo

Künyangta ling nang

Chomangta nü ling nang

Holo iyalo ho-e

Holo iyalo ho-e

### **A folk song of our life**

Holo iyalo ho-e

Holo iyalo ho-e

We all human beings

We assume we will not die

We assume we will not end

But one day we all will become the earth's fodder

We all will become carcasses

So before we die

Let us live happily with one another

Let us love and care for one another.

It is a fact that all living beings including humans will die one day bringing everything to an end. This folksong talks about the brevity of human life and existence on this earth.

All men are here temporarily and are like visitors who will leave sooner or later. But men like to assume and think that the stay here will be permanent. Men do not desire to die but the sad truth is that nothing is permanent. Hence death is inevitable. Young or old, rich or poor, one is bound to die one day or the other. Everyone wishes that their stay here will never end yet the lives on this earth is just a fleeting thing and soon it will pass away.

Hence through this song, the Sangtams stress on the philosophy of being happy and contented while one is here on earth, even if it is for a short while. The sad reality is that at the end of the stay here, what awaits men is nothing but to enter the realm of the dead where one will face the same yardstick which is to degrade in the soil. Men only fill up the earth with our carcass as it is buried beneath it. The idea to love and care for one another is thus further emphasized because life on earth is too brief to waste in hate and enmity. Also there is the message that while men are on earth men should live happily and not be overburdened with the sorrows and pains.

Also through this folksong, one is reminded of Shakespeare's lines in *As You Like It*:

JACQUES: All the world is a stage,

And all the men and women merely players;

They have their exits and entrances. (II. iv.139)

Everyone on this earth enters through different routes and exits through different routes, entering when they are born and exiting when they die. Undoubtedly, all men are here temporarily on this earth. Hence, men ought to learn that he should love and care for one another at all times. Happiness can be shared only through love and being good to one another at all times while one stays here on this earth for a limited time.

#### 4. Shangrü khi

Holo iyo holo iyo holo he

Holo iyo holo iyo holo he

Müyang thsaba hita müyang thsare he

Atu thsanye zitu thsanye ihsa hiri lile he

Kihching langüsü aolangsü müyang thsaba hita müyang thsare he

Holo holo holoo he.

Künyangtaba hita künyangtare he

Longphitaba hita longphitare he

Müitaba hita müitare he

Holo hoi holo hoi holo o he.

Holo hoi holo hoi holo o he.

#### A folk song on friendship

Holo iyo holo iyo holo he

Holo iyo holo iyo holo he

Making of friends we use to do it this way

Today tomorrow and always we are one.

With any tribe or person with friends we enjoy to our heart's content like this.

When we enjoy we enjoy like this...he

When we share we share like this,

When we share our love we use to share our love like this.

This folk song is about the joys of friendship. As S.T Coleridge has written “Friendship is a sheltering tree” (39), the comfort in having friends is brought out here. The bond that is shared and strengthened between friends is celebrated through this song. Despite the differences and dissimilarities, a strong bond of friendship can be created. It brings a sense of comfort and security knowing that a friend will be there for each other when one is in need of the other.

This song also talks about the wide horizons of friendship beyond one's own village and tribe. Friendship should know no boundaries or limits. The fun and laughter of being around with friends and the moments spent together is much cherished and expressed through the song. As friends, they share a close bond where they share in good and bad times. This way their bonds of friendship is strengthened and made more firm. A deep sense of commitment is created through such sharing and in that way the bond grows stronger whereby it is rooted in love and understanding with each other.

The importance of friendship is brought out through this song. Man is a social animal and as MacIver has rightly said, "Society is a web of social relationship." As such no men can live in isolation and he needs to live in company. At all times, a true friend is worth more than anything. He is like a precious gem that is treasured by all. It can also be learnt through this song on how friendship is given due importance by the Sangtams for friends will stand by one through thick and thin.

### **5. Thsingar village**

Holo He Olo Holo E holo Holo Elolo Ho E

Hale E Olo Hale E hele Hele E Hele Ho E

Ihrü Surocho Ihrü Surocho Holo E Holo Ho E

Ihrü Müngucho Ihrü Surocho HoloE Olo Ho E

Sü Au Müürü, Su Ya Müürü Holo E Olo Ho E

SüYaMüürü, Su Ya Müürü Holo E Olo Ho E

Ihrü UarilüIhrü Yarilü Holo E Olo Ho E

Müngchangcho Nungkyo Müngchangcho Nungkyo Holo E Olo Ho E

Müzacho Nungkyo Müzacho Nungkyo Holo E Olo Ho E

Ihra ThrirülüIhrü Thrirülü Holo E Olo Ho E

Akhe Müthücho Akhe Müthücho Holo E Olo Ho E

Aza Nyangnyülü Aza Nyangnyülü Holo E Olo Ho E

Ashangrüdeseh Ashangrüdeseh Holo E Olo Ho E

Tsachi Püpe Tsachache Püpe Holo E Olo Ho E

Kehva Ticho Kyo Kehva Ticho Kyo Holo E Olo Ho E

Langva Tichokyo Langva Tichokyo Holo E Olo Ho E

Zasho Atsikho Zasho Atsikho Holo E Olo Ho E

Shisho Atsikho Shisho Atsikho Holo E Olo Ho E

Ihrü UarülüIhrü Uarülü Holo E Olo Ho E

Thale Mürokho Thale Müngukho Holo E Olo Ho E

Ihrü Nyatsariü Khüdupi Changkhang Holo E Olo Ho E

Thale Müronung Thale Müngunung Holo E Olo Ho E

Amüsüpade Müi Danüling Holo E Olo Ho E

### **Thsingar village**

Holo He OloHolo E holoHoloElolo Ho E

Hale E Olo Hale E heleHele E Hele Ho E

This life into which I am born

My life

Without my father

Without my mother

O father, O mother

It seemed you would never leave

It seemed we would never depart

But he who made us

Sent the call

The morning of your leaving

Friends of my father

Also leaving

Like the pine needles falling

Like the trees falling

They have left me

Departed

Never to return

Never to come back

Once we die

We can never come back again

Keep the love for each other

Before death overtakes us...

The tone of this folksong is very sad. The dejected orphan looks back at the time when his parents had been alive and around him. Merry were the days when he was with his parents but now they have left him. He feels a sense of loneliness and emptiness without his parents. Such tragic departure from his life had not been expected by him but sadly as fate would have it, his parents are taken away by God. Even his father's friends have said their adieus and just as the pine needles that fall off to the ground leaving the tree bare, the boy is left all alone by himself. Their departure is permanent and it leaves a scar on the boy's life. He knows deep down that once they are dead, they would never be united with him again. Therefore, he only says that one should keep the love that they share when they are alive. People should love and care for one another when they are alive on earth for once they die, such joys can never happen.

The metaphor used here in this song is with reference to the pine needles that falls on the ground. This would also mean the detachment of the cone from the mother plant. Once it falls to the ground, it can never be united with the main tree. Rather, it grows on its own without the assistance of the plant to which it was attached. The falling of the trees is another metaphor that reveals to the listeners that just as the trees that are felled to the ground and becomes lifeless, his life without his parents is so. A sense of uselessness seems to overshadow his thoughts as he draws in this comparison between himself and the tree which is only meant for timber after it is cut down. Likewise the young child had been left alone by the parents to grow up on his own and his thoughts seem to be occupied with this feeling of uselessness.

The song is particularly focused on the personal anguish and loneliness that one experiences a life without their parents around. On a personal note, it is pregnant with sadness, misery and even fear and anxiety about the future and this appears to be the main theme of the song. It also highlights the temporariness of human's existence on

this earth. The life that is bestowed on us is only for a brief time and everyone has to die and rot and decay. Therefore, love should fill our lives and the joys should be shared while we are on this earth. The idea to love and care for each other is thus further exalted and forms one of the major themes of this song.

### **6. Chungtor village**

Ho IhsaChungto

Ho IhsaChungto

ChungtorünüSingtrong

YangthriLicho-O He

He-Le He-Le-E-Shi

Thsüza Kyüseh-E-Cho

Khünying Kyüseh-E cho

Kijinglangsü KyümükangLicho

Kihu Langsükyümükang Licho

Hatsü Khonü Chünye Tashi

Ih Rü Lire-E-He

Ah-U-Li

### **Chungtor village**

People of Chungtor

Cut the jungle

To establish the village

They cut the mithun

They cut the tiger

They cut in the south

They cut in the north

From then till now

We are found here

### Ah-u-li

The folksong is about a particular village called Chungtor which is in Longkhim area under Tuensang district. People of that village are known for their bravery and were great warriors. Hence, this song is a celebration of their bravery and warrior spirit.

The butchering of various animals like mithun and tiger signifies their achievements. These animals are associated with great honour and prestige. People slaughter mithun only on very auspicious occasions like the Feast of Merit and it marks a level of great respect and privilege. It also signifies materialistic achievements and display of wealth and power of a particular person.

A ferocious creature like the tiger which is an animal that is held in much awe and wonder. In “The Tyger” by William Blake, the poet wonders at the majesty and grandeur of the tiger:

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry? (28)

The tiger can invoke terror and fear even in the minds of the onlookers. It is considered as one of the mightiest creature on earth. The strength it possesses is incomparable and matchless. Hence, to capture and kill such an animal is not an easy task. It is an enormous task and requires great skill, will power and man-power as well. This is so because it calls in for a lot of bravery, efficiency, determination and it involves risk as well. Even to go near a tiger is much dreaded and hence attempting to kill the tiger is considered a very challenging task. Only the bravest and strongest men accomplish such a task and hence the killing of a tiger had been much revered in those times though it is banned in the present days.

To this day the bravery of the people of Chungtor village is widely known and people continue to admire them for such abilities in them. They continue to hold great pride in their ability to accomplish such feats and hence till today such instances are reflected in the folklore in the form of folksongs.

**7. Uza xohrü khi**

Holo iyolo Holo iyolo ho

Holo iyolo Holo iyolo ho

Chingkhü musing chah

Pongtsi khyang pucho

Nyümong khu wüde

Ungu hoh licho

Nyümong khu wüde

Unga throshe pü longcho

I tsurü tra pümcho

Hütsü thro kishocho

Holo iyolo Holo iyolo ho

**Folksong of bird catcher**

Holo iyolo Holo iyolo ho

Holo iyolo Holo iyolo ho

In the mountain of Chingkhü

I kept a set of traps

And when I went the next day

A tragopan was caught in the trap

And I took the tragopan from the trap

And when I reached home

I found my son crying

And he stopped crying

Holo iyolo holo iyolo ho.

Simplicity in the way life was led can be depicted through this folksong. Through the song one also gets to know about the means used by men to hunt animals and birds for food by setting traps in the forest. This way they need not waste their time searching for the hunt.

A close affinity with nature is also brought out through this folksong. Even though they depended mostly on what he found in nature for food and survival, men were not wanton and selfish while trying to fulfill his needs. Instead, he also could see and appreciate the beauty that nature beheld.

Another aspect of this song is how it depicts a father's love and concern for his child. It shows how a father does the best he can so that he can put a smile on the child's face. The song beautifully shows the beauty of the tragopan whereby it says how upon seeing the bird, a child who had been crying stopped crying. It can also reflect on how the Sangtams were abundantly blessed with different birds and animals the land must have been during those times since in the present day, the beautiful Tragopan bird can rarely be sighted.

From this folksong, one gets to understand that the reason for the extinction of such rare species is because of activities like hunting and trapping. Men's need for food accompanied by the selfish desire to accumulate wealth has made him to do thoughtless activities and destroyed the fauna. The future thus stands hampered and at a state where men now have to struggle to create balance and harmony.

### **8. Mübhi kehrü khi**

Holo I yo hele I ye le

Asemongrü asemongrü akang lichö lüh

Longrisehnü nahshiki du sho lire

Tu kyo lichö tu yang lichö lontong yang lile

Kiyo lasü anahshiki tröp sho yale

Akhulang chopikyü kangla

Tsangsü thsanye shuhsü thsanye longnyüpnü tsucho

Tanye chüye chopikyü kangla

Shusü tsunye thangsü tsunyu I musi thringolangsü mülaküshore

Akanglila longri tutsü lile

Nührü apam I chopikyü nü salem jühre

Holo I yo hele I ye le

**Folk song of a leper**

Holo I yohele I ye le

The life of Chopikyü is living with full of sadness and tears

Where does he live?

He lives in the outskirts of a village shedding his tears

Earlier the life Chopikyü was so at ease

That it satisfies him when he ate meat and food

But today the life of Chopikyü has changed totally.

Even if he eats meat or food it does not satisfy one-fourth of his cravings

All his life is burdened with sorrow and sadness

I Chopikyü convey my last goodbye to you.

This folk song is a sorrowful song of lament sung by a leper as he is infected with leprosy. As a person who is infected with the disease, he is made to live alone in the outskirts of the village and is prohibited from entering the village. Thus, he leads a lonely life filled with sadness and tears due to his present plight. He longs for human company and also recalls back the time when his life was at ease before the disease afflicted him. But now tears of sorrow has replaced those happy moments. He recalls how he relished the food that he ate with meat to provide nutrition to his body. There were no troubles and sickness that ailed him then and he led a healthy life.

Unfortunately, there has been a change in his circumstances and his life has turned the other way round. Even if he eats the meat, his cravings could not be met and he is left unsatisfied. Here it would be safe to assume that the message which the singer wants to convey is that good food alone is not the only necessity of life. There are other more important things in life like the companionship of friends, neighbours and relatives.

Now that he is leading the life of an outcast, he feels the loneliness and the accompanying heartache. He feels his life is now a heavy burden filled with sorrow and sadness. Finally, we can assume that the singer prefers death over leading such a sorrowful life. He therefore is ready to welcome death at any moment it visits him. He bids his last goodbye to all his fellow mates or friends and relatives.

Since folk songs are transmitted orally within a community, in time, they develop many variants; however, it takes us away from all of the hustle and bustle of the world and takes people back to nature and the simple and rustic nature of village life. It also stimulates the emotion of the listener and makes one acutely feel the joys and sorrows, hopes and dreams, pain and pleasure in accordance with the words of the song.

When it comes to songs or music, Nagas, in general, and Sangtams in particular, would take inspiration mainly from the rhythm of the sounds that one heard in nature. This can be evidenced in their rich folk songs with its myriad vocalizations. Folk songs have been an integral part of the Sangtam Naga society from time immemorial and a major factor in the preservation of their culture and traditions. Though its influence might not be as vigorous in its energy as it was just a few decades ago it would not be amiss to say that they still continue to be a beacon of the Sangatm culture and society and a very important aspect of Sangtam Literature.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Folklore connects the generations. Folklore stimulates our memories because when stories are narrated and heard, it takes us back in time and enables us to connect with our ancestors and our roots. Through this study it can also be understood that folklore is also important especially as it often times acts as a medium of keeping records for people who had not yet been able to collect much through the art of writing.

Though the usage of oral tradition is slowly fading, the stories, sayings, beliefs etc., still continue to govern the life of the Sangtams as it is evident today in their way of life and practices. This is so because the folktales of a community are not just stories narrated for the sake of entertainment but rather they are representatives of a plethora of activities. It also shows men's relation and interaction with their surrounding environment. It can also be concluded that the ancient people were mostly simple minded and not yet exposed to modern scientific discoveries and inventions and therefore while narrating or making up a tale, their sole point of reference was what they could see and experience in nature around them. Folktales also help readers/listeners to get an insight into how people during those times perceived and reacted to the happenings around them. Therefore, in most of the tales human like characterization in the form of animals and plants is found. For instance, if a character in the tale had to be depicted as cunning, it was the fox which was used as the point of reference since men could see that the fox was a wily animal. So also to depict a strong, wise, stately being, the character would be some big growing tree. Another factor for depicting animals in the tales is that in most cases, the target audience is usually the young minds. Therefore, to attract their attention and keep them engrossed in the story, animals are depicted as characters since they become more interesting and relatable.

It must also be noted that it was not always the case where only metaphorical or allegorical characters were depicted. There are certain tales where human to human interactions were also projected. These tales were mostly concerning the social issues and experiences representational of their socio-economic and cultural background as well. Also the family relations are also reflected in the tales. There are tales of orphans, ill-treating step parent and the relation between siblings. All these tales are diverse in nature in so much as some have happy ending whereas others end in tragedy. However,

inspite of the diverse nature of the theme and composition, it can be concluded from the study that a common feature of the folktales is that, they are most aimed towards imparting a moral or intellectual life lesson. Thus, for the Sangtams, it becomes apparent that these folktales are not mere stories but also a source for keeping record of guidelines and instructions on how to live a good and fruitful life. Also, tales like “Even if you work with torches lit, you will get only what is predestined for you” which is mentioned in Chapter 2, imparts the moral lesson that men should not spend his time and energy pursuing foolish and unproductive activities rather to be contented in what one get as his share. It is therefore evident that the Sangtams through the folk tales aim at instilling certain moral principles or lessons which is epistemological in nature. These lessons are an accumulation of knowledge gained through varied experiences and it is what that the tribe wants to share/ impart to the listeners/ readers.

Folktales also act as a source for keeping and preserving the cultural heritage of a community. The unrealistic characters present in the folktales represent the folk belief and images of the Sangtams and provides access to cultural concepts and ideas. A tale can therefore be interpreted from different angles at different levels by the listeners. Folktales, folk sayings and folksongs form a particular mode of oral tradition that contributes towards maintaining the history of a community of people. They also play the vital role of acting as a source of inspiration for the society in times of difficulties. They act as the point of reference where one can find the answers to the questions relating to why, where, when and how certain beliefs and the corresponding practices associated with it came about. Thus, tales such as that of Lihjaba and his visit to the widow enables the listeners/readers to understand the reasons or background behind the celebration of the Mongmong festival by the Sangtams every year on the first week of September.

Through folktales one gets an understanding of the social life of the people during those times. One also find that along with the elements of fantasy and apparent/real supernatural elements, folktales embody ethnographic information about the Sangtam people and place. They reflect their social system and also their world views. Such folk narratives reflect social reality in spite of its fictional overtone. Through the tales one gets to learn about certain taboos and norms which are observed in the society. For instance, in chapter 3 the prohibition on burning snakes in fire as per the tale “The Lady who Married the Snake.” Social experiences and the reflections of these experiences

characterize the folk narratives. Thus, the moral values and culture of the Sangtams can also be restored or reaffirmed through such narratives.

In short, folktales are the source of information and reference and also the de facto record keeping source. Stories are often heard among the folk people. These are/can be repeatedly narrated and listened by their successors and they in turn passed on to the next generation. The depths of the contents can be hardly noted or realized as they are simple and plainly presented or narrated. But no doubt the stories are all narrated with a purpose and such purposes should not be diminished with the passage of time or else if it loses its footing the whole story will get lost forever.

But unfortunately with the adaption of the modern way of life and its accompanying diversion, people are gradually losing interest in the tales of the past in the form of folktales and as a consequence gradually losing touch with the past. Also, since the ancestors mostly depended on nature for all their needs and wants, the tales they narrated were also mostly related close to nature. The tales were inspired by what they saw and experienced in nature but with the gradual modernization, these tales have lost their significance and resultantly the present generation is gradually losing their connection to nature too.

Despite the advancements made in the field of science and technology, the traditional folklore still has a strong hold over people's mind. Belief in the existence of supernatural powers and forces in nature seems to form the backbone of the traditional religion of the Sangtams. This is reflected in the beliefs of the people in the existence of elves, imps and fairies and how many confusing or unexplainable happenings and situations are attributed to such beings and their mischief.

To cite an example of such a situation, a person goes to the well to fetch water and he slips and has a fall while he is there. On returning home, the person falls ill or experiences some kind of unusual discomfort, instead of seeking medical attention many people usually seek the advice elsewhere wherein the reason behind the ailment is professed to have been caused by the spirit or supernatural being that resides in the vicinity of the well. Thus, in order to ward off the influence of the spirit of the being the remedy that is usually suggested is to slaughter a pig and offer a grand feast to the community and offer prayers etc. This explains the presence of fabulism and supernaturalism in the lore of the Sangtams despite the many scientific advancement

and developments and even the advent of Christianity. Even at present such beliefs of the people shows that they still hold sway over the minds of the people. Such unexplainable phenomena are transferred orally through the folk beliefs of which majority are still unrecorded.

Through a careful analysis of the proverbs and statements, it is evident that proverbs are the wisdom of the ages. Many of the Sangtam proverbs serve as impersonal vehicles for personal communication that also throws light on their overall worldview and of the culture of the people. Proverbs are short and witty traditional expressions that arise as part of everyday discourse between men where personal circumstance is taken into account and embodied in impersonal and witty form. Through these, it is comprehended that human speech had been and continues to be a powerful weapon. It can create peace or bring destruction upon the human race. Hence, the Sangtam forefathers used these folk sayings to relate, to teach or to instruct and also to warn the people in the form of moral lessons so that they can be careful about their conduct in life. They are like jewels which the tribe has inherited from their forefathers meant to pass down through generations. They are meant and used to make all realize and learn the many truths of life at a time when humans become harsh, selfish and narrow-minded. But generations tend to learn less or do not learn anything from them because of our ignorance and insincerity. Nevertheless, these aphoristic statements are still very much used by the elders and continue to be relevant even to this day.

The glimpse of rural world can be seen in the folklore especially the folk songs of the people. They are not only the medium of entertainment among the rural masses but also a reflection of the rural society which had been less polluted in the earlier times unlike the present state. Folk songs are important and will always be as they are another form of storytelling that evolved and is means to pass down traditions, cultures, and history of the common man. It is also a means to talk about the common man's political, social, economic and personal issues in a non-confrontational manner since it being a song.

Primarily, the folksongs were not recorded in books or transmitted in other forms of media but have continued in oral tradition. The rich cultural heritage can be maintained and kept up through the art of singing. Attempts are being made these days to preserve such in various forms like recorded voices, videos and writing however inconvenient it

might be. One such attempt has been made in this dissertation to record and preserve the vibrant culture.

One need to realize that this earth in which he live in is not an inheritance from our forefathers. It is not our permanent property; rather it is meant for the future generations and he is here today as mere borrowers from the next generation and meant to leave this earth. Therefore care should be taken not to destroy the earth while one is here. With the increase in human population and selfish ways of men, many problems have arisen. The natural environment with its diverse flora and fauna and resources are gifted to men and he utilize it as though it will never get exhausted. Thus the cruel ways of men has done much damage to the environment. As men distance ourselves further away from the environment by causing it damage, he is also gradually losing the essence and the touch that our forefathers once had with nature. Hence, the close proximity is lost, and humans can no longer listen to the voice of nature. Likewise, the lessons learnt from nature and the beliefs associated with those are diminishing gradually. Men can no longer feel at one with nature and this way some of the traditional practices and beliefs are also being shattered with the passage of time. The essence of simplicity and honesty of our world view is lost and hence it is the need of the hour to restore and preserve the simple way of life. Men have now lost the essence of simplicity and honesty of the world view and hence it is the need of the hour to restore and preserve the simple ways of life. Thus, there is a need to preserve the folklore of the society for in doing so it will also enable men to come closer to nature.

Folklore studies help one to delve into the past where it helps us to gain an understanding about the present. Moreover, these long held customs and traditions still have a strong hold over them at present and likely even in the days to come. Therefore it can be inferred that there arises a need to record and preserve the rich lore of the people. There calls in immense tasks on the part of the person who records it as for the Nagas recording of the folklore in a language which is foreign to them i.e English is not an easy task. No doubt the present generations are striving to move forward from oral tradition to documentation but not in one's own language. Therefore to document and to preserve is quite challenging and difficult. Scholars at present are trying an attempt to preserve this through various forms of documentations and records in the form of written, visual, audio and/or audio-visual forms. It is only through these documentations that the rich cultural heritage of the community can be preserved and transmitted to the

younger generation. This dissertation therefore has been an attempt to record the unrecorded lore and also to preserve and reflect on the recorded lore.

It can also be drawn to a close that there has been a regression in the transmission of knowledge especially folklore from the older generation to the present on account of various factors. There is a decline in the way knowledge is disseminated in the oral form. Colonization has destroyed the local cultures, forms of storytelling and forms of memory. The onset of modern education system has led to the disappearance of *kuhyings* which acted as a place for learning. The younger generations are also not enthusiastic in learning about their rich culture and tradition. Therefore, they barely spend time with the elders discussing on their folklore and this is also leading to the disappearance of the traditional culture since most of it had not been recorded in any form. If such is not preserved, the progenies will lose their touch with their own culture and will later forget it/ diminish it. They in turn will be unaware of their own culture and customs that their forefathers have long cherished and upheld. Thus, preserving the folklore in print and digital format will serve to educate the present generation about their culture and can be handed down to the progenies without losing its essence. This need is strongly felt because these long held customs and traditions still have a strong hold over them at present and is likely to continue to do so even in the days to come.

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