

# **LOTHA FOLKLORE AND CONTEMPORARY LOTHA SOCIETY: RELEVANCE OF FOLKLORE STUDY**

(Dissertation submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in English)

**Submitted by:  
MHONBENI E HUMTSOE  
Roll No. 03/2020**

**Under the supervision of  
Prof. ROSEMARY DZÜVICHÜ**



**Department of English  
School of Humanities and Education  
Nagaland University  
Kohima Campus, Merima -797004  
2020**



## NAGALAND UNIVERSITY

(A Central University, established by the act of Parliament, .35/1989)

Department of English

Kohima Campus, Meriema, Kohima-797004: Nagaland, India

### SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that dissertation entitled *Lotha Folklore and Contemporary Lotha Society: Relevance of Folklore Studies* is a bonafied record of research work done by Miss Mhonbeni E Humtsoe, Regd. No. 03/2020, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during 2020-2021. 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 been previously formed the basis awards of any degree, diploma or other title and the thesis represents independent and original work on the part if the candidate under my supervision.

Miss Mhonbeni has completed her research work within the stipulated time.

The

Kohima

Dr. Rosemary Dzüvichü

Supervior

Professor

Department of English

Nagaland University

Kohima Campus, Meriema.



### CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, Mhonbeni E Humtsoe, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *Lotha Folklore and Contemporary Lotha society: Relevance of Folklore Studies* submitted for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in English is a bonafide record of research done by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Rosemary Dzüvichü, Professor, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema, during the period of my research (2020-2021) and it has not been submitted, either in full or in part, to any university or institution for the award of any other degree, diploma or title.

Place: Kohima

**Mhonbeni E Humtose**

Date:

Research Scholar

### Countersigned:

**(Dr. Jano S. Liegise)**

**(Dr. Rosemary Dzüvichü)**

Head

Supervisor

Department of English

Professor

Nagaland University

Department of English

Kohima Campus, Meriema.

Nagaland University

Kohima Campus, Meriema.

## Glossary

<i>Phyangza:</i>	Plain area with no shade
<i>Rongtong:</i>	Referred to the husband
<i>Meruma:</i>	A dark red flower blooming in bunch
<i>Sungro rumbum:</i>	Bangles worn by women
<i>Divü:</i>	A kind of an armlet worn by women
<i>Mongsangosü:</i>	Shawl
<i>Shompo:</i>	A friend who is willing to give up even one's life
<i>Shompvüro:</i>	A female friend
<i>Seno:</i>	A bird, red and yellow in colour
<i>Rüjüng:</i>	Hornbill bird
<i>Süngjomani:</i>	Vegetables
<i>Otsiozü:</i>	Wheat, barley, paddy, etc
<i>Niokhüma:</i>	Humble prayer
<i>Ümmachen:</i>	Abundant blessings
<i>Pvürironsi:</i>	Agricultural God (as regarded during the pre Christian era)
<i>Pyonphen:</i>	The place where paddy are gathered after harvest
<i>Lekhüm:</i>	A big basket (lotha basket)
<i>Hanjüng:</i>	A local basket used for carrying paddy
<i>Tongtichochang:</i>	The village chief or the village elders
<i>Sümro:</i>	Plain people

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise be to the Lord, for he showed me the wonders of his Love. I thank God for his unconditional love and blessing as I pursue my endeavors.

I am extremely grateful to the Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema, for accepting me as a scholar and for the kind approval of the topic of my dissertation *Lotha Folklore and Contemporary Lotha society: Relevance of Folklore Studies*.

My deepest gratitude to my research supervisor, Dr. Rosemary Dzüvichü, Professor, Department of English, Nagaland university, Kohima Campus, Meriema, for her continuous encouragement and support. I am extremely privilege to work with such highly learned person, who is kind at heart and has a thumping patience. She is truly a source of inspiration to pursue a research-oriented career. Without her relentless guidance and support this research work would not have been completed within the stipulated time.

My special thanks to all the professors of English Department, Nagaland University for your zeal and determination to bring the best in each individual. You are a source of inspiration to many and I will be ever indebted for your ever willing support and encouragement.

My sincere appreciation and gratitude to all the visionary leaders and elders of the Lotha community who willingly shared their valuable insight in making this research work possible.

Finally, I thank my parents, siblings and all my relatives, friends and individuals. Your prayers and encouragement keeps me through any circumstances.

May God almighty blessing be upon all.

Place: Kohima

Mhonbeni E Humtsoe

Date

Research Scholar

## **CONTENTS**

<b>Candidate's Declaration</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Supervisor's Certificate</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: A BROAD OVERVIEW OF THE NAGAS</b>	<b>1-14</b>
<b>1.1.The Term Naga</b>	
<b>1.2.The Origin and Migration of the Nagas</b>	
<b>1.2.1. The Mao Legend</b>	
<b>1.2.2. The Legend of Khezakhenoma</b>	
<b>1.2.3. The Lothas Account</b>	
<b>1.3. The Social and Cultural Life of the Nagas</b>	
<b>1.3.1. The Social Life</b>	
<b>1.3.2. The Village</b>	
<b>1.3.3. The Festivals</b>	
<b>1.3.4. The Morung</b>	
<b>1.3.5. Head Hunting</b>	
<b>1.3.6. Marriage</b>	
<b>1.3.7. The Economic Life</b>	
<b>1.3.8. The Oral Tradition</b>	
<b>1.3.9. The Folksong and Folkdance</b>	
<b>1.3.10. The Religious Life</b>	
<b>1.4.The Advent of Christianity Among the Nagas</b>	
<b>1.5.Paradigm Shift on the Cultural and the Contemporary Society of the Nagas</b>	
<b>1.5.1. Impact on the Social and Cultural life</b>	
<b>1.5.2. Impact on the Political and Economic Factor</b>	
<b>1.5.3. Impact on the Religious Factor</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 2: A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE LOTHANAGAS</b>	<b>15-32</b>
<b>2.1.The Term Lotha</b>	

- 2.2.The People: Origin and Migration**
  - 2.2.1. Legend of Origin and Migration**
  - 2.2.2. Historical Account of Origin and Migration**
  - 2.2.3. Tiyi Longchüm**
- 2.3.The Land and Geographical Landscape of the Lotha Naga**
- 2.4.The Socio-Political and Life of the Lothas**
  - 2.4.1. Festivals**
  - 2.4.2. Marriage**
  - 2.4.3. The Chumpo (Morung)**
  - 2.4.4. The Village Administration**
  - 2.4.5. Head Hunting**
- 2.5.The Economic Life of the Lothas**
- 2.6.The Primal Religion of the Lotha Nagas**
- 2.7.The Genesis of Christianity among the Lothas and the Dawn of Modernism.**
  - 2.7.1. The Advent of Christianity**
  - 2.7.2. The Dawn of Modernism**

## **CHAPTER 3: ORAL TRADITION AND FOLKLORES**

**33-55**

- 3.1. Oral Tradition in Naga Society**
- 3.2. Folklore and its Relationship with Oral Tradition**
- 3.3. Transmission of Oral Traditions and various Arts and Crafts from Past to Present**
  - 3.3.1. Chumpo (Morung)**
  - 3.3.2. The Role of Village Elders: Custodian of the Tribe Lore**
  - 3.3.3. The Family**
  - 3.3.4. Folk Stories**
  - 3.3.5. Folk Songs**
  - 3.3.6. Folk Dance**
  - 3.3.7. Poetry**
  - 3.3.8. Festivals**

### **3.3.9. Dresses and Ornaments**

### **3.10. Weaving and Pottery**

## **3.4. Ancestral Sites Found in Lotha Areas that has Cultural Values**

### **3.4.1. Tiyi Longchüm**

### **3.4.2. Eran Chrükha**

### **3.4.3. Mengkitong**

### **3.4.4. Chümpo**

### **3.4.5. Tsüngchenphen**

## **3.5. Oral Tradition and Folklore in the Modern Generation**

### **3.5.1. Historical Sites**

### **3.5.2. Folk Song**

### **5.3.3. Agricultural Practices (first occupation)**

### **3.5.5. Ancient Boundaries**

### **3.5.6. Festival**

### **3.5.7. Food Habit**

### **3.5.8. Community Fishing**

### **3.5.9. Oha Long (Lucky Stone)**

### **3.5.10. Believe in Supernatural**

## **3.6. Will Written Replace the Oral Tradition?**

## **CHAPTER 4: AN ANALYSIS ON LOTHALITERARY FOLKLORE 56-73**

### **4.1. Lotha Folktale**

#### **4.1.1. The Story of Malipvüi**

#### **4.1.2. The Story of How Tiger Started Eating Human Flesh/ The Marriage of a Lady to a Tiger**

### **4.2. Poetry**



**4.2.1. Ummha Randan (A Prayer of Blessing)**

**4.2.2. Oli Riathüng Ronsi Etsa ( A Prayer for Blessing for a Good Harvest)**

**4.3. Lotha Folksong**

**4.3.1. Tiyi Nsikakhen (A Song Dedicated to Mt. Tiyi)**

**4.3.2. Ngaro Chücho Echüli Nyiche Vamoji oro Soyile to Echüli Vandamvü Thungi Oyi Yencho (A Message to the Spirit of Death to Come and Help the Spirit of a Child who Died and is Unable to Cross the Valley of Death)**

**4.3.4. Süpen Thera (Rhododendrons) (Folksong)**

**4.4. Lotha Proverbs**

**4.4.1. Hapvüro Lantsa (The Walking Style of a Crab.**

**4.4.2. Echü Siti Ntsiv (One will realize only after Death)**

**4.4.3. Npong Venrocho Tüv Je (The Calm after the Storm)**

**4.4.4. Kyakshak Ejrü (Crow's Egg)**

**4.5. Stories Associated with Moral Teachings**

**4.5.1. Emha Ekhüng Etsoi jo Ünthon (Pride Goes Before a Fall)**

**4.5.2. Etsüngiphen tona bembuk to motsü (The Story of Bamboo and Broom)**

**4.5.3. Vüngnüm ji Motsü (The Story of Vulture)**

**4.5.4. Onshompvüni Motsü (The Story of two Friends)**

**4.5.5. Eboe Nchüa na Eloë Engav ji Motsü**

**4.5.6. Velüngü Nchüngthi Enhyak**

**4.6. Lotha Yisanlan (Lotha Terms)**

**CHAPTER 5: A CONTEMPORARY OUTLOOK ON THE FOLKLORE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE MODERN CONTEXT.**

**74-102**

## **5.1. Globalization and Modernization**

### **5.1.1. Globalization**

### **5.1.2. Types of Globalization**

### **5.1.3. Modernization**

## **5.2. The Lothas Under the British Colonizers**

## **5.3. The Lothas Under the American Missionaries**

## **5.4. Transition of Values Among the Modern Generation**

### **5.4.1. Education System**

### **5.4.2. Occupation**

### **5.4.3. Social Life**

### **5.4.4. Cultural Life**

### **5.4.5. Political Life**

### **5.4.6. Religious Life**

### **5.4.7. Art and Crafts**

### **5.4.8. Language**

## **5.5. The Notion of Progress and Advancement**

## **5.6. Problems of Modernization**

### **5.6.1. Lack of Respect**

### **5.6.2. Unemployment**

### **5.6.3. Addiction**

### **5.6.4. Sex and Teenage Pregnancy**

### **5.6.5. Marriage and Divorce**

### **5.6.6. Virtual World**

**5.6.7. Loss of Christian Values**

**5.6.8. Materialistic Society**

**5.6.9. Loss of Culture**

**5.7. Reweaving the Lotha Society**

**5.7.1. Folklore**

**5.7.2. Festivals**

**5.7.3. The Role of Elderly People**

**5.7.4. The Role of Church Leaders**

**5.8. Retention of Cultural Heritage**

**5.8.1. Modern Technology and its Role**

**5.8.2. The Role of the Youth**

**5.8.3. The Role of Educational Institutions**

**5.8.3. The Role of Village Elders**

**5.8.5. Role of the Artists**

**5.8.6. Role of the Individual**

**CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION**

**103-106**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**107-114**

## CHAPTER 1

### A BROAD OVERVIEW OF THE NAGAS

The Nagas are a distinct group of tribal communities residing at the extreme North-Eastern part of India. The word “Naga” as a compound word unifies all of the other tribes existing in Nagaland and some part of Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Eastern Nagaland (Myanmar). Some of the tribes of Naga are: Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Khiamnungan, Konyak, Lotha, Pochury, Phom, Regma, Rongmei, Sangtam, Sema, Yimchunger, Zealiang, Mao, Kuki, etc. Nagas are marked by its rich culture, traditions and festivals and with its vibrant and beautiful topography and the unique art, the land where majority of the Nagas inhabit is known as the “The Land of Festival.”

#### 1.1.The Term Naga

There is no strong evidence of how the Naga group came into existence, many people have suggested possible theories of the term Nagas. As stated in the North East today, the term Naga might have been derived from the Burmese word “*No-ka*” which means people with pierced earlobes. It is also suggested that the Assamese word “*noga*” meaning “*Naked*” is also another possibility as the Nagas had close contact with them. The Konyaks tribe of the Nagas also has similar word to that of the Burmese, according to them “*na*” means “*ear*” and *ka* means “*hole*”. In the Language of the Ao Nagas “*Nok*” means “*Dao*” a sharp long traditional knife of the Nagas.

The Nagas however accept the fact that they are an independent race since the time of their ancestors and they are proud to be known as Nagas. Dr. Angelina Lotsüro in her book *The Nagas A Missionary Challenge* comments that “*The unknown origin of the term ‘Naga’ has an advantage. No single tribe can claim it to be its own nor reject it. It is nobody’s in particular, but everybody’s in general. It unifies*”(2000:5).

#### 1.2. Origin and Migration of the Nagas

The Naga tribes are believed to be from the same racial stock known as Mongolian race. R.B. Thohe Pou in *The Route of Nagas Migration* also writes that the Nagas lack of written history made it difficult to trace the exact location on where they have migrated from. However, “*geographically and from geographical perspective, the southward movement*

(migration) from mainland China is possible following along the three rivers like Salween (Nu-Jiang), Mekong and Irrawaddy river” ([www.epao.net](http://www.epao.net)). He further supports this theory by the historical facts that the Nagas once inhabited the area of Salween River which is a tributary of the Irrawaddy River and hence, it is possible to migrate through this river. Many scholars and researchers are also convinced with the fact that the Nagas once lived near the seas as the usage of marine shells by the Nagas can be seen in their dresses and ornaments.

Another similar narration of origin and migration given by Mandita and Sebastian M Hongray mentions that the Nagas were forced to migrate while the construction of the Great Wall of China was on progress. According to Mandita and Sebastin, the Nagas came and settled at “Makhel” (a village near sojouba, Tadubi of Senapati district in Manipur bordering Nagaland) after passing through the jungles of Myanmar from China. But slowly due to growth in population the people had to disperse and before they depart, it is believed that the people of Maikhel planted a sacred Pear tree and to this day the tree still exists. The monolith near the tree which was erected on January 1, 1992 reads as “*This tree is known as the oldest tree in the history of the Nagas...This tree still stands as a symbol of unity and oneness of the whole Naga tribes...*” ([scrolls.in](http://scrolls.in))

Some scholars are of the view that Khezhakeno or Kezakenoma or Khezakenoma was initially the home of many Naga tribes before they dispersed to different places along with the various theories, there are also a number of legends depending upon the tribes about their story of origin and migration. Below are some of the tribal legends of origin and migration from different part of the world to the present location.

### **1.2.1. The Mao Legend**

The Mao version of migration and origins believed that the Nagas are descendants of a woman named *Dzüli Mosüro*. According to the legend given by Dr. Lotsüro (2000:7), “*she conceived in a mysterious way with the help of a spirit in the form of a cloud while she was sitting under a banyan tree at Maikhel. She gave birth to three sons named Okhe (Tiger), Ora (God) , Omei (man). Other descendants of Dziüli Mosüro are Chutuwo (the father of the Meiteis, the plainsman of Manipur valley). Alpha, (the father of Kolamei or mayang (outsider) and Kephio (the father of the Nagas)*”. It is believed that they lived together at one period but since the population grew they had to disperse to different region as we find them today.

### **1.2.2. The Legend of Khezakhenoma**

According to this legend there was a long slab of stones that had magical properties to double the amount of rice that are placed on the slab. As stated by Odyuo, the Angamis, Lothas, Sumis, and the Regmas points towards Khezakenoma as their place of origin. Odyuo mentions that since a quarrel broke out between the two sons of Khinzonyu clan over the use of the miraculous stone and the mother interfered wrongly and assigned the stone to the younger one; the elder one got upset and left the place with his men which later on split into different tribes (2019:6).

### **1.2.3. The Lothas Account**

According to some belief as stated by J. P. Mills in *The Lotha Nagas* (2017:3), he mentions that the Lothas and the Plainsmaen were believed to have constituted one group of people who migrated from a place called Lengka (North-West of Naga Hills). However, they soon split and became two bodies; one group became the plain people of Brahmaputra while the other migrated towards the present Nagaland and became the Nagas but this is limited only to some beliefs.

Likewise, there are many tribes in Nagaland that has different legend of origin and migration. However, due to the lack of written historical account there is limited knowledge of where the Nagas originally came from, but it is of the general view that all the tribes of the Nagas have a common history of origin.

## **1.3.The Social and Cultural Life of the Nagas**

### **1.3.1. The Social Life**

The Nagas are originally a warrior group. They have a long history of war and headhunting between different villages. However this practice has stopped since the coming of the Christian Missionaries to our land. Over the time the people and society of the Nagas have changed a lot, they are an independent group of people known for their hospitality and their unique cuisine is known all over the world. The Nagas follow a patriarchy form where the father is the head of the family and thus descent is traced from the father's side. Though the Nagas follow a patriarchy form women always had their fair share in the society, they enjoy more freedom and respect in all aspect of their life comparing to the other women of

the Indian society as also stated by Dr. Lotsüro “*a Naga woman enjoys considerable freedom*” (200:31). Most of the Nagas once married prefer to have their own nuclear family and so it is rare to find a joint family among the Naga society. Then comes the “clan” or the extended family, the Nagas are known to be a generous people and in times of need every clan member visits the house of the sickened or the ill-fated to help them or to carry out any physical work. This custom of sharing and giving is still prevalent among the Naga community. Respect is one of the most important attributes that every Naga is told to consider from the very young age. The ancient Naga society is one that represents a real democracy with no distinction in class or caste, and no one dared to challenge the laws of the land.

### **1.3.2. The Village**

The Nagas live in close-knit villages where it is again sub-divided into khels. Most of the Naga villages are located on top of the hills for their convenience during the time of war. Each village has its own chief assisted by a group of elders and able personalities in order to look after the village administration. Some tribes like the Mao, Semas and the Konyaks practice hereditary system of monarchy or chieftainship, whereas some tribes elect their own leaders, like the Angami and the Lothas follow a system of selection (election) similar to the present democratic system of government. The village chief is sometimes required to play both secular and religious roles, he is also the ambassador to other villages. Dr. Angelina Lotsüro quotes the words of P. Kullu’s “Tribal Religion and Culture” that “...*for the tribals their village means everything, their country, their nation, their tribe, indeed, their whole world. It is in their village that the tribals live out their economic, political, religious and family life. It is here that they have their altar, and their place of government, their court of justice; in a word, everything.*” (*The Nagas: A Missionary Challenge* p-10)

### **1.3.3. The Festivals**

Festivals and ceremonies play an important role among the Nagas as it reflects their rich culture. There are many festivals celebrated throughout the year and majority of the festivals revolve around agriculture. During this occasion people come out from their houses to celebrate it by displaying their traditional music, folk dance, folk songs, etc. It is a time to celebrate and be merry but in every festival the pre-dominant theme is to offer their prayers to God who is their supreme deity. The Sangtams celebrate Amongmong, the Phom -Aoling Manyu, the Lothas-Tokhu Emong, the Angami-Sekrenyi, the Sumi-Tulini/Ahuna, the Kuki-Mimkuut, etc each tribe has its own distinct festivals.

#### **1.3.4. The Morung**

The Morung is one of the earliest forms of social institution where the unmarried young boys and girls after their attainment of puberty sleeps and look after the villages. Here they learn the stories of their elders, war tactics and women folks get to learn various arts like weaving, knitting and basket making. The administration of the Morung varies from tribe to tribe and each tribe has their own name given in their own dialect. For example the Lothas call it “Chumpo” the Ao call it “Ariju” the Sema call it “Apuki” and so on (*Odyuo, 2019:8*). Though some functions may vary according to the tribes, the most important role it played in the social life of the Nagas is that the Morung served as an institution for imparting knowledge of discipline, education, art and crafts, and for various ceremonial purposes.

#### **1.3.5. Head Hunting**

The Nagas are a warrior group and wars were often fought between different tribes and even different villages from the same tribe are not spared in this field. During the war the enemies head were taken as a trophy and the number of head a person manage to collect the more he is respected in the community. There is certain rule to follow before going for a war, every male participating in the war have to sleep away from their wives for some days.

For the Lotha Nagas, Zanao Mozhui states that *“In the morning they would assemble in the house of the champion in the head hunting of that village. There a cock and a pig will be killed and ate together. While killing if the cock makes sound it is regarded as a bad omen and would not go the trip that time. Similarly any person who hic-coughed when he was eating the meat stayed back for misfortune would fall upon him.”* (2004:8-9)

Some tribes abstain from taking the heads of the children and women folks but some tribes regard these heads as precious as they are often protected in the heart of the village and could only be killed through exceptional feats of courage. The practice of head hunting has various reason bound up with social, economic, political and religious life depending upon the tribes. A person who have not a single head collected become an object of ridicule among the women folk and he often finds hard to achieve a bride. However with the passage of time and the introduction of Christianity, the practice of head hunting came to an end.

#### **1.3.6. Marriage**



Marriage form an important social institutions for the Nagas, every tribes follow certain rules and regulation in this process. The Naga men and women are free to choose their spouse from different clan and villages or even between the tribes. Earlier inter-tribe marriages was prevented but slowly with the change in the society many restrictions were taken away and a person is free to chose his or her own life partner although there is still a preference within the same villages and tribes. The Nagas take Marriages very seriously and so divorces are less seen except on the condition of unfaithfulness or impaired fertility. The ceremonies and rituals during the marriage differ from tribe to tribe, for the Lotha tribe, a man has to fulfill certain set of rules and pay the bride price in order to marry the woman he wish for. For the Sema, a man can bargain the price of the bride and get it reduced, for the Angami, they follow both formal and informal type of marriages which is both equally binding.

### **1.3.7. The Economic Life**

The Naga society is an agrarian society. They mostly practice shifting cultivation, earlier the lands are divided equally among the cultivators by the village chief assisted by the elders and no one is allowed to extend new sites without the consent of the village chief. The crops that are known to the Nagas are Rice, maize, beans, millets, yam, ginger, orange, banana, etc. Animal husbandry is also a common practice, rearing of Pigs, Mithun, cow, etc are common to them.

Economically the Nagas depend mostly on cultivation but at present there are many small scale and medium scale industries growing side by side. Pottery, weaving, blacksmith, carpentry, etc are all common professions that are seen among the Nagas. With the introduction of industrial activities the forest and minerals also became important assets for the economic development. The Nagas are mostly self- sustained and Nature has always been the backbone for their economic growth.

### **1.3.8. The Oral Tradition**

History for the Nagas were all transmitted orally as there was no documentation of any sort of written form until the intervention of the Christian missionaries. Most of the stories were narrated in group especially during the evening by the men folks; women were not allowed to participate. Anungla Aier states *“In the villages visited for documenting the historical narratives, the village council chairman or the head Goan Bura was the first person one needs to meet and he would call or identify the elders whose knowledge was trusted by the*

community.” (*Studies on Naga Oral Tradition. Vol 1, p14*) Thus the stories are recorded and transmitted from one generation to the next generation verbally through a trusted elder in the village. For the Khamniungan particularly they follow a different pattern, Aier states, “*The one who had been chosen to be the keeper of oral traditions pertaining to the history of the clan or the village, is a special person and such a person is known as Aseinge. The term Aseinge literally means a ‘knowledgeable and mindful person.’ No discussions take place about the oral tradition of the village till all those who are recognized as the chosen Aseinge of their respective clan arrive.*”(P-15) It is important for the Aseinge or the elders of a community to be careful and accurate in narrating the story to the younger generation as oral tradition is as important today as it must have been in the past because it keeps the social order intact. Through oral tradition the customs, traditions and indigenous knowledge are transferred from one to the next generation keeping the community spirit alive.

### **1.3.9. The Folksong and Folkdance**

Folksong play a very vital role among the Nagas, every folksong of each and every tribe carries a very different meaning. It reflects the unique cultures and beauty, the happiness and sadness, the emotions, the achievements and the desire of the indigenous people. The Nagas held music and dances close to their hearts. They believe in unity and togetherness and so most of the dances or folkdance of the Nagas are presented in groups. Each tribe have their own different folksong accompanied by folkdance having different indication, for instance the “Rukhyo-Sharu” or the “Victory dance” of the Lotha is performed once a war is fought and a victory is brought to the village. For the Angami- Phita, Chakhesang-Pheta, Garo-Wangala Chroka, Lotha-Shanta, Ao-Tsrngsang, Sumi-Aphilo Kuwo, etc are all names of folkdances performed by different tribes. Some names of folksongs by different tribes are Angami-Tati, Chakhesang-Tükhrü-Thürro Lizzo, Chang-Setshang Chia, Lotha-Loju-Longata Khen, etc (*Compendium of Different Naga Art Forms, 2016*).

### **1.3.10. The Religious Life**

The Nagas during our fore-fathers time practiced animism, gripped by clutches of superstitious believe taboos and sacrifices. They believe in both good and evil spirit and right offering were made to the right spirit. B.Z Sema states, “*In order to express their awe towards the supernatural being , their fascination with the mystery of existence, and in fear, pain and terror, the early Naga tribe practiced primal religion in form of animism...these*

*beliefs were expressed through their worship nature and natural phenomena and through their faith in the power of magic and omens.”(2020:22)*

The Nagas also believe in the existence of evil spirit and they dare not to disturb their habitat. The spirits worshipped by various tribes are, the Angamis believe in ‘kepenuopfu’, the Aos believe in ‘mozing’ (Mojing), the Konyaks in ‘kawang’ the God they believed is the God of heaven and earth. For the Lotha Nagas, ‘ngazo’ and ‘ronsu’ were the gods of the crops, whereas ‘sikyingo’ is considered to be the God who controlled the wild animals. But with the coming of modernism and the Christian missionaries, Christianity was introduced to the Nagas and now majority of the people practice Christian faith.

#### **1.4.Advent of Christianity Among the Nagas**

The American Baptist Missionaries (ABM) were the first to bring the Gospel to the Nagas. The American Board of Commission formed by the Congregationalist in the United States in 1810 commissioned Adoniram Judson and his wife Luther Rice along with three other missionaries in the year 1812 to work in India. It is said that on their way to India they decided to embrace the Baptist Model of Baptism and hence on reaching Calcutta, they were baptized by William Ward on 6 Feb. 1812. Later in the year 1836, Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Brown and Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Cutter arrived at Sadiya, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Bronson and Mrs. Jacob Thomas came to the present Naga land upon the invitation of Captain Francis Jenkins the then Commissioner of Assam (*Eyingbemo Odyuo, 2019:11*).

Among the American Missionaries the first to have come in contact with the Nagas is Mr. Miles Bronson in the year 1839. The first contact was to the Nokte Nagas of Namsang in the present Tirap district of Arunachal and established a Christian Mission Centre in 1839. The Nagas at the initial was skeptic of the Missionaries and their motives but on gaining the trust of the missionaries the Nagas accepted them. Dr. Angeline Lotsüro mentions “*People were suspicious about the visit of the missionary. It is said that Bronson took one whole day to convince the people that he was not a spy of the British Company.*”(P-45) Bronson had a passionate zeal to work with the Nagas but due to his ill health and the unfortunate death of his sister, his work was short lived and he had to leave.

The second American missionary to come and work among the Nagas is Rev. E. W. Clark, who came to station at Sibsagar (Assam) in 1869 to start his mission work (*Odyuo, 2019:11*). Among the Nagas the first convert and the pioneer who came into this mission field is Mr. Sobongmeren. As Godhula an Assemese, was already working as an Evangelist

among the Nagas even before Clark's arrival Clark urged Godhula to learn the dialect of the Nagas as he was acquainted with the Nagas and eventually he visited the Molungyimchem village on several occasions and started preparing for the planting of Christianity among the Nagas. In the year 1872, Clark baptized nine of the Nagas who were brought down from the Naga Hill by Godhula and later on Clark himself went to Molungyimchen and baptized fifteen more Nagas and from there the Lord's Supper was for the first time celebrated. Thus, the church was established in the year Dec. 23, 1872 and Christianity became rooted among the Nagas. The Nagas which was once a head-hunter tribe was now changed into a peace loving people of Christ.

### **1.5.Paradigm Shift on the Cultural and the Contemporary Society of the Nagas**

There are various factors that led to the change in the social and cultural life of the Nagas but the two main sources that gave a complete turn are the secular and the religious grounds. On secular note, the British Colonizers played a major role in introducing the system of judicial, planning economic and political ideas and system of democracy. When the Nagas were made to join the world wars they came in contact with different cultures from other nations and their worldview changed for a better lifestyle. Zanao Mozhüi states *"In the first World War 2,000 strong Naga young men were sent to France, which had an eye opening impact on the Nagas who returned home with rich experience of the outside world"*(2004:35). On the religious note, the Christian Missionaries played a major role in spreading the western form of education among the Nagas. Their main motive was to spread Christianity but also to introduce education as a tool to make their work easier. Hence, with the introduction of various western system of organization the Nagas slowly moved towards modernization and they entered the globalized sphere which slowly impacted their traditions, customs, practices and their way of life. The current situation of the Nagas is such that both the west and the east are highly impacting their culture as the Nagas are easily attracted to new ideas and development. Culturally, the Naga society is now a hub of many hybrid cultures influenced from all the four angles, and on religious note, many are going astray from the Christian norms and the church which was once regarded highly is also losing its value.

#### **1.5.1. Impact on the Social and Cultural life**

The Nagas were fond of social and community life; they represented a true pattern of socialist democratic society. They were known for their honesty, sincerity, high morals, hospitality and generosity and these traits are still seen among the Nagas. Everyone was treated equally and there was no discrimination of any sort. The Nagas were fully self-sufficient people depending mostly on the nature and their skills for their survival. But with the changing of society from primitive to the modern, the rich tradition and the proud moral characters are also losing. Bohili Z. Sema states, *“Due to the impact of modernization. Globalization, migration, media and technology, Naga youth have gradually begun to give up certain aspects of the traditional cultural value”* (2020:35). New cultures and traditions are slowly infiltrating our ethnic and indigenous lifestyle and practices. Therefore, it is also necessary to reflect and understand our heritage and culture before identity crisis becomes a threat to the coming generation because we may have no story to tell about our own culture once it is lost.

#### **1.5.2. Impact on the Political and Economic Factor**

At the initial stage, the Nagas did not have a unified system of administration as one tribe had a hostile attitude towards the other tribes or even between villages to village within the same tribe. Every village of the Nagas had their own system of administration, they were self-governed. The village head or chief in most times acted as the head of the social, political, economic and religious organization assisted by the village elders. However with the coming of the Christian missionaries and the colonizers and the impact of the various wars the Nagas moved towards a more refined system of organization in all sphere. As stated by Mozhui, among the Nagas in Nagaland, the first tribal council was formed by the Lothas in 1923 and the Ao's in 1928 but later the Ao's dissolved the tribal bodies in 1930 to be reformed in 1939. Slowly after the end of the Second World War other tribal bodies emerged and the political system slowly took the present form (2004:57).

In economic sphere, more scientific method of terrace cultivation were introduced, and the strong youths were no more wasting time in guarding the villages as the society that was once engaged in wars and head hunting have become a peace loving people. The people have turned toward farming and engaging themselves in more productive activities like, weaving, crafts, pottery, carpentry, etc. New employment in educational field also increased for the educated people, the roads were getting developed and with the easy method of transport and export the business minded people also increased. But the society is fast

running towards materialism and the society which was once casteless and classless is divided into the rich, middle and the poor section.

### **1.5.3. Impact on the Religious Factor**

The Naga primitive religious practice is animism, they believed in the existence of a Supreme Being. However, they have changed a lot in the present context. For the missionaries becoming a convert Christian means throwing away all the traditional practices and beliefs that was once a part of their lifestyle. Zanao Mozhui, commenting on the Lotha Naga he says, the Missionaries who came and worked among the Lothas failed to understand the importance of the culture and traditional practices of the villagers. Mozhui states *“To become a Christian, a person does not need to throw away all his or her cultural life. Rather being a Christian one has to seriously consider their cultural life and preserve it in order that one may grow smoothly, without any side effect in the society”* (2004:105).

The first Nagas who accepted Christianity faith were tortured and were excommunicated from their own village, they became an outcast. As narrated by Yanphamo Humtsoe from Wokha village (Age 100), when he along with some of his peer group first embraced the Christian faith, they were not allowed to take part on any of the social activities occurring in the village, they did not have a proper church to conduct service, they were mocked and called as traitors but amidst all these they never gave up on their believe, they kept praying with a hope that a better days will come. Gradually with the afford and persistence of the American Missionaries and convert Christians, at present majority of the Nagas now practice Christian faith, the American missionaries brought a ray of hope to the people who were once in the dark.

The Nagas as commented by various individuals and scholars are marked by positivity in every field over the past few decades. As J. H. Hutton writes. *“Nagas have fine qualities. They are simple, cheerful, colourful, humerous, courteous and hospitable people”, they are a people with “a sense of honour and generosity at home, at work and at gathering; laughter is the food of the society and hospitality is overwhelming. Nagas are honest and truthful people...”* ([www.kuknalinim.com](http://www.kuknalinim.com)).

The Egalitarian society of which the Nagas are known for have changed a lot over the past few years, The influences of diverse culture have impacted the lifestyle, dresses, food

habits, art and crafts, family, etc. Hence, it is necessary for the younger generation to awaken and re-learn their traditions and customs as we are losing our identity by neglecting our culture. According K.K. Sema (IAS) Rtd commissioner and secretary art and culture department during his speech at the seminar on “preservation of Naga Oral Tradition” comments that *“it is when we as a people have to come together with all the varied custom, culture and tradition that each is identically different from the other, then comes the problem of what kind of custom and traditions to actually follow even though Naga customary law are given due recognition in the form of constitutional recognition from our customary rights...if we were to think of ourselves, as people we don’t know who we are, where we came from, we don’t know who gave the nomenclature called the “Nagas” here comes the question of identity crises and the inability to stand up and say we are from a particular community”*(Nagaland Post, 23 Sept. 2011).

## Work Cited

Aier, Anungla. *Studies on Naga Oral Tradition: Memories and Telling of Origin Myth and Miogration. Vol 1.* Heritage Pubishing House, Near DABA, Duncan, Dimapur, Nagaland. 2018

Alemchiba, M. *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland.* Naga Institute of Culture , Kohima, Nagaland. 1970.

Alemchiba, M. *The Arts and Crafts of Nagaland.* Naga Institute of Culture, Government of Nagaland. July, 1968.

Clark, M. M. *A Corner in India.* Philadelphia American Baptist Publication Society. 1907. Reprinted in India by Christian Literature Centre, Panbazaar, Gauhati. Assam, India. 1978.

*Compendium of Different Naga Art Form.* Department of Art and Culture, Government of Nagaland. Kohima. April 2016.

Ezung. S. Ekonthung. *Alcoholism Among Married Couples: Ministeral Challenges.* Printing Solution, Tsumang Colony, Wokha, Nagaland. 2014.

Kikon, Myanbemo. *Cultural Change Among the Lothas Nagas: A case study of Wokha and Akuk village in Nagaland.* NEHU, Shillong, 2002.

Kikon. Z. L. *Lotha Jüli Tsolan Phyolan, Sükhying, Vanlan-Yilan to Motsü.* Popular Printing Press. N. L. Road. Dimapur, Nagaland.

Longchar, A. Wati. *The Traditional Tribal Worldview and Modernity.* N, Limala Lkr, ETC, Jorhat Assam. 1995.

Lotsüro, Dr. Angelina. *The Nagas: A Missionary Challenges.* Vendrame Institute Publication, Shillong. 2000.

Mills, J.P. *The Lotha Nagas.* Directorate of Art and Culture, Government of Nagaland. 1980.

Mozhui, Zanao. *The Impact of Christianity on the Naga People.* Lotha Baptist Church, Dimapur. Nagaland. 2004.



*Nagaland* G. K. Dr. N. Khashito Aye. 11<sup>th</sup> edition 2016.

Odyuo, Eyingbemo. *Re-Locating the Mission of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) in the context of Clean Election Campaign (CEC) in select District of Nagaland: A Missiological Perspective*. Unpublished thesis, UTC. March 2019.

Putchong. Dissertation on *Cultural Identity and Moral Values in Khamniungan Naga Folk Literature*. Unpublished thesis, Nagaland University, Merima, Kohima. 2018

Sema, Z Boholi. *Pastoral care and Counselling: Towards Cultural Fidelity among the Naga Youths*. Christian World imprints, Christian Publishing and Books from India, C-3, Wazirpur Industrial Area, Delhi, 2020.

### **Webliography**

Did you know how the term “Naga” Originated? Dec. 8, 2021.  
[thenortheasttoday.com/states/nagaland/did-you-know-how-the-term-naga-originated/cid2535088.htm](http://thenortheasttoday.com/states/nagaland/did-you-know-how-the-term-naga-originated/cid2535088.htm)

Haskar Nandita and Sebastian M Hongray. Naga resistance is not recent-its history goes back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Scroll.in. Aug 19, 2019.  
[www.google.com/amp/s/amp.scroll.in/article/934287/naga-resistance-is-not-recent-its-history-goes-back-to-the-13th-century](http://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.scroll.in/article/934287/naga-resistance-is-not-recent-its-history-goes-back-to-the-13th-century)

Luithui, Shimreichon. Naga. A People Struggling for Self-Determination. IWGIA.2001.  
[www.kuknalim.com](http://www.kuknalim.com)

Nagaland Post. Nagalim: Seminar on Preservation of Naga Oral Tradition. 23 Sept. 2011  
<https://www.nagalandpost.com>

Pou R. B Thohe. The Route of Nagas Migration.19 April 2016 [www.epao.net](http://www.epao.net)

### **INTERVIEW**

Yanphamo Humtsoe (100 yrs) a residence of Wokha village.

## CHAPTER 2

### A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE LOTHAS

Lotha is one among the major tribes of the Nagas inhabiting the present Wokha district of Nagaland. The people of the Lothas also refer to themselves as “Kyong”, the land with its rich natural resources and beautiful landscape is recognized by the government as “The Land of Plenty”.

#### 2.1. The Term Lotha

There has been no evidence on the derivation of the term “Lotha” though some theories have been brought up by various scholars regarding the origin of the word. According to J. P Mills, “*They call themselves Kyon, meaning simply “man”* (1980: 01).

Zanao Mozhui in giving an account of his interview with Late Rev. Zanao Yanthan, a senior pastor in Nagaland mentions that “‘Lo’, means sacrifice or offering, ‘Tha’, means fully satisfactorily” (2004:4. Thus, Lothas are people who fully appeased the expectation of the gods.

Supporting the above statement of the origin of the term “Lotha” N. Khumkhotung Ngullie of Tsungiki also writes in the Eastern Mirror on why the Lothas were called so. He takes an account of the oral history passed down by our forefathers and according to him; it was because the Lothas practiced sacrificial rituals religiously. Ngullie writes, during the migration of the Lothas to a new place, a person name Rankhandamo was unable to cross the tunnel for it was too narrow and he got stuck as he could not let go of the Mithun’s head he was carrying. He told the villagers to leave him there but to not forget him when they reach their new world but the villagers after reaching the place forgot about him. When a dysentery epidemic came in the village the people remembered Rankhandamo and thought it might be the punishment by his spirit for not obeying and forgetting about him. That is when the people started to appease the spirit of Rankhandamo by offering different types of sacrifices. This practice of appeasing spirits soon covered many aspects of their lives. It was through a sorcerer that a person offer sacrifices for various reasons like, curing sickness, for good harvest, for blessings, for building a village, etc. sacrifices include, offering of Eggs, A chick,

a Dog, a Cock, etc. The Dog was considered to be the highest item for sacrifice. Thus, after the sacrificial ritual, a person will act according to the advice of the sorcerer.

*“From the narration of rituals of offerings and sacrifices practiced by our forefathers, our people, our tribe was called “Lotha” (Lothata lota eroe jipo), which means a “tribe which practices rituals of offerings and sacrifices most adequately, thoroughly, meticulously, devoutly and religiously” (Eastern Mirror. N. Khumkhothung Ngullie).*

Another interpretation of the term ‘Lotha’ given by Zanao is that the Lothas was encountered by the British only after coming in contact with the Khuzas and the Angamis in the 1830s and the British might have acquired the term from the Khuza word “*Latha*” meaning “*gone to a far place*” which later on developed to term Lotha, as recorded and recognized at present (2004:4).

## **2.2. The People: Origin and Migration**

### **2.2.1. Legend of Origin and Migration**

Mhonyani Sangma in the abstract of her case study on the *Origin of the Lotha Naga and their early settlement* mentions that the Lothas had a record of their history but as it was written on animal skin and unfortunately, a dog ate it and since then the history of the Lothas has been handed down orally (*IRJSS Vol. 6(4), 43-48, April (2017)*).

However, while tracing the origin and migration of the Lotha Nagas to the present land, a single migratory route for the Lothas alone cannot be obtained. All the tribes of the Nagas believe that they share the same paternal ancestor and therefore all of the Naga tribes were considered as brothers at one point of time. As also mentioned in the previous chapter according to the research and documentation done and the narratives told by various tribes, the Nagas altogether seem to have a similar migratory route and must have come around sometime between the 1st and the 2nd century B.C. It was only after reaching the destined place that the people parted ways for a reason known and unknown to us.

Sangma, in her case study mentions a popular legend among the Lothas which says that their ancestors emerged out of a hole to discover and settle in the new homeland. The story goes by the name *Longkvürü* who went on an expedition along with his brother and a hunting dog. The dog while pursuing a porcupine (*Lisso*) went inside a hole. *Longkvürü* and his brothers in search of the dog too went inside the hole just to find out an enchanting new world on the other end. *Longkvürü* then plucked a gooseberry and ate it, and nearby the tree

he found a brook from which he took water and drank it. Even the water they tasted really sweet and the two brothers amazed by the new world decided to migrate and built their village in the new land. They went back to their village with some gooseberry and water from the Brooke to persuade the people but the villagers did not show much interest about the new found land. It was only during the time of Limhachan and Limathung, the son of Longkvürü and his brother, that the village got dispersed. It was the two sons that took the villagers into the new world. Limhachan as his name indicates (Limha-world, Chanka- View) was named so by his father because Longkvürü was the first to view the new world and likewise Limhathung (Limha-World, Thungia-exalt) was named so by his father as Longkvürü's brother was mesmerized by the new world and he was the first to have exalted it among the villagers.

This story is similar to the legend of Rankhadamo but has different end to it, during the time, there was a monster name Rankhanda who devoured the people and the livestock and created mayhem in the village, and so Limhachan and Limhathung persuaded the villagers to go to a safer place in the new world instead of being eaten by the monster. Accordingly, the villagers agreed and packed all of their belonging, and decided to leave without letting the monster know. However, the monster came to know about the villager's plan and followed them to the hole but his horn got wedged and he got stuck in the old village. The people were now free from the monster and the villagers to preserve their kinship and their upcoming generation consented to marry within themselves and thus all the Lotha tribes believe that they are descendants of the two brothers.

We find stories of other tribes like the Ao's who believe that they evolved from a stone or the Angami asserting that men came through a hole, but there is no way that humans can naturally evolve from a hole or a stone. As mentioned by Sangma it could be that the Nagas lived in a far-flung place surrounded by mountains on all sides and it must have been going through staggering mountains instead of coming through a hole to find another place on the other side of the mountains.

### **2.2.2. Historical Account of Origin and Migration**

J.P Mills mentions that the Lothas might have migrated along with the plainsmen from a place called Lenka as he was shown a dao, a highly prized heirloom called "Yanthang" from a Lotha village called Okotso which is commonly used by the Lothas at present. This dao is believed to be a gift from the plainsmen as the Lothas could not possibly

make such ornaments. However, this story of origin from the Lengka has different versions but it is believed that the Regma, Sangtams, and the Lothas form one wave of migration as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Another theory given by Shri Hoikishe Sema, former Governor states that, “*the Lothas migrated from the Eastern part of China, passing through Malaysia, Indonesia, and Burma en route and reached a place called ‘Khezahenoma’ located between the Manipur and Chakesang area (present-day Phek). Here they settled for a short period time and later on moved towards their present settlement, Wokha (NE Tribe. The Travel Community).*”

According to John Humtsoe, there is also another theory that mentions that the Lothas migrated from Manchuria, passing through the foothills of the Himalayas and reached Manipur via Burma. They slowly moved from Manipur to reach their present location. The Lothas, Southern Sangtam, Semas, and Regmas are believed to have the same ancestor who migrated from the Mao area towards Kohima. Later they reached the neighborhood of Lozema/Lezama and it is believed that in this area the Semas parted ways from the group. Thence they slowly moved towards Themoketsa Hill, Known to the Lothas as Honohoyanto (Foul-throat-cutting-village). Most Lothas trace their descent in this place nine or ten generations to some ancestor who lived at Honohoyanto. The Regmas soon parted their way to occupy their present inhabitation while the Lothas divided into two groups and one went towards the Phiro and Shaki area and the other group went towards the Wokha hill also known as Lüngchum. Another tradition says that the Lothas divided into three groups, the two groups took the route as mentioned above, the third group after locating an area from the hilltop from honohoyanto went towards Moilan-Pyangsa area but on their journey, they could not find the exact location and so they went on towards the present Koro village and settled there (*Nagaland Journal*)..

### **2.2.3. Tiyi Longchüm**

While studying the history of origin and migration of the Lothas, it is important to mention ‘Tiyi Longchüm’ as this is the oldest village among the Lotha area and the majority of the Lothas settled here before venturing out to from other villages. According to Mhonyani Sangma in her article *Origin of the Lotha Naga and their Early Settlement* this village is believed to be about seven hundred years old. It is located at the hilltop of Mt. Tiyi, one of the highest peaks found in the Lotha area. As per the historical account, there were nine clans with a Chumpo (Dormitory) which is also known as Morung in Naga general term. Sangman

further states about the various findings in this area *“monoliths that were planted in those times during the celebration of ‘feasts of merit’, hearth (nchü), stones that were used as stands for keeping beer mugs known as lümpfutongphen and also ancient whetstone”*, “Vüktzüphen” or a flat slab with certain flowery patches which was used for measuring purposes was also found. All these findings according to Sangma were believed to be owned by a person named Yanpenthung of the Ngullie clan. Many stories of myths and legends, stories and beliefs of the Lothas are pointed towards this region. The village however was deserted due to water scarcity as the people had to climb down the hill at ‘eran chrükha” located at present-day Niroyo village, the second reason for abandoning the village is due to the wild tigers that preyed on the humans and livestock.

### **2.3. The Land and Geographical landscape of the Lotha Naga**

The present homeland where the Lothas inhabit is known as “Wokha” one of the eleven districts of Nagaland, it is also popularly known as “The Land of Plenty”. The literal meaning of “Wokha” is “census” and it is called so because the number of headcounts for the Lothas was taken from this place before spreading out to different villagers in search of new land. As per the District Administration Wokha, the land is situated at a latitude of 26° ‘8’ North and a longitude of 94° ‘18’ East and the total geographical area is 1628 sq km. Wokha is bordered by Assam on the north and west side, Mokokchung and Zunheboto on the Eastside, and Kohima on the Southside. Situated in the mid-western part of the Nagaland state the Wokha area occupies 9.82 % of the total geographical area of Nagaland..

The district is divided into three ranges, they are:

1. The Wokha Range also known as the Upper Range which falls in the upper North-Eastern part of the district
2. The Sanis Range or also known as the Middle Range covering the mid area of the district.
3. Bhandari Range or Lower Range extending from Japukong range of Mokokchung District to the Assam plains in the North-Western side. Bhagty and Churung valley in this region is the most fertile valley in this range ([wokha.nic.in](http://wokha.nic.in) ).

There are altogether 133 villages according to the figures provided during the 2011 census. Most villages of the Lothas are built on the hilltop and slopes located far away from towns and cities. The villages were strategically built on the hilltop to keep an eye on the enemies as it is easier to locate and defeat the enemies if their villages are built on higher grounds.

## 2.4. The Socio-Political Life of the Lothas

### 2.4.1. Festivals

Lothas practiced animism, a form of religious belief and many festivals, feasts, rituals, and ceremonies were held in connection to the culture and religious practices of their tribe. Among the various festivals, *Tokhü Emong* and *Pikhüchak* are the two main festivals celebrated by the Lothas.

*Tokhu Emong* is the most important festival while *Pikhüchak* is associated with marriage. *Tokhü* means “Feast” and *Emong* means the halt on the appointed time. This festival is celebrated annually in the first week of November extending over to 9 days. This festival is also known as the post-harvest festival as it is celebrated after the harvest season when people take respite from the toils and sweat and settle down to enjoy the fruits of one’s harvest. The festival starts once the priest gives the signal; he will go around the village along with his “*Yinga*” or peer group collecting un-husked rice from every household. The more generous a person is the more yields he will get in the following year. The collected rice is used for making rice beer that will be consumed during the celebration and some portion will be used to buy a pig to divide the meat among the contributors of rice (Tokhu Emong- Lotha Tribe, [ipr.nagaland.gov.in/lotha](http://ipr.nagaland.gov.in/lotha) ). During the festivals, prayers are offered to the spirits of the people who have died in the respective year and once the declaration has been made for the celebration of the festivals visitors of the villages are allowed to leave before sunset or they can stay till the end of the festival. The folksong, dances, feast, traditional games, etc are all displayed and the villagers are dressed in their traditional attire according to their social status. As also stated by the Lotha Hoho, Dimapur, this festival is not just a post-harvest festival but also a celebration of brotherhood, forgiveness, and oneness ([www.nagalandpost.com](http://www.nagalandpost.com) ). Locally made drinks and cooked meat are also exchanged among friends and the amount of meat given denotes the depth of their friendship. The most beautiful aspect of Tokhu Emong is that the past hostilities are forgiven and new ties are formed and bonds of closer intimacy are built. It signifies the end of bitterness and the settlement of all problems.

A visitor who takes part in this festival is treated with much hospitality and grandness as one can experience the feeling of enthusiasm and exhilaration within the group through an



extravagant way of feasting and entertainment. As the stories of the forefather and our ancestors are also narrated one can not only enjoy the gayness of the time but also learn about the culture and traditions. It is a festival blended with religion, culture, and entertainment. Once the festival comes to an end, young couples who are engaged during the year are permitted to get married and start a new life.

#### 2.4.2. Marriage

Though at present the system of marriage and the age to get married have changed, during the forefathers' time, as stated by Zanao Mozhüi, the expected age for young women to get married is between fourteen and eighteen and between seventeen and twenty for boys (2004: 12). The customary practices for getting married are different between the Northern and the Southern Lothas. J. P. Mills in his book *The Lotha Nagas*, gives a detail description on the pattern of the traditional Lotha Marriages (2017: 147-154), once a man decides to get married he tells his parents or any other elders in their family to go and ask the girl's parents for their daughter's hand in marriage. If the girl is willing for the marriage, she will offer a traditional drink "*Chunga*" or "*rohi madhu*" to the groom's family, after which the bride price is settled between the two families. This is settled by giving a *rain-shield (Phucho)*, a small carrying basket (*eyingkhangdro*) and a dao handle, to the bride by the groom. The next is *Pikhuchak* ceremony of *Tsoyuta* (eating and drinking) where the groom takes a cock, cooked and prepared by him and takes it to the bride's house along with an old man from his clan referred to as "*Hantsen*". The food is then served by the bride along with a traditional drink to be consumed by the relatives except for the couple. After the *tsoyuta* or *Phikhuchak* is over the groom works for a year in the father-in-law field, collecting wood in the jungle and bringing it to the bride's father's place, this practice is also known as *Lantsoa* (road-making), during this time the groom is allowed to stay at the bride's place. The groom also brings six heaps of woods lined up near the entrance of the bride's house and the bridegroom then kills a pig and gives about twelve pounds of meat to the bride family. Until the next *Tokhu* comes the groom is expected to work in his father-in-law's field.

Once *Tokhu* gets over and the *Hanlam* ceremony is completed, it also ends the groom laborious honeymoon; the groom builds a house called *Kithandro (kithanro)*. Later at night, the couples are summoned from the house saying "*Let them come. Any further talking can be done to-morrow. Any further talking can be done the day after to-morrow. It is forbidden to*



*come after cockcrow. If you do not let them come now we will burn your house*” (Mills 2017:150) The couples are then escorted to the *Kithanro*, the wife of a man from the bridegroom’s clan lead the way followed by the groom dressed in full traditional attire, the bride walks behind the groom dressed in *Lorosü* (marriage cloth) and another wife from the groom’s clan stays behind the bride. The first and the last women must not be pregnant at that time. Some relatives also escort them asking the way to the *Kithanro*; it is not that they do not know the path towards the *Kithanro* but to fulfill the norms. The *Hantsen* will be waiting for the couple and a ceremony of will be made for the newly wedded couple. Sexual intercourse is forbidden on the night of their marriage and the newly wedded couple is not allowed to visit the bride’s family until the third day where they go with a present of meat. The formal marriage ends here however, there is another practice done by the *Ponyiratsen* (man-and-wife-magicians) (Mills 2017:151) this ceremony is held so that the couple can be free from poverty and evil fortunes. This is regarded by the Lothas as initiation of the marriage and each individual can perform only once in their lifetime.

Though the above-mentioned marriage practice is similar for both the Northern and Southern Lothas, some few practices differ. For example, the *Lantsoa* ceremony is practiced by the Northern Lothas only and there is no *Hantsen* as among the Northern Lothas.

**Bride price** or “*oman*” (a collective term for bride price) can also be paid in the form of cash divided into several items. The Bride Price as given by J.P Mills in *The Lotha Nagas* are, amount of Rs 1 is paid to the bride’s mother’s father or mother’s brother right after the *Tsoyuta* is over; this is known as “*Chüka*”. *Nzüüman* (Rs. 8 to Rs. 10) is then paid to the bride’s parents for raising her, next comes the *Nvanman* of (Rs. 10) for not working in his father-in-law's house. Next is *Kitsoman* (Rs. 2) for not building his father-in-law’s house. *Hanlamman*, the cost of pork (Rs. 2), *Tssungshaman* (Rs. 2) in case the groom did not distribute wood to the bride’s clan, *four annas* if the groom did not build the bride’s father a granary, *four annas* if not distributed wood to the father-in-law, *Tsoroman* (Rs. 1) the price of the bride’s breast, and *Lentamoman* (Rs. 1) price of intimacy with the bride, *otaietsoman* given to the bride’s brother and father, it can be paid in installments as it amounts to fifty baskets of rice or Rs. 30 if paid in cash. The last payment is *etchhuman* or price of death (rs.2-rs.5) once this price is paid the bride’s family can claim no *otaietsoman*. But, if a woman dies living children behind *Mungishi* (Rs. 1-Rs.2) is given to her parents and the outstanding amount of *otaietsoman* can be claimed.

### 2.4.3. The Chümpo (Morung)

Morung can be regarded as the earliest form of educational institution for the Nagas. Most of the Naga tribes have a morung named in their dialect. For the Lothas it is called “*Chümpo*” where the young male members come to learn various customary and traditional practices. Every village of the Lothas have their Chumpo usually built in the middle of the village, some are built at the village entrance. Most relics of warfare and weapons like the skulls of their enemies, daos, spears, shields, etc are kept and most of the important decisions are made here. There are also certain norms and procedure to be followed while building a Chümpo, as stated by J P Mills, “*a typical chumpo extends to forty feet, with a breadth of fifteen feet at the front and twelve feet at the back. The roof-tree is low in the middle, and curves up to gables at the front and back, that at the front being about sixteen feet high and that at the back a foot or so lower*”(2017:25).

In the Chümpo, young boys are taught about the traditional values and practices, various war tactics, their cultures and norms, and also the working principles of the village administration. The elders take charge of training the young boys, each grouped according to their age entrusted with various responsibilities. Though some tribes of the Nagas allowed having a Morung for women, the Lothas restricted women to enter the Chümpo. According to Mhabeni Ezung “*The Chumpo was the pride of the village, and it was always decorated with trophies of war and the finest wood-carvings that the villagers were capable of*” (2014).

While visiting a Lotha village, one can still see a symbolic *Chumpo* built in some villages even though its functions have decayed. The decaying culture and traditional norms and practices are causing hype among the villages and hence some villages built *Chumpo* as a sign of remembrance and also preserving their traditions. Mhonlumo Kikon the Advisor of IT, Science and Technology in his speech during the inauguration of a symbolic traditional Chumpo in Wokha village stated that “*our culture is our identity and chumpo is an integral part of every village which was considered the first and the biggest institution in the olden times*”.

#### 2.4.4. The Village Administration

The village administration system among the Lothas is the most primary form of administration. The Lothas are self-governed since the time of their ancestors; all the villages are governed by their customary law.

A Lotha village state is an independent unit; every village marked its territory or boundary lines ascertained by stones or natural markings. No one is allowed to shift or disturb other boundaries and it is believed that if a person shifts an ancient boundary it will bring misfortune to the individual. Though huge walls and partitions are rarely seen between the villages one can still identify their land and hence there are little or no disputes concerning the land issues. Each village is independent and sovereign and no village acknowledges the authority of another village.

Earlier the villages are run by a village chief or “*Ekhung*”, the village is governed by a set of laws known as “*Pyimsumotsui shikhu*” (customary law). The chief is assisted by village elders known as “*Tongti chochang*” and under them are again the “*Pangi*”. The council with the Ekhung, tongti, chochang, and pangi are collectively known as “*Sotsoi*” (meat-eater) (Mhabeni, 2014). The chief is considered as the guardian and protector of the village, he is also the religious head and the leader in war, he holds the supreme authority in the village, he decides when the land will be cleared for cultivation purpose and distributes it among the cultivators, and he also acts as the supreme judge in settling disputes. The chieftainship among the Lothas is hereditary but it can also be passed on to another capable individual, not necessarily his son.

As given by Mhabeni, the citizens of the Lothas are classified into three groups, 1. Rulers (*Esopvui/Esapvui*), 2. Victorious and mighty men (*Ekhyo Ekhung*), and 3. Commoners (*Arushurui/Kishoroe*) (2014: 9). The Lotha village is composed of *Jipo* or clans which are also divided into *Mhitso* (Kindred) as “*Khels*”. The division of Khel is nothing more than a convenient division of village for managing affairs independently and there is no restriction of movement and settling in among the various khels. Every Khel can also have a Morung or a Chümpo.

In the present scenario, the village head of the Lothas is elected by the villagers and he is known as the chairman. This system of electing leaders is similar to the democratic form of government and hence one can find a village council along with the head chairman, Goan Bora (GB) and other council members. Though some changes have taken place one can still

observe the resemblance of the village administration system to that of the earlier times. The elected head or the “*Chairman*” along with the other council members decides for the good governance of the village.

#### 2.4.5. Head Hunting

Headhunting was a common practice during the forefather’s time, a village raid will occur from one tribe to another and the head of the enemies will be taken after a war as trophies. The more a person manages to collect head, the higher his rank rouse in the village and he is respected and feared.

Among the Lothas heads of other tribes were taken and it is rare to find a Lotha taking the head of their tribesman. Usually, a raid of a village will occur in a surprise attack at dawn or when a woman comes down to fetch water or rush an unsuspecting party working in their fields. Women were carefully guarded as their heads were regarded as a finer trophy than that of a man’s. J P Mills mentions that “*Lothas took the heads of men, women, and children indiscriminately, except those of infants who had not yet cut their teeth...for a head without teeth did not count in a warrior’s toll of heads*” (2017:105-106).

Once a raid has been decided to take place, those men who will be going for war are required to sleep away from their wives the night before. Mozhüi also mentions that, before a raid, in the morning all the participants will gather in the *ekhyüing*’s house and a cock and a pig will be killed for the meal before setting out. If the cock squawked while its throat was been cut, it is regarded as a bad omen and the expedition was usually be called off. If a man while having their meal hiccoughs it is also a bad sign and he usually stayed behind as misfortune will befall him and he will be killed during the war. A woman has to remain chaste while her husband is on a raid if not her husband will be killed, she is also forbidden to weave lest her husband's leg will be entangled in a jungle creepers and he will be caught and killed.

The credit of a successful war was shared equally between the man who got in first, second, and third spear. On reaching the village the warriors will shout “O Shamashari!” (O we have killed an enemy) and on hearing them the villagers will welcome back chanting “O Lmaiya!” (O” we are glad), from each of the head collected few hairs will be taken out and put in a clef stick which was set up outside the village gate. The Lotha called it “*Orrülama*” (oruluma) (Orrü-enemy, Luma-warm) an act of “*Warming the earth with an enemies head*” (Mills, 2017:107) saying that, this will bring prosperity as the crops will grow and the village

will increase and multiply. The chanting process continues and the procession of warriors goes around the village, halting and singing in front of every participant in the war. Once it is done, everyone will gather at the morung or Chümpo and the stories of the raid will be narrated. It is required for a man who had taken a head or jabbed his spear into one to pour a little “Madhu” on the ground and throw some rice before eating anything as a sign of offering to the slain enemies or else the food will be blown out of his hand by an invisible spirit. The heads of the enemies will be then hung on the “Mingetung” or “Mengkitung” six feet above the ground and the other parts like ear, fingers, etc will be collected in a bamboo basket and hung just like the head. If there is still time the heads will be hung on the day itself if not the heads will be hung the following day. A man was required to sleep alone for six days after coming from war and the blood in the daos was not wiped off till the next day.

This practice of headhunting was however ceased with the coming of the British government and the Christian missionaries or else a person who has not taken or touched an enemy’s corpse could not even wear an ornament of a warrior, hornbill feathers in his bearskin wig, red dao-belt, dark blue lengta with red lines, etc. as the enemies head were considered like a trophy of war and proof of bravery. A man without having touched an enemy’s corpse even finds it difficult to obtain a wife. This practice of headhunting among the Lothas and the Regmas ended in 1880.

## **2.5. The Economic Life of the Lothas**

Agriculture is a major economic activity among the Lothas as they depend largely on it for the sustainability of the village community. The people spent most of their days in the fields and hence most of the rituals and festivals and various ceremonies were also related to agriculture and harvest. Though at present one can see the different occupation that is gaining the interest of the young minds, the majority of the Lothas still practice agriculture for their sustainability. The whole village was cultivated in one block, each man having his piece of land. According to J P Mills for a Lotha, “*Service under the government has few attractions for him. Even if he takes a post he often throws it up after a year or two and says he would rather go back and live in his village and cultivate his land*”(2017: 45).

Though agriculture is the mainstay of the economic live rearing of animals, pottery, weaving, hunting, fishing, etc were also practiced. The Lothas are a keen fisherman and hence one can still witness the community fishing in the present time which was once a traditional practice among our ancestors.

## 2.6. The Primal Religion of the Lotha Nagas

The Lothas have no formal or organized form of religion but they follow a kind of religious practice known as “animism”. According to Phuveyi Dozo, “*Animism is a worldview of an unnamed Supreme Being, hierarchy of spirits, territorial control, psycho-superstition including lycanthropy, and domination of fear-bondage.*” (2015: xi) The Lothas are superstitious in belief and every domain of their lives is marked by mysticism and superstitions.

Though the Lothas do not believe in the existence of a supreme God, they believed in the existence of “*Potsow*” a god who often visits the village and comes to converse with the village “*Ratsen*”. It is through the Ratsen that a message from God or the “*Potsow*” will be carried out to the villagers. The Potsow will and convey to the ratsen what is going to befall upon their village regarding a good harvest, famine, or death. There is an incident in wokha village narrated to me by Mr. Yitssomo Murry that a god will often appear to a lady named Nzinyimi (a neighbor of Yitssomo) who stayed at B Khel and through her the news of what is going to befall in their village be carried out. Once the gods leave the mark of the spear will be often visible to the villagers and Yitssomo who was a witness of the incident said that the spear mark will be as deep as one feet and when the gods leave the the person (Nzinyimi) who conversed with gods will be still on bed without any consciousness as she talk to the gods through her spirit. Mr Yitssomo also mentions that Nzinyimi had a “sonyuo” or a spirit animal “a Tiger” and he happened see the tiger few times.

Another diety known as “*Sukhyingo*” is also regarded as the lord of wild animals. To see him is considered as unlucky but to those whom he favors, he will have luck in hunting. *Ngazo* is also another jungle spirit often associated with Sukhyingo. “*Tchhüpfu*” is considered to be the god of water. He appears “*a being like a man with hair of enormous length, who lives at the bottom of deep pools and uses human skulls as hearth-stones*” (Mills 2017: 115). Tchhüpfu or Tchhüpfuo is believed to inhabit a pool called “*Tchhüpfu izzü/ Nzhrü*” in the Doyang, below Morakcho. The literal translation of Lotha word *Nzhrü* means “*Swallow*” and *Nzhrü* is named so because it swallows people. A small offering is often made to him by the priest after doing the *Oyantsoa* ceremony.

Though the ancestors did not have an organized form of religion, yet the Lothas lived a clean, honest, and straight life as they believe that virtue in this life will be rewarded with happiness in the next life. The Lothas believed that there is life after death and once a person

dies his soul passes through the Wokha hill towards Mt. Tiyi to reach a place called *Etchü-li* (*the valley of death*). This Mount Tiyi in Wokha area is regarded as a passage for the spirit to reach the place of death.

## **2.7. The Genesis of Christianity Among the Lothas and the Dawn of Modernism.**

### **2.7.1. The Advent of Christianity**

It was in 1885 that Mr. and Mrs. Witter took the hard path by foot from Kohima to Wokha, a place where Christianity was still yet to sprout out. When they reached Wokha there were only two converts, Mr. Mhomo Tungoe of Wokha village and Senlamo Ezung of Longsachung village (the first batch of Lotha converts). They were converted through Robi an Assamese evangelist in 1884 and Baptized by Dr. Clark the then missionary at Molung. Mhomo Tungoe became a pioneer missionary among the Lothas but missionary activity was cut short because of his untimely death at the age of 21 in 1906. Sulamo Ezung returned to his village after the completion of his studies from Molung and established a school with thirteen students enrolled. However, he could not do much because of the absence of a resident missionary at Wokha.

Mr. and Mrs. Witter had a zeal to work among the Lothas but fell short due to ill health and they were taken down to a hospital mission bungalow at Nowgowng, Assam. But their legacy for leaving an imprint of the good news is never forgotten by the people. All credit to Mrs. Witter, as she was the first to start the formal teachings of divine truth to the Lothas. Mrs. Witter translated the first hymn "*There is a Happy Land*" in Lotha and some few hymns, a portion of the New Testament were also translated but were not published then (Mozhüi, 2004:40).

Mhachan Kikon in, *The Advent of Christianity* (June 2020) mentions that the second batch of converts became the pillars in the building of the Lotha churches. This batch includes Nkhao, Shanruo, Shanjamo, and Chijamo. Their work was not confined to the Lotha churches alone but extended also to different tribes. Mr. Nkhao Jungi, son of Nsao Jungi of Yikhum village born in the 1880s and an orphan since a boy was taken to Impur by a visiting missionary and was given education up to standard four. Mr. Nkhao was baptized on 2nd Oct 1898 by Rev. F.P. Haggard at Impur. The same year, his brother Shanjamo was sent to Impur to study. Along with other few converts, he established a church at Yikhum village in midst the opposition from the non-Christian villagers. The church building which he constructed



was dismantled three times by the villagers and he received all the humiliation, insult, and neglect. His work in Mekukla village faced the same fate, the people were not at all willing to accept the gospel therefore, he returned home full of sorrow and shame. At his brother's death, the role of Pastor was entrusted to Shanjamo Jungi. He was born on 11 January 1882 from Yikhum Village and he was the first Naga to visit USA in 1905. He was baptized on 4th January 1899 at Impur by Rev. Dowd and had his school education at Clark's mission. On his return to Wokha from the states, Shanjamo, a devoted worker and a philanthropist took up pastoral ministry in various places in Wokha and Mokokchung. Industrious and indefatigable, he traveled from place to place with his luggage on his back preaching the Good news of God's love, enduring hunger, thirst, fatigue, and often humiliation from the animists. Mr. Shanjamo who served with utmost dedication and self-sacrifice, enriching the Lothas in knowledge and widening their intellectual and mental horizon, died a poor man in 1956.

Through the hard work of the American Missionaries and the first converts, the Lothas opened a new path for modernism and westernization to set in. The new system of education developed and with new ideas and innovations slowly sprouting in their lifestyles the society never looked back on becoming what it is now today.

### **2.8.2. The Dawn of Modernism**

The Nagas entered the modern era after coming in contact with the British colonizers and the Christian Missionaries. According to Purlemmla Longkumer and Humayun Bokth "*The Modern period in Naga society is said to have begun during the British Colonization as early as in 1832 when the British captains traveled through the Angami territory, and later after much resentment from the Angami village, the British decided to annex the Nagas areas to their empire as early as in 1866, when a new district known as the Naga hills were formed*" (JHE, 72(1-3): 284-296. 2020).

The Colonizers paved the way for the Missionaries to spread a new religion that was once unknown to the Nagas and through the work of Miles Bronson (the first Christian Missionary in Nagaland) and E. W. Clark, they set up the first school. According to Zanao Mozhüi, the Nagas who were recruited as a labor corps in France during the First World War also witnessed the new world which was an eye-opener for them and so on returning from the war they established the Naga Club in 1918 (2004: 100-101). The relentless work of the Missionaries and the new education system that was introduced led to a significant change among the Nagas resulting in the dawn of modernism.



Likewise, the Lothas also witnessed a drastic change in their social, cultural, political, economic, and religious life. This factor sets the process of modernization of the tribe and the start of a new era. According to Mhabeni Ezung (2014:129-130), the start of modern education began when Mrs. Witter gathered several Lotha boys and began the first formal education on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1885. Sunday school was also introduced on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1886, Dr. Witter bought a small plot of land in Wokha Village area and the first start of formal school was introduced on August 25, 1886 with three Lotha boys who were later increased to seven, this was the first school established in the Lotha area which also paved the way for modernism.

Education is the most important instrument for bringing about a change in society and the introduction of modern education opened the wide vistas of knowledge which changed the worldview of the people and also resulted in the upward mobility of the society. However, as mentioned by Mhabeni, the advent of the modern education system and the inevitable inroads of modernization and globalization have undermined the traditional Naga way of life..

## Work Cited

Aier, Anungla. *Studies on Naga Oral Tradition. Vol. 1. Memories and Telling of Origin Myth and Migration*. Department of Art and Culture, Government of Nagaland, 2018

Dozo, Phuveyi. *First Form of God-Man Consciousness Animism*. Phuveyi Dozo. UTCM. Dimapur. 2015

Jamir N.S. Takatemjen & Limasemba. Traditional knowledge of Lotha-Naga Tribes in Wokha District, Nagaland. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*. Vol. 9(1). Jan. 2010. pp 45-48

Kikon Mhachan. *Advent of Christianity among the Lothas*. Department of History. St. Joseph University. June 2020. (unpublished)

Mills. J. P. *The Lotha Nagas*. Directorate of Art and Culture Government of Nagaland. 2017.

Mozhüi Zanao. *The Impact of Christianity on the Naga People*. Lotha baptish Church, Dimapur, Nagaland. 2004

Odyuo Eyingbemo. *Re-locating the Mission of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC)*. March 2019

## Webliography

Ezung Mhabeni. "Traditional Religion of the Lotha Nagas and the impact of Christianity". Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Nagaland University. Kohima. 2014

Humtsoe, John. The Lothas- Migration. Nagaland Journal. <https://nagalandjournal.wordpress.com/2013/03/26/the-lothas-migration/comment-page-1/>  
Accessed on 14 May 2021

Jangailu, Gangmei. *The Customary Laws and Practices of Ruangmei Kabu Manipur*. Manipur University. 13 Oct. 2014. <https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/26522/6/06chapter%202.pdf> Accessed on 17 May 2021.

Land of Plenty. Wokha. District Administration Wokha. NIC, Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology. May 4, 2021. <https://wokha.nic.in/about-district/> Accessed on 15 May 2021

Longkumer Purlemla and Humayun Bokth. The Interface between Tradition and Modernity in Naga Society: A Critique from Gender Perspective. JHE, 72(1-3): 284-296 (2020).

Murry, Chumbemo J and Dr. Vinod CV. “Traditional Political Institutions of Nagaland: A study of the Lotha Nagas”. IJR Vol.5, Issue 15. May 2018. <https://edupediapublications.org/journals> Accessed on 17 May 2021.

Nagaland. Webindia123. [https://www.webindia123.com/nagaland/people/naga\\_society2.htm](https://www.webindia123.com/nagaland/people/naga_society2.htm) Accessed on 17 May 2021.

Ngullie Khumkothung N. The Meaning of “LOTHA”. Sept 11, 2014. <https://easternmirrornagaland.com/the-meaning-of-lotha/>

Report of Task Force, Nagaland. T. Imkonglemba. IAS. Agriculture Production Commissioner, Nagaland.

Sangma, Mhonyani. Origin of the Lotha Naga and their Early Settlement. IRJSS Vol. 6(4), 43-48, April (2017)

Significance of Lotha Tokhu Emong. Lotha Hoho Dimapur, Nagaland Post. 11.06.2020. <https://www.nagalandpost.com/significance-of-lotha-tokhu-emong/224301.html> Accessed on 16 May 2021

The Lotha Tribe. NE Tribe. Travel Community. <https://www.ne.cab/tribe/lotha-tribe/> Accessed on 14 May 2021

Tokhu Emong- Lotha Tribe. Department of Information and Public Rrelations, Govt. of Nagaland. [ipr.nagaland.gov.in/lotha](http://ipr.nagaland.gov.in/lotha) Accessed on 15 May 2021

Traditional Chumpo in Wokha Village inaugurated. The Morung Express. 13 Feb. 2021. <https://www.morungexpress.com/traditional-chumpo-in-wokha-village-inagurated> Accessed on 17. May 2021.

## **Interview**

1. Nrisali Murry. A resident of Wokha village B Khel. (Wife of Yissomo Murry).
2. Yanphamo Humtsoe(100 yrs old), eldest member of wokha, 15 May 2021.
3. Yitssomo Murry. A residence of Wokha village B Khel

## CHAPTER 3

### ORAL TRADITIONS AND FOLKLORE

Oral tradition, which is also known as “orality” is the first and still the most widespread mode of human communication. Before the invention of writing as given in Britannica, *“oral tradition served as the sole means of communication available for forming and maintaining societies and their institutions” (Britannica).*

#### 3.1. The Oral Tradition in Naga Society

*Oral tradition is a form of human communication wherein knowledge, art, ideas and culture material is received, preserved, and transmitted orally from one generation to another (Wikipedia).*

The Naga society was a pre-literate society and so oral tradition was the primary form of transmitting knowledge and a way to communicate complex information about culture and folklore and all other aspects of life. As opined by Dr. Lotsüro, *“Nagas see God in their elders” (2000:34).* She further stated that the elderly people in the villages took up the role of an educator and it is through them that the knowledge of the past was handed down to the younger generations. In the contemporary time, oral tradition is given less importance but in the subject of Cultural studies, oral tradition still retains its place. Aier mentions that, particularly in the case of Nagaland where the first form of knowledge and instruction was done orally *“the cultural meanings and the interpretations of their customs, beliefs, actions and relationships, could not be fully understood without a reasonable knowledge of their folklores and oral narratives” (2018: 2-3).*

Oral traditions are often criticized as being biased and subjective compared to written objectivity however one cannot ignore that the authors of written documents also bring their own experiences and are subject to their own opinion and times. Aier proceeds to state that *“Together oral and written methods of recalling and recounting the past have the potential to contribute greatly to the historical record” (2018:5)* The use of folklore which is a close association with oral tradition, with proper scientific verification and critique will be of great value to the reconstruction and understanding of one’s culture, heritage, and history.

### 3.2. Folklore and its Relationship with Oral Tradition

*“Folklore is a combination of the words folk and lore which dates from 1846. The former refers to a community of people, and the latter comes from the Old English lar, meaning learning or knowledge” ([www.vocabulary.com](http://www.vocabulary.com)).*

The word folklore was coined in 1846 by William Thoms to replace terms such as “Popular antiquities” (Wikitionary). The studies of folklore began with an aim to trace and preserved archaic customs and beliefs to their remote origins and examine the mental history of mankind. The first studies in folklore were however concentrated only to the rural and tribal areas but soon after World War II, a new trend emerged particularly in the USA and unlike the earlier studies which were confined only to rural areas, the studies now shifted to the urban areas as well, since it was recognized that cities too contained definable groups whose characteristics, customs, and values marked their identity ([www.Britannica.com](http://www.Britannica.com)). The emphasis of folklore studies also shifted from the past to the present. Hence the term, *“Folklore, in modern usage, an academic discipline the subject matter of which (also called folklore) comprises the sum total of traditionally derived and orally or imitatively transmitted literature, material culture and custom of subcultures within predominantly literate and technologically advanced societies; comparable study among wholly or mainly nonliterate societies belongs to the disciplines of ethnology and anthropology”* (britannica).

Anungla Aier also opines that *“The term Folklore therefore is inclusive of the various genres of oral texts and folk traditions which are the literary manifestation of the people’s creativity such as tales, poems, sayings and such oral texts that reflects the cultural ethos of the society. It includes material culture, indigenous knowledge and traditional practices that define a folk group, and it is sometimes used interchangeably or together with the term oral tradition”* (2018: 2)

Any community that does not have a written history, oral tradition becomes an important source for the re-constructing and re-locating the values of the past to the contemporary society. The importance of this system of preserving and recording history is that it has the participation of both the village chief and the leaders and also of the masses. The songs, the stories, the art and crafts, the socio-political and economic condition of the forefather’s time depicting the society, the lifestyle, the attitude, etc. of their time are all handed down orally not only for its literary quality but for its historical content which constitutes the folklore of the masses and hence a close connection with the oral tradition.

Folklore is a key to the past likewise; it is also of the present and a key to the future. Contemporary cultures are always engaged in the creation and transmission of new ideas (folklore) and oral tradition acts as the blueprint, a charter for those ideas and actions. *“Oral traditions are historical sources of a special nature. Their special nature derives from the fact that they are ‘unwritten’ sources, couched in a form suitable for oral transmission, and their preservation depends on the power of the memory of successive generations”*(Aier, 2018: 3).

### **3.3. Transmission of Oral Traditions and Various Arts and Crafts from Past to Present.**

#### **3.3.1. Chumpo (Morüing) (See Fig no. 3.1.)**

The Chümpo can be regarded as one of the earliest institutions among the Lothas which was operated through oral communication during the past decades. This was a center for various activities like recreation, training of war tactics, etc. Every evening the young and elders of the men folk gather after their dinner around a bonfire to discuss various matters (*Juniator Tulus, 2013: 185*), the experience of their war was also shared, the Lothas prohibited women to enter the Chümpo. Zanao Mozhüi also states that *“the Lothas did not have a women Chumpo”* (2004:10), the women folks stay at home and learn about their tradition from their mother, the male folks stay at Chümpo and learn from their elders at the same time guarding the village, this process goes on one after another generation. Though women were not allowed inside the Chumpo, a male friend had the freedom to visit the girl from their parent’s home. The folksongs, traditional values, cultural practices, etc were all taught by ways of verbal communication as the written form was unknown to them. Skills like, basket making, carpentry, hunting, war tactics, etc were also taught to the young boys.

#### **3.3.2. The Role of Village Elders: Custodian of the Tribe Lore**

Anungla Aier, in the foreword of her book *Studies on Naga Oral Tradition* mentions that the elders of the villages *“played the role of teachers who transferred their indigenous knowledge to the young males who would inherit the responsibility of nurturing the tribes identity. The smooth transference of such knowledge from the old to the young needed a ‘system’ and it will be fair to say that thus emerged the establishment of ‘Morungs’ or Male Dormitories in each villages as centre for learning”* (2019).

The history and stories, the dances, songs, culture, traditions that the elders narrate or portray were also once passed down to them by their elders. Every tribe has elders who act as the custodian of the tribe lore. Among the Lothas, they are regarded as the “Motsurui” or storytellers, they will accustom the younger generations to their forefathers and their practices. As the Lothas did not have any written account of their forefathers all these will be recorded in memory by the narrator and if he misses out anything a fellow elder will supplement his stories as the narration is occurred through ways of open discussion. Though the Lothas were a pre-literate society they are regarded as truthful and honest people and had a legacy of hospitality and generosity. Every younger folk of the Lothas are also expected to respect their elders and address them by their paternal or maternal lineage name. It is regarded as disrespectful to address an elder by their name (*Yanphamo Humtsoe*).

### **3.3.3. The Family**

A story that is often shared in the family is related to kinship, stories of inhabitation and movements, ownership of lands, and social conflicts that are related to their kin group. As a family, this is the place where a child first learns all the basic manners through their parents. The parent will take the role of the educator and educate their children on how to behave and communicate with society. Later on from young age, the men folk goes to stays at the Morung or Chumpo while every Lotha girl stay at home and learn from her mother about women-hood and various skills like weaving, knitting, pottery, etc. in turn they will pass on to her future daughter. The Lothas followed a patriarchy system and so woman are considered less equal to men. Women are expected to cook for the family, look after children, weave clothes for the whole family, carry firewood, carry water, etc. J. P. Mills comments that “*Lotha’s wife by no means a slave or chattel, but a very real companion*” (2017:111).

### **3.3.4. Folk Stories**

The folklore of the people tells some kind of a story that has a deeper meaning and it is through the folklore and the narration of stories that history, tradition, and culture from one generation to another are kept alive knitting the community together. Among the Lothas, the practice of gathering in the evening around a bond fire to share stories among each other taking turns to talk about their own experience was common. This gathering also expresses the bond shared by the community, the feeling of togetherness and warmth of a society that is

seen rarely in the present technology era. As narrated by Yanphamo Humtsoe and Ezamo Humtsoe, when they were young, they will gather at *Chümpo* also called as “*etsikho*” which means “*a place for gathering in groups*”, and take turns to narrate stories of their forefathers or any other issues.

### 3.3.5. Folk Songs

Folksong, is “*a song originating among the people of a country or area, passed by oral tradition from one singer or generation to the next, often existing in several versions, and marked generally by simple, modal melody and stanzaic, narrative verse*” ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)). Folksong as a way of transmitting oral tradition is usually sung unaccompanied or with the accompaniment of a musical instrument. It can have many influences including creativity, forgetfulness, previously learned songs, stylistic expectations, etc. “*Any new song would be likely to undergo this process of communal re-creation. An important characteristic of a song or piece in traditional folk culture is, thus, its dependence on acceptance by a community- that is, by a village, nation, or family- and its tendency to change as it is passed from one individual to another and performed*” ([www.Britannica.com](http://www.Britannica.com)).

The Nagas keep their oral tradition alive through folk tales and folk songs and various cultural practices. The Naga folksong can have historical stories behind or a romantic tone narrating the entire stories of their famous ancestors or a certain incident. Along with the folksong, each tribe could have a different traditional musical instrument that is influenced by their customs and material availability.

### 3.3.5. Folk Dance

Folkdance or traditional dance is another mode of communication that is carried out through body language, facial expression, and gesture of hands (*See Fig 3.2.*). This form of expression comes to its ultimate perfection when ancient tradition and cultural heritage are blended with music and rhythm in equal proportion.

*“Folk dance is full of vitality and strength, unlike most of the dance forms. The entire body and entire movement of the dancer are employed as a single unit. The uniformity of legs steps form an effective means of communicating the cultural expression and uniqueness of war techniques (Northeast windows.com).”*



Among the Lothas, the “Rukhyo –Sharu” which means “Victory Dance” is performed once a victory is brought to the villagers by the warriors. This dance is still performed during any cultural activities among the Lothas in remembrance of the olden times. Every tribe of the Nagas has its traditional dance that has cultural and traditional values attached to them.

### **3.3.6. Poetry**

*“Poetry is a type of literature that conveys a thought, describes a scene or tells a story in a concentrated, lyrical arrangement of words ([www.masterclass.com](http://www.masterclass.com)).”*

There are different types of poems or poetry, some are written while some are orally narrated. Either written or oral form poetry can be structured, with rhyming lines and meter it can also be in free form, which does not follow any formal structure. Among the Lothas the form of poetry that emerged first is in the oral version mostly of free verse and the poetry narrated are often a prayer or songs sung as folksongs.

*“Oral poetry is a form of poetry that is composed and transmitted without the aid of writing ([wikipedia](http://wikipedia)).”* During the forefather’s time, as the written form was not known to them, our ancestors used a form of précised wording not necessarily rhymed, to narrate it; this practice may have influenced the present memorized version of narrating poems.

### **3.3.8. Festivals**

Festivals play a vital role in preserving and safeguarding the oral tradition, it is also a major form of recreation among the Nagas. It is the keeper of the culture and the oral tradition of the Nagas as well as the Lothas as this is the time when the whole community is engaged in various cultural and traditional practices through celebration. It is not only a time of celebration and merry-making but during this time various cultural expressions like folk dance, folksong, traditional games, and so on are displayed. Festivals of the Nagas include pre-harvest, post-harvest, sowing celebration, thanksgiving, etc. as the Nagas are primarily an agriculturalist; most of their festivals are related to agricultural practices.

### **3.3.9. Dresses and Ornaments**

Dresses and ornaments are also an important form of transmitting the various cultural beliefs and traditions of our ancestors, the shawls during our forefather’s time were mostly

made by a thread made out of cotton by hand (See Fig. 3.3. & 3.4.) there are various dresses for various occasions. The *Longpensü* or men shawl of the Lotha tribe are worn by men who had performed the *Ozu esu* (stone dragging) ceremony. The Phanrup (men shawl) is also worn by men who had done the *shishang* ceremony, the first social *genna*. A man can wear separate distinctions of shawls based on the number of *gennas* a person had performed. *Opvurum* is a shawl of the Lotha women and this is worn by the wife of the man who had performed the *etha* (mending) ceremony.

### **3.10. Weaving and Pottery**

During the time of our forefathers, society was self-dependant and even the pots that were used for cooking and the utensils were all made manually by the villagers. Pots were made from a certain type of clay molded in different shapes and sizes (See Fig. 3.5.). The spoons were also carved out from bamboo or wood and even the plate used for eating food was from nature. Clothes were also made with bare hands. It was a privilege to meet Nriyimi Murry from Wokha village; she showed me the traditional way of how cotton is extracted using different tools and techniques and turned into thread. Different colors of dye were also used to dye the thread and that is how the colorful traditional dresses were made (See Fig 3.3.). Baskets were also made by hand using cane and bamboo for carrying as well as storing things. One can proudly say that the Lotha or the Nagas, in general, were creative in many ways as there was no outsider to teach them during that time but through their self-dependent nature and their hard work the society was self-sufficient without having to beg or ask for help from outside.



*Fig no. 3.1. A Lotha Chümpo (Morung)*



*Fig no. 3.2. A group of Lotha men performing folk dance (<https://www.ne.cab/tribe>)*





*Fig no. 3.3. A Lotha Traditional Shawl for men*



*Fig no.3.4. A traditional way of making cotton (Mrs . Nrisali Murry, Wokha village)*



**Fig no 3.5. A picture of earthen pot used by the Lothas**

### **3.4. Ancestral Sites Found in Lotha Area that has Cultural Values**

#### **3.4.1. Tiyi Longchüm**

This place is regarded as one of the oldest villages established in the Lotha area and it is believed to be seven hundred years old. Tiyi Longgüm is located at the top of Mt. Tiyi in Wokha district inhabited by the ancestors of the Lothas (*See Fig. 3.6*). However, due to various reasons, the village was abandoned and people spread across different locations and settled to their present habitation. At present, the Tiyi Longchüm is a tourist attraction and as mentioned by Mhonyani Sangma in her journal *Origin of the Lotha Naga and their early settlement* opines that “this place where they dwelled, procreated, created myths, legends, stories, and followed their age-old customs and beliefs”.

#### **3.4.2. Eran Chrükha**

“Eran Chrükha” or ancient pond located at present-day Niroyo village under Wokha district is regarded as one of the oldest ponds used by our forefathers after coming and settling at Tiyi Longchüm. The pond located at the foot of Mt. Tiyi, Sangma mentions that, it took our ancestors three hours to reach the place to fetch water and this was also one of the major reasons that led to the abandonment of the village as they had to cross a thick forest inhabited by wild Tigers which was also not safe for them (*IRJSS. Vol. 6 (4), 43-48, April 2017*). She further mentions that the water in Tiyi Longchüm area was so scarce that our

ancestors accumulated the water that is seeped inside the bamboo and used it for cooking purposes.

### **3.4.3. Mengkitong**

Once a village has been set up, it is a need for every village to plant “Mengkitong” at the entrance of the village or at such a location where it will give protection to the village during harsh weather (*See Fig no. 3.7*). The Menkitong is also the place where the trophies collected during the warfare are kept and all the “Ohas” or sacred stone which is believed to have a magical power are kept near the tree. Earlier the Menkitong at Wokha village had five branches, signifying the five sectors of the village. Each khels or each sector had its own branches where they will place the trophies or head of the enemies and no other khel member can place the trophies on other khels branches except to the branches marked for their khel (*Yitssomo Murry*). Another magnificent Menkitong found at old Rüphym still stands at the entrance of the village and earlier it was even forbidden to touch the tree as it may bring bad omen.

### **3.4.4. Chumpo**

Every village has Chumpo at the heart of the village and this is one of the most significant places for all the Lothas during our forefather's time as this is the place where a person gets to learn all the valuable skills that he will need in his lifetime. The Chumpo also played a role of a museum in preserving some traditional tools and weapons as earlier the weapons that a man will need for warfare are kept and young boys get accustomed from an early age on how to handle and use them. Items like daos (machete), spears, knives, etc are all kept here. Though women were not allowed to enter the Chümpo, they play a significant role in maintaining this institution as the women stay at home taking care of the household, looking after the children while the husband and the young man stay at the Chümpo and take care of the village. Though in the present generation the role of Chümpo have changed and its value has been replaced by schools and various educational institutions some village still has the Chümpo build to preserve and maintain the tradition. The Chümpo at wokha village, B. Khel has been rebuilt and it is kept as a remembrance of the olden days.

### 3.4.5. Tsungchenphen

“Tsüngchenphen” in literal meaning is known as a place for throwing wood. This practice was done when a village is facing any ill fate like famine, death plague, or poor harvest, etc. This practice was done to drive away from the ill fate or bad luck of the village. “Tsüngchenphen” is also known as “Yanthongphen” which means a place to blame for all the bad omens. The Tsüngchenphen located at Wokha village, A Khel was revived and preserved in memory of our forefathers (*See Fig no. 3.8*). During various occasions the Lotha still practiced this act so that the memory and traditions of the forefathers may still be alive among the young minds.



***Fig no. 3.6. A picture of Mt Tiyi (a view from Vankhosung)***





**Fig. no. 3.7. Menkitong at Wokha Village, D Khel.**



**Fig. no. 3.8. Tssungchenphen at Wokha Village A Khel. (Enacting the practice of throwing sharpened wood)**



### **3.5. Oral Tradition and Folklore in the Modern Generation**

With the introduction of the written form by the whites the Nagas were starting to enter a new era of modernization. Earlier they were regarded as untamed and savage but slowly with the encounter of western culture, they started to change their way of life. The Lothas too came to know about modernization when the missionaries started setting their foot in their land. They slowly learned the art of writing and documenting their experience but it was the foreigners who first started writing about the Lothas. Though a lot may develop in the field of writing and keeping a record with close observation, one can still find the orality that is still prevalent in us.

Though there is a belief that folklore and myths are in the process of decay amidst the continuing modernization in contemporary society, but there is still continuity in other forms but its risk of alteration and modification cannot be predicted as oral tradition and knowledge travels over time and space. Mentioned below are some of the physical and behavioral, and oral traits that are still prevalent among the Lotha Nagas.

#### **3.5.1. Historical Sites**

One of the most significant treasures that the present generation could ever possess from their ancestors is the historical sites that stand as a reminder of their forefathers who once inhabited those sites. One can only reminisce the good old days by observing those ancient historical sites and feel grateful that all the olden days are not yet fully degraded. They remind us of where and how we came from and one can measure from there how far the society has developed and changed. It is important to preserve and pass on those treasures and knowledge to the coming generation, as it will remind us of our identity amidst the growing wave of modernization and globalization.

#### **3.5.2. Folk Song**

*“Without a song and music, there is no right and authentic explanation of the Naga culture and of their historical details (Boholi Z Sema, 2020: 32).”* It is also through songs and music that the past was recollected and transmitted from one generation to the other. Though at the present scenario, contemporary music genres are gaining more popularity among the younger generation, one cannot replace the folksongs with any modern

instruments or music as folksong carry a sentimental history of our past. The younger generation should understand that the folksong that is rarely heard now needs to be re-learned, treasured, and preserved before it turns to just a mere lyric with no one to sing.

### **3.5.3. Agricultural Practices (First Occupation)**

Agriculture has been the mainstay of the Naga economic backbone. Since the beginning of time, the Nagas have been engaging in cultivating and tilling of lands, this is the reason why most of the festivals are also related to harvest or cultivation. The Nagas are known for their organic produce and they rely on themselves for their sustenance. The report on East Mojo also states, as most of the agricultural products that are produced in Nagaland are organic by default, the state has also registered “Naga Organic” brand to promote agro-based farmers. With the advancement in industrialization and globalization, society has changed a lot, and now people engage themselves in other small businesses and industries but the practice of agriculture is never left aside. Most of the villagers still depend on the forest and agricultural activities. At present, about 70% of the population still depends on agriculture (*task force report, Nagaland*).

### **3.5.4. Ancient Boundaries**

The landmark that was made by the ancestors was highly regarded even to this day and it is believed that anybody who moves an ancient landmark or boundary an ill fate will befall upon him. There are rarely any high mount or any fortification that was made to mark a boundary, however, a stone or a tree or any natural mark will be often considered as the partition of certain lands and everyone recognizes their land.

*“Ancient landmarks marked boundaries; they told you how far you could go- and where you could go no farther. They established order and made for good relationships. ([www.Dispensationalpublishing.com](http://www.Dispensationalpublishing.com) ).”*

*“Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set (proverbs 22:28 KJV) ([www.moretolifetoday.net](http://www.moretolifetoday.net)).”* It is even before the advent of the Christian among the Nagas that our forefathers practiced this and never dared to move a boundary that was set up by their ancestors. This act of respecting boundaries portrays the self disciplined nature of our forefathers.

### 3.5.5. Festival

*“The festivals and ceremonies of any society reflect its culture (Dr. Lotsüro, 2000: 15).”* For the Nagas inhabiting the “The Land of Festivals” the celebration of festivals and ceremonies is not a new phenomenon but it is an age-long practice, and to this day the practice still goes on. It is a delight to witness the younger generation with full of gayness taking a lead role in upholding the culture and tradition giving more hope for the younger generation about their ethnicity and their cultural sustainability. If they could maintain this tradition in other aspects as well than our culture will be in full bloom today. Though every tribe has its festivals associated with their culture and customs, the most noteworthy festival, “the Hornbill Festival”, also known as the “Festivals of Festivals” also provides platforms for the Nagas to preserve and promote their cultural heritage contributing to the cultural sustainability.

### 3.5.6. Food Habit

The Nagas are not only known for their unique culture and tradition but they are also well known for their distinctive and exquisite food habit. *“A typical Naga meal consists of Rice, a meat dish, one or two boiled vegetable dishes, and a chutney/pickle (tathu)”* ([wikipedia](https://www.wikipedia.org)). Every tribe of the Nagas has their distinctive dish that makes them stand out among the rest. For example, the Lothas are known for “*Bastenga*” or “Bamboo shoot”, as it is found plentiful in Wokha area, the Semas Known for their specialty in making “*Axoni*” or Fermented soybean, the Ao’s for their “*Anishi*” made from taro leaves and stem. Likewise, the food habits of our ancestors are still prevalent and to this day it is a pride for the Nagas to be enjoying such an authentic taste. Precious Kanmei comments, *“It’s the ingredients and the art of combination that makes Naga cuisine one of the most sought-after cuisines in India ([www.outlookindia.com](http://www.outlookindia.com) ).”* Without any artificial flavoring, our ancestors knew how to make a food taste even better. The celebrity Chef, Gordon Ramsey on his adventure tour to India and North East region comments on the Naga curry stating, *“The curry here is prepared with leaves specially found in the forests and they also use some special fruits as their spice. Bamboo shoot is used prominently in the region, which gives it a turnip/cardamom sort of spicy edge to it”* (Eastern Mirror).

### 3.5.7. Community Fishing

Community fishing is a common practice mostly among the Lotha Nagas, this is held once a year in the month of April and May (See Fig no. 3.9). During the fore father's time, there was a certain rule that a person has to follow before taking part in the community fishing. *"The date is decided by the elders and communicated to the people by the 'Pvuti' (priest)...it is forbidden to kill any animals or consume meat, meals have to be vegetarian only. They are forbidden to touch blood to touch blood or patients and to abstain from intercourse (GON Art and culture: 2016).* A type of roots that are poisonous for fish are collected and crushed with wooden poles and the crushed root is dipped into the river by taking turns. Fishing takes place the next day. Though the practice of community fishing is still prevalent, some restrictions and rules that were strictly followed during the olden times are now relaxed and many people take part in it. The fishes collected were sorted according to size and distributed in descending order according to age. The eldest gets the biggest fish while the youngest gets the smallest. As stated in *Compendium of Different Naga Art Forms*, *"every household gets a share of the catch irrespective of whether they participated in the community fishing or not (29)."*

### 3.5.8. Oha Long (Lucky Stone)

There is a belief among the Lothas that a certain stone known as "*Oha Long*" which is commonly round in shape with a smooth shiny surface and dark in color brings good fortune. However, *oha long* that have cracked or any mark is considered not worthy. According to J. P Mills, *"oha brings good fortune. They are smooth, water-worn stones, varying in size from that a man's head to that of a walnut, and are kept either under the mengitung, or at the foot of the carved post of the "morung" or by individuals in their houses or granaries"* (2017: 166). (See Fig. 3.10.)

Though belief in this *Oha Long* has been less considered now, there is still prevalence in some area of the Lothas and some still possess it as it has been handed down through generations. The purpose of this stone is different from one another; some keep it for good fortune, some for good health, rich harvest, prosperity, children, etc.

### 3.5.9. Believe in Supernatural

Even before the advancement of Christianity, the Nagas believed in the existence of various spirits, both good and evil. Though modern society has changed a lot, their belief in various spirits still exists in some areas. For example, the Lothas still believe in existence as a spirit called “Longkom” or the “Wailing Friends”. It is believed that Longkom lives in a thick jungle and they resemble a man. There is a place in Wokha area called “*Longkomvu rhuktungphen*” and it is believed that the Longkom often visits the people who come to work in the fields. The story of a man being carried off by Longkom is not just a story of the past but is of a present occurrence. “Ramon” is also another such spirit that resides in the jungle and there are stories of people coming across this spirit. The fear of these spirits inhabiting the jungle and thick forest still haunts even in the modern generation. Our ancestors never dared to challenged spirits that are considered harmful or evil to mankind and to this day people dread that they might disturb the spirit if they go to the jungle early, or if they happen to cross their habitation in the thick forest.



***Fig. no. 3.9. Community Fishing at river Doyang***



**Fig. no. 3.10. Oha Long or Lucky stone kept at near Menkitong (J. P. Mills. *The Lotha Nagas*, 2017:108)**

### **3.6. Will Written Form Replace the Oral Tradition?**

With the advancement in the written form, the Naga society that was once pre-literate is now starting to document and keep a record of their history before it is lost. This does not mean that oral tradition or orality will be lost. Jeannie Whayne to the question ‘What is the difference between oral history and traditional written history?’ responds “*Oral history is often one’s person point of view, unless someone gathers a series of interviews on the same issue together in a volume*” ([arkansasresearch.uark.edu](http://arkansasresearch.uark.edu)). This also means that the oral tradition that was told and narrated by the individual has to be checked carefully as the narrator relies solely on their his memories. Written form, however, is also the voice of the third person. A historian before making a statement in his document uses an analytical approach. Whayne states a traditional written history, “*uses a variety of sources, which may include oral interviews, government reports, newspaper articles, letters, diaries and personal papers*” ([arkansasresearch.uark.edu](http://arkansasresearch.uark.edu)). But the written form does have its drawbacks; the written documented record like the oral form is also not free from the judgment of the writer or the author.

There have been lots of questions, debates, and arguments regarding the authenticity of orality as the facts in this tradition are always under clouds. It is true to some extent that the oral tradition keeps on changing from one narrator to the next narrator, the same story

will have a different version from a different narrator but it is interesting that, unlike the formal written form, the first-hand experience of the narrator are reflected and told and this the written cannot do. The written form also has its refined representation of a particular subject and it is a reliable source to check on facts as they are already filtered before documenting it. A writer however, needs the source from a narrator before documenting any incident or tradition and so one cannot ignore the narrator of orality. In recreating the culture or tradition, the former needs the latter to supplement it and only if both come to one acceptable conclusion, the documentation takes place. Hence, oral tradition cannot be replaced totally, and written will always need orality to supplement its work. The pleasure of recalling and reminiscing the small detail that a formal document ignores to be trivial is what makes up the oral narrative interesting.

## Work Cited

Aier Anungla. Studies on Naga Oral Tradition. Vol 1, Memories and Telling of Origin Myth and Migration. Department of Art and Culture Government of Nagaland. 2018

*Compendium of Different Naga Art Forms*. Department of Art and Culture. Government of Nagaland. April 2016.

Mills J.P. *The Lotha Nagas*. Directorate of Art and Culture, Government of Nagaland. 2017

Mozhüi Zanao. *The Impact of Christianity on the Naga People*. Lotha Baptist Church, Dimapur. 2004

Nagaland G. K. Edited by Dr. N. Kashito Aye. ATICOS, Ltd. Publication. 2016

## Webliography

Ambrocia Medolenuo. How Nagaland is working towards becoming an organic state. August 22, 2019. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.eastmojo.com/news/2019/08/22/how-nagaland-is-working-towards-becoming--an-organic-state/> Accessed on July 1, 2021.

Ancient Landmarks for Modern Times. More to Life Bible studies for Women. <https://www.moretolifetoday.net/ancient-landmarks-for-modern-times-/> Accessed on June 9, 2021.

Bucket List: Perfect Matches are made in a Nagas Kitchen (Food, we are talking about food) <https://www.outlookindia.com/outlooktraveller/explore/amp/69086/what-makes-naga-food-so-interesting-and-challenging> Accessed on June 10, 2021.

Festivals in Nagaland. <https://www.tourmyindia.com/states/nagaland/fairs-and-festivals.html> Accessed on June 7, 2021

Foley, John Miles. "Oral tradition". Encyclopedia Britannica, 6 Jan. 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/oral-tradition>. Accessed on 3 June 2021

Folklore. [www.vocabulary.com](http://www.vocabulary.com)

Folklore, academic discipline. Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/folklore-academic-discipline> Accessed on 27 May 2020

Folklore and Oral Traditions" by Karen Pharis. The 1st Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) Lesson Plan Competition [Pharisk@bellsouth.net](mailto:Pharisk@bellsouth.net) Accessed on 27 May 2021

Folklore. Wiktionary. [wiktionary/wiki/folklore](https://www.wiktionary.org/wiki/folklore)

Folk song. Dictionary.com. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/folk-song>. Accessed on June 6, 2021

Folk song. Britannica.com. <https://www.britannica.com/art/folk-song>. Accessed on June 6, 2021



Juniator Tulus. Family stories Oral Tradition, memories of the past, and contemporary conflicts over land in Mentawai- Indonesia. *Wacana Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 15 (1): 180 Feb. 2013. CCBY-NC4.0

Kroll Woodrow. Do Not Remove the Ancient Landmarks. <https://dispensationalpublishing.com/do-not-remove-0the-ancient-landmarks/> Accessed on June 9, 2021

Music of Nagaland. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music\\_of\\_Nagaland](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_of_Nagaland). Accessed on June 6, 2021

Naga Cuisine. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naga\\_cuisine](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naga_cuisine) Accessed on June 10, 2021.

Naga Folkdance and its values: An Oral version. Northeast Windows. 15 Feb. 2019, <https://www.thenortheastwindow.com/2019/02/naga-folkdance-values-oral-version/> Accessed on 3 May 2021

Oral Tradition. <https://wikipedia.org.in> Accessed on 26 May 2021

Oral tradition and expressions including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage. Unesco. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/oral-traditions-and-expression-00053> Accessed on June 7, 2021

Oral Poetry. [https://en.m.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral\\_poetry](https://en.m.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_poetry) Accessed on May 3, 2021

Poetry 101: Learn About Poetry, Different Types of Poems, and Poetic Devices With Examples. MaasterClass staff. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/poetry-101-learn-about-poetry-different-types-of-poems-and-poetic-devices-with-examples#what-is-poetry> Accessed on June 4, 2021

Report of the Task Force, Nagaland. Government of Nagaland, Office of the Agriculture Production Commissioner, Nagaland Kohima. June 20, 2015. Accessed on July 1, 2021.

Sangma Mhonyani. Origin of the Lotha Naga and their early Settlement. *IRJSS. Vol. 6 (4), 43-48, April 2017*

TLC to premiere celebrity Chef Gordon Ramsey's adventure in Northeast. Eastern Mirror. Jan 20, 2015. [Easternmirrornagaland.com](http://Easternmirrornagaland.com)

What is the difference between oral history and traditional written history? Arkansas Research. October 15, 2009. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/arkansasresearch.uark.edu/what-is-the-difference-between-oral-history-and-traditional-written-history/amp/> Accessed on July 16, 2021

**Interview:**

1. Ezamo Humtsoe. A resident of Wokha Village, A Khel. 1 June 2021
2. Yanphamo Humtsoe. Eldest member of Wokha Village (100 yrs) 1 June 2021.
3. Yitssomo Murry. A resident of Wokha Village. B Khel. June 26, 2021

## CHAPTER 4

### AN ANALYSIS ON LOTHAN LITERARY FOLKLORE

*“Folk literature, also called folklore or oral tradition, the lore (traditional knowledge and beliefs) of cultures having no written language. It is transmitted by word of mouth and consists, as does written literature, of both prose and verse narratives, poems and songs, myths, dramas, rituals, proverbs, riddles, and the like (Britannica.com).”* Folklore is the cultural lifestyle of the community including the material and behavioral aspects. The Folk literature of the Lothas Nagas has its origin in the oral tradition.

#### 4.1. Lotha Folktale

*Folktales allow students to experience one of the ways a society develops a sense of moral behaviour in its children ([www.socialstudies.org](http://www.socialstudies.org)).* Given below are some of the folktales of the Lothas. Though some may be a myth and might not have happened in real it has an insight to it and through the tales the modern Lothas can learn about the social and cultural life of our ancestors.

##### 4.1.1. Malipvü Motsü (The Story of Malipvü)

###### (In Lotha)

Tsüngon motsüngalo epoe nchyua na ozen ekhying osi m-mha eli Malipvüi eloe soa vancho. Hoji oyamo kyong jang na n-nzekhokvü ompoe ji kvütolyüi pyontatokvü sana topvü na ekhyo tsotacho. Eng akvü oyamo kyon jiang na ejüng-jung tae epoe ji Malipvüi ji echi rüa ezoa sathokcho. Tolia eloe jina elümoto erüm toa vanisi. Choka tsüngono jo oshom nchyua na epoe ji heto ezocho. “Akhümo, nchüngo eniatana eni eloe jiang satavka, ana eloe ji sa ovon zoana, nina ha ni eloe ji sakhe.” Oni phyotao ji esua okhümo jina mbo kyimrak jiang saphia mbo eloe ji erontokcho. Hoji zoe, Malipvüi epoe jina mbo eloe ji otsotso sacho. Jisülo jo Malipvüi jina ngaro ji pvükachisi hono hanpong ji tatsüngi orapvü mhatongona mbo khe ji pfüphi oma theta ekvüi tsotoksi michüm eyeta oki na tsani yi sicho. Tole epoe jina ‘mbo ha yilia pofü ji pankakhokvü mek küma yillamvüka’ to nchüma zeta yithokcho. Osi epoe jina cheta phanle Malipvüi ji ozen ekhying etssovo ji tsükona pofü ji elaro pankae chiyi mbo tssan ji echükphia vana hungchokchicho. Jisüi jo epoe jina oyam yi engai Maipvüi ji elümoto ezüptoko jiang nchümi elüm nungracho. Osi mbo na pyulyulyu khi ‘rongtong yile lolüm’ to khfükata yitosi mbo kya okiwoe kholani yicho (*Nkolo Eran Motsu, Y Yihamo Patton: 8*)

*This is a story about a man who happened to marry a wise and beautiful lady named Malipvüi but the villagers were jealous, and envied the couple so much that they decided to break their marriage. Daily the villagers will bring up different gossips about Malipvüi to her husband so that he will hate his wife but Malipvüi being a passionate lady tried to bear all the gossips. One day a friend came up to her husband and told him, “My friend, today let us beat our wives, when you hear my wife scream as I beat her, you do the same.” The neighbor then went and started slamming the wall made with bamboo and asked her wife to scream so that Malipvüi’s husband will be convinced and he will beat his wife. Little did Malipvüi’s husband know that this was just an act but he fell into their trap and started beating Malipvüi. Later, Malipvüi could not take it anymore and she decides to leave the house, carrying her child on her back she killed a rooster and cooked for her husband, dust her hand off and then left his husband with lid firewood using it as a torch. The husband thought that his wife will return as she will not be able to cross the river “Pofu” (a river located at the wokha area). However, he saw that his wife managed to cross the river and left shaking off the water from her hair. Only then, he realized his mistake of taking the advice of the villagers and making her suffer. He was filled with remorse but it was too late and so he played her a flute wishing her a safe journey and as for him, he returned home sobbing.*

The story is a folktale from the Lotha Naga tribe and this tells the story of not just Malipvüi but it is a representation of any woman. Being a wife, Malipvüi did her best she could, she was smart, wise, passionate, and beautiful but her foolish husband did not realize her worth, yet she never gave herself into the hardships. Till the last, she was able to hold the insults and loved her husband to the extent of cooking him a meal before she left. This story shows how gossips and bad neighbors could ruin a relationship. The weak mind of the husband is also portrayed here. He had the best wife that was so wise and beautiful but taking the advice of his jealous friend and villagers, he fell into their trap and made his wife suffer. This is not just a story but like any folklore whose main purpose is to instruct, one can also learn a good moral from this. A story is not only for amusement, it depends on the reader or the listener on how to take the best from it.

The woman with all her femininity tried to hold back but at last, she could not and she managed to break herself free from the cruel neighbor and the foolish husband. The river that the husband thought she will not be able to cross was not a difficult task for her. She managed to cross it and this also portrays the break of her bondage and that she is free now. Neither society nor an individual can hold a person down in finding one’s happiness and freedom in truth. The river which is also a representation of her sorrow and difficulties was

also conquered by her and this represents a true spirit. A woman with all her femininity is not a weak person; she is as strong as a man in his masculinity. The folklore which stands as the guide for the modern generation should be considered in this unending transforming society.

#### **4.1.2. The Story of How Tiger Started Eating Human Flesh (The Marriage of a Lady to a Tiger)**

**Kyong na Mmhorü Thungi Yanpio ji (The Marriage of a Lady to a Tiger )** (*Yihamo Patton in Nkolo Eran Motsü: 30-32*)

Eloe ngaro ehan nchyua na phenran khyua owo shümo hungi lhoa vanathung Mmhorü motsünga na eloe ji hungi “shijo a shümo la, nino ntio tssona shi lhoala? Ana ni rümvüka?” to ezoa Mmhorü jina eloe ji rhümacho. Tole eloe jina, “amotsü ana ngaro hamo shi vantoksi soa ni vantokvüka a ti rüma”, to ezoa Mmhorü ji khi mbo vachitokcho. Jisülo jo Mmhorü jina ngaro ji “van, van han?” to tai enga mongcho. Kvüthung Mmhorü jina ngaro ji vanthaka to yivon zocho sana, “enhungo otsshüngo, otchülo, wowokhok han? Yanyanpikhok han?” to tai enga mongcho. Tole eloe jina kvüthüng “enungo otsshüngo, otchülo wokhok thaka osi yanpikhok thaka,” to ezocho sana Mmhorü jina nonghori ji oro soa evamvü methakcho. Oyo jina otsolo na yanpiathüng mpensi yitokvü khilato ossü tükthüng, ‘atsolo jijo Mmhorü thüngi yanpiv saka!’ to nchumi esütsü na ossü ji zanzhüa tüka vancho. Hojiang hungi otsolo jina, “apvü, nino ntio tsocho esütsü zana ato?” to engale, oyo na “aka, tsiro chonung na amhyik shi a erokchichoka,” to ezocho. Opo ha, “apo, nino ntio tssona esütsü zana ato?”, to ezocho. Opo na, “aka ommvü na omhyiki a etsüphichoka,” to ezocho. Jisüi jo opo ha oyo onina otsolo ji Mmhorü ji thüngi yanpia yithokcho. Nzyua sülo jo otsolov jina na ngaro eloeroro bukcho. Ngaro ji oyo na soa na n-nkya, osi opo na soa na elüm kya to tssomongcho, hoji tsükona eleo jina “ntio tssona nina ngaro ji soana hetata kyala?” to engacho, tole Mmhorü jina, “a mehüm jina tssoki kyaka” to janlancho. Nchoka tsüngono jo eloe jina cheta vanle, Mmhorü jina ngaro ji nchü lona kvüri ji eshüpka, eshüpkaae ejen zanthoksi myak to tssoa vancho. Hoji hungi, mbo na Mmhorü ji thüngi na tsani yi khilato, “aka opo, ana otsüngo wovka aka sosi vankhe” to ezole, Mmhorü jina “ana ha rovka,” to exzocho. “Toka ana otchülo wovka, oli wovka, orae wovka aka sosi vana na?” to engana, Mmhorü jina “ana ha rovka.” to tae ezoa mbo phanphia mongcho. Osi nchoka lojo eloe jina “aka opo, ana ossü etsülo tchükhae jowovka,” to ezoa ngaro ji sothoksi mbo na tchükhae na jowo, orhük motsunga nnah tezhü motsünga to rümi ossü ji, pyak,pyak to khfüa etssüa vantoksi mbo

opoang ki tsani yia vancho. Tole Mmhorü jina orhük tona tezhü to ji eloe ji tsayia, “aka oyo, aka na kyaka chüngi züa” to ezo monga ha n-nchüngiajo, Mmhorü jina jowo ze le eloe ji n-nvancho osi orhük tona tezhü to tae vancho. Hoji hungi Mmhorü jina “nte hetvü na mbi a ejithechiake?” to phyoa orhük jijo eshitsüngi si, osi tezhü jijo “hepi yi yi? Hepi hung, hung?” to olan thunga enga, enga phana wole, topvü na “n-nhungka, n-nhungka,” to tae ezocho, osi okhaeti Sangalia ji engale, “enhungati shilo yia vanka” to ezoe phana owo emüngoti opo ha oyo oni ki ntüngo na phayacho. Eloë jina yunga oyi opoang kipüngi na oyo ji “ayo, chiro oki a chonchiyia?” to ezole, oyo na “ocho sana tokha, eyio otsoe n-nvan ka, etsoe jo nkolo na Mmhor:u thüngi yanpithokthaka,” to ezosi chiwo n-chonchicho. Tole otsolo jina “ayo, nina nkolo nonghothung tssütsüp na a ekhowo ji a ka, chiro a chonchia” to ezocho. Tole oyo na “toka hoji ni tssona füro bekvüi na beta rheyia” to ezocho. Otsolo jina füro bekvüi na beta rheyia vanathüng Mmhorü jina oro phayae, Mmhorü jijo ojowoe, oyo jo kvvriwoe to oni tssüngta, tssüngta si olongona tüpsöe sichö. Tole Mmhorü jijo oki hansi oyi chükcha pensi beno tia n-npyakatokna phana vansi shothecho. Osi Mmhorü ji na “aka oyo, ayio elum ni nzana, ekümo jo ohan tssolia oso ongo tae ni tsotokchoka!” to phyoa kya vancho. Tole oyo na otsolov ji osoji ekvüi tsosi hoji pensi owo “Mmhorü, nina kya vanakha, kyon so jo hetata m-mhonka tsophi zeta” to ezoa Mmhoü ji pia tsothokcho. Tole Mmhorü jina hoji tsosi “kyon so jo elüm nünga!” to phyoa elani mbo eloe ji shochelani tsocho. Hoji tsükona enhunga jana Mmhorü na kyon rümala to rütala.

This story has two titles, the first one is “How Tiger started eating human flesh” and the second one “The marriage between a tiger and a human/woman”.

The story is about a pregnant woman who went to a field alone and as she was plucking gourd from the field, a Tiger caught her and said “this is my gourd, why are you plucking it?” The woman in order to escape the Tiger said “Granpa, I will let you marry my child if you don’t eat me”. And so the Tiger released her but kept on asking her if she has given birth to the child or not. On learning that the child was born, the Tiger kept asking again, Is she old enough to fetch water? old enough to carry firewood? old enough to get married? Etc. When the mother finally said that she was ready to do all these the Tiger decide to marry her daughter. The mother was so sad thinking that her daughter is marrying a Tiger and she could not control her tears while making a shawl for her daughter. The daughter on seeing her mother’s tears asked her why she was crying. The mother replied that it was the weaving stick that poked her eyes while making the shawl. On seeing her father’s tearful eye the daughter asked the same and he replied: “It is the bamboo that poked my eye” and soon the day came and their daughter was married off to the tiger. After a year of her marriage with

the Tiger, she bore the Tiger a daughter and it so happened daily that whenever the child is with the mother she will be calm but, whenever she is with the Tiger, she will not stop crying. When the mother asked the Tiger why her daughter was crying, the Tiger replied that it was his fur that pokes her cry. One day as she was checking on why their child was crying she discovered that the Tiger was hitting the child's head from the stone near the fireplace and then licks the blood that comes from the child's head. After witnessing this, the mother plans to run away from the Tiger back to her parent's home and she asked the Tiger to look after their daughter while she goes and collects firewood but the Tiger insisted that he will go along, she then asks to keep an eye on their child while she go and fetch water but the Tiger again said that he will accompany her everywhere. One day the wife asked the Tiger to look after the child while she goes down the river to wash clothes. The wife took lice and a a bug and made them make a noise of splashing water. On hearing the sound "Pyak Pyak" the Tiger thought that it was her wife washing clothes and asked her to come and feed that baby as she was crying. As she was taking so long, the Tiger went to check just to find out a beetle and lice fooling him. The tiger killed the lice and took the bug and set off asking everywhere to find her wife. When he asked the Sangalia, the Tiger was told that it was not long ago that her wife was seen crossing that path, later, in the evening the Tiger managed to find her near her parent's house. The daughter ran and asked her parents to open the door as she was their daughter, but her mother replied that they do not have any daughter as their daughter was married off to a Tiger. The daughter then replied "Mother, it is me your daughter whom you have hit with a spoon a long time back", the mother then said if it is you then take the dog's passage and come inside. As the daughter was trying to get in through the dog's passage, the Tiger caught hold of her from behind. The Tiger pulled from her leg and as the mother was also pulling her from the head, she was pulled off into two from the waist. The Tiger was saddened by the death of his wife that he went and buried off her dead body and sobbed near it saying "my child's mother, I really loved you and I always fed you with meat and fish!" While the Tiger was mourning over the dead, the mother cooked the other half of her daughter and fed it to the Tiger saying "Tiger, instead of crying eat this human flesh and see how good human flesh taste." The Tiger after eating the human meat realized that human flesh is sweet and he dug out the other half of his wife and ate it. And it is said that to this day the Tigers never stopped eating human flesh.

The Lothas are regarded to be one of the most truthful people and since the time of our ancestors, they are known for their loyalty. The story here depicts the loyalty of the

mother towards her promise of marrying her daughter to the Tiger. Though she is sad to marry her off to the wild beast, she kept her word till the end.

Another interpretation that we can bring here is that nature at its own is harmless; the Tiger as a representation of the untamed nature and it did not think of killing the mother or the wife rather it was the Tiger's mother-in-law that taught him to eat the flesh of a human. The mother taught the tiger to destroy life only then he started hunting for life. The story is not sure of how far it is true but one has many things to learn through this. This story also depicts how cruel human beings are. They are regarded as the only social being with a reasoning power but it is them who started teaching the wild in creating chaos instead of maintaining peace.

The story is still relevant in the present generation, as modern society becomes more developed, it is a need of the young generations to take a serious note on the ecosystem by maintaining peace and harmony with nature as chaos will never lead to a better ending. It is one tribe against the other, one community against the other, one country against the other, the sustainability of goodness however belongs to the young minds. It is up to the modern generation to take care of oneself, the other, and the environment.

## **4.2. Poetry**

The types of poetry that have been given below are some of the prayers of the forefathers before the coming of Christianity. As the Lothas were primarily an agriculturalist, their prayers were drawn towards asking for an abundant harvest and for the crops to grow well and produce more.

### **4.2.1. Ümmha Randan (A Prayer for Blessing)**

Ha ümmhonile, Ha osi jito na ke;  
Ha A na echüngcho lo jo,  
Ha seno hanpong oro eshoni le;  
Ha A na echüngcho lo jo,  
Ha rüjüng hanpong oro eshoni le.  
Ha A na echüngcho lo jo,  
Ha Yimzü hanpong oro eshoni le;  
Ha A na joncho lo jo,



Ha sünjo mani ümmhoni le.  
 Ha A chenko lo jo ke,  
 Ha otsiozü ümmhayile.  
 Ha A na richo lo jo ke,  
 Ha pvürironsi royi le,  
 Ha zükhi tajo theta ni niokhüma kila,  
 Ha marü tsenko theta ni niokhüma kila;  
 Ha A na tongchowochi lo jo ke;  
 Ha ümmhachen ümmhachen na ümmhayi le. (*K. R. Murry, 2006: 26*)

This is a prayer asking the god of agriculture to bless for a good harvest by offering the god with “zükhi”, a kind of rice beer which was consumed during the forefather’s time and, “marü”, which means “meat” to eat along with the Zükhi. With an offering, he invokes the gods to come and bless all his works “jito na ke”/ Jitopvü which means “everything” so that all may turn out to be good.

#### **4.2.2. Oli Riathüng Ronsi Etsa (A Prayer of Blessing for a Good Harvest)**

Ha pvürironsi, Ha paniponi ronsi,  
 Ha pvüroporoe pyimtsümotsüi ronsi;  
 Ha oyamo tongtichochang ronsi,  
 Ha oyamo lorokhyingroe ronsi,  
 Ha Phiro-Shanki Sankitong ronsi,  
 Ha Longsa-Pongitong ronsi,  
 Ha Longsachüng-Niroyoco ronsi,  
 Ha Yimkha, Longla, Longidango ronsi,  
 Ha Tsüngiki-Mongyao ronsi;  
 Ha Longying-Koio Seloküo ronsi;  
 Ha Hümtso-Elümyo vo ronsi,  
 Ha Changsü yanghen o yanthamo ronsi;  
 Ha paniponi na nchüng oli richo kila,  
 Ha e phyonphen phimongphisa lo ni zatokü kila;  
 Ha pvürironsi jo ke, ha e pyonphen lo ni zatokü kila;  
 Ha lekhüm mo hanjüng ekae hansi;  
 Ha tssaktsü na lilan sana to,

Ha tsüngoro chenta to,  
 Ha epyong tsona to ti,  
 Ha nzyu lo pofü jü tzüa to ti;  
 Ha oyamo tongtichochang na ün zalanchi khokü;  
 Ha oyamo loro khyingroe na ün zalanchi khokü;  
 Ha kikho hajang shone toti,  
 Oro shonthechi le... Pvärionsio. (*K. R. Murry, 2006: 36*)

Like the previous one, this is also a prayer offered to the Agricultural god to bless the cultivators with a good harvest more than they could carry. The blessings of all the people, the village elders, the blessing of the youth, are all called upon to bless the field that is yet to be cultivated so that there will be an abundant harvest.

Our forefathers were known for their hard work and honesty and though they lived in a simple society, they never failed to give full praise to the gods and give equal importance to the fellow other. The unity in carrying out any works together can be seen through the prayers as this was a prayer not just for the individual but a prayer of blessing for the whole village among the Lotha tribe.

### 4.3. Lotha Folksong

There are different types of folksong sung on different occasions and every folksong carries different meaning, some are for appreciation, some to instruct, some for awareness. Mentioned below are some of the Lotha folksongs.

#### 4.3.1. Tiyi Nsikaken (A Song Dedicated to Mt. Tiyi)

This folksong is dedicated to Mount Tiyi, one of the highest peaks located at Wokha village of Wokha district inhabited by the Lothas. It is a pre-Christian folksong of the Lothas.

Eyio kilomongsi Tiyi süngroi chanla merikhung he...he...he...  
 Eyio echüliha echü limoni o...yivü ena...he...he...he...  
 Eyio echüliha Tiyi sungro lo o-mongo ena ..he...he...he...  
 Eyio echüliha supen joyinglo o-mongu ena he...he...he...  
 Eyio emüngyanthi hati lichüngi o-zuruthi-o he...he...he...  
 Eyio tsorovü to yichi vungi na kyonga roala...he...he...he...

Eyio tsorovü to voroshana nnenkata tsoala...he...he...he...

*(A collection from Mrs Nrisali Murry's note)*

Before the advent of the Christian faith, the Lothas practice animism where they believed in the existence of a supernatural being in all forms of creation. Mt. Tiyi is also regarded as the passage of death and so anyone who dies, his/her spirit passes through this mountain to reach their next destination. Hence, this song is dedicated to this Mt. Tiyi, where the people melancholy look towards the beautiful mountain full of rhododendrons, wild fruits, and birds that they will be happy there, enjoying the richness of the greenery mountain in their second life. The song is an admiration of the beauty of Mt Tiyi with its entire rich flora and fauna and also a reminder to oneself that death is not bad as it may seem as their spirit will reside in a beautiful place like mount Tiyi.

Nature for our forefathers was one of the most important resources, it is the life giver and they depended on it for their survival. They cultivated the land, they hunt, and they also use Nature as a defense from their enemies. But in modern society, deforestation is growing rapidly and this has led to many problems such as air pollution, ozone layer depletion, global warming, and many more. The modern generation must learn to stay in tune with nature and preserve it before it is too late because the forest will be the life-giver no matter how develop the society becomes.

#### **4.3.2. Ngaro Chücho Echrüli Nyiche vamoji Oro Soyile to Echüli Vandamvü thungi oyi Yencho (A message to the Spirit of Death to come and help the Spirit of a Child who Died and is unable to cross the Valley of Death)**

Even before the knowledge of salvation was made known, the Lothas believed in the existence of life after death and they believed that a good person will have a good life in the next life as well. Hence, they believed that there was a spirit of the death known as “echüli vandamvü” and he is in charge of taking care of the spirits who has left the earth and so in this song the spirit of the death is invoked to come and help the child to pass the valley of death. As narrated by Nrisali Murry, it is through a messenger or “*Havai*” that the spirit of the death is contacted. It is also believed during our forefather’s time that the “*Havai*” become the next god of death or “*echüli vandamvü*” after his/her death. The god of the spirit is regarded as “*Echüli Vandamvü*”

He...He...He...He...

Oiyiale yia ho...ho oiyiale yio ho...heli

Ha hele. He-he...he...he...he...

Eyio ochi yanphen kyava echü...I olan tongsa...tsa

Oyiyale yia ho...ho oyiyale yio ho...heli

Ha hele. He-he...he...he...he...

Eyio mongsongo sü, osü shaphia ntio lo tsa

Oyiyale yia ho...ho oyiyale yio ho...heli

Ha hele. He-he...he...he...he...

Eyio ronjungo tsi o enithata shai pilamo

Oyiyale yia ho...ho oyiyale yio ho...heli

Ha hele. He-he...he...he...he...

Eyio zukhi tajo enithata chani pilamo

Oyiyale yia ho...ho oyiyale yio ho...heli

Ha hele. He-he...he...he...he...

Echüi longrüthi ejia khyokae ejicho la no

Oyiyale yia ho...ho oyiyale yio ho...heli

Ha hele. He-he...he...he...he...

Eyio ochi yanphen o chücho sana chüi vandamvü,

Vandamvü thungi longshanka jüjo lo zao

Olongo supen joro soto o ezoyia

He...he...he...he...

Oyiyale yia ho...ho oyiyale yio ho...heli

Ha hele. He-he...he...he...he... (A collection from Tsenrhoni Erui note)

In this song, the child spirit was crying as there was no one to guide through the valley of death and so people offered rice, “zükhi” or rice beer, fruits, etc. but all of these were refused and the child kept crying holding the shawl and so the “echüli vandamvü” was called upon to come and help the child who was struggling to pass the valley of death. There is a belief among the Lothas that, when a child dies the cloth which was used to carry the child from the back or “Pvüsü”, is forbidden to be put into his death bed as it will get stuck in a cluster of bamboo and the child will not be able to pass through the valley of the death to the next world.

#### 4.3.4. Süpen Thera (Rhododendrons) (See Fig. no. 4.1.)

Shompo eni Tiyi ngi chungotav to kato le,

Chungo zeal süpen tong ngo na merüma ki,  
 E shomvü eni na yio, rhonla tola echüi therä sayi,  
 Rhonlatola nsa na ün rhona sayi,  
 Ejo lepok tiyi khi khüma rhona sayi,  
 Eshungtivü chüppi khi khüma rhona sayi  
 Potsüochum mi chanchi le shomüo  
 E sjomvü eni na yio, ejo lepok tiyi khi khüma ün rhon küma  
 Eshongtivü phayi khi khüma ün rhon küma  
 Sümro rümbüm phongi khi khüma ün rhon küma,  
 Mongsangosü chüppi khi khüma ün rhon küma  
 Shomvü eni na yio, ün khümjancho,  
 Ezhü ntavü tsayila, zechi le shomvüo. (*K. R. Murry, 2006: 1*)

This folksong is about a young couple who went to Mt. Tiyi to pluck the Rhododendrons which is found plenty at Mt. Tiyi area. There were certain norms to follow before plucking this flower as rhododendrons for the Lothas is regarded as the flower for the death. But on reaching, both of them realized that they were not properly equipped and do not have any ornaments with them but they continued plucking the flowers. Soon they realized that a storm was coming from a far-off place and they realized that it was because they did not bless the flowers with ornaments first and so they dedicated this song. To this day it is believed that if a person with a rough hand plucks it, he/she invites a storm or harsh weather. This flower is also used as a remedy when one gets a fishbone stuck in the throat; this has been practiced among the Lotha Nagas since the forefather's time.

The folksong not just portrays the importance of the rhododendrons but also the importance of respecting the customs and traditions of the forefathers or else one will invite chaos.



*Fig. no. 4.1. Rhododendron flower at Mt. Tiyi*

#### **4.4. Lotha Proverb**

Among the Lothas, there are certain sayings that our ancestors used in association with different meanings. This topic with bringing some of the sayings or proverbs of our ancestors and elaborate on it also examining how much it is relevant among the present generation. Most of them are however less prevalent ar less used now.

#### **4.4.1. Hapvüro Lantsa (The Walking style of a Crab)**

This saying was based on the story of a crab. One day the mother crab saw the baby crawling crooked and the mother told the baby crab not to walk like that. The baby crab told the mother, “you are crawling cooked and that is why I am crawling like you”. There is a saying among the Lothas not to be like the mother crab which also means not to expect someone to do something which you cannot even do.

#### **4.4.2. Echü Siti Ntsiv (It is only in Death that one will know)**

This is a popular saying of the Lothas and this means that the true story of a person will be testified only after his/her death and so it is told to live a righteous life while one is alive so that upon his death the good deeds will be testified setting a good example for the others alive. However, a person who had a bad history while alive will become a bad example for others. Hence, this saying is more like a warning to a person to live a righteous life else his testimony will not be pleasant after his death.

#### **4.4.3. Npong Venrocho түв je (The Calm after the Storm)**

When a person with a wrath leaves a situation or a situation ends after a long struggle, for example, if a talkative person leaves and the environment becomes quiet, then this phrase is used. This also means the solution after the end of any problem or any crisis.

#### **4.4.4. Kyakshak Ejrü (Crow’s egg)**

As Crow’s egg is white on the outside but on hatching it hatches out a black crow. Just like that, some people look saintly from the outside, as white as the Crow’s egg but on the inside, they turn out to be evil (black) like the Crow’s egg when it hatches. It can also be referred to as a hypocrite who acts differently on the outside but in reality, is a different person, an evil one.

#### **4.5. Stories Associated with Moral Teachings**

There are various stories and proverbs narrated by various village elders and they are not mere words but they hold a deep moral meanings and values. The modern generation can have an insight through the following short stories and proverbs given below.

##### **4.5.1. Emha Ekhüng Etsoi jo Ünmhon (Pride goes before a Fall)**

Once upon a time, a man had nine sons, during the forefather's time, having many sons is also a sign of prosperity and so the father was very proud of his sons who were good-looking but lazy as they were never taught to work and strive. The father was so proud that he felt there was no one in the villagers who is better looking physically than them. As the sons were never taught to work or learn any skills and they were lazy. One day a raid came in the village and the father was told that all his sons were killed by the enemy, with disbelief the father went to check if the news was true, he finds one after another that all his sons were dead. Then God said to him “no ntio kangtsüa la, liko tona ni to nkhotahanla”, which means “why are you proud, the soil and you are no different” meaning no matter how prideful a person may be, one came from the dust and will return to dust. The father was so prideful that he lost all his sons. One has a lot to learn from this short story: pride goes before a fall.

##### **4.5.2. Etsüngiphen tona Bembuk to Motsü (The story of Bamboo and Broom)**

Once upon a time, a bamboo was starting to sprout out its leave, this process before blooming is known as “*nav/nala*” to bloom. The broom on seeing the bamboo in the process of blooming wanted to bloom out ahead of the bamboo. Hence, the broom bloomed fast but it aged very soon, but the bamboo that was patient and completed all the process of blooming stayed for a longer time. When a person with a hasty mind takes a fast step without a second thought, he is referred to as a broom or a person who is not mature in his thinking is also regarded as a broom or told “are you a broom/*üno chukcha/ etsüngiphen ke*”. Moral: Haste makes mistakes.



#### **4.5.3. Vungnüm ji Motsü (The story of Vulture)**

Once upon a time God created all the birds and asked them to come and get their voices. God then told the Vungnüm (Vulture) bird who is considered to be the most beautiful, to come early and take the most beautiful voice. Vungi, another bird overheard the conversation, and the next morning Vungi arrived the earliest of all and said: “Churotuka amotsü” (I have arrived grandfather) to God. God thought that it was the Vungnüm and gave the Vungi the most beautiful sound and so to this day Vungi sings “Pio..pio..pio” accompanied by the female bird. While Vungnüm who failed to come early arrived at the last moment breathing heavily carrying a large basket. God told the bird, since you arrived last take what you came in saying and to this day the Vungnüm, though it is considered to be the most beautiful bird, it sounds as “HMm”.

This story may not have happened in real life but it is a fable that teaches a moral. If the Vungnüm were to arrive early it will receive the best sounding voice but laziness kept the bird away from receiving the price. Hence, obedience is the key to blessings.

#### **4.5.4. Onshompvüni motsü (A story about two Female Friends)**

Once upon a time, there were two female friends, one belonging to a rich family and one from a poor family. The girl belonging to a rich family always looked down to her poor friend and said, “A Divü, rümpum jrü na nikrhi ka akupi na tisukata” meaning “Don’t take bath below me or else the water that washed down my bangles and armlet will cause you allergy”. This was an insult to the poor friend but when they grew up and got married, the rich girl married a poor man, and the poor girl married a rich man, hence, the fate of the two girls changed. One day the poor girl who was once rich went to ask for husk the rich girl who was once poor. She gave her friend some husk along with zükhi/rice beer and told her as she leaves, “be careful the cow dung will slip you.” She was embarrassed but as she treated her friend badly when she was in her parents’ home she left without having to say anything. The story teaches that one should not be proud of their parents' richness before marrying off as women may land up in a poor family and later on struggle.

#### **4.5.5. Eboe Nchüa na Eloë Engav ji Motsü (The proposal of a man to a lady)**

Once a man from a poor family asked a girl hand for marriage but he was rejected as they were poor. The man then said “Kiopo yantsalia, Kioyo yantsalia, Pofü nkholo mokhoti konga yia ethiv lihanla”, which means that although his parents may be poor, his turn will come and he is yet to bear fruit like Mokhothi. Mokhothi is a fruit which is found around Pofü and it bears a lot of fruits. This story teaches one not to look down on someone based on their family background as the children may one day turn out to be the most prosperous than the one who was looking down on earlier.

#### **4.5.6. Velüngü Nchüngthi Enhyak**

Once upon a time, a group of birds was distributing fruits among themselves. The owl that has set an eye on a particular fruit kept quiet and waited for everyone to choose the fruits. At last, he said that he will take the oak tree which gives out many fruits. As the owls waited for the fruit to get ripen, the next batch of the fruit started to appear but the previous one was still raw. Hence, when a person says to do something but fails to keep his words this phrased “Velüngü nchüngthi enhyak” is used, which means something that never happens. The owl waited for the fruit to get ripen but it never did. “Nchüngthi” is a kind of fruit that never gets ripen; it is not an edible fruit.

#### **4.6. Lotha Yisanlan / Lotha Terms**

With the influence of media and other culture the modern Lothas are adopting and learning different languages and in the process they are neglecting to speak a proper mother tongue. Some old Lotha terms are slowly fading away and often used and if this goes on, the dialect may lose its originality. It is the people who need to preserve it by learning and speaking in a proper Lotha. Given below are some words stated by Yitssomo Murry and Nrisali Murry that were once common but hardly heard today.

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 4.6.1. Okhentsüng  | - referred to someone dishonest  |
| 4.6.2. Kitongloroi | - referred to a lady who is properly married as per the village custom and practices |
| 4.6.3. Kupjoloroi  | - Referred to a lady who elopes  |

- 4.6.4. Chapa                                -a kind of basket used to store clothes or any belongings. It can also be referred to as a present-day suitcase made with bamboo, cane, and bamboo leaf.
- 4.6.5. Rongtong                           - The wife addresses his husband as Rongtong as he is regarded as the breadwinner or head of the family.
- 4.6.6. Echümpvüi                        - the husband calls his wife as Echümpvüi as she is the homemaker
- 4.6.7. Yiyapenro                         - Both the parents refer to their children as Yiyapenro
- 4.6.8. Amyako                            - a wife will refer to her father/mother-in-law as Amyako
- 4.6.9. Aa-mm                             - a husband will call his father/mother-in-law "Aa-mm"
- 4.6.10. Nlakupshenka                   - Referred to a lazy person
- 4.6.11. Fulia                              - to take someone else's share or someone's right to share with the person's consent.

For a community to prosper it is necessary to stay close knitted and our ancestors have taught us that through their way of living and conduct. They practice the cultural value and traditions religiously, performed the songs and dances in groups and they had the sense of community respecting the culture and the fellow man. The modern Lothas however, are so caught up in the changes that the old customs are hardly seen. Young boys and girls are often heard speaking in perfect English and Hindi but when it comes to their mother tongue, they prefer not to speak. One needs to realize that the past is a treasure that we can no longer have it but we can learn from them and give our culture a chance to prosper and progress.

## Work Cited

Carbo Richard, John Coakley, Abraham Lotha. Retelling Naga Narratives: More Than

Thrice-Told Tales. Heritage Publishing House. 2014

Patton Y. Yihamo. “*Nkolo Eran Motsü*”.

K. R. Murry. *Kyong Motsüiran Ekhürhyucho: Anthology of Lotha Prose, Part II*. Kyong Academy, Wokha Nagaland. 2006.

## Webliography

Learning about world cultures through folktales. Carol J. Fuhler, Pamela J. Farris, and Lynda Hatch. ([www.socilastudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/yl/1101/110104.html](http://www.socilastudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/yl/1101/110104.html)). Accessed on June 22, 2021.

Thompson, Stith. “Folk literature”. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2 May 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/art/folk-literature>. Accessed on 22 June 2021.

## Interview

Ezamo Humtsoe, Resident of wokha village, June 8, 2021

Nrisali Murry. A resident of Wokha Village, June 5 2021

Tsenrhoni Erui. A Resident of Wokha Village. June 3 2021

Yanphamo Humtsoe (eldest member of wokha village, 100yrs old) 1st June 2021

Yitssomo Murry. Wokha village (elders) June 3 & June 5 2021

## CHAPTER 5

### A CONTEMPORARY OUTLOOK ON THE FOLKLORE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE MODERN CONTEXT.

Every society whether it is rural or urban comes in contact with various changes and development in this modern globalized world. The Lotha societies have also come in contact with many different cultures and are undergoing many alterations in their society. It has impacted the society and the people both positively and negatively. In the modern world, one cannot say no to changes and development but it is how we receive and react to them.

#### 5.1. Globalization and Modernization

##### 5.1.1. Globalization

*“Globalization means the speedup of movements and exchanges (of human beings, goods, and services, capital, technologies or cultural practices) all over the planet”*( [youmatter.world/defination](https://youmatter.world/defination)).

Globalization is not a new process and it has always been deeply embedded since the beginning of human history. Some are of the view that it started around 60,000 years ago and since then humans have been progressing and they have never stopped moving around through conquest and exploration. However, during the second half of the 20th century, world trade accelerated notably in such a dimension and speed that “globalization” became a common term. It has penetrated all aspects of human life including the economy, finance, culture, political, social, technology, geography, etc. generating an interdependence of all activities.

Globalization was primarily an economic process of interaction through the trade of goods and services which led to the increase in global interaction resulting in growth in the exchange of ideas and cultures. WHO defines globalization as *“the increased interconnectedness and interdependence of peoples and countries. It is generally understood to include two interrelated elements: the opening of international borders to the increasingly fast flow of goods, services, finance, people, and ideas; and the changes in institutions and policies at national and international levels that facilitate or promote such flows”* ( <https://youmatter.world/defination> ).

### 5.1.2. Types of Globalization

The more the people interact the more globalized the world becomes. Generally, the eight types of globalization as given by Wilmer Baliwag are Financial Globalization, Economic Globalization, Technology Globalization, Political Globalization, Cultural Globalization, Sociological Globalization, Ecological Globalization, and Geographical Globalization ([.scribd.com](https://www.scribd.com)). As our study is focused on culture, more elaboration on cultural globalization is mentioned below.

#### Cultural Globalization

*“Cultural Globalization refers to the transmission of ideas, meanings and values around the world in such a way as to extend and intensify social relations”* (Wikipedia).

Cultural Globalization can be defined as the exchange of ideas, meanings, and values between an individual and group from across the countries or continent. With the introduction and development of various technologies and social media, social interactions have also intensified. People from one corner of the Globe can now connect with an individual residing to the other end of the globe with just a tap on a screen or by verbal command and this has brought an increase in interconnectedness among different races and cultures leading to cultural diffusion and a world of fusion. The coming of cultural globalization may have helped in the growth of Modernization and development of knowledge and awareness among different cultures and societies from different backgrounds but one cannot deny the changes it has brought to one's originality in cultural practices. As per the UNESCO report of 2005, it is observed that cultural exchange is becoming more rampant from Eastern Asia but the western countries are still the main exporter of cultural goods (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/Globalization>). This has invited the attention of the critics commenting that globalization has become a threat to the local ethnic cultures and it may ultimately lead to westernization or Americanization of culture, as the dominating country's culture can be introduced at ease in the receiving country through globalization.

New developments in fields of music, sports, religion, etc are taking place now and then and there is an increasing interest among the younger generation to keep up with the latest trends. On both positive and negative notes and despite all the criticisms globalization is inevitable, it is a natural process as no country in the world can avoid it, and failing to

embrace it will lead to marginalization. Globalization is multi-dimensional and coming through all directions like the economic, cultural, social, and political aspects, it will impact both the individual life and the society in general.

### 5.1.3. Modernization

*“Modernization is the current term for an old process-the process of social change whereby less developed societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies. The process is activated by international, or intersocietal, communication. (encyclopedia).”*

Modernization refers to the progressive transformation from a “traditional” to a “modern society”. It aims to identify the social variables that are contributing to the social progress and development of societies and also seeks to explain the process of social evolution. The three factors which promote modernization as given by Pooja in her article are:

- Development of Science and Technology,
- Development of Industrial Civilization and,
- Successful working of Democratic Institutions.

The origination of modern concepts emerged in Europe during the time of the Renaissance from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. It was during this time that a revival of the classical Greek and Roman cultures took place and people were looking for new ideas and innovation. People from here on never looked back and from the nineteenth century witnessed modernism at its height. As stated by Shashi Jamir, *“The effects of modernization have penetrated every aspect of human society. They have affected the political system, the economy, the family, forms of entertainment, and all other basic institutions” (2011:12).*

Modernization stresses more on the country’s development whereas Globalization places more importance on the interrelationship among countries to make it one global village. It is through the process of globalizing that modernization grew and along with modernity came the concept of westernization.

As the Lothas set their foot into the new era of modernism, they experience new cultures now and then as they started meeting people from every different cultural background speaking different cultures with different lifestyles. It was an eye-opener for the naive mind of the villagers, the Lothas in particular, and the Nagas in general. However, it



did not take them long to learn and adapt to the new cultures and new developments. The villages slowly converted to cities, occupation changed, the Nagas started dressing like the westerns, they started learning and speaking in different languages, and they started entering into the domain of the technology world. Modernization has made the life of the Lothas and the Nagas easier and comfortable. Wati Longchar opines, *“The nature of the process of modernization involves basically the shift from simple and traditional techniques towards the application of scientific knowledge in the realm of technology, from subsistence farming towards commercial production of agricultural goods and in agriculture, from human and animal power towards machine power in the industry, from limited production for family or village consumption towards commercial market production, from village towards urban centres and from kinship towards egocentric society and nationhood”* (1996: 99).

## **5.2. The Lothas under the British Colonizers**

Before the advent of the Europeans, the Lothas had little or no contact with other parts of the world; they are an autonomous group of people. It was only after the annexation of Assam and Brahmaputra valley in the 1920s that the Nagas came to know about the Europeans. As raids from the Naga area to the Assam plains were rampant, the British had to stop it, and gradually the whole area of the Nagas was annexed ([minorityrights.org](http://minorityrights.org)).

Among the Lotha, the first contact with the Europeans came when Lieutenant H. Bigge came to the Lotha area in 1841 but he had a bitter relationship with the Lothas (Zanao Mozhü, 2004: 30). The Lothas were a group of people who never had anyone to rule over them but when external powers started impacting their integrity, their society changed. As stated by Zanao Mozhüi *“the period from 1890-1925, was called a dark period in the history of the Lothas, because the whole of the Lotha area was given to the hand of the Dobashi (interpreter) with limited power”* (2004:30). The Lothas also witnessed a new world under the rule of the British, during the First World War (1914-1918), under the leadership of Shanjamo Jungio from Yikhum village, 400 young Lothas were taken to Germany as Labour Corps. Another 300 young Lothas also went to France as Labour Corps in 1911. When these young men returned, they had a different outlook as they have witnessed a developed world.

*“They met different kinds of people, whether soldiers or civil, their understanding of world view was broadened, that resulted in changing their dress, food, housing, mentality, sanitation, and living style were affected”* (Mozhüi, 2004:33).

### **5.3. The Lothas under the American Missionaries**

When the Americans first came in contact with the Nagas, they felt the urgency to start a mission, the Nagas were however suspicious of their intention however, with very slow progress and much difficulty the Missionaries started converting the Nagas to Christians. The Lothas also started accepting the new faith but it was a different case for the Lothas. Zanao Mozhüi opines, *“in the case of Lothas, people became Christians not through the missionaries preaching, but through the native preachers or evangelists”* (2004: 89).

When Christianity started sprouting the Lothas started giving up practices like head-hunting, animal sacrifices, rituals, and superstitions, etc. The teaching of love, universal brotherhood, and forgiveness broadened their relationship with other parts of the community. The Missionaries have done a commendable work in trying to make the Lothas into a better people by sharing the good news of salvation, introducing the modern concept of learning, etc but it is also to be noted that with the new changes, the cultural life took a shift from traditional to modern positively as well as negatively. The practice of Chumpo as a learning center of many cultural activities was also given up and was replaced by the modern education system and people started neglecting their culture and started cultivating western culture. Looking at the scenario of the Lotha Naga society, the more modern and developed a society becomes it directly or indirectly impacts the life of the people driving them more towards the western lifestyle as they find the superior race more refined and better. The mindset of the colonizers and the missionaries as being the superior, dominant and sophisticated race impacted the lives of the Lothas at large.

### **5.4. Transition of Values among the Modern Generation**

It was not only through the changes brought by the colonizers and the American missionaries that impacted the cultural life of the Lothas and the Nagas. When modernization penetrated the traditional life of the Lothas, Westernization or western cultures crept in as well and changes came inevitably voluntarily or involuntarily. There are innumerable changes in various fields that have taken place in the past and it is still going on some of the notable changes are mentioned below:

#### 5.4.1. Education System

Till the recent past the Morung or in Lotha term “Chümpo” served as an educational center but with the introduction of western education, the importance of Chümpo slowly faded. The American Baptist Missionaries first introduced the modern concept of learning and slowly schools were introduced. At the initial stage, the schools were not so encouraging but the hard work of the missionaries slowly bloomed and they have opened a new horizon for the people who were once confined to their old tradition. With education came modernization, the Lothas started improving in their way of life, their sanitation improved, and their minds were broadened with the new knowledge of modernization. However, with much of the positive impact, it has also cost the tribal community their institution which served them good for so long. The education system brought by the Christian missionaries enlightened the minds of the tribal community but also contributed to the loss of culture. Longchar opines, the traditional tribal principle of education was *“learning by doing” and “education for life”*. However, when young people became Christians they were asked to give up going to dormitory and the custom associated with these institutions eventually lost much of its utility of shaping the tribals in the native traditional sense” (1995:141).

#### 5.4.2. Occupation

The Lothas right from their childhood was taught the dignity of labor by their parents. Before modernization shown over the region, the people were hard-working and they started their day as early as 3 A.M. As narrated by Mr. Ezamo Humtsoe, he says that earlier they will wake up early in the morning and while some of the siblings go to fetch water some will be busy pounding the rice (before machinery were introduced rice were pounded by hands in “Tsumpo”). Chores were divided among the members of the family and once the breakfast is done everybody set off to the fields for work as early as 5 A.M. Those were the days when the Lothas were regarded as hardworking people. The people were also engaged in fishing and hunting, however agriculture and animal husbandry occupies a prominent place in the occupational life of the Lothas. Hence, no other village had to go begging for food to the other village for their sustenance; they were all self-dependent and self-sufficient. But as modernization became incorporated in the economic life of the people, a new shift began to

emerge, commercial farming became popular and many new occupations started opening up. But with the easy and comfortable life brought by modernization there are now more of dependent individuals rather than independent. As stated by Yarangchang Imchen, “*currently with over 70 thousand Naga educated unemployed youth spreading all over Nagaland, we tend to opt for finding and getting ‘white collar job’ only*”. If the people want to have a society that is self-sufficient then the “white-collar job” should not be regarded as the only means of survival. If every Nagas take up space in the field of construction, agriculture, or any manual work with the legacy “dignity of labor” left by our ancestors will once again shine on our economy and the society will be self-sufficient again.

### 5.4.3. Social Life

The Lothas society was a close-knitted society bonded by marriage in one way or the other. As stated by Mozhüi “*Each village consists of several clans and sub-clans, in some of the villages a single clan were found majority, in this case they make a sub-clan, for the sake of marriage relationship*” (2004:83). There was no class or caste distinctions among the people and everyone was treated equally with due respect and there was no room for discrimination as everybody gets their equal share of opportunity and rights. Zanao Mozhüi quotes the words of R.R.Shimray, “*The Impact of Christianity on the Naga People* which reads as, “*One of the most colourful ingredients of the Naga village States is its community life. Naga individuals knows no other life, except that of community life. They worked in groups eat in groups and sleep in groups. There is neither individual cultivation nor harvest, no individual house building, no feast of merit by individual alone...The Individual has no existence a part from the community*” (2004:83). Such was the social condition of our ancestors but today as industrialization came and infiltrated the life of the Nagas, people turned more towards materialism and the society which was once classless is now turning towards a class society marked by the poor and the rich. People are becoming more individualistic and the richer a person becomes the richer he wants to be and rest the poor are becoming poorer. Our ancestors did not experience this comfortable life but they did their part in making their society beautiful. Shimreichon Luithui quotes the words of J.H. Hutton in the journal *Naga: A People struggling for self Determination*, reads as, “*Nagas have fine qualities. They are simple, cheerful, colorful, humorous, courteous and hospitable people...a sense of honor and generosity at home, at work and at gathering; laughter is the food of the*

*society and hospitality is overwhelming. Nagas are honest and truthful people...”* ([wgia.org](http://wgia.org)).

#### **5.4.4. Cultural Life**

The ceremonies, festivals, and various traditional practices reflect the cultural life of a particular community. The Lothas also celebrated many ceremonies, performed many rituals and sacrifices and it is no doubt that through the dedication of the Christian missionaries some of their negative practices like head-hunting were put to an end and they have given new hope for the Lothas community by introducing the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, if we look at the role played by the missionaries and its impact on the cultural life, one can observe that most of the cultural activities were also put to an end as many ceremonies and rituals were regarded as anti-Christ and a convert Christian was not allowed even to attend the Chümpo. According to Mozhüi, a Lotha who accept the faith of Christianity is prohibited to attend any cultural rituals and festivals or any gatherings (2004:105). The Chümpo was replaced by educational institutions, folksongs by hymns, various rituals and ceremonies were replaced by the celebration of Christian feast, etc. If only the Americans have understood the importance of the culture and incorporated it with the teaching of Christ befitting to the traditional practices to glorify God, the social, cultural, and religious life will be much richer and fuller. But one cannot always blame the other alone, we know that our cultures are diminishing yet we do nothing to protect and preserve it from decay. It is not too late for the younger minds to pick up the good values and amidst modernization, where advancement is carrying off at a fast speed, one should be careful not to lose oneself in pursue of worldly material things. How much of a modern lifestyle a person may adopt, one cannot run away from one's cultural roots. We have many things to learn from the past and the legacy of our forefather who has shed their sweat for the land cannot be neglected. We can utilize modern technology in conserving our land and culture and our identity through many ways.

#### **5.4.5. Political Life**

The socio-political system of the Nagas as stated by Dr. Angelina Lotsüro is described as *“a form of the purest democracy which is difficult to conceive of as existing even for a single day”* (2000:34). Though all the tribes of the Nagas did not have an organized form of a

political system, everyone enjoyed their rights equally without taking the law into their hands. Everyone took an equal part in the decision-making process and they had no sense of defeat and control. They were independent loving people and so no other tribe had the desire to control any other tribe among the Nagas. It was only after the arrival of the British that a new political system was introduced which impacted the effective functioning of the traditional system of the village administration. However, the British had little or no desire to fully conquer them. As stated by Eyingbemo Odyuo, *“the British government recognised the traditional authority of the villages as an effective means of administration at the grassroots level and introduced two more institutions those of Dobashi (DB) and Goan Burah” (GB) (2019:37).*

The peace loving society of our forefathers we admired and praised. Dr. Lotsüro opines, *“The Traditional Nagas are racially, ethnically and culturally distinct from the other races of India. They also hold dear, among others, the values of democracy, freedom and sense of equality” (2000:37).*

Looking at the present scenario, Nagaland being a Christian state, one need to ask if we have produced a God-fearing leader or not. This is a question to ponder not just for the Lothas alone but for the whole of Nagas. Though we consider our state as “Nagaland for Christ”, has it become a mere slogan that represents numbers? Unfortunately Nagaland has earned the distinction of being fully a corrupted state. It is not just the fault of the leaders but the responsibility rests on every individual who calls themselves Nagas. Our ancestors have sown the seeds of morality and virtue in all aspects of their life including the administering of the village. Has money drawn us away from righteous path? Our forefathers did not hear the good news of salvation through virtuous living but the present generation was fortunate enough to have heard the gospel and the good news and we are taught that our good deeds will never go in vain.

It is encouraging to see the young Nagas realizing the loopholes of the current situation and coming up with a better vision of transforming Naga society. If the Rising People’s Party (RPP) as it professed to bring a change in the system of governance based on transparency, accountability and meritocracy and they walk the talk then the Nagas will once again be a heaven on earth (Morung Express, July 5, 2021)

#### **5.4.6. Religious Life**

According to J.P Mills the Lothas belived in a god to whom he sacrifices and always pleased the gods to keep them in a good temper (2017:113). Our ancestors believed in the existence of a supernatural being and they did not dare to disturb or have any connections with the evil spirit and so when they felt the need to cut off any bad omen if needed, they sacrificed Pig, Chicken, or Dog and they followed this religiously. They also never failed to offer sacrifices to the gods to bring them a good harvest or good health or victory in times of war. Every tribe of the Nagas has different names for their gods and the religious beliefs and practices differ from tribe to another. This type of religion is generally regarded as animism. From such a religion that has no hope of salvation, the American missionaries brought the good news of hope and forgiveness for the people and gave us a formal set of religions known as Christianity, and at the present majority of the Lothas practice the Christian faith. But looking at the present scenario of the Nagas, are the modern generations following the path of righteousness as is taught in the Bible? If we look at the current society, the news of rape, bribery, broken families, issues of land disputes, etc does not shock us anymore. If the people are true Christians, and they follow the true teaching of Christ all these would not be happening. The modern generations must reflect to their past and re-learn the valuable lesson from their ancestors and also adopt the teachings of Christ and put in into action than our society will once again prosper in every way. Neiphiu Rio, the present Chief Minister of Nagaland comments. *“As Christians, we believe in God. But if our belief and our action do not go together, I think we are destroying ourselves”* (Eastern Mirror).

#### **5.4.7. Art and Crafts**

The Lothas were artistic, they decorate their villages in numbers of wood carvings, and they make their own dresses and utensils. Almost all the tribes have their distinct type of art which makes them unique. Though during the forefather's time, much of the time could not be focused on the production of many artworks as it was not their primary occupation, the art and crafts went side by side along with agricultural works and other cultural activities. The art and crafts of the menfolk were drawn towards wood carving, painting, and basket making while the women folk engage themselves in weaving, embroidery, and pottery. Though the Lothas decorative styles were earlier only limited to their dress, weapons, and village gates and confined within the community, the beauty of the Naga art cannot be undermined.



The artisans had to work and struggle hard in the past as all was made and produced with bare hands with limited material and without the assistance of modern machinery. Z. Obed opines “*The Arts and Crafts of the Nagas have been one of the basic ways of self-expression. The nascent ideas and feelings, his joy in living, his achievements in society have been woven in the crafts of the Nagas*” (Foreword to *The Arts and Crafts of Nagaland*: xi).

Looking at the present scenario, one can witness the impact of modernization taking a shift from tradition to modern. Traditional weaving methods or handloom have been replaced by a machine, pottery making which was once done by hand have been replaced by a machine, the art of dyeing clothes in traditional methods have been replaced by cheap artificial color, etc. Machines have in almost every way replaced the talents of the Nagas. Though machinery has made our lives more comfortable and easier, it has compromised with the quality of life. The clothes that were once woven by hand are now rarely found in the market as machine-made are overflowing with cheaper prices. The crisis of unemployment among the Naga youths at present is a commendable one, but one need to ask if the people are truly fighting to free from this problem. It is rare among the modern generation to see a young people having the traditional knowledge of making things.

It is encouraging to find schools and colleges trying to uplift and preserve our rich culture, like Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Wokha, organized a cultural event under the initiation of Sir Marcus Humtsoe, a Lotha teacher in DBHSS, he laments on the degrading cultural heritage of the Lothas and so with a hope to instill the importance of culture to the young minds, this event was held (*Nagaland Post*: July 25, 2019). If the young people could engage more in the cultural activities then there will be more employment and less cry for unemployment.

#### **5.4.8. Language**

Y. Yihamo Patton in the foreword of his book “*Nkolo Eran Motsu*” addresses that with the change in the educational system and the introduction of the modern ways of learning, our younger generations do not know how to read or write in Lotha dialect and this applies to all the other tribes of the Nagas as well. Every tribe speak different dialect, some of the tribes have two or more dialects within their tribe while some like the Lothas have only one “Lotha”. According to the census of 2011, in India, Nagaland is regarded as the most diverse state in terms of language with 14 languages and 17 dialects spoken and because of this it is difficult to communicate with other tribes except through the medium of English or

Nagamese. It is a need to learn different languages in this modern generation as we are a social animals and we cannot be confined to one particular place. And as we move around places, we must have the means to communicate in one or the other language but looking at the present scenario this has become more like a trend that the children in cities and towns and even in some of the village areas are more comfortable speaking with Nagamese, English or Hindi rather than their mother tongue. The current case that can be observed among the Lotha community is that with the influence of media and western education children from a young age pick up different languages giving less importance to their mother tongue. While the parents take pride in the fact that their children are learning other languages, they must also mind that the mother tongue is as important as the other language. Speaking a proper Lotha dialect represents a good cultural upbringing not just for the child but also reflects the character of the parents and in this modern generation it is necessary to let the children know their roots first before letting them out to the world. The identity of the next generation depends on the present generation. Over time, languages and dialects are mixed with different mediums and there is no originality in the languages spoken by the younger generations. Vishnu Rita Krocha says “*Learn as many languages as you can, but never forget your own*” (*East Mojo*). It is important to note that our true self of who we are and where we came from will not change even if we speak a foreign language.

## **5.5. The Notion of Progress and Advancement**

*“The origin and development of progress has no place in the discourse on Naga culture, because progress is a Western concept” (Tezenlo Thong 2009:30)*

During the time of our ancestors, the Lothas lived in a society where knowledge and skills were handed down from generation to generation through word of mouth till the introduction of the western mode of education and the coming of the written form. From a young age the Lothas are taught about survival, endurance, and respect for one another. The traditional values that have been taught are not to be disregarded as they will lead to tragedy or disharmony. When the British and the American Missionaries came into the land of the Lothas they failed to understand their cultures and labeled them as uncivilized as their way of living did not meet their civilized standards. Zanao Mozhöi opines, “*the western style of dressing and living standard were encouraged*” (2004:93). Though the whites have contributed to the progress of society a lot of our culture has been lost in the process. Today, with modernization at its peak, we are in a complete different society than what our

forefathers used to live in. We have seen progress in the field of technology, education, economy, religion, etc. One can ask what good are those progress bringing into the community or the individual life. Are those progresses only driven towards material needs? Are we also looking towards progress in moral values? According to Tezenlo Thong, the notion of progress did not even exist during the time of our forefathers, but they managed to live a life in harmony without having to acquire any material needs. Modernity seem to be playing a vital role in our attitude towards our own culture and our land. During the time of our forefathers, there was no need to worry about deforestation, global warming, air pollution, noise pollution, etc but as society progressed and development increased, problems too grew side by side. The labels of the Nagas as honest and hardworking people are now nowhere to be found. The respectful, loving, sharing, and giving community has turned into a selfish, greedy community.

As stated by Tezenlo Thong *“the future does not determine the present as much as does the past. Unlike modern culture that is future oriented and emphatically underscores planning for the future, change, innovation, progress or development, indigenous Naga cosmovision was past oriented...For Nagas, the reference point of decision-making and action for the present was the tradition and the lifestyle of the ancestors. ...To be socially useful and constructive was, therefore, to follow the age-old tradition with precision and exactitude”* (2009: 37-38).

The ideas of progress as instilled by the Europeans have impacted the Nagas in every aspect. The cultural moral values and practices must go hand in hand with a progressing. Mozhui opines, *“The lost of interest in one’s originality poses the greatest the greatest danger to further development”* (2004: 96).

## **5.6. Problems of Modernization**

*“The most damaging blow of modernization amongst the Nagas was the instilling of the deep-seated notion in them that their culture was primitive, uncivilized, and immoral”* (M. Sashi Jamir, 2011:20).

There is no doubt that modernity has brought development and progress to many societies, such as longevity of life, a comfortable lifestyle, and growth in human intellectuality. However, not all societies are privileged enough to enjoy the blessings of modernity. Modernization as stated by Amenla Jamir, can be understood as *“the process by which a country moves from a traditional agrarian society to having a more secular*

*urbanized society and in the process it remoulds the cultural system into a new mode” (dottalks.in).* Modernization however crept in along with the western cultures and it is playing a prominent role in the transforming of the culture as well as the people. Amenla further states that through modernization, immense modifications have crept into the Naga society, and today, many youths have no knowledge of their traditional stories, songs or dances and also various traditional values.

Some of the problems of modernization that we see in the present modern society are addressed below.

### **5.6.1. Lack of Respect**

The people (Lothas) who were once known for their loyalty and respect have witnessed a lot of change under the influence of the Europeans and the introduction of new western culture. As also commented by Dr. Lotsüro, the Nagas were known for their respect towards elders and towards the existing authority and no Naga dared to go against the law. Boholi Z Sema also opines, *“one notice a beautiful blend of freedom of expression with the obedience to authority. In fact though a Naga is known for the sense of independence and individualistic attitudes, no Naga will dare to take the law into his or her own hands. No Naga will dare not to respect the elders” (2020:24).* However, looking at the present situation, the sense of respect is lost and it is now a new thing to hear quarrel among neighbors, among tribes, among various communities, etc. There is no respect to the authority and people tend to take the matter in their own hands leading to a more severe problem. The sense of unity has been lost and modern mindset of individualism has taken a toll on the people.

### **5.6.2. Unemployment**

In the current situation, Nagaland witnessed an unemployment rate of 21.4% according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey 2017-2019; this has impacted every tribe of the Nagas. The Nagas are already packed with loads of unemployed educated youth and unfortunately the Covid pandemic has also impacted the youths especially those working outside Nagaland they had to return home as they could not continue to work amidst the crisis. How are we Nagas going to fight this battle? Our ancestors did not have to worry about this as the society that they lived in was not future-oriented but with the modernization

bringing a change in the society more Nagas want to have a modern way of comfortable lifestyle, however, there must be a source to meet that needs and wants. As we move ahead, we also need to think of the coming generation as well. Are we job-oriented or skill-oriented? If all people look for white-collar jobs then whom are we waiting to fill the other jobs. The dignity of labor seems to have lost its stand in the Naga society. If we are struggling today, how do we expect the upcoming generation to have a better life? It is not just the responsibility of the government but as an individual Lotha or Nagas, one must stand up for a better tomorrow. More research in the field of how to tackle down this problem should be welcomed and implemented. The education system in Nagaland should also be critically evaluated as education with no skill has become a huge wall block for the Naga youths.

### 5.6.3. Addictions

During the time of our ancestors, though there was a history of consuming rice beer, this drink did not cause any threat to society as it was consumed by a limited amount supplementing food. For example, the Lothas used “Chumcho”, the Angamis “Zutho”, which are locally made by fermenting rice. But as the society change most of the Nagas turn towards alcoholism and drug abuse which slowly grew and became havoc in the family life as well as the community life. As the situation grew worst the Naga Mother Association was formed on February 14, 1984, to fight the chaotic problem of drug abuse and alcoholism. Neidonuo Angami the first secretary and former president of NMA states “*The first thing NMA felt was the need to fight against the drug traffickers. At that time, Heroine, commonly known as No.4, was easily available from across the Golden Triangle, which passes through the heart of Kohima en-route National highway 39 to go to the rest of the world. This, No.4 was also being easily trafficked at the international border of Tuensang district*” (Morung Express: June 25, 2021). Drug usage among youths are not a new thing now, it was a painful experience to see during my college days that many young college students both male and female were engaged in the use of *Marijuana* or also known as *Cannabis sativa* which not only harm their physical health but also their mental health. Alcohol, wine, cigarette, chewing of tobacco, etc were not in our culture and it is sad to see that almost all the youth are now a victim of tobacco products in one or the other way.

Gaming is another severe addiction that the youth of the Nagas are encountering and it has become a problem in society. Earlier the Forefathers of the Lothas played a game known as *Khüivru Vanta*, this game was played between two teams, when the game was played the

villagers will come and engage themselves as witnesses enjoying the small recreation together. Though the modern youth may laugh at the outdated stone game, the society then was a happy society with unity representing a true community life, where the villagers get together and enjoy the small event together. But society now has changed and one can hardly find a group of youths that are having a quality time like those of our ancestors representing a true community spirit. Today when the boys gather, one can find them with the latest mobile phone playing the latest game that was once alien to our culture. It is an unending list when we talk about addictions, addiction to fashion, food, materialistic desire, etc are all some of the many problems that modern society is witnessing.

#### **5.6.4. Sex and Teenage Pregnancy**

The society during the forefather's time considered sex before marriage as taboo. We hardly hear of any of our forefathers committing a crime such as rape and molestation or unwanted pregnancies and abortion was something alien to the Lotha. But, with the change in time and the coming of the modern era, western cultures have deeply trenched our culture. A western notion of self-love and self-expression seems to be affecting our community as well. For the modern people, sex has become casual and it is the individual choice to decide for their own life, the Christian values seem to be just a record on a book. We often hear the news of crime, such as child abuse, molestation, rape, murder, abortion, etc happening even in our community. This problem is however widespread not only among the Nagas but also across India. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research as stated by J.N Manokaran *"17 percent of the 1.4 million teenage abortions that take place every year in the developing countries happen in India"* (2015: 130). It is sad to see that taking a life meant nothing in this generation. How often do we hear of stories that say "Phelaishe" meaning that someone has thrown it (abort/ abortion done) even in our Naga community? According to the National Family Health Survey 2019-2020, among the Nagas *"3.8% of women between 15-19 years of age were already mothers or pregnant in 2019-20"* (East Mojo. Dec. 31, 2020).

Manokaran gives the survey by India Today-AC Nielsen-Org-Marg that in India, *"Thirty-three percent of single women across urban India are open to having a sexual relationship with a person even if they are not in love with them. Sixteen percent felt that extra marital sex is all right. Forty-four percent of the women surveyed say that they have no problems ...46 percent say it is wrong. Twenty-eight percent think that it is alright for two people who are not married to live together"* (2015: 130-131). Though the statistics may be

different in Nagaland, many youths are willing to be open in their sex life without any restrictions. The Nagas seems to be carried away and blinded by modernization and western culture that morality means nothing to them as the values of their culture and Religion have been drained.

#### **5.6.5. Marriage and Divorce**

Marriage was a very sacred institution and for the Lotha man to marry the love of his life he had to work hard and earn the favor of the girl's parents by helping them in the field and building their houses, only then he will be able to marry their daughter. A Lotha man can opt either for love or arrange marriage but he has to accomplish many tasks and perform many rituals before he marries. As marriage was done in such a promising manner there was no room for divorce. It is rarely heard of any broken marriages or divorce unless on some rare occasion. Earlier, true dedication and loyalty were tested to see if the groom is actually fit and capable enough to sustain the family but now marriages have become casual so has divorce. Marriages are now more focused on the presentation rather than the vows, it is necessary to make the hall more presentable but one should also keep in mind that above all the vow made before god should not be taken lightly. The cost of a marriage has also reached a point in which the poor and the middle class often find themselves in a situation where they could not afford leading them to elope. Marriage should not only be based on the attraction between the partners, rather the relationship should be a God-driven one but in the modern context, this is a mere talk. One fails to understand the other and this often leads to unhealthy family life, extramarital affairs, and at last resulting in divorce and broken family.

#### **5.6.6. Virtual World**

With the progress in modernization, the digitalizing of the global world came at hand. The digital world or virtual world has become a new trend in our society and parents often led their young kids to handle the latest version of mobiles to keep them engaged from going outside or roaming around not realizing that they are isolating their children from the social real world. In today's situation, a person has more Facebook or Instagram friends than they have in real life. Their hobbies are inclined toward the virtual world like listening to music, playing online games, promoting themselves through social media, etc. It is true that social media have helped a lot in our day-to-day life like many are now using this platform to start



up a business or starting up a page for their vlog or blog and it is interesting to see that many youths are no longer confined in their comfort zone. However, it has also brought a lot of negative impacts, it has eliminated social contact and many youngsters have forgotten about all the things that should come first, they have forgotten their families, social interactions and rather spend their time in the virtual world, taking and chatting through WhatsApp or messengers. Jacob Singh Sundas mentions in an article published in Nagaland post that *“Virtual establishment of networks and relations has led to personality issues in many youngsters. They fear face to face conversation, and feel more comfortable when interacting through a screen...insomnia and insecurity are a result of excessive use of internet”* (Nagalandpost, July 7, 2019), he also mentions that the excessive and unbalanced usage of the internet has led to the change in lifestyle, suffering relationships, poor performance at their work, skipping churches, etc. and these are some of the many negative impacts that the young generation, as well as the elders, are facing. The community feeling is losing as people no longer gather in the evenings to chit-chat like our ancestors did. During our forefather’s time, the youths referred to as *“Yinga-Khingroi”* will come together and help each other in clearing their fields or carry firewood. They take turns in helping one another, but that spirit is rarely seen among the youths now. The virtual world has replaced the real world as technology are misused, any development or modern assets that are causing harm should be well examined before its actual implementation and the youngster must give a thought to this.

#### **5.6.7. Loss of Christian Values**

*“These days, many youths are asking the question: “Why go to church when I can watch it online?” ...there is an obvious lack of community when people aren’t present.”* Jacob Singh Sundas (Nagaland Post, July 6, 2019)

Though Christianity was not the primary religion the American Missionary brought the good news and it slowly grew to be a dominant religion in the Lotha area, and today majority of the Lothas are practicing Christian faith. When the society slowly developed into a modern one along with the western practices, it altered every aspect of the Lothas. The moral Christian values seem to be degrading one after another. Our ancestors could not witness the rise of a refined religion like Christianity but during their time they have religiously practiced all the rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices that were necessary and no one dared to go against any set of rules. However, the Lothas have changed a lot in their behavior,



with the influence of the modern free spirit, they no longer have a sense of fear in swearing using God's name or disobeying their elders, watching porn, having pre-marital sex, or extra-marital affairs, etc. People no longer care about neither their neighbors nor anyone preaching to them. With any kind of information that can be retrieved with just a second, people no longer need other people for help. Their friends, family, their church, place of worship, or any activities even to the extent of playing games have become online. The present Lotha society as well as the Nagas in general must once again retrospect the goodness that Christianity has brought in the community and must not pull away just for the pursuit of worldly pleasure. The good values will never come to decay even if the person passes away.

#### **5.6.8. Materialistic Society**

When modernization starts developing and progressing into any society, that particular society will automatically seek change. If not all, most people will want comfort in life they will want to have all the luxury in life that will make their life easier and comfortable. According to dictionary, materialistic means, *"excessively concerned with physical comforts or the acquisition of wealth and material possessions, rather than with spiritual, intellectual, or cultural values"* (Dictionary.com). Material development has helped the modern generation in achieving what our ancestors could not accomplish during their time. The school of life gives a proper explanation of good materialism *"Good materialism is the fruit of a search for a genuine and balanced place for material objects within the overall context of a good life."*

Examining the present context of the Lothas, in every family and individual life, materialism seems to be taking a huge ground on our lives. The families now want to own better cars than their neighbors, they want to build bigger buildings, the younger generation competes on acquiring the latest smart phones, etc. People now, especially the youths seek to find happiness through acquisition and displaying on social media like Instagram and Facebook and this has become their life cycle. Materialism forces us into comparison with the others who have more and the more we realize we are short of the other, the more we will want more as there is no stop to it. George Monboit on this matter mentions that the traits of materialism have affected both the rich and the poor and, *"is both socially destructive and self-destructive. It smashes the happiness and peace of mind of those who succumb to it. It's associated with anxiety, depression and broken relationship."*

Our ancestors never had most of the material things that we possess, yet through the stories shared by our elders, we learn that they had a happy and healthy community life. Can the younger generation reflect on those ages and reclaim what they are lacking? The youths should not let the material world dominate them and material possession should not be the yardstick of success. Let not the branded items define who you are but let the values in you determine who you are and the purpose of your calling.

#### **5.6.9. Loss of Culture**

The problems of modernization that are mentioned above are directly or indirectly acting towards the loss of our culture. Our ancestors had a true community spirit they did not know what modernism was, yet their legacy of having an order, peaceful, loving, and sharing community is well known all around the world. The British who came in contact with the Nagas were amazed by their hospitality and warmth. Not only the values but the cultural and traditional practices are degrading, the Folk songs that were sung then are less heard now, most youth now do not know the names of the various traditional attires that their ancestors used, the traditional art and crafts are slowly disappearing. To learn a folk dance for performing in a cultural event one has to go hunting for a person who knows how to perform. To some extend the Missionaries who came to our land did contribute to the loss of our culture but one should also be responsible for the change. Change is good, but it should not hinder our identity and our cultural representation.

#### **5.7. Reweaving the Lotha Society**

Shabe Pennells in his article post regarding the Canadian indigenous culture states the response of elderly people *“it took 400 years of abuse to bring us down to where we are. It will take at least that long for us to heal and rise back again.”* Though their contexts were different, our culture is not much different from the changes we have come across through the colonizers and the missionaries. We have witnessed a shift in many forms however, to get back on track and seriously reclaim our culture we must consider how to get back up. Many will have their own opinion but here are a few suggestions on how one can reclaim or reweave the losing culture.

##### **5.7.1. Folklore**

Folklore has been playing a very important role in keeping a record of our culture and traditions. The stories and the lore's that we hear from the elders contain cultural values and practices that one can always re-learn. The folk dance representing the unity, the folksong representing the emotions of the community, the art and crafts that represent the heroic actions of our ancestors, the cultural and traditional practices that represent the true community spirit, etc, all these can be re-claimed and re-learned to make our society better. The younger generations are still yet to fully explore the folklores and recognize their importance.

### **5.7.2. Festivals**

Festivals play a vital role in adding structures to our social life and it helps us connect with our past or history. All festivals be it cultural or religious are our culture in one or the other way, as they all serve in strengthening our sense of community. The Cultural festivals keep the people closer and united with each other. It is an important source to connect with our culture as festivals represent a true community spirit and this is one of the main occasions where everyone can represent their own culture by truly being involved and learning the best from it. For example, the Lotha festival i.e., *Tokhü Emong* a thanksgiving festival is celebrated not just for eating and drinking but it is times when relationships rebuild, grudges are forgiven, and replaced with love for one another, sharing, and merry-making. This festival itself teaches us a lot to rebuild ourselves as well as our community. It holds values and customs which the museums cannot adequately display.

### **5.7.3. Elderly people**

The Elderly people are not to be neglected while we look back at our past as they are the custodian of our culture and heritage. They know the past and it is through them that one can re-learn and record the past for reflection. Our generation has become such that, the youths are given more importance and the elderly people are regarded as a liability rather than a vital resource for reconstructing our society. Jordan Foltz in his article mentions the words of Nancy Lindell of CarePartners, "*Across the generations: Elders are a wealth of stories that connect us to the context and where we come from in ways that Google and Wikipedia can't touch*" (*MountainXpress.com*), and this is true to every society. The young

generation must learn to respect the elders and learn from them before their culture and history are lost completely.

#### **5.7.4. Church Leaders**

Since the Lothas are majority Christians, the religious leaders have a huge impact on the people. Being the spiritual leader of the majority of people, their words and actions will bring a huge impact on the people who are following the same religious path. If the Religious leaders could come up with a new innovative form of worshipping by blending the cultural and traditional values and practices with the teaching of Christ, many will learn to appreciate the culture at the same time cultivating moral values of being Christ-like. Also instead of adopting the western church building, if the churches could encourage the local artist in designing the churches in a traditional way, it will not only beautify the church but will provide a platform for the artist to display God's given talent. The Cathedral in Kohima is a representation of one such art that represents culture and religion at the same time as the building incorporates many elements of the Morung and the Naga houses. If cultural ideas were religionized and religious ideas become part of the culture from the beginning of the works of the American Missionaries then there would have been more appreciation for them rather than blaming them for some of the lost cultures.

### **5.8. Retention of Cultural Heritage**

*“The conservation of cultural heritage refers to the measures taken to extend the life of cultural heritage while strengthening transmission of its significant heritage messages and values”, (UNESCO institute of Statics 2009).*

The main aim of preserving culture is not to go back to the past or the primitive era and adopt their way of life but to maintain the physical and characteristics of a certain object so that its values are not lost with time. Cultural heritage can be of two aspects, tangible and intangible. One can always choose the best from their culture and preserve for the cultural sustainability of the society and there are many ways to retain the culture or preserve it from being replaced. Some ways to retain our cultural heritage are given below.

#### **5.8.1. Modern Technology and its Role**

The present society has become so modern that it is beyond unrecognizable, our society has never stopped changing. With the development in the digital world, there are many ways in preserving the cultural heritage that is on the verge of decay. Though the Naga are yet to or in the process of entering the most advanced technology like using virtual reality or 3D images in reconstructing the lost objects, we can still make use of the available resources. Not just preserving the ancient sites as this is just the tangible aspect, but we can also document and record the stories, the songs, the dances, etc for the upcoming generation who will also do their part in implementing the best available resources in their time in preserving the culture and heritage. Marking the sites and recording it virtually as well as visually, digitalizing libraries, documenting it, etc are some ways in which we can preserve our culture.

### **5.8.2. The Role of the Youth**

Any society gives more importance to the youth as they are the future of society. It is up to them whether to build a better society or destroy it. The youth have the potential to take their culture to a global level but to do that one has to accept their culture first before they get exposed to other cultures. They have the potential to pass their culture onto the next generation but for this to happen, they need the help of the elders to educate them better with their cultural knowledge. If the youths could spend more time with the elders instead of being confined to technology, they will learn a lot for the next generation to pick up. Hence, it is the role of the youth to preserve and keep the culture alive.

### **5.8.3. The Role of Educational Institutions**

Schools and educational institutions can bring a huge impact on the life of students. Most importantly, if all the schools could educate the young minds from an elementary level about their cultures by showing them pictures, organizing outdoor cultural group activities, teaching them the folklores and traditional practices than the society however modern it may become the knowledge of one's culture will never be lost. It is encouraging to see various institutions that are offering subjects to learn about their own culture and mother tongue. If the NBSE could give more importance to cultural education by implementing various courses in the curriculum, it will provide an opportunity for everyone to learn their cultural values. The knowledge once installed from an early age will never decay; it will impact the

individual as well as the group in one or another way. Vikas opines, *“Ignorance is the main cause of why the young people are diverting towards the western culture once, they would know that our own culture is so amazing they would prefer to explore the greatness of it”* ([www.Indianyouth.net](http://www.Indianyouth.net)).

### **5.8.3. The Role of Village Elders**

The village elders are regarded as the storekeeper of the tribe lore. As also stated by Dr. Lotsüro, *“Elders are special group of persons in the tradition-oriented society”* (2000:34). They know the past and the history; they know how society then and now is. If more elders are engaged in events and cultural programs and given the platform to share their stories, the modern generation will have a better closure of their past and can re-learn from them. The elders should not be neglected and made to retire rather they should be encouraged in keeping their minds alive as this will not only help them refresh their memories but also help the society in retaining the culture. Society must also give equal importance to the elders as much as they give to the younger generations. The youths are the future of today’s generation but the elders are the representation of the tribe identity. They know where we came from, who we were, and what we are becoming. The young generation has much to learn from them to have a clear understanding of our past as this will help them perform well in the future.

### **5.8.5. Role of the Artists**

There are many talented artists among the Nagas, we have a unique taste in art, music, our dances are unique, and our history is unique. Since the forefather’s time, we were well known for our unique art and crafts, if the craftsman and artist take inspiration from the past in recreating and re-enacting those skills then our culture will be richer. A cultural band, the “Tetso Sisters”, from Chakhesang tribe is well received on the global platform and they are indeed playing a huge role in representing the Nagas globally. There has been less representation so far from any of the Nagas in a global platform. One can also make use of modern technologies like social media where we can display our skills in promoting our culture.

#### **5.8.6. Role of the Individual**

As a responsible individual and a member of a particular tribe, one can always contribute with their little act in preserving the culture. It is not necessary to be great or to have a platform in showcasing our culture. Just by speaking our mother tongue correctly and teaching the younger generation how to speak one's dialect properly, we are preserving our culture. By practicing the good values that our ancestors taught us, by respecting elders, by knowing who we were once upon a time, etc. Mr. Eyingbemo Odyuo, states that for an individual to preserve our culture "first we must know our roots, know how to read and write in our mother tongue and also share the knowledge of our culture to the upcoming generation, one must also not forget our lineage and our family history and background. This we can practice in our day to day life"

## Work Cited

Alemchiba. M. *The art and Crafts of Nagaland*. Naga Institute of culture, Government of Nagaland. July 1968.

Dozo Phuveyi. *First Form of God-Man Consciousness Animism*. S.P Printers Kohima road, Dimapur. 2005

Jamir M Sashi. *The Impact of Modernization on the Nagas: Anthropological analysis and Theological Response. Breaking the Spell*. December 15, 2011.

Longchar A. Wati. *The Traditional Tribal Worldview and Modernity*. Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam. 1995

Lotüro Dr. Angelina. *The Nagas A Missionary Challenges*. Vendrame Institute Publications (Don Bosco Publication) Shillong, 2000.

Manokaran J.N. *Christ & New Generation Youth. Transformed Youth For Transforming the World*. GS Books, Secunderabad, Telengana. 2015

Mozhüi Zanao. *The Impact of Christianity on the Naga People*. Lotha Baptist Church, Dimapur. Nagaland. 2004.

Odyuo, Eyingbemo. *Re-locating the Mission of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) in the context of Clean Election Campaign (CEC) in select District of Nagaland: A Missiological Perspective*. March 2019.

Patton Yihamo Y. *Nkolo Eran Motsü*

Sema Boholi Z. *Pastoral Care and Counselling. Towards Cultural Fidelity Among Naga Youth*. Christian World Imprints. 2020.



## Webliography

Ambrocia Medolenuo. Why teenage pregnancy in Nagaland demands government's attention. Dec 31. 2021

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.Eastmojo.com/news/2020/12/31/why-teenage-pregnancy-in-nagaland-demands-governments-attention/> Accessed on July 11, 2021.

Baliwag Wilmer. Contemporary world's 8 types of globalization. PPT. <https://www.scribd.com/presentation/420958186/8-Types-of-Globalization> Accessed on July 1, 2021

Christianity transformed Naga society-Rio. Easter Mirror. Dec 22, 2018. <https://easternmirrornagaland.com/christianity-transformed-naga-society-rio/> Accessed on July 9, 2021.

Conservation of cultural heritage. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009. <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/conservation-cultural-heritage#slideoutmenu> Accessed on July 13, 2021

Cultural Globalization. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_globalization](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization) Accessed on July 1 2021

DBHSS Wokha initiates cultural activities. Nagaland Post. July 25, 2019 <https://www.nagalandpost.com/dbhss-wokha-initiates-cultural-activities/200514.html> Accessed on July 9 2021

Fingers Crossed. Morung Express. July 5, 2021. [www.morungexpress.com](http://www.morungexpress.com)

Foltz Jordan. The modern elder: Reclaiming what's sacred in life's later stages. Mountain Xpress. March 30, 2015. <https://mountainXpress.com/living/the-modern-elders-reclaiming-whats-sacred-in-lifes-later-stages/> Accessed on July 14, 2021

Globalization: Definition, Benefits, Effects, Examples- What is Globalization? <https://youmatter.world/en/definations-globalization-defination-benefits-effects-examples/> Accessed on July 1, 2021

Globalization. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization> Accessed on July 3, 2021

Imchen Yarangchang. Transition of Nagas from Hardworking Culture to a Dependent Economy. Easter Mirror. October 29, 2017. <https://easternmirrornagaland.com/transition-of-nagas-from-hardworking-culture-to-a-dependent-economy/> Accessed on July 8, 2021.

Is the Modern World too 'Materialistic'? The School of Life. [www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/is-the-modern-world-too-materialistic/](http://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/is-the-modern-world-too-materialistic/) Accessed on July 13, 2021

Jamir Amenla. Nagas and Modernization: Are we losing our identity? Dot talks. Nov. 6, 2015. [degreeofthoughtdottalks.in/nagas-and-modernisation-are-we-losing/](http://degreeofthoughtdottalks.in/nagas-and-modernisation-are-we-losing/)

Kense Atono Tsükrü. Substance Abuse in Nagaland: History and Journey to recovery. June 25, 2021 <https://www.morungexpress.com> Accessed on July 11, 2021

Krocha, Vishnu Rita. *Learn as many languages as you can, but never forget your own*. Feb 21, 2020. EastMojo <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.eastmojo.com/news/2020/02/21/learn-as-many-languages-as-you-can-but-never-forget--your-own/>  
Web. 27 march 2021

Luithui, Shimreichon. Naga: A People Struggling for Self-Determination. IWGIA archive. 2001 [www.iwgia.org](http://www.iwgia.org) Accessed on July 7, 2021

Materialistic. <https://www.dictionary.com>

Modernization. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernization\\_theory](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernization_theory) Accessed July 3, 2021.

Modernization. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/political-science-and-government/military-affairs-nonnaval/modernization#A> Accessed on July 3, 2021

Monboit George. Materialism: a system that eats us from the inside out. The Guardian. Dec 9,

2013. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/commentsfree/2013/dec/09/materialism-system-that-eats-us-from-inside-out> Accessed on July 13, 2021

Nagas. <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/nagas/> Accessed on July 5, 2021

Pennels Shane. Reclaiming lost Indigenous culture will require both societal change and forgiveness. March 22, 2021 [https://www.thestar.com/local-ancestor/opinion/columnists/2021/03/22/reclaiming-lost-indigenous-culture-will-require-both-societal-change-and-forgiveness.html?itm\\_source=parsely-api](https://www.thestar.com/local-ancestor/opinion/columnists/2021/03/22/reclaiming-lost-indigenous-culture-will-require-both-societal-change-and-forgiveness.html?itm_source=parsely-api) Accessed on July 13, 2021

Pooja. 3 Major factors which promotes Modernization. <https://www.politicalsciencenotes.com/articles/3-major-factors-which-promotes-modernization/366> Accessed on July 3, 2021

Sundas Jacon Singh. Post Modern The impact of the internet in Youths. Nagaland Post. July 6, 2019. <https://www.nagalandpost.com/the-impact-of-the-internet-in-youths/197529.html> Accessed on July 13, 2021

Thong, Tezenlo, "A Clash of Worldviews: The Impact of Modern Western Notion of Progress on Indigenous Naga Culture" (2009). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 1383. <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1383>

Vikas. The Role of the Youth in the Cultural Development of India. <http://www.indianyouth.net/the-role-of-the-youth-in-the-cultural-development-of-india/> Accessed on July 15, 2021.

## **Interview**

1. Mr. Eyingbemo Odyuo. A residence of Wokha Town.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The advancement of modernization among the Lothas started with the arrival of the British and the missionaries. They have opened a new horizon for the Lothas towards a broader outlook on the individual life as well as the society. As also mentioned by Zanao the meeting with the British and the Christian Missionaries have changed the world view of the Lothas. He further states that, *“the prohibition of head-hunting and the imposition of peace introduced the Lotha Naga to a new understanding of society. They learned that living in peace with one another is better than fighting as supported by the missionaries teaching of the Gospel”* (Mozhüi 2004: 1.6-107). With the advancement in science and technology and the intrusion of many different cultures, the Lotha society in the present scenario has taken a new form. Their contact with other cultures and modernity has affected their lifestyle, their dressing, their habits and conduct, etc. Time changed and people have changed and the society keeps on transforming but for a society to be sustainable in all aspect, the people need to look back and reflect on their past and redefine our culture without losing our authenticity.

The missionaries who came and worked among the Lothas contributed to the cultural loss of the Lothas as mentioned by Mozhüi, the missionaries ordered to destroy the house decoration with animal heads which the Lothas valued as a sign of prosperity, and the wood carving on the pillar of their houses were all ordered to be burned down, the weaving and dyeing of clothes were also discouraged, any Lothas who accept Christianity is prohibited to take part in any cultural events and heathen practices of the Lothas but modern way of dressing and conduct were encouraged. However, the Missionaries also impacted the Lothas in a positive way, they taught them the art of loving and living in peace and it is for the Lothas to take the best from both the teaching of the missionaries and from our forefathers.

As narrated by Yanphamo Humtsoe (eldest member of Wokha village), according to him the society that we are living now is better compared to their time when they were young as they could not get any access to what we are possess now. But the people have changed, no one care for the old as they are regarded as useless and unproductive but during their time, elders were feared and respected like God, as they feared that if they hurt or disregard the elders, the curse of the elders will befall upon them and so no one dared to go against them. The values of respect and regard for one another must be re-learned and re-installed if we want to have respectable and sustainable society. He further states that since we are blessed

with a comfortable life with all the luxuries of life, we must not forget to give thanks to God and utilize the best resources we have in upholding our traditions with honour and pride as the struggle of our ancestors were such that the modern generation will not want to endure.

The Lothas are blessed with a rich culture, the folklore stands as a great teacher for the modern generation, through the folk songs, dance, stories, and legacy that our forefathers have left for us, one can inherit the knowledge of our forefathers. The earlier society of the Lotha represent a true community with the feeling of respect and oneness, a sharing community with equality among the villagers where there was no favouritism based on clans or village. Many good values can be relearned if one reflects to their past and their ancestral stories. It is not only for the Lothas but for the Nagas as a whole that folklore plays a major part in the retention of one's culture as it hold memories from the smallest of incident to the greatest achievements of an individual or the community. One can always make the best use of folklore in refreshing our culture and this can be done with the help of elders who are considered as the custodian of the tribe lore. It is important in this generation to have knowledge of our folklore, our culture and our roots, as it will not only help for the sustainability of the community but having the knowledge of one's culture and tradition will also broaden our understanding of the world.

The Harmony Foundation in their article predicts that by the coming century nearly half of about 7,000 languages spoken on Earth will disappear, as the native tongues are abandoned in favour of English, Spanish, and Chinese.”

*“The culture of Yugur, an ethnic minority in northwest China, is on the verge of extinction. Out of 11,000 Yugur people, fewer than 100 (mostly seniors) maintain ethnic traditions while younger generations are summoned away by modern influences” (Harmony Foundation)*

The Nagas are no different from Yugur culture; we have hardly few people who really know the traditions, customs, practices and values of our culture. Y. Yihamo Patton in his foreword to the book “Nkolo Eran Motsu” also mentions concerning the diminishing of Lotha dialect among the younger generation of the Lothas as though people can speak there are only few who can read and write in Lotha. This is a concerning issue not only for the Lotha but for the rest of the Nagas as well, as the more our culture comes in contact with them, our originality is threatened. For example, the Korean Culture that is now a huge hype

among the young Nagas, their lifestyle, dressing, language and culture seem to be winning over our own culture.

Looking at the present scenario the society that was united with love and respect is now divided by the evils of tribalism and favouritism. It is one tribe against another, one village against another and these isms have entered into every sphere of our lives that is slowly eating up our society. From the time of our origin and migration, though it may be vague, the Nagas are believed to be brothers sharing similar route and story of venturing into the present land, they have faced the same fate under the Whites, faced all the struggles of wars and discrimination from the other Indians, even to this day. But when it comes to Nagaland, though we consider brothers and sisters, there is the tribe, village and the clan that divides us. We have marginalized our own people when we ourselves are marginalized under the Indian government. However, there is still hope for the Nagas to relearn and relocate the goodness as all is not lost.

It is encouraging to see that the modern people in the midst of all the challenges trying to revive their culture, the Tetso Sisters are an inspiration to all the young generation to uplift and preserve our own tradition. The Naga Manu Production, in their YouTube channel also organised the first Nagaland online Folktale story telling competition in the month of July 2021 with an aim to conserve and spread the message of preserving the traditional folklores being passed down from generation to generation. This is such a great initiative by the Naga Manu Production as nothing like this has been done before. This not only preserves and promotes the folklore but also unites all the Nagas under one platform where every individual Nagas could witness it even in the comfort of their home. It is also encouraging to see the positive response from all the tribes by taking part in this competition not only by narrating but also enacting the stories and producing it to the world. This gives the modern generation a hope to revive and relearn what has long been ignored. If more young Nagas could take part in promoting and preserving the traditions as well as the values than our present society will be a mirror for our future generation setting a good example in reflecting the goodness of our ancestors.

Our cultural identity provides an essence of who we are and they play an important role in the strengthening of the community. Hence, this is a call for all the young and the elders to come together and work as a team to reflect, relearn and re-construct the good values that our generation desperately need. One must however understand that while

maintaining the traditions and values of our society by following the footprints of our elders, forefathers, teachers and social obligations, we also need to bring modernity in our lives in order to progress in tune with the rest of the world.

*“Every culture is unique and divinely intended to distinguish a people just as every person is unique and is marked out by her or his own individuality. In the present days culture should serve a person in all dimensions. It should make a person more of a person” (Mozhüi, 2004: 94).*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

Aier Anungla. *Studies on Naga Oral Tradition. Vol 1, Memories and Telling of Origin Myth and Migration.* Department of Art and Culture Government of Nagaland. 2018

Alemchiba. M. *The art and Crafts of Nagaland.* Naga Institute of culture, Government of Nagaland. July 1968.

Clark, M. M. *A Corner in India.* Philadelphia American Baptist Publication Society. 1907. Reprinted in India by Christian Literature Centre, Panbazaar, Gauhati. Assam, India. 1978.

Dozo Phuveyi. *First Form of God-Man Consciousness Animism.* S.P Printers Kohima road, Dimapur. 2005

Ezung. S. Ekonthung. *Alcoholism Among Married Couples: Ministeral Challenges.* Printing Solution, Tsumang Colony, Wokha, Nagaland. 2014.

Jamir M Sashi. *The Impact of Modernization on the Nagas: Anthropological analysis and Theological Response. Breaking the Spell.* December 15, 2011.

Kikon. Z. L. *Lotha Jüli Tsolan Phyolan, Sükhying, Vanlan-Yilan to Motsü.* Popular Printing Press. N. L. Road. Dimapur, Nagaland.

K. R. Murry. *Kyong Motsüran Ekhürhyucho: Anthology of Lotha Prose, Part II.* Kyong Academy, Wokha Nagaland. 2006.

Longchar, A. Wati. *The Traditional Tribal Worldview and Modernity.* N, Limala Lkr, ETC, Jorhat Assam. 1995.

Lotsüro, Dr. Angelina. *The Nagas: A Missionary Challenges.* Vendrame Institute Publication, Shillong. 2000.

Mills, J.P. *The Lotha Nagas.* Directorate of Art and Culture, Government of Nagaland. 1980.

Mozhui, Zanao. *The Impact of Christianity on the Naga People.* Lotha Baptist Church, Dimapur. Nagaland. 2004.

Odyuo, Eyingbemo. *Re-Locating the Mission of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) in the conytext of Clean Election Campaign (CEC) in select District of Nagaland: A Missiologial Perspective.* Unpublished thesis, UTC. March 2019.



Patton Yihamo Y. *Nkolo Eran Motsü*

Putchong. Dissertation on *Cultural Identity and Moral Values in Khamniungan Naga Folk Literature*. Unpublished thesis, Nagaland University, Merima, Kohima. 2018

Sema, Z Boholi. *Pastoral care and Counselling: Towards Cultural Fidelity among the Naga Youths*. Christian World imprints, Christian Publishing and Books from India, C-3, Wazirpur Industrial Area, Delhi, 2020.

*Compendium of Different Naga Art Forms*. Department of Art and Culture. Government of Nagaland. April 2016

Ezung Mhabeni. "Traditional Religion of the Lotha Nagas and the impact of Christianity", Nagaland University. Kohima. 2014

Kikon, Myanbemo. *Cultural Change Among the Lothas Nagas: A case study of Wokha and Akuk village in Nagaland*. NEHU, Shillong, 2002.

### **Secondary Sources**

Carbo Richard, John Coakley, Abraham Lotha. *Retelling Naga Narratives: More Than Thrice-Told Tales*. Heritage Publishing House. 2014

Jangailu, Gangmei. *The Customary Laws and Practices of Ruangmei Kabu*. Manipur. Manipur University.

Juniator Tulus. Family stories Oral Tradition, memories of the past, and contemporary conflicts over land in Mentawai- Indonesia. *Wacana Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 15 (1): 180 Feb. 2013. CCBY-NC4.0

Longkumer Purlemla and Humayun Bokth. The Interface between Tradition and Modernity in Naga Society: A Critique from Gender Perspective. *JHE*, 72(1-3): 284-296 (2020). Print.

Luithui, Shimreichon. *Naga: A People Struggling for Self-Determination*. IWGIA archive. 2001 [www.iwgia.org](http://www.iwgia.org).

Manokaran J.N. *Christ & New Generation Youth*. Transformed Youth for Transforming the World. GS Books, Secunderabad, Telengana. 2015.

Murry, Chumbemo J and Dr. Vinod CV. "Traditional Political Institutions of Nagaland: A study of the Lotha Nagas". *IJR Vol.5, Issue 15*. May 2018. [edupediapublications.org/journals](http://edupediapublications.org/journals)

Nagaland G. K. Edited by Dr. N. Kashito Aye. ATICOS, Ltd. Publication. 2016. Print.

Report of the Task Force, Nagaland. Government of Nagaland, Office of the Agriculture Production Commissioner, Nagaland Kohima. June 20, 2015.

## **Webliography**

Ambrocia Medolenuo. Why teenage pregnancy in Nagaland demands government's attention. Dec 31. 2021 [www.google.com/amp/s/www.Eastmojo.com/news/2020/12/31/why-teenge-pregnancy-in-nagaland-demands-governments-attention/](http://www.google.com/amp/s/www.Eastmojo.com/news/2020/12/31/why-teenge-pregnancy-in-nagaland-demands-governments-attention/) Accessed on July 11, 2021.

Ambrocia Medolenuo. How Nagaland is working towards becoming an organic state. August 22, 2019. [www.google.com/amp/s/www.eastmojo.com/news/2019/08/22/how-nagaland-is-working-towards-becoming--an-organic-state/](http://www.google.com/amp/s/www.eastmojo.com/news/2019/08/22/how-nagaland-is-working-towards-becoming--an-organic-state/) Accessed on July 1, 2021.

Ancient Landmarks for Modern Times. More to Life Bible studies for Women. [www.moretolifetoday.net/ancient-landmarks-for-modern-times-/](http://www.moretolifetoday.net/ancient-landmarks-for-modern-times-/) Accessed on June 9, 2021.

Baliwag Wilmer. Contemporary world's 8 types of globalization. PPT. [www.scribd.com/presentation/420958186/8-Types-of-Globalization](http://www.scribd.com/presentation/420958186/8-Types-of-Globalization) Accessed on July 1, 2021

Bucket List: Perfect Matches are made in a Nagas Kitchen (Food, we are talking about food) [www.outlookindia.com/outlooktraveller/explore/amp/69086/what-makes-naga-food-so-interesting-and-challenging](http://www.outlookindia.com/outlooktraveller/explore/amp/69086/what-makes-naga-food-so-interesting-and-challenging) Accessed on June 10, 2021.

Christianity transformed Naga society-Rio. Easter Mirror. Dec 22, 2018. [easternmirrornagaland.com/christianity-transformed-naga-society-rio/](http://easternmirrornagaland.com/christianity-transformed-naga-society-rio/) Accessed on July 9, 2021.

Conservation of cultural heritage. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009. [uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/conservation-cultural-heritage#slideoutmenu](http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/conservation-cultural-heritage#slideoutmenu) Accessed on July 13, 2021

Cultural Globaliization. [en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_globalization](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_globalization) Accessed on July 1 2021

Culture Loss. Harmony Foundation. [harmonyfdn.ca/?page\\_id=863](http://harmonyfdn.ca/?page_id=863) Accessed on July16, 2021.

Culture Loss. Harmony Foundation. [https://harmonyfdn.ca/?page\\_id=863](https://harmonyfdn.ca/?page_id=863) Accessed on July 16, 2021.

DBHSS Wokha initiates cultural activities. Nagaland Post. July 25, 2019 [www.nagalandpost.com/dbhss-wokha-initiates-cultural-activities/200514.html](http://www.nagalandpost.com/dbhss-wokha-initiates-cultural-activities/200514.html) Accessed on July 9 2021

Did you know how the term “Naga” Ooriginated? Dec. 8, 2021. [thenortheasttoday.com/states/nagaland/did-you-know-how-the-term-naga-originated/cid2535088.htm](http://thenortheasttoday.com/states/nagaland/did-you-know-how-the-term-naga-originated/cid2535088.htm)

Festivals in Nagaland. [www.tourmyindia.com/states/nagaland/fairs-and-festivals.html](http://www.tourmyindia.com/states/nagaland/fairs-and-festivals.html) Accessed on June 7, 2021

Fingers Crossed. Morung Express. July 5, 2021. [www.morungexpress.com](http://www.morungexpress.com)

Foley, John Miles. “Oral tradition”. Encyclopedia Britannica, 6 Jan. 2019, [www.britannica.com/topic/oral-tradition](http://www.britannica.com/topic/oral-tradition). Accessed on 3 June 2021

Folklore. [www.vocabulary.com](http://www.vocabulary.com)

Folklore, academic discipline. Britannica. [www.britannica.com/topic/folklore-academic-discipline](http://www.britannica.com/topic/folklore-academic-discipline) Accessed on 27 May 2020

Folklore and Oral Traditions” by Karen Pharis. The 1st Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) Lesson Plan Competition [Pharisk@bellsouth.net](mailto:Pharisk@bellsouth.net) Accessed on 27 May 2021

Folklore. Wikitionary. [wiktionary/wiki/folklore](http://wiktionary/wiki/folklore)

Folk song. Dictionary.com. [www.dictionary.com/browse/folk-song](http://www.dictionary.com/browse/folk-song). Accessed on June 6, 2021

Folk song. Britannica.com. [www.britannica.com/art/folk-song](http://www.britannica.com/art/folk-song). Accessed on June 6, 2021

Foltz Jordan. The modern elder: Reclaiming what’s sacred in life’s later stages. Mountain Xpress. March 30, 2015. [mountainXpress.com/living/the-modern-elders-reclaiming-whats-sacred-in-lifes-later-stages/](http://mountainXpress.com/living/the-modern-elders-reclaiming-whats-sacred-in-lifes-later-stages/) Accessed on July 14, 2021

Globalization: Definition, Benefits, Effects, Examples- What is Globalization? [youmatter.world/en/definations-globalization-defination-benefits-effects-examples/](http://youmatter.world/en/definations-globalization-defination-benefits-effects-examples/) Accessed on July 1, 2021

Globalization. [en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization) Accessed on July 3, 2021

Haskar Nandita and Sebastian M Hongray. Naga resistance is not recent-its history goes back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Scrolls.in. Aug 19, 2019. [www.google.com/amp/s/amp.scroll.in/article/934287/naga-resistance-is-not-recent-its-history-goes-back-to-the-13th-century](http://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.scroll.in/article/934287/naga-resistance-is-not-recent-its-history-goes-back-to-the-13th-century)

Humtsoe, John. The Lothas- Migration. Nagaland Journal. [nagalandjournal.wordpress.com/2013/03/26/the-lothas-migration/comment-page-1/](http://nagalandjournal.wordpress.com/2013/03/26/the-lothas-migration/comment-page-1/) Accessed on 14 May 2021

Imchen Yarangchang. Transition of Nagas from Hardworking Culture to a Dependent Economy. Easter Mirror. October 29, 2017. [easternmirrornagaland.com/transition-of-nagas-from-hardworking-culture-to-a-dependent-economy/](http://easternmirrornagaland.com/transition-of-nagas-from-hardworking-culture-to-a-dependent-economy/) Accessed on July 8, 2021.

Is the Modern World too ‘Materialistic’? The School of Life. [www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/is-the-modern-world-too-materialistic/](http://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/is-the-modern-world-too-materialistic/) Accessed on July 13, 2021

Jamir Amenla. Nagas and Modernization: Are we losing our identity? Dot talks. Nov. 6, 2015. [degreeofthoughtdottalks.in/nagas-and-modernisation-are-we-losing/](http://degreeofthoughtdottalks.in/nagas-and-modernisation-are-we-losing/)

Kense Atono Tsükrü. Substance Abuse in Nagaland: History and Journey to recovery. June 25, 2021 [www.morungexpress.com](http://www.morungexpress.com) Accessed on July 11, 2021

Krocha, Vishnu Rita. *Learn as many languages as you can, but never forget your own.* Feb 21, 2020. EastMojo [www.google.com/amp/s/www.eastmojo.com/news/2020/02/21/learn-as-many-languages-as-you-can-but-never-forget--your-own-/](http://www.google.com/amp/s/www.eastmojo.com/news/2020/02/21/learn-as-many-languages-as-you-can-but-never-forget--your-own-/) Web. 27 march 2021

Kroll Woodrow. Do Not Remove the Ancient Landmarks. [dispensationalpublishing.com/do-not-remove-0the-ancient-landmarks/](http://dispensationalpublishing.com/do-not-remove-0the-ancient-landmarks/) Accessed on June 9, 2021

Land of Plenty. Wokha. District Administration Wokha. NIC, Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology. May 4, 2021. [wokha.nic.in/about-district/](http://wokha.nic.in/about-district/) Accessed on 15 May 2021

Learning about world cultures through folktales. Carol J. Fuhler, Pamela J. Farris, and Lynda Hatch. ([www.socilastudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/yl/1101/110104.html](http://www.socilastudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/yl/1101/110104.html)). Accessed on June 22, 2021.

Materialistic. [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

Modernization. [en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernization\\_theory](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernization_theory) Accessed July 3, 2021.

Modernization. [www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/political-science-and-government/military-affairs-nonnaval/modernization#A](http://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/political-science-and-government/military-affairs-nonnaval/modernization#A) Accessed on July 3, 2021

Monboit George. Materialism: a system that eats us from the inside out. The Guardian. Dec 9, 2013.

[www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/commentsfree/2013/dec/09/materialism-system-that-eats-us-from-inside-out](http://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/commentsfree/2013/dec/09/materialism-system-that-eats-us-from-inside-out) Accessed on July 13, 2021

Music of Nagaland. [en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music\\_of\\_Nagaland](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_of_Nagaland). Accessed on June 6, 2021

Naga Cuisine. [en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naga\\_cuisine](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naga_cuisine) Accessed on June 10, 2021.

Naga Folkdance and its values: An Oral version. Northeast Windows. 15 Feb. 2019, [www.thenortheastwindow.com/2019/02/naga-folkdance-values-oral-version/](http://www.thenortheastwindow.com/2019/02/naga-folkdance-values-oral-version/) Accessed on 3 May 2021

Nagaland. Webindia123. [www.webindia123.com/nagaland/people/naga\\_society2.htm](http://www.webindia123.com/nagaland/people/naga_society2.htm) Accessed on 17 May 2021.

Nagaland Post. Nagalim: Seminar on Preservation of Naga Oral Tradition. 23 Sept. 2011 [www.magalandpost.com](http://www.magalandpost.com)

Nagas. [minorityrights.org/minorities/nagas/](http://minorityrights.org/minorities/nagas/) Accessed on July 5, 2021

Ngullie Khumkothung N. The Meaning of “LOTHA”. Sept 11, 2014. [easternmirrornagaland.com/the-meaning-of-lotha/](http://easternmirrornagaland.com/the-meaning-of-lotha/)

Oral Tradition. [wikipedia.org.in](http://wikipedia.org.in) Accessed on 26 May 2021

Oral tradition and expressions including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage. Unesco. [ich.unesco.org/en/oral-traditions-and-expression-00053](http://ich.unesco.org/en/oral-traditions-and-expression-00053) Accessed on June 7, 2021

Oral Poetry. [en.m.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral\\_poetry](http://en.m.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_poetry) Accessed on May 3, 2021

Pennels Shane. Reclaiming lost Indigenous culture will require both societal change and forgiveness. March 22, 2011 [www.thestar.com/local-ancestor/opinion/columnists/2021/03/22/reclaiming-lost-indigenous-culture-will-require-](http://www.thestar.com/local-ancestor/opinion/columnists/2021/03/22/reclaiming-lost-indigenous-culture-will-require-)

[both-societal-change-and-forgiveness.html?itm\\_source=parsely-api](#) Accessed on July 13, 2021

Poetry 101: Learn About Poetry, Different Types of Poems, and Poetic Devices With Examples. MaasterClass staff. [www.masterclass.com/articles/poetry-101-learn-about-poetry-different-types-of-poems-and-poetic-devices-with-examples#what-is-poetry](http://www.masterclass.com/articles/poetry-101-learn-about-poetry-different-types-of-poems-and-poetic-devices-with-examples#what-is-poetry) Accessed on June 4, 2021

Pooja. 3 Major factors which promotes Modernization. [www.politicalsciencenotes.com/articles/3-major-factors-which-promotes-modernization/366](http://www.politicalsciencenotes.com/articles/3-major-factors-which-promotes-modernization/366) Accessed on July 3, 2021

Pou R. B Thohe. The Route of Nagas Migration. 19 April 2016 [www.epao.net](http://www.epao.net)

Significance of Lotha Tokhu Emong. Lotha Hoho Dimapur, Nagaland Post. 11.06.2020. [www.nagalandpost.com/significance-of-lotha-tokhu-emong/224301.html](http://www.nagalandpost.com/significance-of-lotha-tokhu-emong/224301.html) Accessed on 16 May 2021

Sangma Mhonyani. Origin of the Lotha Naga and their early Settlement. *IRJSS. Vol. 6 (4), 43-48, April 2017*

Sundas Jacon Singh. Post Modern The impact of the internet in Youths. Nagaland Post. July 6, 2019. [www.nagalandpost.com/the-impact-of-the-internet-in-youths/197529.html](http://www.nagalandpost.com/the-impact-of-the-internet-in-youths/197529.html) Accessed on July 13, 2021

The Lotha Tribe. NE Tribe. Travel Community. [www.ne.cab/tribe/lotha-tribe/](http://www.ne.cab/tribe/lotha-tribe/) Accessed on 14 May 2021

Thompson, Stith. "Folk literature". Encyclopedia Britannica, 2 May 2017, [www.britannica.com/art/folk-literature](http://www.britannica.com/art/folk-literature). Accessed on 22 June 2021.

Thong, Tezenlo, "A Clash of Worldviews: The Impact of Modern Western Notion of Progress on Indigenous Naga Culture" (2009). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 1383. [digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1383](http://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1383)

TLC to premiere celebrity Chef Gordon Ramsey's adventure in Northeast. Eastern Mirror. Jan 20, 2015. [Easternmirrornagaland.com](http://Easternmirrornagaland.com)

Traditional Chumpo in Wokha Village inaugurated. The Morung Express. 13 Feb. 2021.  
[www.morungexpress.com/traditional-chumpo-in-wokha-village-inagurated](http://www.morungexpress.com/traditional-chumpo-in-wokha-village-inagurated) Accessed on 17.  
May 2021.

Vikas. The Role of the Youth in the Cultural Development of India.  
[www.indianyouth.net/the-role-of-the-youth-in-the-cultural-development-of-india/](http://www.indianyouth.net/the-role-of-the-youth-in-the-cultural-development-of-india/) Accessed  
on July 15, 2021.

### **Interview**

Eyingbemo Odyuo, A resident of Wokha Town.

Ezamo Humtsoe. A Resident of Wokha Village, A Khel. 1 June 2021.

Nrisali Murry. A Resident of Wokha village, B Khel. (Wife of Yissomo Murry).

Yanphamo Humtsoe (100 yrs old), eldest member of wokha, 15 May 2021.

Yitssomo Murry. A resident of Wokha Village. B Khel. June 26, 2021