

To,

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National Academy of Music, Dance & Drama,
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Submission of Project Report on the Research topic;
*Tracing the Roots: Documenting the Myth of Origin of the Tenyimia Nagas of Manipur and
Nagaland*
File No. 28-6/ICH-Scheme/2015-16/78,
Under the sanctioned year of 2015-16

Sir,

I am submitting my 2nd and 3rd Appraisal of the above mention project in the form of hard print copies as well as a CD of the same. And if there be other necessity regarding this matter please do let me know. Please acknowledge the receipt of this mail. I am sending the same by email as well.

Thanking you in anticipation for a positive response.

Dated: Sept 05, 2019

Place: Shillong

Sincerely,

(Kholi Ashiho)

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Submission of the 3rd Appraisal on the Scheme for
“Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse
Cultural Traditions of India”

Topic: “Tracing the Roots: Documenting the Myth of
Origin of the Tenyimia Nagas of Manipur and Nagaland”

Title: “Tenyimia: Tracing the Roots”

Submitted to:
Sangeet Natak Akademi
(Drama / ICH)
(MoC, Govt. of India)
New Delhi - 110001

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Tenyimia: Tracing the Roots

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TENYIMIA: TRACING THE ROOTS

Introduction: Tenyimia

*Tenyimia*¹ is a nomenclature used to collectively denote the ten fraternal Naga communities namely the ten fraternal sub-communities viz; *Angami, Chakhesang, Inpui, Mao, Maram, Pochury, Poumai, Rengma, Thangal, and Zeliangrong* as an entity. Tenyimia literally means ‘the descendants of *Tenyi*’ in the local parlance. This group of the Nagas claims to have a common origin at a place known as *Makhrai*, today known as Makhel. The other factor is that this group of the *Tenyimia* Nagas also claims to have the same place of dispersal at Charanho village in the Mao land before they departed to different land that they inhabit today. *Tenyimia* people claim to have dispersed from the sacred Wild Pear tree at *Charanho*, today known as Shajouba, which is a kilometer away from Makhel. Today the *Tenyimia* people are scattered across the states of Manipur and Nagaland.

Creation myth or myth of origin plays an important role in the beliefs of communities, way of life, ritualistic practices, and social and cultural life. Creation myth conveys a community’s sense of its particular identity etc. and describes the original ordering of the universe. Therefore it is no different for the *Tenyimia* Nagas that they have their own version of Origin or what is popularly known as Creation myth. Myths are etiological in nature and so is the *Tenyimia* Origin myth. The cause and effect of nature are often allied to other factors for the *Tenyimia* people. I will dwell on the origin of the *Tenyimia* people’s lore, where they are said to have their place of origin in the *Memai*² land. The origin of the *Tenyimia* like the other *Naga*³ communities is shrouded in mystery. An oral narrative ascribes to the origin of the community to one *Dzülamosüro*⁴, a mystical woman.

The *Tenyimia* claim that they originated from *Makhraifü*⁵ is not unfounded. They claim that *Makhraifü* is the ancestral home of all the Nagas. The relics, megaliths, sacred stones, sacred banyan tree and pear tree, legends, folktales and folksongs are centered around this site. The lore about the origin and the subsequent dispersal to different parts of the land is sung to these days. The song also claims that a day will come when the *Tenyimia* brothers

¹ A conglomeration of ten fraternal Naga tribe, namely; *Angami, Chakhesang, Inpui, Mao, Maram, Pochury, Poumai, Rengma, Thangal, and Zeliangrong*

² *Memai* is another term for Mao

³ *Naga* is a Mongoloid race of fifty and more different communities sharing similar cultural traits, traditions, food habits, and ways of life coming, inhabiting the state of Nagaland, four hill districts of the state of Manipur, parts of the state of Assam, parts of the state of Arunachal Pradesh and the upper region of *Mynmmar*

⁴ *Dzülamosüro* is the mythological mother of the *Tenyimia* group of Nagas

⁵ *Makhraifü* is the legendary village in the Mao land, where the *Tenyimia* are believed to have first settled

will return again. The coming together had been foretold in the songs and it is happening. It is interesting to note that tribes and clans of different communities come and acknowledge their origin from Makhraifü and dispersal at *Chite bu Kaji*⁶ today.

Makhel

The *Makhrai Rabu*⁷ village nestled in the lap of nature situated on a small hill range, this village numbering around 250 household is shrouded in mysticism. There is an old feel of charm and a level of comfort and warmth receding into folklore and tradition of old days in the life of these inhabitants. The village is the treasure trove of orality of the Makhrai race. The myth of origin and the other lore of this place and its people living through generations in this village and the subsequent migration to different land are the lore living in oral form to these days. Surely the Supreme Being as they fondly called has endowed much on the village and there is no surprise when this population modestly pride themselves as inhabitants of the abode of the gods. It is a place of pride as folklore is churn out, out of this place and into the living memory of the people through word of mouth as oral literature of the people.

The oral literature of the community continues to survive in this place as there are tangible witnesses of material culture (tree and stones) to relate the lore of the people. In this land the tree and the stones speak; narrating a tale of their significance as to why or how they are there and of their importance. The oral literature continues to thrive through them and so long as they continue to exist in form, people will continue to tell tales and folklore of this place and its people will survive the test of time.

Marabu

The *Marabu* tree manifests signs of power and mysticism. This tree at no point of time in a cycle year withers its leaves in totality nor clad itself in leaves in totality. At any point of time of the year the tree is endowed with new shoots, matured leaves, withering leaves and dry twigs resembling the four seasons of the year on its four sides, and this cycle goes on and on year after year. So every visitor to this place is allured to this natural beautiful phenomenon. The people believed that if any branch of the tree or its leaves begins to wither abnormally it is a sure sign of impending danger in the form of natural or manmade calamity.

⁶ *Chite bu Kaji* is the Big Wild Pear tree from under which the *Tenyimia* brothers are said to have dispersed to their present place of settlements

⁷ Meaning the 'secluded abode of god' in the local language

It is also foretold that if the tree dies human race would get extinct from the face of the earth. It is recounted by old timers that an incident took place when a big branch of the *Marabu* facing towards the east unprecedentedly withered. As it turned out, the year the World War II reached this humble hamlet on March 31, 1944. The older generation recounts that though there was no life lost in the community many Japanese soldiers maybe sixty-seventy were killed and two-three British soldiers were killed in the neighboring village of Shajouba. This took place before the final Battle of Kohima. Horror, chaos and bloodshed reigned and violence of this nature was experience majorly for the first time in and around the vicinity of the village.



Fig.1. Marabu which sheltered Dziiliamosiiro

The *Marabu*⁸ tree stands tall in the village Makhrai adjacent to the village Chief's house. Local relates that it is under this tree that *Dziiliamosiiro*⁹ is said to have conceived and lived with her children. A folk tale of the community thus relates;

... a stream of mist/cloud from the south came and engulfed *Dziiliamosiiro* and as a result she conceived and bore three offspring, Ora¹⁰, Okhe¹¹ and Alechamaio¹². Thus, began the life of man as per the origin myth of the Tenyimia Nagas. The brothers lived here with their mother. A time came when they brothers have to settle their

⁸ Meaning the mystic or sacred banyan tree in the local language

⁹ The ancestress of the Makhrai race

¹⁰ God/spirit

¹¹ Tiger

¹² Man/human

place of living. And all of them wanted to live in the middle. And so their mother took them to *Chazelophi*, made a *Prodzü*¹³ and said that he who touches the *Prodzü* first will inherit the middle. As they competed, *Okhe* touch the *Prodzü* first. *Omai* objected saying he was not ready and so they should do it again. So, on the second try *Omai* shot the *Prodzü* with a catapult and claimed to have touched the *Prodzü* first. *Okhe* and *Ora* raised no objection and as agreed, *Imai* the youngest of the brothers inherited the middle place. The brothers also erected a stone each as a sign of their co-habitation at a place called *Chazelophi* where the stones stand to this day. *Omai* ask *Okhe* the eldest of the brothers to go to the jungle up north and live by fruits and also warned ‘if you could not wait for the fruits to ripen and if you make attempt on my domestic animals, you will lose your life at my hand’. *Ora* you will go south to the furlong, your habitat is where man cannot inhabit. Then *Ora* ask *Imai*, ‘will you eat only matured red chilies or even the green chilies?’ *Omai* replied, ‘I will eat both, red as well as green chilies.’ Thus *Ora* affirmed, ‘fine, then man shall die young as well as in old age’. Then *Ora* said to *Omai*, ‘in winter, when you see clouds formed at *Chibu* do not stray out of your habitation, for in those times I will take off with a partner. But during summer if you see cloud forming at *Chibu*, do not fear but prepare yourself and cultivate for if you do not do so your dear ones will become orphans and die of starvation.’ As arranged, *Okhe* headed for the northern jungles, *Ora* headed for the southern land and *Omai* stay put in the middle.

Pinomai Kosii Ttu



Fig. 2. The monolith of the three brothers; *Asiipfualapha*, *Ttuttwo* and *Khephio*

¹³ Plants tied together into a ball shape and erected on a pole as a sign of promise and ownership

The *Pinomai*¹⁴ *Kosii*¹⁵ *ttu* stands in the southern side of the Makhrai village. The sons of *Alechamaio* were *Asiipfualapha*¹⁶, the eldest of the brothers and who according to the folklore of the people is said to be the progenitor of the plain's man (non-tribal) race. *Ttuttowo*¹⁷ is the middle sibling and said to be the progenitor of the Meitei's race and *Khephio* the youngest of the brothers is the progenitor of the Naga race. In commemoration of the feasts the brothers erected a monolith to indicate their bond of brotherhood and in remembrance of the feast. On this monolith were engraved motifs of a bull with a rope around its neck, a rooster, a fish, a mithun, a shield, tiger's footprint and some script. This monolith lies in the heart of the Makhrai village to this day. It is believed that the elder brothers parted to different lands from this place. And the youngest brother *Alechamaio* stay put at this place to continue his life.

A tale relates about the separation of the brothers from Makhrai village and also to showcase their humanly prowess of life. The tale thus said;

As time went by and with the growing population of the village, migration became imminent. And so the brothers agreed to dine in each others' house for once on different occasions. *Asiipfualapha* being the eldest of the siblings invited his younger brothers to his house to dine together. He prepared chicken curry and served chicken curry to his brothers, but instead a live rooster appeared on the plate of each brother. The host graced the rooster with a sword and the rooster turned into cooked chicken dish and the brothers thus enjoyed their meal and the younger siblings returned to their respective homes. Next was the turn of *Ttuttowo*, the middle sibling. He invited his siblings to dine at his home. He prepared the best fish curry for the feast. No sooner did he serve his brothers the fish curry, a live fish began to waddle in their plates. To this the host graced the fish with a sword just like his elder brother did and thus the live fish turned into a cooked fish curry once again. The brothers enjoyed their meal and went off to their respective homes. Now it was the turn of *Khephio* the youngest of the brothers to host his brothers. He invited them to his home and for them to dine he

¹⁴ Local term for brothers

¹⁵ Local term for three

¹⁶ Also known as Kola-u

¹⁷ Also known as Mikri-u

prepared a *mithun*¹⁸ calf. While the curry was being cooked Khephio wanted to attend to nature's call and so, he advised his elder brothers not to meddle the curry pot till his return. But the elder brothers too curious to know what their brother was cooking put a hand each into the pot. To their horror and bewilderment their hand got clamped by a *khebi*¹⁹ inside the pot and despite their best effort they could not free their hand. When Khephio returned to his inglenook, to his amazement he saw his elder brothers trying to extricate their hands from the pot unsuccessfully. He took hold of an *Otochipi*²⁰ and blessed it and with that he freed his brothers' hands from the pot. They then sat down to feast upon the meat of the mithun calf and ate to their content.

The following song encapsulates the genesis of Tenyimia people's origin;

Makhrail Hrii Lo (Song of Makhrail Race)

Singer: Shri. N. Salew, Age: 92

Headman, Makhrail Village

Howa omai hriihe adai chino hriipra khelosazo?

Sazo omaihriihe Mokhru izhe-e Makhrail fii heno ohrii karai opekotsii hriipra.

Hriipra opai Dziiliamosiiro bu heno khe lehe Marabu kaji-e charasii phileno buhrii.

Buhrii lehe Makhrail fii heno orachina siiso anochina dushu.

Dushu kowuhe chara chorope chara-a morokalai maisii kulu ano chovosii moshuno chottho.

Chottho thu karai tino omai va no chottho.

Chottho sii thesii le oto va no chottho.

Chottho sii thesii le morii va no chottho.

Chottho sii thesii le sori pfupi va no chottho.

Chottho siitto-e no makaiko chottho doeno.

Aeno thesii Oraphazhu kono siilai.

Siilai Khubu Redzii sii-e chara Khubu bashi kayi sattho.

Otu Tupha vaki ochade ocha khrumai sattho.

Sattho sii thesii Shepfumai obathe obakha.

Bakha lehe Makhrail fii hino Ora china siiso-e no chinabi socholosii.

¹⁸ *Mithun (Bos Fontalis) considered to be the domesticated form of wild gaur and is mainly found in the North East of India*

¹⁹ *The local term for a beetle like insect having clamp forelegs*

²⁰ *A type of necklace, used only by the well to do people*

Tapra Shipfumai adzii fii heno otu Tupha pfuda.
Nopfūimaino ottho vottho Otu Tupha va siiki vuphu.
Hriikoda thu-e chuhu mozho kanhai nikhelu chosie.
Chosie siidu siino otu Tupha sii chovo tikochue.
Shipfumai adzii fii mai maihriiyi mozoji.
Zoji chiprazhu chiphe krai chane shu.
Zoshu chizhu sa chiphe krai chane shu.
Shipfumai adzii fii mai maihriiyi mozho pfukr-e pfuzho hrii.
Hrii ko-o sii kotulusii kashilusii zole okrai chane othu chane ko shukhe doeno.
Zonichikoe Shipfukrii ko aso thuesii.
Aesii opai Dziili siishu-e Chitebu phileno bu sijiliasii.
E-le hi rashibu-e chitebu-e chacho chusa oka chu sattho.
Sattho ochi kaka oji kaka-e mokhu tilesii Shepfumaisii.
Maisii kamaikono kutu luku kashilu kusii tale doeno.
Aeno kamai kono osiiluku chakhalu kusii tale doeno.
Aeno achi hudzii onghakayio masai kopfiio motu-iki kokrono selo,
Hudzii riimorolu ophe vepfiiano lehe inholi heno bu fiishu pfiata.
Aeta lehe rasibu-e Chitebu pfonako ko achaliasii.
Aesii lehe Makhrai pfu movono
Mane lia Orattholu-e Chitebu pfonakoko acha tano
Shakola pe zupe he-e Shipfuli ohrii karaile Makhrai hriimaisii.
Maisii osii lihe ottho-o tehezhi
Hezhi osii chibi ttho-o tete kayiti Makhrai hriimailo ORA YE TTHO.

Summary of the Song

The song is about the life of Makhrai race, the song begins with the question of where life on earth began. It is answered by saying that life on earth began at the *Mokhru izhe*²¹, where the forefathers led their life. The daily rituals that are carried out and the manifold blessings that came along with the rituals. The song also relates tales of the vicinity of Makhrai village, of *Tupha Chava*²² stone at Tobufii village and *Chite*²³ tree at Charanho village. The song also tells us about the teeming population of Makhrai race having seven

²¹ The name of a deep water gorge like sea

²² The charmed stone located at Tobufii

²³ The wild pear tree located at Charanho

hundred household in the east and another seven hundred household in the south. It also relates to the impending migration of the Makhrai race to other lands as the then settlement was getting crowded. It goes on to foretell that the Makhrai race will go on to occupy great lands and forest. But when a branch of the great *Chite* tree is broken then the Chieftain of the village proclaims a prohibition *genna*²⁴ and it is passed on to the *Tenyimia* race far and wide to observe. All this and the beautiful fruit bearing *Chite* tree belongs to the *Tenyimia* race.

Altogether this song is a very positive song narrating how life began at Makhrai and the positive side of life of the Makhrai race in general. Below is another song pertaining to the Makhrai race;

Makhrai Hrii Lo (Song of Makhrai Race)

Singer: Smt. S. Akha-a
Charanho Village

Hoale he makhrai dzii hino ohrii karie hrii pra
Hrii pra le he makhrai dzii hino ochi azhu ola azhu pepra
Pepra le he makhrai dzii hi pe mono shu pe mokhru peo da
Ada le he makhrai pfo movuo no chiji raso pie morii kono hubu-o
Hubu oshu li kohrii hi makhrai pfonta chithe toa pra
Epra omai the hi the adai sii no pepra
Pepra chi charabu hino chite bu hi pepra
Pepra ottho kopie azhu nho cho
Ocho rahu li kohrii no ru tto chimo mokhro toa no
Bu tto ko ote tto okhrole mo
Lemo chi chite ba tto zhino kama obi aso pra cho
Zhoa oshuli kohrii siikhe kopfo khruno
Khruno chi charanho mai chine bu hea no
Ano pomai kono chiphi chibula mala le tatia sii
Sii tto kalei maino chi charanhomai chini le hi ta bu hia eloa hrii
Ae hrii chi ahrahi chithuyi kayi ni kolei khai oda
Oda chi charanhomai chini moe ni mikhe ne le se
Asii chi charanhomai chi mikhe ni kochumai mala lomoe
Moe chi chitebu hi oji fula oji cha pftoe

²⁴ The rites for restrictive prohibition or observance by the people

Ato chi chetibu hi charabu chara enho tu shu
Tu shu cho zhoko nhii pule zhile nhii asii
Asii shu mahra pfoa atai lu zii piphre kole
Piphre konho ni adai mai chino ochi siisa
Piphre konho hi chiphri chipu no ochi sii beii
Siibeii kooti oshu mahra pфона mai sii asii amao
Siibeii ko-o te oshu emeo pфона lota tao luo mopei pfii le sii
Asii katei ko deli-e kaji ko mohro lu le tto peda pie kotsiimai sii

Summary of the song

The song encapsulates the life of the Makhrai race. It says that life first took root at Makhrai. The people spoke the same language, therefore do not belittle them but embolden them. The Chief of Makhrai has huddled the domestic animals and performed the divination²⁵. As life began at Makhrai everyone began their life eating the food of Makhrai. As man prospered it was prudent to move out of their settlement and at Charabu they found a place that is plentiful as the mystic *Chite* tree grew there. It hung filled with fruit and the birds ate them but to no avail to finish it. The wellbeing of the people multiplied and strengthened. Therefore, all the wooden platters²⁶, wants to have a glance of Charanho, some who left to learn new speech²⁷ are the ones who want to look at Charanho. So they are encouraged to look on a bright clear morning. But even if they don't see Charanho but still locate the smoke bellowing from Charanho, then they are still noteworthy. The people of *Chitebu* brag and say that their *Chite* place is the navel of the earth and a male earth. It is a mystic place planted with mystic stones. But they still want more and thus say; 'we will still occupy some more'. And warn the *Mahra*²⁸ man to tighten themselves for the Charanho people are stretching down, and when they stretch down from where would the thunder roar, they ask? And says that the thunder²⁹ will roar from their vicinity, and when the thunder roars the people in the neighbourhood would hear it. When the thunder roar Mao³⁰ people should cultivate for they will gather plenty, as the forefathers have foretold that even if they cultivate little they will gather much.

²⁵ The Oratuubu divination

²⁶ The Nagas

²⁷ Nagas who migrated to other land and started speaking different from the mother tongue they spoke at Makhraifii

²⁸ The Marams

²⁹ The people of Charanho are said to be guarded by the deity of 'thunder and storm'

³⁰ Mao and Memai are one and the same, here the writer uses it alternately

The song is of two parts; the first about the Makhrai village and second about the Charanho village and its ability and greatness. This is what the folksongs relate about the twin villages of Makhrai and Charanho and this is what the forefathers have foretold for the Mao people since the bygone past.

Chite Bu Kajii



Fig.3. Chitebu Kajii; it was at the foot of this tree the Tenyimia forefathers dispersed

The legend of this sacred Wild Pear tree relates that it is from beneath this tree that the *Tenyimia* Nagas believed to have dispersed to different land. The tree stands to this day as a witness to the grand dispersal and brotherhood of the *Tenyimia* Nagas. The tree is revered by the *Tenyimia* and to this day if a branch or any bearing of the tree is damaged even by natural calamity, a genna is observed by the *Tenyimia* brethren when they come to hear of it, which could be even after months. It was foretold that one day the Naga brothers would again come together under this tree to celebrate their life and be brothers like in the days of old. The Nagas regard this tree as a means to connect their relation with their forefathers and their fraternal descendants. The following folk song captures the essence of the *Tenyimia* and Naga people who once lived in the land of this great tree *Chite bu Kajii*;

Chara Chitebu (The Mystic Pear Tree)

Singer; Athisii Chisa, Age - 96

Charanho Village

Hoa lehe Makhrai dzüno ohrü karai hrüpra
 Hudzü ro moropfü ojü pfoki ko füşu-e shettho
 Shettho achi chitebu heko tobuli-e füşu lukochu
 Kochu lehe charabu heno onhubu sü pepra kotsümai sü chara kochu
 Kochu zho-o imemoso opemoso khrusü
 Khrusü soko nolu sabomai he
 Maihe tose pfülu noshu ttho li-eno
 Ano lehe chite phihino avubu shijü-e chore
 Chore achi chitebu he buphro mozhu bumü mozhu esü
 Esü lehe enuli chihe tamara te süchu
 Mara kotu sü dolaire-e solaire esü
 Masakhapfü süso okhapfu süso esü asole se
 Lese nina nizü nikhru kayi nikili-e ayi sü mojü
 Mojü ana azü akhru kayi nikili-e sü ni sü mojü
 Mojü lehe makhrai jü ikhro leheno vu shijü puletto
 Kanhie maila kohe pe azhuli süleho mo-u no Shipfumai sü
 Maisü lehe inuli chikhru motsü kosokhru vulohe ama
 Ama lehe inuli chikhru motsü kosokhru vulohe tili
 Tili idemai ko sü Shipfumai ko sü kakri tthu oda
 Kanhie maila kohe pe azhuli sü leho mo-u no Shipfumai na
 Maina achi Charanho no ochabu he pepra
 Pepra lehe ruhu li no asü eru koto-e ku
 Iku lehe Charanho khru lono asü-a rali-a talo
 Talo lehe chitephi ekhro le tino buhrü
 Buhrü lehräi shishu lula shishu-o okre yi-a hrü Shipfumai na

Chara Chitebu (The Mystic Pear Tree)

(Translated by; K. N. Mao)

Life first started at the place Makhrai
 Cocks weaved into the basket they went for new settlement onto the mountains
 That is how they truly came upon my Chitebu and settled
 Truly near the mystical Chite tree grew the iron tree and the forefathers were truly mystic
 Today the whole Memai and all the forefathers

Put on *Soko* and *Sabomai*
Put on the cowries shell and *Noshu*
And are gathered at the foot of the Chite tree
Yet the foot of the Chitebu was crowded and branched over
And so they have gone over to different villages
The separation has been too far and too long
Have become father and mother
You beget good loving children yet unknown to me
I beget good loving children yet unknown to you
Once again they will gather at the front plain of Makhrai
Will the Shipfumai children still speak the same language and understand each other
Have all the important leaders of all the villages gathered
And if all the important leaders of all the villages have come
Start discussing the forefathers' and Shipfumai' stories
Will the Shipfumai children still speak the same language and understand each other
At my Charanho grew the *Ochabu*
And all the birds gathered and ate
The youth of Charanho gathered and came in
And they came and settled at the foot of the Chite tree
Don't be hard-hearted or volatile but cooperate and live together children of Shipfumai.

(The Researcher held an interaction with some local knowledgeable elders on the Wild Pear tree and the *Tenyimia* Nagas and this is documented in the following pages)

Interaction Participants;

Smt. Athisii Chisa, Age – 96

Shri. Kaisii Adahrii, Age – 80

Shri. Pfokrehrii Heni, Age – 65

Shri. Neli Puni, Age – 67

The Interaction;

K. Adahrii: The then Chief Minister of Nagaland was on his way to *Khezakheno* for a meeting. He stopped by to take a look. So, his team was told that the branch or the fruits of the Chitebu Kajii is forbidden to be broken or to consume, but then he pluck a handful and started eating the fruit.

N. Puni: They might have assumed that eating the fruits might be something good and so they might be eating it.

K. Adahrii: Maybe, but from before they were told that there is restriction and anyone who comes across even a broken branch even take and hide it without letting others know and it is also never burnt and the fruits were never consumed by even kids, while narrating this he pluck the fruits and ate it.

Pf. Heni: What the Kahremai made I think is not right, because it was *Dziiliamosiiro* who gave birth to *Okhe*, *Ora* and *Omai*. And *Omai* begot *Asiio Alhpa*, *Tuutto-o* and *Khephio*. This is how the genesis of the Makhrai race or Naga race began. And the term *Shipfuli Kohrii* or Naga race was handed down to us from our forefathers. And the terms for different Naga tribe as existed in the past are known differently in the present time. In the past the different tribes of *Shipfuli Kohrii* or Naga race are known as; *Shipfuli Kohrii* (Naga race), *Osihai Kotomai* (Konyak), *Pijimai* (Ao), *Lohremai* (Lotha), *Lozhemai* (Rengma), *Esii Kozho* (Chakeshang), *Shinamai* (Angami), *Mozhumai* (Sema), *Ozhemai/Pikohumai* (Tangkhum), *Epu Chizhumai* (Zeliang), *Mahramai* (Maram), *Oshumai/ Kapemaitta/Tolupemaitta* (Poumai), *Memai* (Mao).

Summary

The discussion basically centered on the sacredness of the big *Chite* tree. An incident involving the chief minister of Nagaland, who himself belongs to the *Angami* community one of the fraternal tribe of Tenyimia was thus narrated; the Chief Minister was on his way to *Khezakheno* visited the *Chitebu* tree. He and his team were informed that the branch or the fruits of the *Chitebu* is forbidden to be broken or consume, but then he pluck a handful and eat the fruit. This was in disregard to the tradition and observance of the people. They continue to emphasize on the sacred tradition by saying that there is restriction and anyone who comes across a broken branch even take and hide it without letting others know and it is also never burnt and the fruits were never consumed even by kids.

Secondly, the discussion revolves around the *Shipfulihrii* or Naga race. That is, they disagree with the classification made by the people of Kahremai on the *Shipfuli* or Naga race, downward of *Khephio* the progenitor of the Naga race. And cite how the genesis of the *Shipfuli* or Naga race began. And the term *Shipfuli* or Naga race was handed down by the

forefathers. The matter was deliberated and the terms for different Naga tribe as existed in the past are labeled against what is known differently in the present time. And this is how the names or terms of the *Shipfuli* or Naga race are known then and now as per the Memai oral narrative as handed down to them by their forefathers;

<u>Past</u>	<u>Present</u>
<i>Shifpuli Kohrii</i>	Naga race
Osiihai Kotomai	Konyak
Pijimai	Ao
Lohremai	Lotha
Lozhemai	Rengma
Esii Kozho	Chakeshang
Shinamai	Angami
Mozhumai	Sema
Ozhemai / Pikohumai	Tangkhul
Epu Chizhumai	Zeliang
Mahramai	Maram
Oshumai/Kapemaitta/Tolupemaitta	Poumai
Memai	Mao

Tenyimia people how are they called so, the reason for calling them so or clubbing them together is because they practice and observed and have the same kind of food habits and the same kind of rites and rituals. And they are ten fraternal brotherhoods as of today. 1. *Esii Kozhu* (Chakeshang), 2. *Shinamai* (Angami) 3. *Lozhemai* (Rengma) 4. *Poumai* (Tolupemaitta- Kapemaitta) 5. *Mahramai* (Maram) 6. *Thangalmai* (Thangal) 7. *Inpuimai* (Inpui) 8. *Lohriimai* (Lotha) 9. *Pu Chizhumai* (Zeliangrong) 10. *Maimai* (Mao).

Therefore there is a way of clubbing together communities whose lifestyle, language, food habits, mannerism, rites and rituals and the likes are similar. Thus terms are coined like *mikri-kola*, *pihu-kosa*, *shato-piji*, *lohriie-lozhi*, *esii-kozhoo*, *shina-mozho*, *epu-chizhu*, *oshu-mahra ye emekhru- ekhrakhru* in the local language. This is why the *Tenyimia* group of people is termed as one and from the same race.

Hen: Among the *shepfuli* race *Memai* is the youngest, therefore *Shepfuo Chorow (Memai)* is the forefather of the *Memai*. *Shepfuo Chorow* had two wives, the first wife was *Osiipfii-Chayimoa* who begot *Momiio* and *Momiio* children are *Pfunio*, *Robviichoro-o* and *Pfushetatu*. *Shepfuo Chorow*'s second wife's name was *Shikhapfii-Pfuzia* and from her he begot *Khrasi (Tabio)*, *Ahrow (Makhraimai)* and *Kade (Tobumai)*. That is the tracing of the *Memai* race.

Summary

The discussants go on to discuss on the terminology of the different community and how different communities are clubbed. The logic for clubbing them together is because of the similarities in the facial features and lifestyles. The discussion also veered towards the age of the siblings of the Naga race, and how many people of different communities yearn to have a glance of the village Charanho for it was at this place that their forefathers left for new settlements. The discussion goes on to trace the genealogy of the different Naga communities and their present day settlements and claim that today there are 16 Naga communities in Nagaland, 12 in Manipur, 1 in Assam, 27 in Myanmar and 21 in Arunachal.

All the Naga communities including the *Tenyimia* are descendants of the *Shipfuli* race and it is supported by folk tales and folk songs of the communities. The songs of the *Memai* claims that the forefathers of the Naga race deliberated and dispersed from under the *Chite* tree. It recounts that their descendants will give birth to love and dear ones but the days of departure has been far too long therefore will they know each other, or hear each other meaning speak the same language. The song ends in a positive but cautious note, leaving a message to the present generation and the message says; 'The days of departure is far too long therefore be patient with each other and maintain the brotherhood for we were all brothers in the long bygone past'.

Conclusion

The Naga race deliberated at the foot of the *Chite* tree and foretold that the *Chite* tree will show signs in the future. Even if they failed to meet in the future if they come to know the signs from the *Chite* tree it would be good enough. If the *Chite* tree shows signs of better growth on any side be it north, south, east or west the people in that direction will prosper and be well-off. But if a part of the *Chite* tree withers or does not grow well or wither or go barren, the people inhabiting the land in the direction of the *Chite* tree will face hardship and

the population will face difficulties. So the *Chite* tree is held with utmost respect and reverence, and if any branch break the message is quickly passed on to the Tenyimia brothers and other Naga race. And when any Naga or Tenyimia people come to know that the other person is a descendant of the generation of the Naga race who dispersed from under the *Chite* tree, the people claim them as their own. They dileberated at the foot of the *Chite* tree and dispersed to find new land for settlements and upon finding a new place they returned and informed the chief of Makhrai village, weaved cocks into baskets and thereafter went off to settle in the new lands. Even today the *Chite* tree stand tall and stand as a living witness to the gathering and dispersal of the *Shipfuli* race.

The go on to discuss on the term *Charanho* and *Chitebumai*. The village *Charanho*, the name is derived from a mystic woman named Charani who happens to be from this village. She was gifted with such power that at times she would be seen as a young maiden and at other times as an old woman. It is said that she ascended into the sky after her marriage. The place from where she is said to have ascended into the sky still stand preserved at *Charanho* village to this day. Whereas the name *Chitebumai* is derived from the *Chite* tree that stand tall in the upper ridge of the village.

Finally the discussion concluded as to how the relationship of the Tenyimia came into and what are the principles that led into this grouping. The principles on which the Tenyimia fraternity came about is by acknowledging the group that shared the same place of origin and dispersal, following the same kind of Rites and Rituals, sharing the same kind of Food habits and abstinences and not eating the raw-roasted food. These are some of the principles upon which the Tenyimia grouping is traced and established. Our forefathers said that if we do not observe proper food habits then famine would strike on those people, therefore it was primary for the Tenyimia people in matters of food habit. For the kind of food that you eat and how you prepare and eat are of utmost importance to the Tenyimia people. For it is in the food habit that people are largely identified as a group belonging to the same race. This is how Tenyimia group of people too came into being.

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