

Chapter-3

Themes in Angami Folksongs : Significant Traits

3.1 Folksongs of the Angamis

Our bodies are our libraries- fully referenced in memory, an endless resource, a giant database of stories. Some we lived, some were passed on, some dreamt, some forgotten, some we are unaware of, dormant, awaiting the key that will release them. (Mojica 97)



Fig 3.1 The Land of Festivals District Kohima, *Folksong (Trio) performing by Angami Ladies at Hornbill Festival. 02 May. 2018.*

In any oral tradition, the human voice and memory play an important role. Music is of paramount importance in transferring or transmitting knowledge and values. It also brings the community together by holding important celebrations or events. The Ao tribe trace their songs to a tree known as *Ken dong* (song tree). The story goes that a young girl fell in love with a boy whom she had never seen in daylight. One day when she was washing her face at

the well, a tree bent down and started to sing to her. She was shocked to see the body-cloth she had given to the boy wrapped around the tree. When she narrated the story to her parents, they told her that her lover was a spirit and proceeded to cut down the tree. When the tree fell, its branches fell towards the Ao areas as it was facing that side. Therefore, the Aos are said to be good at composing songs, especially in the Langpanglong area. (Kire 4)

The observation holds well in respect of the oral tradition of the Angami's and their love for music with the practice of singing songs for every occasion no matter how ordinary the event might seem. They hold the songs in high esteem and enjoy singing it meaningfully. Every Naga tribe have some similarities in their way of singing a folksong. Most of the songs are never sung in full volume except for the main processional song. There are different kinds of folksongs for different occasions. In fact the Angamis enjoy singing so much that every work or event is accompanied by a folksong. From luring a child to sleep to pounding rice activity, there is no silence while working. The different kinds of folksongs sung by the Angamis are *Nuo kepfhü peze kecü pfhe* (lullaby), *Ciethupfhe* (rice pounding song), *Thupfheü* (cowherd song), *Tsanüü* (foraging song), cotton spinning song, *tati* song, *Lida* (sitting songs), *weü-o* (group song), *Rühe pfhe* (love ballad), *Khuse pfhe* (rice plantation song), *Ü* (conversation song) etc. Each song suits its own purposes and sometimes an individual or a group is barred from singing specific songs in the village since it is considered to be a taboo. For example, foraging songs are not allowed to be sung in villages as it is meant to be sung in the forest only. The names of the songs differ according to each village though they basically stand for the same thing. Most of the folksongs are sung by the youth and the old people in the village. The children recite short verses like nursery rhymes with less or no meaning at all.

All these folksongs are sung in mild or medium volume except for *Thupfheü*, *Tsanüü* and *Weü-o*. These three folksongs are sung in high volume and in a group. The songs sung in

thehuba or *thebanu tsali* are relatively low in volume. The Tenyimia Angamis speaks in five phonetic or tone and in the same way, the folksongs also have five distinct notes or parts. An example can be used here as in the word *Pe*,

Pe-pera pe (shoot a bird)

Pe – pe (shiver from cold)

Pe – pe (bridge)

Pe- pe (fat)

Pe – pe (incline)

These five words have the same phonetic in both speech and song. The same tone is used to sing songs. The five tones in folksongs are *Puonuo* (Soprano), *Thepfülairei* (Alto), *Thenularei* (Tenor), *Kege* (Bass 1), *Puokrü* (Bass 2). These five tones are incorporated into the art of singing a folksong and it is sung in harmony. The soprano and alto are female parts whereas the rest of the parts are taken by male. All the Tenyimia songs follow *so, hi, mo, zo, so, no, di, yo, le* scales and progression and based on this, most folksongs follow the pattern of maintaining nine syllables per line. However, there are some songs which do not follow any strict pattern of using the nine syllables in case of a composer composing his own story into a song. These folksongs were preserved and sung by the older generation but if we take a look at the reality of today's Angami society, there is barely anyone left to sing or remember the songs which were sung in the past. The effect of modernisation can clearly be seen in the way the society is losing much of its older culture and tradition, the dresses, folksongs and folktales of their forefathers. These folksongs are revived only during rare occasions or festivals. The issue of preservation of these songs and culture with their texts is not finding consideration in the modern context as songs are rarely sung. The modern generation has given more importance to western cultures in terms of music and lifestyle which poses a threat of overlapping the rich traditions of the community including folk music.

There are different folksongs for different occasions and from the data which have been collected from people belonging to different villages. An attempt has been made to bring these songs under specific title explaining the theme as well as the significance of the songs.

3.2 Categories of folksongs

3.2.1 *Lida* : This song is sung in sitting or gathering places during leisure time. It is mostly the youth gathered inside a *thehuba* who enjoys singing folksong of this kind.

Uramiawe sono rü kegi

Reipie liesho hiewe bie phekhwe

A hi chiüpie thehuluoria nu

Aneiü no mia ketsu sienu

Puo khwe teikhru hiedi pfü mekhe

Cüi pfütsu lu rüdi petse

Hatsie rüluo chiüshü aneiü

(by Avi Meyase and Chasie Hiemu)

(Translation)

Near-by Battle

As the village is warring with neighbours

Where could I go but to stay and guard the village

I sat upon the community fire-place enjoying my drink

And there goes my love

Wearily carrying her wine-pot, swirl her shawl above her head

Went beyond the giant river

Return safe, fair beloved

(Translated by Keviuchüto Kevin)

The above song is sung by men in any numbers. It can be sung in place of gatherings or *thehuba*.

This song was recorded from Avi Meyase and Chatuo Hiemu from Khonoma village. Explaining on the theme of the song, they narrated that the song was sung by a warrior for the woman he loves. The song begins with the man narrating about those days when waging war with another village was common before the advent of Christianity. It was a time when the brave warriors go around guarding the village. They guard it wearing their entire traditional ornaments holding a cup of home-made brew. The man in the song being a warrior is performing his duty of guarding the village. As he stood guarding, keeping an eye out for the approach or any movement from the enemies, he notices his beloved. The woman he loves was making her way out of the village to go to the field. When he sees her moving out of the village, it worried him because the village was in the middle of a war and his protection over her could extend only up to the boundary of the village. Seeing that she was walking out of the village made him question about her safety as his protection could not exceed beyond the village gate.

This song emphasizes on the duty of a warrior who was assigned to guard the village during troubled times. He prays for the safety of the woman he loves because headhunting was common during olden days and not even the head of a woman was spared. According to

tradition, the more head a warrior has, the more powerful he is and it is also a way to gain high status in the society. The warrior holds a wooden cup filled with rice beer and stands in the community fire place guarding the village. He watches standing at the top of the village as the woman makes her way out of the village gate and towards the giant river.

The village gate is no ordinary gate and much importance is given to putting up a gate because it ensures the safety of a village. Ceremonies are conducted when a new village gate is put up and no ordinary tree is used for making the village gate. It is often believed or practiced among the *Tenyimia* Angamis that the biggest tree in the jungle is chosen for carving the village gate. Before felling the tree, dreams are given importance when it comes to deciding about the right tree. If the dream following the choosing of the tree is bad, it is considered to be a bad omen and another tree is chosen. If the dream is a good one, it is considered to be a good omen and the particular tree is used for making a village gate.

The next song was recorded from Kiruphema village sung by Chalie.

Pfesi we pu Luzhanu wakro

Khriesanoma Thu keru vorü

Tekhu shünu Walie hu dinu

Si-u hiena Ma kezü therü

Shadu marhi Kezi rütsa nu

Zole tari Zezinyüto-i

(By Neiyiezo Ngunyüto)

(Translation)

The blossom of Fragrant Aurantiacum brightens the valley,

The young plucked and adorn themselves with it.

When paddy plantation is done;

You fade away while nature thrive

bravely fought through the dark forest,

Yet, when plucked, you wither away quickly.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

The above song talks about the flower Aurantiacum which is found in abundance in Nagaland. It is also known as Orange Ginger, Butterfly Ginger, Ginger Lily, Orange Bottlebrush Ginger and produces fragrant, bright orange blooms and dark green foliage with red-streaked stems.

This flower is used by men for decorating their ears. This song makes an indirect reference to a man and woman escaping sitting at the *thehuba* or gathering place to meet somewhere else with no other people around. Like the fragrant Aurantiacum flower being plucked from its tree, these two people are also lost and are expected to wither away like the flower which withers and die as soon as it is plucked. The feeling of desolation overshadowed the feeling of togetherness experienced by these two individuals. They have a feeling or a blur foresight that their path is only going to lead them towards emptiness.

This is a group song sung in places of gathering and during celebrations. It is usually sung by young people in the village. There are two parts in the song comprising of the high and low pitch. The song lays emphasis on the importance of *thehuba* or gathering place, which is a dormitory for young people to gather and learn valuable traditional knowledge.

The two lovers in the song found no happiness even though they are together because they have strayed away from the *thehuba* which forms the most important institution for any Naga society and not just the Angami tribe.

Garephejü terhüso üpfü

Sariüino Khwüinoria kevo

A pfü pelhu anie Pukahie

Pedo huro kethutuo caiü

Norü pedo a rü n thukhono

Japfüphiki nie kewheko ze

Terho mi chü jüü gei keza

A whuo rü mu kuoliesho dinu

Pecurü mu perie tsüyie ho. (By Avi Meyase and Chasie Hiemu)

(Translation)

Terhüso sister of Gareiphe land

Sariüino journey to Khonoma village

Pelhu my (foster) father, Pukahie my uncle

If we are both oxen, we dashes to clash

Thou are oxen I am a calf

Along with your Japfü range alliances

Multitudes lights rain in the mounts

Tis a war that I can never win

The enemy onslaught I doth surrendered.

(Translated by Keviuchiuto)

Back in the olden days when waging war against another village and raiding was common, there is a village named ‘*Gareiphe*’ which is located near ToupHEMA village. The song sings about Sariüno, the sister of the strongest warrior in the village who was captured and brought to Khonoma village. After capturing her and bringing her to the village, they made her sing. She calls out the name of two village leaders ‘*Pelhu*’ and ‘*Pukahie*’ whose names are only called out during war times. She addresses herself as a calf standing in front of a buffalo. Now that she is taken captive, she admits defeat for she knows the useless attempt to fight them. She compares herself to a calf before oxen. She surrenders knowing the power of her opponent. This song can be sung by both men and women in any numbers in places of gathering.

Folksongs are not only sung to celebrate certain festivals but they are also used as a means to preserve stories of old. There are poetries and songs that narrate the story of Tso-u and Terhopfudiu, Mehoviu and Morusa, Sopfunuo etc., likewise the other Naga community also adapt folktale into folksongs which indirectly helps in the preservation of the story as well as the theme presented in it.

An example of a Sema Naga folktale woven into a folksong goes,

Wolo wolono

Being an orphan, being an orphan,

Hot rice served to real son, cold rice being my share.

Hot tea served to a real son,

Cold tea being my share

What to do

Being an orphan, being an orphan,

I do countless work,

But it is nothing in the eyes of my masster- with my grief-

Crying on my father's grave.

Hey! My father, hey! My father,

Hey! Mummy, where are you?

Hey mummy, where are you?

It is the living worry of an orphan

Zulo Zulono (Jadav, 114-115)

Khriesariü-ü uko de ki ha

Miapo Miazo kechü-u monyü

A thi A nei keshü rei khriele

Thie ha toi nhicumo keze

Zo bamo-ü cha utse nu vo

Tiehu tuo mu u ro le kro mia-o

(By Rūda)

(Translation)

Youth in their Prime

Instead of being a mother or a father,

To be called *aunts* ' and *uncles* ' is regrettable.

Like today, enjoys life as innocent children,

Yet, all shall pursue different paths.

I lament, my peers.

(Translated by Keviuchütuo)

The above song sings about the happy, lively and youthful days. The song explores the mind of young people when they dread over the thought of being called or addressed as somebody's father or somebody's mother. To even imagine being called as aunty or uncle is something sad because life is most happy at its youth. The last three lines of the song expresses sorrow over how everyone's path will separate one day and what will be left behind are memories and regrets.

Tei Kijū nie rūdi kemo thi

Themia huo lhou tuo tie yieru

Rükra u rie rei lhou la kesa la lie

Lho mu khri pfü.

(By Lt. Zaseriezo and Kevichüno Mor)

(Translation)

Till Heaven and Earth change

Some people will live on

The thought makes us envious, but to live anew

Alas, is impossible.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

This song can be sung by both men and women and it talks about death. The tone of the song is melancholy and it says that regret does not bring a dead person back to life. Until the sky and earth disappears, people will continue to keep living, some dying while some living still. The song was recorded from Lt. Zaseriezo Mor who passed away of cancer in the year 2019 and his wife Kevichüno Mor.

3.2.2 *Rühe Pfhe* (love ballad)

Rühe pfhe or Love ballad are songs that usually narrates about the story of lovers or the story of a person meeting with tragic fate. It is usually sung in groups but is not in a very high pitch.

A neiü se dzü kekru lie ti

Kwülie sho di puo bi cha a tsü

Kethie kiwe shülie mvü dinu

Theri shü le dzü meluo kethu

Terhomia dzü rülhe zo a tsü

A tsüi tie a-i terhono

Cha pesotsoe thepe chü tsur

Mechü phouwe khalie sho voü

Tsünyü pienie kha kela zhü si

Weü tsatie tekwi kezolie luolie

Avo cü-u kezolie molie. (By Avi Meyase and Chasie Hiemu)

(Translation)

Cultivate paddy field by the riverside with my beloved

Unable to cross, stretched her hand for aid

Couldn't save her then,

Strike the rivers' heart with the spears' tip

Spirit calm'd the river for me;

As I am also a child of the Spirit.

Then, from the northern side, came an epidemic,

People's life couldn't be saved,

Nevertheless, desire to save my beloved's life again.

Even forest monkeys enjoys fruits and have relations

But, we couldn't be together in this life.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

There is no special occasion for this song as it can be sung anytime when young people meets at gathering places or *thehuba*. There are two parts to the song. The first part sings out the lyrics whereas the second part hums an “*Oui*” to add melody.

In the opening of the song, we get to understand that the man owns a paddy field beside a river. The first line of the song itself exposes the agrarian life of the Angami Nagas. The man in the song is having a great time working in the paddy field with his lover. But unfortunately, the woman was drowned in the river while trying to cross it and the man laments over her death and how he failed to save her. The man requests the spirit to calm the river as he is also a child of the spirit. Here striking the river’s heart with the spears tip can be an indication of provoking the spirit to show mercy on the lovers. The man in the song sings that though he is unable to save the lives of the multitude, he had tried to save the life of his lover by offering *Tsünyü*. Here, *Tsünyü* is a plant used for washing hair in the olden days. *Pienie* is another plant with a strong smell used to ward off evil. The song, then move towards the monkeys on the other side prospering and enjoying the fruits of nature. There is famine on his side but prosperity and abundance on the side of the monkeys. The monkeys are happy unlike him who is mourning for the loss of his beloved.

This song employs a lot of images of nature such as water, jungle, monkey, fruits, herbal plants, displaying the closeness of human towards nature. The man in the song refers to himself as a child of the spirit pleading it to show mercy and calm the river. Before the advent of Christianity, animism was followed and practised by the Nagas as a whole. Every individual in the Naga society believes that every living thing in nature is controlled by the spirit. The act of offering ‘*Tsünyü*’ and ‘*Pienie*’ symbolizes the old traditional practises that were performed by the Angamis. This act of offering sacrifices, small or big in exchange for a person soul was excessively done during the olden days to escape from unpredictable death. The man also compares his fate to the fate of the monkeys and concludes that they are in a

much better situation than him because he is experiencing the effect of an epidemic and the loss of a love one.

Tei mehü therü tei we shü

We lu thinyü he rükhrie kezü

No a nei-ü rülhi we mhielie

Kezo tsu di therü nhaphie da

Kedo tha di thino kho ke kie

Haca liro u keru tuo shie (By Mekhrieno and Saphrü)

(Translation)

The cool breeze of Autumn

Shaking the tree leaves afar,

Is like my beloved lady.

Together cleared the fields' surrounding,

Side by side, opened the grain's cover and analyse;

Fine grain is a sign of marriage.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

This song is sung after plantation when the paddy starts bearing fruit. The song is sung by a man to the woman he loves and he makes references to the soft wind that blows over the green paddy, moving them lazily in one accord which reminds him of the same manner in which his lover walks.

A zhü gwe-o mia we u-ü se

Kezo uda thi thinyi uda

Zoya derei niephi pfü mia we

Keyu die rei cü mia nie de mo

Cü mia ze hie, cü mia rüchü hie

Ya-üyie mu a mezie ya lie (By Rüda)

(Translation)

My love, people say we

Worked for each others,

but thine sweethearts

Make jest all day without being weary;

Feast with others, converse as you feast on,

So, my strength failed me.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

This song sings about the love between a man and a woman. The song is sung in such a way that if it is the boy singing to the girl, it means that the family of the woman is unwilling to accept the man for whatever reasons that are known and if it is the woman singing the song out to the man it is for the same reason.

The song begins by addressing the lover and how people have been talking about them in assurance that one day they will both end up as husband and wife. But the family of

the woman refuses to accept the man for her life partner. He is constantly being reminded about how unfit he is for her. The woman is also warned by her family members not to talk to him or mingle with him. The man feels disappointed and discouraged.

A nei-ü ze to kikirü chadou

Rüye shü di larü ca nu

Le khe mo zhü le hielie rüzie

Kethu jü di nu a nei-ü no

Kha mia tsü yie ho terho tei we

Rü meyu vor hie lie rü yha

Pethu lie di nu a neiü no

Kelie la zerü setso re shü

Rüdo tha nyü le yu kri thanyü le

We-he he-ya lie-o

He-ya ya lie a huo o (by Avi Meyase and Chatuo Hiemu)

(Translation)

Wandering through Kikirü road with my beloved

After sightseeing, return to the village,

Ashamed to enter and face others.

No one to vouch for you, my beloved.

Bequeath you to others, the Spirit favoured.

Let heavy rain fall in the valley, into my field.

Filled it with water, then, my beloved

I longed to work with you.

Yearn to stand by your side, make jest

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

The song expresses the sorrow of a man who has married his lover to somebody else far away. He drops her off to her new home and returns back to his own village with a heavy heart. As he stood there at the village gate, his heart is filled with remorse. He feels cold and empty and begins to think about the possibility of changing his fate if he were to be a rich man. He need not let his lover go if he had enough wealth and a good status. However, this unwanted and heart breaking situation happened because he was poor and his fields were dry. He therefore earnestly prays to the spirits to bring rain upon the earth and fill his dry fields with water then it would enable her return to the village and like the good old times, they can once again stand together there in the field working together.

During the olden days, according to the practice of terrace cultivation, there are usually two kinds of terrace cultivation. There is one where the water is allowed to remain in the field throughout the year without drying up and the other kind remains dry after the harvest season until plantation again. Earlier, the ones to own the wet terrace cultivation were considered to be wealthy and lucky. This is seen evident in the folksong itself.

N zhü a mhosuo zayie apuo

Umho suo rei sataya tanyü

Khiserüna Rüzazou lie khwe

Kephi duü sodzürü hie gei

Hie tha dylie hie cü re ketse

Keshü irei rekhrie ro caü

Hie nisolo re ma tsü khrieya

Apo gei we jü rinou voü

Azuo gei we jü rinoumo yie

Vükhwüno thukewhi zekho

Dziecharü nu ga keda nha we (By Khunyü Rino)

(Translation)

Father, last night I had a bad dream,

Do we really die if we had bad dreams!

Early morning, patrol the field at Rüzazou,

Was killed by an unknown warrior

Removed my armlet and necklace,

Too precious to be given away,

Priceless is my *Nyieso* to be given away,

Disappointed with my Father,

Yet, no regret at my Mother

Lied and led Vükrünuo up the forest hills

At Dziecharü to gather vegetation.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

The folksong is composed in the manner of a girl narrating about a bad dream that she had. On waking up she narrates it to her father. When her father hears it, he answers, “*Umho suo rei sataya tanyü*” which means that having a bad dream does not mean the person will die. Thus her father sends her to the paddy field early that morning despite the bad dream that she had. The girl in obedience goes out to the paddy field to work where she was attacked and killed by men at war. They chopped her hairs off and divided her necklaces among themselves. She remembers all of these with sadness in her heart. She also makes a reference to the ornament “*nisolo*” which is used as an ornament for decorating the ears. She tells of it as a priceless ornament wishing to keep it and not allow others to snatch it. Coming back to her father, she says that she is disappointed at her father for not paying attention to the warning she had received in her dream. As for her mother, she feels sorry for her. The song ends with the girl longing for those days when she went to Dziecharü to gather wild herbs with her friends.

The folksong above shows the importance of dreams in the lives of the Angami people. When we look through the beliefs of the Angami community, we find that the Angamis consider dreams to be a very significant tool to foretell upcoming unusual events. Dreams are often relied upon for every special event that is to be conducted. When it comes to marriage, dreams are the deciding factor. It only takes a bad dream or a good dream to stop or proceed with the marriage. There are several interpretations of dreams, if a person dreams

about fish; it simply means that there will be an argument or a row. If one dreams of catching a snail, one receives money, if a person dreams about his/her teeth falling, or people digging a path or engaged in feasting by eating and drinking it is taken as a sign that someone is going to meet his end. The interpretations of dreams differ from one person to another.

Dreams are often shared in family gatherings sitting around the kitchen hearth. This routine of dream narration is often done by women and is still done to this day. According to Micheal Heneise's *Agency and Knowledge in Northeast India: The Life and Landscapes of Dreams*, he states that, "dreaming is closely associated with ancestral and spirit-mediated knowledge..." (4)

Dreams are relied upon because they offer information about situations that are about to take place. Some people are gifted with the ability to decipher and interpret dreams "enabling the community to understand how the images and signs within the dream can become a part of daily life." (Heneise 5)

According to J H Hutton, "of all forms of second sight dreaming is the favourite and the best. The Angamis have almost a science of dreaming. (246)

Not every dream is considered to carry significant meanings but there are some dreams which are believed to foretell an approaching danger, accident or death. Skeptics might consider it silly and superstitious to believe in something that is not real but it has always been revealed time and again that there is some amount of truth.

3.2.3 Tsaniüü (woodcutting/ foraging song)

Khriosa seidu pfü kenyü lanu

Hie va chü mo sie whuo tsurlie

Nie neimia pie duchü hu dinu

Hie pie dumvü seimvü tha hie kie

Hie rei seimvü si rüluo caii

Kukhie kerhie za hie khonu shü

Pfülie khemo mhidzü thu hie de

Harie sei jü harie mia seikha

Mia nei moro sei jüya gwinu. (by Rüda)

(Translation)

Yearn to fetch wood cut by the youth,

Without breakfast, followed the youth.

Arranged firewood for thy lover;

I was refused firewood, point at the tree stump,

I also know what a tree stump is!

Cut fresh *Kukhie* into my basket,

Unable to carry, tears welled up and soaked me.

I own no woods; even these woods belong to others.

If not loved by others, then we wouldn't have wood!

(Translated by Keviuchüto)

The above song is a youth song and it narrates the sad love story of a woman. The woman in the song is pursuing the man she loves and she laments on the man's inability to respond to her love. She skips her breakfast and carries her basket to collect firewood from the forest along with her age group. Among her age group, there is a man whom she loves and she wishes to carry the firewood that he cuts. However, the man is busy cutting firewood for other women around him and seemed to ignore her. Been kind enough to other women but to her, he simply points out to a tree stump. This gesture of his offends her as she sees no point in showing her something that she knows about. She could also tell the difference between good wood and bad wood. He cuts 'Kukhie' (a plant with beautiful flowers which is light and burns easily) for her which she does not want to carry because the wood she was carrying cannot be compared to the fine woods that the other women were carrying and therefore she cries carrying the basket filled with the plant 'kukhie'. The song ends with the woman saying that if a woman has no lover, the forest also denies her its woods.

This song exposes the feeling of a young girl accompanying her age group to the forest to collect firewood. For a young girl, if she has no man to love her, it means, she will have no one to cut firewood for her when going into the forest. Here, 'kukhie' is used to symbolize shame. 'Kukhie' is a plant that burns easily and is very light to carry. This image of nature is used to display how the girl was feeling ashamed to be carrying a basket filled with this plant because it gives out a message to the onlookers that she had no man to cut good woods for her.

Mha lie to ya keshü nhie we

A vo kezo lu ketsa gei kho

Nie ki cha rei dzü keko mhie lie

Yudi sei-u kenhyo lie ya nyü-o (by Rüda)

(Translation)

On Foraging day,

Together we went up to the forest hills,

The way to your abode is like a tender egg.

Want to make you mine, my love.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

The above song is generally sung when young men and women goes to the forest to hunt or gather firewood and wild herbs. On the day of hunting, the man and the woman walked deep into the forest and lost track of time. They enjoyed each other's company that the day seemed too short for them. The last line of the song is spoken on behalf of man stating that good sense of humour and smart talk attracts women.

This song sings about the pleasure in having a good companion who compels the time to go unnoticed. There is a saying among people that a man who can make a joke wittily and speak wisely can attract a woman easily.

3.2.4 Weü-o (group song): This group song involves the participation of everyone irrespective of age.

Khriesa hako cahu hanu mhalezö kesie

Diphupar rü die ki hanu ha

Bie sa modi ura vo di kitha he tuole

Ketha rü-ü kevi ko zedi

Mhie u nei ko kecü ba tuolie

Kevi-u uya kekuo u vie

Kebie donu phe kijü mu thenu theno die

Mhie we medo hieko rüli ha

Rükra shümu pukeyie tsur

Hieko sei pie hieko nu mvüya (by Rüda)

(Translation)

Thoughts of the village youth

Here in the place called Diphupar

Will leave this place for our village to woo spinsters.

Accompanied by good spinsters,

Will talk of the happy things.

The best is ours, victory is ours

Then, the voice of the place, women and children is heard;

Their concern for our best

Reach us as we thought about it,

Hearing all these encouraged us.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

The song was sung by young men in prison longing for their loved ones back at home and it sings for their longing of freedom. The first line in the song talks about how the young men as they sat in prison began to give a thought. They were in Diphupar jail. They do not want to stay in prison but wants to go back and pursue women they love and admire. They longed to be back in their village, sitting at the gathering place and engaging in interesting conversations with women about all the good things. They also affirmed that goodness and strength is theirs. As they lie in jail thinking about it all, messengers arrives carrying tales from their village. When it was relayed to them that everyone in the village remembers them and is carrying on with life, it enlivened their hearts.

The song can be sung anytime and it has four parts to it, as in soprano, tanner, bass and alto. This song gives emphasises on the importance of freedom in the life of young men.

3.2.5 Ü (conversation song)

This is a very popular folksong among the youth. This folksong can be used for communication between a man and a woman. If a man falls in love with a woman and desires to pursue her or if he is disappointed in the woman and wants to convey a message to her not through speech but through songs, he does it so by using Ü. In the same manner, if the woman wishes to reply back to the man, she does so in the form of a song. What the tongue finds it difficult to express in speech, it is filtered out and communicated through songs. This folksong is more of an individual song than a group song.

Khuzhü mo ze se die nei he

Zo ba die rei nie neimia khuzhü

Nie kehe ki, nie nei krimo nhie

Hie gei diezhü, hie gei yusimo

Zo ba di hie lievo sie nu

Die kesa khie nie neimia zeyu

Zoya mo nhie die kenie pu-uo (by Rūda)

(Translation)

Wooed thee not once but two three nights,

But the night when thy love

Expressed thy feelings, but couldn't jest with me,

Nothing changes till I left,

Then, thy tone change, jest with thy beloved.

Hope you don't have two minds!

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

This song is about a man who loves a woman but the woman is in love with another man. It is a love song and the man in the song kept pursuing the woman consistently. However, she does not open herself up to him fully and the response that she gives him is not up to his satisfaction. She does not tell him what is in her heart and mind and there is a part of him that doubts the loyalty of the woman. Every night when he comes to her house to pursue and woo her, he leaves her feeling dissatisfied and disappointed. He suspects if the woman behaves differently with other men and if any other man visits her after he leaves.

This song conveys the message that the young man wanted to give to the woman. The man questions if the woman has two minds.

Another example of *Ü* song is,

Man: *A dzü gwe ü ukeri tagwe*

Woman: *Keri nyeri terhopfü medoh*

Man: *Toh loi mü nyu kemvü kechü.*

Woman: *Mia ketha u she kenyü mewa.*

Man: *Mhiare tomu a she shiale*

Woman: *Shelihuü mewa upokrü*

Pezhü mo mu mia ri pi sheni

(Translation)

Man: I will marry my love.

Woman: Marriage is by the will of the spirits.

Man: Of that comes happiness.

Woman: You are one who runs after other girls.

Man: If you go away I am sad.

No one else has bought your life, shelihuü,

And since not, why do you fear other men? (Hutton 283)

This song is sung in the form of a marriage proposal and the girl's name has also been mentioned in the song as *Shelihuü*.

This kind of conversation song remains popular even among the other tribal communities. Usually this conversation song is sung by young people in the process of wooing their lover. The Bhuiyas in the north of the Brahmaputras sing a folksong displaying similar patterns to that of a conversation song

Boys: A Kanchan flower bring to us,

We'll listen whilst you sing to us.

Girls: We'll gather greens for dinner, dear!

But cannot think of singing here.

Boys: As Radhe's pretty little bird,

You sweetly sing and must be heard

Girls: You silken meshes o'er us fling,

But truly; love! We cannot sing.

Boys: A handful that of chaff and straw,

Us boys you surely beat at jaw!

Girls (pouting) : Ah! Birds that chirp and fly away.

With us your care not than to stay?

Boys (amorous) : Yes, yes, we've caught some pretty fish,

To part, dear girls, is not our wish.

Girls (pleased) : The clouds disperse, the day look fair.

Come back then lads our homes to share.

Boys: No! by the bar tree blossom! But you come with us and share our hut.

Girls : The birds sing merrily, we agree

To leave pa ma and go with thee. (Jadav 78)

The girl in the song is described as being playful and a part of nature. This is not merely a song but is accompanied by dancing as well. The folksong is further elaborately described by Dr. Jadav as,

The girl is described here as an essential part of nature, her unwitting wantonness of beauty the very power of pakriti- the inherent dynamism of the wild- which captivates the lover's heart. Rather than becoming possessive, the lover is cautious and warns her against exposing him so as to guard her free sports with her other lovers. (Jadav 84)

The Konyak Nagas also sings of such conversation songs. These songs are not only sung to intensify the depths of lovers emotions rather they contain meaningful messages which address the problem that young people in the society faces.

Boys: We have come to your house to sing,

Tell us frankly whether you want us as your lovers,

Do not tease us, by saying one thing,

And doing another.

Girls : Alas, we can only love you for a few months,

For we are betrothed to our cousins,

And it would be wicked to break the engagement.

Boys: We do not want to be your lovers

For a short time only;

We want to have you for all time

As our wives.

Girls : We cannot be your wives,

Our parents would be cross with us

If we did so.

Boys: We have offered to become your husbands,

But you want only temporary lovers;

So we shall go to other girl's houses.

Girls: Well, go ahead and make love to them

If you can get other girls,

We too can get other lover.

Boys: At first you talked very sweetly,

But now you have turned us down

And we feel very bitter.

We will not waste our time with you,

But go in search of other girls.

Girls : We did not know that you wanted to marry us,

We thought you only wanted to love us.

You never told us what was in your mind.

We were quite willing to make love to you

For a few months, but we cannot be your wives.

For we are already betrothed to our cousins

And they would feel bad if we broke the engagement.

Our mother's brother would bear us,

And we are afraid of him.

Boys : Be it so. We love you all too much

And I you do not want to marry us,

Let us be your lovers for some time. (Jadav 78-79)

The above song clearly narrates how love affairs not ending in marriage were normal experiences. The song also reveals the young people's attitude toward romances before marriage with someone else who are not their betrother husband or wife. The importance of a family decision in choosing a life partner is displayed through such lines as 'our parents would be cross with us' and 'our mother's brother would bear us'.

The song highlights a girl's willingness to enjoy such premarital adventures, though brief, with a number of lovers without committing herself to a more permanent union, and suggests that young men were more keener on marriage than the girls. On the whole free and easy relations between the unmarried of both sexes echo from the alternating chants. (Jadav 79)

Tsie zhü hie he

Vo nie mho gei nu

We lu thizie pema tuo moro?

He la kezi pema to di shü

(by Mekhrieno and Saphrü)

(Translation)

Tonight, I was wooed

In your dreams,

Will thee dreamt the best bunch of paddy

Or the time thou wooed thy beloved first.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

The song is usually sung by a lady as an indirect message for the man she loves. She narrates how the man has come to woo her in her house and ponders over the thought of if he will dream of her or the first woman whom he had wooed in the past.

Zhu ze nyü rei shie ki kha khriü

Hie tsu thie si-u a nei-ü

Shie rei me vi zo

Prü mho lier lo

(by Mekhrieno and Saphrü)

(Translation)

Desiring sleep yet woke up to open the door

Together we worked today, my love

Transform yourself

And fly into my room. (Translated by Neizovou)

The above song is sung by a man for the woman whom he loves. Back in the olden days, the young men in the village gathered at the dormitory every evening to sing, talk and engage in socializing with others. Sometimes the young men in the dormitory would visit their lover in their dormitory (girl's dormitory). The visit is accompanied by singing which serve as messages for the girl. Now, it is forbidden for a girl to continue sleeping without opening the door for the man who comes to woo her. The song displays the necessity of doing so in the first line of the lyrics. The song is sung on behalf of a young woman who is tired but gets up to open the door for the man she loves. She sings that even if she fails to open the door to him, he should transform himself into an insect and fly into her room.

Kevimia he di vor a kip u lo

A kezeu a yu kesi-u (Rüda)

(Translation)

Wooed the best and bring the message.

My friend, who understands me.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

Some of the folksongs are very simple and short as in the above given folksong. This simple and short song is a message from a blind person to his friend who is able to enjoy everything that he himself cannot enjoy or immerse himself into. He longs and desires to experience everything that his friend experiences and therefore he requests his friend to go and woo beautiful women in the village and come to tell him all about it.

Chazukhru lu zhalo shie

Me li de-i

A nei-u ki zha mo shie

Me li kri mo shie.

(by Lt. Zaseriezo and Kevichüno Mor)

(Translation)

Great as the Mountain,

Famous, but

Not greater than my beloved,

Not specially famous.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

This is another love song dedicated to a man by a woman who compares her suitor to her beloved saying that though her suitor is as huge as the mountains; her lover is greater than him and more famous than anybody else.

3.2.6 *Nuo kepfü pezekecü pfhe* (lullaby)

Nuo kepfü pezekecü pfhe or lullaby is usually sung to lure a child to sleep. A lullaby can be any song from a simple humming without any proper lyrics to singing an actual lyric. Even in today's modern Angami society, we can see the usage of lullaby in villages when a mother tries to lull her child to sleep by taking a stroll and humming a song. Lullaby can either be sung by a man or a woman depending on who is trying to make the child fall asleep.

Michü rie zü a kehie shüsie

Bei lie simo, rüvo li simo

Soze ba ta kra a zo va rei

Sie-rü di nu tsa tie khrieba lie

(by Lt. Zaseriezo and Vichü Mor)

(Translation)

Make the fire and hold me in thy shawl,

Don't know how to sit nor move.

With whom shall I stay? Grasp my mother's belly as I cried,

Oh! The thought of growing old is woeful.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

This song is about an infant without a babysitter crying for its mother, grabbing on to her clothes. Infancy is a stage where a human is helpless and dependant on others. An infant child needs to be taken care of by somebody else because it is considered too young and tender to look after itself. However, as one grows up, the realization the truth hits every person that growing up is a struggle and it only means we are getting closer to our graves.

When one looks at an infant child, it does look helpless because for everything that it needs or demand, the only sound that escapes from its mouth is a cry. It is totally dependent upon the mother for every requirement and needs. Though infancy might look helpless and not something that is pleasant enough, the song agrees that growing up is even sadder and the thought of it makes one wishes if one could stay an infant forever.

3.2.7 *Khousepfhe* (plantation song)

Khousepfhe or plantation song introduces us to those songs which are sung during the plantation season (planting paddy). Like plantation song, there are different songs for different kinds of work. Every work is accompanied by a folksong no matter how ordinary the chores may seem.

Ei-ho ei-hi

Tekhu chü di dzü kehu rülo

Ei-ho ei-hi

Ketheki we, a kho mo di nu

Ei-ho ei-hi

Therü chü pie kenyü ze nu

Ei-ho Ei-hi

A kho tuo

Ei-ho ei-hi

(by Mekhrieno and Saphrü)

(Translation)

Ei-ho ei-hi

Ploughed the field, bathe in dirt,

Then did not leave me.

Oh! When autumn brings leisure,

Will you leave me!

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

The plantation song recalls to the mind the time of rest that autumn brings after the cycle of cultivation comes to an end. During the olden days, young men and women in the villages form groups and works in each other fields taking turns. There was active participation in the work. Also working in group brings the young men and women together which in turn strengthen the bond of friendship and the feeling of oneness in the circle.

Due to the modern development which had been taking place over the years, all these practices have been abandoned. The best example can be seen in the construction of the four lane road in Nagaland. The mountains were levelled, forest cut down, passage of water in the rivers were disturbed leading to abandonment of paddy fields owing to no other means of channelling the water for irrigation purposes. The change in landscape in turn affecting the primitive life that was still in existence even if it was practised in small scale. The few people who are still engaged in this agrarian activity barely follow any traditional etiquette of cultivation anymore. Folksongs no longer accompany working hands.

Khunuo co puo tei therü ze nu

Whizo u cahu va rei

Khunuo hu rei, khunuo shü co pfwe

Rünyü a rie sho ke sa lo le.

(by Mekhrieno and Saphrü)

(Translation)

An animal in the Autumn

Circles towards our boundary,

Among many animals, the sound of this animal

When heard, renews my fortune.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

Tei Therü pfwe is sung after spring. The song sings about a particular insect which come singing after spring. When one hears the insect sing, everything seems to be renewed.

The Angami Nagas are not the only tribe to enjoy singing in every ordinary occasion but the whole of the other Naga tribe also have different folksongs for different occasions. A Rengma Nagas folksong recorded in the book *Agricultural Folksongs of Nagaland* goes,

Eshe, Ketsin hi se a tsego no

Ketsin ajuü le nthu hi sele

Logwa lünyu ajuü hyüdyü thyü

Eshe ajuü no a-kenyü kon thyü

Eshe, nmhu a lo kensu shülo

Logwa lünyu rhenkelu nyule

(Translation)

Going to happen true

Yes, a party for me and my mother

Yes, tis my field party today

My lord, let my mother admire you.

And let my mothrt do her favour

Oh! Shout and sing to honour my field

My love a highly regarded one. (21)

The Ao Nagas also sing different songs for different cultivation process. A song sung during harvesting and threshing goes,

Soba tiaba

Tanu alu jenti niko

Arangtevu rangni

Tani wadang bangko yala

Yashi ku nangnu moavuang ni

(repeat three times)

(Translation)

Almighty, the creator of God

On this day of harvesting and threshing

You, God of blessing

Plentifully bless us

Oh, God of blesser

Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes (29)

A Konyak folksong for harvesting sings,

Iinyih haupak ümei lulinge tanpe hanpak

Ülek iimei luk pete bin shong poih

Kulem wei üshe wei hüim me wangle

Poih thrah ümei wet lah touh

Jemzu eithra ümei hin hei touh.

Ponta shai le wangle hah.

(Translation)

Today is the day we long for, now is the time to gather all the fruits.

We are happy and giving thanks to our heavenly father for blessing us to harvest plenty fruits.

Come friends we will go back to our sweet home with the good news of harvest to our beloved
villagers.

Come friends, carry the beautiful fruits. Let your friends see you are in serious business and let them
see. (Jadav 31)

3.2. 8 *Thupfheü* – This folksong is also known as cow herding song. When the youth in the village go for cow herding, they sing *thupfheü* in a cheerful and lively manner.

Hie kinu we Hie kenoma we

Hiero bari Nhicu khri-o ze

Kenyü la nu Hie ri ho ra tsu

Kimhoza-o Sie tsu me modie

Nie ri khashü Tsur kezie ngu

Pezi lie lo Rüso khwenyü-o

Awo thu ho Ketsata ranu

Keseshü di Pfü a wo hie bagi

Nie ngu seshü Niecü yhu sa se

Nie khwe nu shü Nie ngu shükesi

Ketha ki we A ni ki zhünyie

Hie ri pedo Nie ri sa medzi

Wo me mo die Thenupfüdi-ü

Bu nu tha ho Rüyhu le wholie

Pedo tse lie Nie ri rüyhu tse

Ci-i so no die Thenupfüdi-ü

Tso-u Tso-u U kima ni kemo-u sü

A no ni sü A ri a mede

(By Neiyiezo Ngunyüno)

(Translation)

In my house, my family

Forbid, yet the company of teenage love

Is yearned for; drove my herd of cattle first,

Have I crossed Kimhoza-o?

Release thy cattle, come and meet,

Be early; Pfhenyü-o.

Herded our cattle to the forest edges.

The cattle's grazing; in our feast spot

Pinned thy spear, took off thy necklace

Placed it on thy shawl, shook thy spear,

Then, were the best days with my beloved

Did my bull follow your cattle?

Is it so, Thenupfüdi-ü?

It's in the barn; hop in and get it,

Jumped into the barn, thy bull leaps over.

Whose child was that? Thenupfüdi-ü!

Tso-o Tso-o, the man whom our family disliked,

The love of my child is my love too.

(Translated by Wood Publishing house)

The above song narrates about the tale of Tso-u and Terhopfüdi-ü, a tale which is most famously known among the Angami tribe and is often narrated to children. In the olden days,

cow herding was a profession and even Tso-u and Terhopfüdi-ü were engaged in the activity of looking after the cows. They both belonged to different villages. According to the song, Tso-u goes cow herding into the forest to meet the most charming and eligible woman Terhopfüdi-ü belonging to a different village. They gathered their cows and keep them in a plain spot as they always do. They are both in love with each other. Having taken care of the cows, they sit down to rest and have their lunch at the appointed place. While getting ready for lunch, Tso-u takes off all his ornaments which includes shawls, spear and necklaces and bundles them up inside the shawl, holding the spear. This sight of him makes her admire and love him.

The song then moves onto narrate about how the best cow belonging to Tso-u followed the Terhopfüdi-ü home. After bringing it home, the cows are fenced inside and Tso-u in order to retrieve his best cow goes to visit Terhopfüdi-ü's village. Upon meeting each other and stating his reason for the visit, Terhopfüdi-ü tells him to jump over the fence and chase the cow out himself. Having succeeded at retrieving his cow back, he returns home. The parents of the woman having watched the man completing the whole task in a dignified manner, asks the daughter who the man was. She replies to them saying, "He is the man whom you disapprove of." However the parents seeing the goodness of the man admits that whatever pleases their daughter pleases them too, including her choice of man.

The Ao Nagas also sings of such folksongs narrating tragic love stories of prominent folktale characters such as the story of Jina and Etiben,

Jina responds:

Why not come,

You precious, my beauty,

Please wait unmarried.

Etiben replies:

Beloved, of us, whoever first depart,

The last one, in the grave of first depart,

Should drive lies,

Wrapping shawl from left side. (Jadav, 96)

The love story between Jina and Etiben are also sung in short verses such as

Beloved, oh, I am about to die,

In this world though not married,

In the far away lower land to marry

Darling, will you come not-? (Jadav 96)

Jina and Etiben's love story continues to remain popular even today and it has also been incorporated into the English syllabus of Class 10 NBSE. Like many tragic love stories, the path of Jina and Etiben also follows a heart wrenching path. The possibility of marriage between these two lovers was rendered impossible due to the class difference and status. Jina was given a condition to bring cows and buffaloes as dowries if he wishes to take Etiben as his wife. Upon hearing this condition, a rich man by name Tenyur who wanted to make Etiben as his wife brings dowry to Etiben's parents and she was married to Tenyur.

Even after marriage, they continued to keep meeting each other in secret. On one unfortunate day, Tenyur catches the two lovers meeting in secret. Tenyur hid himself until Jina leaves. Then he comes out of his hiding place and beat Etiben like a cruel animal. He then left her body out in the field to die. Etiben's parents felt regretful at the decision they

have made for their daughter. If only they have allowed her to marry her love Jina. Even as she lay on her bed barely breathing, Jina continued to meet her and take care of her in secret. Before dying Etiben asks Jina if he would marry her and make her his wife in the netherworld to which he relents. Etiben succumbs to her death owing to the injury and Jina on the other hand starves himself to death. When the villagers cremated the dead bodies of these two lovers, the smokes from the fire formed figures of two humans holding hands and disappearing into the sky. This was an indication that the two lovers were finally united in the netherworld.

Although there are various songs for different occasions, unlike the Ao Nagas, the Angami do not compose every event into a folksong. However, every piece of poetry composed can be converted into a folksong. The Angami Nagas are fond of singing but not every occasion demands for a song. For example in the olden days songs were not sung during funerals. There is a lot of crying and mourning and shouting but no songs accompanied the mourners. Nowadays with a majority of the population being converted to Christianity, songs are sung when attending a funeral. Also the Angamis do not sing songs during the birth of a child except for conducting some rituals but no songs are sung during such occasions as well.

There are songs which are considered *kenyü* to sing inside the village. These songs are known as *Shieli* in Khonoma village. The songs are usually short and are meant to be sung outside the village. An example of a *shieli* song is,

Ketsa nu lerr-ro udi krehewü

Repu hudi kezoro viho

(Translation)

When we go into the jungle, hide no word.

To speak all that is in the heart and be friends, is well.

Khonhye wü ri küzü tsanu tsu

Mheye lipi a niuko shümolie

A renumoho

(Translation)

We have never been into the forest together.

I have never plucked wild herbs to fill my love's basket.

For this I am sad.

(Man)

Thenumewü thepeso hilo

Thapfüliro larr ukeжомoho

(Woman)

Hi tse u thapfü larr ukeжомo ro

No wü leshü pi che

(Translation)

(Man)

Do not tease a girl.

When her hair is grown she will no longer be my friend.

(Woman)

Whether I don't come back and be your friend after my hair is grown

You wait and see. (Hutton 283)

Tsa zotie yie ho

Tsa zotie yie ho adzügweo

U kromia nicu la yagwe

(Translation)

Getting older and older

Why don't we get young again.

Khor tuori aki pumo

Khor tuori aki pumo dinu

Khor asieku nu

Rüshü athuka

Aphirhe lolie

(Translation)

Without informing me that you are coming

From my backside

Hiding, with cruel intension

Pulled me down.

Though it can be agreed upon that the Angami Naga community sings variety of songs for different events and occasions, unlike their Ao neighbours there is no record of folksongs that sings of their migration. The Ao Nagas sing of folksongs that narrates historical events and marks geographical location in the lyrics.

Temsula Ao clearly illustrates how oral tradition plays a pivotal role in the structuring of the society, and constitute the worldview, sense of identity as well as the idiom of the Ao's continuance within that world. (Aier 5)

The emergence of Ao people from Longterok is further described in the folksong as recorded,

Longterok poker

Ipanger arr tziyonger teas

Süingko ninang atzü yonger teas

Kübo Imsenpirongi alongjangko atzü paji ngujaker,

Atzü pajishaya angta nisha nongaline;

Sharo at akpor empiange antipongka empiagne;

Atzü paji külemnü,

Tasu temulung kuliseka küli kepiange;

Kubo Yongseni aniing tsüngrem den yushi ajemer

Kotak yimpangba nung kurong rongga teli atendaki;

Tsüla tzüti nongjet a baphu tzü pa ka aten mesokone;

Paji mete ne semtu surante

Küsemtu nung bochi asemsanger senden agi

Kübo Imsenpirongi longpok tzuyong yongli meyongküim

Ni Meyongkümla jarane, bochi asem sanger dang Shaya oangkone.

(Translation)

Everywhere people drank vine juice,

Imsenpirong the grandfather discovered water beneath a stone cave,

The water testified to their hardship

Thus a striped pig, a cock instructed to fetch for worship

On that day of worship may the heart be saved for me

Yongsen the grandfather and the sky god in understanding

Struck the thunderous storm up in the heavens,

The *Tzüila* river overflows and the mighty *Baphu* river too heavily

Unbearable so erected a hut for shelter

In my hut sons of the three clans sheltered

That is why we are called *Imkisüla*,

Imsenpirong, my grandfather discovered unceasing water

Thus we are called *Meyongkümla*

Proclaim to the children of the three clans

That we the *Jamir* clan are the finders of water. (Aier 94)

The Ao Naga folksong contains important historical narrative of their origin as well as migration. These folksongs help establish their ethnic identity. Along with the above song,

there are others in addition providing information about important discovery and establishing specific ancestral site as centre of dispersal.

O Chungliyinti kong nung,

Mondang ayimer,

Arr Salang pang nung,

Nütsüing temang senden angne,

Nütsüing temang sendenar,

Tsüngremkümer Ongangla dang jagi

Amtok amsü wani,

Tzüsen tsubo külem angta,

Tzüsen tsubo külemteta yur,

Orung saku agi

Yimrong süngsang tuden one

(Translation)

Upon a ridge at Chungliyinti village,

A conference is summoned.

To the platform, all the citizens to gether;

Away to Ongangla the sorceress, to divine by tearing leaves

To worship the pond, having worshipped the pond,

With the head of an Orunger, the enemy

The whole village is awashed in Glory. (Aier 94)

The song narrates the event leading to the discovery of water and the worship which followed is remembered in the above folksong. The condition of life after the discovery of water and what happened afterwards is also recorded in the following folksong,

Longterok nung poker,

Menang ali tetenziükdang

Shari tesako Shotoker

Anariü, Lisürü, Orunger Shariruuden

Zoniseka tontep akone

O chungliyimti Jatilari

Ayu lemtetsuba

Shari tongpang kok-ariü

Arr ngangyinernem

Mangkotepsü atatsüiti ta lemtetdagone.

Translation

With the origin at *Longterok*

The beginning of a new world

There arose the ferocious warriors of *Shotoker*;

With the warriors of *Anariü, Lisür* and *Orunger*

Battle with them every sunrise.

The women of Jamir clan (*Jantilar*) of *Chungliyimti*

Arrived at a decision;

Defeating the enemy and driving them away

To those warriors shall a shawl with painted enemy head (*Mangotepsü*)

Will be woven and presented.) (Aier 95)

The song narrates about the emergence of ferocious warriors and how the other villages in the region constantly battled with the people of *Chungliyimti*. The women of the *Jamir* clan felt the need to be protected and therefore, they arrived at a decision as to whoever succeeds in warfare and establish themselves as warriors will be awarded with the shawl *Mangotepsü*.

The Phom Nagas also possess folksongs narrating historical events. One such song recorded is,

O Shang meya, abü Yingnyüshang meya,

Meihongnyü-I bünpü nyühük bajaha

Yingnyü Apaihuong mao vannyaü pü agpeih,

Jeidam naiühan pangpao Yingnyü shangma pan

(Translation)

O at the mountain, our ancestors lived at Mount *Yingyiushang*,

Humankinds are all brothers and sisters

Born of “*meihongnyü*”

Music tree has been felled at *Yingnyü Apaihong*

Social customs among brothers have been shared

At mount Yingnyiushang. (Aier 73)

The above song entails account of the Phom's settlement and the establishment of social and cultural institutions. This kind of information being preserved in folksong gives a peek into the old culture and tradition of the Nagas.

Among this various collections of folksongs we come to know that folksongs not only narrate accounts of a sad tragic love story or a marriage proposal but it also helps people in remembering their history and bringing them back to their roots. However, the Angami Naga tribe seemed to have no such folksong which describe or records information about their migration or origin, about events that occurred during the journey of their settlement to the present site. Though such stories are orally narrated but the preservation of such important details are not done through folksongs.

3.3 Representations of natural environment in folksongs

3.3.1 Religion, rituals and superstitious belief

The Angami society in the pre-literate era practised animism like the rest of the other Naga tribes. This belief that every living thing possesses supernatural power enhanced their relationship with the natural environment by showing deep reverence towards it. The Angamis like the rest of the other Nagas believe themselves to be a part of nature. They perceive that all things in nature are controlled by supernatural forces.

Their way of life integrated well with the local geological and geophysical characteristics, fused with mystic powers and absorbed with ecological abundance and diversity. All these exposures led Nagas to develop a close attachment to nature
(Nienu 35)

The Angami Nagas believe in a supreme being known as '*Ukepenuopfi*' which means 'she who bore us'. They also believe that the world is not absent from other deities who are called

as *terhoma*, *temi* and *ruopfii*. Nature, according to them has constructive as well as destructive role to play because spirits can be malevolent and benevolent. Therefore rituals are performed by an individual appointed as a village priest in order to avoid the wrath of the spirits. When performing rituals, nature is relied upon to predict omens. One of the simplest methods of observing omens is by tossing two leaves on the ground. The positions of the leaves are observed to predict good and bad luck. If one leaf is right side up and the other is upside down then it is taken as a sign of good luck. They also consult omens by strangling a fowl and determining the position of the fowl's legs. If the right leg lies above the left leg, it is considered to be a good omen. This ritual is practised during the festival of *Sekrenyi*.

An interesting thing about the *Sekrenyi* festival is about a game named *Sozie* which is played by men divided into two groups. The whole idea of this game was invented after watching the movement of the bird name *Sozie*. This bird resembles an eagle and flies very high in the air in groups. The forefathers of the Angamis came up with this game which is popular during the olden days and is only played during big and important festivals like *Sekrenyi*. The chirping of a tiny bird called *tseiino* is consulted for omens. If the chirping is heard from the leftward direction when stepping out of your house, it heralds good news. A shield is usually carried on the left hand side and so according to that the leftward direction is taken as a good omen. Apart from the Angami, other Naga tribes also follow the practice of performing a simple ritual by women before wandering inside a jungle or getting into a river for a bath. She is expected to pluck a grass and keep it beside the river and pray to the spirit that it spares her life and accept her humble sacrifice.

Their love and respect for nature are expressed in their folksongs, folktales, arts, crafts, religious ceremonies, dress and ornaments. The songs of the Angamis in particular praise nature and are filled with respect, amazement, energy and joy.

Earth is treated as mother, sky as father. This concept of the duality of nature, which is

at the centre of the Naga worldview, is fundamental to how the Nagas treat nature. The Naga's philosophy and perception are built on this concept, including the manner in which he organizes not only the relationship between man and his natural environment, but also that between man and woman and between his kin and his neighbour. (Nienu 37)

Such an understanding of nature has ingrained in them a sense of morality and belongingness to the natural environment and then dealing and acceptance of their fellow men.

As mentioned earlier, the Nagas are known for their oral tradition which served as a storehouse of cultural values and knowledge passed down orally through generations with the help of cultural memory. In any oral tradition, the voice of a human is vital for transmitting knowledge from one generation to another. Many of the Naga oral traditions are expressed in the form of poems, songs and stories. The Nagas accept that all of the whole and possibility of existence are derived from the physical world. Different kinds of plants, shrubs or vines are used for subsistence activities or for performing rituals. The Nagas refer to the fig tree as the chief priest of the trees because it is considered to be a source of food and in remote villages figs are also known to be a substitute of rice for poor people who have to work in the fields without having proper food. Superstitious beliefs are also associated with nature and in most cases the leaves of trees and even animals are used for predicting good and bad omens. There is a belief among the Angamis that if a bee keeps hovering around a person and refuses to leave, a sad or a bad news is coming on the way. This belief is evident from the novel of Easterine Kire's *Mari* (2010) when the protagonist was followed by a bee constantly and news soon arrived that her lover was killed in the war.

3.3.2 Significance of nature in folksongs

Nature has always played a significant role in the lives of the Nagas. We can see the existence of nature and animals in various forms of folklores of the Nagas. In many folktales

we read about women getting married to spirits of trees or other animals or the transformation of a human into a tree or an animal. All these indicate the strong relationship that exists in between the Nagas and the natural environment. One folktale recorded by Avinuo Kire, narrated by Khrinyio Lürüo emphasises on nature as a fostering mother. Agriculture being the main source of activity, the Nagas and the Angamis in particular depended on nature for signs to begin ploughing the soil, sowing seeds and harvesting. The Angami tribe or the *Tenyimia* people in general pay close attention to the flowering or blooming of an indigenous plant known as *khoutho nyie* in order to begin fieldwork. This plant would be planted beside the footpath at strategic places to remind the onlookers about the best time to begin field work.

The folktale as recorded by Avinuo Kire narrates about a young couple who dreamt of greater and higher things. It was a very long time ago when humans and nature co-existed, that a boy named Hutuo and a girl named Teguo discovered life to be magnificent and filled with splendour. Their passion for life was deep because they were deeply in love with each other. Their love for each other was so great that it extended towards the physical world around them. The pair knew each other well as they belonged to the same *Peli* (age group) group. In the olden days, these age groups would consist of about twenty to thirty members who would socialise, sing songs and work in the fields together. Toiling in the field was a strenuous labour and such camaraderie washed away the drudgeries of their hard lives and renewed strength for the new day to come. Being in such age group prepared a young person for the adult life that he or she would soon embark upon.

One day, Hutuo and Teguo went to work in the field of one of their *Peli* members. In the process of working together, the young lovers began discussing about how nice and glorious it was to be alive, to be young and in love. Despite the happiness, they both pondered intensely over the brevity of life. They both knew in their hearts that this happy moment was not going to last forever and like everything else it will fade away. Their

happiness as well as their youth was all but temporary. The ultimate truth of life was death and youth was just a passing phase. When this happens, they would be forgotten then. The beautiful couple said to each other

“How lovely it is to be young, loved and admired by everyone. We are now in the prime of our lives but Alas! This will not always remain so. As it is, we are growing older with every passing day!”

“People may look at our youthful vigour and beauty and value us now. But what of tomorrow? Will future generations remember us and our story? Will they recall how wonderfully we have lived?”

So then the couple decided to make a pact in order to make it sure that the future generations remember them always. Furthermore, they both agreed that this had to be in a manner which would not bring disgrace to their beloved families. They did not want their love to be the cause of an act which would be deemed less than noble. Morals were prized back then and honour was held in high esteem.

They speculated and disagreed in turn;

“Shall we become rocks? Surely this will ensure that we last through the ages for all eternity”

To this suggestion came the reply from the other,

“People throw rocks sometimes. I wouldn’t wish to be such an object then.”

Finally, a consensus was reached after much discussion;

“Let us turn into flowers then! When we bloom, people will gaze at our beauty and have joy always.”

Thus Hutuo and Teguo bade farewell to their fragile human lives. Holding hands, they disappeared into the forest and transformed into flowering trees. They became trees which had not previously existed but which we acknowledge today as indigenous to Nagaland and identify by their once upon a time human names. These flowering trees bloom simultaneously

and are always found growing beside each other. Hutuo produces the most vibrant flowers and gentle Teguo is recognised by her pristine white blossoms. Ever since they transformed into flowering trees, everytime their friends sees them, they would point it out to others and say, “Ayale! There bloom our beautiful friends Hutuo and Teguo!”

The blooming of these trees every year during springtime reminds *Peli* groups and villagers that it is time to sow seeds before the arrival of the much awaited rains. In the absence of any calendars, nature helped the villagers to carry out agricultural activities at the right time. (Kire 9-11)

This folktale is an example to show how important nature was in the life of the Angamis. Nature was relied upon for every single activity that was conducted. The reverence shown towards nature was unlike anything that we see among the Nagas or the Angamis in particular nowadays. Though one may call the old Naga society as uncivilized or illiterate, nobody ever took more than what was required from nature. The exploitation level of nature has considerably increased over the years leading to banning of all kinds of foraging activities.

The tribal world is always interconnected with nature. Nobody understands nature better than the tribals themselves. It is not only in their folktales that we hear about man transforming to animals or maidens transforming to flowers or trees but even in their songs, we hear the praise or wrath of nature. Folksongs act as a genuine bridge between people and their cultural heritage. The folksongs of the Angamis display a symbiotic relationship between men and nature. In the olden days, songs were learned and memorized by both men and women in their *Kichüki* (dormitory) to be sung on the community festivals or such occasions. These songs also get passed on from one person to another with the help of memory. The folksongs are not confined to the festivals or gathering places, but they are also

sung when working in the field. There are also songs for children and songs sung after returning back from field.

Hiewe thie tsu Tsaliethenuo lievü

Lievüwe ru teku huo telie,

Sevo riecü hie me vada wa,

Hiewe sodu rei la tsu tetuo (Sekhose, 78)

(Translation)

Went to work in the field of *Tsaliethenuo* today

Caught some water bugs and insects

Brought it home, roasted, ate it and wished to eat more of it

Going to the field tomorrow to catch more of it. (Translated by Neizovou)

After returning from the field, everyone goes back to their own house. But for those who are wealthy, they invite the group of workers (*Peli*) in the field and offer them home-made rice beer and *Gapha* which is a dish prepared by the Angami Nagas. They sing this song gleefully and with much activeness meanwhile savouring the drink and the food prepared by the owner of the field.

The theme of folksongs varies from one another depending on the message that it aims to impart. The most commonly sung folksong is *Kewhu* which contains no lyrics but if it is sung perfectly, it produces a fine melody. This kind of songs are slow at the beginning but slowly speeds up and when it reaches at the maximum fast pace possible, it ends with some loud yelling known as *Mepfü* (ululating).

Besides singing, the only musical instrument that the Angamis use is *Tati* which is made from dried gourd shell. The shell is cut into half and covered with the dried cow's bladder. This gourd is then attached with a bamboo handle and strings are fixed on it. These strings are made of tightly spun cotton thread greased with wax to make it smooth and firm.



Fig 3.2 A picture of an Angami man playing a musical instrument known as *Tati*.

This dependence on nature by the Angamis to produce anything is seen evident in their folksongs as well. Nature plays a crucial role in any tribal community not simply for sustenance but also for various other reasons. The folksongs of almost all the Naga communities involve nature to portray several symbolic meanings.

O, as so many stars,
 As the sun rises,
 The sun in the sky,
 O, Yana and Shayong's sons,
 So high are they in the sky.
 O, like the high trees
 Like the virgin forest,
 O, Yana and Shayong's sons,
 Great are they on the earth. (Jadav 73)

The above Konyak Naga folksong devotes itself to praising the descendants who are compared to the stars and the sun and the high trees of the virgin forest. The imageries of nature had been embedded into the folksong to describe the descendants of Yana and Shayong.

Another Angami folksong that compares human to nature is

Khunuo co puo tei therü ze nu

Whizo u cahu va rei

Khunuo hu rei, khunuo shü co pfwe

Rünyü a rei sho ke sa lo (by Mekhrieno and Saphrü)

(Translation)

An animal in the Autumn

Circles towards our boundary,

Among many animals, the sound of this animal

When heard, renews my fortune.

(Translated by wood Publishing House)

This song is usually sung after spring and it sings about an insect that comes around singing after spring. The song delivers the message that there is something magical in the song of the insect because when one listens to it, one feels as though one is reborn. This portrays how nature can soothe a person's mind and enable him/her to forget all struggles in life forging a new life again.

The folksong below emphasises on the importance of using wild flowers as accessories to decorate oneself. In the olden days, a lot of flowers were used for ornamentation. The fragrant aurantiacum is described in the song in all its beauty. This flower seems to

brighten the place wherever it grows. The young people in the village often use this for adorning and decorating themselves. This song portrays how the ancestor of the Angamis respects and appreciates nature.

During the olden days, custom forbids women to grow their hair until marriage. The hair is considered to be the one of the most beautiful feature, the most valuable treasure and the most loved in a woman's body. The long black hair was also a symbol of respect. When a woman grows to a marriageable age, she is allowed to grow her hair. Even after her marriage she is not allowed to bind her hair unless and until she gives birth. As soon as she gives birth she can start binding her hair using a black thread. Every woman's desire in the village was growing her hair to the length of her waist or even below that. Therefore, leaves and flowers are used by women for ornamenting their head before they are allowed to grow it.

Pfesi we pu Luzhanu wakro

Khriesanoma Thu keru vorü

Tekhu shünu Walie hu dinu

Si-u hyena Ma kezhiü therü

Shadu marhi Kezi rütsa nu

Zole tari Zezinyüto-I (by Neiyiezo Ngunyüno)

(Translation)

The blossom of *Fragrant Aurantiacum* brightens the valley,

The young plucked and adorn themselves with it.

When paddy plantation is done;

You fade away while nature thrive.

Bravely fought through the dark forest,

Yet, when plucked, you wither away quickly.

(Translated by Wood Publishing House)

Meriezo-o woru ho rüvü

Kerie keprü chanyie hu loru

Shanyie hurei rho ketsü rüda

Tsiedo no soma nie ra dylie de

Dukelie-u theza simo ru

Dusanyü-o nie ra dylie shie

Dusanyü-o porie talie cie

Vihukhrie-o kuhienyi keri

Nie keti bi ler kilora

Diepu rükhru zu ta thenyüsa

(Kriüta)

Ma we nhicu sha kenyü ma we

Ma phipfüma petsu hu di nu

Kica merhie meyha these rü

Thema rhishü mero rhikeka

Kebakoi tsithu hu yie ho

Thehie metha thenyü krütsürü

Ci-i khapfü lozi zako ze

Wo viyie ho tsa ku zako we

Sümo joho selonu za-o (by Neiyiezo Ngunyüno)

(Translation)

Amidst the hectic work day
Like the rope made out of bamboo
Desiring to ask but waiting for it to be given willingly.
Who went to cut your bamboo?
Nobody knows the name of the culprit.
Dusanyü-o took your bamboos
Dusanyü-o slice off the stem
Vihukhrie-o wearing *Kuhenyi*
With black shawl came to the porch
Speaking as though he would be sweating all over.

(Leader)

Those who long to be young for longer period of time
Do not listen to the words of the elders
Plucked and smelt the *Meyha* flower
Playing with the sculpted figure of men
Now they go to the field together
Like the afternoon of the day
Working together old and young
The old people can go home

The ones standing in the middle (*selonu*) can complete the work. (Translated by Neizovou)

The above song is known as *Tsati*. It is a group song which can be sung by anyone in the village irrespective of age. This song is sung when one is working in the fields. There are

two groups singing the song and the second group follows up after the first group. The first part of the song is supposed to be a remark made by old people to the young people and the second part of the song is a reply of the young people to the old. Based on this, the first part of the song is sung slowly while the second part of the song speeds up. The first part of the song begins by remarking upon the carelessness and absence of ethic in young people. Amidst the people getting busy and working, the young people are requested to bring the rope made out of the outer layer of bamboo. They do not want to ask but hope that the owner will give it to them without asking. In the fourth line, a question is asked as to who has fell the bamboo tree. This indicates the lack of manner in young people.

The name of the person remains unknown and this also symbolizes a woman eloping away with her lover completely unknown to others in the village. The blame is upon a man name Dusanyü. Dasanyü is sung to have sliced off the best part of the bamboo tree. Meanwhile Vihukhrie-o comes to the porch of the house ornamenting his ear with the flower *Kuhenyi*. In the olden days, *kuhenyi* which is an orchid was used by men for decorating their ears. Vihukhrie-o stands there speaking with nervousness covered in sweats. The interpretation of this line can also mean the lack of courage present in young people.

The second part of the song is a reply to the first part of the song. It is the young people defending their stand stating that the ones who desire to stay young for a longer period of time engages in doing all kinds of childish activities. They spend their time plucking flowers and smelling it, sculpture human figure out of clay and play with it but as soon as they grow up to be a youth, they go to the field together with the old people. They are compared to the afternoon of the day which is supposed to be the best part of the day. Even as they work in the field, they tell the old people to go home because they lack strength like the young people. This song uses images of nature as metaphor to human life.

When we look at the Naga society, every distinct tribal community has a variety of folksongs for different purposes. Every kind of activity is accompanied by singing except for the Konyak Naga community not possessing any kind of working chants. Singing during the process of working is totally absent in the Konyak Naga tribe.

When they drag in a huge house-pole it is to rhythmic yells and shouts and young people weeding the hill crops will break into cascades of laughter and shrieks but never into songs. (Jadav 77)

The folksongs contain variety of themes and they sometimes act as the principal and recognised medium where the groups as well as the individual can express their most intense emotions.

Good new friend,
 Friendship that made in jungle
 Good new friend,
 Friendship that made on the way.
 Destine to die,
 So make friend all along the way.
 Like the flowers blossom,
 Let the friendship blossom. (74)

The above folksong belongs to the Yimchunger Naga community and it gives out the message of the importance of friendship. The song also likens friendship to that of the flower blossoming. The blossoming of flowers is used in many folksongs among the many Naga tribes to refer to different things such as youth, love, or even to people.

People will rejoice
 Be rejoice, people;
 Like flowers blossom at hill-top.
 How lovely is the blossom at hill top.

At the hill top

Be seen by all the world.

Insurmountable delight. Be delightful. (74)

The above Khiamnungan Naga song also uses the blossoming of flowers to refer to the mass of people, sprightly luminous on hill-top.

Not the beautiful people, but only the wealth of ecstasy of the living spirit of nature as though with a soul, in its splendour and such majesty that the whole world enthralled would behold at it. Here the perception involves unsurpassable animated nature and its dynamism itself. (Jadav 75-76)

Many folksongs of the Angamis are composed with themes based on love which might reflect the romantic nature of the people belonging to the Angami community. Not just the Angamis but the theme of love is inexhaustible in the folksong of the Konyak Nagas as well. However the problem with the lyrics of the folksong is that not many people can understand the meaning of certain words.

Many songs are fully understandable only to a limited circle and even the singers

Sometimes cannot explain the exact meaning of the individual words, for the archaic

language used in songs is very different from the language in everyday use. (Jadav

76)

Besides the meaning of the lyrics, the songs also contain addition of meaningless words such as *so hi mo zo so no di o le*, and *oh ho oh*, *oh ho oh*, in Angami folksongs or *ho holo iye hele*, *ole iyi le he-e* in Lotha folksongs. This addition is believed to make the song more melodious and pleasing but it is also impossible to understand the meaning of those songs without being provided with full details of the circumstances and situations to which they are related or referred to.

A certain love song from the Sema Naga community goes,

Dear, walk in front of me.

Dear, walk in front of me.

Good water flows from ridges

Good water flows from stony land.

If you really love,

Test me by your utmost.

All your tests will be of no use.

Since I love you with my whole heart and soul.

There is a flower on the tree top

There is a flower on the tree top.

There is an orchid in the rift.

Dear, wear it and be beauty

There is no cord how to wear on my ear,

Dear, give me the one with cord please,

Alas! There is none with cord. (82-83)

The flower in the folksong denotes delicacy, fragrance and beauty which are a vehicle of lover's desire to be plucked.

Love take to the peak Japfu,

Transforming and sitting together like the brightest star,

Wishing and watching over the coming generation (Translated by Neizo)

The above is an Angami love song and it compares the love between two lovers to the Peak of Japfu Mountain. The love shared between the two lovers is immortalized by the transformation of the lovers into stars watching over the coming generations.

Similarly a Konyak love song also narrates the tragic tale of a love shared between a man and a woman who were trapped in a forbidden relation and had to sacrifice their lives.

Yinlong and Liwang

Dearly loved each other,
Loving they lay together
Red as the leaf of the ou-bou tree,
Flamed love and desire
On the paths to the village,
The two lit fires,
Skywards, upwards curling,
The smoke of the fires united,
And mingled, never to part. (Jadav 95)

The song idealizes the love shared between Yinlong and Liwang and how they were finally united in death through the image of the smokes. This love story share a very similar trait to the story of the famous Ao lovers Jina and Etiben who were also united in death through the image of the smoke.

Wolo wolono
Being an orphan, being an orphan,
Hot rice served to real son,
Cold rice being my share.
Hot tea served to a real son,
Cold tea being my share.
What to do.
Being an orphan, being an orphan,
I do countless work,
But it is nothing in the eyes of my master-with my grief,
Crying on my father's grave.
Hey! My father, hey! My father,
Where have you gone? It is the living worry of an orphan,
Zulu Zulono. (Sema Nagaland) (114-115)

The above Sema Naga folksong narrates about the mistreatment given by the step-mothers towards their step-children which is universally revealed in tribal folklore. The theme of ill-treatment of step-children is depicted in many folktales and folksongs which evokes the feelings of poignancy of tortured existence wherein the victims lament about the sad miserable situation that they are in.

One can also find patriotic songs narrating about victory over an enemy. Several folksongs have been adapted from poems which are known as *Geizo*. A number of songs also reflect the uncertainty and brevity of life and death which is inevitable. The above three songs give a peek into the relationship between the Angami tribe with their natural environment. Nature has consistently maintained a prominent position in the life of the Angamis and the Nagas as a whole. In a society that was dominated by the superstitious belief in spirits, nature was their sole comfort and also something to be feared. Their traditional belief, tales, practices, and songs have always revolved around nature. Both the living things as well as non-living things were gazed upon as allies and they add to their fulfilling life. The superstitious fear of spirits of the forests, fear of the spirit of huge stones, or fear of the water or river spirit drives them into protecting and preserving nature to a large extent. There is a constant intimate link with the nature and forces around them and it is manifested meaningfully in all the cultural, traditional and customary practices, and folksongs.

3.3.3 Nature and the supernatural elements

The life of the Nagas is closely intertwined with the natural environment. The Nagas lifestyle, ornaments, social activities, agricultural activities and culture are closely linked with nature. An understanding between them and their natural environment is achieved through the traditional knowledge and wisdom. A balance is maintained in the process enhancing a peaceful relationship with nature. The different folktales of each tribe of the Nagas represent

the relationship between man and nature. Even though the activities of hunting and food gathering were practised ever since time immemorial, these were done using traditional methods and never over exploited. In this way, the sustainability of the natural resources is guaranteed. Nowadays hunting and foraging the wild for food has been banned and anyone caught in the act of killing or slaughtering wild animals are severely penalised. This is because unlike the olden days, people began taking from nature as much as they could, more than what is needed just so they can sell off the extra resources and get some money. Everything has become commercialised to the point where people in the Naga society have over exploited nature. The wild animals and birds are captured to procure money. This has led to the extinction of many birds and animals in Nagaland. There will come a day when the sound of birds chirping will become a very rare event happening in Nagaland. Despite the ban and protection of wildlife and nature, we see the young boys and man in some villages still going around with an air gun hanging on the arm ready to shoot anything that moves on the trees. In an article 'Respecting Nature and Social Responsibility' by Esther Konyak, she says,

The very identity of a Naga is rooted to land and culture. The loss of land is seen as loss of identity, and alienation from nature. With this strong sense of connection, the protection of land and forest was both conscious and culturally internalized. Therefore, the belief that as "land belonged to the human, the human belonged to the land" was a strong ethical and moral foundation of everyday Konyak life.

The land and everything in it holds much importance in the life of every Nagas. Though land is important, it is just as much important for the people to preserve their culture and tradition which is deeply rooted in their natural environment as well. In the short documentary of Alok Sagar's 'The Professor', we hear and see the protagonist stating that the tribals are the only ones who can connect closely with nature and this statement is relevant to all the tribals who are solely dependent on nature for their survival. The speech of Chief Seattle which was first

published by Dr. Henry H. Smith in 1887 shows the great affection that the native culture of the USA had for their natural environment. In the speech, Chief Seattle mentions

Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people. Every hillside, every Valley, every plain and grove, has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished. Even the rocks, which seem to be dumb and dead as they swelter in the sun along the silent shore, thrill with memories of stirring events connected with the lives of my people, and the very dust upon which you now stand responds more lovingly to their footsteps than yours, because it is rich with the blood of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch.

Though superstitious in their beliefs, the Angami Nagas rarely disrespect nature. The religion of animism has a role to play in their viewing nature as possessing some supernatural powers. Like every other religion of the world, they also believed in the existence of a spiritual realm beyond the physical realm. According to the Angami Nagas, there are benevolent spirits and malevolent spirits and most of them are manifested through nature. From the insects to the stones and trees, everything in nature is considered sacred. There are various folktales and folksongs associating the life of men with nature. There are various rituals where nature is invoked to foretell what is to come or to predict omens.

In the words of Milada Ganguli *A Pilgrimage to the Nagas*, talking about wild Cannas in some Angami villages, she writes

People plant them, but only those who are very superstitious. They believe that if suddenly an evil spirit appears, they can quickly hide under a Canna bush, where he is powerless and cannot do them any harm. (51-52)

Likewise the leaf of bitter wormwood is used to ward off evil. Despite its unpleasant smell, the leaves are kneaded on the palm of the hand and inserted behind the ears of children to prevent any attacks of the spirits in the jungle. There are also various plants used for healing wounds and curing sicknesses following the traditional method. Some of the plants like

Tierhütiöpfü (Amaranth), *Japan nha* (Crofton weed), *Vilhui nha* (Redflower ragleaf), *Tsomhou* (nutgall tree) and many more are used for its medicinal properties in curing wounds and sicknesses. Not only folksongs but folk poetry also plays a prominent role in preserving culture, tradition and history. In the Angami society, most of the folk songs are adapted from folk poetry. The following poem contains lyric that emphasises on nature.

Khüpra metsei vü tee nie geizie,
Rüso ba di tsoke rü nhie we
Hie pie ciethie thenyhü moluolie;
Zo ba mo di zo sie mia pfekho
Nie puo nie zuo rachü nie penyhü,
Kezeira shü sojüra kevo
Metsülie mu dzü di nie cha kha
Bayielie mu chütherhü rie prei
Verü mo mu suo tuo mo nhiemu,
Nhie we
Ki kenyü ü kharü shü vaya
Kitiera tha nie jülei the tshie
Kiluora shü va rüso kezhü
N the lerü n phou kenyü krei
Tolo tenyü khrieü lerülo
Zu luo merhe nie puonuo hie li
Kho chükeshü pfülie mvü dinu
Mhichü rüzhü pfü nie zuo zhü gei
Thepfu re jü thenu puo rübei
Pa zupfü puo nei puo mede

Kemo puo sü suorüsuo chünyi.

A nie die we chü rüinouvuo-o

A puo ddie we chü rüinou mo shü

A zuo nou suo puo noune chü (Shürhozelie, 8)

(Translation)

Every year, sacrificed a chicken in your name to determine signs

Carried on until the day the signs showed

Rather than saying ‘She is not marriageable yet

Relented and agreed to the proposal

Your father and your mother married you off

To a far distant foreign land.

Comes summer, and the water in the river blocks your path.

Comes dry season and the fear of enemy warriors strikes your heart.

‘Has not return home ever since, may no sickness befall her.’

And one day she came home

It was a day of house *kenyü*

Standing outside with a sorrowful heart holding the walking stick

Threw it on the porch of the house

Your walking stick has entered, your body must is no different

Come inside the house *Khrieü*

Wiping the surface froth on the beer container served her father

Unwilling to carry her basket back

Lamenting and crying on her mother’s bed

Her uncle came to visit

No male child but only one female child

Adored and loved, allow her to do what she wants

Don't force her to do what she doesn't want to

My uncle words satisfied me and made me happy.

My father's words hurt and broke me

My mother sympathises with me but it was my father's will to marry and send me off.

(Translated by Neizovou)

Khrü was a woman living and enjoying her life with her parents. Each year a chicken is used in a ritual to determine if it was the right time to propose her. And one day, a proposal came for her. Khrü has no heart for marriage but her parents decided to marry her off against the wish of their daughter. They married her off to a man from foreign distant land. She could barely make her visit to her parents any longer as the river which runs between the villages poses a danger due to the strong force of water in summer. She could neither visit them during dry season due to the fear of enemy warriors who could kill her and take her head. Nevertheless, Khrieü paid a visit to her parents one day. To her dismay, the parents refused to let her into the house reasoning that they were observing a house ritual and it was forbidden for anyone outside the house to make an entry. Maybe the parents were really observing a ritual or it can also be pretension for fear that she might not go back to her husband's house. This saddened her much and as she cried standing outside she threw her walking stick on the porch.

At this her parents agreed to let her inside the house since the walking stick was already inside too. Therefore, Khrieü went inside the house and spent the night there. The next day, the parents decided to send her back to her husband's house and packed her things but Khrieü was reluctant and did not want to go. She lay on her mother's bed crying her eyes out. Meanwhile her uncle tells her parents to stop forcing Khrieü to go back if she does not want to.

Even after her death, she remembers her uncle with gratefulness in her heart. As for her mother and father, she says that though her mother is sad about it, her father showed no sign of sadness on her death and this is the reason why she is disappointed in her father. Khrieü parents kept forcing her to return back to her husband's house so she left but she never went back to her husband. Khrieü took shelter under a huge rock and spent her days there. When the food runs out, she'd return back to her village to get food from her parents without their knowledge of her living under a rock. Each time she crosses the river, she would beg the river to drown and kill her but the river does not seem to take her. One night, Khrieü was given a message in her dream that it wanted to take her life away but the ritual she performs before getting inside the river is too good that it makes them want to spare her life. This is because Khrieü always plucks the leaves of any grass and puts it over a rock before she gets inside the water. After becoming aware of it, she went to the river once more, this time without plucking any leaves of trees and putting it over a rock.

Upon getting inside the water, she tells the river 'if you are truly merciful and good, take my life away.' That day the river took her away. This folksong explores various themes like marriage, sacrifices, and dreams. It is fascinating to know how Khrieü turns towards nature for all her problems when no one around her understands her. Nature embraced her at her will and she was freed from the problem of marriage.

V Nienu states that,

The mountains and rivers of their land (referring to the Nagas), combined with the indigenous flora and fauna shaped Naga life and culture to a great extent.

Consequently, for the Naga people, the mountains are more than just a habitat, rather, the mountains are a special vicinage- a sacred landscape and heritage that helped forge Naga society and identity (32)

In reference to the story of Khrieü, water is an important source of life. In the Angami traditional belief, water is not only an element that sustains life but it is also a spirit that is as much living as any human being. The mountain Japfü is well known for its physical features and myths which are associated with it.

The word Japfü is the corrupt name of ‘*Dzüpfu*’. In tenyidie *Dzü* means water and *pfu* Means mother, and when it is translated, it means ‘mother of water’ where the water of many important rivers including the Dzükou, Dhansiri, Siedzü, Dzü-ü and Doyang originates. (Nienu 41)

The Semas also trace their origin to Mt. Japfü. In Easterine Kire’s book *The Journey of the Stone* and *When the River Sleeps*, we can find a reference to the water spirit in the traditional belief of the Angamis. The first page of the book *When the River Sleeps* mentions “The river had gone to sleep.” (Kire 1)

In the old traditional Angami society, the river was believed to possess magical supernatural power and it goes to sleep like any humans at night. In the personal interview which was held on 22nd of May 2022, Lhoutsüvi Paphino, who is 88 years old hailing from Pfüchama village narrates that the *Melino Tsiöpfe* in the village is one of the most popular gathering place because of its good background story.

Today’s Christian seeks for God’s blessings in order to be successful but during the olden days people ran after ‘theguo’ (luck object). The Angamis believed that possessing this *theguo* will bring them wealth, riches and good luck. Therefore Melino, a tall and huge man just like his name decided to go and search for *theguo*. He went to Kigwema (one of the oldest Angami village) village to consult a seer and seek advice on how to procure theguo. The seers in villages are disappearing with the advent of Christianity but in the olden days,

they held high prestige in the society because for every problem occurring in the village, they were consulted. They act as a medium between the spiritual and the physical realm. Upon asking the seer to give him *theguo*, the seer replied saying how he can possibly give Melino something that he does not possess. Only the spirits or *terhuoma* could give him such a valuable and sacred object. The seer advised him to go to a big river, sit there patiently and wait for the river to fall asleep. The river is considered to be asleep when the water in it stops flowing. During the slumber of the river, people say that it becomes very silent as the water stops moving. When this happens, Melino was asked to quickly get inside the river, drink the water and wash himself and take the blessing of the water also known as *Dzüguo*. By possessing that he gains the ability to possess *theguo*.

Most people are of the view that this *theguo* is in the shape of a round stone usually found in the rivers. But the narrator here does not specifically name any such objects. Melino did exactly as he was advised by the seer and asked for blessings from the river. Though he received it, he could not identify the kind of blessings that the spirit has showered upon him. Once again he paid the seer another visit to inquire about it and to clarify his doubt. The seer asked him to be silent and added that it was the spirits job to bestow upon him whatever blessings that it desires. Later on he realized that the spirits have bestowed upon him the blessings of seducing women. Thus, every woman that he touches ends up sleeping with him. This continued for years until he turned old and grey without having a child of his own. People began to tell him “How can you have a child when you have been sleeping with women without marrying even a single one?” So he married a woman at a ripe old age and begot a son.

In commemoration of his journey from seeking the blessings of the spirits to finally having a son, he constructed the *Melino Tsiepfe*. *Tsiepfe* is a place of gathering but it is not a

morung or a constructed house. *Tsiepfe* is also known as *thehuba* made in open spaces in the shape of a circle. Stones are piled on top of each other in the shape of a stone tower and sitting places are erected for people to gather and talk. This story exposes the relationship between the spirits present in natural elements with humans. Though Christianity and modernity has changed the outlook of people towards their superstitious concept of things around them, the belief in spirits possessing natural elements like stones, rivers, forests etc are still continuing. Despite the numbers having lessened, unexplainable phenomena are still being associated with the activity of inhuman entity.



Fig 3.3 Lhoutsüvi Paphino from Pfuchama village. (Photo by Neizovou)



Fig 3.4 The Han Lin, *Angami Tribe of Nagaland*.04 June. 2020.

The sounds of various animals are also observed in order to determine the coming danger or tragic events. A story was told about a cock that crowed early one morning. The sound of it was different from normal days. The cock after crowing, flapped its wings and seemed to say “*Kithorü nu tsü te*”. Every neighbour heard the cock’s message and its crowing clearly. They waited silently and patiently for what was about to happen next sensing that the crowing carries an important message. Strangely enough, an enemy stood hiding outside in the compound of the house and when the owner opened his door to check upon the cock, he was killed and beheaded by the enemy. Such sound of the cock’s unique crowing was never heard of again. And so the villagers began to term such strange crowing of a cock as a message from the spirit or *terhoumia*.

Another instance can be the story of a young man who went out to work in the paddy field. As he was working in the field and the afternoon had passed, a bird flew over and settled on a tree which stood on a clear patch beside the field. The bird then began to chirp continuously seeming to say “*Azuo mo di Apuo*” (not my mother but my father). The young

man stood and kept listening to the sound of the bird and felt a sudden burst of heaviness and sorrow in his heart. He waited until evening to return back home. As he neared his home, he heard people mourning and weeping giving him the impression that something had terribly gone wrong. True to his fear, his father has passed away while he was busy working in the field. What shocked the young man was the fact that death snatched his father away unexpectedly when he saw them in the morning with no ailments.

During the year of harvesting, the ones in the village using local paddy keep themselves busy throughout the year, guarding and chasing the birds from eating or destroying it. The people keeping watch over the field has to leave early in the morning and return back late in the evening. Hence those couple without a child were considered unlucky as they couldn't take off their duties even for a day to allow their children to take over. One day a family that owns two fields decided to separate the work of guarding the paddy field between the parents and the children. The father and mother went to take charge over one of the field and their two children Zeinuo and Pfuzelhou to the other field. As evening approached, the parents decided to return home. A bird flew above their heads on their way home and sang "*Zienuo Pfuzelhou*". Hearing this they began to wonder about what might have happened to their children. Reaching home, they waited upon the arrival of their children but they did not return even with the fall of darkness. Unable to wait anymore, they ventured out into the darkness and towards the field searching for their children. What they saw next left them dumbfounded and heartbroken. They found their children lying dead inside their hut. All these short stories are evidences of how the Angami Nagas depend on nature for everything. Beside the food sources, they also seek signs from different elements of nature.

Water is used as a cleansing agent in various rituals and celebrations. Writing on the laws and customs of the Angamis in the olden days, B.K. Sachü in his book *Ketho Kerhei Nanyü*

Utsiepfümia Nanyü he writes

Mi mu Dzü ki diehou pu kenyü (23)

This roughly translates to “It is forbidden to utter words to fire and water without thinking”. The meaning of the above line enables us to understand just how important these two elements are in the Angami culture. Among the various rituals, an example of water being used as a purification element can be seen vividly in the house ritual. Many cultural beliefs consider water to be an element which cleanses everything that it is sprinkled upon. The house ritual is performed by the woman in the house. The man in the house can speak of the ritual but does not perform it. The house ritual is one of the most important rituals for women in the house. It is believed that in performing this ritual, the members in the house will grow in numbers, food will never run out, and the woman in the house will never get homesick or long for her parents and the old village where she grew up.

The mother in the family gets up very early in the morning and goes to fetch water from the village. On the way she pulls out some fresh leaves of grass and brings it home. She soaks the leaves in the water, takes it out and sprinkles it on the door post and everything else in the house. She is expected to finish the ritual of sprinkling water over the house before the sun rises. Until the sun rises, fire is also not made in the kitchen. On this day, no one in the family is allowed to entertain any guests or consume anything that is offered by the village inmates. The family members are also disallowed from crossing over the fencing. On a day like this the people in the village gather at one place and inquire the elders about the ongoing events and stories. Therefore this ritual is not only about forbidding this or forbidding that but rather it is about interaction, understanding each other and caring for one another.

The festival of *Sekrenyi* also uses water as an element of purification. The ritual in this festival is mostly observed by the male members in the family. The preparation for the purification ritual begins when a boy reaches the age of four. Careful thought is given into the making of new garments or shawl for the boy. The mother when weaving a new shawl for her son remains alert and cautious about letting out any foul words from her mouth. She is also barred from having any arguments or row with neighbours. On the day of the festival the male members in the family goes to wash themselves in the village well. Not only do they wash themselves but they wash their weapons such as daos and spears as well. Washing themselves and their tools and weapons with water indicates the purification process that is done in order to celebrate the *Sekrenyi* festival.

As the world keeps on changing in terms of environment, urbanization, modern education and values thereof, the threat of extinction of olden culture and tradition is on the rise too. The advent of Christianity and western mode of education into the life of the Angamis and the Nagas as a whole brought massive changes. Many indigenous practices of the Nagas have been brought to an end with the adoption of the Christian faith with its practices and also with the contact of the outside world. The old customs and traditions have been forsaken and it has rapidly declined over the ages. With the fall of the institution of morung or *thehuba* (gathering places), a lot of traditional beliefs and social practices were brought to an end. Such changes have severely affected on the tradition of folk music as well as celebration of some of the old festivals. Since folksongs were a part of such festivals and several other practices in the society, they are also losing relevance and getting out of circulation. Even the younger generation with education in English and literacy with the language is finding the language of the older generation as applied also in the folksongs more and more archaic.

The folksongs are now replaced by western music and communal life and social practices is beginning to be a past memory. In regard to the matter of dresses and ornaments, one can only see the reflection of traditional culture during the Hornbill festival or such specially devised occasions, even the Hornbill Festival is more infected by the seeds of westernization with the Naga youths more prone towards western music, dance and other expressive forms than traditional arts of different Naga communities. When a survey was conducted by the 'Morung Express' on Hornbill festival 2009, a remark passed by an individual goes,

A major rock music festival as part of the festival is somewhat of an oxymoron to me, as well as to many discerning Nagas. Nagas cultural values are in complete antithesis to western pop/rock culture's values. Are we not sending a wrong message to our youth by including a western musical practice that is founded on rebellion, sexual pervasion and wanton lifestyle? (Puthankudy 139-140)

The native language and its nuances are mostly replaced with English and the broken version of Assamese (Nagamese). This can form a reason behind the young people's inability to understand the archaic words and lyrics in folksongs. This assimilation of the western culture owing to modernism and westernization has led to the decline of culture and tradition of Nagas and the Angamis Nagas in particular.



Fig 3.5. Mekhrieno and Saphrü from Mezoma village (Photo byNeizovou)



Fig 3.6 Rüda from Mezoma village (Photo by Neizovou)



Fig 3.7 Avi Meyase and Chatuo Hieme from Khonoma Village (Photo by Neizovou)



Fig 3.8 Neiyiezo Ngunyüno from Keruphema Village (Photo by Neizovou)



Fig 3.9 Lt. Zaseriezo and his wife Kevichüno Mor from Khonoma village (Photo by Neizovou)



Fig 3.10 Khunyü Rino from Jotsoma Village (Photo by Neizovou)



Fig 3.11 Jieviu Sophi and Vinyühu Meyase from Dzüleke village

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