

THE NEHU JOURNAL

CONTRIBUTORS

BENGT G. KARLSSON

A. C. SINHA

BADAPLIN WAR

B. P. SAHU

B. S. MIPUN AND S. PURKAYASTHA

David R. Syiemlieh

S.C. Daniel

*Vol III No 2,
July 2005*

The NEHU Journal

Vol. III, No. 2, July 2005

Editor: T B Subba

Associate Editor: Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih

Assistant Editor: Bedarius Shylla

Editorial Board Members

Mr. Jayanta Mahapatra, Editor, *Chandrabhaga*, Cuttack.

Prof. K. Satchidanandan, Secretary, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi.

Dr. Sreenivasan, Editor, *Journal of Literature and Aesthetics*, Kollam.

Prof. A.C. Bhagabati, Guwahati.

Prof. Sanjib Baruah, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

Dr. Anindita Dasgupta, Managing Editor, *Journal of Peace and Democracy in South Asia*, Kuala Lumpur.

Dr. Phillipe Ramirez, National Centre for Scientific Research, Paris.

Prof. Stuart Blackburn, South Asian Institute, Heidelberg University, Germany.

Prof. Mahadev Chakravorty, Tripura University, Agartala.

Prof. Virginius Xaxa, Delhi University, Delhi.

Production Assistant : Surajit Dutta

Layout and Design: Shongdor Diengdoh

The NEHU Journal

Vol. III, No. 2, July 2005

This issue of the journal is devoted to the region in general and Meghalaya in particular. It begins with the article by Dr Bengt G Karlsson, an anthropologist of Uppsala University, on 'traditional political institutions' on which much needs to be debated than what has already been done by the London School of Economics partners at North-Eastern Hill University. I think this article takes the debate further ahead by arguing in favour of the possibility of a new kind of governance based on the wisdom of indigenous people rather than arguing whether or not such governance can be labelled as democratic, liberal or gender-neutral. The article provides one of the latest and most considerate account of the movement of the Khasis towards achieving what the author calls 'indigenous governance'. Although I am personally a little sceptical about the optimism that exudes in his article, I am indeed happy and proud to have this article in this issue of the journal.

The next article by Prof. A. C. Sinha presents a rare account of the search for 'tribes' in colonial and post-colonial India, and the relevance of this search despite the failure of anthropologists to define what a tribe is or delineate its characteristics without running into serious problem with contemporary data. He shows how the tribes represent a spectrum of social, economic, educational, demographic, and technological conditions. He concludes by arguing that this variation may be taken into consideration while derecognizing some of the tribes in India, which has somehow eluded national politics so far.

In the third article, Prof. Bodapin War draws Anthropology and Linguistics closer than by perhaps anyone earlier by bringing in rich data and deep analysis of Khasi folk titles. The Khasi folk titles show how the community once defined (and still depict) individual personalities on the basis of natural categories. Such titles are not certainly typical of the Khasis, but she reveals the Khasi-ness in them very well, as much as she provides linguistic analysis of the same. It is a pleasure to read this article even if one does not know the Khasi language or has no idea about Linguistics.

NEHU

EDITORIAL

This issue of the journal has a clear focus on the region in general and Meghalaya in particular. It begins with the article by Dr. Bengt G. Karlsson, an anthropologist of Uppsala University, on 'traditional political institutions' on which much needs to be debated than what has already been done by the London School of Economics partners at North-Eastern Hill University. I think this article takes the debate further ahead by arguing in favour of the possibility of a new kind of governance based on the wisdom of indigenous people rather than arguing whether or not such governance can be labelled as democratic, liberal or gender-neutral. The article provides one of the latest and most considerate account of the movement of the Khasis towards achieving what the author calls 'indigenous governance'. Although I am personally a little skeptical about the optimism that exudes in his article, I am indeed happy and proud to have this article in this issue of the journal.

The next article by Prof. A. C. Sinha presents a rare account of the search for 'tribes' in colonial and post-colonial India, and the relevance of this search despite the failure of anthropologists to define what a tribe is or delineate its characteristics without running into serious problem with contemporary data. He shows how the tribes represent a spectrum of social, economic, educational, demographic, and technological conditions. He concludes by arguing that this variation may be taken into consideration while derecognizing some of the tribes in India, which has somehow eluded national politics so far.

In the third article, Prof. Badaplin War draws Anthropology and Linguistics closer than by perhaps anyone earlier by bringing in rich data and deep analysis of Khasi folk titles. The Khasi folk titles show how the community once depicted (and still depict) individual personalities on the basis of natural categories. Such titles are not certainly typical of the Khasis, but she reveals the Khasi-ness in them very well, as much as she provides linguistic analysis of the same. It is a pleasure to read this article even if one does not know the Khasi language or has no idea about Linguistics.

The fourth article is by Dr B. P. Sahu of the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. And his article on the state of water in Shillong is indeed educative. I think every resident of the city, whether indigenous or not, should read this extremely informative article on water.

The fifth article, written jointly by Prof. B. S. Mipun and Ms. S. Purkayastha, both of whom are Geographers, is equally educative about some of the most important issues of public health in the city, and about how the hospitals and nursing homes themselves have been sources of diseases rather than places where people go for treatment of their diseases. Although based on rather limited data, the article is also revealing about the lack of responsibility that the government, the hospitals, and the civil society have shown by allowing the health institutions of the city to pollute the streams and endanger the life and health of people living downstream. I think the merit of this article lies in drawing our attention to a hitherto ignored but very important consequence of unplanned urbanization.

Finally, there are three book reviews, two by Prof. David Syiemlieh of History Department of this university and one by Dr. S. C. Daniel who retired from this university recently after teaching at the Department of Philosophy for many years.

I hope you enjoy reading them.

T B Subba
Editor

CONTENTS

Editorial

Sovereignty through Indigenous Governance: Reviving 'Traditional Political Institutions' in Northeast India	...	...	1
<i>BENGT G. KARLSSON</i>			
In Search of the Tribes in Northeast India	...	...	17
<i>A. C. SINHA</i>			
The Folk Titles in Khasi: A Linguistic Analysis	...	...	31
<i>BADAPLIN WAR</i>			
State of Water in Shillong	...	...	51
<i>B. P. SAHU</i>			
Management of Hospital Wastes in Shillong	...	...	69
<i>B. S. MIPUN & S. PURKAYASTHA</i>			
Book Reviews			81

The Folk Titles in Khasi: A Linguistic Analysis

BADAPLIN WAR

Introduction

Folklore is a tradition of any expressive behaviour that brings a group together, creates a convention and commits it to cultural memory. This is a description of folklore posted on the website of the National Folklore Support Centre. Of course many folklorists have provided more detailed discussions on the nature and scope of folklore. Dorson (1972), for instance, has categorized folklore under four sectors. The first of these is oral literature, sometimes called verbal arts or expressive literature, "under whose rubric fall spoken, sung and voiced forms of traditional utterance that show repetitive patterns". Other sectors are material culture, social folk custom and performing folk arts. Islam (1985) divides items of folklore into the following four categories:

1. Folk literature which includes myths, legends, fairy tales, fables, animal tales, proverbs, riddles, ballads, songs, etymology, dramas, blessings, curses, similes, folk titles, chants, charms etc.
2. Folk practices which are neither literature nor arts are subdivided into (i) day-to-day practices and (ii) occasional practices.
3. Folk arts, which are subdivided into: (i) performing folk arts and (ii) non-performing folk arts.
4. Folk science and technology.

Looking at the above, we can sum up that one of the most important sectors of folklore concerns language. Whether one calls this sector - folk literature, oral literature or verbal arts - its scope includes folk narratives such as myths, legends, different types of tales, folk poetry, verbal forms such as proverbs, riddles, folk titles, etc. It is one of the verbal forms which

will be the focus of our discussion here, namely folk titles.

Meaning of Folk Titles

Before presenting and analyzing folk titles in Khasi, it is necessary to first discuss what is meant by 'folk title'. The term, as it is used in this paper, is taken from Islam (1985: 8) who describes it as "a title given to a person resembling the name of a bird or an animal as his behaviour resembles that bird or animal". This description is further expanded and elaborated in order to give a more comprehensive analysis of the way folk titles are used in Khasi.

Linguists and folklorists have pointed out a special way in which the vocabulary is related to its cultural context. This is seen especially in the use of figures of speech such as metaphors, words or phrases which have their primary reference to one semantic area but are used, secondarily, to refer to other things as well. The secondary or transferred meanings are usually more abstract than the primary or conceptual meanings. Semantic transfer, therefore, can be seen as instances of the basic process of extending the repertoire of lexical entries. It is also worth observing that semantic transfer of words is among the most important mechanisms by which words extend and change their meaning. One of the ways in which words assimilate a figurative meaning is when animal names are applied metaphorically to human beings. This appears to be almost universal in languages the world over that it seems to suggest a natural inclination in human language.

Examples of the metaphorical application of animal names to human beings in English are shown below:

1. Sam is a pig\rat\louse\hawk\ etc.
2. Rita is a mouse\cat\vixen\bitch\etc.

Each one of the above names is associated with certain traits of that particular animal, e.g., 'hawk' is usually associated with a person with war-like attitudes. Of course, metaphors of such kinds are drawn from a variety of semantic areas. Metaphoric reference to food is also quite frequent in English, e.g.

3. She's a tart (flirtatious and easily seduced)
4. He's just a creampuff (no strength and stamina).

Abrahams (1972: 123-124) marks the important use of proverbial similes in English which are seen in phrases: 'as sly as a fox', 'like a bat out of hell'. He also notes a multitude of adjectival phrases that are sometimes referred to as proverbial phrases in English, for example, 'a snake in the grass' or 'a bad egg'. The metaphors, proverbial similes and adjectival proverbial phrases shown above are included under the broad term 'folk titles'. They may be simple metaphors or they may be more complex noun phrases which are termed proverbial phrases by Abrahams above. The Khasi folk titles selected for this paper are drawn from other semantic areas beside animals and birds. These include trees, plants, flowers, insects, fish, moon and stars.

Delimitation of the Study

The folk titles taken for analysis here are found in vocabulary lists, dictionaries and in folk narratives documented in books. Only a few of such samples are selected for this study. Folk titles from certain sources have not been considered for analysis in this study, for example:

1. Folk titles as calques translated from Aesop's fable, e.g: *u suri kup snieh langbrot* (a wolf in sheep's clothing).
2. Folk titles whose source is from the Bible, e.g: *u 'lang sait pap* (the lamb that washes away sin).
3. Folk titles which are the result of lexical borrowing such as: *u lar moti* (This is an Indo-Aryan word for jewel).
4. Verb phrases with metaphoric meanings are also not included in this paper since these cannot be categorized as folk titles. For example:
Bam ja khluit - Literally, this phrase means 'to eat steaming hot rice'. Metaphorically, it is a warning against acting hastily.
Kynther jymbuiñ - Literally, this verb phrase means 'to shake the breast'. Metaphorically, it refers to the act of parents disowning their child.

Khasi Folk Titles

A. Plants, Trees, etc.

1. *U 'Bat iam bait:*

(The word 'Bat is a short form of the word *kynbat* meaning herb, *iam*

means to cry, *bait* means easily.) This plant is similar to the English 'touch-me-not' but instead of ripe seed capsules which jerk open it has leaves which fold up when touched. As a folk title, this name refers to an overly sensitive and touchy person who minds any remark which he feels is made against him.

2. *Ka 'Lai nili kit synrum:*

(*Lai* is a short form of *Tlai* meaning 'palm tree', *kit* means to carry, *synrum* means rubbish.) The phrase refers to a palm tree standing in the river bank that has gathered much debris, dirt and rubbish around its trunk as a result of flash floods. As a folk title the phrase refers to an old person who has experienced a great deal of misfortunes and has suffered much sorrow and grief.

3. *Ka Wang bam im:*

(*Wang* is a *taro* which is a tropical plant. It belongs to an arum family with tuberous roots also used for food. The word *bam* means to eat, and *im* means raw.) The phrase refers to a kind of taro-stalk that is edible and can be eaten raw. As a folk title it refers to a person who is naïve and gullible to the extent of being easily taken advantage of by others.

4. *Ka Wang kushu:*

This is a kind of taro-stalk that is not edible and may cause itching in the gullet when eating it even when it is cooked. The phrase refers to a person who is aggressive and rude, unable to get along with anyone.

5. *Ka 'Dong shi mat:*

(*'Dong* is a short form of *tyndong* which means a tube, *shi* means one, *mat* means a joint.) The phrase refers to a bamboo tube where one of its ends has been sliced open. If both sides are left intact, then any amount of water trapped inside the tube would naturally remain. But if one end or joint is removed, then water would spill over whenever the tube is tilted. The phrase refers to a person who could never keep a secret.

6. *Ka Dieng shaiñ doh:*

(*Dieng* means wood, *shaiñ* means mince or chop, *doh* means meat.) The phrase refers to a wooden chopping board used for chopping and minc-

ing meat. As a folk title it describes a person who, in spite of undergoing physical and verbal abuse or any form of ill-treatment from others, chooses to remain quiet and does not feel compelled to retaliate.

7. *U Dieng byllan:*

This phrase refers to sleepers or wooden beams placed at an inclined plane in order to raise heavy objects. Since olden times, the Khasis always erected monoliths (*Mawbyinna*) for religious purposes, in remembrance of renowned persons or to mark an important event. These monoliths were huge stone slabs and were transported from the quarry to the selected site by placing them in wooden boxes and rolling the boxes over wooden sleepers (*Dieng byllan*). On reaching the spot, the prop wood was discarded and the monolith was erected. The phrase describes a man who is befriended by a woman or one who uses his friendship with a man in order to get to someone else close to him.

8. *U 'Peh sylli pam shi wait:*

(*'Peh sylli* is a kind of small bamboo, *pam*, means to cut, *shi* means one, *wait* is a heavy-bladed knife.) The phrase refers to a very sharp spike that is made from a bamboo known as *sylli*. It describes a person who is very intelligent and far-sighted besides being a good orator.

9. *U 'Wai sohlaper pep iew:*

(*'Wai* is a short form of *kwai* meaning betelnut, *sohlaper* refers to small betelnuts, which grow atop the betel tree. Because of its small size and poor quality, it cannot be sold in the market, hence the words *pep* which means to be absent from and *iew* which means market.) As a folk title, the phrase refers to a person who always delays finishing his task till it becomes too late to be of any use to him or anyone else.

B. Animals

10. *U 'Sew bna lat:*

(*'Sew* is a short form of the word *ksew* which means dog, *bna* means to be informed or to know, *lat* means a feast.) The phrase refers to a stray dog which smells good food from afar and runs to any feast to get delicious food. As a folk title the phrase refers to a person who attends any feast

whether he is invited or not.

11. *Ka Miaw bam khun* :

(*Miaw* means cat, *bam* means to eat, *khun* means child.) This phrase speaks of cats which prey upon their own offsprings. As a folk title, it refers to parents who are incapable of providing for their children or to be concerned for their well-being, but instead ill-treat and abuse them, thereby destroying their lives.

12. *U Khla ka wait*:

(*Khla* means tiger, *ka wait* is a sword.) This folk title refers to a courageous warrior, a valiant soldier and a patriot.

13. *U Hati saw kuna*:

This phrase refers to a rogue elephant. As a folk title, it refers to a self-willed and violent person who always refuses to co-operate with, and quickly dismisses the opinion of others.

14. *U 'Si sam khmut*:

(*'Si* is a short form of the word *masi* which means a bull, *sam* means to pierce, *khmut* means nose.) The phrase refers to a bull who is led by a nose ring to go wherever his owner leads him. As a folk title, it refers to a hen-pecked husband who is completely under the control of his wife.

C. Moon and Star

15. *U 'Lur mangkara*:

(*'Lur* is a short form of *khlur* meaning a star.) This is the name given to the brightest star in the sky. As a folk title it refers to a man of good looks and well respected in society, or an eligible bachelor.

16. *U 'Nai khatsaw synñia*:

(*'Nai* is a short form of *bnai* meaning a moon, *khatsaw* means fourteen, *synñia* refers to pitch darkness of the night.) The phrase refers to a full moon resplendent in its full glory in the sky. As a folk title it refers to a handsome young man who has reached marriageable age and earns a good income, or a highly eligible bachelor.

17. *U 'Lur dih duma:*

(*dih* means to drink or to smoke, *duma* means tobacco.) This phrase refers to the tail of Halley's Comet, which appears in the sky as a star emitting smoke from a pipe. This comet appears very rarely in the sky. As a folk title, this phrase refers to a person who is rarely seen by his close relatives or friends.

D. Insects18. *Ka 'Niang kongwieng khlem snier:*

(*Niang* is a short form of *khniang* meaning an insect, *khlem* means without, and *snier* means intestine.) This is a kind of insect whose intestines are said to be filled only with air and which can produce a certain sound continuously. It is usually heard during the autumn season. As a folk title, the phrase describes a person who takes pleasure in blowing his own trumpet without any actual deed to verify his boastful speech.

19. *Ka 'Niang thang doh:*

(*thang* means to burn, and *doh* means flesh.) This is the name of a moth that is always fatally attracted by fire and continuously approaches an open flame unaware of the risk of getting burnt. As a folk title, it refers to a person who does not think before speaking, thus always landing herself in a predicament, facing embarrassment and humiliation for having failed to control her/his tongue.

20. *Ki Khun jynreiñ:*

(*khun* means child, *jynreiñ* means a louse or a body vermin). As a folk title, the phrase refers to children who live off their parents like parasites, by living extravagantly and squandering all their wealth, leading the family to stricken poverty.

21. *Ka Sharyntoh:*

This is the name of the praying mantis. As a folk title, it refers to sycophants who have a bad habit of flattering everyone they meet, expressing their gratitude for kindness shown to them even when no such act of kindness had actually taken place.

22. *U Puit tangkuli kynjih mawsiang:*

(*puit* means a grass hopper, *kynjih* means to jump, and *mawsiang* means a rock.) This phrase refers to a grasshopper that always jumps up high in order to seat itself on the tip of a grass-stalk or at the highest point of a rock but which keeps falling off whenever a strong breeze blows. As a folk title the phrase refers to someone who spends all his time indulging himself in extravagant pastimes without thinking of difficult times that lie ahead.

E. Fish23. *Ka Panshandi dem lor khah:*

(*Panshandi* is a kind of tortoise, *dem* means to lie, *lor* or *halor* means on, *khah* means reeds.) This is the name of a tortoise which keeps peeping out of her shell as if expecting to see something or someone. This folk title is derived from a folk narrative that tells about the way the Moon fell in love with the Tortoise because of her enchanting way of dancing. His family tried very hard to persuade the Moon not to wed the Tortoise so she sent the brightest Star (*U 'Lur Mangkara*) to plead with them on her behalf. But when the Star studied the situation carefully, he understood the problem in the relationship. So he remained in the sky and did not come down to earth. *Ka Panshandi* was very lazy and loved to wallow in the mud. This made her husband very unhappy and he tried hard to change her ways but simply failed in his attempts. At last, he became thoroughly fed up with her and left her for his celestial abode in the sky. Then only did she realize her loss. Since then *Ka Panshandi* always keeps peeping out from under her shell eagerly anticipating the return of her beloved even though he had no intention of returning to her. Such a wife who waits in vain for her estranged husband to come back to her is referred to by the folk title *Ka Panshandi dem lor khah*.

24. *Ki Khun tham:*

(*tham* means a crab.) Baby crabs usually live within their mother's shell, at times devouring her flesh until she dies. As a folk title, this phrase refers to children who are lazy, disobedient and who squander away their parents' wealth, thus bringing much heartache and hardship to the unlucky parents.

25. *Ka 'Kha Ujai:*

This is a kind of fish that spatters its eggs and hence must be sold

cheaply else no one would buy them. As a folk title this name is given to a licentious person who leads an immoral life and has a bad reputation of being cheap.

26. *Ka 'Kha iap saw:*

This is a name given to a fish that has been dried briefly in the sun before it is cooked. As a folk title it refers to a widow who is seeking to marry again.

F. Birds

27. *U Phiang Phiang bam sih:*

(*Bam* means to eat, *sih* refers to filth or rubbish.) *Phiang Phiang* is the name of a green bird which has a crest on its head. This bird has a voice which sounds sweet to listen to. However, it is very fond of pecking its food from debris of rotting flesh and other such rubbish. As a folk title, the phrase refers to a well-dressed good looking person but one who lives a life of debauchery and sexual immorality.

28. *I Sim lai dieng:*

(*I* is a diminutive article, *sim* means bird, *lai* means three, *dieng* means tree.) Literally, this phrase refers to a bird which continuously flits from tree to tree. As a folk title it refers to a person who is fond of going from one house to another in order to gossip about and to meddle in other people's affairs.

29. *Ka Langbyrku sang khyndew:*

(*Sang* means to shun something or someone, a taboo, *khyndew* means ground.) This is a green fruit pigeon which is never seen to step on the ground. There is a folk narrative that relates why this bird shuns stepping on the ground. Once upon a time a widow with two young daughters remarried a cruel man who ill-treated and starved the two children to the point of death. In desperation, they plucked some chicken feathers and inserted them on their own bodies. They then ran round and round the garden until they were able to fly. Thereafter they always rested on tall trees away from their cruel step-father. They swore that they would never plant their feet on the ground again. Their mother searched for them and begged them to come

back home but they refused and blamed her for all their suffering. Since then, the birds were called *Langbyrku* and are said to never step on the ground. As a folk title, this name refers to young women who walk daintily, giving the impression of floating above the ground, being too delicate and fragile to walk on the ground.

30. *U Sim tyngwieng die kmie:*

(*die* means to sell, *kmie* means mother.) This is a bird that resides by the riverside and has a magnificent white crest on its head. This water bird always shakes its head giving the impression of showing off its crest. There is a folk narrative that tells how this bird acquired its name. A long time ago, amidst the annual dance of all creatures, this bird did not have a turban on his head and he desperately wanted to appear well-dressed in front of his friends. So he mortgaged his mother in order to receive a loan to buy his fine clothes but then forgot to repay the loan and to retrieve his mother because he was always engrossed with his beautiful *turban*. As a folk title the phrase refers to a person who is so obsessed with his appearance that he would go to any length to procure costly attire even to the point of bringing his family to ruin.

G. Flowers

31. *U 'Tiew Pathaw:*

(*'Tiew* is a short form of *syntiew* meaning flower, *pathaw* means pumpkin.) This phrase refers to pumpkin flowers, which do not bear any fruit. As a folk title, it describes a man who always takes credit for any progress in society but who actually does not contribute in any way at all to the upliftment of others.

32. *U 'Tiew Pathai khubor:*

(*Pathai* means to emit, to inform, *khubor* means news, information.) This is the name of a flower which gives off its sweet scent even from a great distance. As a folk title the phrase refers to a person who is no longer alive yet is still much talked of and remembered for the good things he had done.

33. *U 'Tiew Dohmaw laiphew na ar jingmut:*

(*'Tiew dohmaw* is a flower that grows in rock crevices, *laiphew* means thirty, *na* or *duna* means less, *ar* means two, *jingmut* refers to the mind,

intellect or wisdom.) This is a small plant whose leaves are dark in colour and are printed in gold pattern. This flower was in earlier times especially preferred by women to wear in their hair. As a folk title the phrase refers to a great and wise person but one who is humble and who leads a quiet life; a philosopher, an intellectual.

34. *Ka 'Tiew Lalyngngi pep shad:*

(*Tiew Lalyngngi* is a Lalyngngi flower, *pep* means to miss or to be absent, *shad* means to dance.) This folk title is derived from a folk narrative that tells about a young woman who was well known for being an extremely good dancer. Once a dance was held in a ground and a very large crowd turned up to participate in it. Everyone was waiting expectantly to watch *Lalyngngi* dance. She, however, took very long time to get ready for the dance. When she reached the venue the dance was over and the crowd had already started dispersing. The people who were still there laughed and mocked at her for turning up in fine dancing attire when the dance was over. In tears and utter humiliation, she ran away and committed suicide in a deep ravine. A beautiful flower grew in that place and is called *Tiew Lalyngngi pep shad*. As a folk title, this phrase refers to a person who takes up too much time in dressing up that she eventually fails to complete any task on time.

Analysis of the Folk Titles in Khasi

Dundes (1968) states: "the collection and classification of oral literature are not ends in themselves. They are only means to the end of analysis. The concern of analysts of oral literature may be with the origin, the function and the form of a given item". In this section of the paper, therefore, an attempt will be made to analyze the selected folk titles under the above three points.

Origin:

From the point of view of origin, the creation of folk titles might have started with an individual but it is through collective efforts that it is disseminated and maintained. Nonetheless, folk titles as forms do not emerge from nowhere; they are contextually embedded in a social structure with clearly stated acceptable norms of behaviour. They are therefore analytically examined according to their various sources.

Firstly, the folk titles that have been taken for analysis here are those derived from nature such as trees, plants, flowers, birds and animals. Nature itself is the repository of most items that are used as folk-titles. Mawrie in his *Ka Pyrkhath U Khasi* (1972 rep. 1994) has examined how nature has inspired man to reflect on certain traits and characteristics in fellow human beings. A Khasi always lives in close affinity with nature. This is seen by the way s/he imaginatively personifies animals, plants, trees, flowers, fish and birds to reflect those traits and characteristics of people. He walks along the bank of a river and looks at an old, gnarled and twisted palm tree with rubbish, dirt and debris clinging to its rough bark. He then sees not the old palm tree anymore but an old person trudging wearily in life, battered and embittered by one bitter experience after another. Hence, the name *Ka 'Lai nili kit synrum*.

He then turns his eyes to the ground and looks not only at tall and impressive majestic trees but a small plant peeping at him from amongst the many other herbs and grass. He touches it and it folds up and he sees not the touch-me-not plant any more but a person who is overly sensitive and withdraws to himself whenever he feels any remark is made negatively against him.

The humble *taro* plants which flourish during the summer but which dry up and die in winter to produce yam inspire him to see with his mind's eye two opposite types of characters: the *taro* which can be eaten raw as a naïve and gullible person; the *taro* which aggravates itching when eating its cooked stem is seen as a bad tempered and aggressive person.

Bamboo at one time was very important to the Khasis. From the time a baby was born, the umbilical cord was cut off with a sharp piece of bamboo and when people died, their funeral bier was usually made of bamboo. Traditionally, tubes of big bamboos are used for fetching water from springs and other water sources. One has to be careful in handling them; otherwise the water would spill over before it could be emptied into pots and jars. A Khasi looks at the bamboo tube with one of its joints sliced open to keep water and sees a talkative person who could never keep any secret. Like the water that spills from the bamboo tube, secrets pour out uncontrollably from the person's lips. The sharp spike that is made of the small bamboo *sylli*, on the other hand, reminds him of an intelligent and far-sighted person who is also a good orator.

The wooden chopping board seems to patiently bear the repetitive chopping and mincing action of the meat cleaver. His mind's eyes see a

person continuously and unfairly harassed but one who bears the harassment and humiliation without retaliation.

The discarded *Dieng byllan* (Serial No 7) after the monoliths are erected seems to stand for what is called a cat's paw, befriended and then discarded by his lady love for his best friend.

The betel-nut (*U Kwai*) is very important in Khasi cultural life. It is needed in feasts, festivals, marriages, social visits, and when a person dies, he or she is said to have gone to eat betel-nut in God's house. Yet the last betel-nuts that grow in the tip of the betel tree branches are very small and fetch no prize in the market. A Khasi sees in *U 'Wai sohlaper* a person who is never able to complete his or her task until it becomes too late to do so.

The same is the case with many other objects or creatures he sees in nature – whether they are animals, birds, fish or flowers.

Secondly, some of these folk titles have been derived from popular folk narratives. The four folk narratives discussed above have been documented in books by various authors. As was the case of folk literature that has been handed down through generations by word of mouth, there are variations and differences in their details. Gatphoh in his *Ki Khanatang Bad U Sier Lapalang* (1937) describes *Ka Panshandi* as a tortoise which could dance so gracefully in the annual gatherings of creatures that she captivated the Moon's heart and he fell deeply in love with her. His relatives opposed their relationship and warned him not to marry her. She then sent *U Lur Mangkara* as her mediator to plead her case with them. *U Lur Mangkara*, however, did not do as she requested him to when he realized that the relationship was doomed from the start. He did not communicate with her any further but remained in his celestial abode in the sky. The relationship between *Ka Panshandi* and the Moon of course ended in disaster and he left her for good. Nevertheless, *Ka Panshandi* kept hoping that her lover would return to her and that is why she kept craning her neck from within her shell to look expectantly for his return. Elias, in his *Ki Khanatang U Barim* (1937), presents a lengthy narration of this love affair. According to him, *Ka Panshandi* was an ugly, dirty creature who loved to wallow in the mud. In the pitch darkness of the night, *U Mangkara*, the brightest star in the sky saw her looking longingly at the stars in the sky. He came down with his wealth, his gold and married her. This made her proud and arrogant and even lazier than before. He tried to get her to change her ways but could not do so. In the end, when he realized that she would not listen to him at all, he

packed his bags and left her for good. She then wept and begged him to come back to her but he was resolute in his decision. Therefore, *Ka Panshandi* kept pushing her head out of her shell to look expectantly at the sky for her husband's return but in vain.

The details of the story presented by the two authors may be different for, after all, the story was transmitted by word of mouth and the narrator may have embellished the tale here and there. Nevertheless, the theme remains the same and the meaning of the folk title *Ka Panshandi dem lor khah* is also the same.

The other folk titles which were derived from folk narratives are *Ka Langbyrku sang khyndew*, *U Sim Tyngwieng die kmie* and *Ka 'Tiew Lalyngngi pep shad*.

Thirdly, cultural practices can also be the source of folk titles. *U Dieng byllan* as a folk title is derived from the cultural practice of erecting monoliths, a very important aspect of the Khasis in the olden days. Huge stone slabs on lying or standing positions are still found throughout the length and breadth of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Even to this day people avoid demolishing them as they are usually associated with some important religious rituals or which mark some important historical events or to commemorate famous personalities. Lyngdoh, in his *Ka Niam Khasi* (1937), describes how these huge stones were carried from the stone quarry. If the distance between the quarry and the selected site was considerable, the stone would be put in a box made of wood or bamboo called *Ka Po* and then the box was rolled over wooden sleepers. Once the stones were erected both the box and the sleepers were discarded, hence the use of *U Dieng byllan* as a folk title.

Functions:

Many folklorists have highlighted the manifold functions of oral literature. Allan Dundes (1968) in particular has pinpointed the functions of oral literature as to educate, amuse and promote group solidarity. He is also of the view that by analyzing the content of oral literature of a culture, one can obtain information about themes and topics which are of great importance to members of that culture.

The main functions of oral literature highlighted above appear to be generally applicable to Khasi folk titles.

Folk titles seem to fulfill a moralizing function. The Khasis value good

moral conduct and social etiquette very highly. As in many societies, elders would be concerned if they notice any undesirable and socially unacceptable attitudes and behaviour of younger members of society. They would then make it a point to teach, instruct and inculcate what they consider important cultural and social values to them. They have at their disposal many ways of doing so: they can address them directly and teach them these values or they can instruct them in a more indirect and impersonal way through proverbs. They also know the effective power of folk titles to shock their hearers into realizing how improper or inappropriate their action or behaviour is in society. Having said so, the nature of the folk titles in the list above suggests that their moralizing function is not confined only to young members of the society. They are meant to create an awareness in one and all, irrespective of whether they are young or old, male or female, the acceptable social behavioural norms that are crucial for the smooth conduct of all social interaction. Some of the folk titles presented above are related to family relationship. One in particular warns parents to take their parental responsibility seriously and not to play with their children's welfare and future prospects (*Ka Miaw bam khum*). Many of the folk titles teach children to love and respect their parents, and not to bring sorrow and hardship to them particularly in their old age (*Ki Khun tham, Ki Khun jynrein, Ka Shapuloit*). Many of the folk titles generally warn people of excessive vanity (*U Puit Tangkuli kynjih mawsiang, U Sim tyngwieng die kmie, Ka Niang Kongwieng khlem snier, Ka 'Tiew Lalyngngi pep shad*); of being too gullible (*Ka Wang bam im, U Diengbyllan, Ka Diengshaindoh*); of sycophancy (*Ka Sharyntoh*), etc.

Folk titles also reflect positive values that need to be emulated. Wisdom and humility as important values are personified by *U Tiewdohmaw laiphew na ar jingmut*; *U 'Tiew pathai khubor* refers to a person who quietly performed good deeds which are noticed by others only after he is gone.

Folk titles are powerful means of instructing acceptable social conduct. They are always packed with a powerful punch. Telling someone that it is not proper to attend all and every feast especially when one is not invited is not as effective as using the folk title *U 'Sew bna lat* because of the unflattering image of a stray dog sniffing for discarded food in any festive occasion.

Folk titles are also a means of expressing people's wit and humour. The Khasis are, in general, a very fun-loving people. Their love of jokes and

laughter result in witty remarks, some subtle while others not so subtle. A good but gullible person who is constantly taken advantage of by others, who never learns to be wary, is jokingly referred to as *Ka Wang bam im*. The humorous expression of *U 'Bat iam bait* to refer to an overly sensitive person easily offended by remarks which are not even intended for him is another example of this. Other folk titles that reveal the people's love of wit and humour are: *Ka Dongshimat* (a babbler), *U Diengbyllan* (cat's paw), *U 'Si sam khmut* (a hen-pecked husband), *Ka 'Niangthangdoh* (a moth fatally attracted to fire), *Ka Kha Ujai* (a person with a bad reputation), *U Phiang Phiang bam sih* (an immoral and licentious person), *I Sim lai dieng* (a gossip-monger), *U 'Tiew pathaw* (a braggart) etc.

Wit in itself is a result of the creative use of language and the folk titles show the creative manipulation of phrases to perpetuate and maintain *Ka Akor Khasi* (good manners).

Folk titles as figures of speech including metaphors also make a language more decorative in its expression.

Structure:

All the folk titles selected for analysis are primarily nouns. However, some of them have a more complex structure as noun phrases. The structure of the folk titles can be discussed under the following categories:

1. Article and Noun

- (a) *Ka Sharyntoh* 'praying mantis'
- (b) *Ka Shapuloit* 'small lark'

2. Conjunctive and Genitive Compounds of Nouns

The first constituent of a compound determines its word class. The noun is always the first constituent of the selected folk titles. Hence all of them are noun phrases. The single inverted comma before the noun indicates that its short form is used and as seen in the list above many nouns in Khasi compounds have shortened forms. Examples of conjunctive and genitive compounds are the following:

- (a) *Ka 'Kha Ujai* 'Ujai Fish'
- (b) *U 'Tiew Pathaw* 'pumpkin flower'

- (c) *U Khla ka wait* 'warrior'
 (d) *Ki Khun tham* 'young ones of a crab'

3. Nouns with Attributive Adjectives

- (a) *Ka Wang kushu* 'inedible taro plant'
 (b) *U Dieng byllan* 'wooden sleeper'

4. Compound of Nouns with Verb Phrases

The basic word order of a sentence in Khasi is subject-verb-object (SVO) where clitics *u\ka\iki* normally occur before the subject, the verb (for agreement) and also before the object. However, the structure of these folk titles follows that of a compound where the clitic is not found before the verb and the object. Linguists have analyzed such structure in Khasi as object incorporation as seen in the following structure:

- (a) *U 'Sew bna lat* 'greedy person'

The structure of the full sentence would be:

<i>U</i>	<i>ksew</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>bna</i>	<i>ia</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>lat</i>
M	dog	M	hear	OBJ	F	feast

'The dog knew of the feast'.

Other examples of this type of compound are:

- (b) *U 'Lur dih дума* 'Halley's Comet'
 (c) *Ka 'niang thang doh* 'fire moth'
 (d) *Ka Langbyrku sang khyndew* 'ground-shunning bird'
 (e) *U 'Tiew pathai khubor* 'sweet-scented flower'

Another important point here is the use of the article before the noun. As seen in the data above, four articles are used before the folk titles, namely, masculine '*U*', feminine '*Ka*', diminutive '*I*' and plural '*Ki*'. These articles denote the gender, person and number of a noun.

Standard Khasi has a basic two gender system whereby nouns are either assigned a masculine or a feminine gender by the use of the articles

'*U*' and '*Ka*' respectively. The third article '*I*' is generally used as a derivational mechanism to indicate diminutives or politeness. The article '*Ki*' is used to indicate plural number. In the list given above, all folk titles except three are preceded either by '*U*' or '*Ka*'. Two of the three exceptions have the plural '*Ki*':

- (a) *Ki Khun jynreiñ* 'the young ones of a body louse'
 (b) *Ki Khun tham* 'the young ones of a crab'

The other exception is the use of the diminutive article '*I*' in '*ISim lai dieng*', (literally, a bird hopping on three trees). The diminutive article may be used to indicate politeness, endearment or contempt. In this instance, the article is seen to indicate contempt.

Almost all the folk titles are preceded either by the article indicating masculine gender '*U*' or by the one indicating feminine gender '*Ka*' whether these are animate or inanimate beings. The question may also arise whether '*U*' '*Sew bna lat*' refers only to males and '*Ka*' '*Dong shi mat*' only to females.

When one looks at the gender system of Khasi, one notices that the language has both natural and grammatical gender. Grammatical gender is seen in the way gender is assigned to animals as well as inanimate beings not based on natural gender. The species of trees, plants, herbs are usually assigned a masculine gender. Animal species such as dog, elephant and tiger are assigned masculine gender. Fish, cat, insect as species are, on the whole, assigned the feminine gender. However, as in the case of many species, certain birds, particularly the ones with a crest on their head, are usually assigned a masculine gender. One could say that folk titles whether prefixed by a masculine or feminine article may apply to male or female persons since the assignment of gender is purely grammatical to species of animals and to inanimate objects.

Nevertheless, natural gender always over-rides grammatical gender where humans are concerned. Therefore, the folk titles preceded by the masculine article would be more likely to be used to refer to males. Some of them like *U*' '*Si sam khmut*' (Serial No 14), which means a hen-pecked husband, can obviously be used to refer only to a man. Similarly, the folk titles preceded by the feminine article are more likely to be used to refer to female

persons. In particular *Ka Panshandi dem lor khah* (Serial No 23) and *Ka Tiew Lalyngngi pep shad* (Serial No 24) generally refer to women.

Diachronic observations on Khasi folk titles:

Finally, there is one more point to be made regarding the use of folk titles in Khasi. Bascom, as cited by Dorson (1972), regards “verbal arts” as the creative composition of a functioning society, dynamic not static, integrated not isolated, central not peripheral components of the culture. The modernization of society at times results in change or even disappearance of some genres of oral tradition. With regard to language, in particular, it is found that secondary or transferred meanings are not as well-defined as conceptual meanings. They are apt to vary from age to age, from society to society. They are relatively unstable, that is, they vary considerably according to historical periods and the experiences of the individual.

On examining the use of Khasi folk titles, it is found that some of them are becoming obsolete among younger Khasi speakers. For example, the use of the folk title *U Dieng byllan* is difficult to be understood by many young speakers. This is probably due to the fact that the act of transporting monoliths over wooden sleepers is not practised anymore. On the other hand, the use of the chopping board (*Ka Dieng shain doh*) as a folk title is clearly understood by all speakers as this item is constantly in use especially in meat markets.

It is also true that many new folk titles not yet included in dictionaries are fast gaining popularity among Khasi speakers. For example:

(a) *U Piat* (onion). This is an ingredient that is used in almost all Khasi dishes, boiled or curried meat, stewed or fried vegetables, mixed salad, etc. As a folk title, it refers to a person who actively participates in all kind of social activities or organisations, sometimes ones whose objectives are the very opposite of each other.

(b) *U Khra pei*: Literally the phrase refers to a leaking earthen pot. As a folk title, it refers to a person who is totally addicted to alcohol, one who drinks from early morning to nightfall.

In conclusion, one can say that the study of folk titles shows how folk creativity finds expression in the metaphoric use of language.

REFERENCES

- Abrahams, Roger D. 1972. "Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions". In Richard M. Dorson (ed), *Folklore And Folklife: An Introduction*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bars, E. 1973. *Khasi-English Dictionary*. Shillong: Don Bosco Press.
- Dorson, Richard M. 1972. *Folklore And Folklife: An Introduction*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Dundes, Allan. 1968. "Oral Literature". In James A. Clifton (ed), *Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Elias, H. 1941/1980. *Ki Khanatang U Barim*. Shillong: Don Bosco Press, Shillong.
- Gatphoh, Primrose. 1937/1980. *Ki Khanatang Bad U Sier Lapalang*. Shillong: Ri Khasi Press.
- Gatphoh, Primrose. 1941/1980. *Ki Umjer Ksiar*. Shillong: Ri Khasi Press.
- Islam, Mazharul. 1985. *Folklore: The Pulse of the People*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- Kharkongor, I. 2002. *Ka Dienshonhi*. Shillong: Mrs. Darkos Nongkhlaw.
- Kharmawphlang, Desmond L. 2000. "The Urban Folk Speech of Shillong". *Journal of Indian Folkloristics*, 2(1), January-December Issue.
- Laitflang, W. 2004. *Katto-Katne Shaphang Ki Katto-Katne*, Thup II. Shillong: Kong Hesila Pyngrope.
- Lyngdoh, H. 1937/1990. *Ka Niam Khasi*. Shillong: Desmond P. Reade Diengdoh.
- Mawrie, Barnes L. 2001. *The Khasis and Their Natural Environment: A Study of the Eco-consciousness and Eco-spirituality of the Khasis*. Shillong: Vendrame Institute Publications.
- Mawrie, H.O. 1972/1994. *Ka Pyrkhat U Khasi*. Shillong: Lyngwiar Press.
- Singh, Nissor. 1904/2004. *Khasi-English Dictionary*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Singh, Nissor. 1906/2004. *Hints on the Study of the Khasi Language*. Guwahati: Mrs. D.Syiem.
- Singh, U Rabon. 1998. *Ka Kitab Jingphawar*. Shillong: Mrs. Beaulah Lyngdoh.

Book Reviews

Reverend Robert Evans, *The Great Earthquake of 1897 in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills*, translated by Basil Morris, NEHU Publications, Shillong, 2003, pp. xvii-40, Rs. 95.

The earthquake of 12 June 1897 struck shortly after 5 pm. It is believed that this was the most devastating earthquake to have struck these parts of the country in recorded history. Its epicentre in all probability was somewhere in the Khasi hills. So calamitous were the tremors, so devastating the effects it had on the land with hundreds of deaths resulting from its intensity, that it has been called the "great earthquake". The Richter scale was not in operation then, but descriptions of the severity of the tremors give us the impression that it was intense, "Category A" in the parlance of the time. Natural calamities such as this have left their imprint in human memory. Many Khasis who experienced the disaster calculated their age and those of their children using the date of the earthquake as a reference. A new and safer form of house construction "the Assam type," became preferred to the earlier stone structures introduced by the colonial regime after that earthquake. So marked was the imprint of this great earthquake that exactly a hundred years after it struck, the people of Shillong, if not elsewhere in the Khasi hills too, were gripped with the fear of another devastation, as if natural calamities return at the centenary!

The paperback booklet under review is a translation of an account of the great earthquake written by Reverend Robert Evans, a missionary of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Presbyterian Mission in the Khasi Hills - 1878-1901. Written in Welsh and published soon after the incident it describes, the account has gone unnoticed outside Welsh church circles till the translation of it into English by Basil Morris. The introduction to the translated publication and the translator's note provides an account of how Morris got interested in locating the original text and getting it translated for publication by the North-Eastern Hill University Publications. The account has seven very short chapters. The first "God and Earthquake" gives a Christian perception of why natural calamities strike. The second chapter will be of more interest to the lay person, as it gives an account of previous earthquakes in the region. One would have hoped the third chapter to have gone into the details of what occurred that fateful late afternoon. This is a disappointment as it gives

a very sketchy account of the disaster. The next chapter narrates the natural effects of the incident while the fifth section provides the spiritual effects in its aftermath. An interesting section in the last but one chapter contains the experiences of several witnesses of the earthquake. The last chapter provides events connected with the natural disaster, particularly the devastation of Shella village on the south face of the Khasi hills.

To those familiar with the accounts of the 12 July 1897 earthquake, this booklet is a welcome addition to the existing literature on the subject. However there is nothing very significant of the account it attempts to recapture. Much more details are found in the official report of the earthquake published by the Government of Assam. Other Catholic and Presbyterian missionary accounts have been written with more empathy for those affected than the tribulation of god as Robert Evans projects. Another interesting and more humane account but little used source is the diary of Hajom Kissor, the founder of the Unitarian Church in the Khasi-Jaintia hills. In part it will be this stiff evangelical portrayal of the cause and effect of the earthquake which will deter its use as a more reliable account of the quake.

David R. Syiemlieh

Professor of History, North-Eastern Hill University

Vehicles of Grace and Hope: Welsh Missionaries in India 1800-1970, edited by D. Ben Rees, William Carey Library, no place of publication stated, 2002, no price indicated, pp. iv, 259, paperback edition.

The last of the Welsh Presbyterian missionaries left the Khasi-Jaintia Hills in 1969 following the decision of the Government of India that all foreign missionaries leave the region. Though the missionaries who laboured in these parts of the country have periodically returned and their church leaders continued the connection, it was wearing thin until interest was sparked with the television programme and publication of Nigel Jenkin's *Gwalia in Khasia* in 1995. Since then the exchange between Wales and the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, "their biggest overseas venture" has grown in a variety of ways. One way has been the publication of literature in Welsh, English and Khasi on the connection.

D. Ben Rees' edited work under review is a welcome addition to the literature on the subject. A minister of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, he has researched and written widely on the Welsh missions to the Indian sub-continent. With the support of other church persons he has been able to present a ready reckoner on each of the missionaries who came to India under the Welsh Presbyterian Foreign Mission, as it was then called, the Baptist Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society and some independent missionaries. The volume was compiled for three reasons: his response and reaction to some Welsh TV programmes on the missionary work in North East India; that the work should be ecumenical in nature to include the efforts of denominations other than the Welsh Presbyterians; and to include those who kept the witness in Wales as far as India was concerned.

India, according to the editor, has been in the psyche of the Welsh since the 18th century. This comes out very clearly in the sheer number of their missionaries, among other, who came to India. The biographical accounts of the missionaries are arranged in alphabetical order with large sections given to the more common of Welsh surnames, the Evans, Jones, Williams and Thomas. The name of the authors of the sketches is indicated below the list of references used for drawing up the life of these Welsh missionaries to India. There are entries too on the missionary societies, the presbyteries, some of the larger churches and their mission fields.

The author has however not given much attention to the role the Khasis and Mizos played in the growth of the church in these hills. There are entries on only a few of their pastors and church elders which makes me think that in time it would be a useful exercise were someone to focus attention on the "native". Apparently the author and his collaborators were not in touch with persons in their former mission field. This has resulted in a number of errors in spelling of names of persons and places. The photograph on the front cover which is the only photograph used, shows the last of the Welsh missionaries in the Khasi hills with church elder. (The note at their front piece wrongly indicates that the missionaries were with students of the Khasi-Jaintia hills.)

Church historians, missiologists, persons linked with the ongoing

programmes of the churches in North East India which trace their origins to the Welsh Missions, and readers in Wales are sure to find Ben Rees' *Vehicles of Grace* a useful text.

David R. Syiemlieh

Professor of History, North-Eastern Hill University

Anil K. Rajvanshi, *Nature of Human Thought: Essays on Mind, Matter, Spirituality and Technology*, Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute, Phaltan, 2005, Rs.100/-.

In *Nature of Human Thought*, Anil K. Rajvanshi explores the nature of human thought. He hopes to add to the already existing enormous amount of knowledge on this exciting subject. He believes that remarkable phenomena occur due to the interaction of human thought and material surroundings. He argues that since human thought is produced by brain, it must be physical in nature. Therefore, he comes to the rather uncommon conclusion that human thought is controlled by scientific laws. What are these scientific laws? Finding an answer to this significant question is the avowed purpose of writing this book. An ingenious conceptual framework is proposed by the author to show the intimate relation between deep thought, space, time, matter and universal consciousness. He makes use of the latest brain research and cosmology. He admits that his ideas are conjectural. He is not deterred by this since he believes: "The black magic of today is often the science of tomorrow".

The author has arranged his essays under three sections, namely: basic theme, deep thought and more, and spirituality, technology and sustainability. The first section contains the philosophy of human thought and its interaction with matter, and also the interrelationship of time, space and universal consciousness. It deals with the concept of death and reincarnation, which never fails to arouse the curiosity of people. The second section deals with the fruition of deep thought, while the third with spirituality and technology, which are considered to be effective tools of sustainability. The first section consists of five interrelated essays, while the second and third

sections consist of seven essays each, which take up certain individual issues.

The author bases his thoughts on Patanjali's *Yoga Darshan*, which he considers to be a definitive and scientific writing on the control of human thought.

The author has his own definition of spirituality. He says: "Spirituality is nothing else but understanding ourselves and the laws of universe through the tools of science and technology". (p.59). I have serious difficulties in accepting this 'scientific' definition of spirituality. It seems to me to be completely one-sided, ignoring deliberately the crucial religious dimension of spirituality.

But the topics dealt in this book are not only interesting, but also contemporary. It is extremely readable. It is written in simple and straightforward style. The Sanskrit words and scientific terms are made understandable by giving their meanings in English and simple explanations. The drawings go a long way in making one understand complicated scientific notions. Notes and references are elaborate and very useful. The author's sense of honesty and integrity is exhibited clearly, when he talks about himself with candour. Some of his experiences seem to be surreal. He has a wonderful gift for telling stories. His careful observations, recommendations to school children, suggestions and conclusions are worth considering, especially his recommendation to the students of professional courses. He says very insightfully: "There is a general tendency among students of professional courses to give a step-motherly treatment to humanities but I believe study of such subjects gives one a well-rounded education. Hence I feel that humanities should form a compulsory part of the curriculum in all professional colleges" (p. 85). The author tries to practise what he preaches. There is a certain charm and directness about this book.

Anil K. Rajvanshi has a degree in mechanical engineering from IIT, Kanpur and a PhD from the University of Florida, USA. He has been doing research in the areas of renewable energy, rural and sustainable development and spirituality. It is no wonder that he has been attracted strongly by Mahatma Gandhi and his "experiments with truth" since he was a devoted adherent of sustainable living. His essay on "Mahatma Gandhi, A votary of sustainable living" is worth reading for its clarity, strength and conviction.

The author ends his preface to the book by wishing "Happy reading and thinking". I wish the same for the future readers of this book. I hope that

many such readable and knowledgeable books will come out of the 'stable' of this young scientific thinker of modern era. This book is available from Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute, Phaltan-Lonand Road, P.O. Box 44. Phaltan-415523, Maharashtra, India.

S.C. Daniel

Department of Philosophy (formerly), NEHU, Shillong.

DECLARATION

Form IV Rule 8

1. Place of Publication : Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003
2. Periodicity : Biannual
3. Printer's Name : Deputy Director, NEHU Publications
Address : Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003
4. Publisher's Name : Deputy Director, NEHU Publications
Nationality : Indian
Address : Bijni Complex, Shillong - 793003
5. Editor's name : T. B. Subba
Nationality : Indian
Address : NEHU Publications, Bijni Complex,
Shillong 793003
6. Name and Address : North-Eastern Hill University,
of individuals who own the Permanent Campus, Umshing,
journal and partners or Shillong- 793022
share-holders holding more than
one percent of the total capital

I, T. B. Subba, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

T. B. Subba

Indexed in the Guide to Indian Periodical Literature

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

1. All contributions should be sent in electronic form as well as hard copy printed on A4 size paper in double space and with adequate margin on the left side. Notes and references should be numbered in Arabic numerals, with details provided as endnotes. The title of the paper, the author's name and address should be typed on a separate cover-sheet. Telephone & fax numbers and e-mail ID's, if available, should be provided.
2. Non-English words should be italicised or underlined. Spelling should be British. Quotations should be reduced to a minimum and where used should be put under double inverted commas or indented. Quotations of more than 50 words from published or copyright sources should have the permission of the author / publisher enclosed with the manuscript.
3. Contributors shall be given a copy of the journal. Those interested in reviewing books or have received review copies from publishers should write to the Editor with some indication of their field of specialisation.
4. Contributions accepted for the journal are not normally returned. Authors are therefore advised to keep a copy of their articles to facilitate reply to any queries, the Editor and / or referee(s) may have. All articles, book reviews and enquiries should be sent to the Editor, NEHU Publications, Bijni Complex, Shillong- 793003 at tbsubba@nehu.ac.in.

The responsibility for the facts stated and opinions expressed is wholly that of the contributors and the Editor and the North-Eastern Hill University Publications accept no responsibility for them.