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Editorial

With January 2004 issue *The NEHU Journal* enters the second year of its publication. During 2003, the year of its birth, we at the editorial office were successful in obtaining the ISSN for the journal, getting the editorial board approved by the Governing Body of the University Publications, and starting the process of vetting every manuscript at least by one outstation referee. We sent a manuscript to a second referee only when we thought that the first referee had not been fair to an author, but from the next issue we intend to send the manuscript, including book reviews, to at least two referees. Honestly, this might not always be possible, for we still need to solicit articles from friends and acquaintances, but we shall at least try and get back to the contributors for various clarifications, if and when necessary.

We begin this year with a regret about not being able to utilise the services of our very able copy editor, but are happy to announce that we have now an assistant editor who is on a full-time job related to the journal. With his editorial assistance, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih, the Associate Editor, and I, hope to be able to pay some attention to the promotion of the journal both within and outside North-East India, which we realise is as important as raising its standard.

As we wish you all a very happy 2004, we would like to request you to kindly send your valuable articles, review essays, book reviews and academic reports for possible publication in the journal. We would also like to inform you that though we have revised our subscription rates, they are still much lower than the actual expenses involved in the publication. We shall be ever grateful if you consider patronising the journal not only by contributing to it academically but also financially by subscribing to it.

T B Subba
Editor

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A Lexico-statistic Study of Khynriam and Lyngngam Dialects of the Khasi Language

K S NAGARAJA

During the 60s and 70s of the twentieth century, American linguists Morris Swadesh and Robert Lees developed a method, which was used to estimate the time separation between two languages or speech forms on the basis of the number of shared native lexical items (cognates). This method helps to determine the rate at which a language has changed over centuries. It aims to work out the length of time (divergence) that has elapsed between any two related languages. *Glottochronology* is the name of the method and *lexicostatistics* is the name of the technique applied.

Khynriam or Sohra dialect is the *lingua franca* of the Khasi hills, whereas people inhabiting the strip of a sandwiched region between the West Khasi Hills and Garo Hills speak 'Lyngngam'. Due to its geographical location, socio-cultural and agricultural practices besides the classical biological characterisation of the population, the ethnic identity of the Lyngngams is disputed as some studies suggested that they belong to the Austro-Asiatic Mon-Khmer speaking linguistic family. Hence the Lyngngams are categorised as a Khasi sub-group and their dialect as one of the Khasi dialects. Others opined that morphologically and socio-culturally they resemble the neighbouring Garos. Still others are of the view that the Lyngngams are a hybrid population resulting from the intermarriages between the neighbouring Khasi and Garo tribes. Finally, some suggest that they are a separate but independent population distinct from both Khasis and Garos.

Nevertheless the earliest linguistic study compiled in Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India* (1928) and later studies confirmed that these two speech forms are very close to one another and a comparative study of them will naturally lead us to reconstruct a common ancestor or ancestress language or dialect (Nagaraja 1996). Thus the Lyngngam dialect, including the Khynriam, Pnar, Bhoi and War dialects, has been established to be Austro-Asiatic and Mon-Khmer in origin and not Garo language, which belongs to the greater family of Tibeto-Burman speakers prevalent throughout North-East India.

In this study an attempt was made to determine the possible time of separation from the common/parent speech form of Khasi and Lyngngam adopting Swadesh's method for which a 200-word list was taken (see Appendix I). First a list of comparative vocabulary was provided, followed by a discussion as to the determination of the number of possible cognates and non-cognates along with the problems involved in it. The most difficult part of this enterprise is in determining whether an item is a cognate or not. First of all entries 5 and 81 and 46 and 146 have same forms. So, instead of counting them separately, only two of them will be taken for consideration. Thus, the items (words) get reduced to 198 from 200. As change is natural for all natural languages (speech forms), one can observe many changes between these two speech forms. On the same basis, absence of change or presence of identical forms in both languages is considered to be a sign of later development.

The given word list provided various problems in determining cognates. There are basically two types of entries:

(1) Cognates, i.e., those having certain differences between them numbering 87.

(2) Non-cognates numbering 111.

Within the second group there are three sub-types (a) those which are phonetically unrelated, numbering 71; (b) those which

have identical phonetic shape in both the speech forms, numbering 30; and (c) those having partial similarity, in 10 entries. In some of these the similarity is in the first part of the word and in some in the second part. As it is difficult to decide whether these are really cognates or not, they have been treated as non-cognates. These are with a question (?) mark. The basic premise in considering those entries having identical forms is that the sameness must have come about due to borrowing from one language to another at a later time. So, they have been treated as non-cognates. (Items like 3, 12, 15, 34, 38, 39, 50, 56, 57, 62, 68, 70, 79, 84, 86, 88, 101, 108, 115, 127, 129, 137, 144, 154, 166, 169, 175, 176, 180). In languages where there are no written records that could be used to verify the validity of this hypothesis. This stand at least helps in eliminating most of the later borrowings. This step obviously pushes back the separation time by many centuries.

Once the number of cognates and non-cognates is identified, a calculation is done using the following formula. In this calculation, a basic assumption will have to be made regarding the rate of retention of cognates over years. For this kind of calculation, scholars have assumed a rate of retention of 80.5% for one thousand years. So, the formula:

$$t = \log C / (2 \log r)$$

Dividing 87 by 198 gives a ratio of cognates at 43.9% or .439 (as per logarithmic table). This is the value to be taken for C in the calculation of time depth formula.

$$t = \log .439 / (2 \log .805)$$

The logarithm of .439 is .823 So, .823 / (434) = 1.89 M.

This states that these two languages became separate some 1.89 millennia back. It is extremely difficult to provide the exact time, as inclusion of even a single non-cognate word in the cognate list or exclusion of even a single cognate word from the cognate list can change the time perspective by almost two hundred years.

So, in order to make it more reliable, a range is provided rather than the fixed time. Also, a margin is provided to take care of the possible errors. It can be (as in statistical studies) at different levels, like 7/10 confidence level, 5/10 confidence level, etc. Taking the first position, in this case, a range can be provided. That is – plus or minus two hundred years; i.e. 2.09 M to 1.69 M. So, it tells that at the latest fifteen hundred years back these two speech forms must have separated from the common ancestor.

In spite of the inherent limitation of this method, it throws some light on the past stages of these languages. That information itself is of some significance. More the number of cognates between the languages compared, they will be closer to each other. Swadesh was fully aware of the limitations of this procedure. But he argued that there must be a balance between the forces that maintain uniformity in language and those which encourage fluctuation, and pointed out that it is possible to obtain ancillary evidence from the dating methods used in archaeology. Certainly the approach has generated many interesting hypotheses about early language states and the relative chronology of modern languages, and several scholars still use it in their work – if only because no alternative technique has been devised (Crystal 1987).

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Appendix I

	Gloss	Khasi	Lyngngam	Remarks
1	all	baroh	prok	C
2	and	bad	nam	NC
3	animal	mrad	mrad	NC
4	ashes	dpei	?pau	NC
5	at	ha	he	C
6	back	dien	baddon	NC
7	bad	sniew	kïncha	NC
8	bark	snep	snie?	C
9	because	namar	amte	NC
10	belly	kpoh	l uba	NC
11	big	heh	kïmba	NC
12	bird	sim	sim	NC
13	bite	dait	kïnnap	NC
14	black	ïong	ïnño?	C
15	blood	snam	snam	NC
16	blow	pyrsad	phïnnur	NC
17	bone	shyieng	c?e?	C
18	breathe	ringmynsiem	ri? ïnsom	C
19	burn	thang	ïntha?/thïnn??	C

20	child	khun	khon	C
21	cloud	lyoh	l?o?	NC
22	cold	khriat	bïnsir	NC
23	come	wan	lïnnar	NC
24	count	ñiew	chïnnan	NC
25	cut	khap	khïnnap	C
26	day	sngi	s?gei	C
27	die	ïap	ñinnap	C
28	dig	tih	tïnniet	C
29	dirty	jaboh/jakhlia	dïmmut/jïmbait	NC
30	dog	ksew	ksu	C
31	drink	dih	dïnniet	C
32	dry	rkhiang	ri??kho?	C
33	dull	isih	josmoit	NC
34	dust	pum-pum	pum-pum	NC
35	ear	shkor	l?kur	C
36	earth	khyndew	kmi??	NC
37	eat	bam	bïnn??	C
38	egg	pylleng	pïllï?	C
39	eye	khmat	khmat	NC
40	fall	hap	e?gai	NC
41	far	jngai	j?gi	C
42	fat-grease	sngaid	ïmmir	NC
43	father	kpa	pa	C

44	fear	sheptieng	tie?dait	NC(?)
45	feather	sner	snir	C
46	few	khyndiat	tah-diat	C
47	fight	ïashoh/ïadat	yamu?	NC
48	fire	ding	?doñ	C
49	fish	dohkha	kha	C
50	five	san	san	NC
51	float	per	ra?	NC
52	flow	tuid	sïn-toid	C
53	flower	syntiew	sïnteu	C
54	fly	her	kïndei	NC
55	fog	dum-lyoh	nio?gnia	NC
56	foot	kjat	kjat	NC
57	four	saw	sau	NC
58	freeze	shohthah	tï??gam/ bïnsier	NC
59	fruit	soh	su?	C
60	give	ai	ïnnai	C
61	good	bha	mïrrhia?	NC
62	grass	phlang	phla?	NC
63	green	jyrngam	sï?gi??	C(?)
64	guts	snier	snor	C
65	hair	sñiuh	sñi?k	C
66	hands	kti	ktei	C
67	he	u	jutu?/umi	NC

68	head	khlieh	khli	C
69	hear	sngap	s?gu	C
70	heart	klongsnam	klo?gsnam	NC
71	heavy	khia	kenba?/khïnnia	NC
72	here	hangne	hani	C
73	hit	tied	uda?	NC
74	hold-take	shim	thom	NC
75	how	kumno	na?gnet	NC
76	hunt	beh(mrad)	wu?gna	NC
77	husband	u tnga/u lok	kora?	NC
78	I	nga	n?	C
79	ice	thah	tha?-?lli?	NC
80	if	lada	lede	C
81	in	ha	he	C
82	kill	pynïap	pïnñap	C
83	know	tip	he?k?n	NC
84	lake	pung	pu?	NC
85	laugh	rkhie	ïllom	NC
86	leaf	sla	sla	NC
87	left-side	diang	tïmmi??	NC
88	leg	kjat	kjat	NC
89	lie	thok	thïlloit	C
90	live	im	ïnnim	C
91	liver	dohnud	nod	C(?)

92	long	jrong	jïrro?	C
93	louse	ksi/jynreiñ	sïlliet	NC
94	man-male	shynrang	khonkora?	NC
95	many	bun	bon	C
96	meat-flesh	doh	meim	NC
97	mother	kmie	gma	C
98	mountain	lum	dom	C
99	mouth	shyntur	gap	NC
100	name	kyrteng	kïrte?	NC
101	narrow	bakhim	(bakhim)	NC
102	near	jan	j?gan	C
103	neck	ryndang	kra?	C(?)
104	new	thymmai	thïmmai	NC
105	night	miet	s?nñu	NC
106	nose	khmut	leumut	C
107	not	em	ïnji	C(?)
108	old	rim	rim	NC
109	one	uwei	uweu	C
110	other	kiwei	marber	NC
111	person	briew	br?	C
112	play	lehkai	khellai	C(?)
113	pull	tan	rïnnie?	NC
114	push	khynñiad	kïncheu	C(?)
115	rain	slap	slap	NC

116	red	saw	?nsau	C
117	right-correct	dei	deu	C
118	right side	mon	tïm-mon	C(?)
119	river	wah	por	NC
120	road	surok	twar	NC
121	root	tynrai	tïrrai	C
122	rope	tyllai	la?gnai	NC
123	rotten	pyut	jïllit	NC
124	rub	kyrshut	kïrchut	C
125	salt	mluh	maluk	C
126	sand	shyiap	ch?iap	C
127	say	ong	ïnno?	C
128	scratch	trud	tïrrut	C
129	sea	duriaw	duriau	NC
130	see	iohi	mujo?	NC
131	seed	symbai	jellei	NC
132	sew	suh	sïnnek	C
133	sharp	nep	ïnta?	NC
134	short	lyngkot	tïïmban	NC
135	sing	rwai	rï?gwi	C
136	sit	shong	cho?	C
137	skin	sniehdoh	snie?meim	C(?)
138	sky	bneng	brei	NC
139	sleep	thiah	ïnñiñ	NC

140	small	rit	doh-dit	NC
141	smell	sma	ïnnau	NC
142	smoke	tdem	ïnthak	NC
143	smooth	jlih	jïmpai	NC
144	snake	bseiñ	bseñ	NC
145	snow	ïor	yor	NC
146	some	khyndiat	ta?-diat	C(?)
147	spit	biah	jïrtheu	NC
148	split	phiah	thïlla	NC
149	squeeze	khem	khïnnim	C
150	stab-pierce	dung	dane?	C
151	stand	ieng	ñi??	C
152	star	khlur	khlor	C
153	stick	dieng	?di??	C
154	stone	maw	mau	NC
155	straight	beit	lïmphar	NC
156	suck	kjit	kïnjok	C
157	sun	sngi	s?gei	C
158	swell	at	ïnnat	C
159	swim	jngi	jïnnai	C
160	tail	tdong	kdo?	C
161	that	katei	ga-tei	C
162	there	hangthie	gatho?	C
163	they	ki	gni?	NC

164	thick	rben	rïmbin	C
165	thin	stang	sïnta?	C
166	think	pyrkhat	pïrkhat	NC
167	this	kane	ga-ni?	C
168	thou	me/pha	mi/phi	C
169	three	lai	lai	NC
170	throw	kawang	lïntheu	NC
171	tie	teh	tïnnak	C
172	tongue	thylliej	thïlloit	C
173	tooth	bniat	moiñ	NC
174	tree	dieng	di??	C
175	turn	kylla	kïlla	NC
176	two	ar	ar	NC
177	vomit	prie	pïrrau	C
178	walk	ïaid	dinni?	NC
179	warm	syaid	ïnšit	NC
180	wash	sait	sait	NC
181	water	um	gum	C
182	we	ngi	yeu	NC
183	wet	jhieh	jimbait	C
184	what	kaei	umet	NC
185	when	lano	mïnnet	NC
186	where	haei	hanet	NC
187	white	lieh	?lli?	C

188	who	mano	y?t	NC
189	wide	ïar	ïni?r	C
190	wife	tnga	konthau	NC
191	wind	lyer	l?iar	C
192	wing	thapniang	thapnir	C
193	wipe	ñiad	innat	NC
194	with	bad	nam	NC
195	women	kynthei	raukmau	NC
196	Forest	khlaw	l?ut?p	NC
197	worm	wieh	wiak	C
198	you	phi	phyau	C
199	year	snem	snim	C
200	yellow	stem	sïntim	C

Book Review

Elizabeth Dell (ed), ***Burma: Frontier Photographs: 1918-1935***, James Henry Green Collection, Merrel Publishers Ltd, London, 2000.

The British presence in the Brahmaputra valley loomed large from 1825. This thinly populated, little exposed, and highly forested region was destined to be the pioneer tea plantation of the empire. The tea industry attracted numerous fortune seekers, influential industrialists and even some British bureaucrats preferred planting tea bushes to serving the empire. These potential tea-growing areas were also the play fields for the various tribes in search of slaves and trophies of human skulls. These tribal raids in the later British tea growing territories led to numerous pacification expeditions to the hills resulting in carving out of the various hill districts as loosely administered 'excluded areas'. That is how Garo Hills, Mikir Hills, Naga Hills and Lushai Hills districts were created in the province of Assam by the turn of the nineteenth century. Through the same process the northern triangle of Upper Burma, soon to be known as Kachin Hills, were carved out as a distinct administrative arrangement in 1895 in the northernmost part of the British Indian Empire. The book under review refers to the region, its resident Singphos of classical British ethnography (now Jingphaw) and their past heritage.

James Henry Green (1893-1975) was a soldier of the British Indian Empire in its waning period. He joined the Burma Rifles as its recruitment officer and worked up to 1935 in the 'Excluded Areas' Kachin Hills, northern Burma. He left Rangoon (now Yangoon) in 1937 for Singapore to take up the post of military intelligence officer. After the fall of Singapore in 1942 during the World War II, he returned to London, where he remained for the next ten years in the British Foreign Office. He was a photographer

par excellence, who used classical ethnographic technique as a tool for military intelligence and recruitment. In course of his nearly twenty years of stay in the Kachin Hills, he took numerous photographs, collected ethnographic exhibits, and wrote his tour diaries containing priceless data on the lives of the people and events of the region. The James Henry Charitable Trust placed 1600 photographs, 200 textile exhibits and diaries with the Royal Pavilion, Library and Museum, Brighton, England for up keep and research. *The Burma: Frontier Photographs: 1918-1935* is based on photographs and accompanying texts, spread in five chapters and contributed by four scholars. These chapters are lavishly illustrated with appropriate photographs from Green's collection. The book contains 230 photographs of different sizes, a priceless collection of photographic album running into 90 pages. Biographic note on J H Green, bibliography and index at the end enhance the utility of the book for the readers.

Elizabeth Dell in her 'Introduction' to the book, titled "Mapping Burma: the James Henry Green Collection of Photographs", found that the photographs formed a part of a particular unequal transaction between peoples, and stand as a record of those transactions and points of contacts. They also have a life and meaning beyond intentions, skill, luck and vision of the photographer and as archival evidence they are witness to an era, events and institutions long gone by (p.9). As a recruiting officer with the Burma Rifles he travelled to remote northern hills previously unmapped by Europeans. His fascination with the people of the region aroused a life long interest culminating in a fellowship of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1928, and a diploma in Anthropology from Cambridge University in 1934 on "The Tribes of Upper Burma North of 24 degree N and Their Classification". He studied the nuances of the customs, beliefs, languages and physical attributes that distinguished neighbouring groups and recorded these according to the anthropological practices prevalent in those days.

On the basis of Green's archives of notes, diaries, speeches, publications and photographs, the volume under review records his role as military intelligence officer and an amateur anthropologist, his observations on peoples and collection of artifacts—specially textiles. Green's photographs should be seen in the line of photography as a tool of descriptive ethnography and as a part of the colonial anthropological heritage since 1860s, which began with E T Dalton's *Descriptive Ethnography of Bengal*. This ethnographic collection of strong visual record of Kachin State also highlights the tension between the past and present of Kachin people engaged in negotiating the place of these records within the contemporary construction of their national identity. Burma proper was administered as a province of India and frontier areas were identified as 'excluded areas'. Even in 1935 the residents of this region had not heard of Burma or Burmans, leave alone of India. Green was aware that many of the ethnological problems were baffling, but thought that "a study of physical anthropology, technology and mythology will solve a good many of them" (p.15). Physical attributes were clearly of importance in recruiting 'types' for military as well as for racial classification of the people, a pet project of the colonial days. He advocated a general knowledge of the culture of people to be of greater importance to the administrators than that of the language.

The strongest part of Green's photographic collection is the portraiture, though there is little in his diaries or route notes that refers directly to the process of capturing images of people. The images of people show Green's interest in physical types, their costumes and their evolution. He was clearly a product of his time and of beliefs and motivations of the empire. His Anthropology, like his photography, was in harness to his official role in military surveillance and control. However, the images collected in the book can point to an understanding of modern construction of identity, nationhood and unity as they are analysed, incorporated, rejected or used as evidence in contemporary Burma. After all, Green's is

part of a tradition of ethnographical documentation through photography, which stretches back to mid nineteenth century. That was the time bulky camera was considered indispensable documentary tool for the benefit of colonial ethnography and useful to the administration.

It goes without saying that publication of the *Peoples of India* between 1868 and 1875 containing 500 photographs of racial, ethnic and caste types was part of an ideology to tabulate, synthesize and ultimately control the culture of India in the aftermath of the mutiny of 1857-58. In spite of the individual photographers' skill to overcome the limitations imposed by the cumbersome camera, the photographs were invariably unsatisfactory: "the people always seemed nervous, their expressions were invariably stupid or stolid and they posed very unwillingly". By 1920s the camera was improved to the extent that its intimidating size was reduced; its portability was increased and its intrusive features were minimized. But by then science of ethnography itself had changed and thus postures and intimacy of camera began to be questioned.

David Odo notes that Green's images attest to the unprecedented access he had to his subjects. Perhaps he was the first European to encounter many of the people he had photographed and studied. Through out the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries photography was largely considered a simple recording, truth revealing, mechanism. Photography played a major role in Salvage Ethnography of the period and much of Green's work can be located within this tradition. Heavily influenced by existing anthropological paradigm of race and evolutionism many of his images are of the homogenizing and dehumanizing 'physical type'. "This is evident from large number of images in which body functions as an object of study. His photograph of two Naga men is one the more extreme examples of this position (No. 0625). Two men are posed in naked and are shown in full length... it nevertheless reduces its human subjects to mere physical specimen...the men's facial expressions attest to their distress at the time they were photographed. They

are pictured without clothing. The subjects are located in 'nature', employing none of the signs such as material artifacts or built environments, typically used to provide information about cultural context. Rather, it is absence of clothing that here serves as cultural marker, for Nagas were stereotyped as 'lazy', preferring to go naked than weave cloth...We learn virtually nothing of the conditions of their lives from this photograph, rather it is informative of the photographer's intentions and ideology and unequal power relation that enabled Green to create it" (pp. 43-45).

For David Odo, Green's photography suffers from two qualities: dehumanising physical types and images of exceptional intimacy and sympathy. Through these photographs of physical typing not only could the subjects of dying races be studied, but they could also be preserved. For him authority also provided a way to salvage the subjects' culture, which was highly paternalistic. Green did not work within Malinowskian model: rather he favoured close-ups and portraits, posed his subjects and tended to eliminate context from his images. By 1920s, the view that photography afforded an objective window to reality that had largely been discredited. These changes contributed to a decline in the anthropological use of photography, as new anthropology was interested in culture, now constructed, and not as visible.

Mandy Sadan's two chapters on 'Contemporary Context' and 'Documentary Record of Contact' raise the issue of the relevance of colonial anthropology to ethnic groups and nationalities on the one hand, and negotiating a relationship with the animistic heritage by contemporary Christian nationalities such as Kachin, Naga and Mizo on the other. She began her research on a selection of Green's archives in Rangoon in 1996. Kachin State emerged as a political entity after the Burmese independence in 1948 and Kachin identity is itself largely political in origin. However, it was the British who initiated the process in 1895 through the Kachin Hill Regulation, an Act labeling hill tribal villages as 'Kachin' for the use of administration. It is also a fact that Kachin soldiers were mainly

drawn from Jingphaw (Singpho) community besides Lisus and others. In this way, the term 'Kachin' was artificially created, like the word 'Nagas' some two decades before that and an ethno-political composition of six parts such as Jingphaw, Lisu, Maru, Nung-Rawang, Zaiwa and Lacid was imposed on northern Burma.

The world of Green's photographs, taken 75 years back, is not only difficult, but also discomforting and contemporary Christian Kachin nationalists would like to dissociate themselves from their animist past. For many Kachin Christians, their animist cultural context displayed through these photographs can be immensely disturbing. The Kachin theologians frequently cite the oppressive burden of animist rituals as the main reason for their rapid conversion to the Christianity. Against the Burmese attempt to make Buddhism the official State religion, Christianity was drafted as the symbol of Kachin nationalist resistance against the Rangoon regime. Kachin missionaries emphasised on the superiority of Christianity to animism. However, there is a deep-rooted insecurity about how the animist relates to the Christian present and whether such photographs should ever be considered more than simply a record of a degenerate culture. To advance the worth of Green's photographs exposes danger of undermining the foundations of unity expressed through the symbol of Christian faith. Modern Kachin nationalist discourse demands a level of 'standardization' of ethno-cultural uniformity and a level of quality in cultural practices and symbols free from potential ridicule from others. Odo rightly identifies ambivalent interpretations of Green's photographs of the animist past and its role for future (p. 61).

The commonest social and economic opportunities that existed for ambitious Kachin youth in recent years were to enter theological college to train as pastors or priests or to enter K (aching) I (ndependent) A (rmy) as officers. For these young and articulate leaders Kachin identity is a current obsession. In this context, Green's archive seems to offer little towards enabling evidence to them. There are very few Kachins who still believe in animism and

still fewer who practise it. Choosing this as an area of study is to illuminate a world that no longer exists, and few mourn its disappearance. It can also be a potential bone of contention between the past and the present. Green's collection presents a heritage, which is difficult to disown and embarrassing to own up by the contemporary Kachin people.

Green chose to remain a career soldier in preference to a career in anthropology. Green's work in Kachin hills was mainly oriented to military related survey or recruitment or to provide slave-release campaign of the civil administration. The British identified the pre-eminent Kachin socio-political structure as prop to their need in the form of Jingphaw hereditary chiefs - *Duwa*. However, it was not always clear whom to delegate local power as the Duwa, because of conflicting over-lap of institution of hereditary chiefs and hereditary headmen. The case of Duwa Htingna Khuma (p. 74) is an illustration. The British administration would opt for the enhancement of powers of those chiefs and headmen, who could demonstrate willingness to be co-operative. The District Commissioner would stand as Duwa Kaba (great /big chief) to the then Kachin power structure with Union Jack flying atop. Was it not reminiscent of the Red Indians terming the President of USA as the big father/ chief? Here also the administration gets embroiled in the chiefs' demands for communal dues from the Christian villages for animistic festivals as it happened in the Naga Hills District.

Impact of slave-release should have been one the most rewarding exercises for historians and anthropologists with a view to understand the modern Kachin social formations. But for obvious reasons, it is one of the most impenetrable areas of study (p.85) Green's photographs may be seen as one of the personal response to the British encounter to the Kachin primitive world. It was the pattern of Kachin relation building that enabled Green to be intimate and sympathetic to the people. As a result, he developed a uniquely rich heritage of records that is still relevant for a proper understanding

of the lives and vanishing world of the northern Burmese frontiers. A similar situation may be noted from Kachin's western neighbouring Naga Hills, where one finds M/S J H Hutton, J P Mills, Charles Pawse, and Furer Haimendorf empathising with the Naga cause. Green's collection presents a highly romanticising image of tribal life from a distant frontier in to a typical Kipilinsque style of paternalistic approach to simple societies. Inadvertently, the Empire through its omission and commission laid the foundation of nationality formation among the distinct ethnic groups such as Kachins, Nagas and Mizos. In the final analysis, Green clicked his camera for the cause of the Empire, but inadvertently, he contributed to the preservation of the Kachin heritage and priceless source of data for the 'science of man'.

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Temsula Ao, ***The Ao-Naga Oral Tradition***, Bhasha Publications, Baroda, 2003,185 pp, Rs 125/-.

Temsula Ao's study is an attempt to understand the culture of the Ao tribe of Nagaland in North-East India through their oral tradition. The book is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the Ao civilization as oral tradition, textiles and artefacts. Chapter 2 discusses the indigenous Ao society. In Chapter 3 the "authentic" Ao belief system is presented. Chapter 4 forms the main part of the book and presents some Ao myths and tales. In Chapter 5 a large number of tales are given under various headings such as "Transformation tales", "Some animal tales", "Some tales of the Supernatural", "Some other tales", and "Some heroine-oriented tales". Chapter 6 provides some linguistic details on the

Ao language and a few paragraphs on Ao time reckoning, numbers and weights and measures. In the concluding chapter (Chapter 7) a few words are devoted to changes in contemporary Ao society.

The study is based on the author's personal knowledge and experience as an Ao, her frequent field trips to the Ao area and a writing-up phase at the University of Minnesota. It is a thorough and serious study of oral tradition of a small scale but dynamic culture. The book has an important documentary value as it gives a large number of Ao narratives. Being an Ao herself and a Professor of English at NEHU, the author deserves all praise for her sincere effort to gain insight into her own culture. Not being trained as an anthropologist the result of her work is a well-written historical document for which the Aos have to be grateful. It will be of interest to all those interested in Ao culture as well as to linguists and anthropologists.

My perspective in reviewing this work is that of an anthropologist. For me the importance of this work lies in bringing together cultural data and narratives of the Ao tribe by a native speaker. The collection of texts shows a high degree of variation, often subtle, which makes oral tradition so rich, so beautiful, and so relevant for both modern Aos with an interest in their own culture and contemporary anthropologists. The study is a rich source of data, but its analytical framework is weak. For example, the data on society, civilisation and belief system are presented without a connection with those of the stories. The structure of the book, by and large, follows that of the early scholar-administrators such as Hutton and Mills. A truly integrated analysis would have helped in mapping out the original Ao mentality.

In her attempt to grasp the totality of the Ao culture and to make it understandable to contemporary readership, the author imposes two sets of classifications on the data that seems to me arbitrary. The oral tradition is divided into Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. This division presented in the first chapter does not serve

any purpose, not even in the rest of this book. Another division relates to worship and sacrifice. These are classified as "regular" and "irregular". This division also does not add to our understanding. The intention might have been to demonstrate historical developments or the dynamics of the Ao culture. On page 29 Ao society is called 'loosely' democratic in its structure. This is, however, contradicted by the description of the Village Council (*Putu Menden*) as being a legislative, executive and judiciary power all in one institution (p.34) as well as by the existence of patrons and slaves (p.59). The "highly egalitarian society" (p.29) is thus not so egalitarian having slaves and a strict hierarchy of three high and many lower ranking clans.

While a beginning of an integrated approach to culture and narratives is made on page 15ff about names and narratives, such an approach is missing in the presentation of all other myths, legends and tales. In most cases the author's comments do not go beyond a kind of functionalistic comment: the myth is told to justify a particular practice or custom (for example on pages 54 and 56). This is rather surprising for the Select Bibliography mentions the works of Claude Levi-Strauss, Brenda Beck, Stuart Blackburn and A.K. Ramanujan who all have analysed oral traditions with a structural rather than a functional approach.

This is a pity for the author shows great sensitivity while commenting on some myths. Commenting on the belief system, for example, she remarks, "their belief about tiger-souls is more akin to the concept of a person having more than one soul" (p.66). Indeed, the Ao concept of personhood needs to be studied on the basis of their narratives. The Ao view on another important cultural aspect – mortality – lies between the lines of the narratives entitled "A girl who was Lowed by a Tree-Spirit" (p.122) and "Revenge for a Father's Death"(p.135).

This book lies at the junction of two traditions. The old tradition of scholar-administrators is followed in its structure and

descriptive nature. At the same time it falls under a recent tradition of anthropological activities by other than anthropologists. The author frankly states in the Acknowledgement (p.iii) that she is "yet only a tentative amateur". As such she displays an emotional involvement. Striving for objectivity she leans on her training and experience in literary criticism. The lack of anthropological knowledge, for instance, appears in the use of the term patriarchal instead of patrilineal; distinguishing clans as major and minor is not incorrect, but it is a more common anthropological convention to describe their ranking in terms of high/low social and/or ritual status; the observation that the family is the first social unit in any culture (p.43); the absence of information on dates and methods of data collection and the years in which the field trips were undertaken.

Notwithstanding these critical comments, I wish to recommend this book to all anthropologists. I sincerely hope that Professor Temsula Ao will continue her journeys into Ao culture while making them anthropologically stronger so that her desire to "understand the intricate interweaving of the oral tradition with the culture" can be truly fulfilled.

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