CHAPTER 4

TRADITIONAL METHOD OF FOREST CONSERVATION

4.1: Sacred Groves

Nature worship is an age-old practice followed by a number of indigenous communities in India and elsewhere in the world. One such significant tradition of nature worship is that of providing protection to patches of forests (Barik et al., 2006: 1). Sacred groves are the remnants of relict virgin forest vegetation of the area, which is often very much different from the vegetation of the surrounding area. They not only serve as repository of the flora and fauna of the region, but play several important roles in the life of people living in the area. Besides providing large number of tangible and intangible benefits of the people in their day-to-day life, these are the places of socio-cultural activities of the people residing in the nearby area (ibid.: 4). Traditional societies all over the world value a large number of plant species from the wild for a variety of reasons, be it food, fiber, shelter or medicine. Arising partly out of this close human- forest linkage and partly because of animistic belief system of the forest dwelling traditional societies, the protected area of the natural ecosystem in a given region has existed as sacred forest in many societies all over the world (Hughes and Chandran, 1998:869-876).

Man is an integral part of nature. Any impact on nature, therefore, has influence on man. Nature flourishes, man flourishes too. If nature gets destroyed, man is bound to be destroyed. Sacred groves represent the major effort to recognize and conserve ethnic biodiversity in traditional ways. Our fundamental socio-cultural, ethical, aesthetic and economic values are directly and indirectly linked with nature and its biological resources. Throughout the history of agriculture, Indian farmers have been increasing the level of biodiversity in agro-ecosystems. Diversity in genes, species and ecosystem has contributed immensely to the productivity of agriculture. The existence of sacred groves in India most likely dates back to an ancient pre-agrarian hunter-gathering era, and their presence has been documented since the early 1800s. Believing trees to be the abode of gods and ancestral spirits, many
communities set aside sanctified areas of forest and established rules and customs to ensure their protection. These rules varied from grove to grove but often prohibited the felling of trees, the collection of any material from the forest floor, and the killing of animals. Presiding deities administered punishment, often death, to individuals who violated the rules, and sometimes to the entire community in the form of disease or crop failure. As a result of these protective restrictions, preserved over countless years, sacred groves are now important reservoirs of biodiversity (Anubhav et al., 1992: 2). Traditional ethos is reflected in a variety of practices including sacred groves and sacred landscapes (see Deb et al., 1997; Pandey 1996, 1998). In many groves, villagers perform annual rituals and ceremonies to appease the presiding deity and ensure the well-being of the community. It is also common for people to make individual offerings, often in the form of terracotta figures, in exchange for wishes such as good health or harvest or the birth of a child. Sacred groves help to define the cultural identity of the communities that revere and protect them. They are also closely linked to the politics and economies of their communities, and their legal status and management vary among regions and individual villages.

The historical links of sacred groves have been traced to the primitive state of human society. The first instances of Indian traditional conservation of our biological wealth in various pockets of natural forest are often referred to "sacred groves”. In the past, sacred groves were indicators of the phenomenon of ethno-environmental management. Sacred groves are forests that have been protected for ages by traditional societies. In the past, these were present in numerous parts of the world, nearly every continent, and were entities held sacred by communities with different religions and different forms of economic and social organizations. The sacred groves also exist in Ghana, Syria, Nigeria, Turkey and Japan. Most of the world’s sacred groves, unfortunately, have disappeared and only few are reported to occur to date. And yet, some groves have passed down generations and are flourishing in their full form. The hills of the north eastern region (NER) of India are the living testimony of the same. These groves are relatively undisturbed (see Sherring, 1974; Rao and Nayudu, 1979; Ramesh and Pascal, 1997; Ramakrishnan, 1998, 2001; Sinha and Maikhuri, 1998).
In North-East India, there are a large number of sacred groves in the States of Meghalaya, Manipur and Karbi-Anglong area of Assam. These sacred groves were in existence in the region since time immemorial and are considered to be the relic of the original forest vegetation of the region. These are among the few least disturbed forest patches in the region serving as the original treasure house of biodiversity. Over the past one decade or so, a considerable amount of interest has been generated in the studies of sacred groves among the ecologists, taxonomists, foresters, environmentalists and anthropologists. The sacred groves (called as ‘Law Kyntang’, ‘Law Niam’ and ‘Law Lyngdoh’ in the Khasi hills; ‘Khloo Blai’ in Jaintia hills, and ‘Asheng Khosi’ in Garo hills) are owned by individuals, clans or communities, and are under direct control of the clan councils or local village Dorbars/Syiemships/Dolloiships/Nokmaships. The tribal communities of Meghalaya – Khasis, Garos, and Jaintias – have a tradition of environmental conservation based on various religious beliefs. In Meghalaya, sacred groves have persisted through generations due to strong religious beliefs and taboos associated with them. The local people believe that the Guardian spirit or Ryngkew U Basa rest in these forests. It is also believed that the spirits of the dead rest in peace in the groves, therefore, they are considered sacred and left undisturbed (Barik et al., 2006: 1). All forms of vegetation belong to the deity. The local indigenous people believe that the Sylvan deities would be offended if trees are cut, and twigs, flowers and fruits are plucked. Various cultural programmes, religious rites and rituals are also performed in the forests (Mishra et al., 2005: 107). The religious beliefs and myths attributed with the deities preserve a large number of isolated pockets/forest patches (Jeeva et al., 2006: 567). As elsewhere in India, particular patches of forests are designated as sacred groves under customary law and are protected from any product extraction by the community. Such forests are very rich in biological diversity and harbor many endangered plant species including rare herbs and medicinal plants. Among the Gangte tribe in Churachandpur district of Manipur, extensive tracts of land were traditionally not subjected to shifting cultivation, since these were considered to be sacred groves and believed to be abodes of spirits. Mizo tribals have safety reserves and supply reserves around the villages. These safety forests are continuation of the SGs of the pre-Christian period. They also have bamboo reserves called mawmund in Sialkal region of northeastern Mizoram (see Gokhale et al., 1998). In plains and foothills of western Assam, the forest dwelling tribes like Bodo and Rabha have tradition of sacred groves locally called
Than. In Sikkim, sacred groves are attached to Buddhist monasteries called Gumpa Forest Areas (GFAs) which are managed by Lamas.

Since time immemorial, forests have been playing a dominant role in the history of the Nagas. The Nagas are by nature, dependent on the forest land, which is the best means of their livelihood. It is also inseparably interwoven with the progress of the state. Nature worship was practiced and followed by all the tribes in the State. Unlike in many States, the scared groves in Nagaland are unique. Most of the groves are usually small patches of forest fragments of varying sizes, ponds and streams which are mostly owned by individual or the clans and have a significant connotation. There was neither temples, nor shrines or altars or definite cult objects but made sacrifices by offering eggs, fowls, pigs, dogs to please the keeper (spirits) and deities of the site and also to ward-off any evil spirits from harming them. They basically worshiped the spirits without objects and material image. Hunting, collection of forest wealth and logging are usually strictly done by the owners of the grove. Forest was regarded as the seat of the evil spirit and to cut this forest for jhum field, animal was sacrificed necessary to appease the spirit (Nshoga, 2009:220). They also identified the dreaded place in their village, and anyone who ventures to tread the forbidden spot was killed by the spirits. In all the interviews with the locals, the interviewees (see Plate 4.1 and Plate 4.2) gave responses to the specific taboos or actions that prevailed in the recent past. People are not allowed to take anything—hunting, cutting of trees, collecting forest wealth etc., in a sacred grove. People do not harm sacred groves mainly because of socio-religious traditions and fear of unknown, believing that those who cut or use an axe in a scared grove may be harmed or may face consequences by the presiding deity or spirit. These beliefs for ages have strongly influenced conservation of the particular site. The sites not only yield several non-timber forest products but also harbour multiple use livelihood goods, provide habitat, water and nest-sites for wildlife and birds. However, with the coming of Christianity, the religious beliefs and rituals associated with the forest have been declined and are now fast eroding.

Unlike other parts of India, especially the Santals of West Bengal who retained their indigenous beliefs and heritage while superimposing Christianity (Raj, 2007: 243), the Naga religion and culture has been largely replaced by Christianity.
The Christian missionaries made a significant contribution to education system in Nagaland and this played an important role in changing the belief system and their practices of religious beliefs.

4.2: Identified sacred groves in Nagaland
The following are the few sacred groves identified in the present research:

A) MOKOKCHUNG DISTRICT (see Figure 4.2)

i) Jangjalong (see Plate 4.3) (‘Direct communication’): This is a huge stone, rectangular shaped structure perched atop a hillock. It is situated at Waromung village, 64kms away from the district headquarter and is under the Administrative jurisdiction of an EAC, with Alongkima as its headquarter. The exact location of the stone is 2.5 kms away from the village towards the southern side. The site is 922 meters above the sea level and lies between 94°31'05.3" East and 26°32'18.3" North. The stone measures about 180ft on both sides and about 120ft towards the west and 22ft towards east.

The stone is acknowledged by one and all to be the abode of a ferocious spirit possessing great supernatural powers. In the remote past traditional rites and rituals were performed in the area. Hence, the vicinity of the stone was preserved and conserved. The core area is still intact and undisturbed. However, the peripheral area has degraded.

ii) Yimchingkaba: The site is at Lakhuni village, Mokokchung district. The site has wangching (holes/fissures in the ground). The site is believed to be the abode of an evil spirit. Many years ago, a woman was mauled and killed by a tiger, and so the site is regarded as cursed. Hence, the site has been left untouched and the forest preserved. With the advent of Christianity, superstitions and beliefs lost their hold. In mid-1960s, Pangerchiba Langu, along with another family decided to cultivate the site. At the time of clearing the site, they boiled tea in bamboo. Suddenly, the bamboo burst open and scalded Longkumtoshi’s (son of the other family) body nearly killing him. The incident indicated that the site was accursed and that the spirit is still the master of the site. Presently, the area is under cultivation.
iii) **Ngatipang**: The site is about 1km from Ungma village. It lies between 94°30'11.73" East and 26°17'46.73" North. The site has a bamboo grove and a cave known as Jentisang Ki (house). The people worship the Ngati god, Jentisang, from a distance since they revere him. In the past a man while hunting around the bamboo groove saw a porcupine and he tried to hunt it. The porcupine ran inside the Ngati cave and the man chased it to the cave. Upon entering the cave he saw a lady (wife of Jentisang) at the entrance, pounding rice. She asked him why he was running after her 'pig'. The man therefore, returned home without the hunt.

Since the site has a bamboo grove, people go there to collect bamboo shoots (a delicacy of the Nagas). It is said that even now Ngati god sometimes come in the dream of the person who collects the bamboo shoots and ask to return it and at the time of jungle burning for *jhum* cultivation if by chance the fire spreads to the Ngatipang area, the area around the cave does not catch fire. At present the vicinity is under cultivation.

iv) **Ngaza**: The site is 3kms from Ungma village towards Settsü. It lies between 94°30'05.7.84" East and 26°17'42.72" North. The site by nature has stones arranged in the shape of Arju (Morung), which is believed to be the house of the god (Ngaza tsüngrem). The site belongs to Pongen clan. While hunting at the site pogen clan is always blessed with hunt while other clans do not get any. If there is a dispute between two persons from the village and if the village elders cannot not settle it, the village elders and the priest go to Ngaza site taking some rice along with them and perform ritual by putting the rice in two leaves and wrap them, one each for the two. The ritual is performed by asking the god to interfere and give the judgment. After the ritual the priest opens the leave- the leave with the rice disturbed is pronounced as the culprit. People do not frequent the site as they revere the god. It is said that at the time of jungle burning for *jhum* cultivation even if the fire spreads to other areas, the Ngaza area does not catch fire. Presently the vicinity is under cultivation but the core area is undisturbed.

**B) WOKHA DISTRICT** (see Figure 4.3)

i) **Mt.Tiyi** (see Plate 4.4): The importance of the area lie in the fact that the locals believe it to be the place where the spirits of the dead washes their feet on their journey to the land of dead and had been revered and conserved in olden days.
Mt. Tiyi lies above the township of Wokha, 80kms from the state Capital, forming as the main catchment area of the town. It covers an area of about 317 ha. and lies between 94°16'27.55" East and 26°12'32.59" North. Owing to the population pressure and unscrupulous deforestation, there had been a gradual decline in the green cover of the area.

ii) **Potsow lan** (see Plate 4.5) (‘Path way of the gods’): This site is 487 meters above sea level. It is a path way between Mt. Totsu and Mt. Tiyi, under Wokha district and is 28kms from the district headquarter. The locals believe it to be the path way of the Gods. In olden days, due respect was given by not resting on the path and keeping the area free from cultivation. It lies between 94°07ˈ07.2" East and 26°01ˈ31.9" North. According to the locals, the path remains clean and clear all round the year. Even to this day the people preserve the path. However, for the past 10 years, the surrounding area is under cultivation.

iii) **Limyon** (see Plate 4.6) (‘Red field’): The site is at Echuyonton under Wokha district. It is situated at an altitude of 558 meters above sea level and lies between 94° 09ˈ1.6" East and 26°02ˈ06.9" North and The site is 30kms from the district headquarter. The area belongs to Aremo, Asao and Anyimo clans. It is said that in a fight between Mt. Totsu and Mt. Tiyi, Mt. Tiyi decapitated Mt. Totsu and placed the head at Limyon. The dripping blood from the head of Mt. Totsu made the area red. Hence, the people regarded the area as unwanted and unclean. Hence, the area was untouched for a long period of time.

With scarcity of land for cultivation and with the increase in population, in 1953-54 a family cultivated that land and their daughter died. In 1962-63, a widow also cultivated and she too died. Again in 1973, two families cultivated and the consequence was from one family, the father died and from the other, the son. Since then, the area is left uncultivated though the yield is good. However, the surrounding area is disturbed.

iv) **Liko Emvu** (see Plate 4.7) (‘Unclean land’): The site is at Yanphiso, 28kms from district headquarter and is 276 meters above sea level. It lies between 94°19ˈ1.4" East and 26°04ˈ05.4" North. The land belongs to Tsanglao clan. In the upper part of the land, there is a pond and the locals believe that a keeper (spirit) resides there. The area is uncultivated and people do not even trot the area because there
are many instances of people facing negative consequences for setting foot on the land. The land, therefore was regarded as unclean, hence was preserved 8.

v) **Ali-Merum** (see Plate 4.8) (‘Red Soil’): The site is located at N. Longidang village, under Wokha district. It is situated at an altitude of 782 meters above sea level. It lies between 94°28'11.6" East and 26°88'18.5" North. The locals believe that the head of evil spirit (Tsüngrhan) from the North beheaded the evil spirit of the South during a fight. The body was buried in a place called Tsüngrhan Khup (evil Grave) and was covered with slate, which can be seen even today. The people believe that due to their fight red soil came out from the bottom making the area unsuitable for cultivation. At present the area is preserved 9.

vi) **Sako-Selek** (see Plate 4.9): The site is located at N. Longidang village, under Wokha district and is situated at an altitude of 458 meters above sea level and lies between 94°09'22.8" East and 26°02'27.2" North. The place is believed to be the meeting place of the evil spirit (Tsüngrhan). Common people feared to venture in that area. Only the chosen one i.e., a messenger for the living and the dead could visit the site. The messenger used to perform rituals to please the spirit. During their forefathers’ time, the place was covered with thick forest and even birds could not fly out from that place. At present, the area is disturbed due to deforestation 10.

C) **PEREN DISTRICT** (see Figure 4.4)

i) **Ihaingkicia** (see Plate 4.10): The site is situated at Peren village and is 1443 meters above sea level. It lies between 93°44'38.2' East and 25°30'34.6' North. The locals believe that Herabe (spirit) resides there. Therefore, the people revered the area. It is said that during the head-hunting days the spirit protected the villagers from external attacks. There are also many instances of people encountering with the spirit. Though the area was not cultivated, making traps and collection of cane and fire wood was done. Rituals were also performed by offering white cock to please the spirit. At present, the area is moderately disturbed 11.

ii) **Mt. Herapaitu**: It is situated at Peren village and lies between 93°44'16.99" East and 25°30'34.61" North. The legend behind this site is spirit Nchang from the
South-West got engaged to a lady but could not marry her. She married Herapaitu instead. Nchang composed a song for his lady love requesting her to look back to him. People used to see shawls displayed at Mt. Herapaitu, especially in the evening. In the remote past, during Hega festival, when a dancing troop visited this part of the village, they saw the spirit viewing their dance sitting on a tree\textsuperscript{12}. The people therefore, preserved the area as a sign of reverence to the spirit. At present, it is a recreation place. The groom to be usually takes his bride to Mt. Herapaitu, showing that their youth life is coming to an end.

iii) **Mt. Pauna** (see Plate 4.11): It is situated at Peren district and lies between 93°51'35.46" East and 25°35'38.56" North. Locals believe that some unknown factors are controlling the area. If the people want to collect jungle products or cut down a tree, they have to first perform ritual by offering a pig or ill luck will befall on them. As recent as 2012, a family, in spite of being Christians, sacrificed a pig for felling trees. At present, the foot hill of the mount is under cultivation\textsuperscript{13}.

**D) ZUNHEBHOTO DISTRICT** (See Figure 4.5)

i) **Yemetsu Lhove**: The site is located at Mishelili village, under Zunheboto district. It lies between 94°60'09" East and 25°53'28.9" North. The village is under the administrative jurisdiction of an ADC, Pughoboto, Headquarter. The locals believe that a spirit named *Yemetsu* resides there. During the forefathers, days the people of Mishelimi saw the spirit *Yemetsu* coming out from a hole. They closed the hole with a big stone to prevent the spirit coming out to overpower the people. The stone is still intact. No human ever entered earlier. Even to this day, some people fear to go to that place because they believe the place might be still haunted\textsuperscript{14}.

ii) **Sungato**: The site is at Mishelimi village. It lies between 94°15'42.1" East and 25°53'8" North. The locals believe the site to be cursed by the spirit of an angry old woman since her pig was killed and eaten by the people from the Chella clan. In the olden days people feared to go there and the area was preserved. At present the site is a frequent picnic spot for the youth\textsuperscript{15}.

**E) TUENSANG DISTRICT** (see Figure 4.6)

i) **Khinuhanlu** (see Plate 4.12) (‘Dog’s sacrifice place’): The site is situated at Kuthur village, 10kms from Tuensang district, is 1250 meters above sea level,
with coordinates 94°49'20.3" East and 26°00'50" North. Till the recent past, if the villagers wanted to cultivate land, they had to sacrifice a dog to the keeper of the site. If the sacrifice was not made, a member of the village would die. Hence, the site was left uncultivated. However, recently i.e., 2013, construction of a link road has disturbed the area.

ii) **Pelungkechup** (see Plate 4.13): The site is situated at Kuthur village, 10kms from Tuensang district and is 1254 meters above sea level and lies between 94°48'24.7" East and 26°00'00.1" North. The people believe that the king of devils, *Akokoba* reside there. In the recent past, no one ventured into the surrounding area. The villagers believe that whosoever hear any noise or sound coming from this place, death is inevitable for that person. Hence the site is neither inhabited nor disturbed.

iii) **Khaiknohanlu** (see Plate 4.14) (‘Pigs sacrifice place’): The site is situated at Kuthur village, 10kms from Tuensang district and is 1254 meters above sea level, lies 94°50'20.7" East and 26°00'40.4" North. Owing to growth in population and with limited land for cultivation, the area has recently been brought under cultivation. Rituals are performed by offering pig, ginger and wine to please the keeper. Once rituals are over, it is said that clearing of the site to be cultivated has to be completed that day itself, else death will be brought upon the family.

iv) **Wonoshiyeh**: The site is located at Kuthur village, 10kms from Tuensang district. It lies between 94°49'37.88" East and 26°00'3.53" North. All the year round, birds come to drink water to this stream. It is said that only the brave go towards the stream to hunt for birds. If a person, after killing birds takes rest in others’ fields, ill- luck befalls on the owner or in most cases the owner dies. The inhabitants of the area says that whenever people go for hunting to the stream, the keeper disturb them by throwing stones at them. Till to this day the vicinity is not disturbed.

v) **Meiksuk-ke** (see Plate 4.15) (‘Abode of jealous spirit’): The site is at Chessor village, 56kms from Tuensang district and is 1225 meters above sea level, lies at 94°45'31.2" East and 26°00'40.2" North. The locals believe the site to be the devil’s village. It is said that the devil rear livestock and can even hear the devil’s call to pigs to come and feed. With development and growth in population, the site has come under cultivation. However, pig sacrifice is done. Sacrifice is performed...
by the head of the Lims clan. Due reverence must be given while performing the sacrifice, failing which the owner of the land will face consequence in the form of death. At present even though the site is under cultivation, locals believe that the keeper still reside there. In June 2013, Murthung a native of the village died after coming back from the site and villagers believe that the keeper of the site cut off his head20.

vi) **Longkhunpit** (‘Stone hole’): The site is at Chessor village, 56kms from Tuensang district and is considered sacred by the locals. It lies between 94°43'5.78" East and 26°04'49.96" North. The significance of the site is the presence of a stone with a hole. After the sowing, if there is no sufficient rainfall, one or two elders from the Khephuru clan goes to the site to evoke rain. Stone chips and mud mixed with water on a bamboo mug is thrown on the stone. After performing the ritual, they cover their head with banana leave and chant, ‘Arilo’ (let the rain be with us). However, if rain catch them before they reach home, they die. On 18th June 1986, Shokhemba was sent to evoke rain, since rainfall was late that year. He was successful in performing the ritual, but unfortunately he was caught by the rain and the following day, he passed away21.

vii) **Asheru Long Khean** (‘Path of spirit of the Dead’): The site is located at Chessor village, 56kms from Tuensang district and lies between 94°43’27” East and 26°04’53.7” North. The locals believe that all dead spirits pass the site. The area, therefore, considered unclean, remained untouched till the recent past. It is said that the spirits take their livestock along with them and while crossing the site, hit a stone with a spear, then goes to a pond (Asheru Lonrike) and takes bath to free itself and to affirm that they no longer belong in this world. In this pond, strands of hair are found which is believed to be of the spirits. The spirits then proceed to a tree and take rest. Here they tie up all the animals they had carried with them before they depart for the other world. At present, the site is disturbed due to human interference22.

viii) **Mihshe jin** (‘Path way of the Arimre’): The site is at Chessor village, 56kms from Tuensang district. It lies between 94°43’12.08” East and 26°08’7.18” North. According to the inhabitants, conversation of Arimre (devil) and cries of babies can be heard from the site. Legend has it that during a fight among the Arimre,
Rishila was killed and buried there. No trees or vegetation grows there and the site remains bare all year round. Hunters rarely go to the vicinity of the site to hunt. Even if they go, they do not find their prey. Also, even if they do find a prey they do not find their kill.

ix) **Wohnu-ya** (‘Abode of birds’): The site is at Sotokur village, 33kms from Tuensang district and is 1222 meters above sea level. It lies between 94°47'05.7" East and 26°08'05.2" North. The site has a pond. Locals believe that spirit/keeper of the pond heals/cures the sick. A Thümürü (Witch) performs the rituals by taking some ginger and rice from the sick person. At night Thümürü takes the offering to the keeper of the pond. Owing to population pressure the area is used for cultivation. However, the owner of the land has to perform ritual by killing a dog to please the keeper.

x) **Moyit ke-chih** (‘Mountain cut in the shape of a tail’): The site is at Sotokur village, 33kms from Tuensang district. There is a pond on the foot of the mountain. People do not drink the water from the pond because it is believed that it is the abode of the Arimre (Satan). Moreover the area around the pond is covered with thick forest growth that it is difficult for the people to get access to the pond. The pond remains clean all year round. It is believed that the Arimre keeps the pond clean. At present, the area has been disturbed due to construction of link road.

xi) **Shih Yeanyung**: The site is situated at Sotokur village, 33kms from Tuensang district. The Limkhiung Kheiungru clan has the sole right to get all the wealth from the site. Even the keeper (spirit) of the site blesses only the clan members if they hunt in the area. Other clans out of fear to invite trouble/consequences do not venture into the site. Till recently, the site was revered. However, at present the vicinity is under cultivation.

F) **MON DISTRICT** (see Figure 4.7)

i) **Oloanu** (see Plate 4.16): The site is at Zakho village, Mon, and lies between 95°05'58" East and 26°49'20.20" North. There is a pond, where the level of water remains constant. Locals believe a spirit reside there. Till recent years, the vicinity was kept untouched. During winter months, the water turns reddish in colour.
Locals say that if the water remains reddish for 2-3 months, there will be no rainfall. During World War-II, the British used the pond to dump their arms and ammunitions. After the war, they tried to retrieve them, digging drainage to drain the water out. Before they could dry out the water from the pond, one British officer dreamt that they have to give offering to the keeper - six black cocks and six white cocks, which was interpreted as six men from the village and six British. The British therefore gave up the idea of retrieving their arms and ammunitions.

If rainfall is late in a particular year, people throw stones to evoke rain. If the villagers want to clean the pond, they have to fast for three days. In late 1970s, Pongting from Sangyu village laid trap on the drainage dug by the British to catch fishes. He was warned by the elders not to do so, but he did not listen. He suddenly fell sick. He was carried home and died after reaching the village. In 2004, some youth from the village were cutting down a tree. While cutting the tree, it fell to the pond. As a consequence, the village got heavy rainfall accompanied by strong harsh wind. The church and six houses were destroyed by the storm. At present too, no one collects anything from the pond, but the vicinity is under cultivation.
End notes

1. As narrated by Kiremwati Aier, 86 years. Retd. Pro-Vice Chancellor, NEHU and Alemchiba Ao, 85 years; Waromung village, Mokokchung District during an interview conducted at their respective residence at Kohima on 11/10/2014. Also see J. P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, 1926.

2. As narrated by Rev. Dr. Toshi Langu, 64 year; Lakhuni village under Mokokchung District during an interview conducted at his residence at Kohima on 05/10/2014.

3. As narrated by C. Yashikaba, 75 years; Ungma village under Mokokchung District during an interview conducted at his residence at Kohima on 03/10/2014.

4. Ibid.

5. As details given by Supongnuksi, IFS.

6. As narrated by Nchumbemo Tsanglo, 60 years and Renphamo Tsanglo, 48 years; Sankitong village under Wokha District during an interview conducted at their residence on 27/06/2013.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. As narrated by Ntsomo Murry, 86 years and Nyimtsemo Ezung, 83 years; N. Longidang village under Wokha District during an interview conducted at their residence on 26/06/2013.

10. Ibid.

11. As narrated by Chubam, 78 year; Peren village under Peren District during an interview conducted at his residence on 30/07/2013.

12. As narrated by Asiakep Sephe, 53 years; Peren village under Peren District during an interview conducted at his residence at Peren town on 30/07/2013.

13. As narrated by Heisuiding Irangbe, 80 years and Ingimangbe Thoü, 86 years; Benru village under Peren District during an interview conducted at their residence on 31/07/2013.

14. As narrated by Hovishe Wotsa, 89 years, Khupu, 72 years, Tokiye, 54 years, and Khulu, 56 years; Mishelimi village under Zunhubhoto District during an interview conducted at Guanboras house on 12/09/2013.

15. Ibid.
16. As narrated by Shochah, 60 years, Neoji, 61 years, Ritsong, 55 years and J. shokhum, Chairman Village Council, 72 years; Khutur village under Tuensang District during an interview conducted at the village council hall on 12/02/2014.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. As narrated by Throng Kiuba, 2nd Head Guanbora, 67 years; Chessor village under Tuensang District during an interview conducted at his residence on 13/02/2014.

21. Ibid.

22. As narrated by Nokrunba, Head Guanbora, 81 years; Chessor village under Tuensang District during an interview conducted at his residence on 13/02/2014.

23. Ibid.

24. As narrated by Lothrong, 87 years, Dokiu, 46 years and Shobhu, 88 years; Sotokur village under Tuensang District during an interview conducted at Guanbora residence on 14/02/2014.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. As narrated by Nokao, 52 years, Zakho village under Mon District during an interview conducted at his residence on 08/05/2014.