
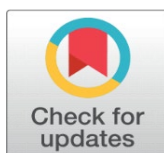


TRADITIONAL WORK CULTURE OF ANGAMI-NAGA AT KIGWEMA VILLAGE UNDER KOHIMA DISTRICT, NAGALAND

Vizotuo Thorie 

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Oriental College, Kohima, Nagaland, India



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Corresponding Author

Vizotuo Thorie,
vizotuothorie@yahoo.co.in

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ABSTRACT

The Angami-Naga community follows a unique practices and traditions which have been passed on from the forefathers from generation to generation. Likewise every village has its own ways of practicing the tradition in different ways throughout the year. The people of Kigwema village under Kohima district of Nagaland has their own oral narratives which has been passed on down to the generations about its identity, stories, histories, practice, festivals, and the work culture followed in the year. The village has its rich traditions, follows the “Nanyü” whose translation is customs on different occasions during the particular time of the year after different completions or starting of any kind of work or practice. It also have its moral code of conduct which is called “Kenyü” its meaning is prohibition where the people are not allowed to do or practice certain work or go out during its application. However, the rich culture has been forgotten and ignored in the modern generation because of various factors. Therefore, the objective of the study is to preserve the rich cultural ethnicity of the fast forgotten practices and traditions and carry forward the good deeds followed maintaining a sustainable environment.

Keywords: Ritual, “Nanyü”, Festivals, Practices, Customs

1. INTRODUCTION

Kigwema village is one of the oldest villages among the Angami tribe under Kohima District of the Nagaland State of India. The village name had been called as ‘Kiwema’ which means occupy a house vacated by its original settlers. It was believed that many villages settled here and spread to other places [Alemchiba \(1970\)](#). The name was change to ‘Ki We’ [Hutton \(1921\)](#) which means old house and in written the name was spelled as Kigwema village. The people of the village belong to the Angami- Naga tribe which is one of the major tribes in the Tenymia

community among the many tribes of Nagaland. Nagaland been known as the Land of Festivals because of its rich cultural diversities, customs, traditions and all round cultural festivals with different tribes having its own traditions of festivals celebrating the uniqueness of its cultural identity and beliefs.

As per the history of the Nagas, Naga villages were independent and their worlds revolved within its village jurisdiction, family, clan and khel. The people followed certain customs and traditions in their daily works and most importantly lived in harmony and with disciplined life. The work culture throughout the year is done accordingly depending on the weather and timing of work practiced with having its own name for each month in a year.

Dr. V. Elwin mentioned in his book [Verrier Elwin \(1961\)](#) that Naga society presents a varied pattern of near-dictatorship and extreme democracy. 'Phichü-ü' which means an elder person or Gaonburas take care of the village activities and cultural practices, celebrations and work culture.

Therefore, in this paper an attempt has been made to bring the beautiful and timely practice of work and the customs followed throughout the year about the people of Kigwema village in particular.

2. KIGWEMA VILLAGE LOCATION

Kigwema village is a village in Nagaland state under Kohima district located in the southern part with its people called as the Southern Angami. The location of the village is 26°35'54.78"N 94°07'20.65"E which is 12 kilometers away from Kohima and is run through the National Highway 2 (earlier NH 39). Its approximate land area is 3700 hectares with around 1500 household and a literacy rate of 83%. The village is predominantly settled by the Angami-Naga people one among the Tenyimia community.

3. WORK CULTURE OF THE VILLAGE PEOPLE

The village followed its own unique practice traditionally in all its work culture throughout the year. Interestingly, the names of every part of the work are given its name accordingly to the timing and kind of work done at a particular stage. This paper shows the various practices, culture, customs followed during the different months and seasons of the year.

Tesekhuhi kü: The year starts with 'Tesekhuhi, which is January month. It is interpreted as the time for plowing of paddy field for cultivation of agricultural crops during the cold winter season which is after the festive seasons of celebrations.

Tsakanyi kü: This is the month of February which is called 'Tsakanyi kü'. It is interpreted as the time of sowing of seeds of the cultivated crops especially rice grains by the 'Tsakau' which is the elder of the village and after the sowing Tsakanyi is celebrated.

Tsati-u kü: Tsati-u stands for the month of March. This name is derived from the culture that after sowing of seeds for various crops is the 'Tsapfü Tsati' which stands as plantation and beginning of preparation for cultivation of crops.

Kinyiu kü: This is the month of April where the word 'Kinyiu' is also called as 'Khutho nyi' which is the time of celebration for starting the work for the plantation of crops.

Cacü kü: 'Cacü' is the month of May which stands as the time for starting of plantation of rice beginning with various customs followed during the month. Firstly, 'Therhase' which is interpreted as a ritual for asking rain for plantation and as per the customs a cock is thrown to a stream namely 'Tepfükuyie' at the boundary of the village. The 'Kenyü' of this custom is that people are not allowed to enter or go out of the village before sunset of the day. This month is also the time of 'Thekhu Shiekü' which speaks of first plantation of rice plant.

Cadiu kü: This is the month of June. 'Cadiu' which is the time of summer where plantation of rice plant is done. During this month, people are engaged in the paddy field work which include terrace and jhum cultivation.

Shünyiu kü: The month of July is called 'Shünyiu' which is interpreted as harvesting of millets and it is the month of festival of millets where a ritual for the harvest which is called 'U wo chükecü' which is interpreted as offering is performed during this celebration. On this particular day, a cock is kept at a place called 'Kiphobole Tsazu' as an offering and people are not allowed to go to the place for the day.

Ayo-o kü: This is the August month. As the name in Angami dialect, 'Ayo-o' which means free and is interpreted as the time of being free from works and relaxation period for the people.

Tekenyi kü: The month of September is called 'Tekenyi'. During this month, the traditional practice of the people is that nearing to the harvesting time of rice cultivation, the name 'Lede' ritual performed by a lady who is called as 'Lede pfü' meaning the elder lady appointed by the village to lead in the custom ritual for beginning of harvesting. In this practice, 'tsaka lede' meaning millets are collected from the village and also from Phesama and Pfuchama village as they migrated from Kigwema village. This ritual is for 5 days and on the fifth day, the 'Lede pfü' will come out from her house and firstly called a name having good meaning in common as in 'Vipizo' meaning good in result. The reason for this custom is asking God to give good weather, health and good harvest for harvesting the plantation crops. This month is added with cleaning of footpaths ways to the field and village areas.

Achie-u kü: This is called the October month. 'Achie-u' its meaning is harvesting. This season of the year is the harvesting time for the rice grains where the name suggested collection of crops from the agricultural field.

Terhünyi kü : 'Terhünyi' is interpreted as the celebration after the collection of all the cultivated crops. This is called the month of November. A practice during this month is allowing the reared cows to go free in the village jungle for them to look for their food in winter.

Sekrenyi kü: 'Sekrenyi' is interpreted as a celebration after completion of the end of yearly works and stands for the month of December. As the name is derived from the word 'Festival', the month represents celebration and merry making time of the year.

4. FESTIVALS CELEBRATED

Tsakanyi: 'Tsakanyi' is the festival of sowing of seeds. The elder person known as 'Tsakau' will take the seeds of the crops of agricultural items to a place and sow the seeds. After that this festival is celebrated.

Kuthonyi: This is the festival celebrated before the beginning of rice grain plantation. Another name of this is 'Kerunyi' the time of asking rain for rice cultivation. At this celebration, locally made wine which is called 'Zu' is taken to the field and people join in group and make merry.

Shünyi: This festival is derived from the harvest of millets (Shütie) plantation. Wine is made from the millets and celebrated as 'Shünyi' festival.

Tekenyi: 'Tekenyi is celebrated by the village people after collection of the first harvest of rice grains.

Terhünyi: As per the tradition after collecting and gathering all the cultivated crops mainly rice grains, a festival is celebrated which is called as 'Terhünyi' and also has another name as 'Tehonyi'. During this time, it is believed that spirit of the deaths roam around their graves.

Sekrenyi: The main festival of the people is 'Sekrenyi' and is celebrated in the month of December. This is in celebration with the completion of all the yearly works and therefore it is a merry time together with rice beer and wine along with meat. The festival is also celebrated as 'Phousanyi' which is referred to as cleansing of body and soul or purification festival. There is custom performed called 'Dzüse va' means male members of the village in early morning on the first two days of the festival go to a place set where water is found, wash their feet, faces and soak the tip of their cloths asking God for blessings and take water and come home. On the third day, a bottle of wine and meat is carried to visit the uncles and aunties of the family. The fourth and fifth day is celebrated with the near and dear ones along with friends. During this festival, people gather together at the respective khel morungs, made bond fires and make merry singing traditional songs and partying together

5. KENYÜ

As per the oral interpretation of the elders, there are some beautiful quotes of 'Kenyü' that is prohibition which have been followed from the forefathers to the present generation. It is considered an important aspect in the culture of the people. According to J.H. Hutton, in his book *The Angami-Naga* elaborated the word 'Kenyü' as not only to the breach of a strict rule of a magico-religious observance or to the breach of a social law, theft for example, but to the most trivial matter of pure utility.

It is 'Kenyü' to call our parents by their name.

It is 'Kenyü' to give vow on false words.

It is 'Kenyü' to disrespect the unsound person.

It is 'Kenyü' to block public ways or footpaths.

It is 'Kenyü' to re-locate boundaries

It is 'Kenyü' to direct wrong way to any person.

It is 'Kenyü' to eat crossed-legged.

It is 'Kenyü' to disrespect elders even at sunset.

It is noted that the village people live in peace understanding each other, lived in morally good life in the fear of God and following the 'Kenyü' rules of the village.

6. CONCLUSION

The people of the village had a straight forward work culture, tradition, customs and practices in which all people followed obediently with good moral behavior. The yearlong practices of the work in plantation as the people of the village were engaged in agriculture divided in such a way accordingly to the seasons and weather conditions were a perfect example of the moral code of conduct. The beautiful cultures and practices are ought to be preserved back in the present generation as it was said that the customs practices were reaching just below the village and it will fast vanish and be forgotten.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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