



CFEL

Research

Newsletter



Centre for Endangered Languages (CFEL)
(A UGC, New Delhi Sponsored Centre)
Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies (AITS)
Rajiv Gandhi University
Rono Hills, Doimukh- 791112

Centre for Endangered Languages (CFEL) Rajiv Gandhi University

The Centre for Endangered Languages (CFEL), Rajiv Gandhi University has successfully completed one year of existence. The unique feature of CFEL, RGU is its multidisciplinary approach. The research team comprises of scholars from linguistics, anthropology, folklore, tribal studies and mass communication. The Centre is at present focusing on survey, documentation, and analysis of the critically endangered languages of Arunachal Pradesh. It is also studying these speech communities in their socio-cultural contexts. In the first year, i.e., 2016-2017, the Centre successfully carried out four field studies and documentation in the remote areas of the state. It also successfully conducted four workshops related to language and cultural documentation. We are planning to publish the research findings in the form of a monograph, and bring out short films from the audio-visual documentation which will likely have academic impact.

Prof. S.Simon John

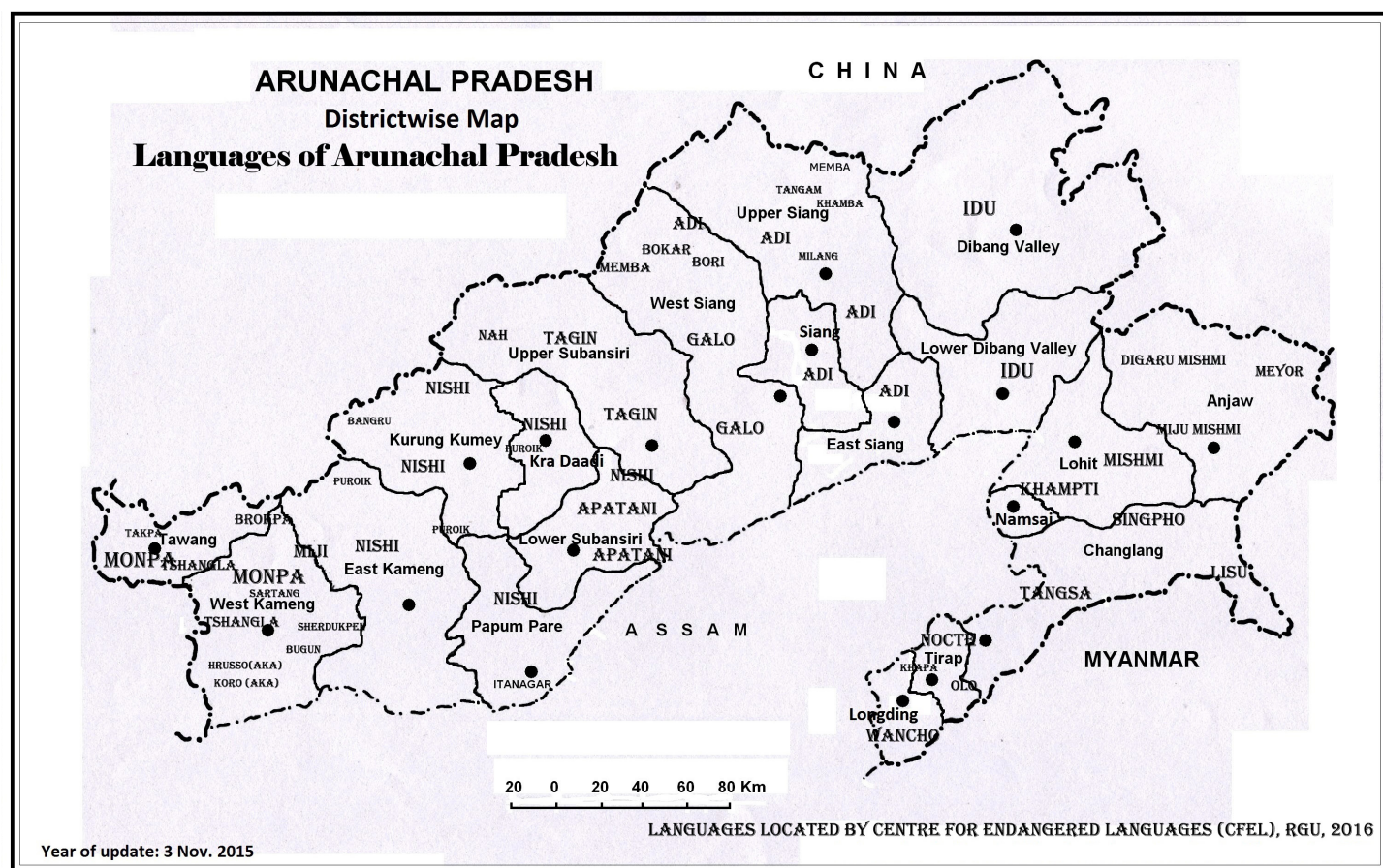
Language Endangerment in Arunachal Pradesh: Current Issues and Future Prospects

■ Lisa Lomdak

Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh is the largest state in the north eastern India which covers approximately about 83,743 sq. kms of land area. The diverse landscape of the state with equally diverse climatic conditions and biodiversity nestles the numerous tribes of Arunachal Pradesh broadly into distinct cultural zones. Out of the total population of state which is 13.82 lakhs (2011,Census) the tribal population constitutes about 66.85 % per cent of the total population. The state is inhabited by one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The ethnic composition of the tribes predominantly belongs to the mongoloid stock.

Fig. I Map depicting Languages of Arunachal Pradesh



Ethno-Linguistic Speech Communities

The languages of Arunachal Pradesh have been classified under the Sino-Tibetan language family and more specifically under the Tibeto-Burman and Tai group of languages. The distinct linguistic groups identified are 1) **Lolo-Burmish** languages like Lisu/Yobin, 2) **Bodhist** languages like Tshangla (Monpa), Brokeh, Khamba, Memba, Meyor, Lishpa, Chugpa 3) **Sal** Languages (Burling, 2003) like Tangsa, Wancho, Nocte, Singpho, 4) **Tani** languages like Apatani, Adi, Nyishi, Galo, Tagin, Mishing, 5) **Mishmi** languages of Idu, Digaru, Miju 6) **Hrusso** language of Hrusso-Aka and 7) **Tai-Khamti** language of Khamtis. Some of the lesser known languages and language varieties of Arunachal are 8) **Sherdukpen**, 9) **Koro** (Aka), 10) **Miji** (Sajolang) 11) **Bugun**, (Khowa) 12) **Puroik** (Sulung), 13) **Milang** (Adi), 14) **Bangru** 15) **Meyor** (Zakharing) and 16) **Sartang** (Boot Monpa). We can list although not conclusively, that till date 32-34 linguistic varieties have been identified as *living tongues/languages* of Arunachal Pradesh. Recent contemporary linguistic research and reconsideration of linguistic evidences have cautioned that some of these languages need to be re-considered as language isolates and not be generalized as being sub group of a grand phyla called Tibeto-Burman languages (Blench, 2011).

Status of the Languages

All the languages of the state are listed in the Non-Scheduled languages of the Constitution. The official language of the state is English and a colloquial variety of Hindi called *Arunachalee Hindi* and Assamese are used as the *lingua franca* by the various speech communities. Scripts like Bhoti and *Lik Tai* scripts belong to the Buddhist group of Monpa (*Hinanyana*) and Khamti (*Theravada*) respectively. Scripts based on Roman alphabets, *Devanagari* and Assamese script were introduced in the state through the Education system. All the Tribal literary societies of Arunachal have mostly developed and adopted modified Roman alphabets to represent their unique phonemes of languages and write down their languages. New scripts like *Tani Lipi*, *Wancho Script* have also been developed by native scholars.

Endangered Status of the Languages

According to UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* (2009) more than 26 languages of Arunachal Pradesh have been identified as endangered languages. On a closer study the degree of endangerment of these languages range from being unsafe, definitely endangered to critically endangered group.

Table No.1 Table showing Population and degree of endangerment of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh

SL. No.	Tribe /Language	Population 2001 Census, Field reports	Degree of Endangerment
1	Tani Languages Adi Tangam Milang Apatani Galo Nyishi Tagin Nah Puroik	1, 62, 000 300 3000 60,000 87, 754 163020 39129 1000 3945	Unsafe Critically Endangered Critically Endangered Unsafe Unsafe Unsafe Unsafe Critically Endangered Definitely Endangered
2	Tai Khampti	12925	Unsafe
3	Mishmi Idu Miju Taraon/Digaru	25161 12000(approx)	Definitely Endangered Definitely Endangered Unsafe
4	Nocte	36299	Unsafe
5	Wancho	47788	Unsafe
6	Khowa (Bugun)	1616	Critically Endangered
7	Monpa	43344	Unsafe
8	Meyor	391	Critically Endangered
9	Miji	6721	Definitely Endangered
10	Sherdukpen	3260	Unsafe
11	Singpho	4539	Definitely Endangered
12	Aka (Hrusso)	5140	Definitely Endangered
13	Tangsa	29538	Unsafe

The table above lists the names and population of various ethno-linguistic speech communities and its distinct regional varieties so that we can comprehend the linguistic diversity embedded within the ethno-linguistic groupings. The figures however do not indicate the actual number of mother tongue speakers of these languages. The multi-layered acceptability of languages of wider communication like Hindi, Assamese and English have caused a major language shift towards the mainstream languages and has resulted in a critical state of language loss of the native languages of the tribal communities. Even the numerically larger tribes like Nyishi, Galo, Mishmi, Tangsa etc. whose population exceed the ten thousand mark are also not safe from endangerment, hence marked unsafe. The classification implies that the younger generation of these tribes especially in the urban areas have mostly discarded the use of their mother tongue and have lost language competency of the language. There is an urgent need to spread awareness and control the risk of language loss. A language becomes endangered when it is on a path towards extinction, when the older generation ceases to pass it on from one generation to another and its speakers cease to use it. It is also reflected in the shrinking of communicative domains of the language use. Endangered languages in some worst cases are spoken only by a few living elders. And with the death of the last speakers the language dies with them. The unwritten status of many languages adds additional dimensions of vulnerability of these languages. Today, there is an imperative need for new policy initiatives, language preservation and documentation to enhance the vitality of some of the most endangered and lesser known speech communities.

Endangerment of the Minor Speech Communities

During the field study (Feb, 2016) conducted on two of the lesser known language groups Tangam (Adi) and Khamba we came across a few glaring facts. The residents of Tuting town (located in Upper Siang of Arunachal Pradesh) mainly comprising of Khamba, Memba and Adi groups posed certain unsettling queries to the research team, “*Are there any Tangams left? Is there a distinct language such as Tangam? It must a code language?*”. The only Tangam village now in existence is called Kugging which is 22 kms away from the small town. We were fortunate enough to cut short the 22 kilometres of steep, treacherous *kaccha* road as we took the ferry across Siang river and got a lift in a tractor loaded with drums containing diesel, which meandered through deep forest, vast paddy fields and river streams of mighty Siang. During the course of the journey, we did wonder about the people who lost their lives on the way down to the ‘nearest’ medical centre located at Tuting and researchers who took the journey before the *kaccha* roads were built. We came across fellow travelers belonging to Khamba region Singha (closer to the international boundary), who had started their journey downwards towards Tuting about two days back. In the field area Kugging, it was alarming to note the decreasing number of Tangam population i.e. 253 speakers only (Field Survey, 2016). During the course of documentation we realized that the distinct *Tangam Agom* (Tangam Language) was also being maintained by the non-Tangams clans who migrated from the neighbouring Minyong(Adi) and Shimong(Adi) areas and they could switch easily between different varieties of Adi i.e. Minyong, Padam and Shimong. Some of them were our informants for valuable data on folklore and language of the Tangams. How did we know Tangam was a distinct language variety? The research team comprising of Adi speakers could barely understand the rapid speech of the speakers of Tangam language. It was only during the course of transcription and data collection that we could clearly identify morphemes of the lexical entries and relate it to the larger Tani Phyla. Tangam today has got the focus it deserves in the field of research and documentation.

The main purpose of mentioning the above field study is twofold. Firstly, the account of the Tangam language field study gives us the classic case of how marginalization of the smaller groups endangers their very existence and consequents in loss of language and culture of the people. Secondly, it is imperative to bring focus on the smaller /lesser studied groups and empower speakers of these lesser studied groups in the process of revitalization of their knowledge systems and preservation of their language and culture.

Now a days many tribal communities have taken up initiatives for providing reading materials and developing literary materials in mother tongues to facilitate activities towards the preservation of one’s language and culture. In the process of development of languages a very important area is being overlooked by the intellectuals. In order to bring about some form of standardization in the otherwise pluralistic and heterogeneous speech communities, through the promotion of the concept of “common language for all” they tend to overlook the fact that the power politics and hierarchy that exists within the socio-cultural and linguistic aspects might in fact get aggravated to a greater degree. In Arunachal Pradesh the merging of smaller speech communities within the numerically larger tribes is often historically, politically, culturally and linguistically motivated. Research in the lesser studied sub groups like the Bangro, Koro, Puroik, Milang speech communities have cautioned that there exist many linguistic diversities veiled within the larger frame of ethnic identities. Promotion of an elitist notion of certain variety of dialect being projected as the standard variety will be met with complex challenges. Most of the tribal groups have distinct language varieties and sub tribes under its fold, some ranging upto 13 (Adi) and even 35 (Tangsa). Only the numerically larger sub group with power have the advantage of taking part in the decision making process regarding language issues and language development. As the utility value of the powerful neighboring language is more the urge to learn the other tongue with better opportunities, higher status and prestige takes place. Now given this scenario the planned change that the community wants to bring about by imposing or promoting a certain variety of language in school education will neglect the development process of several other smaller speech communities within it. Will the smaller speech communities with less number of speakers survive the onslaught of power politics and globalisation factors?

In another instance, Bangrus and Nishis have assimilated to such an extent that it is difficult for an outsider to differentiate between

the two groups outwardly. Since time immemorial these smaller speech communities like Meyor and Bangru have shared an intense and close association with the neighbouring larger tribes. None of these smaller speech communities have been in total isolation. Rather in the process of language contact and shared history the smaller groups have evolved a unique blend of socio-cultural traits. The intensity of contact is also reflected in borrowed linguistic structures of these languages. For instance, Bangrus are grouped ethnically under Nyishi and Nyishi is their second language. But on the closer look Bangru lexical roots are markedly different from Nyishi and closer to Miji (Sajolang) and Hrusso (Aka). After collecting and comparing the wordlists of both Nyishi and Bangru, Tame (2011) also remarked that "...It is also worth noting that the Bangru language has been largely influenced by Nishi and very much show a mixed form of speech (language structures) at present. Due to intermingling of different speech communities like Nyishi, Bangru and Puroik languages there reflects some affinities in their verbal communication." In the case of Meyor language it is proposed that it shares structural features of a Bodish-type language (related to Memba and Tawang Monpa) but that at some point in its course of history interacted with Miju (Mishmi) and borrowed some of its lexicon. (Blench, 2011) In the recent past, Zakharing and Meyor merged together under the nomenclature of Meyor to form a collective group and increase their numeral strength (Jamoh, 2009). Meyor remains a critically endangered and highly marginalized group with a population of 391 and very few competent speakers left.

Language Documentation

The groups identified for research and documentation are some of the most understudied and marginalised sub group and minor tribes of the state. Keeping in view the critical status of some of the living languages on the brink of extinction and others where there is paucity of linguistic research undertaken, the criteria for selecting the groups based on features of endangerment of a speech community, are the following:

- Decreasing Competency in mother tongue and reduced number of speakers (ranging from a few hundred to a few thousands), decline in the rate at which the succeeding generations are acquiring the language concerned,
- the lack of availability of materials for language education,
- the unwritten status of the language
- lack of governmental and institutional policy support for the language development.

Table. 2. Lesser Known languages of Arunachal Pradesh

Language Name	Ethnic grouping in Arunachal Pradesh	Phyla	Location(Districts)	Population
Bangru	Tani(Nyishi)	Hrussish?	Kurung Kumey	2600 (Tarh, 2014)
Meyor/Zakharing	Meyor	Bodish	Lohit district	391 (Field Survey, 2012)
Tangam	Adi	Tani	Upper Siang	253 (Field survey, 2016)
Sartang	Sartang (Boot Monpa)	Bodish	West kameng	4000 (Rockpudu, 2013)
Khamba	Khamba	Bodish	Upper Siang	700 (Field Survey, 2016)
Memba	Memba	Bodish	West Siang, Upper Siang	4000 in Mechuka (Menchuka) area
Nah	Tagin	Tani	Upper Subansiri	1000 (Field Survey, 2012)
Olo	Nocte?	Sal?	Tirap	5500 approx.
Khapa	Nocte	Sal?(Nokte)	Tirap	1570 (Census, 2001)
Bugun(Khowa)	Bugun (Khowa)	Bodish	West Kameng	1580 approx. (Field Survey, 2012)
Milang	Adi	isolated	Upper Siang, East Siang	3000 (Post, Modi, 2012)
Puroik	Puroik (Sulung)	isolated	East Kameng, Kurung Kumey, Kra Dadi	10000 approx. (2008)
Koro	Aka	isolated	East Kameng	1500 (Census 2011)

The smaller tribal groups have appealed for documentation of their language and culture. Language documentation of some of the lesser studied and highly endangered languages of the minor sub-groups/tribes of the state is the need of the hour. The data will contribute towards expansion of lexical database for these minor languages. Collected data will provide insights into the researches on the larger question of genetic positioning of languages like Meyor, Puroik, Milang and Bangru and other related languages. It will contribute towards

theory building and provide new insights into different aspects of linguistic analysis as a whole. The audio-visual texts of all genres documented will be useful to future scholars as well. It will provide a base for research on the ethnography, pedagogy and typology of some of the lesser known and lesser studied speech communities of the world. The findings of the study will have implications on the policy making for development of endangered tribal communities. Language documentation will help the revitalization efforts of the indigenous languages to some extent. Future prospects depend upon achieving the targets of preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of these groups and dissemination of and access to the documentation.

Conclusion

To conclude Language diversity is essential to the human heritage. Each and every language embodies the unique cultural wisdom of the people. The loss of any language is thus a loss for all humanity. Tribal languages of Arunachal Pradesh show serious signs of endangerment mainly caused due to negligence and faulty provisions of the Governance which have not facilitated the mother tongues of the tribals to be functional and useful outside the home domain. In the state the political and cultural groupings and re-groupings have also accentuated the inequality that already existed within. The most affected ones have been the young speakers and smaller/minor speech communities. However the awareness regarding the language endangerment and language loss is fast catching up amongst the speakers. Research and language documentation will positively help in preserving and reviving the endangered languages.

References

- Abbi, Anvita (2009) "Where Have All The Speakers Gone?" *Endangered Languages in India*, pp 57-72, Published by INTACH, 71, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi
- Barbora, Madhumita. (2015). *Bugun Nyo Tau Bugun Reader*. Delhi: EBH Publishers
- Blench, Roger, Mark Post 2011. (De)classifying Arunachal Languages: Reconsidering the Evidences, Pokhara 2011
- Chera, Devi 2015. *Folk Narratives and Practices of the Bangrus of Arunachal Pradesh*, MPhil Dissertation (Unpublished), Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh
- Hale, Ken, Michael Krauss, Lucille J. Watahomigie, Akira Y. Yamamoto, Colette Craig, LaVerne Masayesva Jeanne, Nora C. England (1992) "Endangered Languages", *Language*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Mar., 1992), pp. 1-42 Published by: Linguistic Society of America
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/416368> (Accessed: 07/10/2009 08:45)
- Hinton, Leanne 2000. Reviewed work: *Endangered Languages: Current Issues and Future Prospects* by Lenore A. Grenoble, Lindsay J. Whaley, *Language in Society*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Jun., 2000), pp. 287-290 Published by: Cambridge University Press Stable
 URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4169013> Accessed: 25-08-2016 10:45 UTC
- Jamoh, Daniel (2009), *Meyors: An Ethnographic Study*, M.Phil Dissertation, Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Rajiv Gandhi University
- Ladefoged, Peter (1992) "Another View of Endangered Languages", *Language*, Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 809-811 Published by: Linguistic Society of America, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/416854> (Accessed: 07/10/2009 08:56)
- Singh, Udaya Narayana (2009), "The Sense Of Danger: An Overview of Endangered Languages in India" *Endangered Languages in India*, pp 39-56, Published by INTACH, 71, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi
- Tarh, Ramya 2013 Bangrus of Arunachal Pradesh: An Ethnographic Profile, *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, vol 1, No 3.

Meeting cum workshop of the CFEL- North East Cluster, Tezpur University, Assam

On 4th -6th April, 2016, the Centre for Endangered Languages, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh attended the meeting cum workshop of the North East Cluster organised by Nodal Centre, Tezpur University, Assam. The meeting was attended by the Prof. Uday Narayan, National Coordinator, Centre for Endangered Languages, Visva Bharati, Shantiniketan along with the North East Cluster representing Tezpur University, Sikkim University and Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh. The CFEL, RGU team did a presentation on the activities carried out since the inception of the Centre on Feb, 2016. An audio-visual presentation on field study conducted on Tangam and Khamba languages during Feb, 2016 was also presented before the members by CFEL, RGU. It was followed by feedback session from all the members of the North East cluster. During the course of two days various issues pertaining to Centre activities and fieldwork were discussed at length between the research team of various centres.





Field Trip to Kuging and Noksa Villages

■ Kombong Darang

The Centre for Endangered Languages (CFEL) carried out its field trip on February 2016 to Kuging village, located in Paindem circle under Upper Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh to document the language, folk narratives and the cultural practices of the critically endangered Tangams (Adi) community. The Research team consisted of Lisa Lomdak (Assistant Coordinator, CFEL), Rebeka Borang (Senior Research Fellow, CFEL), Rejhoney Borang (Senior Research Fellow, CFEL), Kaling Dabi (Jr. Research Fellow, CFEL) and Kombong Darang (Documentation Officer, CFEL). It was an arduous and tiresome journey charged with challenges for the team to reach the field area devoid of proper road connectivity, poor electricity and poor mobile network connectivity etc. Despite all challenges the team successfully carried out the fieldwork and documented the following audio-visual data on:



- Origin and myth of the Tangam's narrated by Joming Daji, the oldest living female member of Kuging village.
- Folksongs and folktale:
 - Payin festival Folksong and a short lullaby by Joming Daji
 - *Amma Chacha*, a Tangam Ponung by Yombo Nitik and Nyonyok Tamut, senior male members of Kuging village
 - A folktale on the origin of festivals by Yombo Nitik
- Ethnographic Account of the Tangams by Bokin Daji, local leader of the Kuging village.

The Audio-Visual data consists of total number of 1,000 photographs, about 4 hours of video recordings and 7.5 hours of audio recording dealing with content on language, narratives, material culture, people, etc.

A preliminary work was also initiated in Khamba language by the research team in Tuting. Language data containing 1000 basic word list (ICDS wordlist) and Basic sentence list were collected by consulting three native speakers Michung Khamba, Dolma Lhamu and Gimey

Temphi. The prayer ritual of Khambas for world peace was also recorded which is of 21 mins duration. The duration of session on language data collection is of 10 mins video recording and 5 hours of audio recording.

The second field trip of CFEL was carried out in Noksa village of Tirap District in order to document the language and culture of Khapa Noctes. The Khapa language falls among the endangered languages of Arunachal Pradesh and is spoken in Noksa, Pullong and Tupi villages of Tirap District. The team consisted of Dr. S. Simon John (Coordinator, CFEL), Dr. Wanglit Mongchan (Assistant Coordinator, CFEL), Dr. Lienjang Zeite (Research Associate), Rebeka Borang (Sr. Research Fellow), Kaling Dabi (Jr. Research Fellow), Rumi Deuri (Jr. Research Fellow) and Kombong Darang (Documentation Officer). Following are the details of audio-visual documentation carried out during the field visit.

- Audio visual documentation of Kunyiu festival
- Folksongs:
 - Khapa festival song (swing song), Khapa lullaby, Khapa mourning song, Khapa rice husking song and Khapa love song by Bingom Bayang.
- Material culture of Khapa people



The total number of photographs taken during the trip is more than two thousand (2,000) and 3.7 hours of video recordings and 6.9 hours of audio recordings. The documentation consists of linguistic data, folk narratives, material culture, land and the people, festival, performances, etc.

In the month of July 2016, CFEL team went for the audio-visual documentation of *Flaa* ritual performance of the Monpas of Hoongla village under the Lumla constituency, Tawang District. The research team comprised of four members headed by Dr. Jumyir Basar (Associate Professor, AITS). Audio-visual documentation team consisted of Kombong Darang, Kaling Dabi and Tsering Chota (Native Language Consultant).

A field trip of CFEL was carried out again in Noksa village of Tirap District for the audio-visual documentation of a Khapa festival called “Melo”. The field trip was carried out by Kombong Darang (Documentation Officer) and Jason Padung (Technical Assistant) in the Month of October, 2016. The Audio-Visual data consists of total number of 2,500 photographs, about 12 hours of video recordings and 4 hours of audio recording dealing with content on Melo festival.

For archival purpose, all the Audio-Visual documents have been classified, catalogued and preserved. The CFEL aims to establish an Audio-Visual Archives on language and culture of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh which will serve as a data resource for future research and dissemination of knowledge.



Unheard Voices from the Last Adi Village

■ Rejhoney Borang & Chera Devi



Introduction

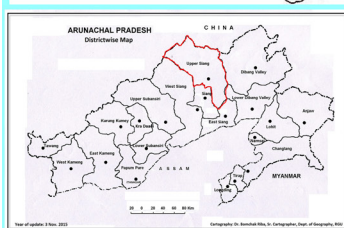
The Tangams are least populated subgroup of the Adi tribe of the larger Tibeto-Mongoloid stock. They are lesser-known and lesser studied group within the Adi community and also within the entire State. The presence of such a community was first recorded in Sachin Roy's *Aspects of Padam-Minyong Culture*, 1960 and again records of the community emerged in Tarun Kumar Bhattacharjee's work titled *Tangams*, 1975 which was the first and the last account on the life and culture of the Tangams.

The hilly terrains of Kuging (pronounced as *kugiy*) in the administrative circle of Paindem in Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh is home to the Tangam community. Kuging is bordered by Khambas residing in Geling in the north, Singa in the east, the Shimong (Adi) in the south and Tuting town in the west. Originally, the Tangams account that they inhabited 25 villages, but now Kuging is the lone Tangam village. The rest of the villages are now inhabited by the Bodhic tribes of Khamba and Memba and also by the neighbouring Adi subgroups i.e. Minyongs, Aashings and Shimongs. The total population of the community stands today at 253 with the village housing a total of 28 households. According to our study conducted it has been found that a total of 12 families have migrated to the nearby Tuting area in search of better living opportunities (CFEL, Field Survey, 2016).

Tangam People

The clan groups of the Tangam community in Kuging are Daji, Lipir, Peyang, Nitik, Nopi, Tekseng, Takong, Talong, Tamut and Taron (CFEL, Field survey, 2016). While members of other groups like the Doron, Mudo, Jodo, Kondo, Ngakki, Ngakko which are mentioned in the book of Bhattacharjee (1975) no longer exists within the community in the present time. Although a few of the clans like Tekseng, Nopi, Tamut belong to the Minyong and Shimong Adi group yet irrespective of their sub grouping, these clans members identify themselves as Tangams today.

* CFEL Research Area Map:



Map Source:
www.mapofindia.com
Google Earth
Cartography by Dr. Bomchak Riba

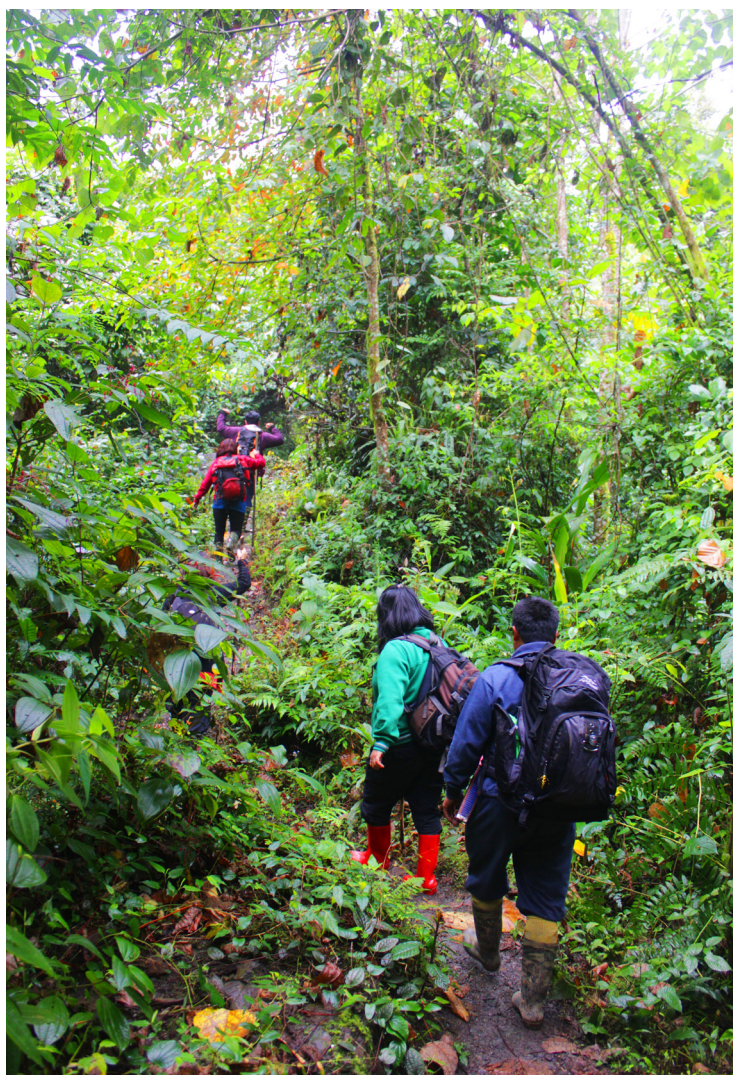


A detailed map of the study area, Kuging Village

The community practice Donyi Poloism while a few members have adopted Christianity. Consultant Nyonyok Tamut informed that 7 families in the village have converted to Christianity while the rest still follow the indigenous faith. Agriculture along with hunting and gathering forms the most important component of the community's economy.

Even after 69 years of India's Independence and 29 years of Statehood the Tangam community and their status is unknown to rest of the people in the state. The village lacks proper infrastructure in all basic sectors of education, health, drinking water facilities, road, and electricity. Kuging is located at a distance of about four hours by foot march from the district headquarter Tuting. There is only one government primary residential school. The single school in the entire village lacks proper infrastructure. The lavatory for both the hostel and the school were constructed with the initiative of the community members. There is not a single graduate member within the community as the prospect of higher education outside the village is nil with the constraints of financial difficulties and lack of centres of higher education within the local areas.

The village has no Community Health Centre which affects not only the life expectancy of the population but also affects overall health issues like childbirth related problems. For availing basic health facilities the villagers have to undertake a four hour foot march to Tuting, the district headquarter in order to reach the nearest Community Health Centre. This perilous journey becomes even more difficult



The CFEL research team trekking towards Kuging village



A Tangam man and in the background is the lone Tangam village, Kuging

when serious ill patients have to be carried on the backs through the entire stretch. Bokin Daji, a village community member made it known that issues relating to water borne disease like diarrhea was the root cause of many deaths in the village. In the absence of a health centre in the village, treatment for such minor ailment leads to complicating health issues, which in turn led to many deaths in the village. The suspension bridge over the river Siang is the only lifeline of these people. The RCC Bridge and the dirt road which connect the village with the nearby areas have been under construction for longer than two years. The CFEL research team had to undertake a six hours foot march from Tuting in order to reach the Tangam village of Kuging.

The entire village is devoid of any form of supply of portable water facilities. Only the primary school lavatory boasts of having running water, which was again an initiative of the community members. The problem of portable water becomes even graver during the monsoon rains when the nearby rivers and streams become contaminated with mosquitoes eventually leading to water borne diseases and malarial infestations. The village receives a daily two hour supply of electricity, from 6 pm to 8 pm, which gets disrupted in case of heavy rainfall or occurrence of landslides.

Tangam Language

The language spoken by the people is Tangam, a variety of Adi with distinct variation from the rest of the Adi varieties. It belongs to Tani language group and to the greater Tibeto-Burman language family. Most Tangams are multilingual; fluently speaking Tangam, Minyong, Shimong, Khamba and Hindi (except for the older people). Linguistically and culturally, they share close contact with all the neighbouring subgroups of Adi and the Bodhic tribes.

Minyong is the *lingua franca* of the Tangams in communicating with the neighboring Adi subgroups. Languages like Hindi and Khamba is used with the Bodhic groups and with the non-natives. The domain of the Tangam language is only within the community.

In brief, let us have a quick glance of the salient features of Tangam language. There are 18 consonants which are phonemic in nature and 7 vowels with distinction in the vowel length; long and short vowels.

	Bilabial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b	t d		c ɟ	k g	ʔ
Nasal	m		n	ɲ	ŋ	
Trill			r			
Fricative			s			h
Approximants				j		
Lateral Approximants			l			

Table 1: Consonant Chart of Tangam Adi Language.

	Front	Central	Back
High	i/i:	ɨ/ɨ:	u/u:
Mid	e/e:	ə/ə:	o/o:
Low		a/a:	

Table 2: Vowel Chart of Tangam Adi Language.

The language of the Tangams like the other varieties of Adi strictly maintained vowel lengthening such as;

ato ‘father-in-law’ (mid back rounded short vowel /o/)

a:to ‘come’ (mid back unrounded long vowel /o:/)

Tangam	Minyong	Aashing	Shimong	Orthography	Khamba	English
ŋo	ŋo	ŋo	ŋo	ngo	ŋa	‘I’
no	no	no	no	no	co	‘You’
nodɨ	bɨ	bɨ	bɨ	nodii/bii	indep ^h u (He) indepomu (She)	‘He/She’

Table 3: Comparative Personal Pronoun Chart

Presence of glottal consonant /ʔ/ tends to be the prominent feature in Tangam Phonology as compared to the other varieties of Adi.

Tangam	Minyong	Orthography	English
leʔɲi	lənɲi	lenyi/lennyi	‘twice’
duʔponɲ	dumponɲ	dupong/dumpong	‘head’

The language follows SOV constituent order (subject-object-verb) and is typologically agglutinative in nature.

ŋo no-m(e) ke-to
1. SG 2.SG-ACC see-PFV
‘I saw you’

ŋo anne-ke legape agia-m bom-bi-to
1.SG mother-GEN for cloth- ACC carry-BEN -PFV
‘I brought a cloth for my mother’

UNESCO has declared Tangam as one of the endangered languages of the world. And it is also observed that the degree of endangerment is much greater as the community itself faces extinction due to various reasons. In such a situation the negligence on the

part of the local leaders and the government towards the community poses an even greater threat. Lack of health care facilities, low literacy rate and inability to engage the community into decision making bodies greatly aggravates to this situation. We are aware that language is an integral part of culture. It is imperative to document the language and other aspects of culture and revitalize it and work for the upliftment of the Tangam community. If the trend of neglect and ignorance keeps on continuing then a day is not far away when the Tangams shall merely be identified with a census number and shall be reduced to people in text books, which then ironically shall bring them to eyes of the outside world. If a situation like that of the Bo tribe and their language of the Andamanese or the likes of aboriginals of Tasmanian language of Australia is to be avoided, the state has to wake up to their plight and take notice. Initiatives have to be taken up ; planning and policies have to be framed by the state in favour of the smaller groups like the Tangams.



Tangam man & woman in their traditional attire.

Kunyu - A Ritual Celebration to Counter the Ordeal of Drought and Famine

■ Kaling Dabi & Rumi Deuri

Kunyu is a festival of the *Kasik/Khapa* group of the Nocte tribe who inhabits the Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is celebrated in the four villages, namely Noksa, Pulung, Old-Tupi and New-Tupi where *Kasik or Khapa*, a dialectical variant of the Nocte language is spoken. Etymologically, “*Ku*” means festival and “*Nyu*” means big. It is celebrated annually on 25th April every year for three consecutive days. The underlying motive behind the celebration of this festival is to defy the predicaments of natural disasters (drought and famine) through the means of revelry and merry-making. Simultaneously, rituals are performed for yielding abundant paddy in order to survive throughout the dry season.

A night before the festival, all the bachelors make ‘*Morung*’ (bachelor’s dormitory) their base. They sing and dance whole night long on the tune of the log drum and other indigenous musical instruments. The first day of the festival starts with the offering of *Yichi* (tapioca-beer) popularly known as *yuchi* to the paternal and maternal uncles of the family and to the head of the clan to seek their blessings. It is followed by a mass procession of the youth along with the Chief, accompanied by the council members, towards *Kou* (a hill) which is considered as a sacred spot by the village community. Here, they perform *Wan-Wan* (libation), sing songs of praise to their guardian deity for the over-all well-being of the village.



On the second day of the festival, buffaloes are ritually sacrificed. The ritual sacrifice is called *Loilang*, where *Loi* means ‘buffalo’ and *Lang* means ‘to sacrifice’. Usually, 2 or 3 buffalos are sacrificed in a village which can exceed judging on the number of the population. Prior to the sacrifice, the village women perform a purifying ritual wherein they sprinkle *Yichi* and ginger paste on the buffaloes while synchronously uttering incantations. They perform *Wan-Wan* to commemorate their ancestors (*Tedong*, *Vidong*, *Aphii*, *Aapha*, etc). A local plantain leaf called *Lemei* (“*Le*” means good and “*Mei*” means leaf) is folded in a conical shape to be used as containers to perform *Wan-Wan*. This particular leaf has socio-cultural significance and indispensable in all the rituals of the *Kasik* people.

Slyaram (*Shya* means 'paddy' and *ram* means 'ritual') ritual is performed in the evening of the third day by the womenfolk of the village. The women go to their agricultural fields where they place *Lemei* leaves on the ground and sprinkle *Yichi* and thinly chopped ginger pieces on it. The act symbolizes purification of the land. They bring back bunches of newly sprouted paddy from the field and store it in their house which they believe will ensure bumper harvest and self sufficiency.

After the ritual, the village youth gather near the *Morung*. The *Morung* boys begin beating the log drum which indicates the beginning of the feast. Then, the youth along with some elderly village men sing and perform the ceremonial dance through-out their way towards the chief's house. The village community gathers at the chief's house and performs *wan-wan*. Then they gear up for the traditional group dance which is to be followed by feasting. The chief, being the leader of the community, is bounded by the obligation to organize the community feast in his house. The feast commands the mandatory participation of each and every household of the village.

On the last day, rituals are performed in the agricultural fields in order to bid farewell to the guardian deities and spirits. After the ritual the entire village observes taboo for the whole day which restricts them to work in their fields, hunting activities and to travel beyond the jurisdiction of the village.

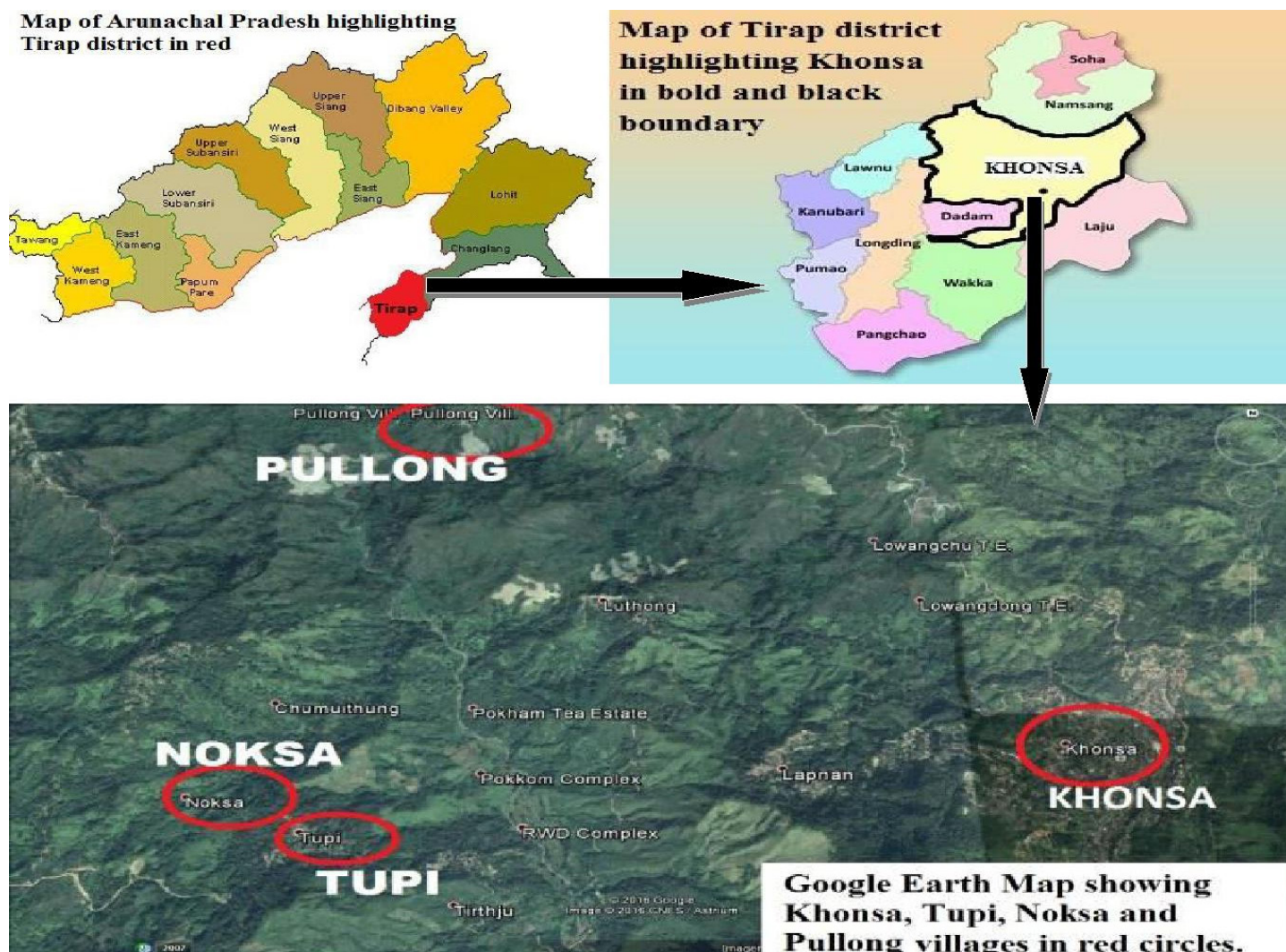


Overview of Khapa Language

■ Rebeka Borang

Introduction:

Nocte, a Tibeto Burman language, is one of the main languages of Arunachal Pradesh which is spoken in Tirap district of the state. Nocte has many varieties viz. Hawa, Phothung, Tang, Laju and Khapa¹. Among these varieties, the only written document available is of Hawa variety. This article is an overview of Khapa variety² based on the pilot study conducted by Centre for Endangered Languages (CFEL), RGU. Khapa is spoken by Nocte people residing in Noksa, Pullong and Tupi villages of Tirap District. The maps below represent the Khapa speaking villages:



According to our informants, Khapa is an exonym which has been termed by people of other Nocte villages. So people of Noksa village prefer the native term '**Kasik**' for the reference of their people and language. Nonetheless, for our research, we have used the term Khapa solely for the purpose of convenience. Total number of speakers of Khapa is 1215 according to 2011 census.

Language contact:

Khapa people are multilingual and most of the elders have knowledge of Hawa and Assamese, and young people have good command over Hindi and Assamese. Educated people of the village have basic communicative knowledge of English as well. Assamese is used as lingua-franca among different villages of Noctes. So, many Assamese words are often used in lieu of native terms. At times Assamese words are so frequently used that it is often difficult for the speakers to recollect the native words.

¹Gupta K. Das, 1971. *An Introduction to the Nocte Language*, North-East Frontier Agency, Shillong

²The data of Khapa language were collected from Noksa village.

Domain of the language:

The domain of Khapa language is confined to the respective three villages mentioned. Since Assamese and Hindi are the common lingua-franca among different villages of Noctes, Khapa is not usually spoken outside the said villages. However, Khapa is used actively in the said three villages and most of native speakers have good command over the language.

OVERVIEW OF KHAPA LANGUAGE:

1. PHONOLOGY:

Vowels: As per the initial observation, Khapa has a total of 15 vowels out of which 7 vowels are cardinal vowels, another 6 are long vowels and rest 2 are central vowels as presented below:

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i/i:	ɨ	u/u:
Close Mid	e/e:		o/o:
Mid		ə/ə:	
Open Mid	ɛ		ɔ
Open	a/a:		

Khapa Vowel Chart

Examples of vowels:

Vowels	Khapa Words	English Gloss	Vowels	Khapa Words	English Gloss
1. /a/	man	Grass	8. /ɨ/	sɨ	Thorn
2. /a:/	pa:dik	Fence	9. /ə/	pə	Tree
3. /o/	joŋ	Rice	10. /ə:/	pə:loŋ	Branch
4. /o:/	r o:jaŋ	Always	11. /ɛ/	mep ^h ɛ	Late
5. /ɔ/	ŋua t ^h umpɔ	Community Hall	12. /e/	k ^h abe	Tobacco
6. /i/	odi	Root	13. /e:/	le:	Not
7. /i:/	i:po	Flower	14. /u/	ŋa:uho	Ripen Banana
			15. /u:/	u:poŋ	Chicken

Examples of Vowels in Khapa

Consonants: There are total 25 consonants in Khapa as presented in the IPA consonant chart below:

	Bilabial	Labio Dental	Alveolar	Post Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b p ^h b ^h		t d t ^h		c ɟ c ^h	k g k ^h	ʔ
Nasal	m		n		ɲ	ŋ	
Trill			r				
Fricative			s	ʃ			h
Approximant		v			j		
L. Approximant			l				

Khapa Consonant Chart

Examples of unaspirated consonants:

Consonants	Example	Gloss	Consonants	Example	Gloss
1. /p/	pɑ:dik	Fence	11. /s/	si	Thorn
2. /b/	ban	Ten	12. /ʃ/	ʃia	Eat
3. /t/	taha	Night	13. /r/	ramho	Maize
4. /d/	odam	Push	14. /h/	hokin	Spade
5. /k/	kə	Side	15. /j/	joŋ	Rice
6. /g/	keroge	Pain	16. /l/	laho	Pumpkin
7. /m/	man	Grass	17. /c/	cop ^h ak ^h e	Sweet
8. /n/	nohua	Place			potato
9. /ɲ/	ɲin	Money	18. /ɟ/	oɟa	Month
10. /ŋ/	ŋa:uho	Ripen banana	19. /ʔ/	miʔʃia	Knife
			20. /v/	vənkən	Cough

Examples of Consonants in Khapa

Aspirated consonants: Aspirated consonants in Khapa are: /c^h/ /k^h/ /p^h/ /t^h/ /b^h/. These aspirated consonants are phonemic as they tend to change the meaning of the word if they occur in same environment as that of their unaspirated counterparts. This can be seen in the minimal pairs presented below:

i. Voiceless Bilabial Plosives

/p/		/p ^h /	
opoŋ	‘Male’	op ^h oŋ	‘Help’

ii. Voiced Bilabial Plosives

/b/		/b ^h /	
oba	‘Tooth’	ob ^h a	‘Carry’

iii. Voiceless Alveolar Plosives

/t/		/t ^h /	
te	‘Language’	t ^h e	‘Bridge’
tuam	‘Throwing up’	t ^h uam	‘Early morning’

iv. Voiceless Palatal Plosives

/c/		/c ^h /	
ocoŋ	House of the	oc ^h oŋ	Measurement

v. Voiceless Velar Plosives

/k/		/k ^h /	
kam	‘House’	k ^h am	‘Gold’
kə	‘Side’	k ^h ə	‘Yam’



CFEL team with Khapa consultants

Tone: Khapa prominently features three levels of tone viz. high tone, mid tone and low tone. Such as:

	Word	Tone	Gloss
1.	ǰṵṇ	(High)	‘Cook’
	ǰṁṇ	(Mid)	‘Knife/dao’
	ǰṇṇ	(Low)	‘To happen/to be’
2.	ǰṁṁ	(High)	‘Lazy’
	ǰṁṁ	(Mid)	‘Carpet’
	ǰṇṁ	(Low)	‘To spread’

2. MORPHOLOGY:

As most of the Tibeto-Burman languages, Khapa is agglutinative in nature. As per initial analysis it is observed that the vocabularies of Hawa and Khapa greatly vary which makes these two varieties *mutually unintelligible*. Similar vocabularies are very few in number. Following are the comparative word data of Khapa and Hawa varieties³:

Dissimilar Words		
Khapa	Hawa	Gloss
in	van	Fire
pə	baŋ	Tree
odi	baŋ-rin	Root
laho	kum	Pumpkin
kembu	ni	We
hi:buji	t ^h annin	They
kek ^h on	ko	go
leiran	he(i)tho	Teach
ro:	ra:ŋ	Write
ot ^h o	sok	See
kek ^h on	ko	Go
Similar Words		
Khapa	Hawa	Gloss
kam	kam	Gold
ŋa	ŋa	I
ate	ate	His
raŋ	raŋ	Sky

Comparative word data of Khapa and Hawa

Some other initial morphological observations of Khapa are; **Person:** Khapa has three way person distinction; 1st person, 2nd person and 3rd person. **Number:** Number Pronoun in Khapa has three way distinction; Singular, Dual and Plural. However, for noun it has two way distinctions Singular and Plural. **Tense:** Khapa has distinct tense markers for Present, Past and Future tense. **Negation:** There are two Negative Particles in Khapa /le/ and /ma/. Both the particles are prefixed to the verb. The particle /le/ is use to denote negation in the sentences which are in Present or Future tense. /ma/ is use in sentences which are in past tense. **Word Formation:** The major word formation processes in Khapa are; compounding, reduplication and derivation.

³Hawa word data are taken from Gupta K. Das, 1971. *An Introduction to the Nocte Language*, North-East Frontier Agency, Shillong. Hawa sentence data are taken from Wanglit Mongcham, Native Hawa speaker from Borduria village.)

3. SYNTAX: Like most of the Tibeto-Burman languages, the Word order of Khapa is SOV (Subject + Object +Verb). For example:

ŋe	ŋa:uho	fabo
(S)	(O)	(V)
I	banana	ate
‘I ate banana’.		

In sentence, Indirect Object (IO) precedes the Direct object (DO). Such as:

ŋe	chak ^h ap -ne	let ^h an	kuʔŋa
(S)	(IO)	(DO)	(V)
I	Chakhap-ACC	book	gave
‘I gave a book to Chakhap’			

Comparing the sentence of Khapa with Hawa variety, it is observed that the sentence making and structure of Khapa is similar to Hawa as can be seen in the example below:

	Subject	Object	Verb
Khapa:	jahəŋ-e yahəŋ-NOM	chak ^h ap-ne Chakhap ACC	ɲua-ge like-IMPF
	‘Yahəŋ likes Chakhap’		
Hawa:	ɲahəŋ-me Nyaheng-ERG	chakap-naŋ Chakap-ACC	hun-ke like-IMPF.3SNG
	‘Nyaheng likes Chakap’		

Some more observations include; in both Khapa and Hawa, Genitive is unmarked. Both the varieties do not have gender agreement. Hawa marks **Person-Verb** agreement while Khapa do not. Negative particles are similar in both varieties while their occurrence varies. In Khapa, Relative Clause is pre-nominal and it precedes the main clause. Khapa do not use relative pronoun. Khapa has postposition rather than preposition where the location markers follow the noun.

Conclusion

From Initial observation, it can be said that Khapa varies from Hawa in Lexical and morphological level. Sound inventory and syntax of the two varieties are all the more similar. To have deeper understanding, Khapa language needs to be studied thoroughly as there is no consolidated research work conducted upon this very language so far. Since the domain of the language is confined only to three villages, and with small number of speakers, Khapa is highly endangered. Along with the research documentation work by scholars, awareness of language preservation among the communities should also be enunciated in order to bring collective effort from both native speakers and researchers.

References:

- Borang Rebeka, 2016. *Fieldnotes of Khapa Fieldwork*, Centre for Endangered Languages, Rajiv Gandhi University.
 Gupta K. Das, 1971. *An Introduction to the Nocte Language*, North-East Frontier Agency, Shillong.
 Lienjang Zeite, 2016. *Fieldnotes of Khapa Fieldwork*, Centre for Endangered Languages, Rajiv Gandhi University.

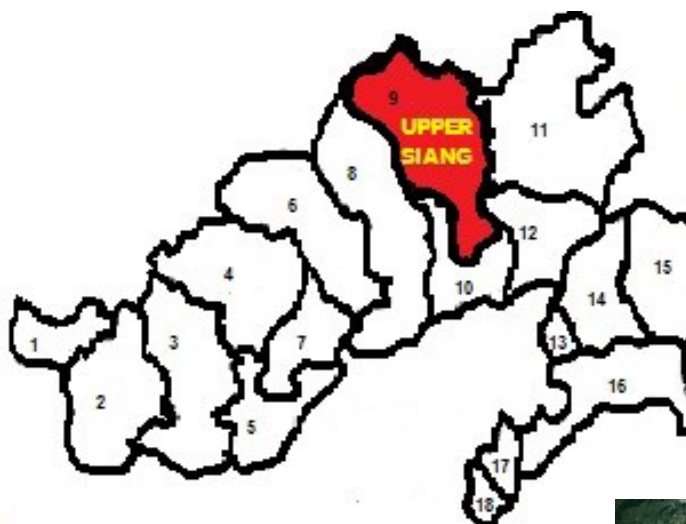


Nocte man & woman from Noksa village

A brief note on Khambas of Upper Siang

Khamba is a Tibeto-Burman Language spoken by Khamba tribe. Khambas are mainly located in seven villages of Upper Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, India, viz. Nyering, Nyukong, Yortong, Mankota, Tasigong, Singha, Shimoling. Few families can also be located in District headquarter Tuting. The maps below represent the stretch in which the Khambas reside.

1. Tawang
2. West Kameng
3. East Kameng
4. Kurung Kumey
5. Papumpare
6. Upper Subansiri
7. Lower Subansiri
8. West Siang
9. Upper Siang
10. East Siang
11. Up. Dibang Valley
12. Lo. Dibang Valley
13. Namsai
14. Tezu
15. Anjaw
16. Changlang
17. Tirap
18. Longding



According to the native speaker Mr. Michung Khamba, the estimated population of the Khambas in Upper Siang in the year 2016 is around 500-700 approximately. As per UNESCO vitality scale, Khamba fall under '**Definitely Endangered**' category. They are multi-lingual and can communicate fairly well in other languages like Memba, Adi (Minyong variety), Hindi, Assamese and Elementary English.

The Khambas reside along with other tribal groups like the Adis (Tangam and Minyong) in West, Membas in North and Digaru Mishmis in East. The pilot study in Khamba reveals that Khamba language has many similarities with Membas (*See Comparative Word data table'*). Memba and Khamba are classified under Bodish cluster, of Tibeto Burman Language. Religion wise the Khambas follow the Nyingma sect of Buddhism.

References

Post. Mark, 2011, *(De)Classifying Arunachal Languages: Reconsidering The Evidence*, Borang, Rebecca 2016, *Field Notes on Khamba Language*, CFEL, RGU
 Borang, Rejhoney 2016, *Field Notes on Khamba Language*, CFEL, RGU
 Lomdak, Lisa 2016 *Field Notes on Khamba Language*, CFEL, RGU



Comparative Word Data of Khamba & Memba

Khamba	Memba	English Gloss
cik	cik	One
sum	sum	Three
ŋa	ŋe	Five
gu	gu	Nine
naco	namdzo	Ear
lakpa	lak	Arm
mik	mi	Eye
pima	pim	Sun
daga	dager	Moon

Workshop on the Language and Cultural Documentation of Endangered Languages



The two-day Workshop on the **Language and Cultural Documentation of Endangered languages** was successfully held during 18th-19th Feb, 2016 at Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

The workshop was organized under the initiative of the Centre for Endangered Languages (CFEL), Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU). The context for the workshop arose from the urgent need to raise awareness amongst the Research Scholars of RGU regarding the risk of language loss and knowledge systems faced by a large number of Tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh. The objective of the workshop was also to impart multi-disciplinary approach and methodology used in various disciplines of Field Linguistics, Anthropology, folkloristics and Mass Communication in carrying out research and documentation of Language and Cultural aspects of Endangered communities.

The Language groups represented during the workshop were the research scholars and resource persons who were representatives of different Linguistic groups: **TANI**- Tangam, Bokar, Bori, Galo, Apatani, Nyishi, **MISHMI**:- Idu, **BDHIS**: Sartang, Monpa, **SAL**: Nocte etc. All the languages belong to the Tibeto-Burman Language family.

The technical sessions were distributed over two days and was conducted in lecture mode series followed by interactive sessions. All the technical sessions were devoted to learning about the process of field research from Resource persons who spoke about their practical experiences in this regard and certain ethical and theoretical issues. The Resource persons emphasized on technologically driven, ethnographically-oriented and culturally relevant language documentation activities.

A book entitled *The Tangam Language Grammar, Lexicon and Texts* compiled by Mark W. Post, Dugbang Lipir and Yankee Modi was also released by one of the author of the book who also happened to be a representative of Tangam community, a critically endangered language of Tani group. The book is a highly relevant book for language research and documentation. The Programme ended with feedback session from the participants and certificate distribution.

International Mother Languages Day celebrated at RGU



On the event of International Mother Languages Day (IMLD) a program on the theme “Quality Education, Language of Instruction and Learning Outcomes” was organized by the Centre for Endangered Languages (CFEL) and Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies (AITS), Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono hills at the Institute of Distance Education, Rajiv Gandhi University conference hall on 3rd March, 2016. Prof. K.C. Kapoor, Department

of Education, RGU, was the speaker on the occasion. Speaking from his experience in serving about 30 years in Arunachal Pradesh in the education field he highlighted the challenges and issues relating to imparting quality education in the primary level. He emphasized on the need for using mother languages as a medium of instruction in the lower primary level and role of tribal educationists in the particular areas. Prof. Tamo Mibang, Vice Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi University shared his views on issues of script development for the unwritten languages of the state and why it was need of the hour to take immediate steps to implement it in the education system. Earlier, in her welcome address, Lisa Lomdak, Programme Coordinator cum Asst. coordinator, CFEL highlighted the present status of the tribal languages of Arunachal Pradesh and spoke on the role and contribution of a few tribal literary societies like the Adi literary Society, Apatani literary Societies etc...in promoting language and literature in the school education. The lectures were followed by a brief interactive session among the faculty members, research scholars and students from various departments of RGU.



Flaa

An Endangered Bonistic Ritual of the Monpas

■ Kaling Dabi & Kombong Darang

Flaa is a Bon ritual of the Monpas, performed in four villages under the Lumla administrative circle of Tawang district viz., Hoongla, Pharmay, Suhung and Kuminthang. It is performed on 24th of *Ngapa* (July) every year. Every alternate year the ritual is performed on a very large scale. The belief system associated with this ritual is the propitiation of the two sibling mountain deities called *Tsongtsong poh* (Sister) and *Chospoh* (Brother), regarded as the custodian of life and fate of the inhabitants of the area, seeking super-natural protection for the crops and for the over-all well being of the community. Basically, *Flaa* is a ritual associated with the Bon religion which had its origin in Tibet. Bon religion self-identifies as being distinct from the Tibetan Buddhism, although it shares similar overall teachings and terminologies with it. Bon religion is still considered as the indigenous religion of the Monpas of Tawang district. It is animistic as well as shamanistic, where Shamans, indigenously called as *Bon*, is the religious head.

The ritual which was once performed in the entire Tawang region is currently performed only in the above four mentioned villages. Due to religious acculturation with the dominant Buddhist religion, rituals and sacrifices have been modified in accordance with the Buddhist norms and values which have significantly altered the actual form of animistic essence of the ritual, putting the original ritual practices on the verge of extinction.



Villagers bringing offering for the ritual



The Offerings



Bon priest performing the ritual



Gathering at ritual ground



Cockfight performance during the ritual

Dwindling Folkcrafts of the Khapas/Kasiks

■ Lienjang Zeite

The Khapas are settlers of Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh. They are included under the lesser known ethnolinguistic group of the Nocte tribe and linguistically classified under the Tibeto Burman Language family. The term 'Khapa' is a xenonym and the natives specifically called themselves as 'Kasik'.

The application of knowledge to create sustainable and eco-friendly objects for day to day use reflects the ingrained relationship of the Khapas with nature and environment that surrounds their villages. The organic products are culturally and historically significant to the tribe. These household products and containers are featured intentionally to emphasize on the rich cultural heritage of the Khapas. The incredible art and skills of producing densely weaved and intricate basket or container is slowly ebbing away. Nowadays, the bamboo and other organic containers are already being replaced by plastic pitchers, can, bottles, jars, bags and containers which are doing more damages to their health and the environment.

The following twentyfive products exhibit the indigenous knowledge and worldview regarding material culture of the Khapas. Most of the household products are made of bamboo which is found in abundance and used extensively from making houses to containers for food and water.

1. /ʃəʔ/- shah

This is a long bamboo basket to store various kinds of valuables like money, traditional ornaments, etc. It is densely woven and does not have a lock. A latch is attached to secure the woven bamboo lid accompanying the basket. It is about a metre high.



2. /bimtək/ or /kʰeləptək/- bamtak/khelaptak

This is a dry gourd container encased in a bamboo basket weave. A bamboo node is wrapped in cloth for a stopper. It is used to store tea leaves.



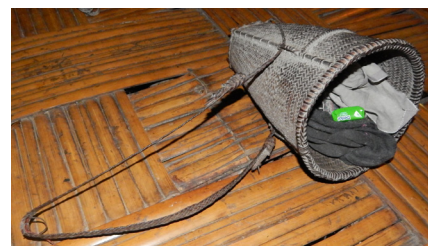
3. /pʰɑː/- phaa

This is an elevated bamboo structure for a dining plate. Such plate stands are used to serve the Chief and Chieftess only and commoners are forbidden from using it.



4. /nokʰiaʔ/- nokhiah

This is a spherical bamboo basket with a flat end. It also has a braided bamboo head band attached to the basket. Kasik women like to use it as a purse to carry day to day essentials like water container, leaves to be used as plate and other small items.



5. /təŋdɑ/- tangda

This is also a spherical bamboo basket with a flat end with loosely woven design for carrying necessary items like water container and leaves and other smaller things. It also has a braided bamboo head band attached to the basket.



6. /mənpʰɑː/- manphaa

This is a big squarish shaped bamboo basket with big loose weave. It is used for storing vegetables mainly tubers like potatoes, tapioca and colcasia, etc. Gourds and other vegetables can also be kept in it.



7. /nua/- nua

This is a big, slightly elongated and densely woven bamboo basket to carry grains in big quantity.

**8. /c^{hi}/- chi**

This is a small, finely woven bamboo basket to measure items like rice, pulses, etc., in smaller quantity.

**9. /c^hoŋk^həp/- chongkhap**

This is a cup shaped out of a single culm or internode of a bamboo with a culm node intact at one end. A braided bamboo shaving handle is attached on one side. It is further decorated with a dual strand of metal chains giving it an elaborate look. There are three copper bells attached to each end of the chain. Cups with such designs are exclusively for the use of serving the 'Mong' or healer of the village and the Chief and Chieftess.

**10. /c^hoʔ/- choh**

This is a medium sized cylindrical bamboo container with a bamboo lid for storing dry or roasted meat and fish.

**11. /k^həp/- khap**

This is a tall cylindrical bamboo container with braided bamboo shaving handle used for measuring items in smaller quantity or carrying water. It is also used as a measuring cup for cooking rice.

**12. /ja:k^ho/- jaakho**

This is a plate made by scraping off the outer layer of the bamboo and is shaped into a rectangle mini trough. It is used as an eating bowl. It also has a small braided bamboo accessory at one end to hang it.

**13. /tik^həŋtik/- takhangtak**

This is a small earthen pot to cook rice or stew in smaller portions.

**14. /ka:tik/- kaatak**

This is a big earthen pot used for storing rice. The pot in the picture below is about a hundred years old.



15. /po:kʰo/- pokho

This is a carved shallow wooden trough used for grinding spices like ginger and garlic for making chutney. It comes with a rotund grinding stone.

**16. /inkʰua:/- inkhuua**

This is a densely woven bamboo plate with a conical end on one side. It is used for winnowing rice and other grains from husks.

**17. /kʰoŋ/- khong**

This is a big sized woven bamboo tray used for spreading rice mixed with yeast for making rice beer.

**18. /mənpha/- manpha**

This is a sparsely woven bamboo tray to dry fruits or boiled meat and can be kept out in the sun or above the fireplace.

**19. /kʰoŋ/- khong**

This is a grand sized bamboo tray used for drying paddy.

**20. /sikʰuət/- sikhuat**

This is a bamboo basket used for trapping fish. It has a conical shape corner at one end.

**21. /səŋdo/- sangdo**

This is a densely weaved rectangular/oval shaped basket with a lid. It is used for storing dry meat.

**22. /cʰoʔlu:/- choluh**

This is a cylindrical bamboo container made out of a huge bamboo culm. It is used for storing water or uncooked rice. Leaves or cloth stopper can be used to prevent the water or rice from spilling.

**23. /cʰopiən/- chopian**

This is a cylindrical bamboo container with a slant cut mouth for storing black indigenous salt harvested from the local salt well.

**24. /təŋsuən/- tangsuan**

This is a back pad made from palm or betel frond. It is used to prevent bumpy pressure at the back while carrying a back basket.



25. /bebuətik/ - bebuatak

This is a clay pot with numerous holes at the bottom. It was used to steam rice. Layers of leaves were stacked to cover the holes from inside and pre-soaked rice was placed and steamed over a fire. The particular pot in the photo below is about hundred years old. The productions of such pots have stopped and exist only as family heirloom.



The need to preserve and promote such artistic skills and eco-friendly products will prevent excessive synthetic life which breed and spread cancer and other life hazardous diseases. The skills and practices to create, weave, mould and carve such arts are unthinkingly not passed down or taught to the younger generation. As a result, some of the remaining household products are collecting dust in a corner or in a disintegrating state of existence. Many such products remain in a family as heirlooms or reminders of how the older generation used to carry or store certain items. Moreover, it will have a huge impact on the Khapa language as the words used for labelling such folkcrafts will diminish gradually and create a visible vacuum in the linguistic structure of the Khapas. Since the Khapas are multilingual and their mother language is already endangered, preserving any form of cultural and linguistic aspect is highly required.

Workshop on Tangam Language Documentation

A 7 days workshop on Tangam language Documentation was organised by Centre for Endangered languages (CFEL), Arunachal Institute of Tribal languages (AITS), Rajiv Gandhi University from the 7th-13th October 2016. The workshop was attended by eight native language consultants from Kuging village, under Tuting circle, Upper Siang district along with the entire CFEL team. The workshop was coordinated by Rejhoney Borang, Senior Research Fellow of the centre. Various data on different aspects of culture and language of the Tangam community were collected for description and documentation purposes during the week long programme.



Workshop on Khapa Language Documentation

A seven-day workshop on **Khapa language** was successfully conducted by Centre for Endangered Languages, Rajiv Gandhi University from 20th-26th September, 2016 at Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, RGU. A team of ten Native Khapa speakers from Noksa village of Tirap district were invited to the university. The workshop mainly aimed at documenting the language and socio-cultural aspects of the Khapa people. The Coordinator of the workshop was Rebecca Borang, Senior Research Scholar, CFEL, RGU.



CFEL- RGU Research Team:

Prof. S.Simon John, Coordinator
Lisa Lomdak, Assistant Coordinator
Dr. Wanglit Monchan, Assistant Coordinator
Dr. Jumyir Basar (Consultant Anthropologist)
Dr. Lienjang Zeite, Research Associate
Rebeka Borang, Senior Research Fellow
Rejhoney Borang, Senior Research Fellow
Chera Devi, Junior Research fellow
Kaling Dabi, Junior Research Fellow
Rumi Deuri, Junior Research Fellow
Kombong Darang, Documentation Officer
Preety Shukla, Office Assistant

Editorial Team:

Prof. S.Simon John
Lisa Lomdak
Dr. Wanglit Monchan

Layout and Design:

Kombong Darang

Kudda Hidan
(Siang Hanging Bridge Tuting, Upper Siang)

