

The Unique Naga Culture of Preserving the Skulls

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Abstract: *The Naga tribe has their own distinct myths and beliefs that has transcend orally from one generation to the other. The absence of written records made this cultural transcendence so valuable and exceptional to the nagas, the responsibilities of disseminating to the younger generations was uphold with utmost sincerity, honesty and integrity. This moral culture was regard to be one of the most unique characteristics of the Nagas in those times. The Naga cultural and traditional practices was also closely involves and inter-woven with varied religious rituals, superstition and beliefs; the Nagas has a firm belief in the afterlife and spiritual world that centers on the idea of the 'Land of Death', the final abode of the dead souls. They believe that life continues to exist even after death, and the soul goes to the world of death through a passage of road created in an invisible dead realm. This paper examines on the unique socio-religious practices of preserving the skulls by the Chang Nagas. The Chang Naga also takes a great care of the funerary rites as part of this belief system such as offering foods to the dead by keeping the eatables at the grave of the dead for the smooth passage of soul towards the land of death. The Chang Naga also practices a unique burial system of disposing the death. If a person dies, the body is buried in the kitchen to decay; after the body is decomposed, the head is detached from the body and kept in the cave. Various such rituals was performed, the skulls were also kept in a separate place as a part of fulfilling this religious belief. tribe to have ever preserved the cave of the skull that popularly got the term, "The Skull Cave"*

Key Terms- Skull Cave, Headhunting, Chang Naga

I.INTRODUCTION

Nagaland had been an exotic destination for so many outsiders for its cultural distinctiveness, the cultural manifestation in the traditional festivals, unique physical characteristics, lifestyle, food habits and its past association with the head hunting and tattoos offers a varied interest to the researchers etc. to do the ethnographic study. As such the existence of caves offers a fresh gateway to the Naga past culture in understanding the Naga cultural dynamics. The caves in Nagaland are mostly natural made and not creation;

by which it meant that these caves were utilize in its originality, as it had existed, it has gained a lot of attention of many tourists in recent times. These caves also have their own unique history of its discovery; there are few caves in Nagaland as Ahom Stone Cave in Longleng district, Salomi and AZ Phizo, Rani Gaidiniulu Cave in Peren district, Piolongka Cave in Noklak district, Langpangkong Cave in Mokokchung district and the Skull Cave in Tuensang district.

a) *Ahom Cave:* Ahom cave is located in Bhumnyu village at Longleng District of Nagaland. It is believed that the Ahom King Gadpani and his wife Joymati kouwari took refuge in this cave to escape from Laluk Burphuka, a claimant to the throne; later this cave came to be known as Ahom Cave as the Ahom prince took shelter in the cave, sometimes it is referred as the refuge cave. The Nagas sympathizing Godapani, gave every kind of assistance and shelter him against his pursuing enemy. He settled in hills of Nagaland in Ao and Konyak areas and married to the Naga daughter. In 1861 AD, Godapani ascended to the throne. This Ahom stone cave looks like a proper slabs and column (Village Level Entrepreneur, 2019). This cave also indicates the good relationship between the Nagas and Ahoms in the past.



Fig. 1. Ahom Stone Cave.

b). *Rani Gaidinliu and AZ Phizo Cave:* This cave is located in Poilwa village of Peren district. Rani gaidinliu and AZ Phizo was said to have taken shelter in this cave during their struggle against the British raj and India. Rani Gaidinliu went in hiding during her revolt against the British and took shelter here. (Hegs, 2021) In October 1932, she came to Poilwa village

with her followers, she was warmly welcomed by the villager with singing, dancing, and playing various traditional sports and sports. The villagers generously donated ornaments, and animals like mithun, buffalo, cow, pig etc. and hosted the festivity. The cave in Poilwa was used as her secret hide out during her stay in the village (Native Uncut, 2022). AZ Phizo was a Naga Nationalist leader, under his leadership the Naga Nationalist Council (NNC) fought for Naga self-determination. (Jamir, 25 August 2021) see Fig. 2.

c). *Piolongka Cave*: Piolongka Cave is located in the forest of Kingbulei, Tsoiphu village at Longleng District of Nagaland. Piolongka is name given by the locals vilagers which means “ The Bats Cave” as bats are found in this cave also the abode for birds and monkey. It is also believe to be the place of refuge for the villagers from the foes; it was the haven of shelters for the animals when they wanted to hide from the humans and their enemies. During winter, animals like tiger, bears and stags take shelter in this to protect them from the freezing cold. The cave is 300 feet deep wide, 30 feet wide and 150 feet high. The cave is filled with stalagmite and stalactite. The entrance to the cave is narrow and dark. There is absence of noise and only the sound of the dripping water can be heard inside the cave.(Shongmo B, 2022)



Fig. 2. Rani Gaidinliu and AZ Phizo cave.



Fig. 3. Piolongka Cave

d). *Langpangkong Cave*: Langpangkong cave is located between the valleys of Dikhu and Milak rivers in the Mokokchung district of Nagaland, and of the

six major caves ranges inhabited by the Ao Naga . It is the series of natural limestone cave and is believed to be of millions years of age, and along with limestone’s it is also a home to Stalactites and stalagmites. The Langpangkong caves are a natural wonder with historical significance. According to the local folklore of the Ao people, this cave served as safe place of refuge for an Ahom King who ruled during that time. He fled from Sivasagar due to court intrigues and rivalries and took shelter in this cave. The cave is which he took shelter in one of the caves of Langpangkong caves. It also served as a hiding place for the tribes as a hiding place to protect themselves from the enemies during the headhunting days. It is also said to have discovered some artifacts that dates back to 18th century. Inside the caves are the wonder of rock formation and underground streams.



Fig.4.Langpangkong_Cave

e). *Salomi Cave*: Salomi Cave is the limestone cave located in the Kiphire District of Nagaland. Salomi Cave is believe to be 200 million years old formed due to the geological process. It has unique rock formation, several connected caves with underground streams, stalactites and stalagmites have developed over thousands of years. The cave consist of several interconnected caves with largess one being 1 km in length. There is echoes of flowing water, and various inscriptions, carvings and sculptures can be seen, this proves that this cave have a religious significance. This cave is a great example of architectural and was believed to have come to existence with blessings from above. The name of the cave is derived from the name the village itself Salomi.



Fig.5. Salomi Cave.

e). *Skull Cave*: The Skull Cave is located in Tuensang Village of Tuensang District. It is closely associated with the history of the Chang Naga tribe and it revolves around the social and religious life of the Chang Tribe. There are four caves in total, belonging to the respective clan –Oung, Kangshou, Hoangang, and Lomou. They practiced a partial burial, when a person dies, the body is decomposed and the heads is detached from the body and kept in the cave.



Fig.6. Human skulls at the Skull Cave.

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE SKULL CAVE

The Skull cave is the burial place located tuensang district of Nagaland inhabited by the Chang Naga; the skulls of the dead's or clans are kept together in one place, as it is belief that in doing this they would stay together as the clansmen throughout eternity. The four clan as Oung, Kangshou, Hoangang, and Lomou has its own skull cave and is kept accordingly. The believe that, there is a place where all the souls of the dead lives formed the basis of religious practices of the Naga tribes, the physical death is not the end of life but life continues and the souls travels through place called *yem lam*, which is the dead people's road. According to the traditional belief of the Chang Naga, the future world lies in the underground called *Yembikaodak*, the abode of the dead (Ngullie, 2023). The Skull cave in Tuensang is not a deep-hollow cave

for human habitation but it is a short rock shelter. See Fig. 7 and 8.



Fig.7. Physical remains in the Skull Rock Shelter.

The accurate time of the origin of the skull cave cannot be traced, as there was no written record by the Chang ancestor. However, the possibility of the Carbon dating cannot be rule out and thus offers a prospect to the archeologist to this endeavor but the local participation is the need for the same. The skull cave is the striking feature of the Tuensang village and it became an area of the interest for the tourist and researchers. The skull caves are located in the outskirts of the village. The skull caves is not the human made cave but it is the natural rock or cave shelters which they selected keep the skull of their deceased beloved families. (Ngullie, 2023)



Fig.8. Remnants of Skulls in the Skull Cave

In traditional period, when a person dies, their dead bodies were kept in an elevated platform but with the passage of time, the platform gets destroyed or collapsed and the skeletons were misplaced or carried away by the wild animals, buried underneath. So in order to keep the memory of their loved ones, they decided to keep the skull in the secured place. The skull place was also known by alternate name as

'Khulo Apshang'. There were generally two kinds of announcing the death was practiced, when the warrior died, the news was spread within the village by beating the drum with it create a unique sound known as "Mushou" conveying the warrior passed away. The death of the unmarried women and children was orally conveyed to the villagers.

III. PRESERVATION OF DEAD BODIES:

Death is an irreversible cessation of every living organism; the ancestors of the Chang practiced the platform exposure method of burial. For platform exposure, the body was wrapped in cloth, mat and exposed on a *machang* i.e. a raised bamboo platform, on the outskirts of the village but often the body was eaten by animals. So in order to preserve the remains of their deceased, they searched for the rock shelters where they could preserve the remains of the dead and from here on they started to preserve the skulls of their deceased beloved in the rock shelters and it is called "Khulo Apshang" meaning 'The Place of Skull' or Lochem meaning "Bone House"

(Akho, 2022). When a person dies naturally the process of burial was performed with various rituals. In the first process, the dead body is exposed in the platform exposure made for the ceremonial purpose and the body is kept for decomposition and after the complete decomposition the head are detached and kept at the rock shelter. (Nasetyemjong, 2024. Chingmak,2020)

IV. CATEGORIZATION OF DEATH:

The cause of death is categorized into two category as Natural, Unnatural and the unnatural or the accidental death. The unnatural or accidental death is not buried in the Khulo Apshang. Accidental dead like being struck by the fallen stones or trees, drowning, birth labour death, victims of the wild animals, killed by the enemies. These are categorized as unnatural death and were called "*Sauto Haubü*", it was also considered as a taboo. If the woman die at the time of the childbirth, her husband stays in the jungle for six months in quarantine as the process of purification. The relatives are also restricted from visiting. The brothers of the husband brings foods and clothing and keeps at a specific place nearby his quarantined place and informs him but not allowed to physically come into

contacts while in the process of purification; after completions of the six months of purification, he wear new cloths and shave of his head. (Nasetyemjong, 2024). Those who died with leprosy and mental illness were not allowed to keep in the skull cave as when they were alive people detested them. So they were buried separately, and that place was given the name as Leprosy cemetery.

As for those who died a natural death it was kept in the skull cave, Khulo Apshang. Before the skull is taken to the skull cave rituals were performed. The dead body was buried inside the kitchen for a fixed period for decomposition. The funerary rites are initiated by the oldest male member of the clan called "Paushibou", he marks the area to bury the dead body, the other male members of the family helps in digging out the grave, Above the buried body in the kitchen, the fire is lit for six days to decompose the body faster. A dead body is keep buried for one month for the complete process of decay. The family members have to carry out their activities during the processes of body decomposition. It was the strong belief that the love they have for the deceased should enable them to endure the stench of the decomposing body in the kitchen (Nasetyemjong, 2024).

Every year before planting any crops in the field, the village elders decides on detaching and cleaning of the flesh from the skull. The dead body is dug out with the help of the male member and the cleaning of the body is done by the eldest paternal aunt of the family called *Anye* along with the help of other female members of the family, they removes all the flesh with the sharp bamboo knife and it is cleanse by the bark of the tree known as "Kohak-Po which is soapy in nature, and the final cleansing of the skull is done by the oil extracted from the Perilla seeds. After the cleaning the skull is detached from the body. As a part of the rites, the family members carried the skull and mourns for the whole day. The next day the eldest man of the clan known as Paushibou leads the way towards the burial place. The eldest aunt carry the skull, calls out the name of the deceased, and the names of their deceased fore-fathers pleading them to take care of the newcomer and they all marches toward the skull cave mourning. On reaching the place, the eldest aunt gives the skull to Paushibou (Eldest man in the Clan), to keep the skull at its final resting place. The rest of the body parts were buried in the kitchen. After that, depending on the status of the family, either a chicken

or a pig be killed and a feast will be prepared. The innards were cooked and thinly sliced ginger was put and offered, first to the deceased. The rest of the meat will be cooked and shared amongst the family members and with the neighbours. A special package was made for the woman who had detached the skull from the body and carried to the rock shelter. (Ngullie, 2023, Nasetyemjong, 2024)



Fig.9. The Detached Skull kept at the Skull Cave.

On that very day a local wine called ‘Loehh’ was served in large quantity, and only after drinking the whole prepared jar of wine, they were allowed to go to the field which may sometimes takes up to more than 2 days to finish drinking the whole jar and for the final rituals a black chicken was released near the village gates asking for prosperity, blessings and success over the village. The feast was the last rite for the deceased and it was believed that the soul departed after that and the deceased person’s name was never called out again or addressed. The belief of the Nagas that head possess a special power of fertility and other blessing maybe the reason that Chang gave the special importance to the preservation of the skulls. This practice was done till the 1900s, only with the penetration of Christianity and modern education, this practice was put to cease. (Ngullie, 2023, Nasetyemjong 2024)

V. SKULL CAVE: THE GOLGOTHA OF NAGALAND

The Golgotha is the Greek translation of the Aramaic *Gulgultha* that corresponds to the Hebrew *‘Gulgoleth’*. The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word is *‘Kranion’*, the Latin, *‘Calvaria’*, and the English, *‘Skull’*. Golgotha is the place where the crucifixion of Jesus took place (Wilson,1906). Golgotha is located outside the walls of Jerusalem, it has been a place of

pilgrimage, and a place which is highly revered. This place is also venerated as the location where St. Helena, the Mother of Constantine the Great, located the True Cross of Christ’s crucifixion. The Chapel of her honor was built by the crusader and various Christian groups like Greek, Roman, Armenian and Coptic churches control parts of this church and conduct services regularly (Wilson,1906). The name Golgotha is being referred in all the four gospels of the as ‘The Place of Skull’, the place where Jesus was crucified. Matthew 27:33, “They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”)” (NIV Bible). Mark 15:22, “They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”)” (NIV Bible). Luke 23:33 “When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals. John 19:17, “Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. The scholars have suggested some reason for the name Golgotha: The first reason is due to the pre-Christian tradition belief that the skull of Adam was found there. Another reason is that it is named due to the skull –like shaped hill.



Fig.10. Golgotha, Wylar, 2013

1. That Golgotha was so called because it was the public place of execution, and abounded with the skulls of executed criminals — These skulls , according to some authorities lay about unburied , and, according to others , were hidden from view in an adjoining rock-hewn tomb , into which the heads and bodies of those who were excuted were cast (Wilson,1906).
2. Golgatha is located at the hilly mountain, outskirts of the Jerusalem. Similarly even the Khulo Apshang is also located at the outskirts of the village in the village.

3. We can also see that both Khulo Apshang and Golgotha is revered. Golgotha is revered due to the crucifixion of Jesus at this place and Khulo Apshang is revered due to burial of the ancestors. Though it is not revered much now, in the past, the ancestors of the Chang revered the Khulo Apshang as it was resting place of the deceased one.

Despite the differences in the reason for the name, the common and acceptable fact is the Skull. In all the theory of reasoning Skull is associated. Both Golgotha and Khulo Apshang have two common nature: both the places have the skulls displayed unburied and both are located at the hillside, natural rock shelters surrounded by the trees. And based on this common nature, the Khulo Apshang can be considered “The Golgotha of Nagaland”, as this is the only Skull Cave in Nagaland.

VI. METHODS OF DISPOSITION OF THE ENEMY HEAD AMONG THE CHANG NAGAS

Whenever the warriors brings the enemy head, the entire village population gather together to welcome the warrior's and celebrate as they believed that this head have brought them success and prosperity. The captured head are brought to village as the trophies, they follows different ways disposition. Some tribes like Ao carried the head to morung, Sumi and Konyak takes it to the house of the chief, Tikhir throws into the war drum. The Sangtam tribe keeps the head on the headstone. Rituals and ceremonies are observed by killing cows, mithun, pigs or cocks (Thong, 2011). The Chang kept all the head taken in the morung as the trophies. Before the head are brought to display in the morung, various rites and rituals were observed. When the warriors comes back from the war, victorious with the heads. The heads are tied on the tree called Kupbung (Pachira Quinata) with the rope and goes to morung. They keeps the heads on the log drum. The name of the first and second head-taker is chanted beating the log drum as Shebou (first) and sembou (second). This is sign of recognition as a hero and a great pride for the warrior. There was no separate morung for each respective clan to keep the head as trophies like that of the skull cave, all the clans keep the head at the morung. (Nasetyemjong, 2024).

VII. CHRISTIANITY AND ITS IMPACT ON SKULL PRESERVATION

The emergence of Christianity in the Chang area was late, but as the saying goes “Better late than never”. The year 1946 was the year of Breakthrough in the Tuensang village, the parent village for the Chang tribe. Mr Sayouwongto encountered the gospel through Mr Imlong Chang at Mokokchung when he went to Assam to buy a salt, Mr Imlong Chang shared about the Kingdom of God that in accepting and receiving faith, the village would experience peace and harmony. Sayouwongto willingly accepted the message and took back to village along with the salt. On the way, he shared the message to Mr. Thungti whom he met on the way, who willingly and swiftly received the message. And this mark the beginning of eventful passage for the gospel in Tuensang (Chingmak, 2020). In 1971 with the wave of revival, the villagers collected all the head trophies that they kept in the morung as trophies and buried. More than 800 heads was buried with the prayers, marking a sign of repentance and revival. (Nasetyemjong,2024) A stone was erected on 29 December, 1971.

“We left behind all our vain glory for the kingdom of eternity and memory of our defeated souls, the same created life in the name of trinity forevermore. i have overcome the world”

This memorial stands as a sign of repentance, peace between four khels of the Tuensang Village. It is a beautiful testimony for generation and this memory stone also stands as an evidence to the generations and researcher the year of revival in the Tuensang village, which brought peace among the four khel's of the Tuensang Village. (Chingmak,2020).

VIII. PRACTICES IN THE COLONIAL RULE

The first contact of the Britishers with the Nagas was in January 1832 under Captain Jenkins and Col. Pemberton. The Nagas were headhunters and they would often raids the villages in the plains from time to time which was posing an administrative inconvenience and hampering the British administration as the Naga frequently raid and killed the British subjects working in the tea garden in Assam. The necessity of safer road to Manipur and the Brahmaputra valley through Naga territory and smoother administration in the North Cachar,

Nowgong, Assam and Manipur made the British to contact the Nagas (Jimomi, 2013). The British was not interested in conquering the Naga Hills but the constant raiding activities of the Nagas made the British to change their policy and attitude towards the Nagas and adopted “*Forward Policy*” of annexing the Naga Hills. Accordingly, the Naga Hills District was created in 1866 with Samaguting as the District headquarters. Lt. Gregory became the first Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills District. After the Battle of Khonoma on 22 November 1879-March 1880, Khonoma and , the other Angami villages fell one after another. In 1885, the Lotha areas were annexed, and in 1889 the Ao areas were also annexed with headquarters established at Mokokchung. Consequently Zunheboto and Phek districts were annexed and brought under the British administrative control. Only the Chang areas which is also known as Trans-Dikhu tribes, Tuensang district remained un-administered throughout the British rule. Trans-Dikhu tribes comprise of Chang, Sangtam, Yimkhuing, Khamnyugan, Phom and Konyak (Ketholesie, 2015). Though unadministered, in 1902, the Tuensang District was put under the supervisory charge of the Governor General of India for the nominal control (Chingmak, 2020). In the pre-colonial days each Naga tribe occupied its own specified territory and each tribe was grouped in to a number of villages and each village occupied a well-marked area and they had their own independent administration. The village forms the sole political and social unit. Every Naga the village was very much a world in itself, people married, lived and died in their respective villages. The world for the Nagas was his village. All his achievements gained outside the village through hard physical labor, victory in war or diplomacy in disputes were all enshrined within the village. Each village was independent and had its own administration that represented the community in all the areas such as politics, society, economy and even religious. The traditional religion of the early Nagas was Animism. Animism is the belief in the existence of the spirits in all the aspects of life surrounding environment-trees, rocks, rivers etc. Nagas belief in both the Supreme being; the creator and the evil spirits that can do harm or even kill if proper appeasement is not done. So early Naga religion was a kind of superstitious belief and therefore every effort was taken not to offend the spirits as it would bring them unfortunate and misery

in the lives. The Nagas had the same concept of Supreme being though addressed it by different names. The Sumi calls ‘*Alhou*’, Aos ‘*Tsungrem* or *Lijaba*’, Angamis ‘*Terhuomia* or *Ukepenupfu*’, Konyak ‘*Kahwang*’, Chakhesang ‘*Kümunupü*’ (Phira,2020). The Chang ancestors worshipped many gods and they were generally called as ‘*Kaokhium Mühghaiü*’ meaning ‘gods of the earth’ or *Shabü Mühghaiü*’ meaning ‘evil gods’, but the supreme and most revered god was “*Shambüli*’ or ‘*Sambou*’. This supreme god is regarded as ‘the keeper or master (Chingmak,2020). The British could not administer the Chang areas but the gospel of Christ rule over the Changs. Christianity transformed the lives of the people, their daily practices and way of life. They gave up their animistic lifestyle. With the introduction of the Christian calendar, they stopped going to fields on Sunday, which earlier was very important to them, as their life was dependent on it, instead they started to have fellowship on Sunday. They stopped offering sacrifices to the spirit, They no longer take life or heads but instead give their lives for the gospel. One remarkable change in their way of life is the ‘Cessation of Head-hunting practices’, which was very important for them. In fact, not only the Chang but also the whole Nagas stopped the headhunting with the coming of the Christianity.

IX. DECLINE OF PLATFORM EXPOSURE BURIAL

Just as the Nagas believed that head possess the vital power possessing fertility and prosperity, Chang being the major tribe of the Naga, may also have believed in this, and this force can be the reason for the Changs to give special importance to the preservation of the skull through skull cave. Christianity and introduction of the modern education brought a great change in the social tribal culture life of the Chang. There is still believe in the life after death, but in a different dimension. They also still believe in the spirits, but the fear of evil spirits is does no longer exist. (Chingmak, 2020). Estimating the time of the penetration of Christianity in the Tuensang area, it can be said that the practice of keeping the skulls in the cave was stopped half a century ago and the death are buried according to the Christian customs with no classification between the natural and unnatural death till now though the practice of keeping skull in loochum has ceased but

the skull caves are still in existence as the cave at Nakshou village, two in Tuensang village and one in Konya_Village.



Fig.11. The Skull Cave at Nakshou Village.

The Konya Students Union (KSU) built the skull house and shifted the skulls from the cave. The cave was abandoned with the coming of Christianity, the location of cave made it difficult to maintained so the KSU took the initiative of preserving the skulls by building the skull house. They build this house with the support of the village council, who provided the timber from the village. This house was built with a long discussion of more than a year. It was shifted with prayer and sermon by Rev.Limba, Pastor, Konya Baptist Church and the new skull house was inaugurated by M. Somba D.B.(Akho,2022)



Fig.12.The Skull Cave of Konya Village



Fig.13.New Skull House at Konya Village

The Chang' practice this 'Platform Exposure' even during the 1920s, only in 1930s they resorted to the underground burial that is with the coming of the Christianity but since major part of the villages didn't embrace Christianity fully in those days, they practiced the platform exposure till 1960s (Chingmak,2020). Though the practice of keeping the skull at Khulo Apshang is not observed at present, we can see the legacy through the presence of cave till now. This cave is the unique heritage of the Chang Naga tribes; if preserved and maintain well and open for the exhibition or public visit, it could also become the heritage of the Nagas in general. It can be an area of interest for the future generation of Naga intellectuals to delve into ethnographic studies on the Naga cultural practices.

CONCLUSION

The Chang Naga has a unique historical background, surrounded by rich and unique traditions. They are the man of dignity, brave and with a courageous and this is evident from the fact that, their areas were unadministered by the British. They were independent in nature, hardworking, honesty, courtesy and respect. Their sense of respect can also been establish from the fact that they address the elderly people as 'Abou, means 'Father' and 'Anyu' meaning 'Mother' It so happen that when I went to Tuensang to meet the Chang Khulei Setshang, the President of CKS. He was addressed as 'Abou' by others though being holding the position of the President. The penetration of Christianity in the Chang was quiet unique and different from the rest of the Nagas. It was Rev. Kijung Ao, who made the breakthrough, and tour through the Chang, Longra, Noksen, Longtang and Tuensang evangelising, spreading the message of Gospel. Prior to him, Godhula also came, but it did not had much effect. (Jimomi, 2013/Chingmak, 2020) Christianity and modern education still didn't penetrated in the Chang areas until the mid of 20th century. This skull cave keeps only the head of the family, so one question arise, "Where do they keep the head of the enemies (head-hunting)? The heads of enemies was kept separately at the Morung.

The Head-hunters were greatly valued and respected, head-hunting was a close knit of their social life. And it was practiced till mid-20th century i.e, till the

arrival of Christianity. The story of head-hunting was buried there, and no memorial was built in that burial, just simple burial and it vanished, most of the younger ones are not aware of the fact that more than 800 skulls were buried. Not only the heads was buried, but also the history, legacy and heritage of the Chang was buried. Even if the story is passed down orally, since no memorial is erected, with the development, progress and the occupation of the people there, that story also will perish and it will be forgotten. Can this head be retrieved? Or the memorial be built in that burial place? It remains an answer that need deeper introspection, it is the mystery that younger generation can solved. If their mind awakens and are made aware of this, maybe their hearts for the preservation open up then, something can be done about it. If the repatriation of Naga remains can be processed from the Pitts River Museum of United Kingdom, then the erection of the memorial in this burial is not difficult task to do so. The skull cave have recently attracted the attention of the tourist, in past few year some tourist can be seen visiting the skull cave. But our own Nagas are inattentive to it. In the cave located in Kangshou village, near the Palak river, almost all the skulls destroyed can be seen, These sites if properly preserved and maintained can become a popular heritage site for the Nagas. Nagaland can attract lots of tourist and these caves have the potential of becoming a subject of research. For instance, the artifacts that are found in Langpangkong caves will tell a lot of history about the Nagas. Many of these skulls are also destroyed by the children as proper preservation measure are not taken up. I proper initiative for the preservation of this skull are taken up then this caves can be effectively preserved and can also boast the economy of the people of the region.

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