

## Book Review

### **Head Hunters Culture- Historic Culture of Nagas- Joseph S. Thong. (2012)**

New Delhi: Mittal Publications. pp. 175 + xv. ISBN: 81-8324-154-9. Price: Rs. 495/-

**Pritish Chaudhuri**

Central Public Sr. Sec. School, Udaipur

*Email: pritish.chaudhuri@gmail.com*

The author of this book has presented descriptive information of the Naga tribe who were once known for head- hunting. Head- hunter's culture is a very old tradition once practiced by the Nagas, inhabited in the states of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam in India and in Myanmar who migrated from the South East Asian countries long past. This tribe is differing from rest of the communities of India in origin, language, food habits, dress pattern, beliefs, religion, social customs and tradition. It is said that they used to chop the head of their enemies after the battle is over and bring those at home as a memory of victory in addition to prove their valour and to appease their god in order to increase their fertility, good luck and well-being of their people. The practise of head- hunting resides in the heart of the Naga culture and all other life cycle rituals and activities and also inter woven with this. The inseparable part of the Naga culture like village society, construction of house, construction of village gate and its decorations, chieftainship, dress and ornaments, occupation, rituals, marriage, clan system, fairs and festivals, etc. are all centred round and linked up with head- hunting and Feast of Merit which are same in almost all the sections of Naga tribe except some minor variations from village to village, clan to clan, etc. This is a distinctive feature of the Naga tribe which makes it different from the rest of Indian communities which is generally governed by caste system, *zamindari* system, *jajmani* system, etc.

Although many books has been written on Nagas by many British administrators, Christian Missionaries, Naga National Workers, journalists, travellers, military personels, local administrators, academicians, researchers and son on, but so far as the author's knowledge, no comprehensive book that covering all the aspects of the culture of the head- hunting community has been written to quench our thrust for knowledge. Hence, through this book the author tried to present us a complete picture of Naga culture. Various components of traditional Naga society have been described in brief.

In present day also, in the interior rural villages one can see the historic culture still prevalent without any change and are transmitted from one generation to another through the aged people whose ways of life have not changed for centuries. Apart from it, the material culture likes the wood carving craft, cloth weaving, pot making, dresses and ornaments, weapons, tattooing, dyeing, folk songs, dances, etc. also served the author as primary data to reconstruct the traditional culture of the Nagas. For the collection of first hand data he also applied participation observation method. The data are also collected from the information received from the informant from the field and from the books listed

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in the bibliography. For the collection of data, the author has gone through very systematic method like library method, historical method, documentary method, questionnaire method, schedule method, interview method and participant observation method.

This book serves as a guideline for the students, research scholars, academicians and teachers of Social Sciences like anthropology, ethnography, sociology, culture, tribal studies, law, society and technology. The book is also very helpful to know more about the life style of the Naga head- hunters. Apart from it, it will serve to the candidates who are preparing for competitive exams, college and university exams related to tribal culture and society. The administrators also be benefited from this book who were serving in tribal and backward areas as this book is proving information related to tribal culture, their ways of life, tribal beliefs, values, customary laws and justice, political and social organization and other relevant information. Through this book the author tried to document those lost intangible and tangible culture heritages that are lost or about to lose.

