

**Megalithic Monuments of Nagas:  
An Ethnographic Study***Mepusangba and Yabangri Changkiri***Abstract**

The practice of setting up megalithic monuments among the Nagas was widespread and associated with their social, economic and ritual ties. It is also an important attribute of identity. With no written records, it is the presence of such monuments that gives us the understanding of the past and present. Among the archaeological remains, megaliths form an important asset for reconstructing the prehistory and cultural heritage of the Nagas. The paper attempts to present a brief report on the megalithic traditions from different dialect-speaking villages: Chizami (Khezha) in Phek District, Nsong and Nzauna (Zeme) in Peren District, Sumi (Sumi) in Phek District, which have been selected from various communities that apply megalithic practices. The variation in rituals and other aspects associated with megalithic practices and the types of monument are observed and recorded. The data presented here is the outcome of the ethnoarchaeological investigations in the above-mention villages.

**Introduction**

The megalithic tradition among the Nagas of Nagaland and those outside the political boundaries are widely associated with various aspects. Megalithic culture forms an important asset in understanding prehistory and the heritage culture of the Nagas. With no written records, such remains of monuments enrich the vacuum in understanding their society, polity, environment, rituals, settlement patterns, art and architecture, technology and, of course, the economy. The standing stones or slabs, village gates, monoliths and series of stones represent strong characteristics, depending on the village and communities. There are various possible reasons to erect megaliths. For instance, they can be associated with headhunting, lovers' stones, village boundaries, the killing of tigers, rituals, and most commonly among the Nagas the Feast of Merit. It is to be mentioned that almost all the communities offer Feasts of Merit but some use perishable materials in commemoration of the feast. The features of these practices include upright stones (menhirs), series of upright stones (alignments), table stones (dolmens), burial stones (cists, cairns, tombs), stone seats, stone circles, and rectangular, raised platforms. The perishable materials are wooden Y-posts or sometimes straight ones with decorative carvings and motifs. It is debatable whether the use of perishable materials is a borrowed tradition or a later addition or the other way round. Even though the use of material varies, the conception of megalithic practice is noticeably similar in certain ways—hard work, competition, purity, fertility, status, community participation, spiritual connection, environment, polity,

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society, art and architecture, technology, belief in life after death, and of course the economy.

The current fieldwork explores villages in terms of type, functionality and rituals associated with megalithic tradition. In recent times, megalithic practice is rarely observed, the original rituals and other practices omitted. Commonly, examples of megalithic continuity can be seen during the organization of jubilee celebrations, church jubilees, or feasts at Christmas. The trend of these widespread traditions discontinued during the 1970s to 80s with the increase in conversion to and acceptance of Christianity. Needless to say, the unplanned advancement and the growth of development in these parts of the region are rapid. The construction of roads and highways infrastructure, the establishment of public and private institutions, the settlement of new villages on old sites, the use of monument remains for personal construction have rapidly caused damage and, in many cases, completely uprooted the context. Other issues are that old people who are living witnesses of practices are taking their memories along with them to their deathbeds. Lack of laws and policies to conserve the sites and to investigate them is too expensive from a financial as well as a physical point of view, and ultimately a lack of interest in heritage from upcoming generations prevails.

Early work and reports on the megaliths of Naga were undertaken by colonial administrators and the anthropologists Hutton (1921; 1922 a and b; 1926; 1937), Mills (1926; 1937), Haimendorf (1939), and Bower (1951). These early scholars and administrators paved the way to an understanding of the megalithic traditions as well as other features of the Nagas through written records, photos and films, which are important in understanding the context. The second wave of interest in the megalithic traditions in the Naga Hills came after India's independence. Mention may be made of Rao (1991) and local scholars. After a gap of decades, the importance and understanding of megalithic tradition have emerged. Classic work on megaliths can be attributed to the works of W. Jamir (1998), in which, for the first time, scientific approaches were applied in classifying the megaliths with equivalent English terms. Following his work in recent years, valuable investigations have been reported – Triparthy & T. Jamir (2011), T. Jamir (2004; 2006; 2015), Venuh (2003; 2005; 2008), Devi & Neog (2014), Wangjin (2014), W. Jamir (2014) and Khongreiwo (2014). Such contributions have significantly broadened the scope and understanding of the megalithic practices of the Nagas. The author, in the present report, investigates four small villages – selected from the wide distribution of megalithic remains – each representing different dialects and communities. The study adopts both archaeological and ethnographic methods and the former was used to map, measure and record the pattern of distribution. The ethnography includes the collection of data on the various aspects of megalithic tradition.

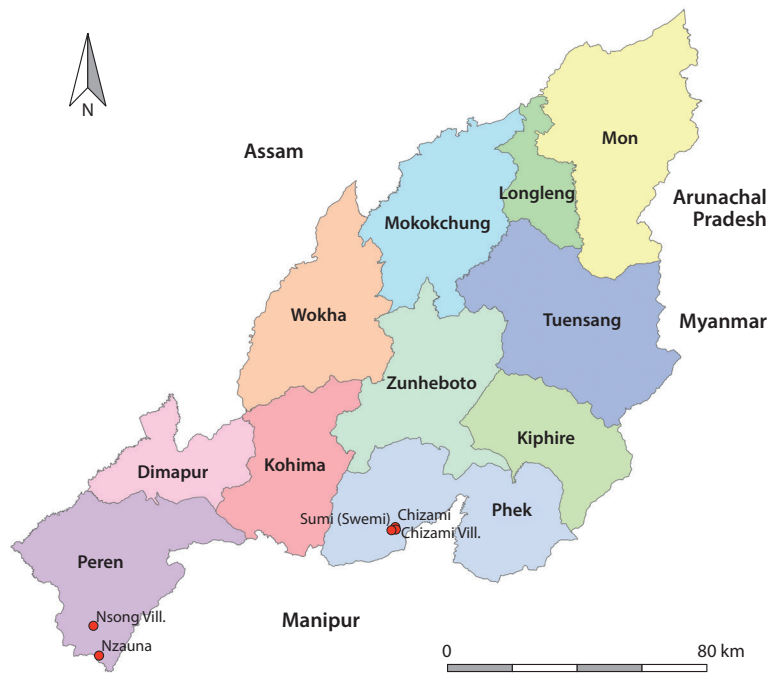


Fig 1. Map showing the Chizami, Sumi, Nsong and Nzauna villages.

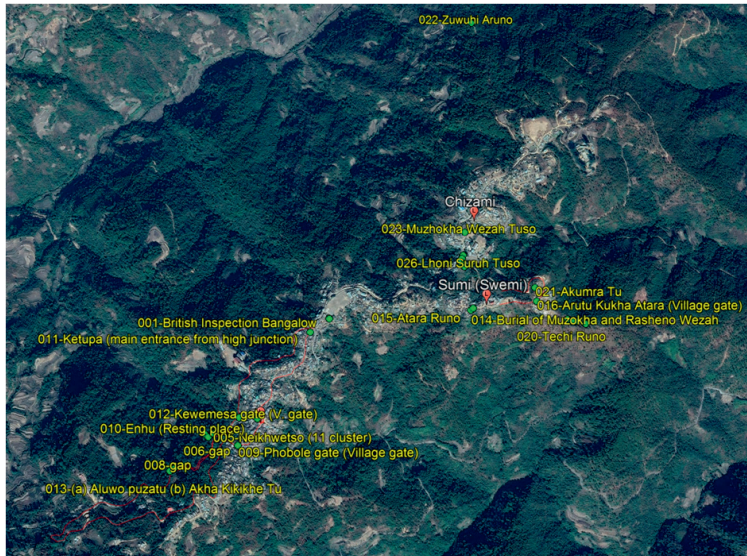
### Location of Chizami, Sumi, Nsong and Nzauna villages

The inhabitants of the villages of Chizami and Sumi (Fig. 1) speak different dialects, representing two communities, the Chakesang arriving first and the Sema later. The villages fall within Phek District. Khezha is the local dialect of Chizami, which has 586 houses in total and a population of 2,592 (2011 census). The village comprises six *khels*:

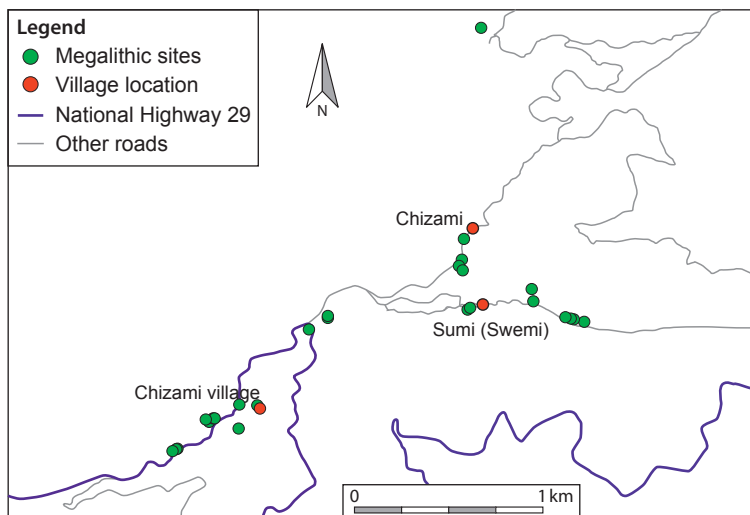
- 1 *Pfutshep* (New *Khel*)
- 2 *Pulekhro* (settling below the bridge)
- 3 *Kepero* (settling in the lower part of the village)
- 4 *Pfutshe* (extended village)
- 5 *Ladelekhro* (settling below the road)
- 6 *Mechutheza* (people living in plain area)

Clan systems are very strong and the village consists of fourteen clans—*Kapzo*, *Likro/Tsuhah*, *Churhuh*, *Mero*, *Wezah*, *Mekrisu*, *Wetsah*, *Thopi*, *Rhakho*, *Kezo*, *Puro*, *Lohe*, *Naro*, *Lasuh*. The village gates have numerous names after places or paths leading to fields and streams, which were generally fortified. Some of the gates are *Thedelu* (upper gate), *Thebvo* (gate name after the place where there are sting plants), *Tsamvupa* (protection gate), *Khilile* (gate name after path leading to paddy field), *Phobole* (name after path leading to paddy field), *Kewemeso* (gate of welcoming, hospitality), *Kavubori* (gate name after the place having bamboo groves), *Eziri* (gate name after path leading to stream), *Pfutshe ketsaku* (extended village gate), *Ketupa* (gate on the hillock) and *Kepero* (lower gate). At present, traditional architecture closely related to megalithic tradition is less to be seen, being replaced by modern houses. However, megalithic remains are widespread within and outside the village (Fig. 2).

Sumi village is closely bounded by Chizami, where the local dialect is Sema. According to the 2011 census, Sumi has 112 families and a population of 508. Oral traditions narrate that there were two *khels*—*Lele* (lower), now abandoned, and *Apfoto* (upper). At present, the village occupies the upper *khel*, which is divided into two, *Atara* and *Akara*. The clan system is very strong and there are around



Figs. 2a – b. Distribution of megalith remains in Chizami and Sumi.



nine clans: *Lohe, Wezah, Wozah, Rhakho, Sumoh, Tahe, Shema, Khamo, Tara*. The village has three main gates: *Lara, Rabola* and *Atara*. Interesting megalith remains are widely present within and outside the village.

The villages of Nsong and Nzauna fall within Peren District and are occupied by the Zeme community. Nsong, according to the 2011 census has 145 households and a population of 638. The village has three *khels*, which also represent the clan. The village also has a chief (*Heguang Peu*), whose position is hereditary and transferred to the eldest son of the family. *Paichuak Pui* and *Kerengdi* are the two main village gates. The dormitory or *morung* system for both males and females was an important institution. *Nreikia* and *Nkangkia* were both for males, the former being the upper *morung*, the latter the lower. *Nreikileuna* and *Nkangkialeuna* were dormitories for females, the former being the upper *morung*, the latter the lower. Nzauna, according to the 2011 census, has a population of 989 and 108 households. The village has two *morungs*, for both males and females. These *morung* systems are an institution for young males and females, playing a vital role in megalithic traditions.



## Classification and types

Megalithic remains found in these four villages consist of (using the English terms):

1. **Menhirs:** single stones erected for memorial or commemorative purposes during life or after death. Feasts of Merit are very commonly associated with these kinds of monuments, sometimes with other celebrations.
2. **Dolmens:** flat stone slabs rectangular or circular for memorial purposes, burials, and seating places. These dolmens sometimes feature along with menhirs and other times without.
3. **Alignments and avenues:** similar to menhirs, alignments and avenues consist of carefully oriented series and rows of stones. The rows can number two or four, depending on the stages of the feast offerings. However, such types are not common among the Zeme villages.
4. **Raised platforms:** common in Chizami and Sumi; circular or rectangular raised platforms for meetings and other discussions in the middle of the village. There can be more than one, sometimes constructed in each *khel*.
5. **Stone seat:** stone place outside or within the village; named after a person or sometimes natural stone named after the individual, set near the way to the paddy field; engraved footprints of the person are common among the Zeme.
6. **Lovers/sex stones:** raised platforms, rectangular, circular or semicircular, set on the way to the fields and having small to large stones placed in rows signifying the number of females a man has slept with or has had affairs with.
7. **Fortified gates:** almost all the villages have well-fortified structures of stone and huge wooden poles.
8. **Resting platform:** constructed for rest, on the way to the paddy field, in memory of a person; raised, circular or semicircular or rectangular platforms.
9. **Others:** fetish or luck stones, spiritual stones, stones symbolizing headhunting and animal killings and the like.

## Megalithic practice in Chizami

Chizami in Nagaland is situated in the southeast of Phek District, which is one of the biggest and oldest traditional villages in the district. Phek District is situated on geocoordinate 25.59 latitude and 94.38 longitude, sharing boundaries with the Sumi Naga in the north, Thangkhol in the south (Manipur state), Angami Naga in the west and Myanmar in the east. The people of Chizami belong to the Chakesang Naga, speaking the Khezha dialect. Chizami was also called Khezhabama, meaning "Khuzha people's place." The village has a population of 4,657 (approx.) and 982 households (Council of Chizami village survey, 2014). Chizami consists of six *khels* with fourteen clans. Chizami people have a glorious and varied tradition, among which is the extensive practice of megalithism. Numbers of megaliths, symbolism on the donor house, complex rituals and community feasts at various stages of megalithic erection have implications for the social, economic and religious life of the people.



### Feasts of Merit and megaliths

The megalithic practice associated with the Feast of Merit in Chizami has only one type. There can be up to twelve stages in the feast and if the donor is wealthy enough he can start from the first one. In doing so, both he and his wife can dress as if they were unmarried, young and starting the feast of merit again. In the first stage, there is neither the erection of a stone, nor status, nor shawl nor a house horn. The second stage allows the erection of a stone and the entitlement to a shawl, house horn (Fig. 3), and the use of a specific traditional cup. In the third stage, a stone is allowed to be pulled on behalf of the wife. For the fourth stage, the donor is allowed to have two stones pulled, representing husband and wife. However, it is said that most of the feast givers die at the fifth and sixth stages and only a few can perform the twelfth stage in their lifetime.

Fig.3. House horn, a symbol showing the owner has hosted a Feast of Merit in Chizami.

### Section of site and orientation of stone

The selection of a site for the erection of the stone depends on the feast giver, but if the donor wishes to use other people's plots, he seeks permission and gives a basket of rice in exchange for the plot. The selection of a site also depends on the dream; if the dream is not favorable, the donor selects another site. The sites are chosen mainly where the whole village can see the monolith. The stone is chosen carefully – again the dream and the omen are important. The shapes of stones are not uniform and depend on availability, but sometimes shapes are selected so that they can be dragged easily. After erection, the stones also signify the fate or sign of the feast giver. The better and smoother surface/shape of the stone faces the village.



Except for some raised resting platforms, all the megalithic remains are outside the village on the path to the paddy field.

### Rituals, *genna* and other aspects

- From the day of the announcement of the feast, husband and wife abstain from physical relations. It is believed that if they violate their purity there will be misfortune in the future or they will become poor.
- The priest and the next in line to be priest together with ten members of the village perform the rituals for the dragging of the stone.
- There is no share of the meat for females, but even infant boys get their share.
- Women are not allowed to touch the stone or rope while the stone is being dragged.
- Outsiders are not allowed to enter the village and no villagers go to work.
- The donor is responsible for the preparation of the food from his own resources but cannot eat or take from the community's share.
- The status achieved by the father cannot be enjoyed by his son but once the father is dead the house horn remains intact even though the son now occupies the house.
- It is a bad sign if the stone cracks or breaks once erected.
- Dreams and spirits are important and part of life.
- The concept revolves around agriculture, wealth, status, fate, rewards during life and after death.



### Types and functions of megalithic monuments

**Tsozhe:** These are menhirs erected singly or in rows of two or more stones. These types of monuments are commemorative stones raised by a person who has given one or more Feasts of Merit (Fig. 4a–c). The erection of these stones is a complex process accompanied by elaborate rituals performed by the feast donor in the presence of village priests. There are twelve stages to complete a whole series of Feasts of Merit. This type of stone is erected on the outskirts of the village but mostly near the path leading to the fields. In most cases, the better side of a menhir faces the path. On average, this type of stone is 125–290 cm high. The upper width is 40–110 cm, the lower is 135–265 cm and the thickness is 35–75 cm.

Figs. 4a–c. Commemorative upright stones associated with the Feast of Merit, Chizami.





**Enhu (raised platform):** This type of structure is mostly a resting or meeting place, found mostly within the village. Circular or semi-circular or rectangular, an *enhu* is a raised platform constructed by piling up a number of small and large stones. The stones of the lower part are collected near the village whereas the stones—comparatively smaller—for the upper part are gathered from nearby rivers. An *enhu* has, on average, a circumference of 660 cm, a diameter of 370 cm and a height of 1 m (Fig. 5).

Fig.5. Raised platform for resting and gathering.

Fig.6. *Eyiza* stone showing the number of women the person had slept with during his lifetime.





**Eyiza (lovers'/sex stone):** It literally means "girl status." It is a raised platform of rectangular, circular or semicircular shape constructed by piling up stones whereby small stones of different sizes and shapes are placed within the platform (Fig. 6). It is erected in commemoration of a person's ability to have slept or have had affairs with females in his lifetime, which is signified by the number of stones erected. The highest number of stones erected is 37. These monuments are found outside the village, mostly near the path leading to the fields.

**Ekhwiza:** This literally means "tiger status." Such stones are erected in honor of people who have killed tigers. The stones are found outside the village.

**Eriza:** It means "headhunting status." This structure of stones and wood, which is found outside the village, is ascribed to a person who is recorded as having captured heads of enemies.

**Kheleli (fortification gates):** These village gates are constructed by piling up stones and erecting wooden poles in such a way as to form a rectangular entrance. This type of gate is located on the periphery of the main village and serves a sentry function and as protection from enemies during headhunting periods. These gates are mostly located on the road leading to the fields. At present, only two gates survive but village elders could recollect around 14 of them.

### Megalithic practices of Sumi

Megalithic practices in Sumi have some similarities and dissimilarities with those in Chizami. The erection of monuments is closely associated with the Feast of Merit. The feast is not only to do with the erection of single stones or series of them but has various aspects associated with the selection of site, rituals, *genna*, and the like. There are two types of Feast of Merit that a married person can offer according to his wealth:

**Kuvemuzhie:** In this type of feast of merit, the donor is not allowed to erect a stone but is entitled to put up a pointed house horn (Fig. 7) and wear a special shawl. After the announcement of the date for the Feast of Merit, the donor observes seven days' ceremonial feasting.



Fig. 7. House horn associated with a Feast of Merit in Sumi.



1. **Pirezhie:** first day, on which cattle are killed as offerings at the feast.
2. **Kebo:** second day, grand feast offered to all the village young, old, males and females.
3. **Akukra:** third day, special feast offered to individuals who had given things to the donor.
4. **Asupfu:** fourth day, feast offered for those who help in collecting firewood.
5. **Alopumi:** fifth day, on which the owner offers rice beer to those willing to come and partake.
6. **Azuhiebuzu:** sixth day, a free day, when villagers can go to work.
7. **Ruphe:** seventh day, clearing up the remains; the last feast.

**Sheso:** The second type of Feast of Merit, which is associated with the practice of megalithic traditions. The donor here is entitled to a house horn (Fig. 8a), to wear a shawl (Fig. 8b) and to erect stones. The feasts have a series of stages with rewards according to the number of feasts offered. In the *Sheso* type, after the announcement of the feast, rituals are observed for 30 days. In the initial stage of the rituals, the things apart from clothing are taken out of the house, and the house is divided into four, marked with a particular tree, among the husband, wife, the priest entrusted by the main priest, and the cook. The children stay with relatives and in the case of an infant the child is brought back only for breastfeeding. This continues for 15 days and after the 15<sup>th</sup> day the cook leaves and the husband and wife shift their fireplace within the house till the 30<sup>th</sup> day and then light a fire in the original fireplace. After the 30<sup>th</sup> day, the children come back and all the things that were put outside are put back in the house. On that same day, villagers work in the feast donor's field collecting firewood and return home early. On the first day, animals are killed for the feast, on the second day the dragging of the stone takes place and on the third day there are community feasting.

Fig. 8a–b. Zutsonyi Tara Head GB – the house horn (a) and the shawl (b) awarded after the Feast of Merit.



### Rituals/ genna/beliefs and other practices

- The donor will not have anything after sunrise and before sunset. If purity is not maintained, the donors believe and are afraid that they will become poor, or ill-fated, or even die.
- Dreams are important. For instance, if dreams are bad, people will not drag or change the stone.
- The priest has his own duty in performing rituals.

### Stages of the Feast of Merit and the erection of stones

- **Stage 1:** donor entitled to nothing.
- **Stage 2:** donor entitled to house horn, shawl, and erection of one stone on his behalf.
- **Stage 3:** wife entitled to one stone.
- **Stage 4:** pairs of stones are erected on behalf of husband and wife till the stones reach twelve in number. Then if the donor has wealth and wants to continue, he starts again from stage 1.

### Types and functions of monuments

- **Tuso:** commemoration stone associated with Feast of Merit (Fig. 9). Characterized by single, double or sometimes a series depending on the stages of feast offered by the donor. This type of megalithic menhir/alignments is very common, mainly erected on the path to the paddy field.
- **Aruno:** circular, rectangular or semicircular platform for gathering and resting (Fig. 10a–b). This is built sometimes in memory of a wealthy person who wishes it built during his lifetime or after his death.
- **Lovers'/sex stone:** a circular or rectangular platform built by an individual, mostly on the path to the field, showing the number of females he has slept through the placing of small stones within the platform (Fig. 11a–b).
- **Others:** other types of stone include the spiritual stone, the fetish/ luck stone, and sacred stones which hold stories about individuals and the village (Fig. 12a–b).



Fig. 9. *Tuso* associated with later stage of Feast of Merit.





Figs. 10a–b. Burial of Muzokha and Rasheno Wezah Aruno; platform as resting place was built by their relatives (left). Atara Khel Aruno raised platform for resting and meeting (right).



Figs. 11a–b. Zuwuhi Aruno, lovers'/sex stone, on the left raised platform for resting and on the right, within the platform, small stones representing the number of women a man has slept with.







Fig. 12a. *Akha Kikizhe Tu*, a flat stone in the middle of the village where fish are distributed during community fishing.

Fig. 12b. *Akumratu*, fetish or luck stone—rituals were performed during headhunting for the prediction of a win or defeat



### Megalithic practices of the villages of Nsong and Nzauna

Megalithic practices in Nsong and Nzauna date back to when the people settled at their present site. It was difficult for informants to ascertain and recollect the time when the megalith tradition started. The traditions among these groups are slightly different from the two villages discussed above. There are no rules for erecting stones; these are commonly flat slabs without raised platform (Fig. 13a–f), erected in memory of father, grandfather or wife. The stones are also erected during one's lifetime. The number and series of feasts offered and the erection of stones have no limits: they depend on the wealth of the donor. Chief systems exist but if the chief of the village is not wealthy he cannot offer a feast or erect a stone.





Another important aspect of megalithic practices among these villages is the tradition of dormitories, an institution for young males and females. Usually, both the villages have two *morungs*: upper and lower for both males and females. The concept is a competition between the two *morungs* to see who can earn the best portion of meat. However, in Nzauna, the erection of stones differs from Nsong, where the villagers erect stones in association with the *Me-tui* festival. The megaliths from both villages consist of menhirs without dolmens, menhirs with dolmens, dolmens with raised platforms, dolmens flat on the ground, stone seats, and circular and rectangular raised platforms. The monuments' remains are mostly within the village.

Figs. 13a–f: Various types of memorial stones, Nsong.



## Types of megaliths

- **Ngaimakbe/Chu/Sung (memorial/stone/erect):** a memorial stone erected or laid flat on the ground (Fig. 14). There is no specific rule, rather it depends on the owner's choice. However, most of the stones are laid flat on the ground, since people believe that they do not know which part of the stone is the tail and which the head. These types of stones are connected with the Feast of Merit and can be erected during one's lifetime or after death.
- **Nneu:** a raised circular or rectangular platform built outside the village where a woman gives birth (Fig. 15a–b). Constructed mainly on the path to paddy fields or at junctions for resting, by family relatives, and it is said that during the building of the platform only dog meat is offered.
- **Heka Nneu:** same as *Nneu* but built by individuals and community, resting place on the path from the field or community fishing.
- **Ntauabam/Chubam:** a stone seat named after a person; it can be within the village or outside the village
- **Stone for hunted animals:** a flat stone in the middle of the village where all the hunted animals are kept for rituals and blessings. Each *khel* may have one each.
- **Metui stone:** menhir with dolmens and without dolmens (Fig. 16a–b). Erected in commemoration of the *Metui* festival, such stones are engraved with the heads of animals killed during the festival.



Fig. 14a. Rectangular slab as memorial stone.



Fig. 14b. Chubam stone seat, Nzuana.



Fig. 15a–b. Circular and rectangular slabs, memorial stone, Nzauna.



Fig. 16a. *Metui* stone, Nzauna.



Fig. 16b. A fallen *Metui* stone and post for tying mithun, Nzuana.





### Dormitory system and megaliths

The village has four *morungs*, each with upper and lower dormitories. The eldest person of the *khel* makes his house available as the dormitory for young females and males – *Nreikia* (upper) and *Nkangkia* (lower) for males, *Nreikileuna* (upper) and *Nkangkialeuna* (lower) for females. The selection of a dormitory is on a first come, first served basis when a child is born. The *Hangliapui*, the leader of the dormitory, may be approached anytime by saying *Akiana*, meaning from now on you will be a member of my dormitory. An earring or small pin is given to the newborn as a sign of membership, showing that the baby is booked. Normally, the child can go to a dormitory for education by elders but cannot sleep there until he/she reaches the age of 14–15. Because of its selection process, membership of the dormitories comprises a mixture of young people from all the *khels*.

After the announcement by the donor of the feast for the carrying of the stone, all the males who can work participate in carrying the stones. The old people do not work but advise the young in preparing the platform for the setting of the stone. Women are not allowed to touch the stone or the rope and must merely watch from a distance and serve food and drinks. It is interesting to note that there is huge competition between the two dormitories to take the chance to lead and carry the stone at the front. The dormitory member who gets to be at the front line in carrying the stone is rewarded with a good portion of meat. This practice is a sign of good teamwork, as the reward ultimately goes to the dormitory.

### Metui festival and megaliths

The *Metui*, a five-day festival, has a close association with erecting megaliths. The festivals are organized occasionally when the population of males or females or wealth increases. The dormitory systems are associated with the festival and the erection of megaliths. The festival includes a kind of challenge between the two dormitories. For instance, if the upper dormitory experiences an increase in wealth and the male and female populations, its members organize the festival, which is followed by the erection of a stone (*Metui* stone) engraved with the number of animal heads taken. The same dormitory organizes the festival, after a gap of some years, if the membership prospers in population and wealth.

### Other aspects associated with megaliths

- Women are not allowed to touch the stone or rope while the stone is being carried. Instead, they watch from a distance and serve food and drinks.
- The *genna* in which husband and wife do not sleep together is applied in order to maintain purity.
- Omens and dreams are important aspects in the selection of stones.
- A piglet or pig is killed along with the mithun, cow or buffalo.
- Individuals as well as the community participate in the erection of the stone.
- The priest plays an important role in the selection of the stone.
- Some stones are memorial as well as functional in purpose.
- Status and entitlement are not very important.

## General observations and conclusions

The megalithic tradition and the concepts of reward, status, competition, procreation, fertility, sex, belief in life after death and spirits are common among the four villages. With only four villages at present, we cannot draw a conclusion on the slight differences in the practice of the megalithic traditions between the three groups, that is, Khezha, Sumi and Zeme Nagas. It is understood that the whole

Figs. 17a–e. A village elder demonstrating a model in preparation for setting the memorial stone to be carried, Nsong.





Naga community practices megalithism but generalizing on the basis of the community would distort the data. There is a need for extensive documentation and analyses in order to come to a conclusive understanding of whether the traditions are borrowed or differences arose due to later additions in the process of migration and settlement. The current study is limited but can help to understand the classification, rituals, and various aspects of megalithic tradition. The other aspect observed, the fast-changing development of the regions—construction of roads, highways, schools, buildings—has destroyed or disturbed extensively the megalithic sites. Memories and the limited number of old people who are living witnesses have limited the information available for an understanding of the origins (Fig. 17a–e).

The use of monuments for personal and other purposes is also very common where the original context is jumbled up. One can say that megalithic tradition still exists in these villages but with the flavour of Christianity in which rituals once connected are omitted.

The present paper is a crude report based on the author's visit to the villages, interviewing groups of various ages who have witnessed and experienced traditions. An opportunity to explore and visit more areas would provide more scope to gain an understanding of the complexity of the tradition from all aspects. It is important to understand the affinities of the Southeast Asian region and Naga megalithic tradition at this juncture, but the question is whether we are collecting and depositing the data in the right place and time. In conclusion, we would like to thank Dr. Tiatoshi Jamir, Dr. Zokho Venuh, the village councils of Sumi, Nsong and Nzauna, informants from all the four villages, and our friend Denguphe, research scholar at Nagaland University, for their valuable information and support while collecting data for this report.

#### **Informants/ interviewers:**

1. Mr. Kenemvu L. Mero (84 years), Chizami.
2. Mr. Neitshutso Tsuhah (96 years), Chizami.
3. Mr. Zutsongyi Tara (80+ years), Sumi.
4. Mr. Neltelo Rhakho (50+ years), Sumi.
5. Mr. Adung (86 years), Nsong.
6. Mr. Haireileam (88 years), ditto.
7. Mr. Heucholak (67 years), ditto.
8. Mr. Namsilam (65 years), ditto.
9. Mr. Hezaikeulu (62 years), ditto.
10. Mr. Mireitau Newme (67 years), Nzauna.
11. Mr. Mimeu Disong (38 years), ditto.
12. Mr. Angam Newme (37 years), ditto.
13. Mr. Masang Newme (38 years), ditto.



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