

Naga Folklore in *When the River Sleeps* by Easterine Kire

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Declaration

I hereby affirm that this dissertation entitled *Naga Folklore in When the River Sleeps by Easterine Kire* is a record of first hand research work done by me during the period of my study in the year 2016-2017 and that this dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree, diploma, associate ship, fellowship, or other similar title.

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Date:

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Certificate

I hereby certify that the dissertation entitled “Naga Folklore in *When the River Sleeps* by Easterine Kire” submitted by Avy Sema for the award of M.A. degree is a record of research work done by the candidate under my supervision during the period of his study (2016-2017) and that the dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree, diploma, associate ship, fellowship or other similar title and that this dissertation represents independent work on the part of the candidate.

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Abstract

Naga literature flourishes with rich oral tradition. Folklore is handed on from generation to generation among the different tribal group. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the folklore elements in the novel with special emphases to Nagaland, and will discuss entirely new perspective on the book through cultural point of view. Easterine Kire is prominent author from Nagaland who won the Hindu Literature Prize 2015 for her novel *When the River Sleeps*. The novel narrates the story of Vilie a lone hunter, who sets out on a journey to the sleeping river to catch the heart-stone that promises to give many untold powers. The novel through the protagonist adventure explores the various myths, beliefs, legends, rituals that are a part and parcel of the way of Naga people. This dissertation is an attempt to study the several facets of the Naga culture and how Folklore in Easterine Kire's *When the River Sleep* is used as a source of imparting and preserving historical and cultural knowledge to the contemporary age. And since the novel is written on the folklore of Nagaland it mainly focus on Naga Folklore.

Key words: Culture ,Naga Folklore, Rituals

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Introduction

Easterine Kire, born on 29th March 1959, is a poet and author who hails from Nagaland, India. She has authored six novels, three collections of poetry, short stories and children's books. She is also accredited for translating roughly 200 oral poems from her local language to English. Majority of Kire's writings are rooted in the lived realism of the natives' people in Nagaland. Her aspiration to become an author can be traced up in her testimony in an interview, "I felt we needed to create written Naga Literature. We have so much oral narratives but with oral dying out, it's all going to be lost". Her works have been translated to Norwegian, German, Uzbek, Croatian and Nepal. In 2011 she was honored the Governor's medal for excellence in Naga literature, Free Voice Award by Catalan PEN Barcelona. "Bitter Wormwood" was shortlisted for The Hindu Prize in 2013, and won the Hindu Literature Prize 2015 for her novel "*When the River Sleeps*".

Kire's spotlight in her writing career came at the age of 22 in 1982, when she published her first volume of poems, "*Kelhoukevira*". Printed in English, it was the first volume of poetry to be published independently by a Naga poet. The core poems lament the warriors of Nagaland slain in the Indo-Naga conflict. Her first novel, "*A Naga Village Remembered*", was the first Naga novel that has ever been published. In 2005, she was forced to flee her home due to assault and aggravation by local authorities exposed by her political writings, but this did not halt her from writing; instead, taking as potency she continues to offer more vibrant works, or in other words, most of her notable work was published during her exile. "*A Terrible Matriarchy*" (2007), "*Naga Folktales Retold*" (2009), "*Mari*" (2010), "*Forest Song*", "*Life on hold*" (2011), "*Bitter Wormwood*" (2012), "*When the River Sleeps*" (2014), and many more.

Kire is widely regarded for her novels. "*A Naga Village Remembered*, 2003 is her first historical novel, a version of the last battle between the colonial armed forces of Britain and the diminutive warrior village of Khonoma. The work replicates the distasteful realism of life in Nagaland and the involvedness around the colonial carnage and inequity. It also highlights the in-house enmity and ideological variations that survived amid the Naga brothers who struggled for freedom. Kire conveys out movingly the mesmerizing and vivacious Naga culture for the entire world to see, through her creative writings that provoke an allure for its old-age traditions and dazzling folklores from the innermost corner of the mystic state that Nagaland is.

"*A Terrible Matriarchy*" (2007), The novel talks about a young girl growing up in a traditional Naga society and it flashbacks into the history of Naga , a history where the Nagas were under the colonial rule, and the Second world War where the Japanese troops invaded Naga hills. The hurdles the Naga face after the Indian independence and also their sweat for freedom. The book was selected by Indian Literature Abroad for translation into the UN languages.

Her next best selling novel "*Mari*" on World War II in the Naga Hills appears in 2010. The novel is based on the real account of a young mother who heroically makes a choice to live her life for her children after losing her fiancé in the war, and where finds contentment all over again. The novel also renders some indefinite actuality of the World War II, a slight recognized but cruel skirmish battled against the Japanese troops in Nagaland.

In 2011 Kire published her fourth novel "*Life on hold*. The novel brilliantly captures the life of Naga that has stained by the struggles during independence movement, which has turned out a permanent scare. The fact that everything was forced to kept in abeyance, except pain and

sacrifice, in the name of better future. It beautifully unfolds bits of conversation and few scenes to unravel and reveal life of Naga with admirable accuracy.

Kier next novel "*Bitter Wormwood*" was published in 2012; the novel talks about the Indo-Naga clash, 70 years a heartrending insight on how the decades stretched freedom fight has tainted the life of the common natives in Nagaland. The novel not only exposes the social and political problems of Naga people but also unavoidable fact of differences that lies between Nagas and the rest of India. It not only highlights the intolerable cruelty shown to them in the past but also at present. The novel was shortlisted for the Hindu Literary Prize 2013.

Kier prestigious novel "*When the River sleeps*" published in 2014 explores vibration of Naga folklore, a work that is completely different from her other novels. The novel "*When the River Sleeps*" is a picaresque novel. It tells the journey motive of the protagonist Vilie. The novel opens with the protagonist Vilie having a strange dream about the sleeping river which he has been continuously dreaming for past two years, the river possesses a heart stone that gives untold power. Vilie finally decided to go in search of this mysterious river and to catch it when it sleeps.

Vilie responded: when the river sleeps, it is completely still. Yet the enchantment of those minutes or hours when it sleeps is so powerful, that it turns the stones in the middle of the river bed into a charm. If you can wrest a stone from the heart of the sleeping river and take it home, it will grant you whatever it is empowered to grant you. It could be cattle, women, prowess in war, or success in the hunt. That is what is meant by catching the river when it is asleep. That way you can make its magic yours. The retrieve stone is a power charm called a heart-stone (3)

As Vilie treks through the forest in his quest for the 'heart-stone', he encounters various people, spirits, situations and places on the way, the mountains, the lakes and rivers, trees, birds, and wild animals, which all possess power that can be transferred to chosen people. "...the forest is dangerous to those who don't know it, but it can be kind to those who befriend it" (20) Vilie on his quest not only faces unknown and evil spirits, cruel witches and beasts lurking in the forest, but there are other dangers also, capable of far more damage, in the form of armed men that follow him. As he keeps traveling on foot from one place to another seeking shelter every now and then, brings him in contact with different villagers who are kind enough to help and support but also ruthless people who try to charge him on a murder that he transpired to witness. Through his will power and courage Vilie finally succeeds and obtains the possession of the heart stone that he has dreamed about and on his way back home he meets a kind- hearted young lady Ate, who has being thrown out of her village, villager believing that she has ominous power that will bring curse on anyone if finger is pointed. Vilie convinced that Ate is harmless and also because of the sudden disappearance of all the inhabitants of the village due to unknown basis, Vilie decided to take responsibility of Ate and brings her along with him. Realizing that the forest is unsafe for her, he took her to his ancestral village with his aunts and gives her the heart-stone. While going back at his home in the heart of the forest, Vilie is viciously murdered by a man who desires the stone to accomplish his worldly belongings. Ate who is now married keeps visiting Vilie's home after every quarter of the year and claims that she feels the presence of vilie.

"No, but I know he didn't die in the fight."237.

"Ate" Asakho began again in a low voice...How do you know he has gotten it and not someone else...?

“I brought it back on my second visit and hide it in the main room. The same night I had a dream and I knew I had done the right things (240)

The novel through the journey of Vilie not only gives the glimpse of the remote mountains of Nagaland a place alive with natural marvel and mystical fascination but also illustrates the close bind relationship with the nature “The forest is my wife” (9). The forest was not only a home and source of food for the animals but also a giver of life to its people. Throughout the novel the author demonstrate the nature as a source of food, shelter and also a protector of life, “the forest was his wife indeed: providing him with sanctuary when he most needed it; and food when his rations were inadequate. The forest also protected him from the evil in the heart of man” (51). It also pictures the Naga populace, their feelings, emotions and their own belief and traditions. The novel beautifully unfolds the beauty, rich traditions and culture of Nagaland. The novel delightfully exposes the inner understanding of the human condition and illustrates diverse truth of ordinary men and women’s life of the Naga people. It also unveils the conceptions that are unique to a region, tribe and village.

Major Themes

The novel *When the River Sleeps* unlike her other novel, gives beyond the representation and stereotypical knowledge that lies in Nagaland, and prove an unusual truth that is diverse from the established mode of perception. It is a confirmation of beauty that subsists behind the stereotypical image. Through the journey of the protagonist Vilie, the author gives the key them, the importance of spiritual than material. The novel initially began as a physical quest, Vilie wanted the heart stone because it gives him power and wealth, “...Certainly, if you catch it while it is sleeping, you can take out a stone from the river and use it to grant you blessing of wealth

and cattle but there is more to it than that” (95). But as he dives deeper he began to learn the true value of heart stone. As he learns to get more acquainted with the heart stone he continues to gain more and more of spiritual knowledge and wisdom, that helps him to feed his courage and overcome his fear. It helps him to triumph over all the obstacles that come on his way.

The wisdom of the stone is more spiritual than physical. It helps us discover the spiritual identity that is within us, so we can use it to combat the dark forces that are always trying to control and suppress us (238).

Love is also another theme that is present throughout the novel. True love is basically based on inner qualities and action. It is genuine and sincere. Vilie is a character that shows true love as a lover, father and love for forest. Vilie falls in love with Seno at the age of eighteen, but after the death of Seno he never consider of marrying even though his aunts pressed on him. Vilie for many months had been leaving flower at the lonely little grave of Seno but suddenly he stoped, as he left the village and settle in forest and made forest his own wife. “He began to think that leaving the forest would be the same as abandoning his wife” (9). Vilie also decided to take the responsibility of Ate when he found out that she was alone, and would not be saved for her to live all alone. Vilie not only saves her life but also as a father shelter her and give her the strength of whole new existence.

“Well, he was not my biological father, but he was the greatest life-giving source I ever knew. So he was a father to me in that sense. He was also the kindest man I knew” (237)

\Folklore

Folklore is traditional practice, customary art, knowledge, and literature that are handed down from one another through examples and oral communication. Thus the information that is transmitted expresses the values and ideas that is shared by the particular group.

In literature folklore is described as a collection of fictional stories about people and animals, songs, jokes, tales, cultural myths and even quotes. It is a portrayal of culture, which has handed down verbally from one another in any written or spoken form. It is also known as oral tradition or folk literature. Folklore in literature shows the way the protagonist manage their each day life events, including crises or conflicts. In simple word, folk literature is all about the individual knowledge or experiences from a certain society. The study of folk tradition is called folkloristic. Even though some folklore represents universal truths, it is also that unfounded superstitions and beliefs are vital elements of folklore tradition.

The novel *When the River Sleeps* through the protagonist Vilie, presents the Naga folklore that was rampant in the Naga culture. Folklore reflects the cultural and social values of a particular group or society and helps that particular group of people, society in finding the meaning of their existence. The history, cultural knowledge and experiences are made it possible to pass it down from one generation to next generation because of the oral tradition. The Nagas have many rituals and cultures practices and are narrated in the form of oral storytelling. The Traditional way of storytelling helps in revealing the beliefs, ideas and the fact that are broadly spread. Kier in a simplest manner has dipped her quill amply into rich Naga folklore. Through this folklore Kier discloses conceptions that are unique to Naga people.

“The folk practice of certain men transforming their spirit into tigers was a closely guarded art. Despite the secrecy, most of the villagers knew who were the men who had become weretigers”. (*When the River Sleeps* 25)

Cultural theory

Culture in a simple word can be defined as a communal field that emphasizes on the material idiom, discourse and practices which in course of time articulate the discontinuities and continuities of people finding social meaning of life that held them together

The *Cambridge English Dictionary* states that culture is "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.

Clyde Kluckhohn's in his book "*Mirror for Man*" defines culture as:

The total way of life of a people, the social legacy the individual acquires from his group. Or culture can be regarded as that part of the environment that is the creation of man (25)

Culture is a way of thinking, feeling, and believing. It is the group's knowledge store up (in memories of man; in books and object) for future use (30).

He further added that,

- Culture is a behavior of a particular group or society.
- A store house where all the cultural values are learned.
- Culture is a part of anthropology that talks about a way of group of people actually behave

- Cultural is a way in which people adjust with other people and the external environment.
- A history of peoples origins
- It is also a map that marks the territory

Geert Hofstede has defined “culture” as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others”.

Culture theory is an area of comparative semiotics plus anthropology that tries to find the heuristic problem that is faced by the concept of culture in using the scientific concept. During the nineteenth century, the term culture was popularly referred to an ample range of human actions, and for civilization. In Post-modernism anthropologists started hypothesizing the culture as a material of scientific study. While there are some people who used it to differentiate human actions as adaptive scheme from the mostly natural adaptive plan of animals, with the robust scheme of other non-human hominids and primates, whereas other employed it to refer as a symbolic expression along with representation of human experience, with no straight adaptable value. Both groups consent culture as being definitive of human nature.

The theorists of Anthropologist has gained huge acceptance, and these theorist propagated that the environment and biology that is constructed by human beings is demonstrate by cultures. Accordingly, the existence of human in a human environment becomes an essential part of cultural and whatever change that occurs in human environment are attributed to historical events that is adapted by humans. In addition, cultures are given as the primary mechanism of adaptation, and the biological evolution of human that occurs at much faster rate are all attribute to the change of culture.

Culture is like a spider web of shared meaning, shared beliefs and shared understanding. Culture theory helps in understanding and describing how members of a group live and make sense of their world. It endows a lens through which people can come together interact and identify them. The main aim of Cultural theory is to examine the practices of culture and their power of relation. Culture theory also includes appreciating and understanding all the culture. It is also a complex form of analyzing the political and social concept in which culture itself is manifests, moreover it also attempts to reconcile and expose the constructed dissection knowledge and practices that assert to be stranded in nature.

Easterine Kire, novel *When the River Sleeps* through the journey of Vilie explores the vibrant culture of Angami or Naga Culture in general. The novel is place in the thriving hills and green forest of the North-East India. It talks concerning the Naga natives of their feelings and emotions as well as their own beliefs and traditions. The novel beautifully unfolds the beauty, rich traditions and culture of Nagaland.

Literature review

Dr.Payal Dutta Chowdhury in his artical "*Myths, Rituals, and Beliefs: Portal of the 'Angami' Society in Easterine Kire's When the River Sleeps*" states that Easterine Kire is one of the note worthy authors from North-East Indian. He says that literature produce from North-East cannot ignore the truth of issue related to ethnicity and identity; violence in different shape and form, strong political awareness and above all the gun shadow that linger around. Kire like most of the contemporary writers from North-East has highlighted the underrepresented issues of the region and thus bring to light the rich culture and tradition of the Nagaland. Chowdhury in his journal quoted Pratilipi who has been pointed out correctly that:

It is tragic that the long-running unrest, violence and terrorism in the North-East has remained a mere digression in the mainstream of the Indian nation-state....The poems by Uddipana Goswami....stories by Mitra Phukan, Srutimala Duara and Aruni Kashyap, serve as a reminder that the “North-East” is not a geographical, political unit, but a place of many languages and cultures (67).

Through this context Chowdhury says that Easterine Kire’s novel *When the River Sleeps* brings alive a variety of the Naga tribal society that is generally set aside in the margin. Moreover she is capable enough to prove wrong the misconception people generally hold about the North-East, that whatever literature that are produce in North-east are always cover with terror, violence and bloodshed. Instead, in this novel, she captures an assortment of beliefs, rituals and myths of the people of the Naga society brining alive of many oral tradition of Nagaland. It also transports the reader into the rich resources of nature of Nagaland. Kire allocates much of her attention in portraying the journey of Vilie to the sleeping river and in the process she brings out a variety of belief system of Naga tribe. Vilie as a man of the forest, and full of wisdom passed on to him by older generations, is able to return securely with the heart-stone. The novel *When the River Sleeps* not only paves the path in understanding the Naga society rendered authentically by someone who has well-known and experienced it but also able to bring out the true picture of the society in a beautiful folktale-like manner.

Neena kishor in his article “*Nature in Easterine Kire’s When the River Sleeps: An Ecocritical Reading*” states that Easterine Kire has offer the readers a truly amazing novel, which in it has its narrative the supernatural and natural woven together. Reading the novel from the environment point of view or concern, the novel gives a great view that reveals the

delightful sceneries of nature of Nagaland. Kishor emphasizes how natures are important to human life. He says a great deal of the novel takes place within the forest and as the readers' trips along with Vilie through his epic voyage in search of the river of his dreams, it transports the readers to get the glimpse of Naga hills that rich in natural vegetation. In this novel Kier has presented the Nature as empowered and not as an oppressed. It has the power to bequeath blessings and grant wishes

If you can wrest a stone from the heart of the sleeping river and take it home, it will grant you whatever it is empowered to grant you. It could be cattle, women, prowess in war, or success in the hunt (3).

Nature has complete control and people linger on nature to achieve blessings. Nature also acts as a munificent provider almost like God, blessing and providing every needs of man. Nature bigheartedly provides food and all facilities that are essential for survival to all the people who seek it. Kishor further added that Kire has emphasized the novel on healing touch of nature. Nature cures and offers an antidote for all ailments, and the people greatly rely on it for any kind of treatment. Vilie could use pastes of ciená for small injuries but for bigger injuries he would use japan nha and rock honey bee. Nature not only provide the basic necessities but also the serenity of nature helps Vilie to think clearly and make the right decision because in nature there is freedom, beauty, an equilibrium that is maintained, and above all an undeniable wholeness.

Nature has shared a close knit relationship with literature. Easterine Kire has presented the readers a truly remarkable novel, *When the River Sleeps*, which has in its narrative the natural and supernatural woven together. An ecocritical reading of the novel reveal that the enchanting backdrop of nature of the

picturesque Nagaland cannot be ignored as the readers remain spellbound as Vilie takes us along with him in quest of the river of his dreams (137).

Subhra Roy in his article “*Naga identity through myth and magic realism*”(2017) states that Kire has created the novel *When the River Sleeps* with the purpose of recreating the Naga identity which has undergone layers of religion and political metamorphosis. Double colonization (British and India) and dominance of Christianity led to the loss of tradition and cultural which subsequent led to identity crisis. However Kire strongly believes that the lost identity can be regained by going back to the roots - the myths and oral tradition of the Nagas.

Roy says *When the River Sleeps*, is all about the protagonist Vilie, who ventures out to find out the heart-stone that gives a profound power from the core of the sleeping river and in the course of the quest, Vilie comes across many mythical creatures like the deceiving forest spirits weretigers, and the widow-women. Initially the novel appear as a physical quest but at the end it brings close to the knowledge of Naga people and their identity, which Kire has seek to recreate the Naga identity that has continued to exist on its myths and cultural knowledge.

Villie’s journey represents the symbolic journey of the Nagas who have to delve deep within the reservoir of their cultural knowledge to find out their true identity – the identity which is individual and communal at the same time (2017).

Kier in order to form this identity purposely violates the rules and conventions of realism and the system of truth, and deliberately blend the fantasies and real making the novel as a magic realism, which is widely regarded as the natural writing style of the post-colonial literature.

The purpose of this research is to explore the Naga folklore that is present in the novel. The dissertation will discuss entirely new perspective on the book through cultural point of view. The novel illustrates the Naga culture through different type of folklore face by the protagonist in his quest.

This area of study has not been done before. Writers have mostly focused on the award of the book, summary and on the richness of natural environment. No attempt or critical analysis has been made to explore the Naga folklore as a source of imparting and preserving culture.

To deal with this topic in the novel, this work is allocated into two chapters. The first chapter aims at exploring the different genre of folklores that are present in the novel and how it has impacted on the protagonist and Naga in general

The second chapter is devoted how culture background in the mind and sensibility of the protagonist helps in bringing out the rich culture of Nagaland.

CHAPTER-1

Impact of folklore and rituals in the protagonist

Kire unlike her other novels has written "*When the River Sleeps*" in a simplest and authentic conduct, exploring into the heart of Naga tradition and culture. Kier through the expedition of the central character Vilie explore the Naga folklores and how these folklores have shape and build the life of Naga people, physically and spiritually.

Folklore is generally described as an eloquent culture enjoyed, shared and appreciated by the particular group of people; it encompasses the traditions that are common to that particular culture, group or subculture. These consist of oral traditions such as proverbs, tales and jokes. It also embrace customary lore, the rituals and forms of celebration like wedding and Christmas, initiation rites and folk dances. Apiece of these, either in combination or singly, is regarded as folklore artifact. Just as important as the form, folklore also comprehends the spread of these artifacts from one place to another or from one generation to another generation. These folklores are generally passed down informally through demonstration or verbal instruction from one individual to another individual. The studies of folklores are called folkloristic.

The origins of folklore are no way of knowing. Whatever literature that are available in today's world are not that ancient in any sense which can provide the origin. Whatever it is there in this present day can be assumed that these practices have being extending over the thousands of years. Therefore we can only make speculations that such practices and the needs of human leads to the rise of oral tradition but it cannot take it completely as origin. Neither can we say so explicitly the overall development and the evolution of folk literature. Every group of people has

their own way, their own lifestyle and beliefs whether it's a small or large community and in their own way has handled their folk literature. Depending upon as it does the out sending from people to people from community to community and also subjecting it from the skilled to unskilled of those people or society who are passing it on and also the influences from many sources like social or physical, that unconsciously or consciously affecting every tradition which in history can be observed as a continuous change.

The term "folk lore" was first coined by William Thomas an Englishman in 1846 when the term was first coined the "folk" were generally applied to the poor working class or the people who live in the rural areas and are illiterate peasants, but in a modern world folk are generally considered as group of people who share the common qualities and expresses their identity through their idiosyncratic tradition. This shifting from old to new echo the reorientation in peoples thinking and recognize and reconstruct the universality of all the peoples condition. It also gives an imperative importance to folklore to all human cultures. The word "Lore" was initially view as songs, stories and texts. In this present world the term lore encompasses anything whether individual willed or creative expression. During the earliest 1960's the term folklore was defined as an artistic communiqué by small groups of people meaning folklorists. Folklorist generally focuses upon the relationship of the individual creativity and to the collective order. Folklorists are also equally concerned with expressive and aesthetic aspects of culture and the societies and people that try to make respond to any creative acts.

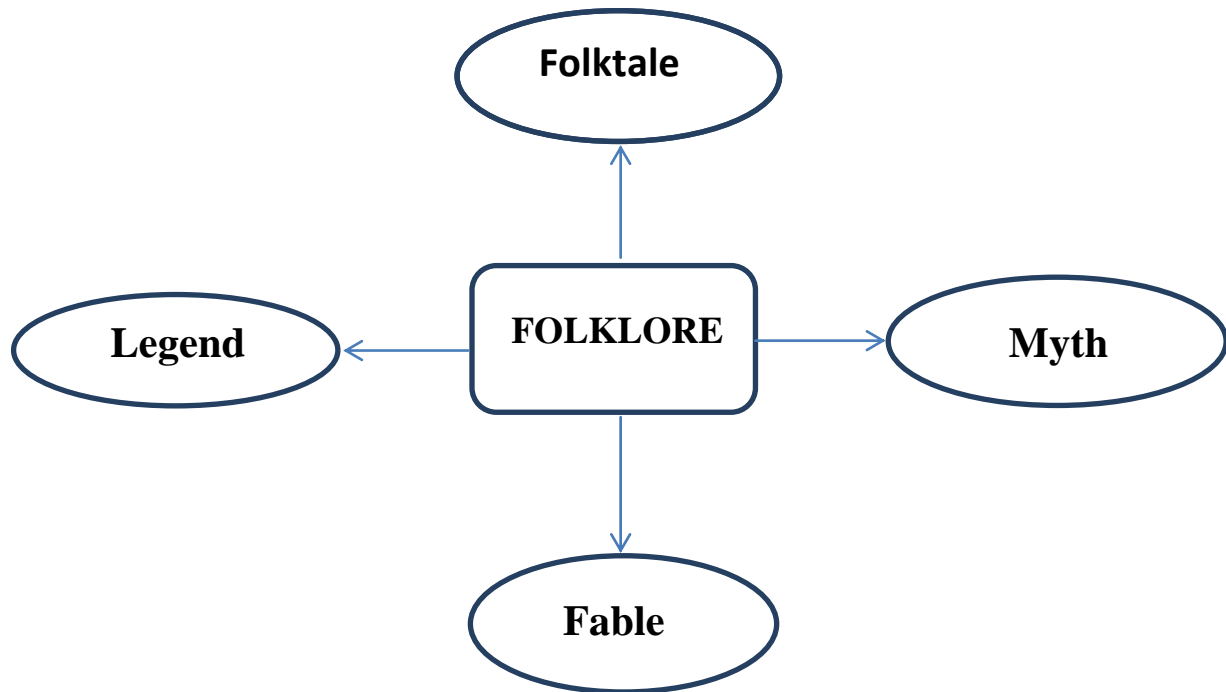
Folklore during the mid-nineteenth century were collectively applied to all social rituals and verbal composition that are solely handed down or at least primarily by the word of mouth through examples rather than any written form. Folklore became more popular by the turn of twenty century when the complexity of folklorists and folklore studies began to grow more and

especially in North America and Europe. The presence of folklore even in the twenty first cannot deny because these practices still continues in a community where only few people can read and write. This folklore flourishes in this literate and backward population in the form of verities of wordplay, stories and oral jokes. Folklore includes superstition, legends, proverbs, songs tales, riddles, spells and nursery rhymes; customary activities at death mirage and birth; pseudoscientific lore about the animals, plants, and weather; and the forms of drama, traditional dances and folk songs that are mostly performed in communal gathering on holidays. Folklore also includes fairy tales, myths, tales of heroes and fables. There is no doubt this kinds of Folklore are found or present among people and society in the entire world, because it is through this, it differentiate people from one another giving unique identities to all.

William A. Wilson in *The deeper Necessity: Folklore and the Humanities* say;

Surely no other discipline is more concerned with linking us to the cultural heritage from the past than is folklore; no other discipline is more concerned with revealing the interrelationships of different cultural expressions than is folklore; and no other discipline is so concerned ...with discovering what it is to be human. It is this attempt to discover the basis of our common humanity, the imperatives of our human existence that puts folklore study at the very center of humanistic study (157-158).

Genre of Folklore



Study of Folklore in *When the River Sleeps*

Nagaland is one of the seven sisters' states of India, rich in cultures, myths and believes. The Nagas like many other tribal societies has an affluent collection of folklore, which are transmitted mostly through the oral not written. Taking folklore in a broader sense include, legends, myths, folktale, fable, proverbs, superstitions, traditional lore and ritual. The area in which the folklore covers are extensive as a result it provides huge human experiences, which are richly treasured. The literatures which are recorded in bulk about the Naga tribes are mostly comprises of the account that are left by the foreign missionaries, anthropologists, and the British

administrators written in English. Whatever account that has written contains the folktales; legends, myths and fable of different varieties as well as various folk dance and song. Talking about the perspective of Naga folklore, one is bound to come across a diverse stories about nature, animals, spirits, and magic which are frequently narrated by the age-people to the younger ones, and these knowledge are handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Story telling is an integral part of every culture as it is a means of preserving cultural traditions and also educating and instructive the young minds which provide as the only source of motivation in fashioning the moral code that gives individuality and the whole society a sense of belongingness. Therefore the Nagas preserves their rich cultural heritages through these stories and practices. Some of these tales have been discussed by Easterine Kier in her famous novel *“When the River Sleeps”*

The relevance of folklore in contemporary Naga society cannot be denied, especially in the forms known as proverb, myths, folktales and Legends. Kire skilful use of proverbs contributed a great deal to the success of *When the River Sleeps* as a great novel. She uses proverbs to sharpen characterization, to sound and reiterate themes, to clarify conflict, and to focus on the values of the society she is portraying. In the novel, proverbs are a mostly use as an effective and powerful mechanism for handing down the culture knowledge, manners, social morality and ideas of a people from one generation to another. A proverb is an unforgettable maxim that expresses a belief and truth in few sentence based on long experience. Chinua Achebe in his famous novel *Things Fall Apart* says “Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten” (6). Kire like Achebe uses proverbs for the development of character knowledge and help the character in completing his quest “you can eat yourself dead” (55) Kier use this proverb to notify Vilie how danger his quest would be, if he is careless and if he is not vigilant and wise

about all things that comes on his way. Kire use the proverbs “from the moment we are born we begin to die” (226) to foreshadow the death of Vilie, as the fact that human beings are bound to return to ash.

Impact of legend on protagonist

A legend is a tale of human action that are comprehend both by teller and listeners to take rest within human account and indicating human values, and which possess certain traits that give the tale verisimilitude. Legend may undergo several changes over time, in order to keep them vital, fresh and realistic. Many legends maneuver within the realm of ambiguity, never being entirely believed to be true, but also never being absolutely doubted. In short a legend is a semi-true story, which has been passed down from one generation to another, and has important symbolism and meaning of a particular culture in which it originates.

In folk literature, legend is a field where the action is secured in historical time, either long ago or recent; it celebrates strong reliability in the narrating society. Most folklorists do not really rely on historical legends as a source for learning about the characters that appear in it or an historical era. This approach was once certainly common among historians, who tried to dig out the hub truth in a legend from its imaginative accumulations. What folklorists seek out to gain knowledge from a legend has much more to do with the aspirations and problems of the society that recounts the story than the historical substance of the characters. A legend may be basically based on the historical fact, or it may fuse the element of truth, but mostly with mythical qualities, or in other words a story from the past that is believed by many people but cannot be proved to be true. A legend may also be a famous or important person who is known for doing something extremely great. Robin Hook is one of the great examples of the legend,

highly regarded as a heroic outlaw in English folklore for his highly skilled archer and swordsman.

The novel *When the River Sleeps* is a legend. The novel talks about the heroic achievement of Vilie who like Ulysses thrust into adventure, but his adventure was not an easy task, with its lies all obstacles and hurdles which the hunter had to overcome, where not only his physical strength but also his soul should match to seize the heart-stone when the river is asleep. As Vilie treks through the forest to achieve his dream he faces many dangers, not only of animals, nature, spirits but also humans. Vilie first encounter the danger while he decided to take a rest for a night Nepal settlement. He and Krishna's family was attacked by a pack of jackals. Vilie swung his gun and aim at leader of the pack, bigger than the rest of the pack, he flung at Vilie when he saw the gun, Vilie immediately shoot at his head and it fell down flat on the ground, as the leader fell, the rest vanished rapidly. Attack by the weretiger is the second danger Vilie encounter. Weretiger are men whose spirit had metamorphosed into tiger." Legend said that every weretiger began as a smaller animal, possibly a wildcat". (27) Vilie remembers that the folk practice certain men transform their spirit into tigers and it's unsafe to kill them. Vilie decided to make peace with them; he quickly called out the names he remembered

Kuovi! Menuolhoulie!Wetsho! Is this the way to treat your clansman? I am Vilie, son of Kedo, your clansman. I am not here to do you harm. Why are you treating me as a stranger? I come in peace. You owe me your hospitality. I am your guest!" He shouted these words out with absolute faith that they being listened to and heeded. Sure enough the animals retreated for the second time, but not before it made a call like a warrior's ululating cry as it departed (26).

Vilie face another danger but this time in the form of men. He meet four hunters on his way and they decided to spent the night together; Vilie was glad that he got company for the night but unfortunately it turns out tragic. In the middle of the night Vilie was woke by two hunters who were arguing, suddenly a loud retort of gun went off, Vilie found out one man was shoot death. Vilie grapping his bag and gun ran out of the shelter, a bullet was shot in his direction, than more bullets followed him and one scraped his arm. Vilie knowing that it would be unsafe for him to stop ran as far, until he could ran no more. Vilie took shelter and stretch out himself under leafy roof, indeed the forest was his wife. “The forest also protected him from the evil in the heart of men” (51).

Vilie quest was not an easy task; he had to undergo through many angry spirits, yet Vilie was a true hero. He was not only physically, mentally prepared but was also prepared spiritually. When he reaches the territory of the sleeping river, he could see the spirit widow women guarding the river. The spirits after performing strange rituals hails back up to hillside, but there was something forbidding about the spirits; the way they chants strongly resembles like a funeral chants. Vilie regain himself remembering Kani advice “remember when we are at the sleeping river, there can be no room for fear. If you harbor fear, you are a dead man (93). As the widow-women disappeared, the river stops flowing and went to sleep. Vilie without any hesitation plunge into the sleeping river and grape the stone from the core of the river, as he took the heart-stone the river furiously spate dragging him under and under. Vilie kept fighting over the river, than stopped struggling over remembering that his physical fight with spirit would bring him no fruit. He concentrated on the spirit words that he had learnt and says,

Sky is my father, Earth is my mother, stand aside death! Kepenuopfu fights for me, today is my day! I claim the wealth of the river because mine is the greater spirit. To him who has the greater spirit belongs the stone! (103).

Vilie finally steps out of the river, but this was not the end, Vilie had to run for his life as he was viciously chased by the widow-women. Vilie undying dream was finally fulfilled but possessing something that was valuable was not easy. He had to be more careful, vigilant and stronger physically and spiritually.

You know that you are in even more danger now because you possess the heart-stone. There are people who would give their lives to possess that stone. Even the spirit creatures envy you now that you have the heart-stone, and they will try to take it from you by force or deceit. Be very careful. Tell no one you have it (111).

Vilie on his way back home faces many trails, sprits trying to lure him, selfish human being trying to possess it. Vilie was wise enough to protect the heart-stone from every circumstance.

Impact of folktales on protagonist

In *When the River Sleeps*, Kier uses folktales whose structure and themes are parallel and it illuminate the main story – the story of Vilie, a famous warrior and trustful guardian of the forest. Kire opens the novel like a fairytale with a fairytale opening, personifying the river “the river had gone to sleep” (1) alluring the readers with a question of suspension. Part of the fascination of this novel of Kier is the multi-layered passage lies in the use of the fairy-tale appearance in order to communicate a clear-cut note in favour of the need for stories, imagination and the magic of words. Kire’s novel *When the River Sleeps* boxed the most important elements that characterize a modern literary folktale. The structure is a heroic

expedition underwent by the protagonist to fulfill the dream which he had been dreaming for past two years. Kire uses many folk tales in her novel to illustrate the culture and its impact on the characters specially the protagonist. There are instances where folk tales are used to give depth of character psych. Vilie has spent half of life in the forest and sometime thinking about the ordinary life of the village, chanting work-songs to add rhythm to toilsome labor, the children running around to fetch water, neighbor calling out each other made him long for the village life “it is those things that I miss”(8), it reveals his feeling, even though he keeps reminding himself that forest is his life, there is no doubt that sometimes he longs for his normal life. Kire employs the folktale like the unclean forest, where the elders would say, spirit would appear before the children and take away the children.

The human children would go missing for days and no search party could find them until the spirit children tired of their play and released their new friend... They would say they had been playing a very nice game and been fed berries, roots and even worms (76).

The elderly people also say that the hunters see beautiful long hair girls, singing and playing in the forest. They called it as forest song. These forest songs are used by the spirits to enchant the humans.

It is beautiful, beautiful, and they sing such haunting melodies the like I have never heard before. Nothing near the age-group that we think are so excellent. Their songs are not sung loudly but they wend their way into your brain and stay there lulling you and drawing you out of yourself with the incredible sweetness.

That's what it is! They sing such sweet songs that you want to cry when they stop because you want nothing than keep on listening (76-77).

This folktale knowledge that has imparted on Vilie helps him throughout his quest. When Vilie went through the unclean forest, he was startled to see young girl's face appeared behind him but knowing that they are spirit and would do no harm if his spirit greater he says "mine is the greater spirit! Depart from me" (84) Kire use another folktale, how many people had come for fetching the heart stone and how many lost their life or return without having it, just because they came without knowledge "and that itself is enough to kill a man" (95) and how useless it was to use weapon to fight against the spirit. "Indeed the river is a spirit. Spirit responds to spirit. Your gun is useless against the things of spirit for these are not flesh and blood" (108) Vilie remembered that was told and that help him in fulfilling his dream by catching the heart stone when the river was asleep.

Impact of myth on protagonist

Myth is part of every culture; every culture has their own myth which is believed to be true and has its origin in the far distant past history of people. Myth helps people to comprehend the society that they live in; and it shapes their existence. As human civilization moves on, new myths are being created to explain the present, sometimes it may sound illogical but it is what that shapes particular society and its people's existence.

Myths deal with the interpretation of pious stories, which comes under the crown of certain group of people, history, sacred religions, cultures and said to interpret the nature. Myths also tell the story about origin of the world and the humans, supernatural beings like spirits and nymphs. It also bestows the stories about Super heroes with the powers gifted by god. Myths are often included in culture. Myths are very popular in Greek and Romans culture, the classical

mythology of Greek and Romans has large impact to the people. It gives the answers of the most typical questions ever asked by the people about existence of the people. Every myth gives itself as a defensive, account of factual. It does not consider about the how much difference is there in the described events because of natural law and experience of ordinary. The graphs of myths can be seen clearly if a keen study is carried out from the past religion or the cultures. In order to see the society where myths play a key role are always difficult. Myth has been commanding by not proving itself but it is simply because of presenting itself. In the olden days it was never questioned as nobody dared to ask it as if they believe that if something wrong happens they may die without anything wrong.

Kire in the novel has incorporated numerous myths to elucidate the culture and tradition of Naga people. Kier depth of vision is that she is able to place the history and myth of the Naga in a larger perspective. Like most modern writer Kire use myths as tool to create a new way of picturing the Naga culture. Kire excellently use the myths like worshipping the Ukepenuopfu, the birth-spirit. The traditional Naga's believed that Ukepenuopfu was the creator of all and therefore taking anything that has sprung out of the earth should acknowledge Ukepenuopfu by saying Terhuomia peziemu as pronouncing a prayer of thanksgiving.

Myths are traditional story which are generally regarded as the phenomenon experiences or some fact. J.M. Synge's wrote the famous play "*The Playboy of the Western World*" based on the on the Ireland myth, the story which he heard while he was on the Aran Isles, the west coast of Ireland. Kier fuse the story of Vilie and Seno as a village mythology. Vilie and Seno were lover, the villagers believe that one fine day they will unite. However, peculiar set of circumstances soon put an end to such dream when Seno died out of ominous circumstances. Vilie for many months kept the flower at the lonely grave but suddenly stop when he make forest

his home. His absence was felt by everybody and many people began to believe that he passed away and they meet in their spirit.

Rumors circulated that the two lovers used to meet in their spirit form in the woods. As the year passed, the rumors slowly disappeared, and the events surrounding Seno's peculiar death, and Vilie's departure were soon relegated to village mythology, and only occasionally retold by Vilie's mates (6).

Impact of fable on protagonist

Fable may simple mean a short story/tale that teach a moral lesson, where characters are mostly inanimate objects or animals. These types of story are not found on facts, it rather on supernatural or extraordinary character or incidents. In literature, fable is described as an edifying lesson given through some sort supernatural or animal story. In verse and prose, a fable is described through inanimate objects like animals, plants and forces of nature by giving them human characteristic wherein they lay bare a moral lesson at the end.

The voices in this novel *When the River Sleeps* explain the moving Vilie to catch the heart-stone. There is a supernatural force at work. This literary piece is one of the well-written fable examples that teach about spiritual knowledge.

What joy will wealth afford you when you do not know the secret of living with peace and faith in your fellow men? It is not wrong to have wealth but your relationship to your wealth defines everything else. If you are grasping at wealth, you are going to lose something that wealth cannot buy for you. You will lose knowledge of the spiritual. And you will lose the power it offers you. That is true

power; that is the only power to aspire to because it gives you power over both the world of the sense and the world of the spirit (95-96).

Kire through this fable convey a moral message that is more important to life. Kier use the story of young boy who was metamorphosing into weretiger. When he along with his father went out for hunting he saw wildcat passing their way. He took aim to shoot at the cat but his father stop him saying that that the cat is him “Son, that cat is you! That was all that the boy needed to understand that his spirit was becoming one with tiger”. (27) Kire uses this fable like George Orwell in “*Animal Farm*”. George presented the story of the development and emergence of Soviet communism through an animal fable. Through these fable he conveys a moral lesson of human struggle under the communism. He advises the animals to struggle against the humans, telling them that rebellion is the only feasible way out to their miserable situation.

Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies... and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end.... No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery... (2).

Impact of rituals on protagonist

Ritual is perhaps a universal trait of human social existence: just as we cannot imagine the society without speech or language it would be equally impossible to envisage a society without ritual. Rituals can both be sacred and secular. It can also be collective experiences, cyclical gatherings, and personal life-patterns, from dawn grooming custom to the ways in which

we interact and greet with one another. Ritual is in fact unavoidable piece of culture, extending from the largest-scale political and social processes to the closest aspects of our self-experience. Contained by this universality, the inherent variety of ritual practices, both between and within cultures, reflects the full multiplicity of the human experience.

The idea of rituals initially emerged as the formal term to identify the notion of universal category of human practice. Later much definition of rituals has been developed linked with variety of intellectual endeavor. For example many myth and ritual theorist looked ritual to describe religion, social functionalist use rituals to analyze society. The theories of Rudolf Otto, Max Miiller, Herbert Spencer, Edward Tylor, William James, James Frazer, and E. O. James, and many others, emphasizes the dominance of religious ideas, born of emotional experiences or pseudoscientific explanations as the cause of religion.

In the last twenty years many theorist have come to the conclusion that ritual is an integral part of cultural analysis. The sociologists, anthropologists, historians of religion, and even the philosophers, intellectual historians and sociobiologists, have turned to ritual as a "window" of cultural dynamics by which people remark and make their worlds. The outcome has been an interdisciplinary tête-à-tête and comparatively broad known as "ritual studies." Undoubtedly the main concern of ritual is to do research on society and religion however; ritual in the present world has become a topic of more interest in its own right, not simply an instrument for understanding more espousal social phenomena. Joseph K. Adjaye in his *"rituals, postmodernity and development"* define rituals as

That extraordinary moment of shared social life during which everyday actions and objects are transformed into symbols that help construct special meaning. It is

the ritual "journey" or ritualization process that gives the action emergent meaning (3).

Rituals are incredibly important in any society. Rituals help in creating the cultural identity. In *When the River Sleeps*, Kier presents certain rituals to reveal the Naga culture and their practices. Kier says that before the coming of Christianity, the Nagas would offer a sacrifice of chicken if any one fall sick, proclaiming "life for life". Kire through Vilie not only exposes the Naga culture but also use rituals as a guide through Vilie quest. Vilie could have killed the weretiger when they attack him, but he could not do so because he knows he had to undergo so many processes which were not possible in the forest and especially when he is all alone.

He would be obligated to perform the tiger-killer ritual which was complicated and not meant for a solitary hunter to fulfill alone in the forest. It was a ritual that required the presence of many members of the clan (25).

Kire deals with other important rituals and beliefs that are associated with the Naga people, the mourning and death rituals that Prominent in Naga society. Kire in one of her famous novel "*A Terrible Matriarchy*" portrays the return of the dead man in the form of spirit and where various rituals are being performed by the family and relatives to help death man to cross the border of the living world to the other world. Kire in this novel *When the River Sleeps* also pats upon those beliefs. Ate has strong belief that her sister zote's spirit would return to bid her farewell. She along with Vilie keeps waiting for her sister's spirit to return. When eventually Zote's spirit returns for a short span, both Vilie and Ate are able to distinguish the sense of hopelessness that has gripped on the spirit "The sorrow- the burden of the grief she carried" (167). Vilie believes that Zote has meet his untimely death, "the spirits of those who die before their appointed time

always carried such anguish with them, that it passed on to the people in their path.”(168) it was the knowledge about his people beliefs and the wisdom that is passed down helps him to understand the circumstances and force Ate to leave village alone with him.

Chapter-2

Role of cultural background in the mind and sensibility of protagonist

The novel *When the River Sleeps* falls under the genre of picaresque novel like those of Henry Fielding '*Joseph Andrew*', and Miguel De Cervantes '*Don Quixote*'. Henry Fielding in his famous novel *Joseph Andrew* presents the seventeenth century society through the journey of Joseph Andrew likewise Kire through the journey of the protagonist Vilie present the Naga society and culture. Easterine Kire as one of the renowned writer of Nagaland shows the dignity of the Naga culture. The novel represents the cultural roots of the Naga people.

Culture covers all the aspect of life, it include history, anthropology, sociology, literature and politics. Culture cannot be confined to one particular term because it is neither born nor created, rather it evolves and grows. Culture can simply be called as "the social" because it is social in nature; it is often a way of life, beliefs, behavior and set of values that makes or help people to distinguish from one another. Cultures in border sense include all the social structures and human traits. However cultures in contemporary discourse have complex, miscellaneous history and diverse range of meaning. E.B Tylor the first 19th century anthropologist define culture

...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, customs and any other capabilities and habit acquire by man as a member of society(1).

Culture and literature are equally related. Literature depicts the reality of human life and also highlights the entire panorama of human life by including in it the cultural traits, social satisfactions, institutions and power structure of society. Therefore, literature preserves all the cultural facets of the society together with its beliefs, values, knowledge and practice. Edward

Said in his essay "*Introduction to Orientalism*" has acknowledged the interrelationship between society, literature and culture.

Too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent; it has regularly seemed otherwise to me, and certainly my study of Orientalism has convinced me (and I hope will convince my literary colleagues) that society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together (35).

Literary formation has its roots in a variety of social sphere such as economic, language, race ethnicity and culture, therefore a literary text is an organic unity of racial difference, socio-culture relation, religious ideology, gender biases, class conflicts etc. Therefore the study of literature in general depicts the cultural roots of the society.

Background of Naga culture

The people of Nagaland or the Nagas are generally consider as the Tibeto-Burmese origin and are mainly tribal people with a rich culture. Nagaland is cover up of sixteen tribal sets with their idiosyncratic cultures. Each tribe has their own motifs in their colorful traditional dresses, has their own dialect, traditions customary practices. Nagas are known as fierce fighters. In verity, two generations back the Nagas were headhunters and was fear and dread by all. The Naga Forefathers believed that the individual soul lived in the nape of the neck and decapitation of their head would set them free. They would display the head outside their house; person who had more head was honored, respected and dread by all.

The settlements of Nagas are not known exactly. Their accurate traces of migratory routes are astray in the sprays of time because there are no written records or historical documents. The Naga people trace back their origin and their settlement with the help of oral

tradition that are passed down from generation to generation in the form of folklore. The Nagas recorded history can only be seen after the British discover the Nagas hills in 1832, prior to that there is no such written records. Naga literature, music and art consist of folk music, folk dances and folk tales. The Naga people expected every individual to participate in the celebration of life. Folk literatures in the form of oral are practice by every tribe in Naga.

Every people's society has a history of change. There is no such society or one would come across such society where all its pristine purity is preserved, sterilized by change. Internal strains and stresses inside the culture could be one the important factor leading to culture change. Some culture changes may also be originate from and may be endorse by pacesetters from within the culture, while some may be inspired indirectly or directly, by outside forces. Talking about the context of Nagaland the continuity of the people has been disturbed, social order and cultural identity has been transformed due to the forces of globalization, modernization and Christianity. Changes are required in every aspect of life, but sometime in the midst of change the culture are partially affected, leading to identity crises.

Every Naga tribe has its own traits of conduct or behavior. This particular trait of behavior helps them in distinguishing themselves from other homogeneous groups. These traits may associate as cultural traits and also as a particular lexis of social identity. The main components of Naga culture are tradition, history, religion, custom, belief, language, art, philosophy, and system of values, social structure and other ways of life. Thus, the identity of the Naga people is known through their cultural style, and the affiliation of an individual to a community can be recognized through his habit patterns obtained from his culture.

The Nagas are abounding in rich cultural heritage and many researchers of contemporary have been trying their hands on the beliefs, rituals and myths that are a part and parcel of the

Naga people. Nagaland has a vibrant culture and traditions, mores and beliefs. Rich in fauna and flora, the region of Nagaland is an amalgamation of diverse indigenous cultures. Like the contemporary writers, Derek Walcott, Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie brings to light the various facets of the Naga society, especially that of the Naga culture and way of Naga life, in her most acclaimed book *When the River Sleeps* (2014). The novel, concentrate mainly Naga culture their beliefs, rituals, and myths.

Every society or culture is the sum total of its individuals. The culture is the reflection of the perspectives, beliefs and faith of an individual. Kire's "*When the River Sleeps*" is a remarkable example of the portraying the Naga culture, and also of how modernization can lead to the disintegration of a culture. Kire has presented the Naga society in a very realistic manner, where the native people are still continuing with practices which in the eyes of modernist are nothing but primitive. Yet these primitivisms in a way preserve the culture and transmit cultural knowledge to present generation.

Cultural background in the mind and sensibility of Vilie

Kire wrote novels in which she discussed serious matters of human experience in general and Naga people in particular. Kire describe the harsh, rough, rude and the problem faced by Vilie through his quest, divulging the culture of Nagaland. She is mainly concerned with the ordinary aspects of life which are depicted in a matter-of-fact, straight forward manner. The treatment of the subject-matter is handled in such a way as it discloses to the world of the Naga people. The novel as the title itself suggest *When the River Sleeps* began with the personification of the river and Vilie having a dream of the river that has possess a heart stone that gives untold power. Vilie has spent twenty- five of his years in the forest where he guards the forest and the gwi (mithun). He did not feel the need to go back to the village after the lost of his beloved Seno.

Kire fuses the story of Seno to give the cultural background of the Naga people, their superstition beliefs and their practices. The Naga people has a notion that if any member of the clan died out of the ominous circumstances that person cannot be buried within the village because the Nagas consider unsafe.

Seno was buried outside the village gate because she had died in what were considered 'ominous circumstances'. Any clan member dying after encountering a spirit could not be buried within the village (5-6).

Kire in an interesting manner show the Naga society where traditional values are rooted. Civilization and modernization has taken place at much faster rate yet there is no denying the fact that the Naga people still believes and practices this notion because it is part of their culture that gives them the unique identities.

Vilie had made the forest his home, the forest has become his wife. He has a sense of belonging in the forest rather in the village and would never think of leaving the forest because to him leaving the forest would be like abandoning his wife. Vilie sometimes would have missed the village life, thinking about his village mates working together under the sun and singing the labour songs, those are small things that made him missed the village but that would never made him leave the forest.

Those in the fields would still be working under the open skies, perhaps chanting work-songs in a call-and-response' way so typical of his people, to add rhythm to the toilsome labour... The melodious works would be heard approaching from far, homeward bound to warm evening meals and a well earned rest (8).

Kier through the psyche of Vilie brings the cultural background of the Naga people. The folk songs are part of every Naga culture. The Naga people use folk songs to encourage one another

during the working hours; they believed that the folk song brings enthusiasm and energy. These cultural practices are still prevalent in the rural areas because eighty percent of the Nagas lives in the rural areas and depend on agriculture. Vilie reluctant to live the forest also proves the Naga people close relationship with the nature.

Vilie finally prepares himself to go and wretch the heart stone. He takes the necessary things that he need on his journey, gun, box of bullets, hunting knife and some food. Before he fully sets out he went to Nepal settlement where Krishna's family live, so that he can give the responsibility to Krishna to look after the forest in his absence. Vilie spend the night and continue his quest the next day. On his first night in the forest he meets with weretiger. Vilie call out the names because he knew that killing weretiger would do him no good. Vilie knew that certain man transformed their spirit into tiger and if those weretigers were killed, a man is bound to perform certain rituals which is complicated and is not possible for one person alone. The cultural knowledge Vilie had, helped him in saving himself from every danger.

Vilie passes through the Nettle Forest where he meets the women harvesting the nettle. He stopped by and had a conversation with the women, where he learned that nettle harvesting was early for a year but it was better, and also the value of nettle.

It is a bit early, I admit, but it gets very hard on the hands if we wait until is full grown, we can use these, and if dried carefully they will gives good yarns (33).

Vilie was pleased to see the women harvesting diligently the nettle. He tried out his helping hand, Idele the elderly woman show him how to cover the steam with the cloth so that he could do it without getting hurt. As she instruct Vilie she stats that she learn from her grandmother and also trying to teach her niece how to make it quick without getting hurt "I learnt it from my Grandmother and I am trying to pass it on to my niece (33). Kluckhohn says

Culture is learned by individuals as a result of belonging to some particular group, and it constitutes that part of learned behavior which is shared with others. It is our social legacy, as contrasted with our organic heredity (33).

Vilie tried as he was instructed but the nettle plant was very stubborn and he got stung by the nettle. The woman also explains to Vilie how important it was to learn the language of one another because trading was based on barter system.

We are Zeliang and the younger generations do not know how to speak Angami, since there was no need for them to learn it. I speak because it was necessary in my day. Back then we trade with Angamis and took their daos, spears, and spades and keshiini, in exchange for our brine, salt, pigs, dried fish and chilly (35).

Kier emphasizes how civilization, modernization or especially after the World War II has impact every aspect of human life, leading to the lost of culture values and identity. Idele laments that trading has befall absolute, and that the present generation did not pay any attention to other language which was always beneficial to know or learn other language. Lose of culture value in present generation is also depicted when Vilie meets Subale. Subale explains

...young people were moving away to the towns like Dimapur or Peren. They found it too difficult to live as their parents did walking back and forth...This is our home, do you understand? We cannot abandon it and try to live in another place. Our umbilical cords are buried here, and we would always be restless if we tried to settle elsewhere (87-88).

The young generations are moving away from their home but Subale does want to accept any of these culture changes brought by modernization and replace her own values. She feels that her belonging and identity would be taken away from her if she accepts those changes. She could not

just let her culture lost forever which for all those years they had being practicing and preserving the cultures. Therefore she laments over the cultural changes brought by modernization. The novel not only presents culture Diasporas, but also a cultural clash between the old generations and the present generation or the tradition and modernity. Bapsi Sidhwa in her novel *American Brat* talks about the clashes of the view between the protagonists Feroza and her mother Zareen. Zareen wants her daughter Feroza to stay in Pakistan while Feroza wants to be in modern America. Feroza become a voice of modernity while Zareen presents the old traditional as a result there rise a conflict between old generation and present generation. Young people want to move to towns and cities and lived a luxury life while the old generation or parents does not desire for such, like Subale they found more comfort and belonging since they are culturally rooted.

Culture is not merely an accumulation of group habits which men have acquired in getting their physical needs met in this physical world, but it is also evidence of men's yearning for the Unseen, the Infinite. The Naga commonly believe in one absolute being with many subsidiary deities and in a great number of spirits of river, nature, forest, ghosts' hill and other invisible spirits who influence or have impact on every point of human life. Kire has infuses all these supernatural elements in the novel. Through Vilie she talks about the evil forest where the bad spirit lingers, widow spirit guarding the river, return of death man spirit or human spirits. Vilie keep facing these spirits throughout his journey, prolonging and making his journey more difficult but also challenging. It also gives him more knowledge and strength.

Vilie is brought back to justice by the Dichu village. Vilie was falsely claimed that he had killed the Dichu village clan. The elderly people of Dichu clan act as a judge and ask him many questions

“What is your name?”... What is our clan? Where is your ancestral village? What are you doing in these parts? Where you known to Pehu of Dichu village? Why were you in his company? Do you deny that you argued with him and shot him dead and then ran off from the camp he had so graciously share with you? (70).

Vilie chooses words carefully and told them the actual incident; he even shows his scares as a proof which was shot to him. Vilie was able to prove his innocence and the elder people beg for pardon, that their wrong action might not come between the villages. The novel presents the Naga culture where there is no monarchy or the chief justice. Judgments are done by the elderly people in the village, they have the full authority. Like Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* presented the Igbo culture. When Okonkwo kills his own clan’s man, he is brought under the judgment the village Elders gather and act as a judge. Kluckhohn in his *Mirror for Man* states “...the basic categories of all cultures are so similar” (31). Both the Nagas and the Igbo have same cultural practice. Every village has the panchayat that is function under the elder people.

When Vilie finally succeeded in capturing the heart stone, Subale village celebrated the Genna Day, a day that is declared as no-work. When Vilie inquiry about the genna day, Subale explains

Every time a person catches the sleeping river, we who live here observe a genna-day, a no-work day. The villagers here will not do any work in their field today. They will not go fishing or go to look at their traps. It a day of thanksgiving for delivered lives (109).

Vilie was mesmerized by their generosity. Subale asked Vilie to stay back and join them in their celebration. Vilie had no intention of violating such a wonderful customs, especially when it is observe in his account. The cultural believes that it is a taboo to do any toil on genna days and

who so ever violate these rules are punished with accidents and injuries that even leads to death. This information also held back Vilie from furthering his journey. He rest for the day and get back to track the next day.

Food is one the most colorful aspect of the Naga culture. The novel *When the River Sleeps* gives a variety of Naga eating habits. Kier wonderfully blends the Naga cuisine in the novel. Rice is the stable food for the Naga, and dry meat is one the most important ingredient for every Naga curry. Use of dry meat is mention in every curry of Vilie.

Into his pot went the herbs he had shredded into small piece, along with salt and rice. A piece of dried meat would add just exactly the flavor he needed. When the meet was tender, Vilie waited for the food to cool. His gun by his side, he ate slowly (50).

Kier through these gives the glimpse of Naga eating a habit which is the most essence of every part of culture. Kire also emphasis on cultural practice, the Nagas believed that the food eaten slowly always in the stomach longer, therefore Vilie even though he voraciously hungry he would chew slowly and deliberately.

Vilie ate slowly, because that was what he had always been taught. All hunters knew that if they found food after a long period of starvation, they should eat slowly, masticating their food properly to help their digestive organ. “You can eat yourself dead” the older hunters would warn when they were teaching younger hunters about this. They were very serious about it (56).

Native tobacco is also of the important that is commonly use by the Naga hunters. It is believed that native tobaccos are much stronger than any tobacco found in the market, it makes the mouth

numb. Vilie throughout his journey not only smoke the native tobacco but also use it to keep himself away from the harmful animals.

One thing that gave away a hunter's presence to animals was tobacco smoke. Wild animals could smell tobacco smoke from a long distance away. He tossed the half tobacco rolled smoke into the fire and regretted it at once. Black smoke instantly mushroomed upward and since he couldn't move quickly enough, he inhaled some of it (57).

Vilie through out his journey uses the culture knowledge that was passed on to him by the elder people. There is no fact denying that through these cultural knowledge that is imparted on him helps him in accomplishing his dream. This cultural knowledge helps him to handle every situation that comes on his way.

Kluckhohn says;

Culture is like a map, just as a map isn't the territory but an abstract representation of a particular area, so also a culture is an abstract description of trends towards uniformity in the words, deeds and artifacts of human group. If a is accurate and you can read it you won't get lost; if you know the culture you will know your way about the life of a society (35).

Easterine Kire's novel *When the River Sleeps* marks the territory of Nagaland and brings alive of diverse features of the Naga tribal society; the novel captures the legend, myths, folktales, rituals, and beliefs of the people of the Naga society. Kire devotes much of her attention in depicting the journey of the protagonist Vilie to the sleeping river and in the course is able to bring out the belief system of Naga people. Vilie as a man of the forest is full of the wisdom that is passed on to him by older generations, and is thus, able to capture the heart-stone

and complete his journey. *When the River Sleeps* paves the path in understanding the Naga culture portrayed authentically by Kire who has known and experienced it and is thus, able to bring out the true picture of the Naga society and culture in a beautiful folklore manner.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, we can avow that Easterine Kire novel *When the River Sleeps* is a part of preserving, imparting and educating the modern youth whether they are living in Nagaland or they live in Diaspora. Self identity cannot be found or complete without being taught the hub values which are entrenched in the mesmerizing folklore of the diverse cultural or tribal groups, especially in the form of legends, myths, folktales, proverbs, and fable. Therefore in this study we have tried to show the best how these are being accomplished, firstly by the protagonist Vilie and secondly the Naga people in general.

The novel focus on the Vilie the protagonist and through his journey, Kire established a vibrant Naga culture. These rich cultures are exhibits in the form of folklore. The folklore in the form of fable, legend, myth, and folktale, that is handed down to Vilie by the elder people help Vilie throughout his journey and helps him in accomplishing his dream. Like Vilie, Kier also accomplish her dream by brining awareness of the Naga cultures that are almost diminishing. The novel not only imparts the cultural knowledge but also in a way act as preserving the Naga culture.

The whole novel is presented in the form of traditional Naga folklore which procures numerous structures of Naga Culture. In novel Easterine Kire steps into the legends and myths of Nagaland, and is almost reads like a folk tale. Unassuming in the style and conduct Kire gives a proof that most of the profound realities can notified in the simplest comportment. Akin to all classic folklore it shows the integrity of the individual heart and human being in general and also the possibilities it embrace, more valuable than all the possessions of the world. The struggle of protagonist Villie is universal in its entreaty, though it is resolutely rooted in the way of Naga life.

In *When the River Sleeps*, the protagonist Vilie is a man who dwell in the forest and because of his vast knowledge of the forest was he was employed as the guardian of the forest by the forest department. Owing the knowledge of the forest he becomes the guardian and the keeper of the heart-stone, a numinous stone that provides its proprietor a numerous wealth, power and exceptional understanding of the physical and spirit world. One of the most interesting things is to note Kire's unwavering attentiveness towards the world contained inside a rural area with a repudiation to give any attention to ill-effects of the modern or civilizing world. Kire set herself apart as an author in this style. Kire in order to show and have in contact with institution and rich culture of Nagaland, consciously make certain that her novel gyrate around the lives of the Naga people so that its rich tradition and culture can be read and remembered.

In the novel Kier illustrate upon village laws, inter-tribe relations, and intricacies the living of a wanderer and of the spirit world. In the story the antagonists are those unscrupulous group hunters and the danger spirits. While the main narratives centers around the different beliefs of Naga community. The novel is also in a way a resolution as the protagonist manages to bring together into the creases of the society, a woman by the name Ate was once indicted of being a *Kirhupfümia* (a minority group of women who are believed to have power of maiming, killing or blinding people simply by pointing finger at people). In the novel Kier does not sack this practice as a source of social evil but rather she obtains it as a tribal attributes and beliefs that these group of women are rumored to possess terrible powers. Therefore the whole narrative is built upon ethnic knowledge. The profound mysticism and magic entrenched in the novel consequently inks a pact between Vilie and the readers in the itinerary of the novel, whatever happens is like real as it is certified by Vilie the shrewd protector of the forest. In this way the cultural knowledge that is imparted in the novel is non-fictional and the readers are force to

comprehend and appreciate the customs and tribal laws as it is meant to be seen as an essential measure and precautionary footed upon ancient acquaintance and secure reason of a group of people.

The way Kier uses the traditional folklores to create an annotation on how she is not simply playing around stereotype but reminding the people once again that the reasons for this needs of culture, and also the needs of these cultures to be preserved by demonstrating it incredible. In the novel Kire intentionally brings the sole focus into the Naga community and not to any negative effects experienced by the Naga people that come in contact with foreign cultures, in order to reinforce her case for the greatness of the cultural. Kier greatness lies in her refinement by employing the pain of an endangered culture and this shows her maturity and her high skill. As folklore enhances and expresses the codifies believes and also enforces and safeguards the morality of the certain group people, kier has use the function of Naga folklore exactly as an attempt to make the reader aware of the importance of culture by drawing it from folkloric tradition.

The novel also accomplish in making the nature as the real hero, through Vilie journey it brings the vales and hills of Nagaland, its sparkling rivers and aromatic herbs which is used and preserve by the Naga people. The novel in general can be regarded as a call to all humans to return back to the natural world. As modernization and urbanization has ties to our natural world there is no doubt that human being are becoming more and more unhappy in this generation. Therefore it is a call to all not only of Naga young generation that are living in Diaspora but also to all human kind in general. This novel seeks to get it back to the kingdom of nature and it succeeded because of its tender characters and strong evocation of the natural beauty.

The core story of the novel sees the sights of the Naga spiritual world which is something that has always been fascinating. The Naga's has rich spiritual tradition and their rich culture teaches that the two worlds exist together i.e. the spiritual and the natural world therefore the Nagas always try to live a life watchfully, conscious and respectful of the spirit life that rambles around.

Unlike the documents of history that emphasize the change that has occurred over the period of time in an educational class, folklore material is useful as it provides cultural answers that are ambiguous because culture tends to be changeable over space and stable over time and symbolizes a wider group of people. Folklore materials can be used to trace ancient cultural traditions, and Kire throughout the novel has used the Naga folklore to give the cultural background of the Naga people.

That is what the age-group houses are for, to impart knowledge of the natural and the supernatural to you so that you go out into the world with knowledge of both, and not disrespect either world as some people are (28).

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