

The Morung Express

Dimapur, Saturday, February 6, 2016

Traditions, a living reality in the NE

Morung Express News

Dimapur | February 5

A two-day national seminar and photographic exhibition on "Eastern Himalayan Domestic Architecture in India's North-East" organized by The Global Open University Nagaland (TGOUN) in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Society for Cultural Heritage for North-East India, got underway here at Hotel Acacia.

Chancellor, TGOUN, TN Mannen, IAS (retd), the chief guest of the inaugural session in his address said the architecture of indigenous communities of the North-East including Naga tribes is intrinsically linked with their culture and tradition. Mannen said the traditional Naga architecture is marked by creativity and aesthetic beauty.

The chancellor TGOUN noted that with the advent of Christianity, the culture and heritage of Nagas including their architectural designs have been "systematically discouraged", which he said would prove disastrous to Naga people in the long run.

Stressing on the need to preserve, protect and promote the rich cultural heritage of the indigenous communities of NE including Nagas, Mannen said the diverse cultural heritage can propel the NE region into a major

tourist destination.

Delivering the keynote address, vice chancellor TGOUN, Dr. HN Dutta, said the domestic architecture of North-East India, be it religious or secular, represented a culture of harmonious living and economic sustainability. Dutta said building mediums and materials used were collected from nature and these materials were biodegradable and hence eco-friendly.

He said manufacturing of indigenous clothes, ink and dyes, tools and equipment, furniture, treatment of wood, pro-

National seminar on North East architecture underway

curing thatch, nourishing cane and bamboo and selection of site for building houses were all done respecting nature.

"It (NE) is a region where archaeology is not confined to the ossified and fossilized objects, this is a region where the past traditions and practices are still a living reality", the vice chancellor said.

Dr. OC Handa from Shimla said the nomenclature "tribal" used for indigenous inhabitants of NE is demeaning as NE people are culturally more advanced than many other races and communities. He suggested "natives"

and "indigenous" people should replace tribals, at least in academic discourses. Handa also called for a balance between modernity and traditional way of living and added, "presently all our thinking, food and houses have become synthetic."

Dr. Heidi Tacier from Switzerland also said the NE has remained "unspoiled" so far and said it was a veritable delight to experience the diverse cultures of the region. Heidi also inaugurated the photographic exhibition at Tourist Lodge.

Superintendent archaeologist, ASI, Guwahati, Dr. Milan Chauley, also referred to the nomenclature "tribals" as a remnant of the colonial era and said "westernization has given us many things but also deprived us of many

things." He said the indigenous people should come out of "tribal" mindset as they are inferior to no one in terms of civilization. He also said the NE with its rich culture heritage and bio-diversity has tremendous scope for adventure and eco-tourism.

Resource persons of the second session included Dr. SS Singh, assistant archaeologist ASI; Ujjwal Jyoti Das, NIT Silchar; Dr. Milan Chauley Kumar; Dr. Tiatoshi, Nagaland University; Dr. Heidi Tacier, Dr. Kripasindu Dey, asst. curator, district museum Bomdila and Dr. Ditamula Vasa, Nagaland University.