

ZELIANGRONG STUDENTS' UNION, DELHI

“For Glory Unite”

27th Freshers' Meet
16 September 2018

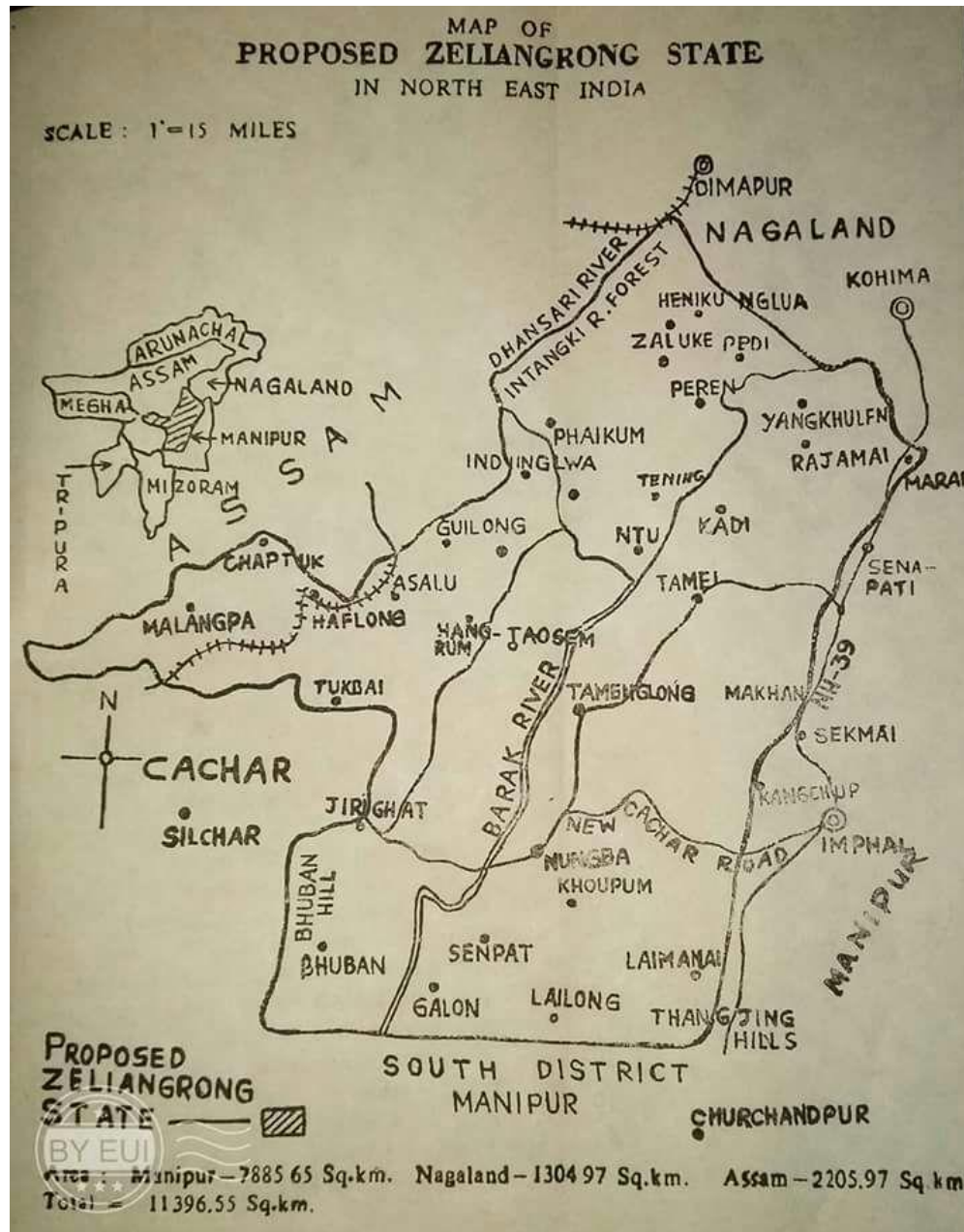
ZELIANGRONG FAMILY

THREE QUESTIONS

Rev.Dr. Elungkiebe Zeliang

HoD, Christian Studies and Peace Initiatives
Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong

A Sketch of Zeliangrong Map



Introduction

- Zeliangrongs are passing through a difficult path at this juncture of our history.
- By Zeliangrong, I mean all the “Luangdimai,” or descendants of our patriarch Nguibabe of ancient Makuilongdi village.
- Descendants of Nguibabe are the Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei, and Inpui.
- As a big family, Zeliangrongs have diverse opinions, and we are struggling with many issues at this time.

Introduction

- One of the serious issues that confronts the Zeliangrongs at present is the identity issue.
- Many Zeliangrongs are confused with questions concerning our identity.
- Questions about Zeliangrong identity needs to be addressed critically in order to take a discerned and firm stand.
- In this presentation, therefore, I would like to deal with the following three questions:

Introduction

1. Who are Zeliangrongs?
2. How do the common clans bind us together?
3. Why should Zeliangrongs remain as one people?

1. Who are Zeliangrongs?

➤ There are many questions with regard to Zeliangrong identity:

➤ What is Zeliangrong?

- Name of a tribe
- Social organization
- Political organization, etc.
- Confused

➤ Are Zeliangrongs one people?

- Yes
- No
- Confused

➤ Who are Zeliangrongs?

1. Who are Zeliangrongs?



Let us define who Zeliangrongs are.



Are Zeliangrongs:

- 1) People who speak Zeliangrong dialects?
- 2) People who live in Zeliangrong areas?
- 3) People who wear Zeliangrong attires/ clothes?
- 4) People who have land/house in traditional Zeliangrong areas?
- 5) All those who marry Zeliangrong girls?

Who are Zeliangrongs?

- Zeliangrongs are comprised of the followings:
 - 1) Blood descendants of our common grand patriarch Nguibabe/Nguibabou/Nguibapou of ancient Makuilongdi village.
 - 2) Immigrants from other tribes who immigrated into Luangdimai villages for whatever reasons and joined the society.

Who are Zeliangrongs?

- Zeliangrongs, therefore, are basically comprised of blood descendants of Nguibabe/Nguibabou/Nguibapou (approx. 95%) and descendants of people who joined the Zeliangrongs from other tribes (approx. 5%).
- Whatever the origin may be, Zeliangrongs are Zeliangrongs, and we accept one another as bonafide Zeliangrongs.

2. How do the common clans bind us together?

- What is a clan?
- A clan is a close-knit group of interrelated families.
- In a nutshell, a clan is a group of people who are related by blood.
- As clans are organized on blood lines, marriage within the clan (or sub-clan) is often considered as incest.

How do the common clans bind us together?

- Apparently Zeliangrongs had two mother clans:
 - 1) Heu/Pame/Pamai/Pamei
 - 2) Hau/Newme/Newmai/Panmei
- There are two clan monoliths at Makuilongdi, namely **Pamai stone** and **Newmai stone**.
- In all the northern Zeme villages, there are two mother clans – **Heu** clan and **Hau** clan – each having several sub-clans and even sub-sub-clans.

Heu Clan & Hau Clan

- E.g., Ze-Nnui (Yangkhullen) village has four major clans (*hepui*): Rapeiname, Heringcame, Haume, and Fwangcame.

Hau Clan (Newme)

1. Haume
2. Fwangcame

Heu Clan (Pame)

1. Rapeiname
2. Heringcame

- There are many sub clans (*hangsiu*), sub-sub-clans (*paupak*) under the major clans.

- **Heu** and **Hau** clans are required in every village in order to perform religious rituals.

Zeliangrong Common Clans across Linguistic Groups

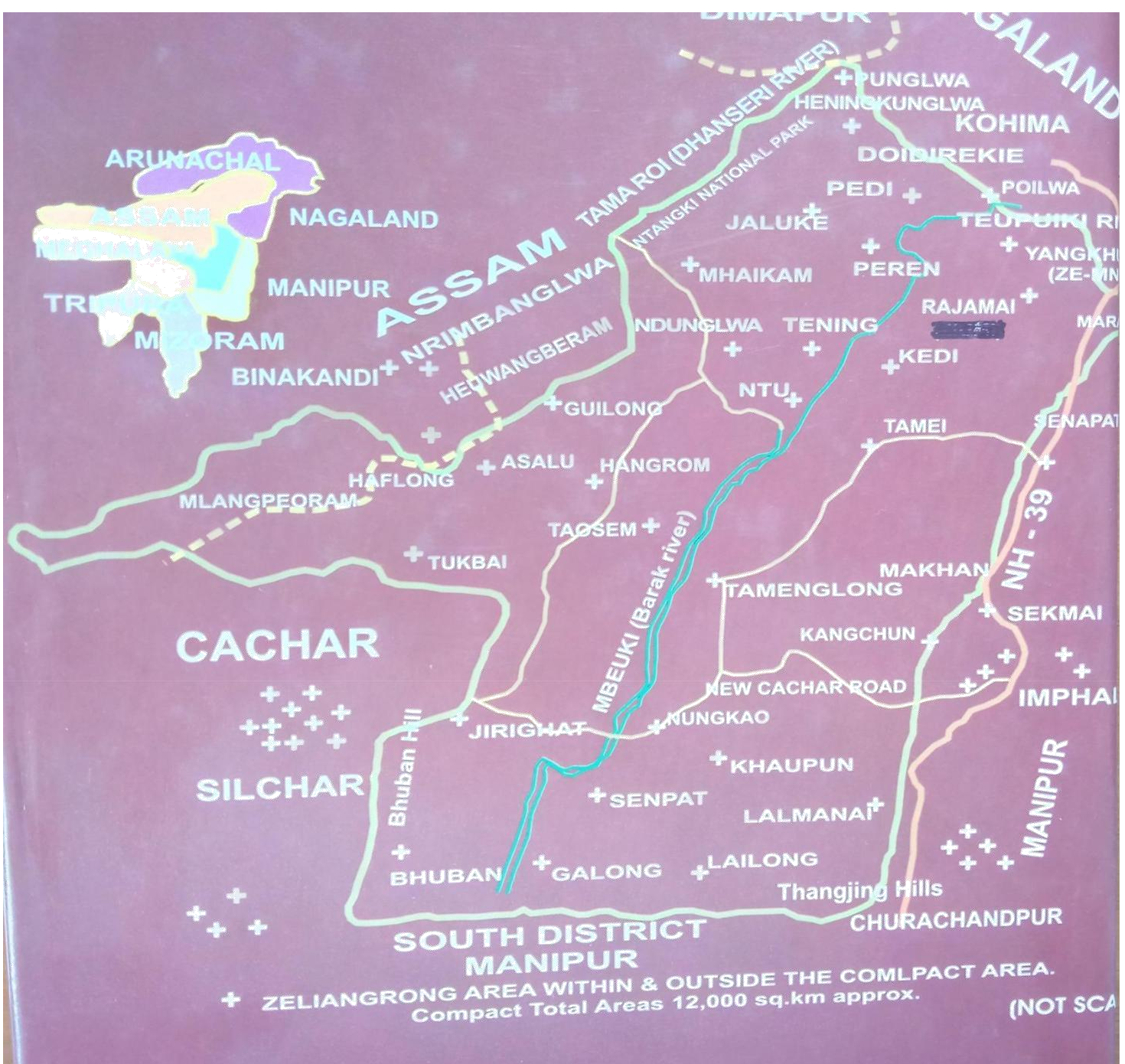
<u>Zeme</u>	<u>Liangmai</u>	<u>Rongmei</u>	<u>Inpui</u>
Heu/Pame /Kuame	Pamai	Pamei/Mpamei/ Kamei	Nka/ Kamei
Melangme	Malangmai	Malangmei	Balang
Hau/ Newme	Niumai/Ne wmei	Panmei	
Penme	Penmai	Panmei	
Daime	Daimai	Ndaimei	
Riame/ Nring	Maremai	Riamei	Bariam/ Riamroi
		Gangmei	Khumba

How do the common clans bind us together?

- As much as clans are formed on blood lines, people of the same clan are related by blood.
- So the Heume/Pame/Pamai/Pamei in the three/four linguistic groups are people of the same blood lineage.
- Likewise, Haume/Newme/Newmai/Panmei are blood related brothers and sisters.
- Riame, Mareme, Riamei, Bariam/Riamroi are related by blood.
- The common clans across the Zeliangrong linguistic groups bind the people together.

How do the common clans bind us together?

- The clan system in the Zeliangrong community has been also strengthened by the numerous waves of migration.
- Even after settling down in the present Zeliangrong areas, families and individuals migrated from one village to another or from one linguistic region to another linguistic region for different reasons.
- Often the immigrants join the same clans in the host villages.



How do the common clans bind us together?

- There are many examples of inter-village and inter-regional/linguistic migrations.
- Many Liangmais emigrated to the Rongmei and Zeme villages/areas.
- E.g., there are two clans at Peren village who came from two present Liangmai villages: Biena & Kedi.
- All Pamei families (257 households) at Inriangluang (Tamenglong) village came from **Ngam** and **Nkio** villages (Zeme villages in Nagaland).

How do the common clans bind us together?

- Many Ngam Pames emigrated to Liangmai and Rongmei speaking villages and today they have become Liangmais and Rongmeis respectively.
- Haipou Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu were said to be descendants of **Ngam** Pamei.
- Every family has a family history which is passed down from one generation to another.
- Many of us know that our ancestors came from other village or even from the village of other linguistic group to our present village.

Activity

- ❖ Stand in the present linguistic group.
- ❖ Move to the linguistic group of your ancestors.
- ❖ All those who are descendants of our common ancestor Nguibabe.
- ❖ Think how mixed up our Zeliangrong people are.

How do the common clans bind us together?

- The discussion on common clans portrays that Zeliangrongs have blood related brothers and sisters in all the linguistic groups.
- The discussion on waves of migration also point to the fact that Zeliangrongs have kith and kin in different villages and linguistic regions.
- All these lead to the fact that we are bound together by our common clans even if we speak different dialects today.

3. Why should Zeliangrongs remain as one people?

- Zeliangrongs have many issues – linguistic issues, state issues, recognition issues, etc.
- There are some Zeliangrongs who are disappointed with the present crises and want to separate on the basis of regional dialects/language or political state.
- But there are many Zeliangrongs who believe and say that Zeliangrongs are one, and must remain as one people.

Why should Zeliangrongs remain as one people?

- I have the conviction that Zeliangrongs are one people and we should remain as one people.
- I take this stand because of the following reasons:
 - 1) Common ancestry
 - 2) Common history
 - 3) Common clans
 - 4) Common culture
 - 5) Brighter future

1) Common Ancestry

- Zeliangrong/Luangdimai traditions tell us that Nguibabe was our grand patriarch and his sons (Kading, Namhegang, and Nrembangbe) are the patriarchs of the present Zeliangrongs.
- When we have such traditions, how can we say that we are different?
- If we are descendants of one great grand father, how dare we say that we are not one people?
- Zeliangrongs should remain as one people because we share a common ancestry.

2) Common History

- Our traditions tell that Zeliangrongs built a giant village at Makuilongdi (in Senepati, Manipur) with 7777 households.
- All Zeliangrongs accept that Makuilongdi was our ancestral village and that our ancestors dispersed from Makuilongdi to our present settlements.
- After many centuries, Zemes, Liangmais, Inpui, and Rongmeis have returned to Makuilongdi.
- Zeliangrongs must remain as one people because we have a common history.

3) Common Clans

- Zeliangrongs have common clans, as we have discussed earlier.
- We have noted that clans are organized on blood relations.
- When we have common clans across the present linguistic groups, how can we say that we are not related to one another?
- Zeliangrongs must remain as one people because we are bound together by common clans.

4) Common Culture

- Zeliangrongs have common culture although we have slight variations.
- We have common folktales – Asa & Meiserung, Asampeu, Hemang Zaulu, etc.
- We have several common folk songs and similar singing styles.
- We have beautiful common dancing techniques.
- Our dialects share many common root words.
- Zeliangrongs must remain as one people because we have a common culture.

5) Brighter Future

- God has blessed the Zeliangrongs with a vast and rich land.
- God has also prospered the Zeliangrongs with huge population.
- Today we have many rich people, intellectuals, politicians, and entrepreneurs.
- If we are together, all our neighbours will look up to us, and we can live with dignity and self respect.

5) Brighter Future

- But if we are divided on linguistic lines, we will fight among ourselves beginning from our villages.
- If we are separated, our neighbours will prick us from all directions and we will fight with them.
- If we want to live in peace, we must stay together as one people. **Unity is strength!**
- Zeliangrongs must remain as one strong people for brighter future.

Conclusion

- In this presentation we have learned that Zeliangrongs/Luangdimais are descendants of one common ancestor.
- As Zeliangrongs have a common ancestry, we are one family and one people no matter where you live or whichever dialect you speak.
- The discussion on the clan system depicts that Zeliangrongs have many common clans across linguistic groups.

Conclusion

- We have also noted that the waves of family or individual migrations from one village to another have not only strengthened our clan system but also kept alive the history of our oneness.
- Finally, we have also noted that Zeliangrongs/ Luangdimais should stay together as one people because of our historical, socio-cultural facts, and also for brighter future.
- Whether we like it or not, we do not have the moral right to change our common history, which our ancestors preserved and passed down to us.

Conclusion

- We may have issues with one another but we cannot change our blood that binds us together.
- Therefore, we need to affirm our common history and affirm our common blood relationship within the Zeliangrong family.
- My Zeliangrong/Luangdimai people, let us remain united, stand tall, and march on with our heads held high.

“How very good and pleasant
it is when kindred live
together in unity!”

(NRSV **Ps 133:1**).

ZELANGRONG RINGTIELO!