

# **“EXPECTATIONS AND DREAMS OF LUANGDIMAI PEOPLE: HOW LUANGDIMAI CITIZENS FORUM (LCF) FITS INTO THIS.”**

**Luangdimai Citizens Forum Leadership Orientation cum Planning Meet on 6<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2024 at Guwahati.**

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## **Introduction:**

In Makuiluangdi/Nkuilwangdi and yonder the lush hills and mountains surrounding the village, the cradle of Luangdimai/ Zeliangrong-Inpui civilization/culture, the echo of Hozam sounded by its patriarchs thousands of years ago can still be heard. This echo informs and inspires the descendants to seek to come together and overcome the barriers working against their interests.

Driven by the common origin, bloodline and socio-cultural system of the descendants of Nguiba of Makuiluangdi/Nkuilwangdi village. Luangdimai Citizens Forum (LCF) believes in augmenting and dovetailing the common future and destiny of the people. Towards achieving this goal, LCF put a firm footing on their unity through a common point of reference. In one of the steps towards this goal, LCF members met in Shillong in 2017 and took a reformative step by seeking to reorder the exclusivity in the 1947 nomenclature "Zeliangrong" by introducing Luangdimai", the inclusive name for the people and descendants of Nguiba of Makuiluangdi/Nkuilwangdi Village who are located in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. At the 2017 meet Zeliangrong Citizens Forum (ZCF) was renamed as Luangdimai Citizens Forum (LCF).

Sometimes, I would like our Zeliangrong/Luangdimai people not to delve into our past history too much. Knowing the history, learning from them and course correcting our collective future is imperative. But, if our past history and mistakes become the source of our disunity today, it will most certainly be the factors of our destiny tomorrow and it will not be one we desire ourselves to be in – a collective downfall. So rather than focusing on the history, it will be more productive if we learn about today, think about the future and work towards it.

## **1. Who are Luangdimais?**

Luangdimais are the descendants of Nguiba of Makuiluangdi village or those whose ancestors have lived in Makuiluangdi/Nkuilwangdi village before migrating to different parts of North East India or presently living in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland.

Luangdimai people are called by different names.

1. Hamai
2. Kabui/Kacha Naga
3. Zeliang
4. Zeliangrong
5. Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei, Inpui

The Laungdimai/Zeliangrong community stands at a critical crossroads, confronted by a complex web of challenges that threaten our very survival. Politically, our deep division and lack of unity have left us vulnerable to external manipulation weakening our position. This prolonged uncertainty has created a power vacuum, leaving us increasingly confused, disillusioned and exposed.

## **2. Luangdimais are divided in their own land.**

Luangdimais, also called Zeliangrong comprises of six linguistic groups namely Kabui, Rongmei, Inpui, Kacha Naga, Liangmai and Zeme. This division into sub-tribe has separated us from one another and the feeling of brotherhood has grown weaker. The descendants of Nguiba of Makuiluangdi village have now spread across different states of North East India (maximum in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland). Owing to long separation from one another, different regional dialect and the prevalence of divergent identities and interest, it has segregated our thoughts and actions and has become a bottleneck in our efforts to bring unity and the spirit of brotherhood. Even Churches are divided sharply in linguistic line and it has effect the social life of Zeliangrong/Luangdimai people. Although all the groups fondly cherish and preserve the history of common ancestry, folktales and cultural practices, they have mixed feelings about working/living together as one.

Analyzing this further, our internal divisions have indeed become a major obstacle. Instead of working together, we often find ourselves at odds, which weakens our collective strength. This is a crucial issue that needs addressing if we are to effectively confront external challenges. Our divisions at organizational, political and social levels have created significant fragmentation, leading to internal competition rather than a united front against external threats. While social media have provided a platform for us to express our thoughts, it often descends into unproductive debates and division's rhetoric. We are rich in ideas and possess vast intellectual resources yet we struggle to take these ideas into action. The lack of structure and collective responsibility has left many of our best solutions unfulfilled, trap in the realm of words rather than deeds.

## **3. Dreams of Luangdimais to live as one people under Political administration.**

It is the dream and aspiration of all Luangdimais to reclaim the past glory of Makuiluangdi/Nkuilwangdi by coming under one roof and to live in unity and integrity under one political administration.

To unite all the descendants of Nguiba of Makuiluangdi village spread across the North East States of India and to fight together for a separate Zeliangrong/Luangdimai Homeland.

To realize our dreams, ZUF was formed by our leaders on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2011 to protect our land, natural resources and our divided people. But unfortunately, divided among ourselves without any reason before fulfilling our aspiration.

## **4. Present Condition of Luangdimais in North East India**

All the linguistic groups are now considering themselves as a separate entity (especially Manipur) and different unions and organizations have come up in their respective region. Participation in the apex organization has declined considerably. People have more interest in their smaller organizations now, however these small organizations does not have the power to impact or the zeal to unite us. The spirit of brotherhood has grown so weak that we tend to fight amongst ourselves for every tiny matter rather than fighting together for our common cause.

In the year 2010, the AZSU (AMN) formed Languages Commission with Rev. Dr. Elungkiebe and two other committee members to realize our dreams as one people through communication. In the year 2017, the AZSU (AMN) and Zeliangrong Baudi (AMN) entrusted the LCF to take charge of Languages' Commission. And thereafter the LCF expanded the languages commission to carry out their activities/mission. The Present Committee members are Rev. Dr. Elungkiebe, Lt. Mr. I. Daniel, Mr. Dai Remmei, Mr. Jianchui Kamei, Mr. Guithuilung Daimei, Dr. Engam, Mr. Aron Pamei, Mr. Wikhonbou and Mr. Caled Mpamei. The main purpose of this commission was to set up a common language for all the descendants of Nguiba/Nguibe/Nguibou.

Today all the identity names of our people have sizeable population and due to which complete unity cannot be achieved.

1. Kabui-Imphal Valley (80 plus villages/colonies)
2. Zeliang- whole of Nagaland (25 villages)
3. Zeme-Liangmai-Rongmei-Inpui: Majority of the dialect segments across Luangdiram (Assam, Manipur & Nagaland)
4. Since its inception on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1947, Zeliangrong has been active and has spearheaded major political movement like ZPC, growth of Para church organizations like ZBCC, institutions such as ZU/ZB, AZSU, ZYF, ZMA etc as apex or frontal organization. However, the demand for separate recognition of Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei and Inpui gained ground and ultimately they achieved in 2012.
5. Among the dialectical groups - there are many more organizations contributing to many discordant voices among them. Eg. Liangmai Naga Council Manipur, LNKR (for students), Eastern Liangmai Naga Council, LNBA etc. Likewise for Zeme, Rongmei and Inpui, it's fair to say we have more than 20 organizations running parallel and without any sense of united voice.

#### **5. LCF is an alternative to bring Luangdimais together.**

The nomenclature "Zeliangrong" is itself a setback for us because through this we have been segregated into six linguistic groups and this segregation has set us further from one another. Whenever a leader is to be chosen among us, there is always a debate on which linguistic groups should be the head and the participation of each linguistic group has to be considered. And this sometimes brings misunderstanding among us. So, the newly coined word "Luangdimai" can be the right replacement of Zeliangrong for bringing about unity and harmony among us.

Luangdimai is a term referring to the people of Makuiluangdi/Nkuilwangdi village or the descendants of Nguiba of Makuiluangdi/Nkuilwangdi village. It does not give any distinction among the linguistic groups. LCF is a neutral body and does not sideline with any other bodies. It acts as a mediator for all the existing unions and organizations of Luangdiram and across.

Ultimately we need to reflect on these issues and strive for greater unity within our community. By addressing our internal conflicts in a very meticulous manner, calculated approach and working together, we can better tackle external challenges and advance our collective goal. In these challenging times, our transformative approach must be deliberate, thoughtful and rooted in wisdom.

#### **6. Suggestions that LCF can do.**

1. The Luangdimai Citizen's Forum should visit the apex body of Zeliangrong Baudi (AMN), Zeliangrong Union, Joint Tribe Council and discuss matters pertaining to nomenclature and bringing about unity and harmony.
2. LCF should also sensitize the youths and students about the nomenclature and the importance of our goals and aspirations by conducting seminars or awareness program in zonal or area wise i.e. in Southern Luangdiram, Central Luangdiram, Western Luangdiram and Northern Luangdiram. Eg, in present Nagaland, we can have awareness program in Dimapur, Kohima, Peren area, Jalukie Valley, Tening area and Nsong area with GBs, VCM, students, youths and women leader at least once in a year.
3. Interaction with elected MLAs, ADC members in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland.
4. To organize Cultural Meet or Annual Meet at least once in two years if not every year and the venue should be Western Luangdiram, Southern Luangdiram, Eastern Luangdiram and Northern Luangdiram.
5. To observe prayer and fasting at least once in a year for Zeliangrong/Luangdimai community.

**Conclusion:**

“The only way to achieve greatness in life is to have patience, consistency and discipline.”

Journey towards Luangdimai is not going to be easy but we have to be persistent and committed to our goal. Leaders like you are called not for anything fancy but to swim against the current. We are here to study how to disentangle and clean up the mess created by others. This is no time to blame and lament but to pull up our socks and start working.

Let us continue to work together for the realization of our LCF's motto "ONE PEOPLE, ONE VISION, ONE VOICE".

May our Almighty God awaken our leaders and give divine wisdom and guidance to save our Zeliangrong/Luangdimai people.

Thank You

Luangdimai Ringtielo