

TRIEM-HAICHINGBAWNG_THE UIPO SONG_TEDAWNSHIM KHALING

I am Tedawnshim Khaling, the Creative Director of Unibrow Studio, India. I have studied painting, but I do not practice anymore. Presently, I run my production house, crafting short films for others, with a fervent hope of creating my own film in the near future. Additionally, I aspire to write children's books as well.

Hailing from the Uipo tribe in Manipur—one of the non-recognized and smallest tribes among the 30-plus recognized and unrecognized tribes—I am a second-generation learner. It is imperative, as a proud member of the Uipo (Khoibu) tribe, to articulate the challenges and aspirations of our community. Despite the lack of official tribal recognition, we firmly regard ourselves as an independent entity, nurturing a unique cultural heritage. With our population dwindling to less than 2000, there is an urgent need for social recognition and constitutional protection to avert the potential extinction we face.

The intricate power dynamics among diverse ethnic groups in the hill areas of Manipur significantly influence tribal recognition. This process is often swayed by lobbying from more influential tribes resistant to acknowledging certain groups as Scheduled Tribes.

Consequently, our plea for recognition extends beyond preserving our identity; it is a quest to safeguard our traditions and cultural practices teetering on the brink of disappearing. The case of the Khoibus exemplifies the negotiation of a distinct tribal identity amid Manipur's intricate ethnic fabric. The enclosures around generic ethnic identities, particularly the dominant Naga identity, contribute to rendering our cultural distinctiveness nearly invisible. This underscores the imperative for a nuanced understanding of our unique heritage, separate from broader ethnic classifications.

Our community is actively involved in tireless efforts to preserve our language, culture, and identity. We firmly believe that official recognition and constitutional protection are not merely rights but essential elements for preserving our rich heritage. In the face of challenges, we remain resilient, hopeful, and determined to ensure that future generations can inherit and celebrate the uniqueness of the Uipo (Khoibu) tribe.

In 2020, my father, Mr. Mosyel Syelsaangthyel Khaling, an ardent community activist, achieved a significant milestone. He became the first Indian citizen to receive the Excellence in Community Linguistics Award from the Linguistic Society of America, a globally recognized honor for linguistic activism. This award highlights his exceptional efforts in preserving our language and cultural heritage. He has graciously agreed to help me with the recording since he already knew all the cantors and translations of the song.

ABOUT THE SONG (HAICHINGBAWNG):

Our culture does not have gender-specific songs; everyone participates in singing and dancing together. However, a unique exception is made during the Haichingbawng festival, where a particular song is sung by women cantors and danced by the maidens of the village.

Haichingbawng, the pre-harvest festival of Uipo, witnesses maidens in full traditional attire dancing under the full bright moon in the ninth lunar month (Sept-Oct in the Gregorian calendar). As paddy ripens in the fields and the soft autumn breeze gently sways the golden fields, the maidens, dancing in rhythm, seek to emulate this gentle sway of the paddy fields. Cantors of the tribe, known as Laarung, lead the songs for the dance, and at times, this celebration continues throughout the entire night.

The full song is called Laapui. There are five stanzas and this one is called "Triem". Here is the complete translation of the song

Mairuolyeng, mairuolyeng, – fall in line, fall in line
Trei, inkhaa tamag-ie, – Spouse is not at home;
Trei-rei inkhaa tamag-ie, – She-spouse is at home,

Triem-triem lailungtriem, – together in the middle with rhythm,
Lailung laisaa phulleisaa, – Middle being filled up,
Thlaa-o thlangdalnichung, – Count on all over and above,
Thlaa-o thlangdaal, – Count every one.

'So! 'So! Taanryelloukanei, rumtaa, – That's it! That's it! Composing the rhythm, for me,
Tlaini atlaipe intlai, – Today's centre of the eyes,
Yo insamruongruong – So beautiful the attire is.
'So! Sawuanag maalum-ie, – That's it! Autumn is pleasant,
Penu, sawuang maalum-ie – Lady, autumn is pleasant,
'Sawaa, nuler-aa, – Like that, all mothers,
Napuinuruoi inhanruoi – Bring in women also,
Tanaaroi O thlangdal. – O count in maids and children.

Masikanaa moiruonraang sawnkapaar, – Sprout-blooming on muoiruon is tiringly beautiful,
Rangai tlungloulai – Admiring all along,
Tlungloulai O rani-ie, – Completely O admiring day,
Asam kasui suisengreng, – What a matching that hair plaiting is,
Maitlyeng sanghang karel-ie – Rolling beauty to (her) face,
Samle samyonbang – Plaiting over the plaits,

Maitlyeng sanghang karbul-ie. – Covering beauty on (her) face.

Tawei moumi samkaphou, – that hair-show of daughter-in-law,
Karchong-ei mounie – The beauty of daughter-in-law,
Selrangaa kamu-ie – Is worth five mithuns.

Maheikhangaa – Shall be twisting (the wrists)
Maheikhangaane. – Shall be twisting

Tawei moumi sam kaphou, – that hair-show of daughter-in-law,
Maite saanghang karbul-ie, – Covering beauty on (her) face.

Ngitie radaangnu ngitie, – We girls, the beauties
Mairuolyeng lyenglouminnie, – Falling in line and face by face,
Triemmin mathouyoumin uo, – O together, strengthening
Trinpaal saapaisanietou – Only when time to return,
Mansaalkourunngai-aane, hai! – Only will return together, yea!

Ngite, radaangnu ngite, – We girls, the beauties
Tu-ei thyelpungchung kalyeng – Today's our play on the ground,
Mairuolyeng lyenglouminnie, – Falling in line and face by face,
Thyelpungchung lyengkhangane, hai! – Shall be playing on the ground, yea!

Tu-ei thyelpungchung kalyeng, – Today's our play on the ground,
Kousu sumagnetouruoi – Also if we are beauty or not
Yaamaa hongthylpaasin-uo, – O menfolk on the ground,
Kousu sumagnetouruoi – Also if we are beauty or not,
Manryedlo, keimai-ung O, hai! – O do comment, it's my prestige, yea!

Thunmaa thunhoy-aasalo – Let Thunmaa be pushed away,
Yalaangchaa ngaaqkalaane, hai! – Waiting eagerly for Yalaangchaa, yea!

Kouya kangaaqmagsawie – Waiting for nothing else, you know,
Yalaangchaa hi-aangaite – O when Yalaangchaa dies out,
Yalaangpui-ei awualsir – In the full moonlit of Yalaangpui,
'Sirra kansai'seyamin – To do wave-dancing thereat,
Solung-aa ryelleihoine, hai! – In the heart preparing, yea!

Thaapaalsom-ei keikatin, – Months accounted of my preparation,
Tuni-ung tinkatherne, hai! – Determined for this day, yea!

Tuni-ung tinkatherne, – Determined for this day,
Katin kankhyelmagmuoi-e, hai! – Determination not to go in vain, yea!

Katin kankhyelmagmuoi-e – Determination not to go in vain,
Kakao kankhyelmagmuoi-e, hai! – Desires not to go in vain, yea!

Alui O Yawndaagmawltraang – Down thereat, O Yawndaagmawl,
Atume, khul kachoune, hai! – Someone's there announcing public, yea!

Atume, khul kachoune, – Someone's did public announcement,
Atumi simraang woy-ie – Who's there at home?
Atumi simraang woy-ie – Who's there at home?
Yaamaa Saakaa-eiramie – Is that Mister Saakaa?
Yaamaa Saakaa-eiramie, – Is that Mister Saakaa?
Karawng Saakaa-eiramie, hai! – Is that king Saaka, yea?

Nu O, khei-ei paatoutie – O mother, the then so called father,
Alui O, Yawndaagmawltraang – O down there at Yawndaagmawl,

Khulkhalawng pomchaaleine, hai. – Taking around pig-corpse, yea!

Khulkhalawngpom hathlawgraang – After taking around pig-corpse,
Sawaarpaapom pomchaaleine, hai! – Taking around cocks, yea!

Sawaarpaapom hathlawgraang – After taking around cocks,
Kani thaapaal heirouthlaa – Followed the journey of the Sun, the Moon,
Rawlei inthaang kaloune, hai! – Taken the appropriate day, yea!

Rawlei inthaangthawdminnie – After finding the appropriate day out,
Yaamaa hongthyelpaasin O – O by the priest on the ground,
Kawgle thingphairei kayiao – Celebrating with leaves and flowers
Bungpi karwyelleihoine, hai! – Dancing around the altar hill, yea!

Bungpi karwyellouminnie, – After dancing around the altar hill,
Basun masaita khayaang – Marching walking at length,
Amung karawng in kachan – Heading towards Head Priest house,
Masawngse karyuileine, hai! – So beautiful the march is, yea!

Alui O, Yawndaagmawltraang – O down there, at Yawndaagmawl,
Kachaan' sonyaangrei kayiao – Walking marching celebrating,

Taangki karawng-in kachan – Heading towards Taangki king,
Masawngse karyuileine, hai! – So beautiful the march is, yea!

Nangaaqroi O, mangaalo, – Do come, O girls also,
Mang-aa, mangthawgchai-aalo, hai! – Come, O come all out, yea!

Mangaa, mangthawgchai-aalo – Come, do come all out,
Tuta thawgchailotoune, hai! – Today's but, commanded to come all out, yea!

Tuta thawgchailotoune, – Today's but, commanded to come all out,
Thyelpung thayaangdousirrie – On to the ground, in the vale,
'Chingbawng mangchawnlotoune, hai! – Commanded to come dance 'Chingbawng
(Haichingbawng), yea!

FOOTNOTE:

Triem - Name of the first stanza of Haichingbawng song and dance.

Yuontlingnu - Name of the second stanza of Haichingbawng song and dance.

Raawol - Name of the third stanza of Haichingbawng song and dance.

Louse - Name of the fourth stanza of Haichingbawng song and dance.

Antrampaa - Name of the fifth stanza of Haichingbawng song and dance.

Laapui - The main song

Thunmaa - The sixth lunar month

Yalaangchaa - A fancy name given to "Yalaangkasi", the eighth lunar month.

Yalaangpui - The ninth lunar month

Yawndaagmawl - Name of a dancing ground in Uipo ancestral land.

Moiruan - Name of a beautiful wild flow