Final Report

Title: Research and Recording on the ethno-music of NAGA, Myanmar

1: Activity Overview

This survey can mainly be divided into two categories.

1) Video recording production of khiam (wooden drunk) inherited by the Naga. (3/2 - 3/16)

I stayed in khiam, home of the Gongvang Pounyu Naga to engage in production. I donated the production costs, and production work was all done manually by the villagers. Also, we carried the drums 4 kilometers from the forest to the village with nearly 100 people, and stored them in the pan (a building that serves as a meeting place). Later, we held a festival to celebrate completion of the drums.

2) Interviews and recording of song and dance done in villages around Lahe (2/23 – 3/1) Based in a guest house in Lahe, which is the center of the Naga hills on the Myanmar side, I visited villages nearby that were open to visitation. The original plan was to visit or stay with the Lainong Naga people, but the roads were in poor condition, and I deemed that travel by motorcycle would be too difficult, so I surveyed other tribal villages besides the Lainong Naga people. I always traveled using off-road motorcycles in a group of four including myself, the guide, and two drivers. (See attachment 1 and 2 for the details of individual activities.)

2: Cooperation with host institutions

Before going to Myanmar, I commissioned the production of a khiam (log drum), from the Lainong Naga people communities which were my host institution. However, because the production budget presented in Myanmar exceeded the upper limit of what I could pay, I abandoned production of a khiam in the Lainong Naga village. Although I abandoned production of a khiam, with cooperation from U Maung Nyan, the committee representative, I conducted a survey and photography in the villages inhabited by the Lainong Naga people. And with the cooperation of the Gongvang Pounyu Naga people whom I came into contact with in Myanmar, I was able to produce a log drum. This was because the motorcycle driver I employed was a committee member of that tribe. He saw that my survey was stagnating, and appealed to the committee that he belongs to. As a result, I was able to gain the cooperation of the Gongvang Pounyu Naga people in addition to the Lainong Naga people committee, and because of the good relationship between the two tribes, I believe that this change will not have a negative impact on either of them.

3: Problems and challenges felt during the period of stay

1) Survey Period

From February to the end of March when I conducted my survey, the villagers were busy with burning their fields. This is because they must burn the mountains while the ground is dry before the rainy season. Because of this, there were only the elderly and children left in the villages. Men were absent from many villages, so I wasn't able to meet with anyone would perform song and dance. In interviews with villagers, I found that December to January was most suitable for the survey.

2) Transportation in Nagaland

After arriving in Myanmar, I found transportation to various villages from my base in Lahe to be more difficult than I had expected. Motorcycles were my means of transportation during the survey period, and I chartered these motorcycles and drivers. I traveled in a group 4 with my photography equipment, but had to climb over several mountains depending on the location in order to visit villages. We avoided danger in what seemed to be dangerous areas by taking the time to walk through them, but it was very difficult to proceed by this process. For this reason I abandoned visits to villages with poor road conditions, and decided to visit villages that can be reached on developed roads. The road conditions on the way to the villages inhabited by Lainong Naga people whom I initially planned to visit were too poor, so I had no choice but to abandon visits to these villages. During my stay, I realized that I should have conducted my survey during the dry season from November to February.

3) Survey Methods

I visited several villages each day during the first week from the start of the survey, sometime staying overnight to conduct photography and interviews. There are no phone lines in the Naga hills except for Lahe, so I was not able to notify them of my visits in advance, which meant that I made abrupt visits. Visiting suddenly and requesting a song and dance performance rarely resulted in gaining approval. Even when I did gain approval, I was only able to see performances in the original style at 2 or 3 villages. Due to such an experience in the first week after starting, I came to think that it would be important to stay for a long period in one village, establish close communication with the villagers, and build trust relationships. In the latter half of my survey, I stayed for 2 weeks in Shaplo village, and I believe I was able to carefully build a trust relationship. As a result, I was able to record the villager's song and dance while closely following their lives, through the production of a khiam.

4: Future plans and outlook

The video recorded in this survey can be broadly divided into two groups of content. One is the production of the log drum in Shaplo village (A). The other is the recording of song and dance done in villages around Lahe, and interview videos with village chiefs of each village (B). I was able to record the whole process for A, and will make one work as video documentation of the production process. However, I currently do not have enough information besides the video, so I aim to work in collaboration with locals to collect information, and complete a video with high documentary value by the end of 2016. Also, in January 2017, I plan to visit Shaplo village where the log drum was produced, and hold a screening of the complete video. Additionally, I plan to sell the video in DVD format at the new year festival of the Naga people in January 2017 and donate the proceeds to the committees of the Gongvang Pounyu Naga tribe and the Lainong Naga tribe. As for B, the information is fragmented, and I believe that it is inadequate as a video that conveys the song and dance of the Lainong Naga tribe. I intend to continue my survey in the future and survey the Lainong Naga tribe. And together with material from this survey, I plan to create video material which introduces the song and dance of the Lainong Naga tribe.

At a meeting just before my departure with my collaborator U Maung Nyan, he told me "I would like you to conduct surveys that will be more beneficial to the Naga people." Certainly, this survey was for my personal achievement, and offered little benefit to the Naga people. I was made aware of this from their opinions, and was able to recognize the challenges for the next survey. It is difficult to conduct a project on my own that will give the Naga people a sense of "benefit". I think that I may be able to give them some benefit by involving third parties besides myself. My next local survey is planned from December 2017, and I intend to consider what I should do then during the next year and a half preparatory period.

Activity Report (Appendix 1)

Tittle: Production of the khiam (log drum), inherited by the Naga people

There is a building called the Pan in villages where the Naga people live. The Pan is not a place to live, but a place for villagers to hold meetings and events. There are two varieties of Pan. One is the type of Pan build built in each district of a village, while the other is the rajah's Pan. The rajah's Pan is considered an especially important building within the village, and it is used when choosing the representative of the village or deciding important things for the village as a whole. The representative of each district brings matters that have been discussed and decided upon in the Pan of their district to the rajah's Pan, where they discuss and decide matters for the village as a whole. There is also a massive log drum called a "khiam" in each Pan. Small khiams or 4 or 5 meters long, while large ones can be 14 or 15 meters long. You can infer the size or power of a village from the size of its khiam. There are also differences in shape and application khiams depending on whether it is kept in a district's Pan or a rajah's Pan. The khiam kept in the rajah's Pan is especially important, and in the past it seems that the severed heads of enemies slain in battle were skewered on stakes placed around such khiams (The Naga people once had a custom of headhunting). Khiams are also used in making sacrifices and other village ceremonies. However, rajah's Pans are no longer made.

In this survey, I attempted to make a khiam to be kept in the district Pan of the Gongvang Pounyu Naga tribe.

The Production Process Day 1 (March 2nd)

I negotiated with the representatives of the Gongvang Pounyu Naga tribe over the cost and number of days needed to produce a log drum. We reached an agreement on the price and schedule, and decided to start production. It was the first time that they would ever produce a tree log using donations from a foreigner. I then traveled to Shaplo village where production would actually be done along with villagers of this tribe.



Picture 1

Picture 1: A meeting held in Lahe.

Day 2 (March 3rd)

In the morning, the men of the village gathered in the Pan to hold a meeting about production of the khiam. They discussed the size, schedule, and division of labor for the log drum they would produce. The Naga people often hold meetings. This is because no single person in particular has power in the village, so they discuss things as a group before making decisions. After the meeting, the village shaman practiced divination. The results of the divination decided the direction and location of the tree that they would use. Based on the results of this divination, we entered forest about 3 kilometers from the village, and searched for a tree to use. The tree decided upon was a massive tree, so tall that I could not see the top from the bottom. The village chief of Shaplo made the first cut at the roots. After him, 20 to 30 men took turns chopping at the roots with axes or hatchets. They succeeded in chopping down the tree after nearly half a day of work.





Pic 02



Pic 04

Pic 05

Pic 02: Divination by the village shaman, inside the PanPic 03: The author giving his donation to the village chiefPic 04: Using an ax to chop down the tree that would be used for the log drumPic 05: the villagers who participated

Day 3 (March 4th)

We took a break from work in the forest. At the forge in Shaplo village, they made tools for cutting off the log. They also produced traditional garb for use in the village festival. The villagers normally wear Western style clothes. They only wear traditional clothes when there is some event such as a festival. However, some villages no longer have traditional garb, as it was lost in a fire or they ended up selling it to escape poverty. In such villages, they borrow their traditional garb from other villages when it is time for festivals. Even in Shaplo, there were some people who had traditional clothes, and some who did not. Also, traditional garb was something very precious to them, so in order to keep it from being last in a fire, they kept their garb together in a warehouse safe from fire, instead of individual homes.



Pic 06

Pic 06: The village forge

4日目(3/5)

Day 4 (March 5th)

The villagers hollowed out the tree on the spot where it was felled, and completed it with decorations on either end. This is because hollowing out the center of the log reduces the weight, making it easier to haul. It takes about one week to hollow out the tree and make the exterior into its final form. Today, they started by cleanly cutting off both the ends of the tree. They then set about making scaffolding for hollowing out the log, and set up an area to use water, cook food, and take breaks using a nearby river. They make these things using only materials that can be procured from the forest around them. In setting up the rest area, they cut down trees to build a framework for the structure, then use used tree bark as rope to fix the framework in place. The roof was made simply by stacking a couple giant palm fronds. Water pipes were made from hollowed out skillfully joined together, and wood was placed over stones carried from the river to make a cooking table. They were completely self-sufficient. It was surprised to see how clear the division of labor was for each job, and impressed by the efficiency with which they did their jobs. By 5 in the evening, they had cleanly severed both ends of the log, which was 12 or 13 meters in length. There was no doubt it would make for a truly massive log drum.



Pic 07





Pic 10

Pic 07: Near the work area in the forestPic 08: Building scaffoldingPic 09: The mountain slope and huge tree in the work areaPic 10: Kitchen and simple lodgings in the forest

5日目(3/6)

Day 5 (March 6th)

Work started on hollowing out the core of the log. The tools used in this process included tools made in the forge on March 4th. The Naga people choose hard, heavy trees to use for their log drums, because they make a good sound and do not break during transit. They choose from three species of trees (I am currently researching the names and species of these trees). The log they chopped down this time was not only huge, hard and heavy, so of course the work of hollowing it out was not easy. With 20 to 40 men, they were able to carve about 15 to 20 centimeters in a day. When hollowing out the tree, they would make an impressive chant while swinging their axes and hatchets. There was a melody that made it sound like a song, but they said it had no meaning in particular. It was simply a chant to keep the rhythm. I think that the origin of song must be something like this.





Pic 11, 12: Hollowing out the log

Day 6 (March 7th)

At the end of the log drum, the men started to carve a decoration in the shape of an Indian water buffalo. I saw a log drum with a similar decoration in a neighboring village, but I also saw a log drum with the shape of a tiger carved in it at another village. Even though the men of Shaplo also carved a water buffalo, the details were different, and theirs was very skillfully crafted.





Pic 13, 14: Decorating the head of the log, carving the water buffalo.

Day 7, 8 (March 8th, 9th)

The villagers continued hollowing out the log drum and carving the Indian water buffalo in the head. When they play the log drum, 20 or 30 men hold sticks 7 to 10 centimeters in diameter and 80 centimeters in length, and surround the log drum. They bang the tips of the sticks on the log drum to make sound. While hollowing out the log, they frequently played it as a drum. This is done in order to test the sound of the log drum. The wider the cavernous section inside becomes, the better it sounds. As the hollowing-out work proceeded, they were able to check gradual changes in the sound. In addition, a new "path" was made in the forest in order to haul the log drum. The site was about 20 minutes from the entrance to the forest, but it was filled with undergrowth, to the point that it was difficult to tell whether there was a path or not just by looking at it. In order to haul the log to the village, the villagers cut a path 5 or 6 meters wide all the way from their work area to the entrance of the forest.



Pic 15 Pic 15: Nearing the end of hollowing-out work

Day 9 (March 10th)

We took another break from work in the forest. Materials to be used as rope (bitter orange and bamboo) for hauling the log drum were procured from the forest, a buffalo was slaughtered for eating in the forest, and food was made.

Day 10 (March 11th)

Hollowing work and carving work both finished, and the exterior of the log drum was nearly complete. The core was neatly hollowed out so that the log was about 15 thick, which made enough space inside the log for 10 or more people to fit. Bitter orange trees procured the day before were fashioned into rope for hauling the log. The two bitter orange trees, each nearly 20 meters tall, were scorched with flame to soften the surface which was then twisted into rope. Then they started work to tie the rope net for hauling around the log drum. Ropes for towing were tied to the front and back of the log drum, and handles were tied to the left and right sides. All materials for hauling the log drum were procured in the forest.





Pic 16





Pic 16: Inside the log drum

Pic 18: Towing rope tied to the log drum

Pic 19: Making rope with materials taken from the forest

Days 11, 12, 13 (March 12th to 14th)

We started to haul the log drum out of the forest. This meant hauling the log drum 1 kilometer from the work area to the exit of the forest, then another 3 kilometers from the exit to the village, all 4 kilometers with only manpower. It is their tradition to only haul the log drum with manpower, using no machines or trucks. As many men as possible participate in hauling the log drum, to tell other tribes just how big their village is. It is customary for men from other villages of the same tribe to come as assistants. Yet this time, there were not enough assistants, so almost exclusively villagers from Shaplo participated in towing the log drum. Normally women cannot participate in any of the log drum production processes, but this time because they were short on people, women participated in the towing work as well. Nearly 100 people in total joined, young and old, male and female, helped to tow the log drum. To make sure that the strength of these 100 people was used efficiently when hauling the log drum, village elders started a chant, and the other villagers repeated this to keep the rhythm. This chant also had a unique melody that sounded like a song to me. I was told that the words of the chant meant "Easy, easy" "Work together!". The log drum arrived in the village before dusk on March 14th.





Pic 20





Pic 22

Pic 20, 21: Towing the log drumPic 22: Log drum arriving in the villagePic 23: Men finishing the decoration on the head

Days 14, 15 (March 15th, 16th)

The villagers then held a festival to celebrate the completion of the log drum. Normally they take a break for one day after they finish hauling the log, but because it was necessary to hold the festival before the helpers returned to their own villages, they held the festival the day after they finished hauling the log. The festival started at 11 at night and was held in the square in front of the Pan where the log drum would be kept. It started with 30 or 40 men from the village walking toward the square from the entrance to the village. They wore black T-shirts and short pants procured freshly for that day, and the Naga people's beautiful accessories over this. Some elders wore the traditional loin cloths of the Naga people, but apparently this was done following the orders of the Myanmar government. A massive fire was lit with kindling from the forest in the center of the square, and the men of the village held hands to encircle this fire. Just like when they were towing the log, they sang at the festival with the elders at the festival starting a chant, and the other people repeated this. Only this time it was not chant, but a song was sung instead, and the content of the song had strong improvisational elements. They put their emotions and thoughts at the time into the melody to sing a unique tune. The lyrics were very short and simple, and they repeated the same phrases over and over. Just when I realized they had repeated the same phrase over and over for 10 minutes, they moved to the next lyrics. This time, they sang "We are so happy that our great log drum is complete" and "May success come to our Japanese donor". The festival continued through the night, without rest until noon the following day. The majority of the men who participated sang and danced continuously for over 12 hours. Originally they would take a break and restart the festival in the evening, but they decided to end it here due to their tightly packed schedules.





Pic 24



Pic 26







Pics 24 – 29: The festival

This survey

By staying in one village for over 2 weeks and participating closely in the production of the log drum, I was able to act together with the same villagers every day. I was prepared to not watch from afar, but act as closely as I could, and participate in the log drum production process when possible. As a result, although I could not speak their language, I felt that I gained their trust. Even the villagers who were aloof at first would speak to me if our eyes met by the end. I especially felt this when I hear their festival song. As the tune of the song gained depth, and their voices grew stronger and more persuasive, I could sense the change in their emotion from "Being made to sing for a foreigner" to "Singing loudly because they are happy". I felt that to not just skim the surface with this survey, but to know who these people truly are, it was important to work together for a long time and gain their trust.



Pic 30 Pic 30: Shaplo village chief Pic 31: Shaplo village elder Pic 31

The log drum produced

The log drum produced this time had the following differences from the traditional production process.

- 1) Production costs were covered by a donation from a foreigner.
- 2) The production period was shorter than usual.
- 3) The production period overlapped with field burning.

(Normally it is done when they have free time in December or January)

- 4) Women participated.
- 5) Not much help was gained from villages of the same tribe.
- 6) They did not produce a Pan for the log drum.

Originally, they have strict rules. If even one inauspicious element arises, production may be halted midway. (Ex: If the tree they chop down and hollow out turns out to have been eaten by insects.) Shaplo village where we produced the log drum is composed of only Buddhists, so they seem to be tolerant of some rule violations. However, in villages where indigenous faiths are still central, the rules are strictly followed.



Pic 32

Pic 32: The author with the finished log drum_ $\,$

Title: Surveying and recording the traditional song and dance of the Naga people

Based in Lahe in the center of the Myanmar side of the Naga hills, I surveyed and recorded the traditional songs and dances of the Naga people living nearby villages, and interview experts on the subject. Although they are called the "Naga people", they are in fact divided into many smaller tribes, each of whom use different languages. Even within tribes, they are capable of communication if the languages they use are similar, but sometimes members of the same Naga people cannot understand each other at all if their languages are far enough apart. As part of my activities I visited the villages of the Lainong Naga tribe, Gongvang Pounyu Naga tribe, Tangsang Naga tribe, and Majan Naga tribe.

Song and dance of the Naga people

The Naga people do not have song in the form of solo performance, but always sing in the form of a choir with multiple people. Their songs are always accompanied by dance.

Naga choirs are not like Western choirs in which all members stand up and face the same direction. Participants hold hands, form a circle, and turn as they sing. Holding hands has the meaning "let us put down weapons and have fun". I saw two forms of choirs: one in which somebody takes the lead and the others follow, and another in which the participants separate into two groups to sing in turn. Sometimes lyrics are improvised, and sometimes they are sung following a fixed form. According to elders in Shaplo village, the Naga people once fought with other villages using song. One side would attack with words added to a melody, and the other side would fight back with their own words. The side that could not come up with words to fight back with first would lose. They also had a customer of telling others things that could not be said face to face by putting this content into their lyrics. (Ex: I gave meat to our guest, but you gave only vegetables.) Furthermore, the Naga people do not sing songs day to day, but only think recognize as song what they sing during festivals and the like. However the Naga people do have a sort of chanting that sounds like song which they do when working or doing some form of labor uniformly. For example, this might be women doing threshing work or several men working together to carry something. When I asked the villagers about this chant, they said "It is not a song, just a chant." Yet regardless of the content of a chant, when it is accompanied by a unique tone, it sounds like a song. I felt that the source of song might be in such chants.

The scope of this survey was not an established musical format like that of the Burma people, but mostly songs that are improvised on the spot. However, I felt that the vocalizations, melodies, and dance styles were common even across tribes. Also, among the other tribes which I saw at the New Year festival last year (2015), the existence of tribes that use unique instruments was confirmed, but there may be music styles which could not be confirmed depending on the region. While the existence of a log drum called the khiam can be cited as a representative instrument of the Naga people, and this log drum is a musical instrument, it is often used in Naga life and rituals.

Names and tribes of villages where I stayed

Lainong Naga Tribe Villages: Myoma village, Nongjannongkong village, Taityan village Gongvang Pounyu Naga Tribe Villages: Shaplo village, Shaplo village Tangsang Naga Tribe Village: Santong village Majan Naga Tribe Villages: Majan village, Khalai village Longkhin village

Survey Itinerary

February 23rd

I visited the villages of Majan and Santong.

The road to Majan was well established, and I arrived with ease. I started by visiting the village chief's house, but he was not there. I visited another elder, and communicated with an elderly couple and several children who were also there. I told them the purpose of my visit, asked them to let me hear their songs, and obtained their consent. An elder (man) by the name of Montenyu performed for me outside of his house. After I finished recording, they requested compensation immediately. From Majan, I rode another hour by motorcycle and arrived in Santong, but the village chief was not present there either. Most of the people I saw in the village were seniors of children. I was shown around by an expert on the village, and asked permission to record again. There I recorded the song and dance of 3 village elders (all men). They were a shaman, a Christian pastor, and an engineer. I requested the contents of their song, but I was only able to record songs for greeting visitors because, as they told me "We can only sing songs that should be sung at the moment. We sing songs to celebrate the harvest and songs for battle at those times, so it would be bad luck to sing them now".

Information on Majan

Tribe: Majan Travel time from Lahe: 30 minutes (by motorcycle)

Information on Santong

Tribe: Tangsang Travel time from Lahe: 1 hour (by motorcycle) Occupation: Agriculture (rice, corn)

February 24th

I visited the villages of Taityan, Shaplo, and Sowlo.

Although I was able to visit Taityan and meet with the village chief, I could not record. The villagers were all out working in the fields, so there was no one to perform for me. I had lunch in Taityan, and continued toward the border with India. After another hour on the motorcycle, I arrived at Shaplo village of the Gongvang Pounyu Naga tribe. I requested to visit again and record the next day, then moved on to Sowlo. This is a large village, with a military based, a church, and a Buddhist temple (although the majority of the villagers are Christian). That night, I stayed at the temple. Soon after arriving, I was checked by the military. I presented them with my permit to stay in Nagaland and explained my itinerary and purpose. In the same day, I interviewed the village chief after waiting for him to come, and requested permission to record. The next morning, nearly 20 women gathered in the central square of the village to perform their song and dance for me, and I was able to record them.

Information on Taityan

Tribe: Lainon

Travel time from Lahe: 1.5 hours (by motorcycle)

Information on Shaplo

Tribe: Gongvang Pounyu Travel time from Lahe: 2.5 hours (by motorcycle) Occupation: Agriculture (rice, corn, vegetables) Religion: Buddhism Population: 300 or more

Information on Sowlo

Tribe: Gongvang Pounyu Travel time from Lahe: 3 hours (by motorcycle) Occupation: Agriculture (rice, corn, vegetables) Religion: Christianity Population: 969

February 25th

I departed from Sowlo in the morning, and returned to Lahe. On the way, I made a detour to Shaplo which I had visited the day before, and was able to record their song and dance, and interview the village chief as promised. Shaplo is a new village at just 6 years old. Originally, it was positioned on the slope of a nearby mountain much like other nearby villages. Buddhists of the village took a major fire as an opportunity to move from their old place to the current position, and started a new village. The Christian villagers remained in the old location, where they maintain their village to this day. Therefore, Shaplo village exists in two place; one old and one new. The new Shaplo is positioned so as to sandwich a trunk road that links villages. This was made following the wisdom of a Buddhist monk who devoted himself to making the new village, in consideration of daily convenience.

February 27th

I visited the villages of Myoma and Longkhin

Myoma is positioned so as to be adjacent to Lahe, and is only a 20 minute walk from central Lahe. Thanks to introductions made by my collaborator U Maung Nyan, I was able to record and interview villagers in the village square. After recording in Myoma, I moved on to Longkhin, but most of the villagers including the village chief were not present. A midwife dispatched by the government resided in Longkhin, and with her cooperation, I was able to gather people coming back from the fields and record their song and dance. That night I stayed in a temple in Longkhin.

Information on Myoma

Tribe: Lainon Travel time from Lahe: 20 minutes (walking) Occupation: Agriculture (rice) Religion: Majority Buddhist Population: 783

Information on Longkhin

Tribe: Majan Travel time from Lahe: 30 minutes (by motorcycle) Occupation: Agriculture (rice, corn) Religion: Buddhist Population: 668

February 28th

I visited the village of Khalai.

Although the village chief was at home, I could not get the cooperation of the villagers, and was unable to record their

song and dance. I only interviewed the village chief.

Information on Khalai Tribe: Majan Travel time from Lahe: 30 minutes (by motorcycle) Occupation: Agriculture (rice) Religion: 60% Christian, 50% Buddhist Population: 500 or more

February 29th

I visited the village of Nongjannongkong.

The road between this village and Lahe was built in recent years, and I was their first Japanese visitor. Because access is so inconvenient, it is a very poor village. At the time of my visit, most of the villagers including the deputy village chief were not present, but because I was there, many of the people returned from the fields. I was able to record the song and dance of a group of 10 or so men, and interview the village chief.

Information on Nongjannongkong

Tribe: Lainon Travel time from Lahe: 1 hour Occupation: Agriculture Religion: Buddhism





Preparing to travel

Taityan village





 $\ensuremath{\operatorname{Villagers}}$ who sang and danced at Sowlo



Villagers who sang and danced at Shaplo Villagers who sang and danced at Myoma





Longkhin village



Inside the temple I stayed at in Longkhin



Khalai village



Nongjannongkong village



Home of the chief of Nongjannongkong



Home of the chief of Nongjannongkong