

## Ngambom & Khupting: The evergreen Kuki love story

Written by Zamlhun Kuki Tuesday, 17 August 2004 00:30



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By Zamlhun Kuki

**August 17, 2004:** The folklores of the mighty Kukis are unmatched in its own genuineness and decency. If comparison be made in the intensity of lovebarometer (Loborometer), Ngambom & Khupting romance would have surpassed that of the degree of Greek's "Odyssey" or Hindus' "Rama & Sita", which ended in happy reunion and at best be depicted equally the desperado in Shakespear famous play of "Romeo & Juliet", which ended in remorse tragedy.

The Kukis history is deeply rooted with valor, integrity, sanctity and unrelenting commitment to the cause of integral relationship. One such relationship of 'Romance' had existed, as legend passed down through to date, between Tangpa Ngambom and Lanu Khupting. Young and Old irrespective of social positions shed tears uncontrollably when the Epic Love story is ever retold in the hearths, workplaces (fields), or even in the sojourn trip, in and around the abode of the mighty Kuki in their Zale'n Gam.

The evergreen story usually commence, once upon a time . . . there lived two friendly women, who married with a fine grooms in the same month at the same hamlet in Zale'n Gam. They were friend since their childhood. They had practiced the age old traditional "Lawmcha" working one day at one's field another day at the other person's field. Tradition like friendship, fellowship, sportsmanship and occasional festive activities were part of their lives and it only bloom in the land of Pu Benglam, Pu Galngam & Hangsai, Lanu Lengchonghoi & Khalvomtepu, Tangpa Nanglhun & Lanu Jonlhing, Pu Jamdil, Lanu Ahsijolneng, and et al, which we now known as Kuki Zale'n Gam (The fatherland of Kuki).

The two women continued their lawmcha even after their married life. They both realized that they were with baby in their wombs. One day they both felt excruciating pain in their abdomens. They were still working in the field, there was no one to help them. Out of apathy and partly because they suffer the same nauseating pain, both embraced each other and tried to console one another. Strangely as they rub their bulging stomach, they felt relieved, another time the pain strike, they rubbed their belly; it was a new panacea. They never told this event to any body even their spouses.

Nine months has passed and the ensuing month sparked off the Kukis' Love Epic Hero and Heroine. One woman gave birth to a baby boy and the parent gave his name Ngambom. The other woman gave to a baby girl and the parent name her Khupting. The two mothers laid their babies, one above the banana trunk another below of it. Whenever they took off to rest and fed their respective baby, to their amazement they found Ngambom and khupting lying side by side not a distance away. This was the strange destiny of Love beneath the skin-every fibers and gems of blood in the body metabolism had acknowledged the predestined "theisen neo kilungset."

Tp. Ngambom and Ln.Khupting and their romantic glitz was the talk of the entire Zale'n Gam. The quality and dignity of Ngambom was beyond expression. His talent in the lyrical Gosem music was known in the entire world. Beside this, he was the most handsome person, having the distinctive quality of nobility, courteous, prowess, sportsmanship, integrity and truthfulness in all his works. Ln. Khupting proved to be the icon of her days. She was ornately beauty, lovely and excelled other in her musical masterpiece of Lhemlhai lyric. Above all, she was modest, virtuous, lovely, hospitable, meek, kind, and superb in shawl weaving.

The expression of every November full moon (Lhalih Jan) and their love legend couldn't be rejected or hid. People of Zale'n Gam came to learn the genuine meaning and ideal love from Ngambom-Khupting love living world. Old folks were eager to cast their eyes on the two duo. Young folks peeped beneath and below their rank and file to cast a glimpse of the duo epic lyrical performances.

As always was the case of the epic love stories in Odyssey, Rama-sita, and Romeo-Juliet, the bliss of romance between Ngambom and Khupting were short live. The maxim of full bloom tender-love turned sour when Ln.Khupting's health began to deteriorated day by days. Khupting body shrunked away, yet her beauty never faded. The Parents, Priests (thiempu) and many physicians couldn't preserve the tenderous beauty life of Khupting.

Ngambom had tried day after days, and year after years following the "Apeu Vadung" (Apeu river- known to be present Irrawaddy river in Myanmar), to find the drifting hair of Khupting. The village priest advice Ngambom to get Khupting hair and put khoigip attach to stone in the middle of Apeu river, hoping the running water might healed the ailment of his darling. But the sudden storm and heavy torrential rain in the night flooded the river basin, eroding away including the big stone to which khupting hair was stamped with khoigip. This worsen the lingering health of Khupting. Her health was beyond repair and she eventually succumbed to death leaving the entire Kuki Nation shock and sorrow.

The pain of separation from Khupting due to the untimely demise, in Ngambom life was beyond human strength to bear. He was driven half mad and no one can replace his darling in life but only Khupting. To find solace, peace and restrain, Ngambom snatched his Gosem and played the sweet lyrical music by blowing gently. He was amazed to find another companion whenever he played his tunes-the Whizzing bee (khoaiva) whirled around the organ pipes, seemingly dancing in tune with the heartbeats of the blower.

Khupting parent invited Ngambom to cut the branches of Thingzabuong in the central of their field (Legend depicts that this tree can be seen on the moon at every full moon night). Selneng who was the younger sister of Khupting attempted to appease Ngambom and appeal for his love by offering sweets and gifts. Yet Ngambom had one love in life though his love bird had been taken mercilessly by the stink of sickness and death. The day in which he was asked to cut the branches of Thingzabuong, Ngambom prepared with his sharp knife, tuibuh (podium of apiate), and his Gosem musical instrument. He climbed up the big bushel trees and began to cut off the wild flourishing branches. Ngambom felt the buzzing sweet tune around him and sensed the present of Khupting Lhaulha (spirit). Ngambom then took a short break, pulled out his Gosem and composed his great Love-song. The tune came through the bamboo pipes of Gosem:

“Abah langkhat kalham leh sim’a mal’a toingei kisai kisai’e.”

The nearest English translation would be: As I cut the branch off, my destined love in the east and west dances gently and mildly in the air. Ngambom was overjoyed having consoled by Khupting’s spirit and he continued to talk through his musical pipes;

“Khupting Lhaulha nahi leh, simlang nga in kisai kisai ‘e.”

(If you are the spirit of Khupting, turn east and show your gracefully flying dance). The Whizzing bee responded the melodious love mantras from Ngambom and turned east and splatter its wings and responded with sweet buzzing sound similar to Lhemlhai.

Ngambom spoke to Khupting again through his musical tune;

“Khupting Lhaulha nahi leh, mal lam nga in kisai kisai ‘e.”

(If you are the spirit of Khupting, turn west and show your gracefully flying dance). The bee heartily followed the rhythmic thumping musical notes. When the music stop, the bee disappeared. It appeared again when the Gosem music is aired melodiously.

How did Ngambom passed his last days? Did he marry Selneng the younger sister of Khupting? Those story, who would bother, when Ngambom played his Gosem and Khupting Lhaulha (spirit) in a form of Whizzing bee came to appear to be with him. The Kuki folklore of Ngambom and Khupting deserved world recognition. It is an epic preserved in the muzzles of Gosem -the Kuki traditional musical instrument.

#### **Philosophical insight:**

Love seems to have no barrier. Even death can’t separate the fibers of love.  
Two different and opposite worlds have no panacea to control over Love.  
People say, “love is blind,” yet this Epic Love story says “Love never dies.”

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