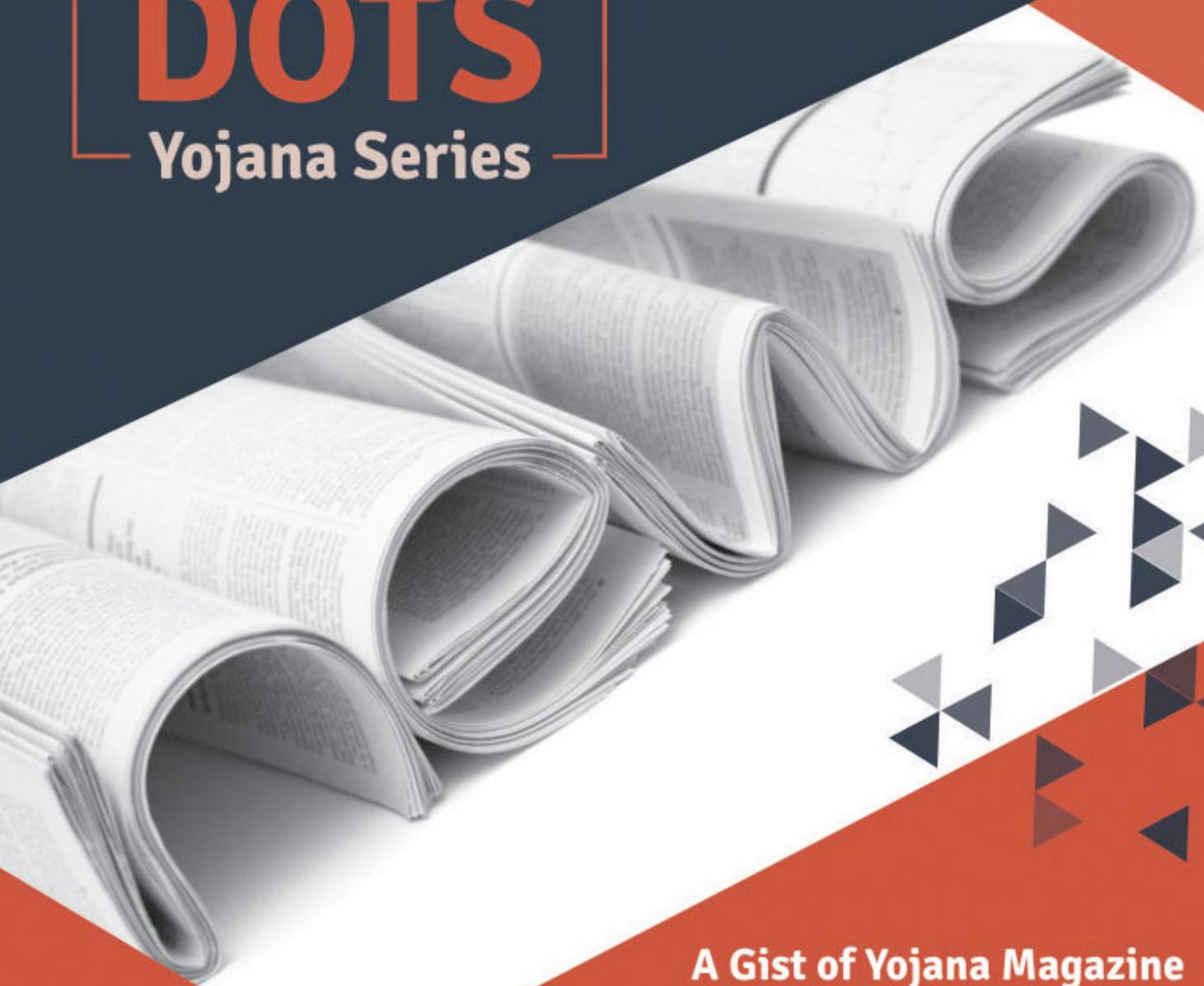


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August, 2020

Cultural Diversity

Shadow Puppet Theatre Traditions

- India has the richest variety of types and styles of shadow puppets. Shadow puppets are flat figures. They are cut out of leather, which has been treated to make it translucent. Shadow puppets are pressed against the screen with a strong source of light behind it.
- The manipulation between the light and the screen makes silhouettes or colourful shadows, as the case may be, for the viewers who sit in front of the screen. This tradition of shadow puppets survives in Orissa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

There are six shadow puppet theatre traditions across different regions in India, which are locally known as:

1. Chamadyacha Bahulya in Maharashtra,
2. Tholu Bommalata in Andhra Pradesh,
3. Togalu Gombeyatta in Karnataka,
4. Tolu Bommalattam in Tamil Nadu,
5. Tolpava Kuthu in Kerala and
6. Ravanachhaya in Odisha.

Togalu, Gombeyatta, Karnataka:

- The shadow theatre of Karnataka is known as Togalu Gombeyatta. These puppets are mostly small in size. The puppets however differ in size according to their social status, for instance, large size for kings and religious characters and smaller size for common people or servants.

Tholu Bommalata, Andhra Pradesh:

- Tholu Bommalata, Andhra Pradesh's shadow theatre has the richest and strongest tradition. The puppets are large in size and have jointed waist, shoulders, elbows and knees. They are coloured on both sides. Hence, these puppets throw coloured shadows on the screen.
- The music is dominantly influenced by the classical music of the region and the theme of the puppet plays are drawn from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas.

Ravana Chhaya, Odisha:

- The most theatrically exciting is the Ravanachhaya of Odisha. The puppets are in one piece and have no joints.
- They are not coloured, hence throw opaque shadows on the screen. The manipulation requires great dexterity, since there are no joints. The puppets are made of deer skin and are conceived in bold dramatic poses.
- Apart from human and animal characters, many props such as trees, mountains, chariots, etc. are also used.
- Ravana Chhaya puppets are smaller in size-the largest not more than two feet have no jointed limbs, they create very sensitise and lyrical shadows.
- Though these forms have distinct regional identities, languages and dialects in which they are performed, they share a common worldview, aesthetics and themes. The narratives are mainly based on the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, Puranas, local myths and tales. They communicate significant messages to the rural community besides entertainment.
- The performance begins with an invocation on a ritually set up stage in a village square or a temple courtyard. Stock characters provide comic relief.
- A sense of rhythm and dance is inherent in all the traditions, across regions. The puppets are crafted from either goat or deer skin. They are manipulated from behind the screen, where lighting is provided to cast shadows. Puppet performances are a part of festivals, celebrations of special occasions and rituals, and sometimes staged to ward off evil spirits and to invoke the rain gods in times of drought in rural areas.
- The geographic locations of the six traditions of shadow puppetry in India, range from Maharashtra in the west of India to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the south, and to Odisha in the east.
- In Andhra Pradesh it is practiced by the Killekyata/Are Kapu community, in Karnataka by the Killekyata/Dayat community, in Kerala by Nair community, in Maharashtra by the Thakar community, in Odisha, the

form is known as Ravanachhaya and is practised by the Uhat community, and in Tamil Nadu by the Killekyata community.

Nazhu Festival - Nagaland

- The Nazhu Festival of the Pochury Naga from Muluori merits attention as it continues to be observed by a small group of people who barely keep alive the ritualistic practices associated with the ancestral religion.
- The most symbolic and unique element common to all is heralding of Nazhu, with the erection of a bamboo totem Awuthruu, that resembles a giant wind chime hung from a tall bamboo.
- The totem is erected any day from the 20th to 24th February. For the Laniri Nale, the totem goes up on the 24th February with all the formalities completed on this day.

Kalaripayattu- Kerala

- Kalaripayattu is the martial art originated and popularly practiced in Kerala. Mythology has it that the warrior sage Parasurama is the promulgator of Kalaripayattu. Kalari is the Malayalam word for a traditionally built gymnasium to teach the martial art known as Pavattu.

The four stages of Payattu are:

1. Muppavaram: Body conditioning exercises
2. Kolthari: Use of wooden weapons
3. Angathari: Use of sharp metallic weapons
4. Yerumkai: Bare-handed defense and attack.

Women also underwent training in Kalaripayattu, and still do so to this day.

Following are the major ethnic style of Kalaripayattu existing in the three regions of northern Kerala (Malabar).

1. Vattenthirippu Style
2. Arappukkai Style
3. Pillathangi Style.

Memorial Stones of Jammu and Kashmir

- Memory is existed a deep There a culture human has of memorialisation. One such noticeable expression is seen in the pan-Indian ancient practice of erecting the memorial stones to commemorate important events and persons.

Memorial Stones of Kashmir:

- The earliest examples of memorial stones recorded from Kashmir date back to circa 2nd-3rd century CE. Seen in every nook and corner of the Valley, these memorial stones reflect a widespread practice based on the tenets of 'hero worship' as well as 'ritual death' like 'Praya' and Sati. Thanks to Pandit Kalhana's Rajatarangini, the 11th century chronicle of Kashmir Kings, we get a clear idea as to how Sati and Prayopavesa by Purohits were institutionalised in Kashmir since the early historic period.
- The widespread practice of raising memorial stones seems to have been discontinued after Muslim rule in the 14th century.
- Extant examples from early historic times to 14th century show that memorial stones as an edifice were non-sepulchral and purely commemorative in character, raised in memory or honour of the deceased.

Memorial Stones of Jammu:

- One of three divisions of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu region is the name given to the part of the outermost hills of the Himalayas that stretch from Himachal Pradesh to the Pothawar in Pakistan.
- Known in the Puranas as Darva Abhisara and situated between the ancient Madhya Desha on the one hand and the Gandhara on the other, the region, since ancient times has been an active meeting point for diverse socio-cultural races, different religious beliefs and varying art traditions.
- Marked by natural boundaries of river Ravi in the east and the river Jhelum in the west, the area of Jammu has played an important link in spreading the religions and cultural ideas from Indian mainland to Central Asia via Kashmir Valley.
- The archaeological evidences found right from the Paleolithic period to Indus Valley Culture, through IndoGreek, Muuryann. Kushan and Gupta eras, early medieval kingdoms, the formation of Rajput states, Moughal supremacy, the period of Pathan dominance and the British rule, speak of a perennial How of culture in the region of Jammu.

- Due to its strategic location, the region, while being a part of the pan-Indian ethos, also imbibed influences which came in the form of numerous waves of migrating tribes from the north and north-west. With the result, the Himalayan interiors of Jammu have been serving as a propitious place for the flowering and fusion of diverse socio-cultural and artistic traditions.
- Notwithstanding the diversity of races and ethnic communities which included the races from the hoary past such as Pishaca, Naga, Kinnara, Gandharva, along with races from the early historic period like Audumbara, Madra, Vahluka, Darva, Abhisara, Yavana, Saumantikas, the Jammu region's socio-cultural legacy which is seen in the shape of a living tradition of folklore, music, and art, reflects the typical socio-cultural milieu wherein man and the environment; the lands, pastures, cattle, birds all are woven into an organic whole.
- Found all over Jammu region, memorial stones provide an insight into the ethnic character, customs, belief and practices of Dogras, who have a distinct identity, language and traditional mode of living.
- Despite continuous political instability in the area since ancient times, when it came to social mores the martial communities of Dogras adhered to a set of values with its emphasis on valour, honour and chivalry.
- The valiant deeds of such martyrs recounted from generation to generation are part of living folklore. Many ballads and songs sung by the folk singers called Gardi, Yogi and Darcies, are a characteristic feature of Jammu folklife.
- In the historic context, the most frequently found type is that of Hero/Warrior Stones which as part of pan Indian practice are raised in honour of warriors. Locally called as mohras, these memorial stones are invariably found near a water source like ponds and baolies-the freshwater springs and especially in the post-17th century freshwater springs.
- In such stones, the hero is shown either riding a horse or standing. He and his horse are shown wearing armour. The hero usually holds a lance or a sword. In another variety, the hero is also shown as standing and holding a sword and a shield. In another type, the hero is depicted along with a Sati who generally rides a palanquin carried by bearers, while the hero rides a horse.

Types of Mohras:

- Other types of hero stones are the commemorative tablets of legendary folk heroes like Baba Jilto, Data Ranpal, Mian Dido et al.
- Yet another most prevalent type of memorial stones in Jammu region are those of Satis, Kuldevis, Kuldevtas and Shaheeds.
- These are not ancestor stones in the strict sense but tenets of the ancient cult of ancestor worship and associated rituals have contributing towards such memorials a practice in vogue even today.

Sati Stones:

- The 'Mohras' of ladies called as Satis, Shilvantis, Syabatis are one of the most commonly found forms of memorial stones.
- This category of memorial stones relate to the age old practice where women used to immolate; with her dead husband (Sahagamana) or after receiving the news of the death of her husband (Anugamana), or at the death of a brother, son or any other hero or to save her honour or of the family, clan, village or for some social cause.
- Such stones depict a figure of standing women holding a kalasha in one hand while the other hand is raised quite high. Sometimes, in later varieties, she is even shown holding a fan in her one hand.

Concept of Hatya:

- The memorial stones also are raised in the honour of a dead ancestor, or one who has died an unnatural death or died for a cause or all those whose spirits demand setting up of a mohra.
- The wish of the spirit of the dead to set up a mohra so that it rests in peace or appeased is known through dreams of a family member or a relative or all those who get affected by the turn of untoward events in their day to life and linked with the wandering spirit.
- The ultimate confirmation is done through a ritual of 'jalar' or 'kart chatna', where a medium called as clayala or doala goes into a trance at the request of the affected party and makes known the wish of the dead spirit by a spiritual communion. This particular shamanistic belief is a commonplace factor of the life of the Dogras.

Memorials for the Childless:

- Another form of memorial stones which were raised in the past was for those family members who die as childless. Locally called as 'autar' mohras, in these memorial stones a half-standing man with a folded hand is shown.
- These stones are not kept inside the house as there is no one to remember them. These mohras are worshipped on special sacred days and festivals. The stone is washed and tilak of sindoor is applied to it. Some portion of new crop or food made for happy occasions is first offered to it, as he is also a shareholder of the family land.

Time Frame:

- Unlike memorial stones of Kashmir some of which are also inscribed, no inscriptions on the memorial stones of Jammu region has been reported so far.
- While the practice of raising memorial stones dwindled at a fast pace with the advent of Muslim rule in the Valley, surprisingly raising of memorial stones seems to have proliferated in Jammu region after the 15th-16th century and continues till today as a living tradition.

Form and Style:

- Jammu memorial stones exhibit two distinct varieties. One which in continuation to the pan-Indian tradition is three-dimensional structures shaped like a miniature temple to be viewed frontally.
- Such tall stones fashioned like a small temple are divided into three segments. The lower register depicts the dramatis personae while its upper part tapers into a conical spire. Such examples dateable between 14th to 17th centuries are mostly reported from upper reaches of Jammu region.
- Another variety is of those stones that are in the shape of a rectangular relief. The dimensions mostly range from three to four feet to smaller versions which measure between two to one and a half feet.
- As far as the artistic style of the carvings on the memorial stones of Jammu is concerned, one finds an amazing variety with a range from semi-classical to folk.
- But as a rule, the early examples seem to have been carved by sculptors well versed in 'Marge traditions entrenched in aesthetics of Shilpa Shashtra. But in later day examples, a gradual predominance of the folk idiom is noticeable.

Conclusion:

- With fast-changing socio-cultural scenario where large scale migrations from villages to urban centres are taking place, the construction of memorial structures and stones is on the wane. Memorial stones are now no more created by traditional carvers locally called as 'Buiede' or 'Slaede', as these families have abandoned their ancestral trade.
- Instead, masons, carpenters are making stones as either simplified and crude carvings of human forms or in a popular style and a medium like marble, concrete where figures are incised with a stylus and coloured with emulsion, thus presenting a total contrast from the past practice.
- A large body of memorial stones and structures dotting the nooks and corners of the Jammu region, especially those carved on the friezes of enclosing walls of ancient springs are important socio-cultural documents awaiting a thorough study and exposition in terms of distribution, typology and style.

Sankheda Nu Lakh Kam: Lacquered turned wood furniture of Sankheda

- Sankheda, a small town in the eastern region of Gujarat derives its name from 'sangheda', the word for a lathe in the Gujarati language.
- The town has about 80-100 families belonging to the 'Kharadi-Suthar community identified with the occupation of wood turning.
- Lacquered, turned wood furniture with hand-painted motifs and traditional method of ornamentation, popularly known as Sankheda furniture, is thought to have been produced in the town from about 1855.
- The traditional craft process of making Sankheda furniture involves shaping and painting the members while the craftsman is turning the lathe. He wields the brush with great mastery to map the patterns freehand, achieving symmetric and even contours without using any measuring device or markings.
- As most of the craftsmen in Sankheda town are involved in this craft it gives them a strong sense of community identity and continuity. The ornate nature of the product lends itself to becoming a visible symbol of expression that has been identified as Gujarati within its local precinct and elsewhere. There is a wide range of furniture items produced including child's cradles, child's walkers to chairs, tables, and large swings.

Rathwa ni Gher: Tribal Dance of Rathwas

- The Rathwas who dwell in Rath-Vistar, the hilly area of the south-eastern part of Gujarat state, perform the Rathwa ni Gher dance on the occasion of Holi (festival of colours) also known as Kavant festival, named after the place where the Holi carnival takes place.
- The Gher (dance with music) performances begin on Dlundendi, which is, literally, 'the day of flying coloured dust'.
- This is the day when people smear each other with colour powder. The festivities last for five days during which the Rathwas observe fast and abstain from sleeping on cots, washing clothes and bathing. Both men and women perform the Gher together, in groups of 20 to 25.

- Of all Rathwa dances performed on various occasions linked with the cycle of seasons, Rathwa ni Gher stands out as exquisite, colourful and spectacular.
- The intricate make-up, the synchronised footsteps, vigorous whirling of the dancers and the mesmerising symphony created through indigenous musical instruments show how antique and refined the dance form is; it constitutes the Rathwas creative expression of their religiosity, cultural identity and understanding of nature.

Compositions of Ameer Khusro- Delhi

- Abul Hasan Yamin al-Din Khusro, known as Ameer Khusro Dehlawi is an iconic figure in the cultural history of India. He was a musician, scholar and poet, a Sufi Mystic and Spiritual disciple of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi.
- He enriched Hindustani classical music with Persian and Arabic elements, from which originated various styles in Hindustani Classical music, such as Khayal, Tarana, Savela, Chaturang, Tirvat, Sadrah. Talan. Tilenana, Qaul, Qalbana, Naqsho-sul. Naqsh-o-nigaar, Rang, Mandha, Dhamal, Sawan aeet. etc.
- The invention of the Tabla and Snar is also traditionally attributed to Amir Khusro. He wrote his poetic expressions in Hindavi.
- The traditional, authentic and real Sufi music based on Ameer Khusro's poetry is a rare treasure of Dilli Gharana.
- Some compositions of Ameer Khusro also find popular expression in the form of sawan geet.

Ranmale-Goa

- Ranmale is a ritualistic and folk theatre form based on mythological stories from the popular Indian epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. It is presented during the Holi festival which is celebrated as Shigmo (spring festival) in Goa and Konkan areas.
- The word 'Ranmale' has evolved from two words, 'Ran' which means battle and 'Male' representing the traditional torch used as a source of light during the performance.
- Ranmale is performed in Western India in the Sattari Taluka of North Goa District and Sanguem Taluka of South Goa District.
- It is also performed in the border villages of Maharashtra like Mangeli, Patye and is also practised in Karnataka in the villages Kankumbi, Parwad, Gawali, Degao. This form comprises of dance, drama and folk songs called Jats.
- Each participant of the drama makes his entry to the tune of folk songs. The traditional instrument, Ghumat is an earthenware drum with one of its ends covered with the skin of the monitor lizard and the other mouth kept open.
- The accompanying instruments Kansale, cymbals of brass, are used for the base rhythm. Jats are sung by the initiator of the folk drama called Sutradhar, while the folk artists stand in a row on the stage acting like a backdrop. In the village of Zarme, the presentation of Ranmale is a must after the annual festival of Chorotsav, while in Caranzole it precedes the festivities. It is a popular belief that non-performance of the element may invite the wrath of the village deity.

Bamboo: Cultural Linkage

- Pena is a single stringed musical instrument. It consists of two parts, the penamasa or dhorr which is a bamboo pole attached to a coconut shell and pena cheijing or chorr, which is a bow used to produce friction on the string.
- The pena player, called Pena Asheiba/Pena Khongba, also sings along while playing. Pena is an indispensable part of Meitei society in Manipur, used in ritualistic functions like Lai Haraouba and Lai Ikouba.

Rongkhli – Meghalaya

- Rongkhli or Tiger Festival is a religious festival celebrated by the people of Nongtalang village in the War-Jaintia region of Meghalaya. The War-Jaintias lives on the slopes of the west Jaintia hills district bordering Bangladesh.
- Like all other sub-tribes of the Khasis, the War-Jaintias too believe that they came to this earth from the sky through a golden ladder that was located at one point of time at Sohpetbneng mountain top in the northern part of the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya.
- Rong means festival and Khli means tiger, in the local dialect, hence Rongkhli means Tiger Festival. Tradition has it that whenever any person from the village catches a tiger or its feline like, rituals have to be performed.

- The people of Nongtalang worship two goddesses namely; Ka Pyrtuh and Ka Kapong. The Dorbar is then summoned by the Chief of the village and a date is decided for the Festival. The festival is mainly held in the month of January to March.

Chokri Naga Folk Songs – Nagaland

- The Chokri community is a sub community under the tribe Chakesang (Naga).
- Chakesang tribe as a whole have a Chakesang cultural research center situated at Chethba town in Phek district.
- They cherish the folk song culture as their proud heritage, which forms as part of every walk of lifework, celebration, dances, folk media, war cry, solo, duet, trio and many such possibilities. In the absence of literary script and the medium being oral, the practitioners sing by memory.

Sowa-Rigpa (Knowledge of Healing or Science of Healing)

- The term Sowa-Rigpa is derived from Bhoti language which means Knowledge of Healing. It is an ancient Indian medical system conceived and propounded by Lord Buddha in India and later was enriched in the entire Trans-Himalayan region.
- Sowa-Rigpa has been developed and incorporated into different environmental and cultural contexts through the centuries. (Sowa-Rigpa has moulded itself into the socio-cultural lineage since ages), where every village has had an Amchi family to look after public health.
- Today, Sowa-Rigpa is acknowledged as a traditional medical system by the governments of India, Bhutan, Mongolia and Tibet.
- Chatush Tantra-a textbook of fundamental principles of Sowa-Rigpa in Sanskrit language) was pioneered by Lord Buddha and translated into Bhoti language around 8th-12th Century' and amended by Yuthok Yontan Gombo and other scholars of Trans Himalayan region according to the socio-climatic conditions.
- According to SowaRigpa health is an equation of balance of tridosha and five Cosmo physical energies (Panchmahabhuta), balance within the body, balance with the environment, and with the Universe.
- Pulse examination and astrological evaluation/analysis of an individual are the unique diagnostic tools in SowaRigpa.
- The natural resources which are safe, effective and time-tested are used as the sources of medication.

Songs of Shaman - Arunachal Pradesh

- Shamanism is prevalent among different tribes in Arunachal Pradesh. Every tribe in Arunachal Pradesh has its own kind of ritual expert for performing rites and sacrifices. In almost all the previous writings, the term (indigenous) priest or shaman is used for them.
- Tani people who trace their ancestry to Abo Tani, believe that antiquity of Shamanism is as old as the emergence of humankind. In Arunachal Pradesh among different tribes, Shaman is mostly seen as a diviner, communicator, negotiator, healer, ritual specialist, and religious expert but neither as a magician nor a mystic. S/he is the middleman between human and spirits who can communicate with the spirits on their behalf.
- As Tani people believe in the existence of spirits, they need human specialists, a shaman, who have experience and can get access to the spirit world as a communicator. Each clan has important religious specialists who initiate and foster contact with the spirits and divinities.
- They will contact the spirits and convey the messages between human and spirits. They are said to have the power to call the spirits for blessings, support and protection against evil and to enter into the spirit world and to communicate and negotiate with them that cause people to become sick.
- They are believed to enter into a dialogue with the spirits and ask for prosperity and health of the members of the clan. Shamans are also the storehouse of traditional knowledge in the form of legends, myths, ritual incantations etc.

Zadipatti and Dashavatar – Maharashtra

Zadipatti:

- Zadipatti is practised in the rice cultivating region/Eastern region of Maharashtra, which includes Chandrapur Bhandar and Gadchiroli district of Vidarbha, during the harvest season and derives its name from the local name zadi for rice. The theatre art of this region is known as Zadipatti Rangbhumi.
- It is a blend of commercial and folk theatre form. Live music is a vital part of the form and the actors are singers as well.

- The region is inhabited by tribes like Gond, Korfu and Pardhi; and Zadipatti was born out of the tribal performing art called Dandar, which was a theatrical performance combining music and dance.

Dashavatar: Traditional Folk Theatre Form

- Dashavatar is a folk theatre form practised by farmers in the Sindhudurg district of the South Konkan region of Maharashtra and the North Goa district of Goa.
- Dashavatar is a popular form of drama in rural areas. Initially popularised in the Konkan area, today it come to be looked upon as part of the classes.
- The performance uses bright make-up and costumes. It is accompanied by three musical instruments: a paddle harmonium, tabla and zanj (cymbals).



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