

WELCOME to the first issue of *Anthropology Today: An International Peer Reviewed NEIRA Journal*. Abstracts of papers and brief information on each author provided in the present issue suggest that we need not bother you with a long editorial.

You certainly stand to gain reading Prof. R. Kongsdier's excellent overview of Anthropology today with special reference to North East India. We need, he says, a more integrated approach to understanding humans as bio-cultural beings.

Prof. Jelle J.P. Wouters invites us to read not only books, but also monoliths and other stones. "They withstand and endure, unlike wood that rots, clay that disassembles, and unlike humans that decompose", and we may also add, "books" at the mercy of silver fish!

Dr. Barnes L. Mawrie, while emphasising the importance of the oral tradition, "focuses on the necessity of demystifying" myths and folktales to arrive at the original history of peoples. The example he uses is that of his own indigenous people, the Khasi.

Prof. Maria Ines Palleiro accompanies the reader to Argentina's indigenous population, and relates animal tales and shows their connection to human history. Prof. T.B. Subba gets to grips with the slippery term "culture" and goes deeper into what cultural diversity means. Prof. C.D. Sebastian informs that there are eight million Buddhists in India – some seventy three per cent of whom live in Maharashtra. Nevertheless, "the Buddhist creed and culture is a significant reality" in India's North East where it got rooted "from an early time."

Don Bosco Museum at Mawlai, Shillong, has become a point of arrival for tourists, researchers, students and visitors in general. Dr. Joy Kachappilly sees Don Bosco Museum as a "celebration of cultures" of North East India, and appreciates its role in preserving and promoting indigenous cultures.

"...many of the intangible cultural values that contribute to a society's cohesion and a people's sense of well-being cannot be measured by the mere flow of capital..." we read in Prof. Amareswar Galla's paper *Benchmarking Diversity in Museums*. The paper deals with transforming museums as civic spaces of learning. Addressing cross-cultural issues, promoting inclusiveness, following the criteria for benchmarking diversity in museums suggested by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), constitute the main thrust of the paper.

The paper by Prof. Desmond L. Kharmawphlang on *Strategizing Narratology: A Case of Select Oral Epics of North East India* underscores that North East India too has a significant place in the oral epic tradition, and in the on-going dialogue among scholars. The paper by Neikehienuo Mepfhu-o and Dr. M.L. Bhanja on oral tradition is a comparative study between the Native American and the Naga writers. It is interesting to note that "storytelling has become a healing ceremony" and an expression of "a quest for authentic tribal identity". Prof. Lucy Zehol's paper *Why do Naga Men Always Win?* would interest any reader to search for an answer reading the paper in its entirety. Kezhangunuo Kelio and Dr. Dominic Meyieho explain how, contrary to general belief, men and women enjoyed equal rights in traditional society. The ground reality is that women to a great extent are still controlled by customs and traditions as they always were.

Finally, Dr. Maria Arul Anthuvan Tharsis, a Bernard Lonergan scholar, offers us a very timely paper clarifying the concept of culture. The extensive bibliography at the end of the papers offers help for those interested in further research.

Barnes L. Mawrie  
Joseph Puthenpurakal  
Dominic Meyieho  
Baldwin Sumer