

# RESPONSIBLE TOURISM and DEVELOPMENT

WORLD TOURISM DAY 2017

Soso Tham Auditorium, SHILLONG  
27<sup>th</sup> September 2017

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY EXPLORER

**WHO IS A TOURIST**

?



**A TOURIST IS**

**'A VISITOR TRAVELLING FOR PLEASURE'**

**CAN WE CREATE RESPONSIBLE TOURISTS AND TOURISM?**

**CAN PLEASURE AND RESPONSIBILITY GO TOGETHER?**



**WHAT IS OUR RELATIONSHIP TO MEGHALAYA?**

**IS IT FOR PLEASURE ?**

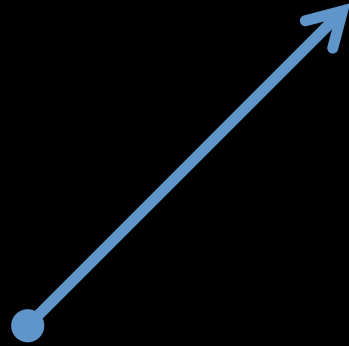
**IS IT A COMMODITY ?**

**IS IT OUR MOTHER ?**

## RESPONSIBLE TOURIST

CAN WE ENSURE RESPONSIBLE TOURISM ?

CAN THIS BE **SELSUSTAINING** WITH THE  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC REALITY OF INDIA AND MEGHALAYA ?



## TOURISM FOR DEVELOPMENT?

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF 'DEVELOPMENT'? WHO IS IT FOR?



**WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT?**

**WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF TOURISM IN OUR VILLAGE OR REGION?**

**WHO IS MEASURING THIS IMPACT AND INFORMING OUR PLAN?**

**ARE WE INVOLVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN OUR DECISIONS?**

CULTURAL

SOCIAL

ECONOMIC

RESPONSIBLE  
TOURISM  
IMPACT

ECOLOGICAL







RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)  
WHERE SHOULD WE INVEST OUR MONEY?  
ARE WE INVESTING IN THE RIGHT PLACE?  
ARE WE DISCUSSING WITH PEOPLE?  
OR ARE WE DAMAGING THE PLACE?





RETURN ON CULTURE AND COMMUNITY (ROCC)  
IS OUR COMMUNITY AND CULTURE IMPROVING WITH TOURISM?





RETURN ON NATURE (RON)  
IS THE NATURE AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICE IMPROVING WITH TOURISM?





WE SHOULD THINK ABOUT ALL THREE QUESTIONS

WHAT IS RETURN ON NATURE (RON) ?

RETURN ON CULTURE AND COMMUNITY (ROCC) ?

AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI) ?



# WHAT IS OUR APPROACH TO TOURISM FOR MEGHALAYA?





WHAT IS ROI, ROCC, RON FOR INDIGENOUS AGRO-PRODUCE?





WHAT IS ROI, ROCC, RON FOR  
INDIGENOUS SKILLS? ARE WE CONNECTING THEM TO EDUCATION



?

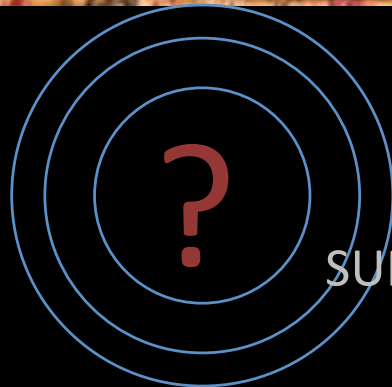






WHAT IS ROI, ROCC, RON FOR  
INDIGENOUS CRAFTS?





ARE WE MONITORING AND  
SUPPORTING OUR UNIQUE SKILLS?





CAN WE LEVERAGE TRADITIONAL  
KNOWLEDGE FOR GLOBALLY RESPECTED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES?

A traditional Khasi *wait* IN PYNURSLA MARKET IS FOR **Rs 300/-**

A KNIFE FROM SWISS GEAR IS FOR **Rs 5000/-**

CAN WE IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES, DEDICATE RESOURCES AND REVITALIZE/  
REPOSITION TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AT A GLOBAL LEVEL? CAN WE INSPIRE  
GRASSROOT INNOVATION ACROSS ALL SCALES AND CONNECT WITH GLOBAL DESIGN  
SENSE AND FUNCTION?







**WHAT IS ROI, ROCC, RON ON LIVING ROOT BRIDGES?**

LIVING ROOT BRIDGES OR JINKIENG JRI ARE *FICUS* BASED ECOSYSTEMS WITHIN DENSE SUB-TROPICAL MOIST BROADLEAF FORESTS OF MEGHALAYA. RANGING IN SPAN FROM 15 FEET TO 250 FEET, THESE BRIDGES ARE GROWN BY KHASI AND JAINTIA TRIBES OVER A TIME PERIOD OF 15 TO 30 YEARS, AND LAST FOR SEVERAL CENTURIES







## **BENEFITS**

COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

NO ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE - REMEDIAL PROPERTIES

MINIMAL MATERIAL AND MAINTENANCE COST

EXCEPTIONAL LONGEVITY

SUPPORT TO OTHER PLANT AND ANIMAL SYSTEMS

EXCEPTIONAL SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITY THROUGH  
**RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**



JINKIENG JRI ENSURES FOREST REGENERATION



JINKIENG JRI SUPPORTS 1274 BIRDS AND MAMMALS





IT HAS EXCEPTIONAL STRENGTH UNDER EXTREME CLIMATE



IT IS A BIOME FOR ORCHIDS, MUSHROOMS, FERN, MOSS AND  
FOOD IN THE FORM OF FIGS



IT ENSURES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, SHARING,  
HARMONY





HAVE WE ENSURED CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF  
JINKIENG JRI?

ARE WE AWARE THAT OUR ACTIONS CAN DESTROY THESE  
STRUCTURES?

DO WE KNOW THAT EACH JINKIENG JRI HAS CRITICAL  
CARRYING CAPACITY?



NOHWET, RIWAI, NONGRIAT  
RECEIVE A DAILY FOOTFALL OF  
MORE THAN 1000 TOURISTS.  
ON OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup> 2017 2000  
TOURISTS HAD VISITED THE  
BRIDGE BY 3 PM.

EACH BRIDGE HAS A LOAD  
BEARING THRESHOLD AND AN  
ECOSYSTEM CARRYING  
CAPACITY. THE SUB SURFACE  
ROOTS NEED PROTECTION  
AND NOURISHMENT.



**JINGMAHAM**  
**DORBAR SHNONG NOHWET**

1. YM BIT BAN POM IA KANE KA DIENGJRI.
2. YM BIT BAN PYNJAKHLIA HA KANE KA WAH.
3. YM BIT BAN KAMAI PISA IA KANE KA JINGKIENG.
4. LADA SHEM IA KINO KINO KIBA LEH PYRSHAH, YN PYNSHITOM KATKUM KA AIN SHNONG.

DA KA HUKUM  
DORBAR SHNONG NOHWET

**WARNING**

1. DONOT INFLECT ANY INJURY TO THE TREE BE IT BY CUTTING OR PLUCKING ITS ROOTS AND STEMS.
2. DONOT LITTER THIS SPOT AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.
3. DONOT CONSUME ANY TOXICATING DRINKS HERE.
4. DONOT MAKE THIS SPOT A PLACE OF PROFITS.

BY ORDER  
DORBAR SHNONG NOHWET



**WARNINGS ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED**



## NONGRIAT VILLAGE



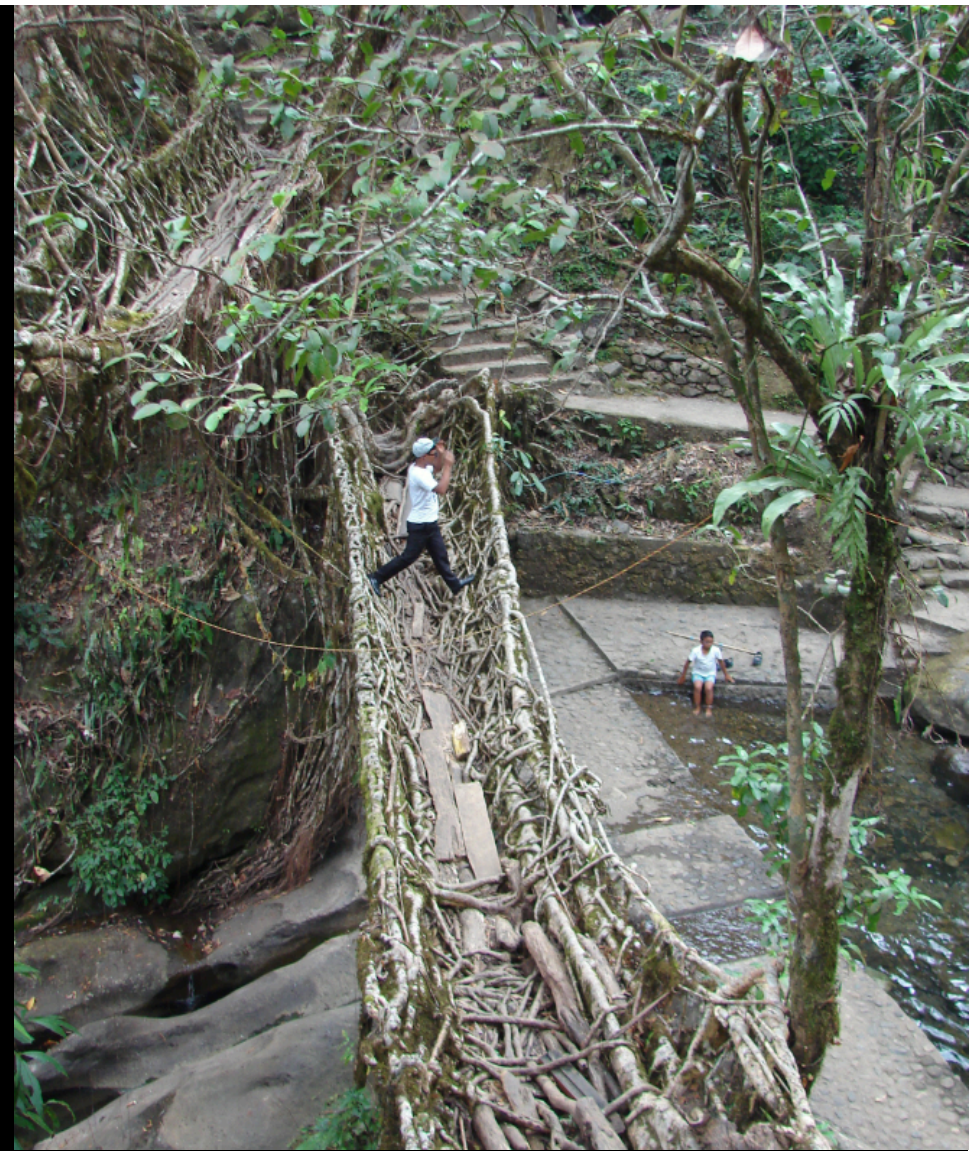
2013



2017

**INAPPROPRIATE 'DEVELOPMENT' ACTIVITY, USE OF WRONG CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, LACK OF AWARENESS, POOR IMPLEMENTATION, AND DANGEROUS INACTION AT ALL LEVELS**





TOURISTS SEEK PLEASURE WITHOUT MORAL RESPONSIBILITY. SOME CARVE NAMES AND TAKE PARTS OF THE BRIDGE AS MOMENTOS. WATER IS POLLUTED WITH NO WASTE OR SEWAGE PLAN. LOUD NOISE PERVADES THE SITE. VILLAGE COMMUNITIES HAVE LOST THEIR ABILITY TO THINK AND DECIDE AS A STRONG UNITED VOICE. WHY HAS THIS HAPPENED IN FOUR YEARS? IS IT BECAUSE OF MONEY, OR TELEVISION, OR EDUCATION, OR POVERTY, OR LACK OF GOVERNANCE?





MAWKYRNOT





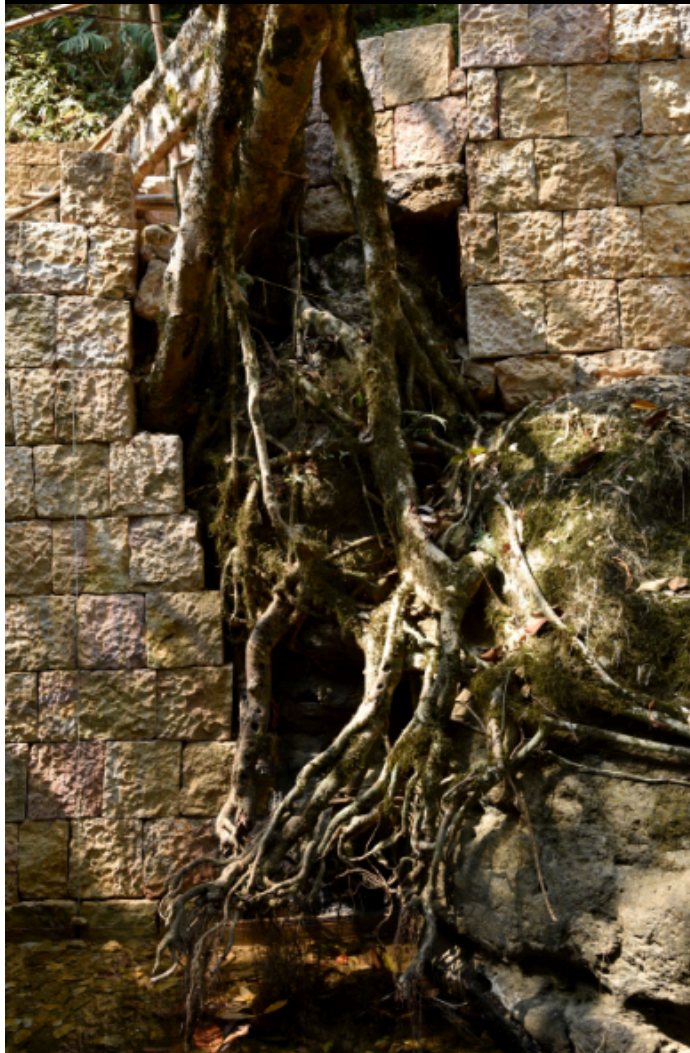




NOHWET







IN MEMORY OF THE INGENUOUS MEMBERS

OF THE KHASI TRIBE FROM NOHWET VILLAGE WHO HAVE TRAINED THE ROOTS OF  
THESE ANCIENT RUBBER TREES BY WEAVING THEM INTO  
GREATFUL STURDY LIVING STRUCTURES TO FORM WHAT IS CALLED

THE LIVING ROOT BRIDGE

SHRI. (L) KIRI KHONGSAR (FROM THE FAMILY OF SMT. ERLIN KHONGSAR),  
SHRI. (L) SHOHUMDENG KHONGTHOHREH.

SHRI. (L) SAUD KHONGTHOHREH (NEPHEW OF SHRI. (L) SHOHUMDENG KHONGTHOHREH)  
SHRI. (L) RIK KHONGLIAR (FROM THE FAMILY OF SHRI. (L) TH. NOKWONG KHONGLIAR)

1. THE *FICUS ELASTICA* (INDIAN RUBBER TREE) WERE PLANTED ON BOTH SIDES OF  
THYLLONG RIVER NEAR NOHWET (SACRED RIVER OR RIVER OF THE GODS)

2. THE TREES WERE PLANTED AROUND THE YEAR 1840

3. THE BRIDGE IS APPROXIMATELY 30 METRES IN LENGTH

THE PURPOSE OF THE LIVING ROOT BRIDGE IS TO CROSS THE RIVER EASILY WHILE  
PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT

THIS PLAQUE IS UNVEILED TODAY THE 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2016

BY

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS  
MAHA CHAKRI SIRINDHORN  
OF THAILAND

IN PRESENCE OF

THE VILLAGERS & LOCAL COMMUNITY OF NOHWET VILLAGE,  
MEGHALAYA, EAST KHASI HILLS





**NONGRIAT  
VILLAGE**

**RAMPANT USE OF INAPPROPRIATE IMPORTED CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS FUNDED BY PUBLIC SCHEMES. SOON THE VILLAGE WILL DETERIORATE TO BECOME LIKE ANY OTHER TOWN OR CITY**











PADUBAH VILLAGE – CONCRETE COLUMN CONSTRUCTED IN THE RIVER BED UNDER A  
LIVING ROOT BRIDGE





**CONCRETE POURED OVER THE  
DECK IN PADUBAH VILLAGE**





FOOT BRIDGE AT (WAHMAWSHEM)  
UMLAKHAR, TYRNGEI VILLAGE  
CONSTRUCTED UNDER  
S.C.A. (BADP) 2013 - 14  
SPONSORED BY  
BORDER AREAS DEVELOPMENT  
(DISTRICT LEVEL SCHEME)

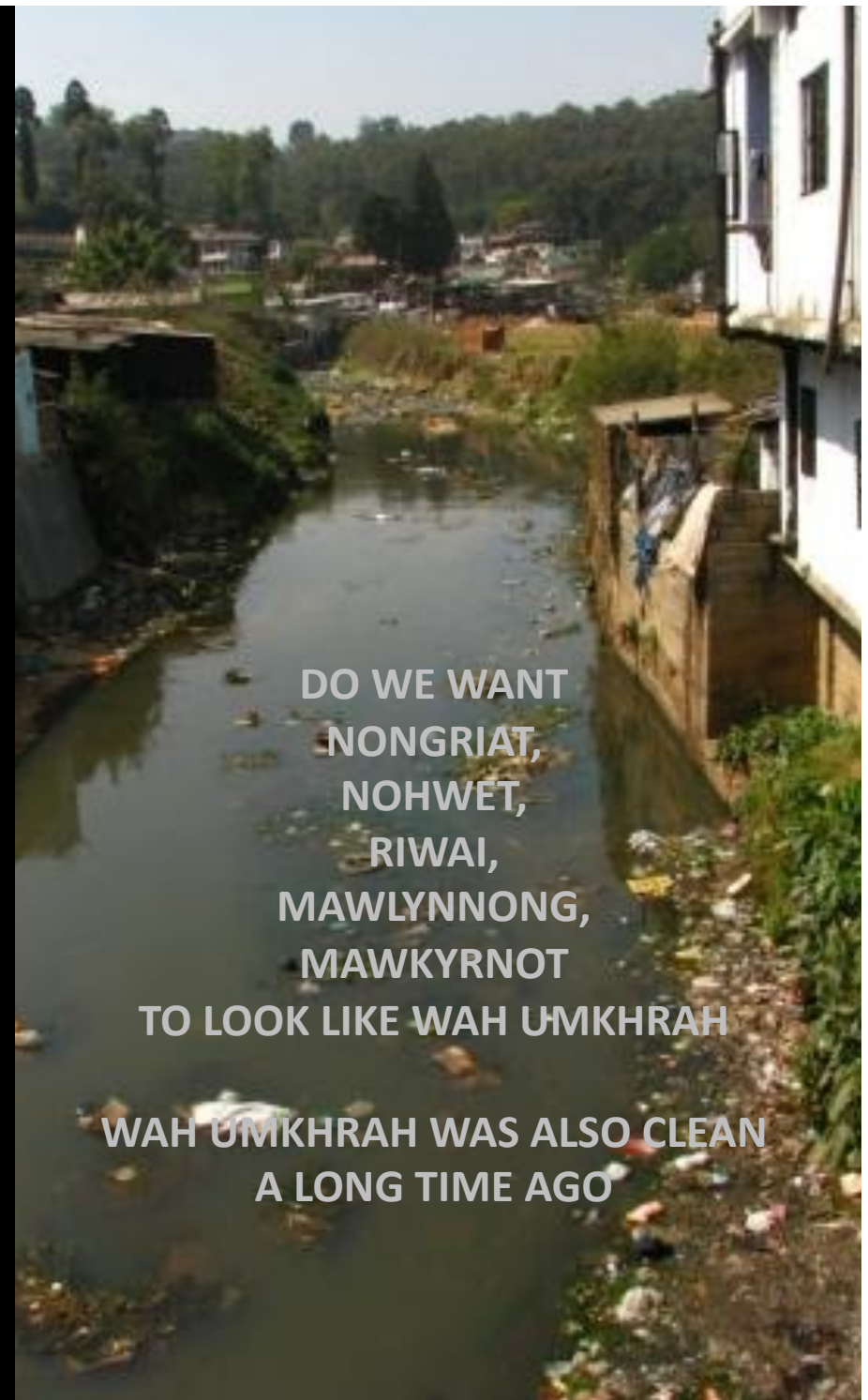
**TYRNGEI VILLAGE – LIVING ROOT BRIDGE CUT AND REPLACED BY A CONCRETE BRIDGE –  
PROJECT FUNDED BY BORDER AREAS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**





BAH WISTON – HEADMAN OF NONGRIAT VILLAGE INFORMS THAT THE DOUBLE TIER LIVING ROOT BRIDGE IN THE VILLAGE NOW IS ATTRACTING BLACK PESTS FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS. THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED BEFORE. HE ALSO ACCEPTS THAT CONCRETE AROUND THE BRIDGE, CLEARING THE FOREST, TOO MANY TOURISTS EVERY DAY AND USING IMPORTED PRODUCTS IS NEGATIVELY AFFECTING THE VILLAGE, BUT FEELS THE VILLAGE IS NOT UNITED ANYMORE





DO WE WANT  
NONGRIAT,  
NOHWET,  
RIWAI,  
MAWLYNNONG,  
MAWKYRNOT  
TO LOOK LIKE WAH UMKHRAH

WAH UMKHRAH WAS ALSO CLEAN  
A LONG TIME AGO



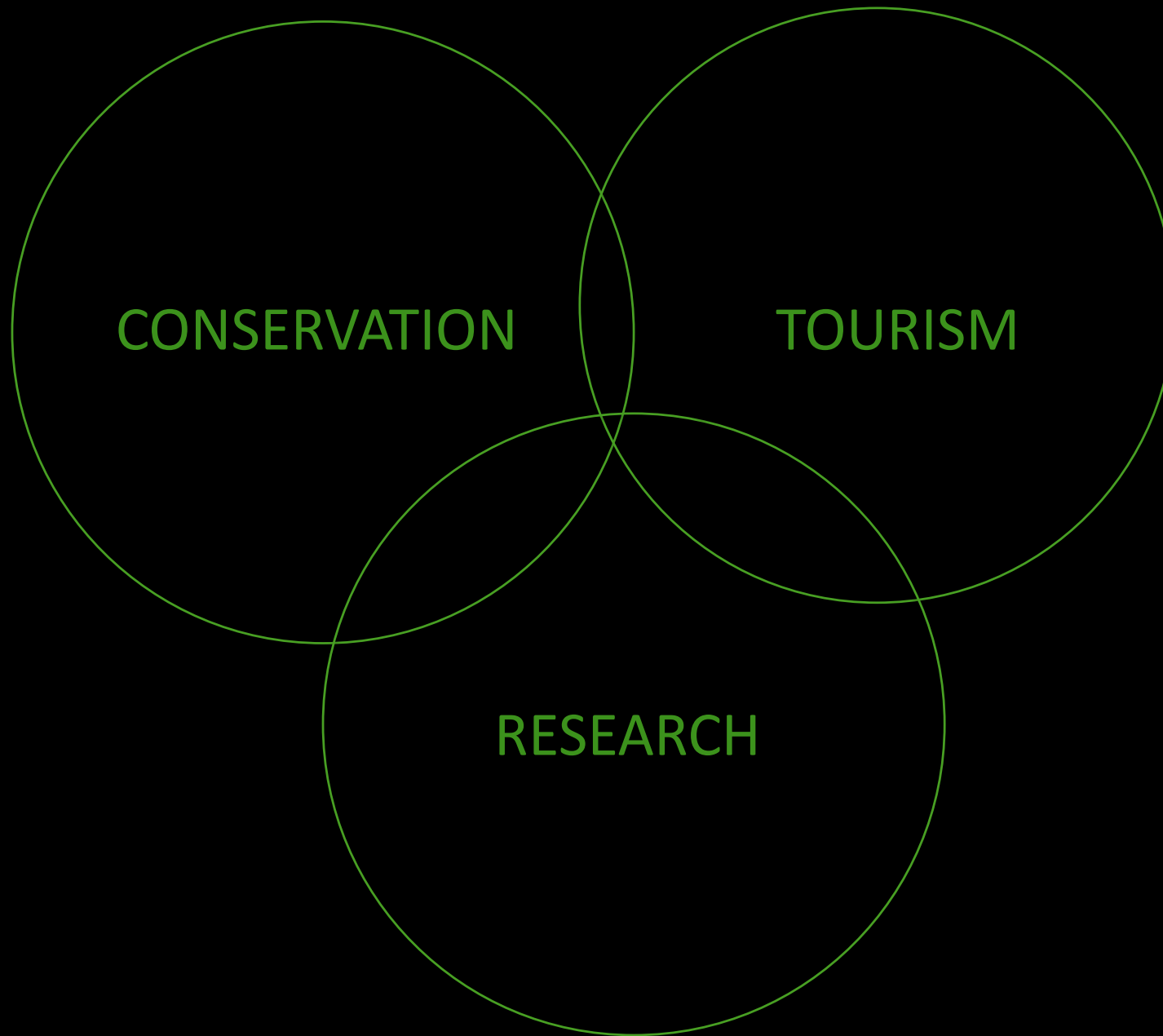
EI KONG!  
SHOULD WE HAVE  
TOURISM IN OUR  
VILLAGE?



BAH, WE SHOULD  
PLAN PROPERLY AND  
ENSURE A HEALTHY  
FUTURE!







SOLUTION LIES IN BALANCING CONSERVATION, TOURISM AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
THROUGH A TRANSPARENT DIALOGUE WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

# CONSERVATION

AWARENESS FOR ALL – TOURISTS, VILLAGERS, GUIDES,  
OFFICIALS, YOUNG, OLD, KONG, BAH, GOVERNMENT, NGOS

JINKIENG JRI DORBAR

**COMMUNITY SCIENCE – RESPONSIBLE TOURISM WORKSHOP**

(FIRST WORKSHOP HELD IN NOHWET VILLAGE ON APRIL 3<sup>RD</sup> AND 4<sup>TH</sup> WITH NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY GRANT)

EDUCATION AND MASTERPLAN – FOCUS ON TRADITIONAL  
KNOWLEDGE, SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND NATURAL-  
MATERIAL BASED CONSTRUCTION



RESEARCH ←

PLAN WITH  
COMMUNITIES  
share, test opportunity

IMPLEMENT WITH  
COMMUNITIES  
design, monitor, evaluate

IMPROVE

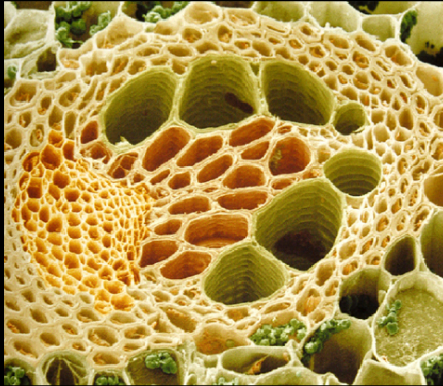
## **CONSTANT RESEARCH**

**A SYSTEMATIC INVESTIGATION REQUIRED PERIODICALLY  
SINCE OUR VILLAGE IS ALWAYS CHANGING AND SOLUTIONS  
REQUIRE US TO BE PRECISE AND OBJECTIVE**

**FACTS FROM THE FIELD WILL INFORM THE WAY WE  
SEE, VALUE AND IMAGINE OUR SURROUNDINGS**



# RESEARCH ON LIVING ROOT BRIDGES NEEDS INPUTS FROM



ECOLOGY



BOTANY



HORTICULTURE



COMMUNITY



ENGINEERING



PLANNING

SUGGESTION OF A RESPONSIBLE TOURISM MASTERPLAN FOR  
EVERY VILLAGE TO  
CREATE VALUE VIA COMMUNITY AND ECOLOGY

1. VILLAGE MAPPING AND WORKING WITH ALL PEOPLE
2. SHOWING ECONOMIC VALUE OF NATURE AND CULTURE
3. BUILD AN ENGINE OF INNOVATION AND ENHANCE LOCAL ECOSYSTEM
4. IMAGINE AND IMPLEMENT A UNIQUE TOURIST EXPERIENCE
5. FOCUS ON LOCAL SOLUTIONS, LOCAL TECHNOLOGY, PEOPLE, SKILLS
6. BALANCE SOCIO-ECONOMIC-ECOLOGICAL GROWTH



INDEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL VILLAGE THROUGH  
LIVING WITH THE PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES – THIS LEADS TO  
**SENSITIVITY** FOR THEIR NEEDS AND CONCERNS AND REVEALS  
SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

+

BIODIVERSITY  
ECOLOGY  
FOOD  
CRAFT  
SKILLS  
ARCHITECTURE  
HORTICULTURE  
FOLK STORIES  
ATTITUDE

-

WASTE  
ACCESS  
AGRICULTURE  
FLOODS, LANDSLIDES  
ECONOMIC POVERTY  
MIGRATION  
INEQUITY  
ENERGY

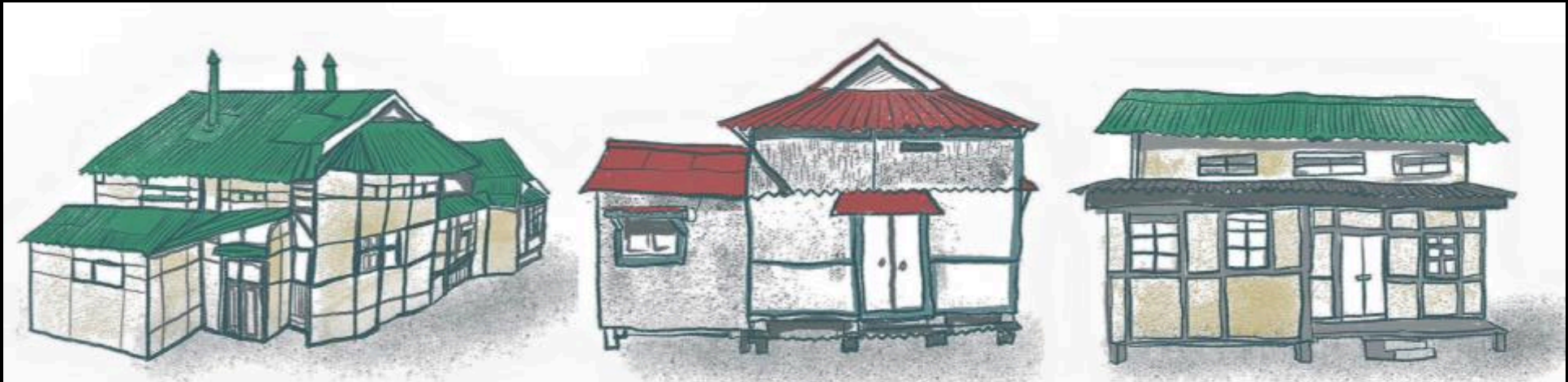
# VILLAGE RESOURCE MAP TO BE DEVELOPED WITH THE COMMUNITIES – MAP EVERYTHING - SOIL, WATER, SKILLS





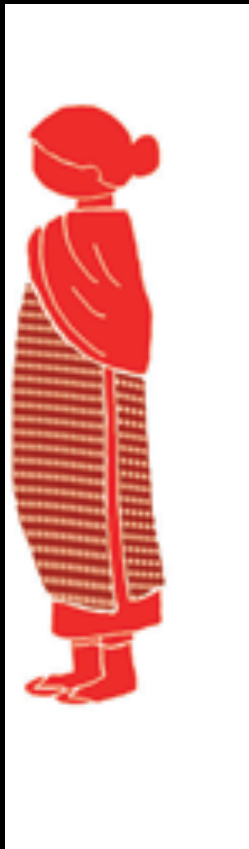
CREATE A **DESIGN** AND TEST A **MASTERPLAN** FOR BENEFIT OF  
OUR FAMILY, OUR VILLAGE, OUR FOREST, OUR LAND, OUR  
HISTORY, OUR STORY, OUR CHILDREN, OUR BIRDS, OUR PLANTS,  
OUR ANIMALS

**IMPROVE THIS DESIGN CONSTANTLY**



FOCUS ON LOCAL SOLUTIONS, TECHNOLOGY, PEOPLE, SKILLS

BRING IN ONLY THE BEST FROM OUTSIDE IF IT **BENEFITS**  
THE COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT



© Porag 2011





CURRENTLY OUR 'DEVELOPMENT' APPROACH IS DISCONNECTED WITH TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES. OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ARE ALL INFLUENCED BY NON-LOCAL IDEAS.

CAN WE INSPIRE, SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH AN INNOVATION FRAMEWORK TO ALLOW THEM TO LEAD THE 'DEVELOPMENT' WITH THEIR NATURAL MATERIAL-BASED TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE PRACTICES COMBINED WITH SCIENTIFIC INPUTS? THIS WILL ENSURE RETURN ON NATURE, RETURN ON CULTURE AND COMMUNITY, AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT. OUR UNIQUE TRADITIONAL ASSETS WILL GROW FURTHER AND THIS WILL INFORM A RESPONSIBLE TOURIM DESTINATION AT A GLOBAL LEVEL. CAN THIS BE NURTURED THROUGH RESPONSIBLE POLICIES?



EXAMPLE OF A BAMBOO BRIDGE DEVELOPED WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY AS PART OF A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY EXPEDITION. THIS PARTICPATORY MODEL IS POSSIBLE AS A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IN THE REALM OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ARCHITECTURE



# BALANCE SOCIO-ECONOMIC-ECOLOGICAL GROWTH





KHUBLEI SHIBUN AND HOPING WE ALL WORK TOGETHER

[www.sanjeevshankar.com](http://www.sanjeevshankar.com)