

A holy speech in Nagamese



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Whether you have a developed language or not, you always find ways and means to get by. But in these days we can learn a language properly which is civilization's gift to mankind. Just a year ago, I went to Cairo to see the Pyramids, the Sphinx and the museums, in fact I did whatever a [normal](#) tourist does within a couple of days' excursion. What I [found](#) interesting was the knowledge of dozens of foreign languages that the Egyptian tour guides possessed. When I told one of the tour guides that I was from India, he said that he knew Hindi and would speak in Hindi with me. I then wanted to know how did he learn the language. He replied that he went to India to learn the language in India itself, which he did besides making a lifelong friendship with a citizen of Delhi. His friend too was a tourist guide, in Delhi of course. What I want to emphasize here is that to know another language is a qualification. For that matter, it can be any language of the world. This qualification has many uses. For the present I don't want to illustrate it.

Language develops naturally. I was in Shillong for about twenty years but I didn't learn the language. But one of my Khasi friends learnt [Assamese](#) and he became private secretary to late Bimala Prasad Chaliha, a past Chief Minister, who had close contact with the Naga people at various levels. The elected Naga Members boycotted the State Legislature for political reasons.

I am away from India for a very long time and my knowledge about Nagamese is limited. I had a close Naga friend and I did speak in [Assamese](#) with him and his wife. We had no problem of communicating with each other. But two years ago I was invited to an [X](#)-mas party in a Baptist Church in the Mikir Hills. The special guest there was a charming Naga lady who studied theology in Australia. At the beginning of her lecture she said she would speak in Nagamese and wondered whether the audience present could understand her. I never had the opportunity of listening to a proper lecture in Nagamese before. But her speech was flawless. It was appropriate, spontaneous and impressive.

On another occasion I met a number of Naga bureaucrats in a social occasion. Normally when I mention to a Naga person that I knew late A Z Phizo, he would try to avoid me, possibly because of the present political situation. But on this occasion my friend was a high official belonging to the Indian Police Service. When I mentioned Phizo's name, he showed interest. But the conversation in this meeting was entirely conducted in English. Late Phizo spoke to me in impeccable English.

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