

**Enduring Voices—Northeast India Language Revitalization Workshop**  
December 2011

The first Enduring Voices Language Revitalization Workshop for Northeast India was held in Shillong, Meghalaya, India on December 17, 2011. Representing National Geographic Society were Fellows Dr. Gregory Anderson and Mr. Christopher Rainier; Dr. Gracious Temsen and Dr. Ganesh Murmu represented Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages. The workshop brought together eight young linguists and language activists from across Northeast India.



Inakali Yephtomi and Richmond Myrchiang test their new recorders out on each other. Photo by Chris Rainier.

Four of the participants hailed from Meghalaya, three from Manipur and one from Nagaland. From Meghalaya came Mr. Edrashin Shadap representing the Ri-Bhoi variety of Khasi, Ms. Bayadalin Kharsyntiew representing the West Khasi Hills variety, Mr. Richmond Myrchiang representing the Amwi-Jaintia language community of Nongtalang and Mr. Pyndap Khongjirem representing the Wakhen dialect of the War language. From Manipur came Kailadbou Daimai who represented the Liangmai Naga language community, Dr. L. Heshu representing the Mao Naga language community, and Mr. Koninglee Wanglar representing the Mongsang (Kuki-Chin) language community. Finally from Nagaland came Ms. Inakali Yephtomi who represented the Sema Naga language community.



Workshop participants. (back row, left to right) Greg Anderson, Grace Temsen, Richmond Myrchiang, Kailadbou Daimai, Koninglee Wanglar, L. Heshu. (front row, left to right) Bayadalin Kharsyntiew, Inakali Yephtomi, Edrashin Shadap, Pyndap Khongjirem, Ganesh Murmu

The participants received language technology kits consisting of a Zoom H2 digital audio recorder, headphones, a Flip™ digital video recorder, GorillaPod tripod, several recording chips and associated peripherals. The participants were instructed in the use of the components of the recording equipment and then to familiarize themselves with them, took part in audio and video recording exercises, where the four participants from Meghalaya were each paired with a participant from outside of that state. This exercise allowed each to serve as both language investigator and language consultant. In the former role they learned how to improve their interviewing and elicitation techniques, monitor audio recording levels, and learn proper framing of video. In the latter role, they gained insight to the difficulties that arise even for fluent native speakers when serving as language consultants, so they developed a better understanding of the nature of that vital role in the language documentation process.

Once sample audio and video recordings were made, the participants were stepped through the process of uploading the raw data files in the uncompressed audio .wav and video .mp4 formats onto a computer, how to name and organize such files, how to process longer audio files into more manageable smaller sound file units using the free software Praat, and finally the importance and use of metadata in the language documentation process. This was followed by a short demonstration of the vital technique of photo elicitation with respect to culture-specific language content and finally the various steps involved in the process of how to turn a video recording into a useable final text document. Following the workshop, the group attended a cultural festival in Ri Massar Village, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya. All participants pronounced the workshop a resounding success.





Kyntiahlang Ryngnga (standing) Arabian Shabong (sitting), speakers of Khasi.  
Photo by Chris Rainier.



Arjun Rumjang (standing), Iohbor Dkhar (sitting), speakers of Khasi, in Ri Massar Village, East Khasi Hills,  
Meghalaya, India. Photo by Chris Rainier.





Dr. Gregory Anderson trains participants in the 2011 Language Revitalization Workshop in Shillong, India.  
Photo by Chris Rainier.



L. Heshu records a list of phrases spoken by Edrashin Shadap in the Bhoi Khasi language.  
Photo by Chris Rainier.



The group goes over sound file segmentation at the workshop.  
Photo by Chris Rainier.