

Khuplam Milui Lenthang

Khuplam Milui Lenthang (born 1920) is an anthropologist, doctor and religious leader specialising in the origins of the Kuki people. He was born at Kahui (Kohima). Thangjalam Milui Lenthang, his father, was a jawan in the Assam Rifles, posted at Kahui. He died when Khuplam was only a child, and his wife, Tingzakhoh, brought up their son with a great deal of love and affection in spite of many difficulties. Khuplam bore certain unusual signs and characteristics from his childhood. In later years, these inexplicable attributes began to make sense with regard to the research work on the origin, culture and traditions of the Manmasi or Manasseh (Kuki, Chin, Mizo) people, which has been a life-long passion of his.

As a boy, Khuplam was not keen on fun and games, a nature normal to other children. He spent hours together listening to elderly people who related stories, folklores and mythologies concerning the origins of the Kuki (historically Kuki was the collective terminology used to refer to the 'Kuki, Chin and Mizo' people) people of yore. Spending most of his time in the company of elderly folks who told their tales, his friends often referred to him as the 'old man'. Khuplam started to collect the materials for his research work on the Manmasi people in 1949, when he was 29 years of age. He traveled extensively in the Chin Hills of Burma, various parts of Assam, Manipur, Lushai Hills, and Naga Hills and was able to compile a vast amount of resources. These resources form the basis of his book, *The Wonderful Genealogical Tales of MANMASI (Kuki-Chin-Mizo)*, a product of lifelong labour of love. After the death of his father, Dr. DD William, a European Christian missionary in Jorhat, cared for Khuplam like a family member.

At Jorhat Khuplam was educated up to standard VI. With Dr. William's assistance he also did a three-year medical training at Medical College in Dibrugarh. Equipped with a professional qualification, he landed a government job as Licensed Medical Practitioner (LMP) in 1951. Although he did not receive complete formal education in medicine, given the condition of the time and the fact that modern western education had only recently been introduced in the region, the title of Doctor was deferentially 'bestowed' upon him thenceforth, he was referred to as Dr