

Heritage Information

Unique Id:

BGD-20.84.2023.00025

Section-1: Identification of the element

Heritage Location

Division

Chattogram

District

Rangamati

Upazila

Details Address

Geolocation(Latitude)

Geolocation(Longitude)

Community Category

Small Ethnic Groups

Community

Chakma

Name of the Heritage, (as used by the community or group concerned)

Sangrain 'Relong Pwe' (water pouring)

Short title of the Heritage, (preferably within 200 words)

'Relong Pwe' or 'Water Festival' of Marma Community falls in the domain of 'Social practices, rituals and festive events'

Concerned Community(ies)/Group(s), (who recognize the element as part of their cultural heritage)

Physical location(s) of the element/how often it is practiced

The Festival is performed wherever the Marma live. The Marma people, formerly known as Moghs or Maghs, are the second-largest ethnic community in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts, primarily residing in the Bandarban, Khagrachari and Rangamati Hill Districts. Some Marmas live in Bangladesh's coastal districts of Cox's Bazar and Patuakhali, while others live in India and Myanmar. There are over 210,000 Marmas living in Bangladesh. Since the 16th century, the Marma have considered Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts their home, where they have established the Bohmond and Mong Circles (chiefdoms).

Short description of the Heritage, (preferably within 350 words)

'Rilong Pwe' is a water festival of the Marma/Mogh indigenous community in Bangladesh. The festival is celebrated

during New Year of the "Mraima" calendar. It is a blessing ceremony which is celebrated by the all members of the community. Three days, out of the four-day festival, are spent bidding farewell to the outgoing year. The fourth day focuses on greeting the incoming year. On the first day of the festival, both male and female members of the Marma tribe form a procession to take their images of Buddha down to the riverfront. The images are washed on a raft with either a mixture of sandalwood and water, or milk and water in preparation for reinstalling them at the temple or in their shrines at their homes. The festival is celebrated in several parts during the day. A water festival competition is specially participated in by young, unmarried boys and girls, which also includes performance of traditional dances. The community also celebrates the festival early in the morning by showering elders with water, as well as showering the Buddha statue in the monastery. Anybody can join the festival irrespective of caste, creed and color. It is opportunity for everyone to extend a hand of friendship, even to strangers. On this auspicious occasion, everyone is a friend. Everyone is determined to start with new hope and new way of life. The community also go to the temple, wash the Buddha statues, recite the eight precepts and take the five oaths before circumambulating the pagoda together. The monks in the temple take this opportunity to remind everyone of the dharma; the right way of living and practicing as Buddhist. The elders are worshiped and they bless the young ones for a bright future.

☐ Domains of the Heritage (applicable fields)

- ☒ Oral Traditions and Expressions
- ☒ Performing Arts
- ☒ Social Customs and Traditions
- ☒ Knowledge and Practices related to Nature and Universe
- ☐ Traditional Craftsmanship
- ☐ Food

☐ Section-2: Characteristics of the element

☐ Practitioners(s)/performer(s) directly involved in the representation or practice of the Heritage (including roles, name, age, gender, social status, and/or professional category etc.)

The entire community is involved in the celebration of this Festival. Documentation was made with the help of following community members: Kongshai Marma, 25, Male, Dancer Uhlaching Marma, 25, Male, Dancer

☐ Other tradition bearers (individuals/groups and their roles))

Marma Shilpi Ghosthi, Marma Unnayan Sangsad and Bangladesh Marma students council: These are community organisations which organise the event.

☐ Language(s), register(s), speech level(s) involved

Arakanese (also known as Rakhine /r?'ka?n/; Burmese: ??????????, MLCTS: ra.hkuing bhasa [??k?à?? bà?à]) is a language closely related to Burmese, of which it is often considered a dialect. "Arakan" is the former

☐ Associated tangible elements used (if any)

Traditional Marma dress, traditional water bowl and traditional musical instruments.

☐ How are women and people of other genders associated with this Heritage?

It is a community Festival so everyone is involved. 'Rilong Pwe' is especially important for the unmarried singles but the entire ritual involves everyone.

☐ Division of labour during the practice of this Heritage

The labour is equally distributed into mens and womans but mainly arranged by the young generation.

☐ Elements to which other customary practices or practices may be connected or accessed in any respect of the heritage (if any)

Relong Pwe is a festival open to all.

☐ Modes of transmission to others in the community

The indigenous Marma people learns about the Rilong PWE Festival from their ancestors.

☐ Organizations concerned (non-governmental organizations and others)

Section-3: State of the element (viability)

Threats to the enactment

Enactment Threats Description

Tourism and commercialism is harming the authenticity of the festival. But, of greater significance is the long history of conflict with the Chittagong Hill Tracts, between the indigenous people from the minority ethnic communities, and the settlers from outside.

Threats to the transmission (if any)

Of major consideration Local majority population sometimes creates pressure and other religious practitioners issue statements discouraging the cultural practices of the ethnic minority that makes them insecure and unsafe, while discouraging the young generation.

Threat to associated tangible elements and resources (if any)

No, there is no threat, but also no support in a Muslim majority country like Bangladesh

Viability of associated intangible elements (if any)

Some NGO's are working for their health care and to improve their financial stability but still nobody is working to protect/preserve their festivals or rituals.

Have been taken any safeguarding measures to preserve this Heritage practices? (if any)

Safeguarding is primarily by the community itself. A few years back the ethnic communities of Bangladesh proposed following safeguarding measures; a) establishment of a tribal cultural institute, b) appointment of indigenous language teacher in every primary school in CHT and c) broadcasting programmes on indigenous culture and heritage. Their suggestions also include e) one more chapter based on indigenous culture in text books at primary and junior levels, f) introducing teachers' training on indigenous languages at Rangamati PTI, and g) setting up a museum to protect culture and heritages of 11 ethnic communities in CHT. They emphasised primary education in students' mother languages. Speakers said this in a daylong workshop titled "Adhivashi Sangskriti Sangrakkhaney Suparishmala Pranayan o Amader Karaniya" organised by local NGO Zabarang Kalyan Samity <https://unpo.org/article/7595>

Section-4: Data gathering/documentation, Consent and preparation of inventory entries

Consent of community/group/individuals concerned for data collection with a view to inventorying

1. Mong Circle 2. Marma Unnayan Sangsad. 3. Kongsai Marma (Dancer) 4. Ulha Ching Marma (Dancer) WEIU

Restrictions on use of collected data, (if any)

Every information's needs to reconfirmed by community

Section-5: Resource Person

Data provider/Resource person (persons/groups, community representatives)

Kongsai Marma Mobile: +8801556774131

Date of data collection

17-05-0202

Place(s) of data collection

Via internet, during COVID19 Pandemic.

Section-6: Safeguarding techniques

Existing safeguarding techniques adopted by the community for the safeguarding of the Heritage

None

Suggestions for safeguarding of the Heritage from the community

1.Create awareness 2.Take workshops 3.Establishing Sustainable tourism 4.Financial Security 5.Encourage Researchers

Section-7: References to literature, discography, audiovisual materials or archives

References to/in literature

1. Barua, Bipy. 2010. "Ethnic Minorities, Indigenous Knowledge, and Livelihoods: Struggle for Survival in Southeastern Bangladesh." In Indigenous Knowledge and Learning in Asia/Pacific and Africa Perspectives on Development, Education, and Culture, edited by Dip Kapoor and Edward Shizha. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2. Hammed, Md. Faisal. 2006. "Assimilation: A Challenge for the Indigenous Culture and Customs ." Journal of Ethnic Affairs II: 22-26. 3. Mohammad, Ala Uddin. 2020. "Changes in Language, Communication and Thought: A Study on Linguistic Discrimination against the Indigenous People of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh." STUDIES IN LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE 1 (1): 25-37. 4. van Schendel, Willem, Wolfgang Mey, and Aditya Kumar Dewan. 2000. The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Living in a Borderland. Bangkok: White Lotus Co. Ltd.

Audiovisual materials or archives

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DpnkdhYHvw> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ag0q46t0sNg>

Discography or archives

None

Section-8: Modalities for updating the information contained in the inventory entry

Data Compiler (persons/groups, including community representatives, who compiled the information)

Resource person will regularly help to update.

Date of Community Consent

Consent of community/group/individuals concerned for data collection with a view to inventorying

Resource person asked their community chief and got full permission.

Present Condition of Heritage

Still maintaining

Brief description of Present condition of the Heritage, (if any)

Still maintaining

Section-9: Community suggestions

Brief description of suggestions for safeguarding of the element by community members/experts/holders, (if any)

As above.

☐ **Restrictions on use of collected data, (if any).**

Not applicable.

☐ **Section-10: Upload Document**

Consent Document



Heritage Details Document



Heritage Images

