

My Mother

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As soon as I was born, I was looked upon with great pride by my mother. I have just realized that my greatest supporter in life is my mother. I am very thankful to my maternal grandparents for giving me such an adorable mom. Let me tell her story...

My mother belongs to the Khamti society of Chongkham in Arunachal Pradesh, but my father is of Mishmi tribe. At the age of seven or eight, my mother started going to the fields to help her father (my grandpa), even though she was put in a school. When the school warning bell rang, she would rush to the nearby stream, wash her legs and hands and would run home. She would eat her breakfast quickly, dress up and would rush to her school. She failed in her class III exams three times, but she also enjoyed studying with her juniors! Actually my mom was very talented, because, even though she did not go to school daily, she learnt how to read and write well. In those days, studying was not so important for Arunachali girls, as it is today. My grandpa and grandma did not encourage children going to school, as they gave more importance to working in the rice fields. So my mother gave up studies when she was in class eight.

When my mother was fifteen, she fell in love with a handsome youth.* After she left school, her parents moved to an interior part of Chongkham, to a village named Manmao. From that time, my mother found it easier to meet her boyfriend. When she was twenty, she got married to my dad and they moved to a Mishmi village called 'Hooking'. My mother told me that in his youth, father was very rude to people. But, after he was chosen as the 'gaon burah' (village chief), he became quite friendly to all.

When she came after marriage, my mom did not get much importance at her new home, as our aunts and uncles. My paternal grandparents did not like my mother very much, as they liked our aunts and uncle. This was because she was not from Mishmi society. But at home, we and father love her very much. My mom and dad work very hard for us.

[Most girls and boys in the Khamti society find their own partners for marriage. It is a common custom even today. - Ed]

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