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DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND TRADITIONAL PRACTICES: GENDERING ELECTORAL POLITICS IN NAGALAND

Renchumi Kikon Kuotsu & A. Wati Walling

INTRODUCTION

Modern democratic practices and values were transported from 'the West' and implanted in the land of the Nagas without preparing them for this new system (Horam 1988: 96).¹ But whereas the western system of democratic

¹'Nagas' here refer to the fourteen Naga tribes of Nagaland only. The meaning and origin of the term 'Naga' is sketchy as there are various versions about it. It is popularly believed that when the British encountered people settled in this part of the country, they enquired from their Burmese guides as to whom these people are. The reply of the word 'Naka', meaning 'people with earrings' in Burmese language led the British to record as 'Naga' and thus used subsequently (Nagaland State Human Report 2004: 20). This is only one amongst several explanations given about the word Naga.