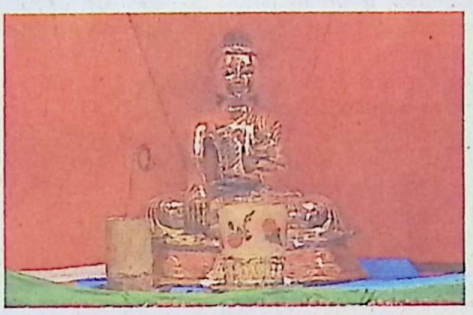
It was his choice to leave the life of a regular person, leave behind attachments, desires and devoting himself to the convention of Buddhism. A Buddhist bhikkhu is allowed to go anywhere but return before night to a monastery unless he is on a journey. He is allowed to stay out of Kiang for maximum seven days in case of severe ill-ness related to his parents and his teacher only. As the mind mends no boundaries, Bhikkhu's can and do go anywhere from Tibet to Timbuktu in search of peace and to practice Buddhism in true sprit. Hindering from sensuous lust, aversion and ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, skeptical doubt; To concentrate, be mindful and energetic, investigate, rapture and apply equanimity is the right persuasion of Buddhism. Though he mentioned that human-mind is wobbly and might change due to time. As for himself, he always wants to lead the spiritual life and continue doing what he enjoys most spreading out Buddha's principle among the people. It took him 30 years to reach such a position which now makes him 42 years old which was quite hard for us to believe by looking at him. His divine habits and apt living has kept him young as a fresh soldier. During the discussion he also told us about the significance of Fanus (light balloon) Festival. Buddhist people believe that Buddha resides up there in the sky on the full moon night and a Fanus is taken as the symbol of wishes and hopes. Through lighting these up and sending them out in the air is more like reaching out to Buddha . As speaking of the differences of past and present day celebrations, Vante shared that in the past the younger ones were more into the religion and rituals. Now when the existence of the culture is at stake its natural they are more into changing religions or becoming less concerned about their ancestral practices. The reasons behind it came upfront when we spoke to Sha-mo's sister Ukhin, who had come with her little boy to visit Vante. Showing discontent in her voice she urged that Bengali customs and tribal customs are very different. But there is no safeguarding or fortification of tribal cultures and customs. They are bound to learn in Bengali, leaving off their own tribal languages. Hence, the younger generation lacks the strong bondage with their religion and ethnicity. Talking to a 13-year old teenager outside the temple building, as she explained that she has been coming to the temple with her parents from a very early age and she enjoys the celebrations more than the regular prayers as it allows her to dress up and meet kids her age under one roof and dance and sing aimlessly.





Due to weather calamities, we had to wait for sometime to observe the Fanus festival the next evening. By 5pm the sky was crowded by glittering light balloons. The Rakhain Polli kiang was surrounded by several booths made of paneled layers holding up Buddha figurines. All men came dressed in their best and women wearing heavy ornaments made out of gold and silver. The teenagers were busy in setting out fireworks. The older Rakhain people were fueling up the Fanus and the kids gathered around to watch. The balloons had the shape of ducks, birds, horses or huge square typographies. As each Fanus went up in the air, the people cried out loud in excitement and joy.

By 8 in the evening we were preparing to get on the 10:30 bus back to Dhaka.The happiness of knowing different culture, perceiving new dimensions of lifestyles was priceless for us. On the other hand we were faced with the mere truth of their insecurities- threat towards their own subsistence regarding their unique being. For years the aboriginal population is fighting for their survival in culture, language, education, land, shelter, recognition for equal rights and freedom to speech in the same homeland. How many of us really get a chance to speak with them and join them to say "yes, we are equal"? The number is doubtlessly small.

Bangladesh is a developing country but our fellow Bangladeshi's- the indigenous people are below the line to accessing development. Assuring a fixed quota in national university admission hasn't ensured their development till date. Neither marking them as "Adibashi" and being nice to them makes things fair . Their language, clothing, food and festivals may are differ from us but they show the same amount

of fidelity a Hindu does during Durga Puja or a Muslim does during the Eid.They state their nationality as "Bangladeshi" as we do. It should be their existence we should remember not their quantity when we assess their individuality. It should be us who should be accepting them as one of us.