

Restoring What Was Lost: The Thongnirit Clan's Commitment



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In the rolling landscapes of South West Khasi Hills, the Thongnirit clan has become a steadfast partner in the Regeneration Meghalaya Project. At the heart of their participation is Stimding Thongnirit — a soft-spoken and gentle clan leader whose calm approach and proactive spirit have inspired his community to care deeply for both land and water.

The Kur Thongni Arjait — Thongnibah and Thongnirit — have lived as custodians of their land for hundreds of years. Their elders tell of a time when these hills were covered in dense forests, filled with towering trees and rich undergrowth. But as poverty pressed upon the people, trees had to be felled to feed their children, and over time the forests were converted into paddy fields, millet plots, maize farms, and other crops. Slowly, the land became degraded.

“According to the teachings of our ancestors and the way of life here in Meghalaya, the soil must be nurtured and raised again,” says Stimding Thongnirit. “That is why, in 2023, we joined the Regeneration Meghalaya Project — to bring life back to our farmlands through rehabilitation and tree planting.”

As part of the project's soil and water conservation efforts, two ponds were built on clan land in 2024. Today, these ponds are more than just water bodies — they are part of the clan's cultural landscape. Members regularly monitor and maintain them, carrying out small but vital tasks like clearing weeds and repairing edges to ensure they last for years to come.

The smaller pond has quietly transformed its surroundings — keeping the soil moist, encouraging stronger plant growth, and providing fresh drinking water for those walking to and from their fields. The larger pond has become a source of livelihood: its custodian has begun rearing fish, adding another layer of self-reliance to the community.



Seeing these benefits, the clan has expressed a wish for more such structures, especially to support plantations farther from the existing ponds.

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