

Traditional Costumes and Ornaments of Arunachal Pradesh

In Arunachal Pradesh, the men generally wear a jacket and a loin-cloth or *lungi*, while the women have a large piece of cloth draped around their body, flowing down from the shoulders to the knees. However, Arunachal Pradesh is famous for its large number of distinctive tribes, each having their own characteristic costumes and ornaments. Hence, the characteristic costumes of some of the major tribes have been described in detail.



Chuba

The Monpas:

The Monpas are greatly influenced by the Tibetan culture. The men cut their hair in a straight line just above the eyes and at the level of the nape at the back. They wear a dome-shaped hat made of felt with fur edges. The women tie their hair into a bun or a plait. Over this, they wear a round cap. Both men and women wear round, yak-wool caps with pointed tassels jutting out from all sides, which help to protect the wearer from rain. The men wear a woolen, hip-length cloak or *chuba*, which is dyed red. This is worn over short loose drawers of the same coarse wool. A short sword in a wooden scabbard completes the outfit. On the feet they wear ankle-length boots made of some indigenous material. The women's dress consists of a large cotton cloth draped around the body, and flowing down to the knees. A jacket called *kvan-chan* is worn over this.



Kyan-chan



Gurdam or Ngama Zom

The Sherdukpens:

The men cut their hair short and wear a round skull-cap made of yak-hair called *gurdam*, which has tassels projecting from all sides, thus providing protection from rain. The cap is often adorned with a white cockade on one side and a colourful band along its brim. The women usually remain bare-headed, though during festive occasions they may wear the Monpa round caps. The men wear a loin-cloth and a *sape*, a piece of cloth diagonally covering the upper body with the two ends secured to the shoulders and reaching down to the knees. A full-sleeved, hip-length, front- open jacket is worn over this. During winter, those who may afford it wear an additional coat and loose trousers. A colourful sash, about 6-8 ft long, is tied around the waist, into which is tucked a sword. The women wear a loose, sleeve-less shirt reaching up to the knees and tied around the waist with a similar coloured sash, known locally as *mukhak*. Over this, they may wear small, full- sleeved coats made of mill-cloth. Two straps of cloth, each 20 inches long and 12 inches wide with their ends sewn together called *lailo* are wrapped around the calves to protect against dim-dum flies, a stinging pest. The Sherdukpens generally walk barefoot though sometimes the men may wear the Monpa boots. The women and children apply on their lips and cheek a mixture of charcoal and a sticky substance obtained from pine resin. This is believed to protect the skin while enhancing the beauty of the person applying it. Both men and women wear silver or brass rings on the fingers as well as necklaces. Women wear silver bangles, bracelets and lockets.



*Nom Lham or Monpa
Boots*



Jur or Frenga