

THE SUPPORTING STAFF

No department is efficiently functional without its supporting staff. We have a competent staff working alongside with the teaching staff in the department. Mrs. Florence Kharkongor is the longest serving member of our staff who joined the department in 1981. We all know her as Kong Yen. Kong Yen has seen the department grow from the beginning till date. In a way, she is the ultimate biochemist who issued us all the necessary glasswares for our practicals but didn't do the experiments herself! We all have grown to adore our very sincere even though slightly confused (at times!!) Kong Yen. And of course we all know about her knitting talents!!! When Kong Yen leaves the department next year we all will miss her terribly.

Mrs. Pushpa Kumari and Mr. Kushal Sinha are part of this department from 1996 and 1998. These two very friendly persons efficiently accomplish the administrative paperwork in time for the department to run smoothly. Pushpa, I know for sure is very good at drawing charts! Kushal is a very religious person and I am yet to find out his hidden talents!

Mr. M. B. Singh has been in the department for a long time as senior technical assistant. He is always very calm and cool and gives you the feeling that things would be ultimately going smoothly even when minor crisis appear and there are deadlines to meet. He is always ready to issue departmental library books any time of the day. Any trouble with income tax, railway tickets etc etc – Manibabu is the man to ask.

Mr. Bani Laloo has also been with us for a long time. He always is making sure that all the practicals are running smoothly for both the M.Sc. semesters. He is highly popular with the students. (A quality so important for the department to run in harmony!) Well, apart from that, Bani is a good swimmer (my son tells me that)! And this I must share with you all. Bani always carries only one piece of 'kwai' in his pocket and the minute I ask him for one, he would pop that in his mouth and tell me- "Sorry, that was the last piece!"

Mrs. Judy Hynniewta joined the department in 1989 as laboratory attendant. Well, my Ph.D. would not have been completed in time without Kong Judy vigorously washing my glasswares and giving me different seasonal fruits from her orchard which she carries in her handbag! So, next time research scholars, when you are hungry and don't have time to run to the canteen, you know who to ask for a fruit. Those labs where Kong Judy washes the glasswares are real lucky! Thank you, Kong Judy.

Mr. Bhaben Medhi is our senior technical assistant who joined the department recently. He mends everything (almost) in the department, from my hair dryer (Don't tell anyone) to voltage stabilizers, electric kettles, switch boards and equipments. Only, don't ask him to fix anything in the Friday afternoon!! By then he is really eager to go to Guwahati to see his son!

Mr. Ponderly Lyngdoh joined the department in 2002. With him came a quiet efficiency with which he does all the work he is asked to do in the department. He never says no to anyone of us and runs up and down the department (the department corridors are pretty long!) and to the administrative building as many times as required in a day serving notices, bringing letters, pay slips and examination remuneration. Specially, he

tolerates my strange 'khasi' speaking ability without laughing and answers me back in khasi making me feel that I am really an expert in the language! Thank you Bah Ponderly!

Mr. S. N. Sahu has joined the department as lab attendant not long ago. He is our errand man! Always doing odd jobs given to him including someday filling my water bottle, making sure everybody had their tea during the examination days, helping in M.Sc. practicals and labs.

Let me tell you all about the newest members of the staff in the department. Mr. Luxemburgh Hynniewta (Lux to us all) and Mr. Pynkupborlang Syiem Malngiang. It is nice to have them in the department as they spread out youthful energy in the department. Lux joined in a temporary post as laboratory technical assistant in 2004. He is one of our alumni and passed out M.Sc. in 2003. He is also NET qualified! With him around handling practicals have become quite easy. Lux is quiet and a polite boy with a bunch of grey hair on his head (there, Lux, you are now famous! everybody will want to see them now!) He and Pynkup are always doing something in the computer. I will have to sneak up one day and see what that is! Without Pynkup and Lux running around throughout the winter break taking photographs, buying batteries, editing, pasting photographs and doing all the minute, irritating modifications in the computer for the souvenir, we probably would not be able to come up with this souvenir in time!! Pynkup is fascinating with his pure Hindi especially when he converses with Prof. Rai! He also threw me off my chair when he identified a Bhupen Hazarika song that I was playing over the internet. He is a sweet boy – always ready to help!!! Nice and hard working people go far in life. Lux and Pynkup, just be patient and you will be rewarded in time.

The best part I kept for the last. Our department is always neat and clean. Thanks to Kong Linda Lanong, Kong Letitia Gathoh and Kong Bathshaba Nongdhar. They come, sweep and mop the department everyday smiling, talking to everyone, eating kwai (and sometimes giving me one as well!) and in general making the place a real pleasure to work in. Specially, my room! I have realized that neater my room is, more vigorously they clean and shine it up everyday!! And of course, after they finish, they wear lipsticks, nice formal clothes and high heels and go for tea. Good job, kongs!

This write up is not complete without mentioning Mr. P. K. Prabhakaran and Mr. Bijoy Das. Prabhakaran (sir to me) knew everything about instruments in the department. Simple as that! Any problem with any equipment or a practical just run to PK sir and it is solved! Best part about him was that he was such a nice person with sparkling eyes and always so helpful and of course always paying our tea bills!! When he left the department we all felt lost and almost betrayed! But thank God, by then Don had learned about most of the instruments and practicals from him. With pressure from us coming to him all the time with problems and with practice Don became almost as good and we survived his absence. We still keep in touch and I know he will always do well in whatever he does.

Here I must mention our (mine?) dear Dr. Don Syiem, who joined the department as STA in 1986 as a very skinny, very curly haired Don! He is the longest serving member of the department right after Kong Yen. My batch of M.Sc. Biochemistry students used to call him "Holy crook" as he refused to tell us the identity of a carbohydrate or an amino acid during practical examination and we were never sure whether the result we got was right or wrong! Mind you we tried all tricks on him including asking him out for a movie, lunch, tea!! (Boy, the length we went without

success to get Don to tell us not the name but what we were reporting was at least right!) Don methodically approached his career first by qualifying UGC-NET and then completing his Ph.D and later joining the department as teaching staff. And guys, he knows all about instruments!! Oh, I have never heard Don really laughing out loud! I mean, I have never seen him find anything highly amusing. My next agenda in life is to find out what it will take for Don to burst out laughing? Believe me, I am working on it!!

Bijoy Das was photographer in the department. He was like a big brother to all of us. Bijoyda was always ready to help us with photographs and reprography. He is such a nice person. He still visits us whenever he is in Shillong.

You know, while I wrote this piece, I realized how nice a setup we have in this department. Somehow, everybody in our department is really nice and it is such a pleasure to be apart of this family!



Non-Teaching staffs: (L to R) M.B.Singh, Kushal Sinha, Judy Hynniewta, Linda Lanong, Luxemburg Hynniewta, F.Kharkongor, Pynkupborlang Syiem, L.Gatphoh, Ponderly Lyngdoh, Pushpa Kumari, B.Laloo, B.Nongdhar, S.N. Sahu, Bhaben Medhi.