

Boa Sr.

Boa Sr. (*circa* 1925 – 26 January 2010^[1]) was an Indian Great Andamanese elder. She was the last surviving person who remembered any Bo, a language of the Great Andamanese language family.

1 Biography

She was born around 1925.^[2]

Boa Sr. lived through the epidemic brought by the British to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which devastated the Great Andamanese population, and the Japanese invasion and occupation of the Andaman Islands during World War II.^[3] Boa Sr.'s mother, who died approximately forty years before her death, was the only living speaker of Bo for an extensive period of time. Other members of the Great Andamanese speech community had difficulty understanding the songs and narratives which she knew in Bo.^[4] She also spoke the Andamanese dialect of Hindi, as well as Great Andamanese, a mix of the ten indigenous languages of Andamans.

Boa Sr. worked with Anvita Abbi, a professor of linguistics at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, since 2005. Abbi studied and recorded Boa's language and songs.^[4]

Boa Sr. survived the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake by climbing a tree. She later explained her escape from the tsunami saying, "We were all there when the earthquake came. The eldest told us the Earth would part, don't run away or move."^[5]

Her husband, Nao Jer, died several years before she did and the couple had no children. She suffered from some vision loss during her later life, but was considered to be in good health until shortly before her death in 2010.^[5]

Boa Sr. died at a hospital in Port Blair on 26 January 2010.^[5] Boa Sr., who was approximately 85 years old, was the oldest living member of the Great Andamanese tribes at the time.^[6] Boa Sr.'s death left just 52^[5] surviving Great Andamanese people in the world, none of whom remembers any Bo. Their population is greatly reduced from the estimated 5,000 Great Andamanese living in the Andaman Islands at the time of the arrival of the British in 1858.^[5]

Stephen Corry, director of the British-based NGO Survival International, issued a statement saying, "With the death of Boa Sr. and the extinction of the Bo language, a unique part of human society is now just a mem-

ory. Boa's loss is a bleak reminder that we must not allow this to happen to the other tribes of the Andaman Islands."^[7] Linguist Narayan Choudhary also explained what the loss of Boa Sr. meant in both academic and personal terms, "Her loss is not just the loss of the Great Andamanese community, it is a loss of several disciplines of studies put together, including anthropology, linguistics, history, psychology, and biology. To me, Boa Sr. epitomised a totality of humanity in all its hues and with a richness that is not to be found anywhere else."

2 References

- [1] http://www.andamanese.net/BoaSr_Obituary.html
- [2] Alastair Lawson (February 4, 2010). "Last speaker of ancient language of Bo dies in India". *BBC*. Retrieved 2010-08-12. The last speaker of an ancient language in India's Andaman Islands has died at the age of about 85, a leading linguist has told the BBC.
- [3] "Bo Sr.'s obituary". *Andamanese.net*. Retrieved 2010-05-14.
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- [5] "Lives Remembered". *The Daily Telegraph*. 2010-02-10. Retrieved 2010-02-22.
- [6] "Language lost as last member of Andaman tribe dies". *The Daily Telegraph*. 2010-02-05. Retrieved 2010-02-22.
- [7] Watt, Jonathan (2010-02-04). "Ancient tribal language becomes extinct as last speaker dies". *The Guardian*. Retrieved 2010-02-22.

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3.1 Text

- **Boa Sr.** *Source:* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boa_Sr.?oldid=717766061 *Contributors:* N-true, WhisperToMe, Jorge Stolfi, Necrothesp, Kwamikagami, Richard Arthur Norton (1958-), Woohookitty, TaivoLinguist, Ryoung122, Koavf, Bgwhite, Tachs, Thumperward, Cybercobra, Ser Amantio di Nicolao, Maziotis, Scanlan, Waacstats, Greatrobo76, Pete unseth, Liberal Humanist, Addbot, Lucas-bot, Yobot, AnomieBOT, DASDBILL2, ZéroBot, H3llBot, Kagundu, Riteshji04, Cyberbot II, Puttugatta, KasparBot and Anonymous: 8

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