

## Caring Touch Matters: Meet Paala, Our Friend!

Suma TS and Thinley Bhutia

Two years back, we met Paala at his Kyongnosla Herbal Nursery, Sikkim. We were touched by his caring touch, concern, commitment towards the medicinal plants he raised in his nursery.

These plants are not common. They are high altitude medicinally important and conservation concern species. This gardener (mali in Hindi) has been in this nursery since 2002. He carefully showed us every bed. When requested for a plant, he sternly said, *"I cannot give any plant to you because they are from this region, they grow here and I will protect them. I do not want any money". That is his commitment and conviction!*

Again next year, we visited him. He recognised us. As usual, with his excitement, he took us to the garden with same zeal and explained about the plants. When we asked him, *"what makes him continue in this profession". Paala said with a gentle smile, "I love my plants!"*



Paala is the nick name of Shri. Gyanzen Bhutia, S/o. Lt. Thendu Bhutia resident of 15<sup>th</sup> Mile JN Road, Karponangunder Gnathang GPU, East District is working as a Mali of Herbal Garden Nurseriesat Kyongnosla, East District since 2002-03. He is very sincere and dedicated to his work. Shri.Gyanzen Bhutiais practically well experienced in Conservation and Propagation of High Altitude Medicinal Herbs. Though he has attended age of 78 years and he is still very active on his duty and performing his duty very satisfactorily.

Shri Gyanzen Bhutia was working under Forests, Department as a nursery labour under River Valley Project(RVP) Scheme from 1980-1981. After saturation of

the RVP scheme in 1992 -93 he was again absorbed under Minor Forest Produce (MFP) Scheme till 1997 - 1998. From 1998-1999 he was again brought under Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) scheme for maintenance of Nurseries as nurseryMali.

Shri. Gyanzen Bhutia is very honest and simple old man and we wish him very healthy and long life. People like him with commitment, passion are inspirations for us.



### For more information:

Ms. Suma TS, Sr. Program Officer,  
ENVIS Co-ordinator, FRLHT (I-AIM), Bangalore  
Email: [suma.tagadur@frlht.org](mailto:suma.tagadur@frlht.org)  
Shri Thinley Bhutia, S.F.S. Joint Director, Sikkim State  
Medicinal Plants Board, Gangtok, Sikkim