Among the tales in Ao-Naga folklore, there is a type which depicts certain characters who possess supernatural powers. This narrative is about such a person called Yajangla, who, it was believed, not only had a tiger as her familiar spirit, but could also transform herself into a tigress if she chanted some magic formula. She could also conjure spirits and perform miracles. But the secret of her supernatural powers was kept hidden from everybody, including her husband. Outwardly, she led life as a normal village wife and in due course of time gave birth to a son.

Since she could not help her husband in the field for quite sometime due to her confinement, he found it increasingly difficult to cope with the weeds which seemed to flourish more than the crops. Tired of his daily complaints about this, Yajangla one day asked her husband to stay at home with the baby so that she could go the field and see for herself.

On reaching the field she saw that her husband had indeed very good reasons to complain and worry about the crops. Seeing that mere human efforts would be ineffective in tackling the weeds, she decided to use her supernatural powers to do the job. She summoned a number of spirits and commanded them to dig trenches all round the field. Next, she wove a network of fine thread and spread it over the entire field. As she pulled the nets towards her chanting some words, only the weeds got caught in the net, which were dumped into the trenches. The process was continued till not a single weed remained in the field. She then caused the trenches to be filled up with earth again by her magic.

In the evening Yajangla went home and told her husband that weeding of the field was complete. He was a little skeptical but when he went there the next day, he was astounded by what he saw and was amazed that his wife, a woman, could perform such a task in one day. Suspecting that his wife indeed had some supernatural powers, he came home and began to question her. At first she refused to say anything, other than asking him whether he was not glad that the difficult job was done. But the husband persisted; she again replied that it would be in the interest of the family if her secret remained with her only. But the husband was adamant: he, as her husband, had the right to know.

After several days of bickering over this, Yajangla gave in to her husband’s insistence and agreed to reveal her secret, but at the same time she warned him that there could be serious consequences for which he should be willing to take responsibility. He replied he was prepared for any eventuality. Seeing that he was beyond reason, she instructed him to take certain precautions as the revelation of her secret could turn out to be extremely dangerous for him. First, she asked him to make a high perch for himself on the ceiling of the house. Then she instructed him to collect several conical baskets and keep them on the perch. Next, she told him to keep a large collection of stones handy.

Even as the preparations were taking place, Yajangla once again tried to dissuade her husband from the idea as the revelation might prove to be too powerful and even
fatal. But having come this far, he was not at all willing to abandon the project, which was beginning to excite him in a strange way. So Yajangla gave up and the stage was set for the drama about to take place.

Seeing that there was no turning back now, Yajangla gave her last instructions to her husband, “When I conjure up my spirits, I shall be transformed into another form and will try to kill you and eat you up. In order to repel my attacks you must push the conical ends of the baskets into my mouth when I jump up at you. If my power lasts longer, you must throw the stones into my mouth to protect yourself. So be prepared for the ferocity of my nature when I am under this spell.”

When night came, the husband climbed onto his seat on the perch and looked down on his wife who was chanting some strange words. The instant she finished the incantation, she was transformed into a full-grown tigress, displaying the natural aggressive ferocity of one which has had a cub recently. Growling menacingly, the tigress leaped, baring her teeth at the human crouching on the perch. The man did exactly as the wife had instructed earlier. First the conical ends of the baskets were thrust into the tigress’s mouth, but the animal kept leaping up at him, so he threw the stones into its mouth. But all his efforts of defense proved futile because the contest was between unequal powers which continued most of the night. Eventually the superior and superhuman power of the tigress prevailed, who killed him and began to eat his flesh. As soon as she tasted human flesh she began to return to her human form gradually. She then quickly grabbed her baby who was wailing throughout the battle between the parents, and began to suckle him from breasts swollen with overflowing milk.

Hearing the commotion in the house and the baby’s incessant cries through the night, the neighbours assembled as day broke. When they came, Yajangla had not yet fully reverted to her human self, and was still chewing a portion of the husband’s leg even as the baby suckled at her breast.

On being questioned by the neighbours, Yajangla, without showing any emotion of regret, gave the explanation, “Oh, the baby’s father was at fault. It was he who forced me to reveal my secret magical powers to him in spite of my repeated warnings. Because of my supernatural powers, I became a tigress and killed him and ate him up. I am not to blame because when I am under the influence of these magical powers I cease to be a human being for that period and have no control over my actions. And I still say that it was wrong of him to force me to do it”.

The neighbours and the village council could not take any action against Yajangla because they saw some logic in her statement and were also afraid of her strange powers. They however made a stipulation: if she wished to stay on in the village, she must promise not to use her magical powers ever again. To this she readily agreed and lived in the village to a ripe old age.

In 1969, to commemorate the birth centenary of the Mahatma, over 40 countries issued stamps on Gandhi. To commemorate the 139th birth anniversary of the Mahatma, the Anti Violence Support Organization put up a thematic exhibition of stamps: Gandhi all over the world.

Ten boards with some 200 philatelic items were shown to visitors on October 2, the day commemorating the birth as well as the non-violence teachings of Gandhi. An exhibition put up by Pravin Bhowanydeen, a local philatelist, who has built up such a collection in a span of ten years, including five years during his studies in India.

In “The Story of my Experiment with Truth”, Gandhi writes how he got the support of children of his village to send his ‘green pamphlets’ to his supporters. “To get these pamphlets ready for posting was no small matter. It would have been expensive too, if I had employed paid help for preparing wrappers. But I hit upon a much simpler plan. I gathered together all the children of my locality and asked them to volunteer two to three hours' labour of a morning, when they had no school. This they willingly agreed to do. I promised to bless them and give them, as a reward, used postage stamps which I had collected.” This is how we come to know that he was a stamp collector.

After his assassination, besides India, 90 countries, from Antigua to Zambia, have issued stamps on the Mahatma. Ironically, India's first postage stamp commemorating Gandhi was printed by the Swiss printers, Helio Courvoisier, Sa. La Chaux de Fonds. A photograph from Life magazine was selected for the stamp, showing the Mahatma in his usual loin cloth and naked above the waist. However, due to bureaucratic decision, the Swiss printer was instructed to have the unclothed portion covered, which resulted in a non Gandhi style.

* [http://www.defimedia.info/articles/4125/1/Gandhi-all-over-the-world/Page1.html](http://www.defimedia.info/articles/4125/1/Gandhi-all-over-the-world/Page1.html)