

CHAPTER-2

DOCUMENTATION OF ORAL DATA OF NAGA TRIBES IN NAGALAND

This chapter is composed of oral facts that have been translated. In preparation for this study project, information pertaining to the Naga tribes has been recorded and translated. The translated oral accounts will be the focus of this chapter's activities as well as the subsequent discussion. For the purpose of constructing the community's self-representation, it is essential to have a solid understanding of the foundations of their beliefs, practices, and concept of origin as represented in the oral material that has been handed down through the generations. Oral history may be thought of as a reservoir in which one's ancestors have stored information that is important to the community and plays a role in the formation of one's identity. The recording of oral data from Naga tribes in Nagaland includes the following headings:

Customary law: the Nagas originate from or belong to an oral culture, which they have mastered over the years and continue to practice to this day. In this culture, every aspect of daily life is regulated by time-honored rituals and practices. These procedures have not yet been written down in a codification. As a result, the customary court of law serves as the seat of government in each and every hamlet inhabited by members of the Nagas tribe, and the decisions made by this body are binding on the whole community. Even though they have only been handed down orally, these traditions and rituals are nevertheless held to be infallible and holy by the tribes for whom they were originally developed.¹

Inheritance: The patriarchal structure of Naga culture dictates that no women may inherit family property; yet, delivering land to the daughter on the occasion of her marriage was a common tradition throughout many different tribes, as several study discoveries have shown. There are several situations in which the lady receives a portion of the newly acquired property.

Marriage customs: The majority of marriages amongst the various tribes of Nagaland are said to be monogamous, however there have been cases in which males have been allowed to marry more than one bride in a few of the tribes. Exogamy is practiced among the Naga people, and as a result, only marriages between members of the same clan are sanctioned throughout all of the tribes. Marriage between members of other clans is frowned upon and considered a taboo by the Naga people. Members of these tribes who violate this taboo are subject to severe punishments by the traditional courts, including the expulsion from their ancestral homes.

Bride price: Despite the fact that the term "dowry" appears in some of these manuscripts in error, the notion of dowry does not exist among the Naga tribes. Instead, bride prices are discussed. There is a custom among several Naga tribes, such as the Rengma, Konyak, and Lotha, as well as

¹ Angami, A. 1975: *changing Naga society* (letters to the editor). North Eastern affairs, 3 (4), January-march

in the hamlet of Wui, which is home to members of the khiamnungan tribe. This custom involves the preparation and payment of a bride price. Presents from the bride's father at the time of marriage seem to be a creative contemporary continuation of the old practice of paying bride price in urban locations.

Divorce: There were, however, strict restrictions laid down in the customary practices of several Nagas tribes about the grounds for divorce, the punishment for the offending party, and the question of child custody. Divorce was historically uncommon among the Nagas peoples and still is in certain tribes today. Some of these documents go into painful detail about the divorce itself, the sanctions meted out, and the circumstances around child custody.

Wages: Women do not get lower wages or other benefits for working outside the home in the same capacities as men. This is true regardless of whether one is in an urban or rural setting.²

Participation in governance: No Naga woman has ever been elected to serve on the village council, nor has one ever been allowed to attend a meeting of the body. When she was out of the house, she was strictly forbidden from discussing governing matters. Some of the appearances, such as the Aos tribe, provide enticing details about men's perspectives on women's roles and abilities under previous systems of government. This predicament even persists in metropolitan areas, where women are not permitted to participate in the decision-making processes of local governing bodies.

One observes that the records provide different information on the subject matter, the kind of study conducted, and the valuations that were made. Only a few people have offered their thoughts on the influence that modern times and Christianity have had on the development of tribal politics. In a mission of this kind, it is not surprising that there is little analysis in the strict meaning of the word. Despite this seeming simplicity, it is important to acknowledge that significant issues relating to women's place in oral traditions have been documented for the first time. The position of Naga women has been a major issue of study and dialogue in recent years, which is particularly vital given that this has now been the case not just among academics but also among the women themselves, even at the grassroots level. This is undoubtedly a significant step in the advancement of giving women in Naga tribes the rights that are rightfully theirs. A particular observation is of importance in this context.³

It has been pointed out that there have been certain instances in which Indian law has taken precedence over Ao customary law. This is known as a forward tendency, and it suggests that Ao

² Angami, A. 1975: *changing Naga society* (letters to the editor). North Eastern affairs, 3 (4), January-march

³ Cutting, C.S. 1938: *Jungle people of Assam: customs and ceremonials of the Naga. Jour of the American Museum of Natural History*, LXXXIII (1). Pp. 54-65.

conventional laws may be able to adjust to accommodate the changes that are occurring in the community of Ao people.⁴

POPULATION OF 17 TRIBES OF NAGALAND

1. Chumoukedima is the District of Angami tribe and it has 160,512 population
2. Dimapur is the District of mixed tribes and it has 500,031 population
3. Kiphire is the District of Sangtam, Yimkhuing, Tikhir and Sumi tribes and it has 57,517 population
4. Kohima is the District of Angami tribe and it has 134,000 population
5. Longleng is the District of Phom tribe and it has 42,871 population
6. Mokokchung is the district of Ao tribe and it has 270,525 population
7. Mon is the District of Konyak tribe and it has 26,328 population
8. Niuland is the District of Sumi tribe and it has 11,876 population
9. Noklak is the District of Khiamniungan tribe and it has 59,300 population
10. Peren is the District of Ziliang tribe and it has 81,429 population
11. Phek is the District of Chakasang tribe and it has 138,843 population
12. Shamator is the District of Yimkhuing tribe and it has 12,726 population
13. Tseminyu is the District of Rengma tribe and it has 67,734 population
14. Tuensang is the District of Ziliang tribe and it has 81,429 population
15. Wokha is the District of Lotha tribe and it has 131,339 population
16. Zunheboto is the District of Sumi and it has 113,160 population

Key elements in District Populations

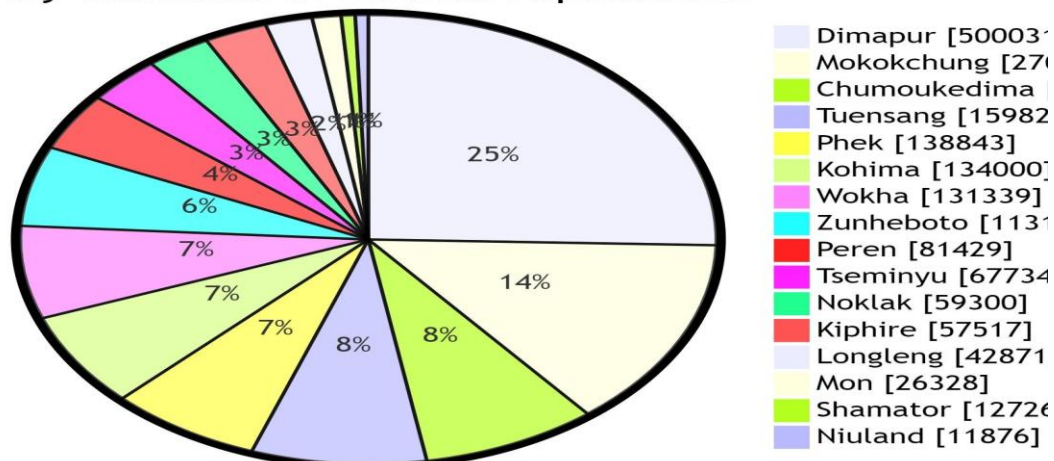


Figure no.4 Pie chart of Nagaland population district-wise (sources : Research scholar)

i) ORAL DATA TRANSCRIPT AND INTERPRETATION

Interviewee:	Hotokhu (Sumi Naga elder/community member)	Transcript-1
Interviewer:	Akatolu Assumi	(Researcher)
Date:	May 14,	2015
Location:	Valley View, Nagaland	

Introduction

AKATOLU: Hello, and thank you for accepting my invitation to participate in this study. Your insights will be invaluable for my research on Naga tribal history.

HOTOKHU: My pleasure. I'm happy to share what I know.

Section 1: Origins and Migration

AKATOLU: To begin, could you tell me about the origins of the Sumi Naga tribe? From where did your people migrate?

HOTOKHU: According to our oral traditions, the Sumi Nagas migrated from mainland China many generations ago. This belief is common among many Naga tribes—that our ancestors traveled from China before settling in these hills.

AKATOLU: That's fascinating. Could you elaborate on the migration route?

HOTOKHU: Yes. As the stories go, our ancestors journeyed through the dense jungles of Myanmar (Burma) and eventually arrived at a place called *Makhel*, located near present-day Senapati District in Manipur, close to the Nagaland border. Makhel is significant in Naga history—many tribes consider it a dispersal point before moving to their current settlements across Nagaland.

Section 2: Historical Figures and Conflicts

AKATOLU: I'd like to ask about important figures in Sumi history. Were there any notable leaders or warriors who shaped your community?

HOTOKHU: [Nods thoughtfully] Yes, we remember many. One of the most respected was *Kihoto*, a great warrior and peacemaker from the 19th century. He mediated conflicts between villages and

⁴Cutting, C.S. 1938: *Jungle people of Assam: customs and ceremonials of the Naga*. *Jour of the American Museum of Natural History*, LXXXIII (1). Pp. 54-65

defended our lands during turbulent times. There was also *Zhimo*, a spiritual leader who established moral codes that guided our ancestors.

AKATOLU: Were there significant conflicts in Sumi history?

HOTOKHU: [Sighs] Many. Before the British came, inter-village feuds were common—often over land or honor. The most remembered is the *Ahuna-Ükhezhü* conflict in the early 1800s, where two powerful clans clashed for years until elders brokered peace through a ritual called *Tukuhe*. Later, during British rule in the 1870s, our people resisted their surveys and taxes. Some warriors like *Sakhiye* led rebellions, though they were eventually subdued.

AKATOLU: How do these stories influence Sumi identity today?

HOTOKHU: These tales remind us of our resilience. We teach children about *Kihoto's* diplomacy and *Sakhiye's* courage to instill pride. The old conflicts also explain clan alliances and why certain villages are still closely tied.

Section 3: Cultural Festivals

AKATOLU: Moving to cultural practices, what are the major festivals celebrated by the Sumi Nagas? How long do they last?

HOTOKHU: We have several festivals, but two stand out. First is *Tuluni*, a harvest festival celebrated in July. It's marked by feasting (we call it *Anni*), where families gather to give thanks for abundant crops. It's also a time for betrothed couples to exchange gifts and strengthen bonds between families.

The second is the *Hornbill Festival*, though it's not exclusive to our tribe. It's a statewide celebration of Naga heritage.

AKATOLU: Could you describe the Hornbill Festival in more detail?

HOTOKHU: Certainly. The Hornbill Festival is Nagaland's most famous cultural event, held every year from December 1st to 10th in Kisama, near Kohima. Each tribe showcases traditional dances,

music, handicrafts, and food. The government's Tourism and Art & Culture Department organizes it to promote unity and preserve our traditions. Visitors from across the world attend!

Section 4: Concluding Remarks

AKATOLU: This has been incredibly informative. As I'm writing my thesis on Naga tribes, is there anything else you'd like to add—perhaps something I haven't asked about?

HOTOKHU: [Pauses] Well, I've shared what I know based on stories passed down by our elders. I wasn't formally prepared for this interview, so I might have missed details. But if I recall anything later, I'd be glad to share it with you.

AKATOLU: Thank you so much for your time and wisdom. Your words will add great depth to my work.

HOTOKHU: You're welcome. It's important for our youth to learn these traditions too.

Interviewer: Akatolu Assumi

Transcript-2

Date: 19 November 2022

Location: Valley View, Dimapur, Nagaland

Akatolu: It is the 19th of November 2022. My name is Akatolu Assumi. I am with the Tohevi Sumi tribes of Naga. If I could just ask you to briefly introduce yourself, provide a little professional background and a short account of oral history of Naga tribes, could you?

Tohevi: Thank you, Akatolu. Presently, I am in Valley View, Dimapur, Nagaland, and I am from the Sumi tribe of Naga. My name is Tohevi. And yeah, the oral history of Nagas are heterogeneous tribes and belong to Mongoloid and Indo-Burmese stocks.

Akatolu: That's fascinating.

Tohevi: Indeed. We also have 16 tribes in Nagaland with different dialects.

Akatolu: So, are there any tribal issues among the 16 tribes of Nagas?

Tohevi: Of course, we have. Tribalism is the main cause that unemployment, corruption, and social ills of the current Naga society are occurring. Also, among the tribes, there is a land dispute

problem. There are some tribes who claim to depart from each other since they are not from the same tribe, etc.

Akatolu: Can you tell me some common myths of the 16 tribes of Nagaland?

Tohevi: Some myths that long existed in Nagas are: apparently, there is a beautiful female spirit who lives in Dzukou and takes the life of a male every year. There is a saying—once a man who visits the Dzukou suddenly falls sick, and they are often told to leave immediately. Another myth

is also said that white elephants roam around the expanse of the valley, and only a few people have witnessed it.

Akatolu: Can you think of any other myths that are still practiced in your society?

Tohevi: Yes, we have myths about how we should not sweep the house at night, and if we do, we will sweep away our wealth. Also, there's a myth about how we should not cut our nails and hair at night, and if we do, it will shorten our life. Some people still follow those practices in Nagaland.

Akatolu: So, do you believe in those myths?

Tohevi: Not exactly. But since our parents teach us in that way, we are aware of that.

Akatolu: Thank you for answering my questions.

Tohevi: You are most welcome.

Key Points from the Interview:

1. Introduction & Background:

- Tohevi is from the Sumi tribe of Nagaland, currently residing in Dimapur.
- The Naga tribes are heterogeneous, with Mongoloid and Indo-Burmese origins.
- Nagaland comprises 16 distinct tribes, each with unique dialects and traditions.

2. Tribal Issues in Nagaland:

- Tribalism is a major challenge, contributing to unemployment, corruption, and social problems.
- Land disputes and inter-tribal conflicts arise due to historical claims and identity differences.

3. Common Myths in Naga Society:

- Dzukou Valley Spirit: A myth about a beautiful female spirit who takes the life of a man yearly; those who fall sick in Dzukou are warned to leave immediately.
- White Elephants: Rare sightings of white elephants roaming the valleys.
- Household Superstitions:
 - Sweeping at night is believed to sweep away wealth.
 - Cutting nails/hair at night is thought to shorten one's lifespan.

4. Personal Belief in Myths:

- Tohevi does not strongly believe in these myths but acknowledges their cultural influence, as they are passed down through generations.

Significance of the Interview:

This conversation highlights the oral traditions, tribal diversity, and socio-cultural challenges faced by the Naga people. The myths reflect deep-rooted spiritual beliefs and taboos, while the discussion on tribalism underscores ongoing political and social tensions in Nagaland.

Interviewee:	Reverend P Dozo	(Theologian & Missionary)	Transcript-3
Interviewer:	Akatolu	Assumi	(Researcher)
Date:	1	July	2019
Location:	Dimapur,	Nagaland,	India
Interview	Duration:	15	minutes
Topic: Religious Transformation in Naga Society			

I. Introduction and Background

Akatolu Assumi:
Today is Monday, 1st July 2019. We are here in Dimapur with Reverend P Dozo, an esteemed theologian and missionary with extensive experience in cross-cultural ministry. Reverend Dozo, thank you for participating in this oral history project. To begin, could you briefly share your educational and ministerial background?

Rev. P Dozo:
Certainly. I completed my Bachelor of Divinity (B.D) here in Nagaland, then pursued postgraduate studies in the United States, earning a Master's degree in Missiology and Anthropology. Upon returning, I served for eight years as Secretary of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC), followed by another eight years as a missionary in Delhi, working primarily with urban migrant communities.

II. Religious Transition in Naga Society

Akatolu Assumi:
My research focuses on the historical transformation of Naga society, particularly the shift from indigenous belief systems to Christianity. Could you describe the religious landscape of Nagaland before Christianization and analyze how foreign missionaries facilitated this transition?

Rev. P Dozo:
[Thoughtful pause] This is indeed a profound question. Pre-Christian Naga society was fundamentally animistic. Our ancestors ascribed spiritual significance to natural phenomena—

sacred groves, rivers, and mountains were seen as inhabited by spirits. Rituals mediated by village elders sought to appease these forces for protection and prosperity.

The transition occurred remarkably fast—within just one generation in many communities. My own life reflects this: as a boy, I walked ten kilometers daily to attend a government school where teachers from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and other states taught comparative religion. We learned about Buddha, Krishna, and Hindu cosmology, but these narratives felt distant. At age twelve, I encountered *John 2:34-38*—"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." This sparked a personal quest that led me to Christ.

Foreign missionaries, particularly American Baptists, employed three strategic approaches:

1. Education: Establishing schools became a gateway for evangelization.
2. Medical Missions: Healthcare services built trust in remote areas.
3. Scripture Translation: Rendering the Bible into local dialects preserved cultural identity while introducing Christianity.

III. Theological and Anthropological Perspectives on Animism

Akatolu Assumi:
Your mention of animism is fascinating. Could you elaborate on its theological parallels and differences with Christianity?

Rev. P Dozo:
[Nods] Anthropologically, animism shares structural similarities with Hinduism—both sacralize the material world through polycentric divinity. However, a critical distinction exists: animism perceives spirits as *localized* forces tied to specific geographies, whereas Christianity presents a *universal* God transcending physical boundaries.

For instance, my grandfather would make offerings to the river spirit before fishing. This wasn't merely superstition; it reflected an intricate cosmology where humans negotiated with territorial deities. Christianity reoriented this worldview by asserting divine sovereignty over *all* creation (*Colossians 1:16-17*).

IV. Concluding Reflections

Akatolu Assumi:
This has been extraordinarily insightful. Unless you have final thoughts, I believe we've covered the core themes for my thesis on Naga historiography.

Rev. P Dozo:
Simply to emphasize that our conversion wasn't a rejection of culture but a reinterpretation. The

gospel didn't erase Naga identity; it redeemed our deepest questions about truth—just as it did for me as a boy reading John's Gospel.

Akatolu

Assumi:

Thank you for your time and wisdom, Reverend.

Rev.

P

Dozo:

Blessings on your academic work. Goodbye.

Interviewee: Wanglu Konyak (40-year resident of Tizit Village)

Transcript- 4

Interviewer: Akatolu

Assumi

Date: August 17,

2018

Location: Tizit Village, Mon District, Nagaland, India

Cultural Context: The Konyak Naga tribe, known for its rich traditions and historic headhunting practices, predominantly inhabits Tizit.

[00:00] Introduction

AKATOLU: Greetings! Could you begin by introducing yourself and your connection to Tizit?

WANGLU: Nyih! [Greeting in Konyak language]. I am Wanglu of the Konyak tribe, born and raised in Tizit Village. For forty monsoons, I've lived here among these hills, farming the same lands my ancestors cultivated.

[00:30] Life in Tizit

AKATOLU: As someone who has spent a lifetime here, how would you describe Tizit and its people?

WANGLU: (*Gesturing toward the valley*) Tizit is like a mother's embrace—the mist on the paddy fields at dawn, the songs of cicadas in the bamboo groves. Our people? (*Laughs*) If you share a meal with a Konyak, you'll never leave hungry. Even strangers become family here.

AKATOLU: What binds the community together?

WANGLU: Beyond kinship, it's our shared struggles. We built these terraced fields stone by stone. When floods came or crops failed, we rebuilt together. Now, even as some leave for cities, our festivals call them home.

[02:15] Spiritual Beliefs

AKATOLU: Your forefathers' spiritual practices intrigue me. Could you elaborate?

WANGLU: (*Nods solemnly*) Before the white-robed missionaries came, we worshipped nature's spirits—the *Ahngs* of the forests, rivers, and mountains. My grandfather spoke of offering rice beer

to the *Shalong* (deity of harvest) before sowing. The missionaries called this "animism," but for us, it was balance.

AKATOLU: How did Christianity change this?

WANGLU: (*Thoughtful pause*) The church brought schools and medicine, but also erased some wisdom. We no longer fear the forest spirits, yet... (*traces a pattern in the soil*) some elders still whisper prayers to the earth before planting.

[04:40] Food Traditions

AKATOLU: You mentioned pork and mithun meat. Are there ceremonial foods?

WANGLU: Ah! (*Eyes light up*) At *Aoleang*, no feast is complete without *smoked pork belly* and *galho*—a bamboo shoot stew with fermented soybeans. The mithun [a semi-domesticated bovine] is sacred; its meat is shared only during festivals or to resolve conflicts between villages.

AKATOLU: Any foraging traditions?

WANGLU: (*Points to distant hills*) Women still gather *yongchak* [stink beans], mushrooms, and *kholar* ferns in monsoon. Our ancestors survived famine eating these. Now, they're delicacies in urban markets!

[07:20] Festivals & Agriculture

AKATOLU: Beyond *Aoleang*, what other festivals exist?

WANGLU: There's *Lao Ong Mo* (post-harvest thanksgiving), where we hang the first rice sheaves in homes as blessings. In *Chingkanyu*, boys prove their courage by wrestling bulls. (*Grins*) Few win, but all get stories!

AKATOLU: How do festivals tie to farming?

WANGLU: Like threads in a loincloth! *Aoleang* celebrates seed-sowing—we dance to "awaken" the earth. Before mechanization, the entire village would work one field per day, singing *Hekka* work songs. Now, tractors are faster... but quieter. (*Sighs*)

[10:00] Closing

AKATOLU: Thank you for sharing these memories. Any final thoughts?

WANGLU: (*Pours rice beer into a bamboo cup*) Come back during *Aoleang*. The drums will shake your bones, and you'll taste *zutho* [rice beer] brewed in hollow logs. Our culture lives when stories are passed down—like you're doing today.

AKATOLU: A heartfelt nyih-khe [thank you]!

WANGLU: Khemee! [You're welcome].

Interview Transcript- 5

Interviewee:

Khulupu

Interviewer:

Akatolu

Assumi

Date:

26th

July

2019

Location: Dimapur

1. Introduction to WWII in Nagaland

AKATOLU: I am with Mr. Khulupu at his residence to interview/talk on the topic of WWII and Naga History. I would like to begin my question on WWII. So, Mr. Khulupu, can you tell me a little bit about WWII?

KHULUPU: That's a good question. The WWII battle took place in three stages from April 4 to 22 June 1944 around the town of Kohima, the present capital city of Nagaland.

AKATOLU: Okay! Were you there during WWII?

KHULUPU: Yes, I was.

AKATOLU: How was your experience there?

KHULUPU: It's so painful to see the people dying. We were all afraid of the gun sounds, though it was far away, and we even hid in the forest, thinking that it would reach our villages. People were stocking food grains.

2. Changes Before and After WWII

AKATOLU: Can you see any changes before WWII and after WWII?

KHULUPU: Yes, there are lots. We lived a life of aloofness, cut away from the rest of the world. But after WWII, the Naga's came to be exposed to the global world. We were indigenous religion

but changed into Christianity. Before WWII, we were living headhunting, but later we completely stopped, and it's not in vogue anymore.

AKATOLU: If there was no WWII, do you think we Naga's will still be living like our forefathers?

KHULUPU: I can't say about that since this world is changing day by day, but one thing I can tell you is, this WWII brought lots of changes in our society.

3. Role of the Naga in WWII

AKATOLU: What was the role of Naga's in WWII?

KHULUPU: Tribes of Naga's guided the British patrols to ambush the Japanese. They also guided the wounded British soldiers on 6th April 1944. They guided 80 walking wounded and 100 non-combatants from the Jail Hill, and this evacuation was made possible in seven hours because they were there to guide them.

AKATOLU: I am so surprised to hear that. Anyway, I want to ask you one last question about the History of Naga's. Can you tell me a little bit about the History of the Naga's?

4. Brief History of the Naga People

KHULUPU: The British first entered the Naga Hills in 1832 under an expedition led by Captain Francis Jenkins and Lieutenant Robert Boileau Pemberton.

During WWI, the British-India government sent about 2,000-3,000 Naga's as part of the Naga Labour Corps to work in trenches as laborers and porters. When these men returned, they arrived

with an awareness of common identity and culture that eventually led to the establishment of the Naga Club in 1918 in Kohima.

17 tribes of Naga and other sub-tribes under the Naga National Council (NNC) in August 1947 protested and demanded an independent Nagaland. On August 14, 1947, the Naga's declared independence.

In 1954, the Indian army moved into the Naga Hills. After a long fight, Nagaland finally became the sixteenth state of the Indian Union in 1963, before which it was a district of Assam.

5. Closing Remarks

AKATOLU: Thank you so much for your time.

KHULUPU: You are most welcome.

Interviewer: Akatolu Assumi

Interviewee:

Date: 22nd

July

Location: Tizit, Mon District

Transcript-6

Tarap

2023

Introduction

AKATOLU: To start our interview, could you please introduce yourself/tell me about yourself?

TARAP: My name is Tarap, and I am from Tizit.

AKATOLU: To start our interview, I would like to know how long you have been living in Tizit and what kind of activities you do in Tizit?

TARAP: I have been living here since birth. We go to work for daily wages every day to survive or feed our children. That work keeps rotating the whole year.

About Tizit

AKATOLU: Okay. Can you tell me something about Tizit?

TARAP: Absolutely! Tizit is a village in Mon district. Tizit also has a number of beautiful sightseeing, trekking, fishing, and picnic spots to attract tourists. It provides serenity and a peaceful

environment. The Tizit society is obviously a patriarchal society dominated by males, and the eldest son inherits the paternal property.

AKATOLU: Do you have any idea when Tizit was established?

TARAP: Tizit was established in 1971, and it is also managed by the Department of Education.

Governance & Tradition

AKATOLU: So, Tizit is still ruled by the village Angh (chief)?

TARAP: Right. Tizit still practices the Angh system, and it is ruled by Angh. The house of Angh is different from others' houses. The huge and unique piece of wood-carving at the entrance of the Angh's house was believed to be constructed by two brothers in spirit. Angh, in other words, [means] king.

AKATOLU: What is the main tradition and culture of Tizit people?

TARAP: Before, our tradition was [being] hunters and warriors, but now our main occupation is agriculture. In the past, Tizit people could be easily recognized by their tattooed faces, and some still follow that. In olden days, Tizit people were renowned head-hunters; they would often carry back the head of their rivals as war trophies.

Traditional Items

AKATOLU: What are the traditional items of Tizit?

TARAP: Traditional items of Tizit are—instead of clothing, they wore headgear, armlets, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, cane leggings, etc.

Closing

AKATOLU: Thank you!

TARAP: No problem.

Oral History Interview with Ang, Chief of the Konyak Tribe

Transcript- 7

Interviewer: Akatolu

Assumi

Date: July 22,

2021

Location: Longwa Village (Indo-Myanmar Border)

Meeting the Chief

AKATOLU: (*adjusting his recorder*) Today, I've been granted the rare honor of sitting with the Ang of the Konyak people in his ancestral home. We're in the kitchen of his longhouse—a place

I'm told literally straddles the border between India and Myanmar. *(turning to Ang)* Sir, my first question is about your title. How does one become the Ang?

ANG: *(leaning back on the bamboo stool)* In our tradition, the Ang is not chosen—he is born. I came into this world as the son of the chief's lineage. When my father passed, the responsibility fell to me, as it will one day fall to my son. But *(raising a finger)* being Ang isn't just about blood. You must prove you can carry the weight of the people.

A Chief's Childhood

AKATOLU: What memories stand out from your early years in Longwa?

ANG: *(smiling)* Ah, we ran wild like jungle fowl! The forest was our playground. We made spears from sticks, wrestled in the rice fields, and knew every tree that bore sweet berries. School? *(waves hand dismissively)* My father said, "What will books teach you about settling disputes or reading the seasons?" So I learned from the elders instead—how to track animals, which plants heal fever, when to plant crops by the moon's face.

AKATOLU: And your parents? What were they like?

ANG: *(proudly)* Strong as teak. My mother could carry two baskets of paddy uphill without pausing. My father? He'd sit in this very kitchen, smoking his pipe while villagers came with problems—land quarrels, marriage disputes. Even with his power, we ate the same rice as everyone. Our wealth was in respect, not rupees.

Echoes of the Past

AKATOLU: Did they share stories from older times?

ANG: *(nodding)* My grandfather's tales were like embers—still hot with life. He'd say our ancestors crossed mountains from Myanmar, following herds and fertile land. They were hunters, yes, but also warriors. *(leans forward)* Once, he described a raid when enemy warriors came like

shadows at dusk. The women smeared ash on their faces to hide in the smoke of cooking fires. The children? They were tucked into pits beneath the floors, silent as mice.

AKATOLU: Did you ever face such dangers?

ANG: (*chuckling*) Not with spears, but I remember the year the Yimchunger tribe cut our bamboo groves. Tensions rose like floodwaters... but my father sat with their elders, shared rice beer, and traded a mithun (a prized bovine) for peace. That's the Ang's true weapon—wisdom, not war.

Life Today

AKATOLU: How does Longwa live now?

ANG: (*sighing*) The world changes. Tourists come to see our tattooed faces; boys dream of city jobs. But our roots are here—in the terraced fields where we grow ginger, in the rituals where we thank the spirits for rain. (*gestures outside*) See those power lines? They reach the next village but stop before us. The government forgets we exist until election time.

Yet (*voice firm*), I tell my people: Hold fast to tradition, but let your children learn. A chief today must speak Hindi, understand laws. My grandson uses a smartphone to show visitors our history. That is our new battle—keeping alive who we are while stepping forward.

AKATOLU: (*closing notebook*) Then let this record be one more bridge between your past and future. Thank you, Ang.

ANG: (*touching his forehead in farewell*) May your words carry far.

Interviewee: Nihozu

Interviewer:

Date of

Location: Lizzami

Transcript-

Akatolu

Interview:

8

Assumi

21/06/2020

Introduction

AKATOLU: Hello, my name is Akatolu Assumi. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your village and yourself. Could you please give a brief introduction?
NIHOZU: My name is Nihozu. I was born in Lazzami village and belong to the Christian religion.

Parents and Childhood

AKATOLU: Sir, could you tell me about your parents and your childhood?
NIHOZU: My parents died early when I was 17 years old, so I hardly knew them well. But I have

some memories—like going farming with them. We had good times; they used to tell me stories about our village and how we came to settle here. As a child, I played around the village with others and had memorable days.

Village Origins and Migration

AKATOLU: You mentioned your parents told you stories. What kind of stories did they share?

NIHOZU: Yes, they told us how our ancestors came to this village from *Kazakhano*. First, they migrated from the Angami village and settled here in Lizzami. In the process, they faced many hardships. They settled near villages that practised headhunting, so they had to defend themselves and fight for survival for a long time.

Village Life

AKATOLU: It must have been difficult to settle in a new place. Can you tell me more about your villagers?

NIHOZU: My villagers were peace-loving people. In the old days, they sought new land for agriculture.

Festivals

AKATOLU: Do you have any festivals in your village?

NIHOZU: Yes, we celebrate *Tuluni* and *Ahuna* festivals.

AKATOLU: Why do you celebrate these festivals?

NIHOZU: We celebrate them during harvest time—to ask for blessings and give thanks.

Religion

AKATOLU: What is your religion now, and what about your parents?

NIHOZU: I am now a Christian. But before Christianity came, we worshipped stones, trees, and the Sun God for blessings, as well as the Rain God for good rains.

AKATOLU: Thank you.

Interview with Shiwoto Yeptho

Transcript- 9

Interviewer:

Akatolu

Assumi

Date:

November

9,

2021

Location: 4th Mile Agri Colony

AKATOLU: Thank you for welcoming us into your home today.

SHIWOTO: You're welcome.

AKATOLU: Let's begin with a brief introduction.

SHIWOTO: My name is Shiwoto Yeptho, and I am from Shotomi village.

AKATOLU: How old are you, Mr. Shiwoto?

SHIWOTO: I am 57 years old.

AKATOLU: Shall we begin the interview?

SHIWOTO: Sure.

AKATOLU: Could you share a folk tale that you believe to be true?

SHIWOTO: Yes, there are many, but I'll narrate my favorite:

"Once upon a time, there was a big pond with a giant cotton tree. A pair of eagles built their nest at the top and hatched two eaglets. Many people tried to take the eaglets but failed. Two brothers made an agreement: whoever reached the nest first would take the larger eaglet. They climbed using bamboo pegs, and the younger brother reached first. However, they fought over the bigger eaglet, but as per their agreement, the younger brother kept it, angering the elder.

Frustrated, the elder brother removed all the bamboo pegs while descending, stranding his younger sibling. When the parent eagles returned, they tried to attack him, but he convinced them he was protecting the eaglets from intruders. Pleased, the eagles began feeding him.

As time passed, the eaglets' feathers grew. Knowing they would fly away and leave him to starve, the man plucked their feathers to prevent them from maturing. The eagles, realizing his trick, begged him to stop and offered to carry him down. Suspicious, he demanded they first bring two stones from the Tulo River as proof. They complied, and only then did he allow them to safely return him to the ground."

AKATOLU: That's a fascinating tale!

SHIWOTO: Yes, there are many such stories, but this one stands out.

AKATOLU: Since we're discussing tales, how would you define *Tales*?

SHIWOTO: To me, Tales are a collection of elicited data and narratives passed down through generations.

AKATOLU: I agree! Thank you for your time—I know you were busy.

SHIWOTO: You're welcome.

Interview Transcript

Transcript- 10

Interviewee:

Vikuto

Yeptho

Interviewer:

Akatolu

Assumi

Date: June 5, 2022
Location: Shotomi Village

Introduction

AKATOLU:

This is my interview, which I'm conducting for my thesis. The first thing I'd like to do is get your permission to tape this interview and use the quotes as part of an oral history. Will you give me permission?

VIKUTO:

Yes, I would be more than happy to help you with your thesis.

AKATOLU:

Let's start at the beginning. Could you please tell me your full name and spell it for me?

VIKUTO:

My name is Vikuto Yephthomi.

Socio-Economic Background of the Sumi Tribe

AKATOLU:

I would like to begin with the socio-economic background of the Sumi tribes. Can you tell me a little about that?

VIKUTO:

Of course. The Sumi society in the olden days was purely a community-based society where every individual worked for the welfare of the village, and the village worked for the interest of the

individual. The village had its own customary law, and every single individual was bound together by that law.

AKATOLU:

Okay, this would be a good time for me to stop and do an equipment test. I want to make sure the tape recorder is working properly. (*Tests recorder*) It works great. Let's continue.

VIKUTO:

Sounds great.

AKATOLU:

So my second question is: Who took the responsibility of enforcing the law?

VIKUTO:

The village chief took the responsibility of guarding the law, making sure everyone followed it.

AKATOLU:

Is there any category or hierarchy among the villagers?

VIKUTO:

All men were equal—whether high-class or low-class people, there was no caste distinction and no communal feelings. Economically, they were self-sufficient, and beggars were unknown.

Gender Roles in Sumi Society

AKATOLU:

Is there any difference between males and females in your tribe?

VIKUTO:

In Sumi Naga, the father is the head of the family, and the inheritance of property is only entitled to male members. However, it doesn't mean females are ignored. Though they were not entitled to inherit property and had no voice in important village meetings, females enjoyed a high position

in Sumi society. The woman acted as an advisor to her husband in decision-making. She influenced the men to act in whatever direction she desired.

Village Administration Systems

AKATOLU:

What kind of administration did they follow?

VIKUTO:

The Naga tribe of Sumi followed two types of village administration:

1. Clan-Based Governance: The village was governed by members nominated by the people, chosen from each clan.
2. Monarchical Governance (Akaku System): A village chief or king (*Akaku*) ruled over one or several villages. The chief held power to administer the village with the help of a deputy and village elders.

AKATOLU:

Since we've talked a lot about the village chief (*Akaku*), I'd like to know more about their role.

VIKUTO:

Traditional Sumi villages followed a sort of monarchical form of government. In every village, the apex political authority was vested in the village chief. Chieftainship in Sumi villages was a very powerful secular institution based on the kinship structure for village administration.

Conclusion

AKATOLU:

Thank you so much for all the information. I've learned so many things through this interview.

VIKUTO:

It's my pleasure.

Oral History Interview Transcript

Transcript- 11

Interviewee:	Atoli	Yeptho	(married	name:	Atoli	Assumi)
Interviewer:			Akatolu			Assumi

Date: October 24, 2022
Location: Durgapathor Colony, Dimapur

Introduction

AKATOLU:

My name is Akatolu, and I am here with Atoli Yeptho at her residence on October 24th, 2022. We are completing the oral history of Naga's aiming to collect stories about a broad range of

experiences. We want to focus today on your experiences with your work. Yeah, thank you for accepting my request.

ATOLI:

You're welcome.

AKATOLU:

Is it okay to record oral history today?

ATOLI:

Yes.

AKATOLU:

What is your full maiden name and, if applicable, your married name?

ATOLI:

My full name is Atoli Yeptho, and my married name is Atoli Assumi.

AKATOLU:

Glad to know that. Anyway, shall we begin our questions?

ATOLI:

Sure.

Religion of the Sumi Tribe in the Olden Days

AKATOLU:

Can you tell me something about the religion of Sumi tribes of Naga during olden days?

ATOLI:

Sure, our forefathers were worshippers of animism. They believed in stone, tree, sun, moon, and so on.

AKATOLU:

When we see our present context, we have pastors likewise. Was there any pastor in olden days?

ATOLI:

Yes, we have, but we didn't call them pastors. We called them "Awou" (priest) during those days.

AKATOLU:

Can you explain to me a little bit about priests?

ATOLI:

In the early Sumi society, there was Awou (village priest) who was entrusted with all the religious responsibilities of the village. One of the most important reasons why the rich oral history was kept secret was because of the practice of animism by Awou. The village people practiced it due

to taboos and gennas, as people were afraid that if it went to the outsider, it would be misinterpreted—so it was denied to outsiders.

AKATOLU:

What is the main role of the Awou (priest)?

ATOLI:

The main role of the Awou is to maintain the balance of law and order in society, as Awou was entrusted with the power to proclaim the activities of everyday life. The taboos are strictly maintained by the Awou and passed on from generation to generation. It can be generally understood as the person with both political and religious power.

AKATOLU:

Are there any superstitious beliefs?

ATOLI:

Yes, there are many, but I will share with you some. That is:

- If a mother died during childbirth, or
- If a person died by falling from a tree,
The villagers were not allowed to work that day.
It is a curse to go against Awou, as the early Sumi society was shadowed with superstitious beliefs.

AKATOLU:

Thank you for your help in the study of the thesis.

ATOLI:

Welcome!

ORAL DATA INTERPRETATION

The analysis of the oral data collected from random interviews highlights both the strengths and limitations of using such sources in research, particularly in studying the Nagas of Nagaland. Here's a structured breakdown of your points with additional insights:

Positive Aspects of Random Oral Data: Unique and Surprising Information: Random interviews can uncover unexpected facts or perspectives not found in written records (secondary/archival sources). This enriches the research by adding firsthand, lived experiences that may challenge or supplement existing narratives.

The oral history transcripts provided offer a rich and diverse perspective on the Naga tribes, particularly the Sumi and Konyak communities. Below is a structured synthesis of the key themes, historical narratives, cultural practices, and socio-political insights gathered from these interviews:

1. Origins and Migration

- Common Ancestry: Multiple interviewees (Hotokhu, Tohevi, Nihozu) mention that the Naga tribes, including the Sumi and Konyak, trace their origins to mainland China, migrating through Myanmar (Burma) before settling in present-day Nagaland and Manipur.
 - Makhel: A pivotal dispersal point (Senapati District, Manipur) where Naga tribes diverged to their current settlements (Hotokhu).
 - Clan-Based Migrations: Nihozu's account highlights intra-tribal migrations (e.g., from Angami villages to Lizzami) and struggles with hostile neighboring tribes.

2. Pre-Colonial Society and Governance

- Village-Based Autonomy:
 - Sumi Tribe: Vikuto Yeptho describes a clan-based or monarchical ("Akaku") system where chiefs (Akaku) and councils of elders enforced customary laws. Gender roles were distinct but complementary—women advised husbands but were excluded from inheritance (Transcript-10).
 - Konyak Tribe: The "Angh" (chief) system persists in Tizit and Longwa, with hereditary rulership blending spiritual and political authority (Tarap, Ang). The Angh's house symbolizes power, often marked by unique carvings (Transcript-6, 7).
- Animist Beliefs:
 - Spirits (e.g., Ahngs, Shalong) were worshipped through rituals (rice beer offerings, taboos). Awou (priests) mediated between humans and spirits, enforcing gennas (taboos) (Atoli Yeptho, Transcript-11).
 - Superstitions like avoiding work after unnatural deaths or nocturnal activities (sweeping, haircuts) were prevalent (Tohevi, Atoli).

3. Colonial and Post-Colonial Transformations

- British Encounters:
 - Initial resistance to British surveys/taxes (Hotokhu), followed by co-option into labor corps during WWI (Khulupu, Transcript-5).
 - The Naga Club (1918) and Naga National Council (NNC) emerged, advocating for independence (declared August 14, 1947) before Nagaland's statehood in 1963 (Khulupu).
- WWII Impact:
 - Kohima's WWII battles (1944) exposed Nagas to global influences, accelerating the decline of headhunting and animism (Khulupu).
 - Nagas aided British forces by guiding patrols and evacuating wounded soldiers (Transcript-5).

4. Cultural Practices

- Festivals:
 - Sumi: Tuluni (harvest festival) and Ahuna (conflict resolution) celebrate agriculture and community bonds (Nihozu, Hotokhu).
 - Konyak: Aoleang (seed-sowing), Lao Ong Mo (harvest thanksgiving), and Chingkanyu (bull wrestling) tie agriculture to valor (Wanglu, Transcript-4).
- Headhunting: Once a marker of prestige (Konyak tattoos symbolized trophies), now obsolete due to Christianity and modernization (Tarap, Khulupu).
- Cuisine: Fermented foods (galho, smoked pork), rice beer (zutho), and foraging traditions (yongchak, mushrooms) remain cultural staples (Wanglu).

5. Religious Shifts

- Animism to Christianity:
 - Rapid conversion occurred via missionaries (American Baptists) using education, healthcare, and vernacular Bible translations (Rev. P Dozo, Transcript-3).
 - Pre-Christian beliefs persist subtly (e.g., elders whispering prayers to the earth) but are often stigmatized as "backward" (Wanglu, Atoli).
- Theological Syncretism: Reverend Dozo notes Christianity's adaptation to Naga cosmology, reframing animist concepts (e.g., universal God vs. territorial spirits).

6. Contemporary Challenges

- Tribalism: Tohevi cites inter-tribal land disputes and political fragmentation as barriers to development (Transcript-2).
- Modernization: Youth migration, erosion of oral traditions, and tourism commodify culture (Ang, Transcript-7). Yet, figures like Ang's grandson use technology to preserve heritage.

7. Oral Traditions and Folklore

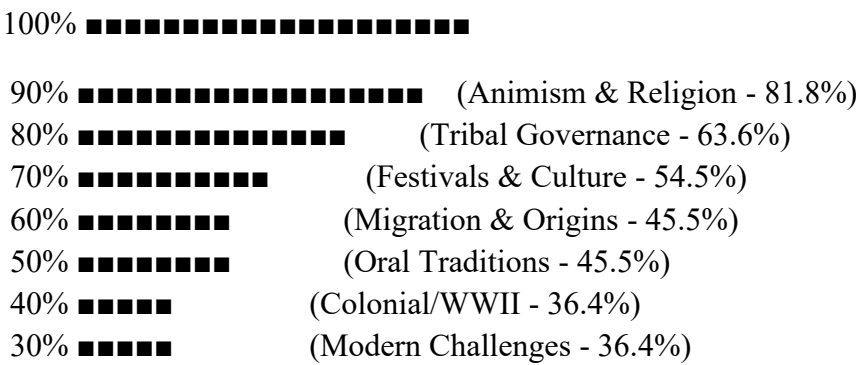
- Myths:
 - Dzukou Valley's female spirit and white elephants reflect animist reverence for nature (Tohevi).
 - Moral tales (e.g., Shiwoto's eagle story) teach communal values and the consequences of greed (Transcript-9).
- Secrecy: Awou priests guarded oral histories to prevent misinterpretation by outsiders (Atoli).

Here's a percentage-based breakdown of themes across all transcripts, presented in both table and visual formats:

Percentage Analysis of Themes

Theme	Total Mentions	Percentage of Transcripts
Animism & Religion	9	81.8%
Tribal Governance	7	63.6%
Festivals & Culture	6	54.5%
Migration & Origins	5	45.5%
Oral Traditions/Myths	5	45.5%
Colonial/WWII Impact	4	36.4%
Modern Challenges	4	36.4%
Gender Roles	3	27.3%

Visual Representation



20% ■■■ (Gender Roles - 27.3%)
10%■

Key Findings:

1. Dominant Themes:
 - Animism & Religion appear in nearly 82% of transcripts
 - Governance structures are discussed in 64% of interviews
 - Cultural festivals feature in over half (55%)
2. Less Common Themes:
 - Gender roles appear in only 27% of transcripts
 - Modern challenges and colonial impacts appear in about 36% each
3. Balanced Representation:
 - Migration stories and oral traditions both appear in 45% of interviews
 - This suggests a good balance between historical and cultural preservation

Multidimensional Insights:The data covers diverse aspects like agriculture, socio-economic conditions, and political administration, providing a holistic view of Naga society.**Oral histories** often capture informal or marginalized voices that official records may overlook. **Intergenerational Knowledge:**Information passed down through generations preserves cultural memory, traditions, and indigenous practices that might not be documented elsewhere.**Dynamic and Engaging Research:**The spontaneity of random interviews can make the research more engaging, as it reveals personal stories and local nuances.

In comparison to other states, there is a significant lack of material to use in the construction of Nagaland's history. There are no historical documents accessible regarding the Nagas before their migration to this region, with the only exception that the Naga tribes have connections with the tribes of the nations in Southeast Asia. Even before 1832, when the British marched through the Naga Hills for the first time on their way from Manipur to Assam, there is little historical evidence accessible, with the exception of a few allusions to Ahom Naga connections. Therefore, we are going to have to rely on conventional tales during the time period up to 1832. The traditional tales of several tribes, and even within the same tribe, might vary to some degree or even a large deal from one another. On the other hand, it is feasible to recreate a pretty accurate history of the migration of the Nagas and the relations of the Ahom Naga using the legends that have been passed down. Since the British left behind so much paperwork on their 1832 arrival, including tour diaries, notes, tales of numerous tribes, and government files, this year is considered the start of the age of recorded history. The Naga people and the Naga Hills, which together form the current state of Nagaland, are the subject of these papers, which are the best source we have for learning about them. In spite of this, the documents only cover what is now the Naga Hills district, leaving out the modern-day Tuensang district and a sizable chunk of the Mon region. Both of these districts

are located in the present-day state's eastern region. Evidence from archaeology is far more similar to traditional tales than it is to any record. Nevertheless, they should be handled with some degree of care. Tradition is another important source of information on Naga history. Because the vast majority of our information prior to the records kept by the British is dependent on tradition, this is not only a source but also one of the most essential sources. Traditions held by the many Naga tribes on migration, settlement, feuds, and other topics vary greatly from one another. Traditions such as this not only differ from one tribe to another, but also, with regard to specifics, among members of the same group. Traditions are our finest source for information on the migration and settlement of many tribes in this country, as well as their feuds and battles, despite the fact that there are some slight variances between them. Following that is one's own unique knowledge. In most cases, personal knowledge does not play a role in the production of historical materials; however, this is not the case in Nagaland. Her expertise is of immense assistance, especially with regard to the culture of the people. In addition to this, it is of great assistance to reconstruct the history of this state from 1957, when the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA), the beginning of the State of Nagaland, was founded; or since 1957, or two years before that date, when the reasons of the development of NHTA began to take place. Both of these dates mark the beginning of the construction of the State of Nagaland. The reason for this is because the history of this time period has not yet been written in a fashion that can be used as a reference point. On the other hand, the history of Nagaland since 1955 is considered to be its modern history. This is two years before the foundation of the NHTA, which marks the beginning of the prosperous march of Nagaland. Because the author had lived in this region from 1952, which is five years before the founding of NHTA, the personal information that this author has is a valuable source for this time. Here, we'll go further into a consideration of these distinct sources.⁵

ii) ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Numismatics, in addition to other historical resources pertaining to Nagaland, are noticeably absent from the available literature. However, there are a handful of archeological sites in this state, however they don't shed much light on the past of the locals. We'll discuss these points in further detail below. The ruins of Dimapur are here. The wealthy town of Dimapur may be found on the plains of Nagaland, more specifically in the west-south-west part of the region. According to the census completed in 1971, there were 12,426 people living there. It is the most major commercial center in the state, as well as the most important railway station, and virtually the only one (the other one being at Naginimora, which is the end of a very short branch line). The Kachari people formerly reigned over a large portion of Assam. The word "Di" refers to a river or water in their own language. Many significant locations around the state of Assam have names beginning with Di, such as Dibrugarh. There was a time when the Kacharis ruled over the area, as shown by names like Digboi and Diphu. Dimapur is one of them, and it was the home of a tribe of Kacharis known as the Dima-sa Kacharis. It was from this group that the

⁵ Dewan, J.P, 1933: *Naga tribes and their customs*. (in) census of India, Burma, Vol. 11, pt. I, Appendix-E. Rangoon, Govt press. Pp. 95-267.

city of Dimapur got its name. They are referred to as Kachari when written, but Kchhari is how they are pronounced. According to the Mahabharata, the Rakshasa prince Ghototkacha was Bhima, the second Pandava brother, and his rakshasa wife Hirimba's son. Bhima was the Pandava clan's second-oldest brother. The Kacharis hold the belief, and some even make the claim, that Hinmba was theirs to begin with. This occurred at the period of the Mahabharata, the historicity of which is debated among traditional beliefs. Dimapur was originally the seat of the Kacharis' empire, which is a historical truth. The crumbling brick gate in Dimapur, which was formerly the entrance of a palace, is evidence that a palace previously stood there. However, inexplicably, there is no trace of any location in the vicinity at all. The entrance is made of little bricks, and only a few of them have any kind of decoration on them. It is perplexing that there are no ruins of the palace elsewhere in the area, assuming that one was there in the first place. In a similar vein, the presence of the gate cannot be rationalized in the absence of the palace. The reality of the matter is, however, that there is a gate in Dimapur that has been beautifully maintained, and the location is known as Rajbari, which translates to "the palace of the king." After going all the way around it, I discovered remnants of a border wall and a ditch on one side, which was the northern side. However, the residents of the area claim that there was once a palace there, and that it served as the royal residence for the Kachari monarchs. On the eastern side of the palace site is where the remnants of the gate may be found. Stones on the inside of the entrance have had holes cut in them so that they can accommodate the hinges of the two large doors. The entranceway is protected by a pair of octagonal turrets, one on each side of the structure. The whole gate is adorned rather well, and it even has a few fake windows made of brickwork with decorative molding. The length of the gateway is 51 feet. 15 feet in depth and a height of around 15 feet. Within the grounds of the palace are a great number of circular monolithic pillars. There are a total of sixty-four pillars spread throughout one area, which are organized into four rows of sixteen each. Approximately twenty-three of them are still standing, fourteen of which are in a shape that is more or less complete, while the other ones have collapsed to the ground and split apart. These pillars are arranged in a V pattern over two rows, with a total of thirty-two of them; however, only one of them is standing. In a different region, there are a total of sixteen pillars, just five of which are now upright. This is the tallest pillar and is around 15 feet in height with a diameter that ranges from 23 to 25 feet. It has a knob on its top and is the only pillar left in the distance. The height of the remaining pillars ranges anywhere from six feet to nine feet, with 10 feet being the absolute maximum. The pillars are organized into two distinct groupings. The first cluster may be found around 300 feet south-southwest of the entrance gate. There are a total of 64 pillars in this group, which are organized into four rows of 16 each. The first two rows on the eastern side are supported by round pillars, while the remaining two rows on the western side are supported by pillars in the form of a V. Out of a total of sixty-four. Standing in complete form receives a score of 14, while standing in fractured form receives a score of 9. Only one of the V-shaped pillars seems to be more or less standing, despite the fact that it is fractured. The others have all crumbled to the ground in their

original configuration.⁶ The arm of one of the V-shaped pillars, which has since collapsed to the ground, has dimensions of 14 feet in length and 3 feet on each side. Dimensions: 6 inches by 3 feet and 6 inches. It takes up a rectangular shape. The circular pillars that make up this group have heights that range from 6 to 9 feet. The distance around it. Varies from 5 feet, 7 inches to 11 feet, 4 inches to 13 feet, 15 feet, and 17 feet, 9 inches. In terms of either their diameter or their height or their decorating, no two pillars are the same. The distance between the centers of each of the pillars ranges from ten to thirteen feet. About 400 feet to the west of the main gate is where you'll find the second set of pillars. It is composed of. There were sixteen pillars that could be counted, but only five are still standing. Both the height and diameter of it are comparable to what was found in the first group. Approximately one thousand feet to the south-west of the gate is where you'll find a solitary pillar. This is the most significant support pillar. Its diameter is from 23 to 25 feet, and it is about 15 feet high (the height could not be accurately measured). In contrast to the other pillars, this one has a knob on top of its head. In the first set of sixty-four pillars, we found one instance in which a pillar had collapsed to the ground. In this instance, there were three rust-proof iron rods with a diameter of approximately one inch protruding from the base stone on which the pillar had been standing. Additionally, there were holes in the collapsed pillar, which led us to believe that the pillar had been standing on those iron rods in the past. In a number of other instances, we have seen that iron rods of this kind have been bored through the pillar in order to prevent the broken piece from sliding off. In several instances, we found shattered pieces of the pillars to have holes in the iron rod that was used to reinforce them. It is not known if anybody attempted to maintain it by supporting it with iron rods, and even if they did, this does not explain why there are three rods at the base of a damaged pillar. Should we then draw the conclusion that those iron rods were employed in the beginning by the builders to repair the pillars, or at least a few of them, and to prevent fractured areas from tumbling down? The tops of the pillars are semicircular in shape, and they contain foliated carvings that are concentric below the top. There are depictions of animals such as elephants, deer, peacocks, dogs, ducks, and others; nevertheless, there is neither a human figure nor a human head. Sandstone was used to construct the pillars. The location known as Dimapur is completely devoid of stones. Chumukedima, also known as Nichuguard, is around 15 kilometers away from the site where the pillars are located and is the location where the stone may be obtained. It is quite likely that blocks of stone were mined from there, transported to the site, constructed roughly, and then carved while they were still there. In any other circumstance, if it had been cut in the quarry and then hauled, it would have sustained significant damage. Even though all of the pillars are adorned and have a similar overall shape and pattern, no two of the pillars are exactly the same in terms of their design. In this context, it is important to remember that E.A. Gait, in his book *History of Assam*, said that Mr. Grange was the first European to see the remains in 1839. This information can be found in Gait's book. Brick walls with a combined length of almost five kilometers encompassed the palace complex on three sides each. Because the river Dhansiri flows along the fourth side, also known as the southern side,

⁶Dewan, J.P, 1933: *Naga tribes and their customs*. (in) census of India, Burma, Vol. 11, pt. I, Appendix-E. Rangoon, Govt press. Pp. 95-267

there was no wall constructed along this side. This side is also known as the southern side. It provided an exit to the river for anyone who needed to flee. There is also the possibility that there was a wall on this side of the river in the past, but the water has since swept it away. But the likelihood of it happening is low. The Kacharis believe that their fourth monarch, Chakradhvaj, was responsible for the construction of the pillars and the palace.⁷ They claim that Kala Phar was responsible for the destruction of the palace and the pillars, but at the same time, they acknowledge that the Ahoms were successful in defeating them. The truth of the matter is that the Ahoms triumphed against and murdered the last Kachari monarch of Dimapur, whose name was Detsung, in the year 1536. Because he only held the throne for a span of five years, from 1531 to 1536, it is quite probable that the palace was constructed several decades before he did. After suffering a decisive defeat at the hands of Dimapur, the Kacharis chose to make Maibong their capital. It is important to note that the Ahom people, at the time of the battle between the Kacharis and the Ahoms, were not familiar with the usage of bricks. Instead, they constructed their homes out of lumber and bamboo and plastered them with mud. However, the Kacharis were quite advanced in masonry, and the mortar that they employed was also of a very high order. This is demonstrated by the fact that the palace gate has survived several earthquakes as well as the wear and tear caused by the hot and humid environment. This demonstrates that the Kacharis were a far more evolved civilisation than the Ahoms were at the time. There is some uncertainty over the antiquity of both the palace and the monolithic pillars. On the other hand, it looks like these have been there for at least 500 years. It's consistent with what we know about the history of the last Kachari ruler, Detsung of Dimapur, who was vanquished in 1536. Since this is the case, we can confidently assert that the construction of the stone structures and the monolithic pillars of sandstone took place at the beginning of the fifteenth century. I arrive at this period, which I will refer to as "1400 plus," by allowing a gap of one hundred years from Detsung for antecedent expansion as well as the construction of the palace and the erection of the pillars. There is a good chance that not all of the pillars were built at the same period or even by a single monarch. This is a highly possible scenario. This might be the explanation for why there are no remains of the palace yet there is still a gate that has been maintained. Long before the time of Detsung, the palace was built, but by the time of Detsung 1 it was already fairly old and in disrepair. Sometime in the most recent few centuries, it was demolished altogether. However, the gate was built by Detsung or one of his predecessors, and as a result, it is still standing. This argument would also make sense of the fact that the Kacharis ruled in Dimapur for a significant amount of time before the Ahoms were able to oust them from power. According to Gait, the fact that there is not a single depiction of a human being anywhere on the pillars is evidence that the Kacharis of that era were not influenced by Hinduism. Is it possible to make a connection between Hinduism and the presence or absence of human figures? Most likely not, considering that several Naga woodworks feature depictions of human beings, despite the fact that the Nagas do not adhere to the Hindu religion. In a similar vein, one may find countless Shiva Lingams all around India that do not depict human forms.

⁷ Furness, W.H. 1902: *The Ethnography of the Nagas of Eastern Assam. Journal of the royal anthropological institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, V (N.S), Pp. 66-445

Nevertheless, it would appear that the pillars are associated with some kind of religious rite. The tops of the pillars are shaped like a half circle, and they are ornately adorned all throughout. To the untrained eye, it can be mistaken for a Shiva Lingam. If we acknowledge that Shiva Lingams do not necessarily need to have human figures on them and that they may be ornamented in different ways, then it is possible for us to acknowledge the pillars as Shiva Lingams. It is impossible to provide an explanation for the existence of so many pillars in close proximity, even when they are only separated by ten feet from one another, if we do not regard them as Shiva Lingams or in any other manner as any type of religious edifice. Whatever it is, this palace and the Kachari kings had nothing to do with the Nagas because the Kacharis never reigned over the Nagas but rather the plains of Assam. Regardless of what it is, this palace and the Kachari kings had

nothing to do with the Nagas. It is only because of this that it is possible to say that the Kacharis and the Nagas enjoyed excellent ties.⁸



Figure no 6. Megalithic site in Khezhakheno with the scholar's onsite visit (source: Research scholar)

Longtorok

It is approximately 20 kilometers by road from Mokokchung to the village of Chungliyimti, which is located in the Sangtam region. There is a cluster of six stones in this area. The Ao Nagas have a strong belief that their ancestors came from that particular collection of stones. The locals refer to it as Longtorok. Stone is what we understand by "long," and "took" refers to six. As a result, it literally translates as "Six Stones." Longtorok literally translates to "six stones," although there are really more than six stones involved. It is reported that there were only six stones to begin with, but due to natural cracking, the number has now expanded to twenty-four. There are two distinct

⁸ Gait, E.A. and Davis, A. W. 1892: *hill tribes. Census of India 1891. Assam, Report. Shillong, Assam Govt. press.* Pp 4-92, 62-221.

collections of stones in that area. There are two large stones and perhaps ten smaller stones that range in size from 10 centimeters by 15 centimeters to 15 centimeters by 25 centimeters in one group. One of them seems to be a phallus that is around 12 by 20 centimeters, another appears to be a human foot, and the third appears to be a football that suggests a human head. One of the large stones is roughly rectangular in shape and is around 175 centimeters in length, 75 centimeters in width, and 30 centimeters in depth. It features a hole in the centre that is around 20 by 50 centimeters and is shaped like an oval, suggesting the female organ. The second set has a couple smaller stones along with a total of four larger ones. The size and contour of the main four are comparable to one another. They are long and rectangular in shape, and each one is around 150 centimeters in length, 25 centimeters in width, and 25 centimeters in depth. Neither their shape nor their dimensions are typical of all of them. According to the ancient account of the Ao people, they descended from these stones.⁹

Khezakenoma Cave

Legends told by the Angami, Sema, and Lotha, three of the largest Naga tribes, suggest that the Naga people originally hail from Burma, gathered in Khezakenoma, and then dispersed to their current locations. Khezakenoma is mentioned in these tales. There is a community known as Khezakenoma in the Chakhesang region of Nagaland. This region is located in the middle of the state and borders Manipur. They are said to have emerged from a cave in Khezakenoma, according to another version of the narrative. According to this version as well, they used to be a single people but have since become segmented into the several tribes that exist now only after migrating to various locations. Whatever it may be, their story also states that the Aos walked ahead of them,

⁹ Gait, E.A. and Davis, A. W. 1892: *hill tribes. Census of India 1891. Assam, Report. Shillong, Assam Govt. press.* Pp 4-92, 62-221

and there is no mention of whether or not they emerged from the cave. Because the Aos were the ones to go first, the Semas refer to them as Cholimi, which literally means "those who went ahead."



Figure no 7. Old style of granary to store extra grain in Khezhakheno(source: Research scholar)



Figure no.8 House of Ancestor Chief Priest Khezhakheno village scholar field visit (source: Research scholar)

Therefore, the sum and content of the traditional stories imply that some of the major Naga tribes arrived from Burma, stopped at Khezakenoma for some time, and eventually dispersed from there. This conclusion is based on the fact that the stories are consistent with one another. The Ao, Lotha, Tenyima, and Sema tribes are considered to be the most important among the Naga. Naturally, Aos has a variety of accounts on their beginnings, and Tenyima incorporates Angami into their narrative. It is a blend of three different tribes, namely Zeliang Rounge, Mao (who live in Manipur), Rengma, and Chakesang. However, the narrative of Khezakenoma provides some insight into the migration and dispersion of the major Naga tribes into Nagaland. As a result, the cave at Khezakenoma is an important piece of archaeological evidence. (Migration of the Nagas will be treated in more detail in the next Chapter).¹⁰ Towards the end of the 17th century, one Ahom prince fled to the Naga Hills to escape the civil conflict raging among the Ahom Kings. Kodapani is the name the Lothas use for him. His name is Godadhar Singho, but it is frequently mispronounced in Naga dialects as Kodathoor Hingho (in Naga dialect, K and G are practically equivalent, and S is heard as H). He wed Watlong, a Konyak woman, while he was living in the

¹⁰ Hinde, H.M. 1867: Reports 14M and 15M of 6 and 7 May, 1876. *In general reports of the Topographical surveys of India*, Pp76-1876, 76-77 (on Lotha, Ao and Konyak Nagas). *Naga's in the nineteenth century*, Ed. By Verrier Elwin. Bombay, Oxford university press, 1969, Pp. 75-272.

Konyak region. Godadhar and his queen Watlong returned to Assam once the conflict was resolved. However, she became ill in Assam, and while traveling back, she passed away at a location now known as Naginimora, also known as the site of Nagini (Naga Woman)'s death. Located in the current Mon district, it is a plain area northwest of Nagaland that borders the Sibsagar plains. The exact location of her death is some four kilometers up, in the foothills, where a stone has been maintained to record the spot. This is not the Naginimora proper. The name of the location, Naginimora, reflects the Ahoms' ties to the Nagas, notably the Konyaks. Inch Stone Long In the Lotha region, close to Longchum village, there is a Stone Pillar. According to legend, the Burmese built the Stone when passing through that region on their way to invade Assam in 1880–86. It is close to the plains in the Bhandari range. It's likely that the Burmese invasion had an impact on the Konyaks, Aos, Lothas, and Rengmas in the lower ranges. Kohima's Sculptured Footprint In Kohima, there is a flat stone with the impressions of two human feet carved into it. Although there is nothing written there, it is believed to be the Manipur Raja's footprint. The truth is that Raja Gambhir Singh of Manipur assisted and supported Lt. Gordon as he led an expedition through Kohima in 1883 from Manipur to Assam. The Nagas opposed the expedition, but they were overpowered. To commemorate the event, the king's footprint was inscribed on a stone that was displayed at a Kohima public park. But recently, it was moved to the State Museum's location. This imprint, however, refers to the conflict between the Nagas and the Manipuris and the latter's defeat.

Various Kohima Artifacts Additionally, a War Cemetery and other smaller stone monuments housing epigraphic papers may be found in Kohima, the state capital. Those topics will be covered where they belong.¹¹

FOREIGN ACCOUNTS

Nagaland is not mentioned in any ancient or medieval texts from other countries. In 1832, employees of the British East India Company passed through the Angami area of the Naga Hills on their route from Manipur to the plains of Assam. The Angamis blocked their path, there were minor fights, and eventually the British advanced to the plains. Since then, the English have traveled to several Naga Hills locations on various occasions, and in 1866 they eventually established a district of Naga Hills under Assam. Instead of on the hills itself, the district's headquarters were established at Samaguting, in the foothills. The headquarters were moved to Wokha, in the middle of the hills, later in 1876. From that point forward until 1947, when India attained independence, the British dominated the country. They have guided numerous expeditions and exploration parties into the Naga Hills over the course of these 15 years, and they have documented their experiences. Foreign writers have written extensively about the country and its inhabitants as a result. While many of these descriptions only make passing mention of the locale, others give in-depth analyses of the geography, population, and cultural practices of the region. The fact that several of the managers of the former Naga Hills district were anthropologists,

¹¹ Angami Baptist Church, *Angami Baptist Church Council Constitute Kohima*, Angami Baptist Church.

sociologists, or academicians with plenty of free time may be mentioned here. The administration was essentially limited to stopping combat or head-hunting. Because it was the policy to not meddle with people's daily lives, no effort was made to develop the area, establish any industries, build schools, etc. A few primary schools weren't established until later in their rule, and even then, only after the populace had pushed for them strongly. The two important accounts were written by ordinary people. The overseas Christian Missions had little work to do as well, but they also frequently went on trips that gave them the chance to gather information for writing.

Aside from all of this, it goes without saying that the missionaries and officials who wrote about the Nagas did so with great zeal. It should be noted that the missionaries' ardour led them to write hymnals and other literature in the local languages in addition to transcribing them into English script. Foreign reports, such as those written by W.C. Smith (Ao Naga Tribes of Assam), Dr. J.H. Hutton (The Angami Nagas), C. Von Haimendorf-Furer (The Naked Nagas), J.P. Mills (The Ao Nagas), and J.P. Mills (The Rengma Nagas) are particularly noteworthy. The most numerous of all the Naga tribes, Ao, Angami, Sema, Lotha, and Konyak, have clearly been covered by the aforementioned list. Additionally, it was discovered that they did not include the eight other tribes that currently reside in the Tuensang district, all of which have populations under 20,000. This is the case since Tuensang District was not governed until 1948, following the departure of the British. You might also talk about The Rengma Nagas by J.P. Mills and The Naga Path by Miss Ursula Graham Bower. Dr. J.H. Hutton's Mixed Culture of the Naga Tribes and W. Robinson's Detailed Account of Assam, among other authors.¹²

INDIGENOUS ACCOUNTS

During the British era, hardly any Indian writers have written about the Nagas. But some significant works were published in 1960. The most important of them are Alemchiba Ao's A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland and Nagaland's The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century. Other works exist in both English and several Indian languages than these three, although the most of them are political, etc.

CHRONICLES

Many Naga chronicles have been written and published in academic journals and popular publications like the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society, Man in India, and the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal since the British first made contact with the Nagas. In addition to the diaries, some tour notes, private letters, and official papers provide light on the Nagas throughout the nineteenth century. John Butler (sen), John Butler (jun), R. Brown, R.G. Wood

¹² Aram, M, Evolution of Naga's politics, Kohima, Nagaland each center.

trope, W. Robinson, E.R. Grange, and H. Bigge are some of the most significant authors of those documents. A.W. Davis, E.T. Dalton, T. Brodie, and A. Mackenzie¹³

PERIODISATION

The history of the Naga people, and by extension, that of Nagaland, which is primarily populated by Naga people, is buried in mystery. All academics agree that the Nagas are closely related to the tribes of south-east Asian nations and that they arrived in their current environment relatively late—likely in the 13th century. As a result, the time frame from the distant past to their relocation to this location may be referred to as the Ancient Period. Almost nothing is understood about this time period. The population was not subject to a supreme authority after their migration until 1876, when the headquarters of the Naga Hills district were established at Wokha. They fought among their own tribes and other villages while essentially living in village states. Because no one tribe or even the entire people had a law enforcement agency, this was a time of lawlessness. Anyone had the power to chop off the head of any member of an enemy tribe or community. An individual went on a headhunting mission out of courage and heroism, not because of any animosity. The hunter used to be hailed as the local hero after bringing the hunted head or heads into the community. As a result, this was a time of lawlessness and headhunting, but as it fell between the ancient and modern periods, it may be referred to as the Medieval Period. This period covers the years from the 13th century and the late 19th century, when the British established their dominion in the Naga Hills. But it required some more time to put the chaos and headhunting under control. As a result, we might conclude that the Medieval Period technically continued into the 20th century. However, we can claim that the Medieval Period ended in 1876 when it comes to periodizing Nagaland's history. It should be noted that the Naga Hills district of Assam was established in 1866, and that Samaguting (now Chumukedima), in the foothills close to Dimapur, served as the district's administrative center at the time. The district headquarters of the then-Naga Hills were established in Wokha in the hills' center, marking the start of the Modern Period. They had peace and order throughout this time. Before this time, nobody could go to bed knowing they would wake up to light. There was always the fear of dying. However, this problem was resolved with the advent of government, and the populace now lives in peace and security. It should be remembered that British rule was established in the Naga Hills not out of a desire for imperial expansion but rather out of concern for the safety of the people living there and in response to a call from some Nagas to protect them from raiding Nagas. Occasionally, headhunting took place here and there, and a few people died as a result. As recently as 1962, when some thirty heads were severed in the current Tuensang area, it took place on a big scale. The Modern Period for the entirety of the current Tuensang district and a sizable portion of the current Mon district did not begin until 1948 (or 1898), when Tuensang's first administrative unit was established. The Tuensang Frontier Division of the North-East Frontier Agency was split off and added to Naga Hills in December 1957, creating what is now known as the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA

¹³ Acharyya Nagendra Nath. 1966: *History of Medieval Assam from the 13th to 17th century*, Gauhati, Datta Baruah Pp. 308.

for short). This is a step in the direction of modernizing the region, and as a result, a few years later, the region was incorporated into a State, which sparked a vigorous start to the region's developmental operations.¹⁴

¹⁴ Acharyya Nagendra Nath. 1966: *History of Medieval Assam from the 13th to 17th century*, Gauhati, Datta Baruah Pp. 308.