

A STUDY OF NAGA TRIBES IN NAGALAND: AN ORAL HISTORY

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

History

By

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2026

DECLARATION

I, hereby declared that the presented work in the thesis entitled “A Study of Naga Tribes in Nagaland: An Oral History” in fulfilment of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** is outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Munmun Mondal, working as Assistant Professor, in the Department of History/ School of social science and language of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever work described here has been based on findings of other investigator. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph.D. thesis entitled “A Study of Naga Tribes in Nagaland: An Oral History submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in Department of History/School of social science and language, is a research work carried out by Akatolu Assumi, 11512530, is Bonafide record of his original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.

(Signature of Supervisor)

Name of supervisor: Dr Munmun Mondal

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Abstract

This thesis explores the oral history of the Naga tribes inhabiting Nagaland, the sixteenth state of the Indian Union. Located in the northeastern region of India, Nagaland shares its borders with Myanmar and three Indian states. The state's rugged topography, dominated by the towering peak of Mount Saramati (3,841 meters), spans 16,527 square kilometers and sustains a population of approximately 1.9 million people. Though modest in comparison to the Indian subcontinent's demographic scale, Nagaland's cultural landscape is remarkably diverse, comprising 17 distinct tribes, each with unique traditions, languages, and social structures. Typically, each of Nagaland's 15 districts is governed by one dominant tribe or a cluster of smaller tribes, reflecting the region's intricate tribal dynamics.

The state experiences a temperate climate, with summer temperatures averaging 31°C and winter temperatures dropping to 4°C. Geographically and socially, Nagaland remains predominantly rural, with two-thirds of its population residing in villages. The village is not merely a residential unit but the highest level of traditional political organization, structured around the clan system, which governs social, economic, and cultural life. Community-centric activities form the backbone of Naga identity, emphasizing collective decision-making, oral traditions, and ancestral heritage.

Given the absence of a written script among the Naga tribes, oral history serves as the primary repository of their historical memory, myths, and cultural values. This study aims to document and analyze these oral narratives, examining their interplay with Nagaland's economic evolution, religious transformation (from animism to Christianity), and political structures. By doing so, it aims to preserve the intangible heritage of the Naga people and illuminate their adaptive resilience in a rapidly modernizing world.

Oral history is indeed a crucial and dynamic field in modern historiography, particularly for communities like the Nagas, who have relied on oral traditions to preserve their history, culture, and identity in the absence of a written script. The passage highlights several key aspects of oral history and its significance in Naga society:

Nature of Oral History:

- Oral history involves collecting historical information through audio or video recordings, which are then organized chronologically.
- It employs diverse methodologies across different cultures and nations.

Importance for Historians:

- Historians must analyze oral data alongside socioeconomic, political, and cultural contexts to draw meaningful parallels.

Naga Oral Traditions:

- The Naga people lack a written script, so their history is preserved through oral narratives, legends, and folktales passed down through generations.
- These traditions serve as verifiable accounts of Naga origins and identity.

Naga Clans and Political Context:

-While 16 major Naga clans in Nagaland are officially recognized, there are over 40 Naga clans outside Nagaland (both recognized and unrecognized).

-Nagaland became an Indian state on December 1, 1963, and is situated in Northeast India.

Research Challenges in Nagaland:

-Since 1947 (India's independence), there have been limited research opportunities in Nagaland, making oral history even more vital for preserving Naga heritage.

Broader Implications:

Oral history is indispensable for indigenous communities like the Nagas, whose histories might otherwise be marginalized in written records.

The political recognition of Naga clans remains contested, with many groups outside Nagaland struggling for acknowledgment.

The lack of extensive academic research in Nagaland underscores the urgency of documenting oral traditions before they are lost.

This thesis is a detailed study of the oral history, culture, economy, and social structure of the Naga tribes in Nagaland, India. It highlights the critical role of oral traditions in preserving the history of a people with no written script. The work is based on extensive fieldwork, including interviews and a review of existing literature from British colonial administrators, anthropologists, and Naga scholars.

The thesis is structured to first establish the historical and cultural context of the Nagas, then present raw oral data from interviews, and finally analyze this data across key themes: economic history, cultural/social issues, and religious/political evolution.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces oral history as a vital methodology for studying the Nagas. It provides a geographical, demographic, and historical background of Nagaland and its 17 major tribes. It details the state's formation in 1963 after a period of political struggle. The chapter also includes an extensive review of literature, citing key works by British officials like J.H. Hutton and J.P. Mills, as well as Naga writers like M. Alemchiba and M. Horam. It outlines the study's objectives: to document oral histories of origin, compare tribes, and study their economic and cultural practices. The methodology relies heavily on qualitative data from interviews and fieldwork. The introduction establishes that due to a lack of written records, oral history is the primary source for understanding the Naga past. It sets the stage for a deep dive into the tribes' unique identities and shared experiences.

Chapter 2: Documentation of Oral Data

This chapter presents transcribed and interpreted interviews with members from various Naga tribes (Sumi, Konyak, etc.). The interviews cover origins, migration myths, festivals, the impact of World War II, and social customs. It also details sources for constructing Naga

history: archaeology (e.g., the Kachari ruins in Dimapur, the six stones of Longtorok), foreign accounts (British colonial records), indigenous chronicles, and personal knowledge. The chapter includes a population breakdown of the 17 tribes by district. The oral testimonies confirm a strong belief in a shared migratory origin from the East (China/Myanmar) and a dispersal point at Khezhakenoma. The chapter underscores the value and challenges of using oral tradition and Archaeology alongside colonial records to piece together history.

Chapter 3: Economic History and Infrastructure

This chapter analyzes the traditional economy, which is predominantly agricultural. It describes the two main farming systems: Jhum (shifting cultivation) and Terrace cultivation. It also covers other economic activities like forestry, cottage industries (weaving, pottery), and the recent growth of tourism. The economy is described as transitioning from a self-sufficient, community-based model to one increasingly integrated with the market, though still reliant on imports and central government support. The chapter also covers inheritance customs (patrilineal, disinheriting women) and the cultural significance of ornaments, which denote social status, bravery, and identity. The Naga economy is historically rooted in agriculture and community ownership. While modern infrastructure and education are developing, the state faces challenges due to its terrain, outdated farming practices, and a structural shift away from the primary sector. Traditional customs around property and wealth display remain strong but are gradually changing.

Chapter 4: Culture and Social Issues

This chapter explores the rich and diverse cultural fabric of the Nagas. It describes their vibrant festivals, the unique institution of the Morung (youth dormitory, which was central to education and social cohesion), and the role of taboos and totems in maintaining ecological and social balance. A significant portion is dedicated to narrating various myths and folktales from different tribes, which explain origins, teach moral lessons, and embody cultural values. The chapter notes social changes, including a move away from strict communal living towards class distinctions and materialism, while highlighting the ongoing respect for elders and community. Naga culture is a complex system of shared social structures (like the Morung) and diverse tribal expressions (seen in festivals and tales). While Christianity and modernity have brought change, core values of community, respect for nature, and storytelling persist.

Chapter 5: Religious Change and Political History

This chapter contrasts the pre-Christian era (characterized by animism, headhunting, and village-level governance) with the Christian era. It details the arrival of American Baptist missionaries (e.g., Dr. Clark, Dr. Witter) and their work among different tribes (Ao, Lotha, Angami, Sumi), which led to widespread conversion. This transformation ended practices like headhunting and introduced modern education and healthcare. The chapter also explains the traditional political systems, which ranged from autocratic (Konyak Angh system) to more democratic (Angami) village councils governed by customary law. It traces the evolution of these systems into modern Village Councils and Village Development Boards

(VDBs) under the Indian administration. The advent of Christianity was the single most transformative event in modern Naga history, reshaping spiritual, social, and political life. The traditional political structure, based on village autonomy and customary law, has been formally integrated into the modern administrative framework of the state.

Chapter 6: Finding and Conclusion

Bibliography

This chapter synthesizes the findings on the origin of the word "Naga," tribal migration, and the core aspects of Naga identity. It concludes that the term was an exonym given by outsiders, and the people likely migrated from Southeast Asia. It reiterates the importance of oral history and the dormitory system (Morung) in preserving culture. The chapter provides a detailed account of the beginning of Christianity for each major tribe, crediting missionaries with ending inter-tribal warfare and headhunting and introducing education. It concludes with the "good culture of the Nagas" – their bravery, respect for elders, rich artistic heritage, and strong sense of community. The thesis concludes that the Naga people possess a deep and complex history preserved orally. Their society has undergone a profound journey: from a collection of autonomous, animist villages often engaged in conflict to a predominantly Christian state within the Indian Union, striving to modernize while fiercely protecting its unique cultural heritage and identity. The study underscores the successful integration of traditional customary laws with modern governance and the lasting impact of the Christian mission on Naga society.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Oral history is one of the essential and rapidly developing fields of study in the modern period. In this kind of history, facts are gathered orally via audio or video recordings and are then arranged in a scientifically chronological sequence. Oral historians in many countries and cultures have used a wide variety of approaches to collect, interpret, and transmit oral history. These tasks have been undertaken. There are many different ways to record oral histories and do research on oral histories, and this is true even within particular national settings. For a historian, it is of the utmost importance to grasp the oral data as well as the economic, socioeconomic, political, and cultural aspects of a society to comprehend the similarities between the two and bring out the significant parallels between them. The Naga do not have a script in written form, material that has been created, or a personal history. They do, however, have tales, legends, and traditions that are told verbally from one generation to the next and serve as the verifiable histories of Naga beginnings. These are handed down from elder to younger generations. Although 16 renowned Naga clans in Nagaland were traded, there are more than 40 authentic Naga clans located outside of Nagaland that are both recognized and unrecognized. The exchange took place in Nagaland. On December 1st, 1963, the Indian province of Nagaland was founded. Nagaland is situated in the most eastern part of the northeast area of the country. The great bulk of the current video disk's contents reflects the fact that there have been few opportunities for doing research in Nagaland since 1947.

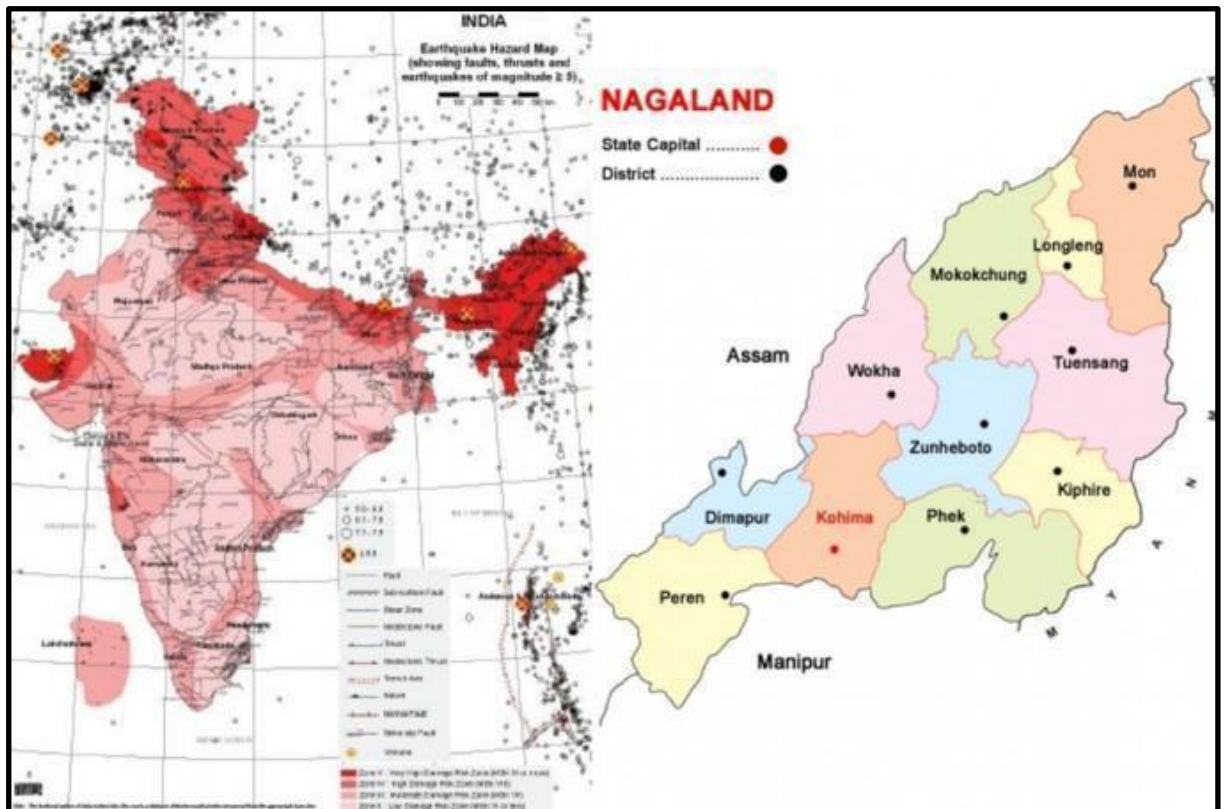


Figure 1. Map of India along with the Nagaland State (sources: Nagaland Archive)

i) THE BRIEF HISTORY OF NAGA

This thesis investigates the oral history of the Naga tribes that reside in Nagaland. In addition to being the sixteenth state to join the Indian Union, Nagaland can be found in the Northeastern region of the country. It is sandwiched between Myanmar and three other Indian states. Nagaland is characterized by its steep terrain, with Sarmati being the region's highest peak at an elevation of 3841 meters. The land area of the state is around 16,527 square kilometers, and its population is approximately 1.9 million people. These figures may seem low when contrasted with the enormous number of people that live on the Indian peninsula, but the state's population is really 17 different tribes, each of which has its own distinctive way of life. In most cases, one main or many smaller tribes have a dominant status within each of the 15

districts. The average temperature in the summer is around 31 degrees Celsius, while the average temperature in the winter is approximately 4 degrees Celsius.¹

The majority of the territory in Nagaland is made up of villages, and Naga culture centers its daily activities on the community. In Nagaland, a village is historically the highest level of political organization, and it is primarily centered on the institution of the clan. In addition, about two-thirds of the people call rural communities home.

As a result of the fact that Nagaland is home to 17 main tribes, the region is sometimes referred to as "the land of festivals." Historically, at least one of these tribes celebrated a festival throughout each of the 12 months of the year. In addition to this, the state government also hosts a celebration called the Hornbill Festival on the first of December. During this event, all of the many tribes that live in Nagaland put on a cultural performance and sell a variety of dishes, cultural relics, and products from Nagaland, among other things.

The very mention of the name "Nagaland" conjures up images of a land shrouded in secrecy, teeming with lively people who fiercely protect their traditional dances, fierce warriors and headhunters, verdant mountains and valleys, and dense forests; all of these elements come together to paint a picture of the region. There are a great number of ethnic groups in Nagaland, each of which has its own distinct language. The variety is balanced out by the shared way of subsistence, which is to live off of nature and the richness that nature provides. Nagas are simple people who have collectively laid claim to and lived on the land that the Nagas have occupied for many generations as the tribe's residents. About 70% of Nagas had to survive on traditional methods of living while being slightly impacted by modernity. About 30% of Nagas have been affected by modernity, and these people have adapted to new modes of surviving while living in what is known as an urban context.

The early history of Nagaland is not well recorded, and this includes the social practices and commercial endeavors that were common in the area at the time. The

¹ Abbott A.K. 1881 and 1882. *Note on the hill and the narrative of a military expedition into KachaNaga country during Feb-April, 1881. Journal of the United service Institute of India*, Nos. 49 and 50, Pp. 1-4.

Naga tribes' economics, culture, and other activities are, nonetheless, documented in the annals of the adjacent kingdom in Assam. Although the majority of the Naga people are now located in Myanmar, they have strong social, economic, and political links to the tribes in Assam.²

After India gained its independence in 1947, the Naga people continued to live inside the boundaries of the Assam region. During this time period, however, considerable nationalist activity started to emerge among the Naga tribes as a result of their desire to bring their ancestors into a single governmental entity. They concentrated their efforts, which resulted in a number of situations involving physical conflict. In 1955, the Union Government attempted to restore peace in the region by calling upon or renting out members of the Indian Army. In 1957, when the Nagas' representative and the Indian government had reached an agreement on the matter. Indian authorities now have full control over the region formed when the Naga Hill district of Assam and the Tuensang border division of the Northeast were merged. Although an agreement had been reached, this unsatisfactory situation persisted, and the tribes continued to refuse to cooperate with the Indian administration and pay taxes. It was decided in July of 1960 that Nagaland should be given the ability to govern itself and become a component state of the Indian Union. The year 1963 saw the formal granting of statehood, while the year 1964 saw the first elections for a democratically elected government.

² Abbott A.K. 1881 and 1882. *Note on the hill and the narrative of a military expedition into KachaNaga country during Feb-April, 1881. Journal of the United service Institute of India*, Nos. 49 and 50, Pp. 1-4.

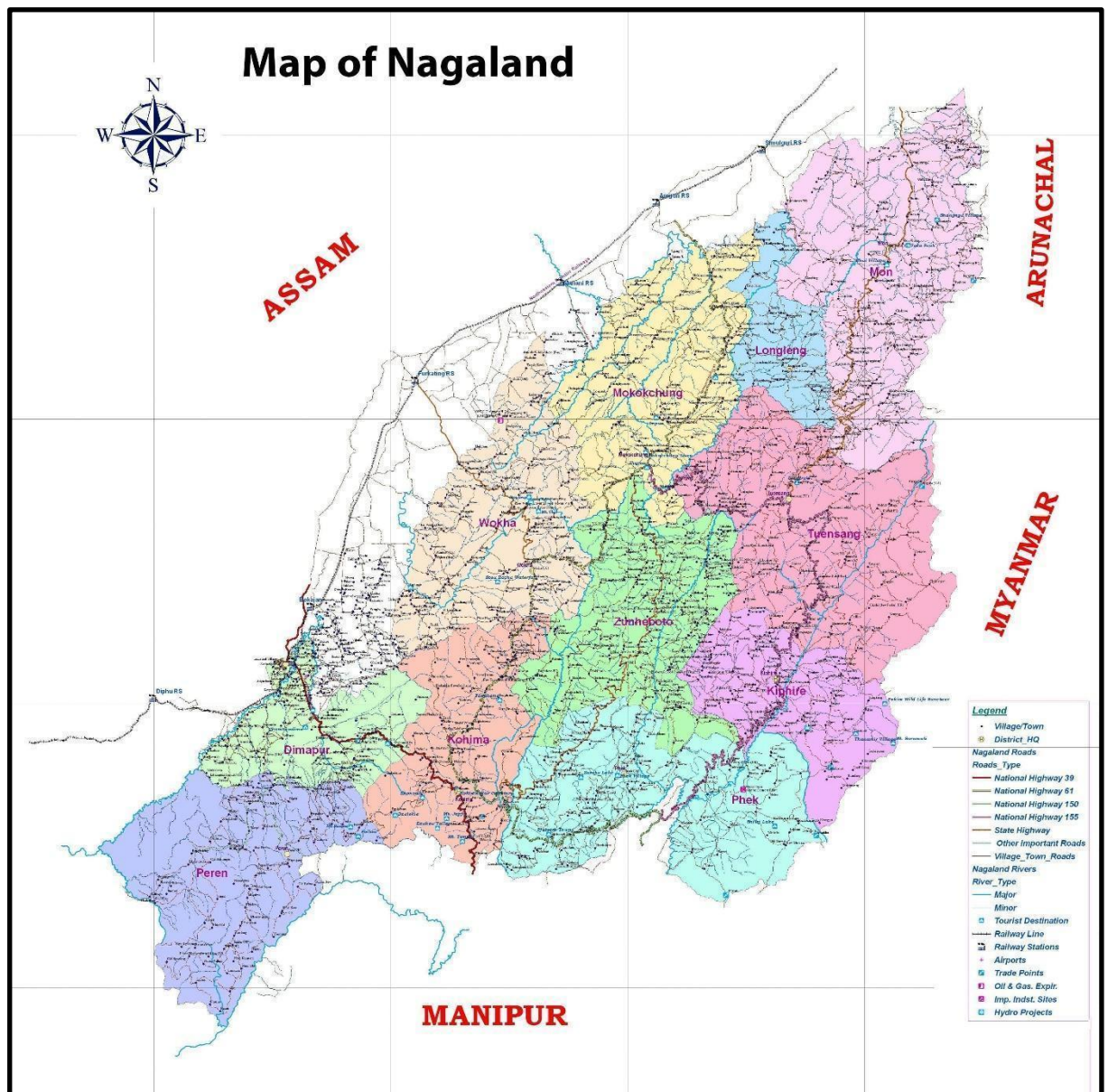


Figure 2. Map of Nagaland and its neighboring states (source: Nagaland Govt Gazette)

Kohima was designated as the capital on December 1, and the state of Nagaland was admitted to the Indian Union as the sixteenth state. Nagaland is located in northeast India and has a total land area of around 16,579 square kilometers. It has borders with Assam to the north, Myanmar to the west, and Manipur to the south. The terrain of the state is mostly mountainous, with the highest point being Saramati, which stands at

3841 meters and is located in the Kiphire district. The most important rivers that do this are the Dhansiri, Doyan, Dikhu, Milak, Tizu, and Zungki. These rivers are like sharp swords slashing through the rocks that make up this mountainous landscape.³

The Naga do not have their own prepared material, their own written script, or their own chronicle of their people's history. On the other hand, they have their traditions that have been passed down through the generations. These oral traditions serve as reliable chronicles of the beginnings of the Naga people. However, there are still more than 40 clans of Naga clans that live outside of Nagaland. These clans include both recognized and unrecognized clans. The Naga clans that live in Nagaland have traded off 16 notable clans. The Nagaland province of India was established on December 1st, 1963, and it is located in the easternmost most significant portion of India's Northeast. Since 1947, it has been difficult to study in Nagaland, and as a result, the vast majority of the content on the current videodisk pertains to the years before that year. The easternmost part of India is where you'll find the state of Nagaland. One of the seven states that are considered to be "sister states" of India, Nagaland is mostly surrounded by mountains of high height. The warmth and friendliness of the people, together with their traditions and customs, really go to one's heart. Unfortunately, Nagaland's early history is poorly documented. Records from the nearby Assamese kingdom of Ahom provide insight into Naga social and economic life. Many Naga still call Assam home, and the state has long been a political and economic hub for the Naga people. Myanmar seized direct control of the territory along the Assam border after an invasion in 1816. Assam and Nagaland unrest during this time period and the era's strict regulations stand out in history books. The region that is today Nagaland was annexed to the British Empire when the British East India Company conquered Assam in 1826. By 1892, the British had administrative control over the whole of modern-day Nagaland, except the Tuensang area in the upper east. It was politically merged with Assam, which at the time included a significant portion of the Bengal area, and for a long time remained a part of that territory. The British noted the frequent occurrence of Naga clan warfare and the practice of head-chasing, in which

³ American Baptist Missionary union, 1887. *Assam mission paper and discussions of the jubileeconference held in Nowgong*, December 18-29, 1886. Pp. 297.

prisoners and others were decapitated for the sake of religious rites. By using their force and planning, the British were able to bring an end to the practice of head-chasing and put an end to the natural confrontations that occurred between them. In any event, the influence of Christian educators in the area was largely responsible for the transformation that took place in Nagaland. A great number of Naga tribes eventually converted to Christianity, particularly the Baptist faith. A small assembly of clans continues to rehearse the animist religious rites that were in place before the arrival of the British. Following the establishment of independent India in 1947, the land continued to be a part of the Assam region. According to J.P. Factories, the Naga people inhabit the territory that is "limited by the Hudkawng valley in the north-east, the fields of Brahmaputra valley toward the north-west, of Cachar toward the south-west, and of the Chindwin River toward the east." In the south, the Manipur valley is widely understood to signify the purpose of interaction between the Naga clans and the notably more solidly associated gathering of Kuki clans such as Thadou, Lushei, Chin, etc. 3 In India, they may be found in the state of Nagaland, as well as four districts in the state of Manipur, one district in the state of Assam, and two districts in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. In addition, there are a significant number of Naga people living in the western parts of Myanmar (Burma). The Naga people are concentrated in the Somrah Tract that surrounds India in Myanmar. This region is governed by the Kachin state and the Saging Sub-division. There are 45 significant clans, and the population was around 3 million as of the year 2001. It is estimated that there are 13 clans in the state of Nagaland, 17 clans in the state of Manipur, 2 clans in the state of Assam, 3 clans in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, and 10 clans in the country of Myanmar.⁴ There are a total of 77 clans, not including sub-clans, according to the Naga National Right and Movements NNC. This total tally contains both large and small families. Around 2.7 million Nagas call the regions of Nagaland and Manipur home, according to the findings of the 2001 Census. About 0.3 million Nagas are still alive today. Some authors have speculated that the Naga people came from the north-east, the north-west, or the south-east, but there is no recorded genuine record of the Te Naga people's origins or the road they followed to reach their present

⁴ Anand, V.K. *Nagaland transition* (New Delhi; associated publishing house, 1967), Pp. 144.

position. The Naga Hills are home to a large population of Naga people, who are usually believed to have originally migrated there from the Southeast along the corridor of the Indo-Myanmar border. Captain Jenkins and Pamberton, accompanied by 700 fighters and 800 coolies or watchmen to convey their things and arrangements, walked over the Naga Hills in 1832 in search of a route from Manipur to Assam, as stated in the report on the territory of Assam written by Mills A.J. Moffatt in 1854. For the Brits, this was their first encounter with the Nagas. The Nagas kept attacking British soldiers stationed in several places even after the expedition reached the Naga Hills. It wasn't until 1880 that British forces were able to successfully seize possession of the Khonoma fortress, ending the struggle between the British and the Nagas. Even though British forces had taken control of the majority of the Naga Hills by the year 1880, the local Konyak tribe fought British rule until 1939.⁴ The British had some kind of success in several Naga settlements, but this was by no means the case everywhere. After the British left the Nagas Hills and India became independent on August 14, 1947, the Nagas proclaimed Nagaland (Nagalim) to be a sovereign country. Yet the Indian government has not recognized the Naga people's unilateral proclamation of national independence, and the native Naga people are still striving to gain control from the Indian government.⁵

In comparison to other states, there is a significant lack of material to use in the construction of Nagaland's history. Aside from the fact that the Naga tribes share connections with the tribes of nations in Southeast Asia, there are no historical sources known regarding the Nagas before they migrated to this area. Even before 1832, when the British marched through the Naga Hills for the first time on their way from Manipur to Assam, there was little historical evidence available, except for a few allusions to Ahom Naga connections. As a result, we are going to have to rely on traditional tales during the time period up to 1832. The traditional tales of several tribes, and even those of different families within the same tribe, might vary to some degree or even a significant degree. Nevertheless, it is feasible to recreate a pretty

⁵ Anand, V.K. *Nagaland transition* (New Delhi; associated publishing house, 1967), Pp. 144.

accurate history regarding the migration of the Nagas and the Ahom Naga connection using the legends that have been passed down.⁶

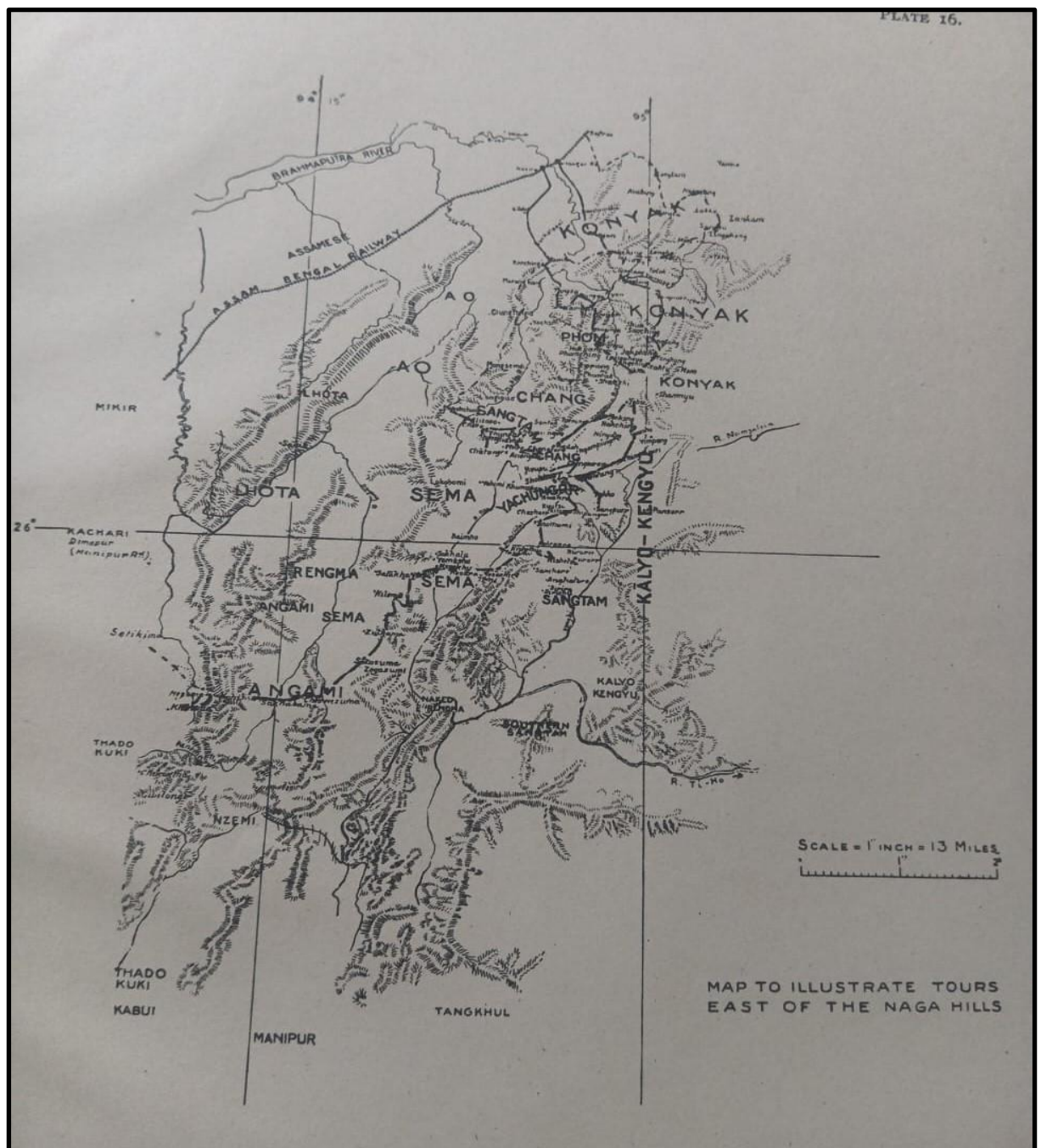


Figure 3. Map of Nagaland during the British era illustrating inhabited Naga tribes (sources: Nagaland Archives, J.Hutton report)

⁶ Avery, John: 1884. *The Hills Tribes of India*. American Antiquarian, VI: 307-16.

When the British first arrived in the area in 1832, the era of recorded history began. This is because the British left behind a large number of tour journals, notes, descriptions of various tribes, and government files. These documents are the most important resource that we have for learning about the Naga people and the Naga Hills, which together make up the modern state of Nagaland. 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. The conventional accounts that archeological evidence is based on are more reliable than any written record. Having said that, one should exercise some degree of care while using them. Tradition is another important source of historical information in Nagaland. Due to the fact that the majority of our information before the records kept by the British is based on tradition, it is not only a source but also one of the most essential sources. Traditions among the many Naga tribes vary, including those pertaining to migration, settlement, feuds, and other topics. Traditions such as this not only differ from one tribe to another, but also, about specifics, among members of the same group. Traditions, in spite of some minor divergences among them, are our finest source of information on the migration and settlement of several tribes in this country, as well as their feuds and battles. Following that is one's 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. Personal knowledge may be of tremendous use in this situation, especially with regard to the culture of the people. And since 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, it is of great assistance to reconstruct the history of this state. Both of these dates mark the beginning of the construction of the State of Nagaland. The reason for this is that the history of this 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 from 1955 is considered to be its modern history. This is two years before the foundation of the NHTA, which marks the beginning of Nagaland's march toward prosperity. Because the author had been living in this region since

1952, five years before the establishment of NHTA, his first-hand experience is a valuable source of information for this period.⁷

ii) REVIEW OF LITERATURE

T.C. Mackenzie (1905), B.C. Allen (1905), and A. Mackenzie (1884). Sir James John Stone (1896). For example, J.P. Mills (1922), "Hudson (1911)," and "Hudson (1921)" by J.H. Hudson. Sir James John's "Naga Hills and Manipur" (1896) is one of the first works to attempt to summarize the many different ethnic groups who called Manipur and the Naga highlands home, as well as the British expedition to the region, the state of education and religion there, and more. Together with the Manipur king, Ghumber Singh, he also wrote a brief history of the British colonial period.

In an attempt to better understand the Naga people, B.C. Allen (1905) described their physical features, the British expeditions to the Naga Hills, and the social and economic life of the Naga people who lived there.

T.C. When Hudson set out to investigate the Naga people of Manipur for his 1911 book, "The Naga tribes in Manipur," he paid close attention to the Naga people's location, general physical appearance, numerous origin myths, and way of life in terms of both geography and culture.

Alternatively, J.H. Hutton (1921) suggests that the Sumi tribe's occupation and food habits, social life, religion, language, and folklore were briefly mentioned in his book "The Sumi Nagas," in which he sought to explore the history and migration of Naga tribes and particularly concentrated on the origin of the Sumi tribe.

J.H. With the publication of 1921's "The Sema Nagas," Hutton attempted to investigate the history and migratory patterns of the Sema people. Work, diet, culture, religion, language, and folklore were all briefly discussed. However, he remained silent on the subject of Sema Naga culture.

J.H. In his 1921 book, "The Angami Nagas," Hutton researched and wrote about the Angami people, including their customs, vocations, appearance, law, religion, mythology, and language.

⁷ Avery, John: 1884. *The Hills Tribes of India*. American Antiquarian. 16-307.

J.H. For his 1921 book, "The Sema Nagas," Hutton attempted to trace the origins and travels of the Sema people. Work, diet, culture, religion, language, and folklore were all briefly discussed. However, he remained silent on the subject of Sema Naga culture.

In April 1923, J.P. Mills and J. Hutton went on a tour of the Naga Hills, where they recorded everything that happened during their journey. In 1876, J. Hutton also made a journey in which he had a map, but because of the passage of time, the map was altered. Mills and Hutton recorded many strange things in their report; they also recorded the strange warriors and their strong army throughout all the villages. From April 3, 1923, to April 30,

In his 1926 book, "The Ao Nagas," J.P. Mills described the daily lives of Ao people, including their customs and laws, their religion, and a brief introduction to their language and folktales.

J.P., the publication of "The Rengma Nagas" in 1937, he set out to investigate the origins and migration of the Rengma people. In addition, he studies the interplay between economics and social structure. The traditional music, literature, and language were the primary subjects of his study.

Notable components of Naga culture, as described by renowned anthropologist Christoph Von Fiirer-Haimendorf (1939), include merit feasts, headhunting, Morung, and the author's own experiences while journeying through the Naga Hills.

In 1957, Tajenyuba Ao published "Ao Naga customary laws" for his people. One of the first works written on the Naga people, this book was written by a scholar from the Ao Naga tribe in an attempt to learn more about their traditional practices.

In his 1959 book "The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century," Elwin Verrier compiled travelogues from a wide range of people who had visited the Naga Hills. The purpose of this project was to edit and consolidate all tour notes about physical features, socio-cultural life of various tribes, early Naga history, and economic life.

Attempting to investigate the Naga people, their history, and the Naga National Council, Elwin Verrier wrote "Nagaland" in 1961. The most notable achievement of the Naga awakening has been the joining together of tribes that were formerly antagonistic to one another, and he highlighted that the framework of They subscribe to a version of Christianity that will grow more inclusive and adaptive to today's society.

V.K. Anand (1967) studied the cultural practices of the Naga people. During his research, he saw that conventional ways of life seemed to be changing swiftly. He found that none of the current Naga settlements had any knowledge of Morung, and that the lack of communication and transportation infrastructure was the biggest obstacle. As an administrator, he also learned there is no way to win the hearts of the people by dismissing their problems and disagreements. An individual's grandfather may have been at the helm of the organization at the beginning of the struggle, which dates back sixty to one hundred years.

Alemchiba, M. 1970. A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland. In this work, he attempted to offer a detailed description of the Naga people, their ethnological affiliations, and the history of Nagaland. He endeavored to present every detail about Naga history in his work, which included researching the culture, festival, and society of the Naga people, as well as migration. He tried to give a concise overview of Naga history.

One of the Naga writers, M. Alemchiba (1970), released a book titled "A brief history account of Nagaland," in which he attempted to trace the beginnings of the Naga people, the origins of the word "Naga," and the migration of the Naga people to where they are presently situated in the Naga Hills.

One of the most famous Naga writers, M. Horam (1975), authored a book titled "The Naga Polity," in which he attempted to examine the Naga people's social and cultural life as well as the origins of the Naga National Movement. In addition, he discussed the etymological and historical roots of the word Naga.

To have a case study on the socio-cultural life of the Tangkhul tribe and to follow the social transition, M. Horam wrote "Socio-cultural life of Nagas" in 1977. The goal was to have a deeper familiarity with the Naga culture. The economic, political, social, and religious landscapes of their society are all changing, he said. He noted that some of the forces pushing for social change may be traced back to the British government's involvement in headhunting, as well as to its engagement with the ordinary people, Christian missionaries, and a push toward westernization. Some of the social and political shifts in Naga were the result of underground activity. In his analysis, he came to the conclusion that the Tangkhul people placed a high value on education.

S.T. Das (1978) studied the Zemi subgroup of the Liangmei, Rongmei, and Zemi families, who are members of the Zelianrong ethnic group. He elaborated on the customs and traditions of the Zemi people. Wet culture, he said, has replaced shifting agriculture since there is not enough land for jhum production.

Indian writer Murot Ramuny (1980) attempted to delve into the origins of the Naga people, the arrival of the British to the Naga Hills, and the formation of the state of Nagaland. In addition, he has published works on the Naga Christian heritage. He summed up the whole history of the Naga people, from their earliest days to the present, in a single sentence.

The North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes of India, compiled by the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army in 1983 (1907). The early British expedition to the Naga Hills is the focus of the book's chapter that is most relevant to our review. The British did not have initial contact with the Naga people until 1832, even though the rest of Muhammad's domains in Assam and the rest of the country up to the Patkoi came under nominal British rule in 1765

R.R. Shimray's book "Origin and culture of Nagas," released in 1985, is an admirable attempt to educate readers about the Naga people's past and present. He has disproved several theories about the origin and development of the Naga people. He offered his own opinion on the origin of the name "Naga," speculating that it was derived from

the Myanmar word "NAKA," which he supported with several instances. He also elaborated in detail on every essential part of Naga culture.

R.R. Shimray (1985) writes that the author of "Origin and Cultures of Nagas" did an admirable job of explaining the Naga people's background in this work. The author addressed the many hypotheses on the genesis of the Naga tribes. In addition to this, Shimray discusses the connections that may be drawn between myth and ritual. According to him, the function of myth is to provide the groundwork for the performance of the rite, and the ritual is the story enacted more dramatically. He also covered every significant aspect of Naga culture; hence, Shimray believes that it is still necessary to preserve the Naga tribe's cultural traditions.

She compiled the bibliography on the Naga peoples that appears in Sipra Sen's "Tribe of Nagaland" (1987). She briefly touches on the many Naga tribes in this book.

Similarly, "The Nagas of Nagaland: Desperadoes and Heroes of Peace" by Kanwar Randip Singh (1987) is another Indian work about the Nagas. In this book, Kanwar Randip Singh (1987) summarizes his tenure as the superintendent of police in Naga Hills and the lessons he learned there. He gives a cursory overview of the different tribes before attempting to trace the history of the turbulent events precipitated by Phizo and the Naga National Movement Council. Finally, he assesses the strengths and weaknesses of advocates for and opponents of national unity and stability among the Naga people.

Major General S.C. Sardesande (1987) is one of many Indian authors who have written on the Naga. The Tuensang and Mon districts of Nagaland straddle the India–Myanmar border, and the Khamnongs and upper Konyaks are discussed in his book. In his book titled "The Patkoi Nagas," he attempted to document the background of these two groups and their societal norms and customs. In addition, he gave a brief overview of how Khamnongs she also compiled the list of works written on the different Naga groups, including Sipra Sen's "Tribe of Nagaland," published in 1987. Sen only briefly discusses the various Naga groups and cultural landscapes that have evolved through time.

Roland Shimmi Y.L.1988.Comparative History of the Nagas; He endeavored to describe the numerous perspectives in his work, the Historical view, as well as the varied cultures, festivals, and how people celebrate their unique cultural systems.

The argument on the Naga tribes' early history, and in particular to the government's Inner Line and non-interference policy, is discussed in A. Mackenzie's book (1989). The book is where this topic is discussed. The Lieutenant Governor was given the power to prescribe a line, to be known as "the inner line," in all or some of the affected districts according to the Inner Line Act of 1872–1873. No British person of a specific class or foreign resident was allowed beyond this border without permission.

(First Edition: 1991)"Nagaland, Darling of the North East" Kiranshankermaitra. He made an effort to research the Naga people of Nagaland. He described how the stunning indigenous people of the Northeastern region, or Nagaland, accept Christianity, and he wrote;

- a) Missionaries try to convince non-Christians and other non-believers that all non-Christians and other non-believers are destined to burn in hell.
- b) To education.

Joseph Athickal, in his 1992 book titled "Maram Nagas-A socio-cultural study," documented his efforts to learn more about the culture of Manipur's last surviving primitive people. He also tried to assess the effect Christianity had on the group. He noted that people's reliance on institutions (whether educational or social, as in the case of Maram) seemed to have increased with the entrance of Christianity. His last finding was that Maram people tend to move to places with better transportation links and more promising economic prospects. He also learned the hard way that expanding one's horizons via formal education is the surest path to affluence, social status, and the development of one's own distinctive culture. Since the Marams arrived late to the party of modernity's benefits, they missed out on all of these opportunities

One of the most important and deserving themes explored in the 1992 book "Nagaland: a contemporary ethnography," edited by Subhadra Mitra Chann, is the evolution of agriculture in Nagaland.

RingyuichonZimik (1992) attempted to investigate changes in land ownership and jhum farming techniques across time.

Missionaries are responsible for carrying out work in the field or for performing duties related to Imchen Panger (1993) is another scholar in the Naga academic community who has studied the Ao people. He discussed the traditional Ao Naga faith and rituals.

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The Sanyu Visier, 1996. In the chapter of his book titled "A History of Nagas and Nagaland," in which he discusses the migration of the Naga people during the latter part of their history, he also discusses the many factors of migration of an enormous tribal movement.

Published in 1998, Ringkahao Horam's book "The Genesis of the Naga Political Movement" focuses on the origins of the Naga political movement and the history of the Naga people.

Published in 2000, R. Vashum's "Nagas' Right to Self-Determination" is an examination of the Naga people and the Naga National Movement from its inception until the year 1999. In addition, he discussed the divergent beliefs held by different Naga ethnic groups with regard to the right to self-determination.

The book "Nagaland: Past and Present," written by Joshi Hard Govind in 2001, makes an effort to shed some light on the subject of Nagaland by examining the present situation, as well as the Naga people's profiles, characteristics, and the British administration of Nagaland and its policies in Nagaland. In addition to this, he talks about the community and culture of the Naga people.

He describes the social, cultural, and economic history of the Naga people from their earliest known ancestors to the current day. Also writing on the Nagas is Hargovind Joshi (2001), an Indian writer. He sought to explore the Nagas' origin and migration to their current habitat.

A.Nshoga published *Traditional Naga Village System and its Transformation* in 2009, in which he briefly describes the various changes that have occurred in Naga society. In this book, he also explains the various administration and functions of the village, the chief: power and position of a chief, how the village assembly functioned, executive functions, judicial functions, legislative functions, and administrative functions. He also explains in his works about the traditional culture of Naga villages. The most significant aspect of the social revolution in social, economic, and political life was the introduction of religion and culture. The British acquisition of the Naga Hills was the single most important element in the change. The influence of British governance included the introduction of transport and communication, as well as modern education.

Produced or distributed by Nagaland's Director of Tourism (2012), who is part of the state's official Tourism Department. Review-worthy themes are covered in this publication, such as the Naga Hills, the social and cultural lifestyles of many tribes, the early history and economic life of the Nagas, and the migration of the Nagas to the region that is now the Naga Hills.

Laseto's (2012) *Tribal Ecology* begins by addressing the significance of the traditions and customs of the indigenous peoples of Nagaland and Northeast India. This book, titled "Socio-Cultural Life of the Nagas," is an attempt to study the many cultural norms of the Naga people and trace their historical progression. The author noted that numerous changes have occurred when looking at their society, politics, and religion, and these changes can be seen while examining their economy. This book also suggested that some of the key factors contributing to societal change are due to Christianity or the participation of Christian missionaries in headhunting, as well as a thirst for westernization. In the realm of politics, subterranean Naga tribes bore some

responsibility for the changes that occurred in social life. In conclusion, the authors discussed the level of awareness that the Naga people had about education.

Cristoph von Furer Haimendorf, a professor of Asian anthropology at the University of London, provided an anthropological view on Nagaland in "The Return to the Naked Nagas," where he praised the Naga Hills, the feast of merit, and the tribal men of tiap. He also discussed the importance of the Naga people. Long before he had the opportunity to travel to India, he became interested in the Naga and their homeland. While studying anthropology at the University of Vienna, he attended a lecture given by Professor Robert Von Heine-Gelder, one of whose areas of expertise was the comparative study of the megalithic culture of Southeast Asia. The highly developed megalithic rituals of some of the Naga tribes seemed to be crucially important in the elucidation of the ideology that led men to commemorate

Ghosh, B.B. History of Nagaland. Here, he wrote about the Nagas in a multi-volume work. He tried to explain the importance of northeastern states, not neglecting their history in the History of India. He briefly explains the conditions of the people, their cultural habits, and also the different administrative system of the Naga. Ghosh, B.B. History of Nagaland. Here he wrote about the Nagas in a multi-volume work.

Verrier Elwin, writing on the Nagas in the nineteenth century, provides a broad overview of the tribe based on his readings of Mills and J. Hutton's writings; he also offers a few brief reports on individual villages, but his overall impression of the Naga people is one of stereotyping. In the nineteenth century, Verrier Elwin visited the Nagas.

iii) OBJECTIVE

This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the different Naga tribes that reside in Nagaland by delving into their oral history and learning more about their clothing, rituals, decorations, inheritance, and economy. The subject of the examination is the Indian state of Nagaland, and the following are some of the aims of the research project:

- To study the historical evolution of the Naga tribes, and to analyze the origin of the Naga tribes in Nagaland
--As part of the goal stated above, we are going to investigate how their appearance and significance have changed through time. The significant historical shifts, as well as the search for the meaning of its genesis, are based on research into oral sources, which reveals a variety of perspectives and hypotheses.
- Documentation of oral sources of the origin of the Naga tribe in Nagaland
--- The most essential aspect of maintaining the records, which have been handed down from generation to generation, and of interpreting the oral sources of the narrative of the Naga people's departure from Nagaland, is the
- Comparative analyses of different tribes in Nagaland
--- The Naga people are well-known for their multi-tribal heritage, and it is an important part of Indian historical research to shed light on all of these many tribes.

iv) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study will use **ethnographic and historical methods**, including:

- **Fieldwork and Participant Observation:** Visiting villages across Nagaland to observe rituals, clothing practices, and community life.
- **Oral History Interviews:** Conducting structured and unstructured interviews with elders, storytellers, tribal leaders, and cultural custodians (Random sampling).

- **Comparative Analysis:** Using a cross-tribal framework to analyze cultural features.
- **Archival Research:** Consulting missionary records, anthropological accounts, and local archives where available.
- **Audio-Visual Documentation:** Recording songs, festivals, and oral narratives to preserve intangible heritage.

This study adopts a qualitative, naturalistic inquiry framework, emphasizing empathetic understanding (*verstehen*) of cultural phenomena while maintaining methodological impartiality. Grounded in interpretive traditions, the research prioritizes the collection and analysis of both primary and secondary sources, with particular attention to oral histories and archival materials.

Data Collection

1. Primary Sources

- Oral Histories: Semi-structured interviews with local elders, storytellers, and community knowledge-keepers, conducted in indigenous dialects and later translated.
- Archival Documents:
 - Official records (e.g., colonial reports, administrative proceedings) from the National Archives of India (New Delhi).
 - Rare manuscripts and oral transcripts from the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
- Material Culture: Field visits to sites referenced in folktales to contextualize narratives spatially.

2. Secondary Sources

- Scholarly works (books, peer-reviewed articles) on Naga history, anthropology, and folklore studies.
- Unpublished academic theses (M.Phil., PhD) from institutional repositories.
- Vernacular resources, including mother-tongue textbooks and regional publications (e.g., Nagaland State Archive collections).

Analytical Approach

- Triangulation: Cross-verifying oral accounts with archival records and secondary literature to mitigate bias.
- Thematic Analysis: Coding narratives into genres (myths, legends, historical accounts) to identify cultural patterns.
- Critical Historiography: Interrogating gaps between colonial-era documents and indigenous oral traditions.

Ethical Considerations

- Informed Consent: Prior permissions obtained for interviews and use of community knowledge.
- Language Sensitivity: Translations reviewed by native speakers to preserve semantic integrity.

Limitations

- Oral History Dynamics: Potential for narrative fluidity across generations.
- Archival Gaps: Fragmentary colonial records may obscure pre-colonial histories.

v) METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

1. Data Collection: Oral Narratives & Fieldwork

- Selection of Communities: Villages were chosen to represent diverse cultural/geographical ranges, ensuring a broad yet representative sample.
- Methods:
 - Interviews & Conversations: Direct engagement with community members during fieldwork.
 - Site Visits: Researchers visited locations tied to folktales to contextualize narratives.
- Findings:
 - Some folktales were shared across ranges (common cultural heritage).
 - Others were unique to specific villages/regions (localized traditions).

2. Translation Challenges & Process

The multilingual and dialectal diversity of Naga communities added complexity:

- Step 1: Translation into a Common Dialect

- Collaborated with experienced community elders/translators.
- Ensured linguistic and cultural accuracy (e.g., nuances, idioms).
- Step 2: Translation into English
 - Aimed at accessibility for academic discourse while preserving original meaning.
 - Potential challenges: Loss of subtleties, metaphors, or oral performance elements.

3. Categorization & Analysis

- Genre Classification: Folktales were grouped by type (e.g., myths, legends, moral stories) to facilitate thematic or comparative analysis.
- Purpose: Uncover cultural values, historical memory, or regional variations.

Key Strengths of the Methodology

- Community Involvement: Elders as co-researchers ensured authenticity.
- Multi-Sited Fieldwork: Cross-range comparisons enriched findings.
- Interdisciplinary Approach: Combined oral history, ethnography, and textual analysis.

Potential Limitations

- Subjectivity: Oral histories may reflect selective or contested memories.
- Translation Bias: Even with care, some meanings may be altered.
- Documentation Gaps: Some narratives might remain untold due to accessibility or secrecy.

Suggestions for Further Research

- Digital Archiving: Preserve recordings/translations for future studies.
- Inter-Tribal Comparisons: Explore connections/discrepancies between Naga subgroups.
- Performance Context: Study how folktales are narrated (e.g., rituals, festivals) to understand their lived significance.

In all, there were two phases to the sampling process for the study:

1. The selection of respective professions for districts, the government of Nagaland provides a list of all the districts in the state of Nagaland. This list will be used to produce the list of districts. Using a process called stratified sampling, districts will be

chosen from this list using a method in which various occupations will be distributed across the districts.

2. The selection of questions for the various professions, the second phase, which will come after the first step of picking the profession from the several districts for the study, will involve selecting the profession. A stratified sampling approach will also be used in the process of selecting representatives from various occupations. The population that will be used for this research will consist of a random sampling of general residents in each District of the state of Nagaland.

vi) Research Gap

Despite growing academic interest in tribal studies in India, there remains a substantial gap in the systematic study of Naga oral history and the comparative cultural practices among tribes. Much of what is known is fragmented or filtered through colonial or missionary records, which often lacked indigenous perspectives. Given the increasing influence of modernization, urbanization, and migration on tribal lifestyles, there is an urgent need to preserve these cultural narratives and traditions. This study aims to:

- Reclaim indigenous voices and highlight local perspectives.
- Preserve intangible cultural heritage.
- Provide a comparative framework for understanding internal diversity among the Naga tribes.

vii) Research Questions

1. What are the major origin myths and migration stories of the Naga tribes, and how do these differ between tribes?
2. How have traditional clothing, rituals, and decoration evolved, and what do they symbolize?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the inheritance systems across tribes?
4. How do oral histories reflect the social and political changes experienced by the Naga tribes?
5. In what ways have modernization and external influences impacted traditional tribal economies and cultural expressions?

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 form the central focus for both the activities in this chapter and 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.⁸

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.

⁸ Angami, A. 1975: *changing Naga society* (letters to the editor). North Eastern affairs, 3 (4), January-march

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 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.⁹

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

⁹ Angami, A. 1975: *changing Naga society* (letters to the editor). North Eastern affairs, 3 (4), January-march

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.¹⁰

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 conventional laws may be able to adjust to accommodate the changes that are occurring in the community of Ao people.¹¹

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 Yimkhung, Sangtam, Khiamniungan, chang, Pochury tribes and it has 159,822 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

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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

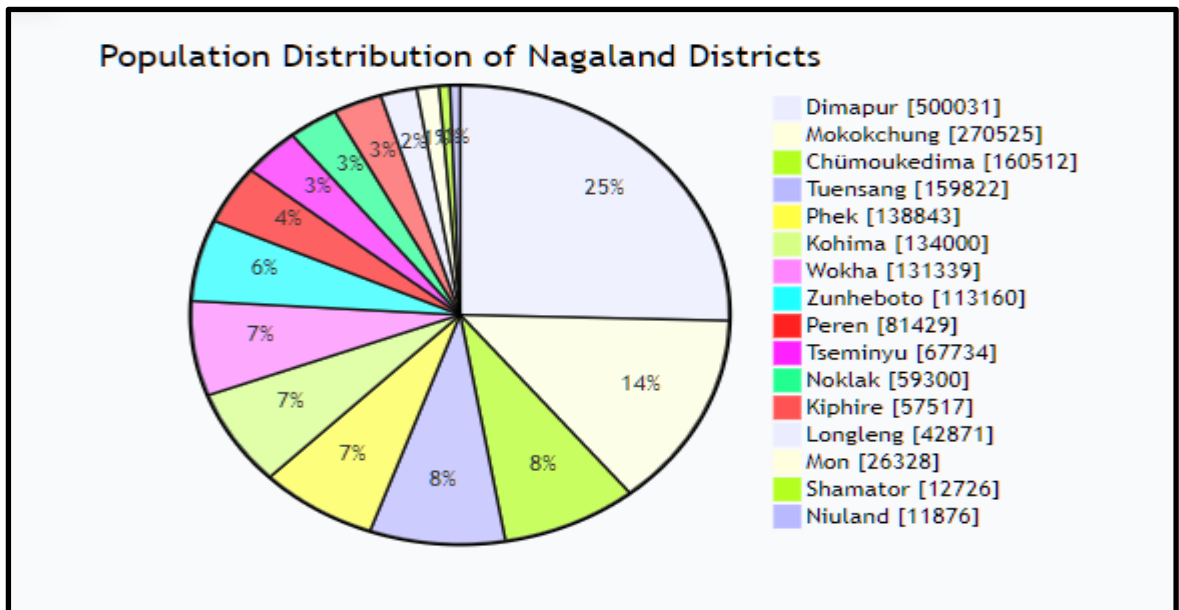


Figure no.4 Pie chart of Nagaland population district-wise (source: AkatoluAssumi)

i) ORAL DATA TRANSCRIPT AND INTERPRETATION



Figure No.5 Picture of Interviewee and Interviewer (source: AkatoluAssumi)

Interviewee: Hotokhu (Sumi Naga elder/community member) Transcript-1

Interviewer: AkatoluAssumi (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 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.



Figure No.6 Picture of Interviewee and Interviewer (source: AkatoluAssumi)

Interviewer: AkatoluAssumi

Transcript-2

Date: 19 November 2022

Location: Valley View, Dimapur, Nagaland

Akatolu: It is the 19th of November 2022. My name is AkatoluAssumi. 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:

a) Sweeping at night is believed to sweep away wealth.

b) 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.



Figure No.7 :Picture of Interviewee and Interviewer (source: AkatoluAssumi)

Interviewee: Reverend P Dozo (Theologian & Missionary) Transcript-3

Interviewer: AkatoluAssumi (Researcher)

Date: 1 July 2019

Location: Dimapur, Nagaland, India

Interview Duration: 15 minutes

Topic: Religious Transformation in Naga Society

I. Introduction and Background

AkatoluAssumi:

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

AkatoluAssumi:

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

AkatoluAssumi:

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

AkatoluAssumi:

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.

AkatoluAssumi:

Thank you for your time and wisdom, Reverend.

Rev. P Dozo:

Blessings on your academic work. Goodbye.



Figure No.8: Picture of Interviewee and Interviewer (source: AkatoluAssumi)

Interviewee: Wanglu Konyak (40-year resident of Tizit Village) Transcript- 4

Interviewer: AkatoluAssumi

Date: August 17, 2018

Location: Tizit Village, Mon District, Nagaland, India
Cultural Context: The KonyakNaga 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: AkatoluAssumi

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.



Figure No.9 :Picture of Interviewee and Interviewer (source: AkatoluAssumi)

Interviewer: AkatoluAssumi Transcript-6

Interviewee: Tarap

Date: 22nd July 2023

Location: Tizit, Mon District

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: AkatoluAssumi

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

Transcript- 8

Interviewer: AkatoluAssumi

Date of Interview: 21/06/2020

Location: Lizzami

Introduction

AKATOLU: Hello, my name is AkatoluAssumi. 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.

Interviewee: VikutoYeptho

Interviewer: AkatoluAssumi

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 VikutoYepthomi.

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: AkatoluAssumi

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.

a)Makhel: A pivotal dispersal point (Senapati District, Manipur) where Naga tribes diverged to their current settlements (Hotokhu).

- b) 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:

- a) Sumi Tribe: VikutoYeptho 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).
- b) 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:

- a) 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).
- b) Superstitions like avoiding work after unnatural deaths or nocturnal activities (sweeping, haircuts) were prevalent (Tohevi, Atoli).

3. Colonial and Post-Colonial Transformations

-British Encounters:

- a) Initial resistance to British surveys/taxes (Hotokhu), followed by co-option into labor corps during WWI (Khulupu, Transcript-5).
- b) 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:

- a) Kohima's WWII battles (1944) exposed Nagas to global influences, accelerating the decline of headhunting and animism (Khulupu).

- b) Nagas aided British forces by guiding patrols and evacuating wounded soldiers (Transcript-5).

4. Cultural Practices

-Festivals:

- a) Sumi: Tuluni (harvest festival) and Ahuna (conflict resolution) celebrate agriculture and community bonds (Nihozu, Hotokhu).
- b) 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:

- a) Rapid conversion occurred via missionaries (American Baptists) using education, healthcare, and vernacular Bible translations (Rev. P Dozo, Transcript-3).

- b) 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:

a) Dzukou Valley's female spirit and white elephants reflect animist reverence for nature (Tohevi).

b) 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).

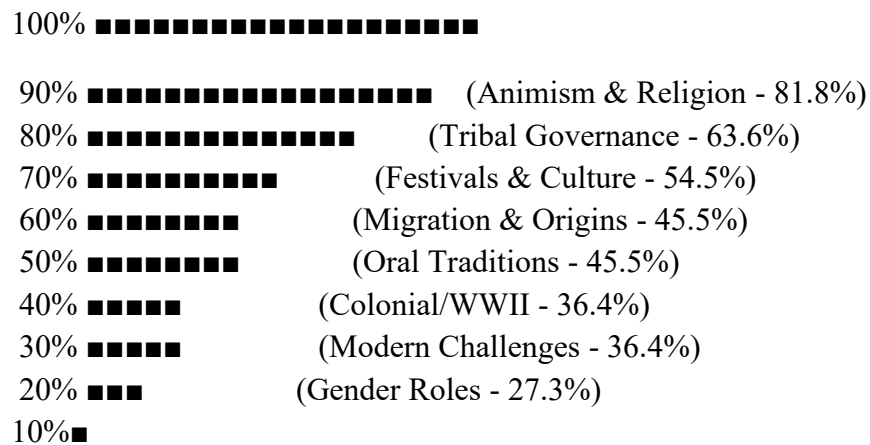
Here's a percentage-based breakdown of themes across all transcripts, presented in both table and visual formats:

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



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.¹²

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 part of the locals. We'll discuss these points in further detail below.

Some of the archeological site found in Nagaland

- a) Archeological site at Dimapur 'Kachari Ruins in Dimapur'
- b) Archeological site in Kohonama 'Megalithic site' and Kazakheno 'cave at Kazakheno'
- c) Archeological site in Mokokchung District 'Longthrok'

¹² 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.

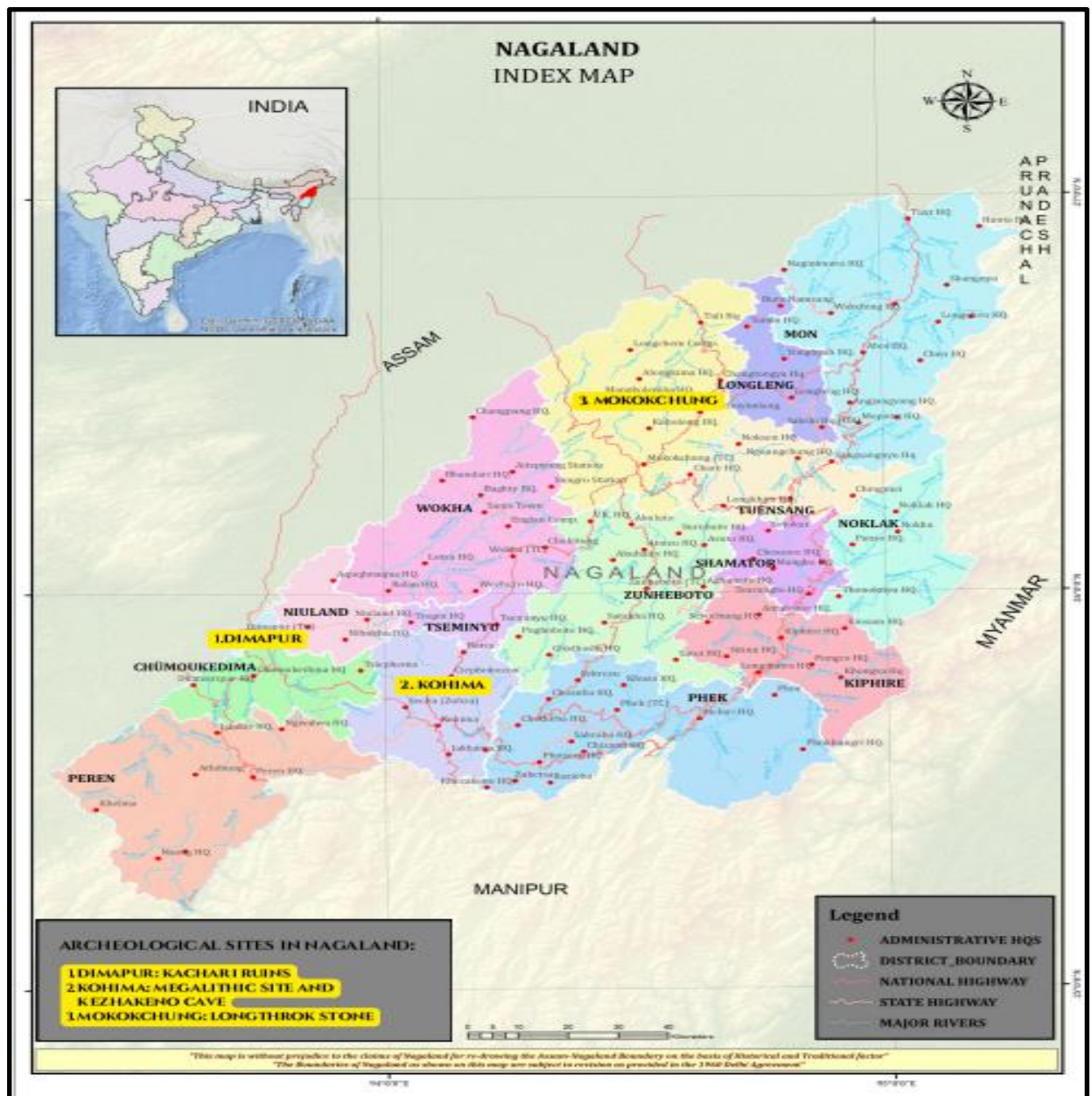


Figure no 10. Map showing Archeological site in Nagaland (source: Kohima Archive J.HuttonReport)

The ruins of Dimapur are here. The wealthy town of Dimapur may be found on the plains of Nagaland, more specifically in the



Figure no 11. Archeological site in Dimapur Kachari Ruins (source: AkatoluAssumi)

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-saKacharis. It was from this group that the 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



Figure no 12. Artifact found during archeological survey by Art and Culture (source: AkatoluAssumi)

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.¹³ 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

¹³Dewan, 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

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, 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.¹⁴ 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

¹⁴ 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

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 Detune 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. 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.¹⁵



Figure no 13. Megalithic site in Khezhakheno with the scholar's onsite visit (source: AkatoluAssumi)

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,

¹⁵ 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.

but due to natural cracking, the number has now expanded to twenty-four. There are two distinct 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



Figure no 14. Megalithic site in longtorok stone with the scholar's onsite visit (source: AkatoluAssumi)

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.¹⁶

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

¹⁶ 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

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, 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 15. Old style of granary to store extra grain in Khezhakheno(source: Research scholar)



Figure no.16: House of Ancestor Chief Priest Khezhakheno village scholar field visit (source: AkatoluAssumi)

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).¹⁷ Towards the end of the 17th century, one Ahom prince fled to the

¹⁷ 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.

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 KodathoorHingho (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 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 Naganimora, 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 Naganimora proper. The name of the location, Naganimora, 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 1980–26. 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 1833 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.¹⁸

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

¹⁸ Angami Baptist Church, *Angami Baptist Church Council Constitute Kohima*, Angami Baptist Church.

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, 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.¹⁹

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*

¹⁹ Aram, M, *Evolution of Naga's politics*, Kohima, Nagaland each center.

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. Woodrope, 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. Mackenzie²⁰

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.

²⁰Acharyya Nagendra Nath. 1966: *History of Medieval Assam from the 13th to 17th century*, Gauhati, Datta Baruah Pp. 308.

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 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.²¹

²¹Acharyya Nagendra Nath. 1966: *History of Medieval Assam from the 13th to 17th century*, Gauhati, Datta Baruah Pp. 308.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURES

The core sector of Nagaland's economy, which is primarily agricultural, is what most people rely on for their livelihood.



Figure No.17: Different crops found in different part of Nagaland (source: Akatolu Assumi)

The main economic activity in Nagaland is agriculture, and many members of the Naga tribes have worked in it or still do. Rice, maize, oilseeds, millets, potatoes, sugarcane, and other crops are among the most significant. Nagaland continues to rely

on food imports from other regions of India. Jhum cultivation is a common practice that has caused soil erosion and fertility loss. Below are some examples of jhum cultivation from the Naga tribe;

Jhum cultivation of Tikhir Nagas: Since jhum agriculture is more practical for mountainous areas, it is the primary system of cultivation among the Tikhir tribes of Nagaland. In search of fertility, the location of farming is changed annually from one location or mountain to another. In this arrangement, a jurisdiction with fertile land is chosen after thorough consideration. After choosing, the priest performs a ceremony of forest purification before they enter. This is followed by clearing the entire agricultural area with fire, and they employed mirow (an element) to stop the fire from spreading from careless burning. After cleansing in the month of January, the jungle should be slashed or trimmed for a few months before being burned once more in the month of April. The length of cultivation depends on the soil's fertility. Burned debris becomes manure, and untidy logs are/should be cleared away before seeds are sown. If the soil is rich, cultivation will last for roughly two to three years. Logs are set horizontally to contain the earth that would otherwise be swept away by rain in order to prevent soil erosion and increase its fertility. The prepared logs are connected to the cleft wooden pegs. Some trees are trimmed down to the right height for humans so that climbers like beans and sweet potatoes can use them. However, they stop farming and leave the fallow land for future cultivation when the soil fertility is depleted or the roots are dried out.²²



Figure No.18: Jhum cultivation field (source: AkatoluAssumi)

²² Ao, Moasosang. 1962: *Social and culture changes in the tribal communities today and the responsibility of the churches. Religion and society*, IX (4) December.

Jhum cultivation of Lotha Nagas: The district's dominant agricultural practice, the Lotha tribes of the Nagas, is held responsible for the majority of the region's damage. The Lotha Nagas uses this practice for a variety of reasons, from the abundance of land for jhum farming to the lack of knowledge of other techniques among the populace. The area's geography does not lend itself well to irrigation techniques. The area must be left fallow for at least seven years before the following round of farming, but most people keep it fallow for longer periods of time due to its increased fertility. These arable lands are privately owned, and the owner decides when to return to the same location in the future. To ensure that no single plot of land is left alone once the community clears the area for cultivation, the entire sector of the village performs the cultivation collectively while preserving regularity in such shifts. No land should be left uncut in the middle of the fields; instead, the owner should return to that same location only for the following cycle of cultivation with the rest of the neighborhood. The practice of headhunting during ancient times, when people could not move about safely, is one cause for this, as is the ease with which wild animals could destroy crops when just a small percentage was planted. Before now, the cycle of at least seven years was closely adhered to.²³

Today, there is a lesser amount of cultivable land available due to the rise in the global population as well as the ongoing expansion of civilization. As a result, it is only natural to return to the same location sooner than you did previously.

Nevertheless, as of right now, a survey on the jhum cultivation of Nagaland as a whole reveal that the jhum technique of agriculture covers 70% of the state. The growth of jhum is extremely detrimental to the environment, particularly the burning of the biomass that results in the emission of carbon and, as a result, contributes to the acceleration of global warming. It would appear that more individuals in today's society have concluded that participating in the market economy is preferable to the arduous process of cultivating jhum using human labor, and thus, fewer people are devoting their time to working in traditional fields.²⁴

Terrace cultivation of the Angami Nagas or village began cultivating ever since the village was established. It is said that among the southern Angami Naga, Jakhama village has to be the first to plough the field, and other villages should follow; then only the harvest will be good that year. In the Kohima district of Nagaland, members of the Chakesang Naga tribe use terracing and irrigation techniques. It is also believed that when they seek a new field, they are required to perform a ritual, clean the land, and dig a little area on the first day. If their dream was favorable after the digging,

²³Bhattacharaya, P.K., 1975: *economic Evolution of the Naga society. Highlander*, 3 sets, Pp. 1-9.

²⁴Hutton, 1967: *patterns of economic enterprises in hill areas of North East India. A common perspective for North East India* (Calcutta: pannelal), Pp. 31-223.

they would return the following day to plough the field; otherwise, they would have to find a new field.

When the paddy is ready to be harvested, they will tie a few bunches of paddy together and perform certain rituals as an offering to the "terhuomia." Once the ceremony is complete, they will be able to harvest the paddy, but they will not consume the paddy that was presented as a sacrifice since it is against the culture's religious beliefs to do so. Only after they have finished harvesting the entire field may they collect a few bunches of rice to present as a sacrifice and utilize the rest of the paddy for fodder. It is also considered impolite to bring paddy into the home. As a consequence of this, they would store it outside or on the porch. It is stated that this practice is still carried out in the majority of the communities to this day.

Chakhesang Naga terrace cultivation; Irrigation systems are built, and people transport water from great distances. The rice that is grown in the Chakhesang Nagas hamlet is typically considered to be of the highest quality and nutritional value of all the rice that is sold in the region of Nagaland. People don't appear to be aware of the fact that this rice is of a very high standard, though. The greatest rice may outperform the most expensive rice that's currently on the market when it comes to the benefits it provides to your health. There is a possibility that rice has a greater quantity of energy, stamina, and vitamins than other rice. Thevuri, also known as fowl paddy, is a kind of paddy that has the ability to be stored for even longer than one hundred years. The cultivation of terrace fields is the Chakesang Nagas' primary means of subsistence. This strategy is quite effective in preventing soil erosion.



Figure No.19: Farmer working in terrace cultivation in a village (source: AkatoluAssumi)

Forestry is another significant source of revenue in the world today. The Nagas see the forest as a source of life, as it is from here that water, flora, and other forms of natural products originate. Large clouds lingering over the forest are seen as a portent of good fortune in many Nagas villages. This is because the presence of such clouds demonstrates that the forest is thriving and has a wealth of resources to provide. Even gathering firewood in the protected forest is forbidden due to the Nagas' aversion to the practice of cutting down trees there. No one is permitted to fell any of the trees in the forest without prior authorization. Even the young couple who would require lumber for the construction of their new home was obliged to obtain permission from the hamlet. The setting of forest fires is prohibited.²⁵

²⁵Bhattacharaya, Ajit kumar, 1973: *social economic strategies of education in Nagaland: Historical study*. Gauhati University, Ph. D. (unpublished) thesis.

Cottage industries like weaving, woodwork, and pottery are other major sources of money. Because of its remote location and the current status of its politics, the state's reliance on tourism is essential but mostly constrained. There is no way to get around the undeniable reality that the economy of Nagaland serves as a representation of the advanced and rapidly expanding phase of the state.

Having built infrastructure is a major help to the process of economic growth and development. The connection between improved infrastructure and overall economic growth is not a matter of simple cause and effect. It is a process that never ends, and the progression of economic growth must always be preceded, accompanied, and followed by the progression of infrastructural development. In light of this, the crucial part that infrastructure, both physical and social, plays in the development planning of an economy is universally acknowledged.

Infrastructure, which includes things like transportation and communication, electricity and energy, financial and educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and so on, is among the fundamental requirements that a growing and developing economy must meet. Some sort of charge²⁶ The following is a list of the many aspects of the development of infrastructure in Nagaland: transportation and communication are among the most essential aspects of development, with a good infrastructure of transportation and communication facilities. Because it acts as a link between different productions, it is considered to be one of the major services that are necessary for driving economic activity. Given that there is no rail nor air service available in Nagaland, the establishment of market hubs and processing facilities is of the utmost significance for the growth of the economy in this state. Due to a lack of investment in local and regional transportation, this state has been shut off from the rest of the nation for quite some time.

The infrastructure of an educational establishment. Education is the cornerstone of holistic growth, both for the individual and for society as a whole. In addition to this, it is a significant role in increasing equality across regions, genders, and in many other areas. The educational institution is an essential part of the social infrastructure since it serves to contribute to the accessibility of knowledge, the diffusion of information, and the provision of possibilities to make more money and be more productive. The state's educational system has advanced quickly because of initiatives like the Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

²⁶ Bhowmik, K.I., Chowdhuri, Mk and Biswas, A.K... 1971: *Socio Economic Characteristics of Zemi family and adoption of terrace cultivation. Society and culture: A Research journal* (Calcutta), 2(1), January.

The development of economic infrastructures marked the first step of economic planning it has done since becoming a state. During the early stages of the planning process, the economy was predicated on the more conventional agricultural and social arrangements. On the eve of statehood, agriculture was the primary employment, and around 98.55 percent of the working population was involved in it. The production method that was used was quite basic. Since then, the fundamental shift that was taking place in the economy of the state has been more apparent. Even though the expansion of the tertiary sector has been relatively slow in recent decades, it is still the primary contributor to the economy, and it has maintained its position as the sector that makes the least contribution to the overall economy.

The fundamental component of economic progress is cooperation.

Increase in workforce participation: The recent past has seen a rise in the percentage of the population in Nagaland that is employed. According to Table 5.3, the percentage of the state's entire workforce that is employed has increased from 42.74 percent in the year 2001 to 49.18 percent as of today. The district of Wokha had the lowest proportion of employees in Nagaland with 6.78 percent, while the district of Tuensang had the greatest share of employees with 22.26 percent (1, 85,250). But in 2011, this proportion of employees was different, as the city of Dimapur reported the greatest proportion with 15.54 percent, while the city of Longleng had the lowest proportion with 3.14 percent.

The majority of the workers are cultivators: the economy of Nagaland is mostly agricultural, with 69.39 percent of the entire labor force being employed in agriculture and activities related to it. A cultivator's farm laborers and marginal employees make up 43.16 percent, 2.32 percent, and 23.91 percent of the workforce, while workers in home industries and other occupations account for 0.98 percent and 29.64 percent, respectively.²⁷

i) AGRICULTURE

Agriculture has historically been the most important sector of Nagaland's economy; nowadays, the sector is regarded as one of the state's most important sources of revenue, and the majority of Naga people make their living in the agricultural sector. They are mostly agriculturalists and are capable of growing approximately twenty different varieties of paddy crops annually. The state of Nagaland benefits tremendously from the agricultural endeavors that take place within it. Slash-and-burn

²⁷ Bhowmik, K.L., Chowdhuri, Mk and Biswas, A.K... 1971: *Socio Economic Characteristics of Zemi family and adoption of terrace cultivation. Society and culture: A Research journal* (Calcutta), 2(1), January

agriculture, often called shifting cultivation or terrace farming, is frequently used by the people of Nagas. They also practice Jhum cultivation, which is another name for terrace cultivation. Growing a variety of crops in their fields is the primary means by which the native people of Nagaland make their living. There is a lot of intricacy involved in Nagaland's traditional farming system.

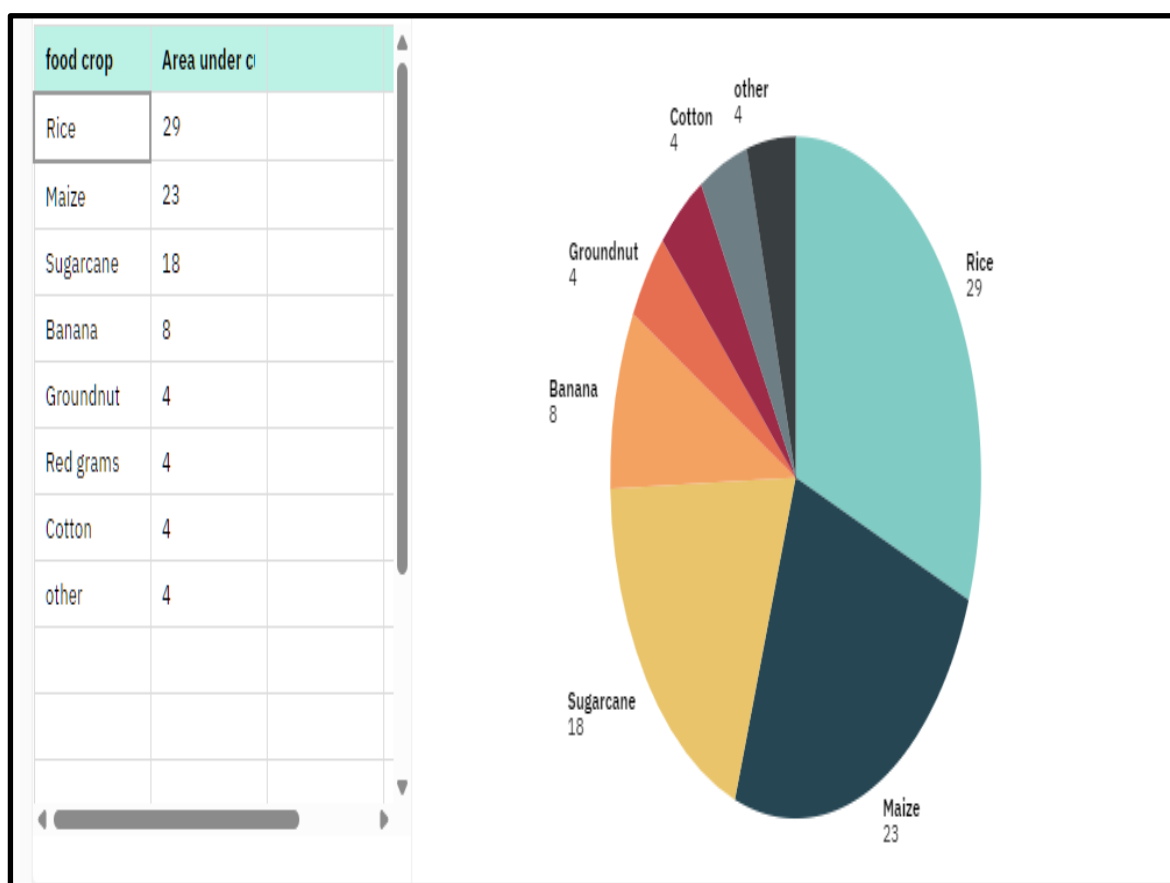


Figure No.20: Pie chart of agricultural products in an area (source: AkatoluAssumi)

Agriculture system: The people of Nagaland have a long and interesting history that involves the development and use of several agricultural practices. The high level of agrobiodiversity that is supported by Nagaland's traditional agricultural techniques is one of the region's most notable characteristics. Exploitation of resources, family food security concerns, careful crop and variety selection, variations in conventional agricultural systems, and the possibility of monetary gain have all contributed to the current high level of agrobiodiversity.

Agriculture comes in several forms, such as the jhum system, the terrace system, firecracker restricted forest, and backyard gardens. Naga rural residents primarily engage in four distinct types of traditional agriculture: the jhum system, the terrace

system, the firecracker restricted forest, and house gardens. The following is a list of the many agricultural systems that may be found in Nagaland:²⁸

Jhum system: In Nagaland, the jhum system of agriculture, which is also known as shifting cultivation, is the kind of farming that is the most widely used and well-known. This type of cultivation is often accomplished by the process of clearing and burning forest land, which is then followed by the planting of seeds. When considering the quantity of land used and the number of individuals directly involved in agriculture, jhum farming is by far the most common traditional practice.



Figure No.21: Drying of Grains in an old Grain dryer (source: AkatoluAssumi)

²⁸ Bhowmik, Kl., Gupta, SN. And Bhowmik, A. 1969: *impact of agricultural development on the social structure of the Nagavillage community*. *Journal of Social Research*, 12(2), Pp. 29-117.

The Jhum or shifting agriculture that the people of Nagaland have historically practiced has become the primary source of employment and subsistence for the majority of the population. In Nagaland, the average time spent practicing shifting cultivation at a given location is 1.5 years, after which it is abandoned for a fallow period that lasts between 8 and 9 years.

Jhum farming involves the cultivation of a wide variety of crops, the most important of which are rice, maize, beans, pumpkin, and other such crops. As a general rule, a single cropping technique is used for this form of farming, as the practice of double cropping in jhum fields is quite uncommon.

Terrace cultivation: A form of irrigated agriculture known as terrace rice farming is used to cultivate rice on terraces. The slope of the ground and the level of experience of the personnel who are creating the terrace both have a role in determining the width and length of the terrace. There are fundamentally two approaches to farming on terraces, which are referred to as dry terrace and wet terrace agriculture, respectively. A multi-cropping pattern has been established for each of these categories, and it is continuing to extend into broader operations.

Home gardens: A home garden in the Nagas culture is defined as an area of land near a house or within minutes of the house where a variety of annual and perennial plants are grown, sometimes with animals. The garden is typically managed by the women of the house, and it is neither a recent innovation nor the result of advances in technology or education. Home gardens are not a new invention nor have they developed with modern education; rather, they date back to the time when the village was first established. Home gardens are the primary contributor to the agricultural system, accounting for the majority of the production of vegetables, both for personal use and commercial distribution. Because they are the agricultural site of operation that is physically located closest to the rest of the system, they receive the greatest amount of attention possible. Typical locations for a home garden include the backyard, the retaining walls of the house, the community's periphery, the empty lot next to a vacant house, or the margins of roads and pathways. Its primary function is to supply food during times of food scarcity. Because it is typically situated at the base home or below the house, it frequently serves as a dumping ground for various household items as well as ashes from the family hearth.

This area is home to a diverse selection of fruits, vegetables, and other types of crops. Vegetables and fruits that grow on vines, such as passion fruit and squash, are frequently trained to climb up and over fences. On the crevices of the rock and the stone walls, cabbage and gynura, which are both types of herbs, are produced. There

is a diversity of vegetation that is farmed, including trees, perennials, climbers, and annual crops.²⁹

Firewood reserve forest: The only people who have access to cooking gas and other amenities are the farmers. Therefore, one of the most crucial needs a family in Nagaland must satisfy to maintain its existence is the availability of fuel wood. In addition to its usage in the kitchen, firewood is also utilized in the heating and warming of a wide variety of other utilities and residences. Locals place a high value on firewood.

Villagers are known to have planted and protected spontaneously emerging valuable species in the reserve forest for fuel. This practice has been passed down through generations. In many cases, different species of trees and bamboo are kept as preserved specimens. A section of woodland that serves as a reserve for firewood is located right on the outskirts of the settlement. This forest is an exact duplicate of the main forest, with the exception that the trees here are far smaller than those in the main forest, which ordinarily surrounds the hamlet. Additionally, a significant amount of revenue is generated by the sale of firewood for many of the locals in Naga.³⁰

The Nagas benefit from the fuel reserve forest in a number of ways, including the provision of essential resources like firewood, poles, and bamboo for the construction of homes and the maintenance of households. It provides a supply of fruits and vegetables that have not been grown. One further advantage of having a fuel reserve forest is that the woodland's cool breath helps to keep the community at a comfortable temperature. After being used to collect firewood, the area is generally put to better use by being used to grow rice and other crops, since the soil is usually rich due to the natural regeneration that takes place there. In addition, the land is typically farmed for a period of one or two years in order to provide care for freshly planted trees.

Over the course of the past several years, Nagaland has seen a growth in the amount of agricultural output it produces. The amount of land in the state that is devoted to agriculture has also grown. In a similar vein, there has been a rise in the application of fertilizers and pesticides in agricultural settings. As a direct consequence of this, there has been a notable rise in production.

ii) ECONOMIC POSITION

²⁹ Biswas, K, 1945: *Aquatic vegetation of Assam with special reference to the Naga Hills and loktak lake and swamps near the border of Assam. Proceedings of Indian science congress*, pt. III, Pp. 73.

³⁰ Bose, Saradindu and Saha, Vaskar (Ed), 1982): *population Data regarding forestry communities practicing shifting cultivation* (report for India, 1980). New Delhi, inspector General of forests, ministry of Agriculture, Pp. 9-27.

Before the advent of civilization, the inhabitants of Nagaland lived in a large number of autonomous villages, and the "village state" served as their primary administrative entity. The many Naga tribes' ways of life were impacted not only by what they farmed and harvested from their vast forest reserves, but also by what they ate. Local economic activity was sufficient to support itself. Before people started trading salt for agricultural goods like pepper, ginger, Naga shawls, and other commodities made in the Naga Forest, salt was in short supply. Before this practice, salt was difficult to come by.

Agriculture is the primary industry that contributes to Nagaland's economy. Forestry, cottage industries, and tourism are all important to the economy of Nagaland, which is mostly dependent on tourism. One of the most notable aspects of the economy of Nagaland is that there are no landless peasants in the region. The economy of the state is also built on the rural economy, which is mostly dependent on traditional forms of agriculture, and where the primary goal of the villagers is to have a bountiful crop. The community in the village is so well structured that all of its inhabitants are provided with the fundamental necessities, which include food, clothing, and a place to live. Despite the fact that agriculture is the primary source of income for members of the Nagas tribe, members of this tribe are still required to import food from other regions or states within India.

Because the Nagas adopted agricultural techniques that were not sustainable, such as shifting cropping methods, this has resulted in the loss of fertility due to soil erosion. This has led to the reality that this has happened or been done. This has either been a roadblock to the expansion of the economy in Nagaland, or it has impeded that expansion.

Beginning in the 19th century, the social and cultural traditions of the Naga tribes began to undergo significant shifts. The arrival of Christianity, followed by British colonial rule, is credited with ushering in the beginning of the Naga economy's use of cash.³¹

The property tax has consistently been the most important revenue generator for the government. It was only recently that the revenues from the sale of forest goods and the tax on urban commerce were added to it. Therefore, the assistance provided by the central government is the source of primary dependence for the economy of the state. The most significant obstacles to the expansion of the economy are typically associated with the topography, namely the presence of mountainous terrain, dense forests, and challenging communication. The people's initial apathy toward any form

³¹ Bose, Saradendu, Ghatak, S. and Bera, R.K. 1982: *Shifting cultivation in India. (in) Economies of the tribes and their transformation*, Ed. By K.S. Singh. New Delhi, Concept publishing company, Pp. 27-216.

of innovation, their lack of knowledge, and their use of archaic manufacturing methods are the community hurdles. The lack of money, the absence of marketing hubs, and similar other challenges are the economic causes.

The majority of the workforce in Nagaland is currently employed in the primary sector, whereas employment in the secondary sector has come to a complete halt. Because it employs a smaller percentage of the labor force overall, the tertiary sector has the biggest share of the state's net domestic product. The labor has been relocated from the primary sector to the secondary and tertiary sectors as a result of the rapid rise of urbanization, which is causing a structural change to take place in the economy.

The economy of Nagaland has risen, although not at the rate that was anticipated or anticipated to happen. The state's relatively mountainous geography, which makes it difficult for the inhabitants to connect, has been the primary factor in the state's gradual expansion over the last few decades. The expansion of the economy in Nagaland has been impeded by both the lack of education among the Naga people and the precarious political stance in the region. The administration of Nagaland's state is making an effort to stimulate the economy via the development of the state's infrastructure as well as the establishment of various enterprises. Because of the efforts being made by the government, the economy of Nagaland will almost certainly improve in the not-too-distant future.

To reduce the trade deficit and resource drain and to capitalize on the income and livelihood opportunities that result from these activities, the Naga people need economic strategies or performance to manufacture products to take advantage of existing local businesses. Large sums of money are being invested by Nagans in the city's infrastructure. They are compiling a record of the current facilities and drawing up plans for future building. In addition, budgeted public funds will be used to implement this strategy. The increase in the scope of government operations paves the way for the facilitation of private investment, which in turn leads to the expansion of the economy in Nagaland and the generation of employment possibilities.³²

iii) INHERITANCE

A person is said to have property if they have full ownership rights over anything, whether they obtained such rights through inheritance, self-purchase, or even gifts from other people. Property, in this sense, is everything owned by a person, a group, or a society that may be exchanged for money or other goods and services. Many different types of property may be broken down into two broad classes: movable and

³² Cawley, the siege of Kohima, 1879. *Surma vally Magazine*, Nov, Dec and Jan, 1927 and 1928.

immovable. The passing on of an individual's assets, titles, debts, rights, and liabilities following the individual's death is referred to as the practice of inheritance in Nagaland. As a result of the patriarchal nature of Naga culture, the right to inherit property has traditionally been given to male offspring. This has led to an unequal distribution of wealth throughout the population. In terms of the way property is passed down through generations in Naga society, equality has never been achieved. In a similar vein, the property will be inherited by or passed on to the male offspring, but female children will be disinherited because they have no legal claim to the inheritance of property. Land is at the center of the Naga tribe's understanding of what constitutes private property. Being a patriarchal civilisation, the people of Nagaland have followed the patriarchal system of inheritance throughout their history. Daughters are not allowed to possess or inherit land holdings, but sons may inherit both family land parcels and property that they or their parents have bought independently. Boys can also inherit land properties that have been passed down through generations.

The people of Nagaland place a high value on their land and view it as their most significant possession. Property may be broken down into two categories: mobile and immovable, which makes sense given that we live in an agricultural society where almost everything revolves around agriculture and depends on the products of the land. The land is considered to be part of the immovable property, whereas movable property might include things like jewelry, household items, cars, and traditional clothing. Immovable property also includes property rights to land.

In Naga society, the father is considered the head or owner of all land, both that which he has inherited from his ancestors and that which he has obtained through his efforts. The patriarch of the family also has the last say over any property distributions to his offspring. Since wealth is often handed down via male descendants, the youngest son is sometimes seen as the most fortunate since he stands to inherit as much from his parents as any of his older siblings. The ancestral as well as the self-acquired traits are or will be passed on to the closed male lineage in the households where there is only one daughter and no boys. These families had only daughters and no sons. The guy who has no sons and only daughters is unable to leave his estate to his daughters, but his brothers' sons will be able to inherit his property once he has passed away.³³

However, female descendants cannot legally or practically inherit their male relatives' wealth. Following the tradition of the Naga people. If the woman or daughter is unmarried and has not yet been married, she can live with her parents as long as she likes, but she is just considered a "keeper" there; she has no authority to sell or say

³³ Centennial, Album. 1972: *centenary publicity committee Nagaland*, Impure (Nagaland), Ao Naga Baptist church council, 1972.

anything, and she does not have the right to take over her parents' property. She can live there until she gets married. According to the customary norms of the Naga people, a woman is not allowed to inherit ancestral property unless it is given to her during her marriage. On the other hand, the regulations ban women from participating in the highest decision-making body of a tribe or a group of tribes. The customary rules of the Naga are pluralistic and also vary not only across the many Naga tribes but also between the various Naga villages.

Nonetheless, the practice of handing down arable land from mother to daughter did not die out entirely. In some families, the daughters of wealthy parents would be given cultivable land as a gift or allowed to work the land while the parents were still alive, with the understanding that the land would be retained by the brothers after the death of the parents. As a result, in the future, there will not be any women since this is necessary in order to retrieve the inheritance of the parents.

There is no such thing as women's or men's equal property rights in Naga societies. No woman ever battled for or claimed her rightful share of her parents' property; thus, this was never a problem in the past. This was because it was widely held and practiced that if a man had inherited land from his parents, he was required to give half of it to his wife. Additionally, as long as the couple remained married, they would share or utilize equal property.

In some communities of the Naga people, it is believed that men are given preferential treatment when it comes to the division of property compared to women. If the wife departs or has already left the husband because of a misunderstanding, conflict, or any other reason, she is eligible to receive one-third of the marital property; however, if the husband leaves the wife, the property should be shared in an equal manner. The distribution of the property is unequal between the sexes, with males often enjoying greater benefits than their female counterparts. If the couple decides to divorce, the wife is not permitted to take any of the immovable property, such as the land, and the husband is not permitted to take any of the movable property in the home, such as ornaments, kitchen sets, and so on.³⁴

There is not a single statute or constitutional provision that allows daughters to inherit their parents' property at this point in time. Even in this day and age, the possessions that women inherit from their parents are seen as gifts rather than as legal entitlements on their part. In spite of the advances in technology, the members of the Naga tribes continue to adhere to the ancient customary rule on the inheritance of property.

³⁴ Chakrabarty, S.B, 1985: *Book review, a pilgrimage to the Nagas* by Milada Gnnguli. Oxford and IBH publishing Co., New Delhi, 1984, XVI+277. Human science, 34, March, Pp. 4-83.

However, a quiet revolution has begun in Nagaland, and parents have begun filing gift deeds to leave the land that they have earned throughout the course of their lifetimes for their daughters. Traditionally, they have been denied the ability to inherit property and stopped from participating in the process of making decisions. However, this practice has been outlawed.

iv) ORNAMENTS



Figure No.22: Ornaments worn by Naga tribes (source: AkatoluAssumi)

For the people of Nagaland, ornaments have a depth of significance that ranges from individual, class, and tribal identity to the ability to be used for self-defense. These ornaments also carry a variety of actions, social rank, and riches, as well as clan identification or a symbol. Dresses worn by Nagas are considered insufficient if they lack ornamentation. The individual's identity, as well as his or her place in the hierarchy of social standing, may be deduced from decorations, which are similar to clothing. The many components that make up a Naga decoration include carnelian and glass loaves, coral, bronze, boar tusks, conch shells, leather, orchids, wood, and cowries, among other things. Aesthetics are not the only consideration when it comes

to ornaments. It establishes the characteristics that distinguish individuals and organizations. Some Naga decorations carry a specific significance, which is what gives them their "powerful" reputation.³⁵ The right of the Naga people to wear them is highly regulated since it is widely held among them that the items contain a source of power that has to be handled with extreme caution. Lotha tribal custom dictates that a man who wears a headtaker's tusk, necklace, or ivory armlet must obtain these goods indirectly rather than directly. This is because if there is any evil in the objects, the guy will attract it to himself. A warrior from the Sumi tribe of the Naga people is not permitted to wear the tusks of a boar that he has personally slaughtered, even though he is legally entitled to such decorations. The Angami man has the right to wear feathers from the hornbill; however, during the time between planting millet and harvesting rice, they do not practice this tradition. And in Rengma culture, young women keep their heads shaved until they get married, and they wear certain skirts and jewelry to signify that they have not yet married.

When a headhunter successfully returns the severed head of an adversary, society bestows upon them a special decoration in recognition of their achievement. For instance, a head taker in the Naga society was allowed to display his power by wearing six pieces of hornbill feathers on his hat.

The Naga people have a culture that is rather distinct from any other people on the planet, and this is something that is frequently represented in their intriguing way of life, beliefs, dress, and thus the one-of-a-kind necklace and bread that symbolize countries all over the globe. It is not only used as an item for ornamentation but also has many beliefs linked with it that convey a strong identity for the culture and legacy of the Nagas tribe. Traditional Naga ornaments are typically multi-stand, huge, bold, and colorful in every tribe; each tribe has its distinctive ornament.

The jewelry that Naga women wear is known for their simplicity, elegance, and beauty. Since the women of the community do not participate in hunting, they choose to decorate themselves with the stunning beaded jewelry that is adorned with stone rather than jewelry made from animal parts.

Beaded jewelry worn by members of the Naga tribe; the Naga thought that the beads contained all of the prayers that were spoken and maintained amongst the glistening sunlight of the mountains. Women of the Naga tribe traditionally wear necklaces that are dense and composed of a number of strands. Additionally, Nagas had the belief that the wealth of the wearer and their family was correlated to the thickness of the neckpiece.

³⁵ Chib, Sukhdev Singh. 1980: *this beautiful India*, Nagaland. New Delh, light and life publishers, Pp. 132.

Among the Naga peoples, a woman's adornment is traditionally the sole thing that is believed to be an inherited asset. The tradition of giving a mother's ornament to one's daughter as a wedding present or as part of a joint inheritance following the passing of the mother continues from one generation to the next.³⁶

Earrings are considered to be the most essential piece of jewelry worn by Konyak Nagas. Two holes are cut in the ears of a kid when they are one month old. One hole is made on the ear lobe, while the second hole is made on the top of the ear. The woman is adorned with two thin, circular coils of brass that are handled and measure around three inches in diameter. These coils finally settle on the woman's breast. The ear hole is widened so that it may take a tube with a diameter of one-half of an inch. Ear decorations may be anything from a set of animal bones to a ruff made of dyed goat's hair or even the horn of a wild goat. Older adults are more likely to be seen with this kind of accessory. You may find it coiled at one end or shaped like a circle with dangling heads. Some people also wear ear-rings in the upper ear hole in addition to the earrings that dangle from the lobe. Several different Naga groups, including the Ao, Sangtam, Yimchunger, and phometc, are noted for their use of crystal earrings, or *topang* in the Aovernicular language. They were under the impression that the crystal earring has some sort of mystical power.

The red collar is a sign of danger, blood, and flame, and it is worn by the Konyak people of the Naga tribe. The Konyak collar is made out of old Domani glass beads that are cylindrical. Wearing tiger fangs is a symbol of a man's bravery and strength. It's possible that the wearer's social rank can be deduced from the collar. In the Naga tribes of Konyak, men's rank is determined by how frequently they and their ancestors staged extravagant feasts, as well as their power in battle and the number of heads they took.

It was often thought in ancient times that adorning one's body with adornments not only enhanced their attractiveness but also gave one an additional source of strength and power. Even in modern times, many indigenous communities celebrate the natural world by using flowers, wild berries, and fruits, while feathers are prized for their vibrant colors and their ability to provide lift. As a kind of adornment and decoration, seeds and even the wings of beetles are often employed. Each adornment served as a representation of the wearer's social standing and position. As a result, the overarching goal of decoration was not just to gratify an innate urge to embellish the body, but it was also endowed with symbolic meaning. Ears may be made more visually interesting by inserting a tuft of cotton wool or coiled red fabric into the ear lobe. You may make the armlets out of brass or ivory. Wild orchids were also often

³⁶ Das, S.R. 1975. *Naga customary laws visa-a-vis the advent of the administration*. Thinker, 3 (1), Feb, Pp. 23-34.

used for weaving helmets because of their vivid yellow stems. Bands for the arms and legs, as well as components for jewelry creation.

The breast jewelry worn by a warrior is likewise worn by the wife of an Angh. Warriors of the Konyak tribe are known to adorn their breasts with decorations made of either boar's teeth or tiger teeth. Beetle wings, red goat hair dyed with Job's tears seed, and other materials go into making an angami warrior's ear jewelry, also known as a warrior's ear. Different Naga subgroups, including the Angamis, the Rengama, the Zemi, and the Sumi, among others, have decorated their dwellings with decorations such as beetle elytra from *Sternocera* and *chrysochroabivittata*. Different Naga subgroups have also decorated their homes with different ornaments. Those who have participated in the feast of merit or who are actively involved in headhunting are given the privilege of donning the beetle wings, symbolizing an increase in their social status. As a result, ornaments not only served to satiate an instinctual drive to embellish the body, but they were also endowed with significant symbolic meaning. Ornaments are a way for people of all ages, including children and adults, to display their social standing.³⁷

³⁷ Das, N.K. 1978: *some aspects of Kinship, power and social stratification in Naga society*. Plenary session of Xth ICAES, New Delhi (unpublished).

CHAPTER 4

CULTURE AND SOCIAL ISSUES OF NAGA TRIBES IN NAGALAND

Culture; the people of Nagaland have a cultural legacy that is both diverse and rich in its depth and breadth. The Naga people have been able to preserve their autonomy for so long because of their intrinsic skills in a wide variety of fields, including basketry, pottery, farming, spinning, weaving, woodcarving, metalwork, etc. The customs and traditions practiced by the Naga peoples of Nagaland are uniquely their own, as is seen by the distinctive clothing worn by members of these tribes. The utilization of vibrant colors, complicated designs, motifs, and patterns that each have specific symbolic significance is one of the distinguishing characteristics of traditional Naga clothing. The fascinating aspect about Naga traditional garments is that each tribe, sub tribe, and clan has its own unique patterns, motifs, and designs that each hold a particular societal significance and may be interpreted in a different way. Their background as head hunters and their current position as giver of the feast of merit both contribute to this cultural symbolism.

The Nagas are a mongoloid race and speak a language that is distinct from other mongoloid languages. The Naga people may be broken down into seventeen major tribes in addition to a large number of smaller sub-tribes. Each of the major tribes has its own language, but all of the major tribes communicate with one another using a language called Nagamese. All of the major tribes follow a leafy clothing code, and their eating patterns and ancient rules are quite similar. The majority of Nagas adhere to the Christian faith, are friendly by nature, and are known for their warm hospitality toward visitors. What sets the Nagas' hospitality apart from that of other cultures is the fact that they see the well-being of their guests as an issue of dignity and distinction. They have a zeal for life and celebrate holidays and other days of comparable significance with a great deal of jubilation and enthusiasm because of their love for life.

Even though Nagaland is relatively tiny in terms of its physical size, it is extremely culturally rich and blessed with a wide variety of cuisines. The customs, celebrations, and artistic endeavors of each distinct tribe, as well as their handicrafts and fairs, are bursting with exuberant color and vitality. Every one of the Naga tribes celebrates its own unique traditions in grand fashion inside its own municipality or community. Tulini, Sukruhnye, Yemshe, Senkrenyi, and Moatsu are just a few of the many festivals that are celebrated by the many Naga tribes. There are many more. Every Naga tribe participates in the celebration of common holidays, such as Christmas and New Year's Day, as well as others.³⁸

³⁸Dewan, J.P. 1933: *Naga tribes and their customs. Census of India 1931, Burma*, Vol. 11, pt. I, Appendix-E Rangoon, govt press, Pp 95-267.



Figure No. 23: Hornbill festival of Nagaland (source: AkatoluAssumi)

The Hornbill festival is a modern-day cultural extravaganza of all Naga tribes, and it is one of the festivals that is celebrated together by all of the Naga tribes. This celebration takes place annually during the first week of December. The hornbill, which has a very long tail with feathers that are used as part of ceremonial or ritual attire, is an especially significant bird for the Naga tribe as a whole. Possession of hornbill feathers is a sign of high status and may be earned by taking part in the feast of merit or by rising to the position of head hunter. In the spirit of finding unity in variety, the festival of hornbill was created and continues to be held with the intention of showcasing both traditional and modern aspects of Naga culture. This celebration happens once a year at the Kisama historical village, which is located around 12 kilometers away from Kohima. The purpose of establishing this hamlet as a historic site is to save and maintain the cultural traditions of the Naga people. Since it began operations in the year 2000, it has brought a great deal of change to the tourist industry in the state. When someone visits this location, they will have the chance to receive an insider's perspective on the cultural differences among the Naga tribes. The Heritage complex comprises a group of seventeen buildings that have been created indigenously and are referred to as morung or dormitory. Each of these dwellings is emblematic of a different tribe.³⁹

The morung, or dormitory, played a major role in the lives of Naga people in the framework of their villages and communities in times past. This massive structure,

³⁹ Directorate of industries, 1970: *festivals of Nagaland*. Kohima Directorate of information, publicity and Tourism, Govt. of Nagaland.

which acted as a "youth dormitory" of sorts, was covered in ornate carvings. But its purpose extended much farther than that; it also served as a place where boys and girls of adolescent or younger age may live and sleep apart before being married. It was also utilized as a guard house during times of war when warriors stayed in it; this was one of the reasons why morung was erected adjacent to the village gate or at the position that offered the most strategic benefit. The passing down of traditional knowledge, skills, and practices from one generation to the next was facilitated in the morung. This is perhaps the most significant aspect of the morung. The term "morung" refers to the structure that housed the dorms that were shared by several individuals. For certain Naga tribes, the morung functioned as a dormitory for the younger males who were not yet married. Because the young morung males belonged to a certain clan. The young people who were living and working together were familiar with one another in a natural way and built a positive relationship with one another that stretched beyond the personal to the social domain.



Figure No. 24: Morung in Chung village in Nagaland (source: AkatoluAssumi)

The village council relied on the young people who lived in the morung to perform a variety of social functions on its behalf. They are responsible for important responsibilities such as directing the observance of a gene, as well as performing at a festival, an event for the community, or a wedding. In addition to this, they helped those who were in need and the elderly, maintained the village clean, and ensured that the members of each generation or age set that remained in the morung had strong mutual bonds and a strong feeling of solidarity that persisted throughout their whole lives. The responsibilities that came with belonging to a given age set were built as obligations.

The morung served as the Naga child's unofficial place of education. There, all of the history of the clans and villages, as well as folklore, music, traditional rituals, and handicrafts, as well as the laws that governed the people that lived there, were taught. In a similar fashion, the females were seen doing the very same thing in their own dorm rooms. In addition, the majority of the reprimanding of misbehaving students took place in the dormitories, but some parents also did it at home. The pride of the clan emerged from the dormitory completely ready for life and living so that they could fulfill their role in the community. They learned politics, diplomacy, and the many different ways one may interact with other people so that they could compete with anybody for the good of their town or clan. The morung was also regarded as a hallowed institution, and the entire community as well as society as a whole took any potentially corrupt behavior that occurred on its premises extremely seriously.

The Nagas culture evolved its ideas and rituals in order to strike a balance between the many demands of humans. The practice of taboo and totem helped to keep the equilibrium that was necessary to shield the natural world from the peril of excessive exploitation. This equilibrium was crucial to the protection of the natural world. By providing these regulations with a theological basis through the use of myths, they were given the appearance of being legitimate.⁴⁰

Taboo; The concept of taboo should not be confused with the superstition of the same name. Something that is not allowed, something that goes against societal acceptability and is barred by behavioral standards is an example of what is referred to as a "prohibition" or "forbidden" action. The Naga civilization is governed by a set of rituals known as taboos, which span all aspects of daily life. It is applicable between various households, between different clan members and village-wide, and even according to the changing of the seasons.⁴¹ A taboo is something that should be

⁴⁰ Dube, Leela. 1974: *Sociology of Kinship, a trend report. A survey of research in sociology and social Anthropology*, Vol II by ICSSR. Bombay, popular prakashan. Pp. 233-366.

⁴¹ Dube, S.C. (Ed), 1977: *tribal heritage of India*, Vol. I: Ethnicity, identity and interaction. New Delhi, Vikas publishing house.

regarded with affected awareness. Therefore, taboos are indicators that many aspects of the world are interdependent and interconnected.

One of the activities that are considered unacceptable is for a pregnant woman's husband to slaughter any kind of animal. In addition to that, he is not allowed to consume honey. Fish that do not have scales, such as the butter cat fish and the stinging cat fish, are not permitted for consumption by females.

The topic of taboo draws a lot of interest. It is very impolite to speak ill of one's parents, uncles, or aunts and uncles. The use of weapons by women is forbidden because it is thought that doing so would bring bad luck to boys or the males in the family, maybe even leading to their deaths. This is especially true during head-hunting trips when men are responsible for the safety of the village.

Many people believe that the spirit of the ultimate power keeps watch over humanity, and that those who wrong others or stand in the way of justice will reap the karmic rewards of their deeds in the form of premature death, illness, abnormality, financial loss, and unlucky circumstances, some of which may be passed down from generation to generation.

Totem; Another technique that maintains balance and harmony in society as well as with the environment is called a totem. By establishing a totemic bond with each natural thing, the Naga people prevented some plants and animals from being exploited for their resources. The practice of naming the clan after the totem and attributing its power to the supernatural is a phenomenon that is frequently seen in totem beliefs. It provides a framework for social as well as religious activity.

Because of their deep totemic roots, the Nagas communities have managed to sustain a highly robust and healthy symbiotic connection with their surrounding environment. Because of this link and the myths that are associated with animals and plants, the Naga people esteem them very highly. Because of this reverence, the whole natural resources were protected and prevented from being overexploited.⁴²

A fundamental part of the Naga way of life is theological thought, which is grounded in Naga daily experience and traditional history. Instead of rejecting the Naga people's cultural and religious practices as being bad and demonic, every effort should be made to recover these practices for the sake of theological contemplation. The Naga people have been blessed with a wealth of cultural and religious treasures.

The sociocultural habits, religious beliefs and practices that have been passed down through generations are all part of traditional legacy. Myths, stories, and songs, the

⁴² Dube, S.C. (Ed), 1977: *tribal heritage of India*, Vol. I: Ethnicity, identity and interaction. New Delhi, Vikas publishing house

majority of which were passed down verbally from generation to generation, are included in this category. However, this is not an exhaustive list.

Concerning social matters, C. Singh is quoted as saying that "the Naga people are simple, friendly, hardworking, and self-respecting." The fact that Nagas were formerly a casteless society or castles is one of the aspects of their culture that receives the greatest respect and admiration. The Naga tribes do not have any biases about creed or caste against other people.

But in modern times, a class structure has begun to take shape, with materialism at its core; this has resulted in shifts in the Naga society's economic landscape and caused divisions among its members. The gap between rich and poor is widening, and the gap between rich and poor is getting wider. The status of those who amass greater riches is rising, but the principle and value of sharing one's wealth with others is falling by the wayside.

As a result of the prevalence of patriarchal customs in Nagaland's modern society, the government has instituted a policy that allocates 33 percent of all seats in decision-making bodies to women. Women are encouraged to enter the public arena via the utilization of both conventional and scriptural resources. Giving women and girls in Nagas society more independence and opportunities is a smart method to combat corrupt practices, discrimination, and violent behavior in the community.⁴³

i) MYTH AND TALES OF NAGAS IN NAGALAND

A myth is a strong conventional belief, often including supernatural beings or occurrences that recounts the early history of a people or provides an explanation for a natural or social phenomenon. Myths are passed down from generation to generation. The construction of Nagaland's history is heavily reliant on the nation's mythology.

The legends and tall tales have been handed down through the generations and incorporated into folklore. A straightforward definition of folklore would be the "oral tradition" that is handed down from one generation to the next. This is how knowledge is transmitted. The passing down of a story orally from generation to generation, particularly among the more senior members of a village's population, is the primary characteristic of myths and legends.

It is also impossible to dispute the fact that the more rural areas of Nagaland produce a greater quantity and variety of stories. There are so many interesting tales and legends that swirl around the lives of the people who live in Nagaland, and it is

⁴³ Elwin, Verrier and Coverley-prince, Victor. 1959: *the Hill people of North East India*. London, Oxford university press, Pp. 31.

exciting to see that the culture of the tribe itself offers a variety of colors for an experience that will be made all the more important because of it..⁴⁴

There is no written record; only tales that have been passed down orally for a significant amount of time. Documentation of folktales has just begun in more recent times, and even then, it is quite limited. They have been passed down from one generation to the next and recounted time and time again, year after year. These stories contain symbolic meaning and offer valuable lessons to their listeners. Villages not only tell them to children as bedtime stories or lullabies, but also utilize them as a means of education, using the stories themselves as an example. Even in modern times, references to them and comparisons to the life of humans continue to be made.

There are several different Nagaland folk tales. They discuss the world, its inhabitants, as well as the sky and the earth. They might be illustrative or metaphorical in nature. Some of them are sad, exciting, dramatic, romantic, and educational all at the same time. Not only are they told to instruct the youth, but they are also used as examples at social events around the town. The oral transmission of folk narratives has been preserved, and it is anticipated that they will continue to exist in the midst and heart of future generations, where they will function as sources of inspiration, enjoyment, and leisure..⁴⁵

The myth of Nagaland: The first legendary origin narrative is something that the Angamis Nagas and many other tribes of Nagaland share in common. The legend tells of the mother (Dziilimossila) and her three boys, who were conceived when she slept beneath a banyan tree. The clouds surrounded her and suffocated her, causing her to become pregnant with all three of her children. The three children were a deity or spirit (Okha, representing the supernatural realm), a tiger (Omei, emblematic of mankind), and a man (Okha, representative of the animal kingdom). When the mother became older, her sons took turns caring for her as she got in their advanced years. It was regarded that Omei was the "nave" of the mother since she took care of her so well despite the fact that Okhe tormented her, Orah was not a good caretaker, and Okhe and Orah were in a disagreement over the succession of the mother's estate. In order to determine who would get what from the bequest, the mother held a contest. She crafted a grass ball and stipulated that whomever touched it first would take possession of the neutral territory. As a result of Okhe's attempt to cheat, the match was restarted. Omei, the child who had cared for her the most in her old age, was

⁴⁴ Goswami, Praphulla Dtta, 1954-55: *Naga Tales. The Eastern Anthropologist*, 1(2), December-February, Pp. 8-73.

⁴⁵ Goswami, Praphulla Dtta, 1954-55: *Naga Tales. The Eastern Anthropologist*, 1(2), December-February, Pp. 100.

given special treatment by Mother, and she instructed him to shoot a grass ball with a bow and arrow. As a result of this, he emerged victorious and laid claim to the planet. This mythological account of the world's beginning attributes its origination to a woman. She was responsible for the creation of gods, humans, and animals. The Christian tale of the beginning of humans, which centers on Adam and Eve, is put to the test by the creation myth.

According to the myth described above, there is a web of relatedness in which everything is connected to something; to put it another way, nothing stands apart from the network of relatedness. The Naga believe that all life on earth is intertwined or interconnected, and that the existence of each living form is contingent on the survival of all other life forms. This understanding lends credence to the Naga's viewpoint. When different entities cut themselves apart from one another, life becomes more difficult. This is especially true when the choice to cut connections was made deliberately, displaying disdain for the other members of the symbolic fellowship; in such cases, the consequences might be catastrophic.⁴⁶

TALE OF AMUGHUSU

Once upon a time in the land of Sumi, there lived a young man with the name Swu Piehena. He was known as a wise man and a teller of myths and tales told by the people. He tells tales from other cultures to other people. The "AMUGHUSU" narrative is the most significant one he tells, among all the others he tells.

The following is an outline of the events that took place:

There lived a man who was a father to two boys. Just before he went away, the father instructed his sons, "Even if I pass away, divide my property among yourselves in an accurate way, and do not be greedy." The oldest son got married while his father was still living, and the youngest son was still a tiny child when the oldest son died away. As soon as the father went away, the oldest son seized all of the property, so the youngest brother questioned the older brother, "Brother, are you not going to share my father's property?" The eldest son had taken all of the property as soon as the father had gone away. The older brother responded by saying, "Our father stored the AMUGHUSU (wooden Axe) for you, and since it is your property, you should take the Amughusu and make it your own." The younger brother became enraged and entertained the idea of murdering anybody that crossed his path with amughusu, regardless of who they were. But Amughusu told his youngest son that he would give him whatever he needed, that he would make all of his dreams come true, and that he

⁴⁶ Bhowmik, K.L. 1964: *Moon and sun, A Naga Folk-Tale and its Analysis*. Folklore (Calcutta), 5 (7), July, Pp. 77-264.

would give him the property if he followed him or did everything he was commanded to do by Amughusu.⁴⁷

Amughusu cautioned his younger brother not to get married without first notifying him about it. I will explain to you the characteristics of the sort of woman you ought to wed. The youngest brother then turned to Amughusu and inquired, "What kind of women are necessary for me to get married?" Then amughusu responded by saying, "Don't go for looks and beauty but go for the daughter of faithful, loyal, and righteous parents and tell me about her." In addition, Amughusu said, "Why are you searching for beauty?" It won't make you proud, it won't bring you luck, but rather she will leave you and go for someone who is better than you. Beauty won't give you anything, it won't bring you luck, and it won't make you proud. She will be subservient to others, she will be filthy, she will bring dishonour to your house, she will never clean, and as a result, your home will become filthy and it will continue to become worse. Therefore, this is the rationale behind why you should never marry a woman based on her appearance or attractiveness. Later on, the youngest son went and spoke to the girl's family, and then he returned to "ANUGHUSU" and informed Amughusu about it. Anughusu then stated that the girl never cleaned her house, never respected others, and so on. If you marry her, your neighbours and friends will pick a quarrel with you in your own home. Don't get married to her. As a result, he is now on his third trip to the women's families in preparation for the wedding. Therefore, when he returned from the third women's home and informed Amughusu about it, Amughusu answered by saying that she is the appropriate one for you and that she would make you wealthy. No matter what she does or how hard she works, the effects will be felt throughout your household. Amughusu also instructed his followers to obey one another in order to live happy. After some time, the couple worked hard and eventually got wealthy. Because of this, other people look up to them and admire them.

However, as time went on, people finally forgot about Amughusu and prioritized other types of wood; in addition to this, they even burnt Amughusu down. After that, one day they found that they needed Amughusu for their requirements, so they went looking for him and spoke to him. However, Anughusu responded by saying, "Now I am blind, deaf, and mute, and I can't speak." It was due to the fact that they torched it. After they forgot about him and destroyed Amughusu, their lives took a turn for the worst and they fell into abject poverty.⁴⁸

TALE OF TIMI KUDU-U

⁴⁷ Hodson, T. C. 1901: *Head-Hunting among the Hill tribes of Assam. Folk-lore*, Pp. 43-132.

⁴⁸ Hodson, T. C. 1901: *Head-Hunting among the Hill tribes of Assam. Folk-lore*, Pp. 43-132

In the past, there was a Sumi tribe that resided in the region that is now known as Tapuhu (Name of a location). One of the persons that called the region around Tapuhu home was a guy by the name of Tughakhi. He was a kind of sorcerer, and in addition to that, he can transform his body. Because of his ability to transform his physical shape into that of an animal, he was once known by the moniker "Timi Kudu-u (Sorcerer)".

He is also a member of the warriors, but in addition to that, he is a witch who imparts information to others on what is happening or what is going to take place in the vicinity of their location. It is too late for the village monarchs and the warriors to stop him when he slips into Ghokemi and Hobolimi village to assault the people there. One day, he even personally assaulted one of the villages, and as a result, the king and the warriors of that town followed the footprints of the wild boar, also known as Amili, all the way to the battlefield, where they even observed the path that the wild boar had just created. Therefore, the residents of that village, including the village monarch and the local warrior, said that he would come and assault our village men and women in a manner similar to this. Therefore, the monarch said that whomever our adversaries are that are freely moving about in our territory, we will cast a curse upon them, and we will not let them live in peace. Therefore, after a period of time had passed, Tughakhai returned to that same hamlet in an attempt to attack people; however, he fell victim to the trap set by a villager and was hurt.

After a period of time had passed, the king of that village arrived and witnessed the squirrel enduring the agony of others with him. He also observed the squirrel adorned with a headdress, armour, and a steel bracelet. From there, the king learned that he is the one, and he also made an announcement to his people, telling them to come and see the guy about whom they had been talking; come and meet our adversary; come and see his body; from now on, he has taken the form of an animal; come and see how he arrived to our hamlet in such a manner to attack them. Come, and we shall have a feast after we decapitate him. The result of this was that all of the people gathered together, banged the drum, and chanted "oh enemy head (SULIPHO)" before taking his head and burying it in Kughobo.⁴⁹

Myths regarding the Dzukou valley have been there for a very long time, and they have been handed down from the older generation to the new age. At an elevation of 2438.4 meters, Dizukhou is the second-highest valley of flowers in India, after Nandan, which is located in Uttarakhand. The vitality of this valley can be attributed to the presence of rivulets, flowers, herbs, and bushes. Dizukhou is home to some of the nation's most renowned hiking trails and hiking circuits. While housing

⁴⁹ Hutton, J. H. 1923: *Folk-Tales from the Naga Hills of Assam. Folk-lore. Folk-lore*, Pp. 34.

"communities" hamlets along the route, below are some widespread misconceptions about Dzukou valley.

It would appear that the local population has come to think that the Dzukhou valley is home to a lovely female ghost who, on an annual basis, kidnaps a living guy. Therefore, male visitors to the Dzukhou who suddenly become ill while there are frequently instructed to depart the area quickly.

There is also the belief or statement that the meaning of the word Dzukou is "cold water." It is reported that the valley is so chilly that whomever visits it feels as if their own soul has been frozen. The story goes that while their forefathers were searching for a site that would be ideal for the establishment of a community, a young scout was given the responsibility of exploring in that area. He did find the valley, but it was uninhabitable, too cold, there was nothing that could be eaten there, and there were no trees in the area. In the beginning, we just named it phephu, but later we decided to rename it Dzukou.

Another Tangkhul Naga creation tale, this one revolving around the vast gathering of all the many kinds of animals, runs as follows:⁵⁰

Kara Akhava, also known as God, called a meeting of all living things to decide how long each day and night would last. Kara Akhava solicited the feedback of the various animals, and after a spell of stillness, a mole spoke up with a suggestion that was unanimously shot down owing to the impracticality of its implementation. The conversation carried on, but nobody offered a solution that might be considered acceptable. After then, the task of deciding how long the day and night would be assigned to the rooster. When the rooster is worn out and in need of some rest, the crow should sound. This would indicate that the day has come to an end. To reiterate, the rooster should only crow after getting a sufficient amount of rest the previous night. Preceding the start of a new day with its arrival. As a result, the rooster emerged as the world's most reliable timekeeper. The hungry flying fox soon made a scene or caused one when he woke up his fellow critters throughout the night and disrupted their restful sleep. By accident, he found himself perched on the tree, munching on a walnut. As he was doing so, the nut slipped out of his fingers and struck the crab that was resting below. The crab was so enraged that it wiped off the rest of the giants' ants, which resulted in the wild boar being stung to death by the ants. The distressed bear went on a rampage and uprooted a banana tree in the process. This once again woke up the sleeping elephant, who was startled as the little bug flew around erratically and settled in his nostril. The frightened elephant eventually went on a rampage, which ultimately led to the man's dying.

⁵⁰ Bloss, Lowell W. 1971: *Ancient Indian folk religion as seen through the symbolism of the Naga*. Chicago University, dissertation (unpublished).

Kara Akhava demanded an explanation from all of the creatures and discovered that the flying fox was the one responsible for the disorderly situation that resulted in the death of a man. The punishment for the flying fox consisted of the amputation of one of his legs and its subsequent transfer to the magpie, who was the most senior of the other creatures.⁵¹



Figure No.25: Living stones of Tuensang (source: Akatolu Assumi)

Legends of the achievements and tales of the Nagas when they were one big family abound in "Myth of the Living Stones of Tuensang Nagaland; Tale of ChunglimliChungliyimti," which is filled with remnants of the past. Legends and anecdotes about the time when the Nagas were a unified people may be found throughout Chunglimli. Longthvroh, also known as the fabled six stones, can be found in the midst of other ancient relics that date back to the Chungliyang culture. The sangtams tribes of the Nagas believe that the stones are personifications of their old gods, and they believe that these gods once traveled from one location to another and gave birth to new stones. According to a local tradition, there are two live stones located to the west of the hamlet of Tsadang. AkangandThrela is the name for these precious gems. The two live stones apparently became friends and would spend time together at length Uroh. The locals revered them, and their opponents in the surrounding areas became frightened and disoriented whenever they ran across them while head hunting. Chungliyangti is located a distance of 4 kilometers from Tsadang.

⁵¹ Dewar, Stephen. 1966: *ceremony of erecting o megalith among the Angami Nagas*. Folklore, Pp. 69-264.

Another version of the tale surrounding the Spirit stone, also known as Tsa-Tawo, describes it as a wonderful spirited flat stone upon which, if a basket of rice is allowed to dry out in the sun, it will produce twice as much in the evening. This is the major first settlement site of "KOZA," the main ancestral forefather of the Naga people, and it is also the location from whence numerous Naga tribes moved in the future. In spite of the fact that the stone is claimed to have lost its mystique when it was set on fire and destroyed, the fabled khezhakeno stone has left behind fragments that are being kept in their original place even to this day.

Another local myth centers on a pond in this community that goes by the name Zhi-Nhaka, which translates to "Nose of the ancient lake." The spring water level in this pond, which is a perennial source, does not fluctuate throughout the summer or the winter. It is stated that at one time the entire hamlet was submerged beneath a big body of water that emanated from Zhi-Nhaka. It is from this place that the essential meaning of the name "Zhiphemi" (guardian of the lake) drives. Its one-of-a-kind existence astounds people all across the country, which results in a significant influx of students from all parts of the country.⁵²

Tales of Nagaland; The folktales are organized into three distinct categories, each corresponding to a certain type of story. The folktales have been categorized into the following categories according to their headings:

- a) Origin narratives
- b) Human relationships
- c) Animal tales

The characteristics of the tales served as the basis for categorizing them into one of three categories for organization purposes. After reading through all of those stories, we were able to classify them according to the traits and personalities that they possessed. The category of "origin narratives" includes all of the stories that have to do with the beginning, including discoveries, establishments, beginnings, and the like. Under the heading of "human relationship," we grouped together all of the stories that discussed the social structure, the inhabitants' way of life in the hamlet, their relationships, and similar topics. But "animal tales" covers a wide variety of stories where animals play important roles in the action.

The tales of the different tribes of Nagaland are given below;

In the distant past, there were three brothers who went by the names Tanyen, Zhoshu, and Penhum. They lived in a quaint little hamlet or home. Tanyen, the eldest brother, put in a lot of hard work at the farm, whilst Zhoshu and Penhum, the younger brothers, did nothing but eat and sleep all day long. The older brother told his younger

⁵² Dutta, S.K. 1976: *The rascal in tribal folklore. The North Eastern spectrum*, 1(1), July, Pp. 6-23.

brother that it was difficult to provide for the requirements of the family with the small money that they had. It is not feasible to continue on like this, therefore brother, I will go out and pursue my fortune and become rich one day so that I may care for my brothers. However, Zhoshu and Penhum did not approve of the concept; they questioned why Tanyan should become wealthy. They spoke with one another by saying, "we should both go out and seek our fortune."⁵³

The self-centered brothers then devised a plan and went to meet Tanyan, telling him, "Brother, we have come to terms with our obligations, and as a result, we intend to seek our fortune and amass wealth so that we may alleviate some of your burden." The eldest brother spoke up and said, "As you wished, Zhoshu acted very lovingly and caringly that day; he kept walking throughout the day, and by the late evening he was hungry and tired, and he arrived in another village." The eldest brother said this with a smile on his face.

He approached the shack and knocked on the door, to which an elderly woman responded, "Who's there?"

He responded by saying, "I am just a traveler so I was wondering if I could stay for the night." The elderly woman then responded by saying that this was only possible if all of the stars in the pond were removed. She pointed to the pond. After that, he pondered, "How am I going to get rid of those stars?" After he realized that they were nothing more than a reflection of the stars in the sky, he returned back to his house in a state of bewilderment and exhaustion and reported to his family that he had been unable to discover his money anywhere.

After that, Penhum made the decision to leave his home and test his luck elsewhere. As he was puzzled about how to get to the old lady's cottage, the old lady instructed him to get the stars from the pond in the same manner that she had instructed his brother to do. What are the odds of that happening? After some reflection, he went back to his house. He lamented that there was nowhere where I could discover my riches.

Now it was Tanyan's time, and when he arrived at the cottage of the elderly lady, he was also given the same assignment to complete. After making a humble request for a bucket, which the elderly woman graciously provided, the eldest brother waded into the pond and started pouring bucketfuls of water onto the surrounding area. He toiled all night long, and by morning the pond had been entirely drained.

Tanyan walked over to the elderly woman as soon as she emerged from her hut in the morning and showed her the dry pit, telling her, "I have removed all of the stars as

⁵³ Dutta, S.K. 1976: *The rascal in tribal folklore. The North Eastern spectrum*, 1(1), July, Pp. 50.

you have said, my good mother." Tanyen thanked the elderly woman and went back to his house with a wealthy man. The elderly woman had been delighted by his actions, and she escorted him to a farm where she told him that this was his prize and that he would now be the owner of the land.

He told his brothers that he had discovered his riches, but they asked him where he had got it. When asked by his older brother, he responded by saying, "I have found my own hand." He then proceeded to tell them all that had occurred to him. His slothful brothers made the decision to start working hard from that day forward, and they worked hard and were happy for the rest of their lives.⁵⁴

Another tale of Chang: Once upon a time, Naga, there was a guy who was unable to find a woman to marry him. As a result, he decided to establish a garden of flowers in the hope that one day, a woman would be enchanted by the beauty of his flowers and agree to marry him so that she could wear them in her ears. However, the man was unsuccessful in his search. Soon after, he became aware that someone had been coming to his garden every night and plucking flowers from it. However, he never saw any of the females in the village wearing the flowers in their ears, so he decided to keep watch in the garden one night in order to solve the riddle. When everything was quiet, a woman of extraordinary beauty came and started picking the flowers while singing quite sweetly to herself as she did so. He ran fast and caught her, and despite her efforts, he held her tightly in spite of the fact that she was struggling. She pleaded with him to release her because she was a member of the sky folk race and her name was Shambili, but he refused to do so, and they ended up being married and having a child together. They were content until one day when Shambilis told her that she needed to return to her own people since it was the season of their spring celebration. He gave her permission to go, and the day after she left, a guy who lived in the home next door passed away from his illness. On the day that she returned to her husband, he noticed her approaching from a great way carrying a basket. To his horror, within the basket he saw the malformed limb of the lame man; however, as she drew closer, he looked again, and the human leg transformed into a cow leg. She prepared that, but her husband, despite her best efforts to get him to eat it, did not consume any of it, so she ate the entire thing by herself. The entrance to the house was still locked when the villagers arrived the following morning, so one of them decided to investigate what had taken place. When he peered inside, he saw Shambili sitting on top of her husband's chest while she tore out his organs and consumed them. He was going to get closer, but suddenly there was a tremendous crack of thunder,

⁵⁴ Hutton, J.H. 1922: *The form of snare used among the Konyak Naga Tribes in the North of the Naga Hilla*. Man, 22(103), December, 79-178.

and a thick cloud descended on that home. When the cloud cleared, Shambili had disappeared into the sky, and he was unable to approach the house any more.⁵⁵

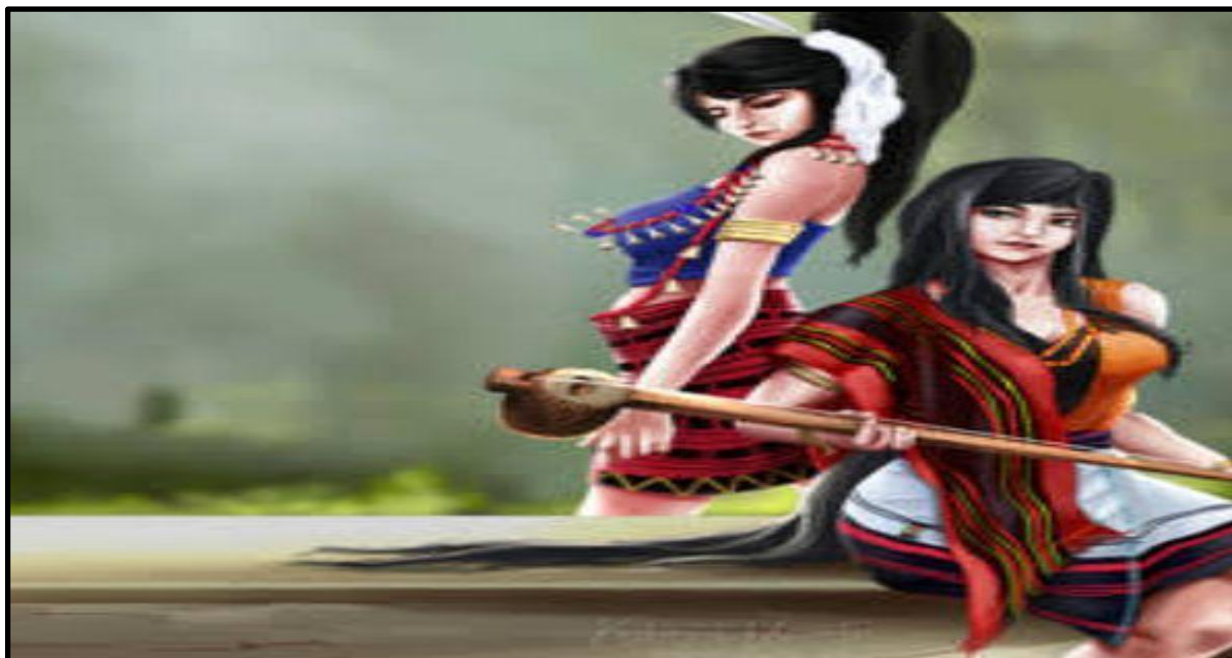


Figure No. 26: Tale of 'Axone' by two sisters of Sumi Naga animation (source: Akatolu Assumi)

The origin of axone, a delicacy made of fermented soya beans that can be found all across Nagaland and is typically referred to as "axone" there, is the subject of another well-known sumi Naga folktale. In this story, two sisters took their lunch of soy beans with them when they went to work in the field. When they returned three days later, they discovered that the beans had become moldy but that they still smelled and tasted wonderful. The moral of the story is that even though the beans had become moldy, they still smelled and tasted nice. Since then, members of the Sumi Naga tribe have begun to prepare axone, and the bean has developed into a key part of the culture of the Sumi Naga people. The elder sister advised the younger sister that they should always eat in this manner since the beans were so tasty.

Tale of Ao Naga,It describes how the sun became enraged and retreated into the heavens, refusing to shine on the earth any more since the rest of creation grumbled about how hot it was. When the sun is not there, the animals of the world are thrown into a state of disorder and bewilderment. They suddenly became aware of their inadequacy and the helplessness they felt in the face of the darkened world. Therefore, the animals and birds got together for a meeting to discuss the issue, and they came to a consensus. They came to the conclusion that the best course of action

⁵⁵ Hutton, J. H., 1951: *Story of shambili: A chang Naga Folklore*, Pp. 35-334.

would be to delegate the cock to make an appeal to the sun on their behalf, pleading with it to provide light and heat so that they may once again live in peace and harmony in the earth. The moral of these stories is that every living thing plays an essential role in preserving the delicate balance that exists in our world. Because existence is pluralistic, each of the creatures have its own qualities and is distinctive in its own right. The symbiotic link between the many organisms ensures the continuation of life.

One such well-known story about Ao Nagas illustrates how unfulfilled promises disrupt the harmony that exists amongst the creatures. On our planet, there was once a time when human beings and rats coexisted without conflict. Rice was an unknown commodity to mankind at that historical period. One day, a rodent approached a human and said, "I will give you a present if you promise to give me a decent funeral when I die." The human agreed, and the rat proceeded to hand him the gift. The human consented to this, at which point the rat presented him with a gift of rice and demonstrated how scrumptious it was to consume. A few while later, the rate makes the decision to put the man's honesty to the test. As a result, he pretended to be dead by lying down on the bank of a creek and acting like he was dead. Soon enough, the guy and his kid made their way in that direction. The youngster brought his discovery to the attention of his parents. Instead of keeping his word, the man responded with, "What are you, a dead rat?" "Poke a stick under it and push it into the stream," the rat, which was not actually dead, leapt up in wrath and replied, as revenge for your unfaithfulness, I shall always eat your rice first and leave my droppings in it. After that, it bolted away and landed in the water of the river. It tells how the Nagas found rice with the aid of a rat. It also explains why the rat began to eat the grains and left its droppings on the grains. Finally, it teaches the people a moral lesson about the importance of keeping one's commitment.⁵⁶

In the story of Chakhesang Naga, there was once a poor family that lived quite happily for a short period of time but not for very long. The family had four members in all, including the parents, and they had two children, one of them was a boy and the other a girl. Sadly, the children soon lost both of their parents to sad circumstances one after the other. At a young age, the children were expected to be responsible for their own feeding, as well as perform all of the housework and field labor. They were made to labor both at and in the field, and they were required to learn how to cook for themselves. Every single day was a struggle from one moment to the next as each day went by. Even though they put in a lot of effort, they were not able to do very much work, and at the end of each day, they would come back to their house as drained and worn out as the sun was setting.

⁵⁶ Hutton, 1923: *FOLK-Tales from the Naga Hills of Assam. Folk-lore*, 34(4), Pp 35-233.

One day, they went to the fields as usual and were surprised to find that their job had been finished and that food had been stashed away in the hut. This carried on quietly for a while, until finally they became curious about what was going on. As a result, they made the decision to unravel the enigma. They had a plan to hide out and keep watch in the shadows so that they might discover for themselves who had helped them. In the evening, they both sneak into the nearby woods, where they hide out and act as though they are leaving to go home. As they waited, the sky began to darken, and all of a sudden, they were taken aback to see two individuals making their way into the field. They were speechless as the two figures approached them from a closer distance, and when they realized who it was, they were overjoyed to see their parents assisting them. As the two figures approached them from a closer distance, they realized it was their parents. They had the intention of following their parents to find out how they were doing and where they lived, so they came up with the plan to hide in their parents' luggage. The youngster made it inside his father's bag, whereas the young lady fell short of her mother's. When the father noticed his own kid hiding in a bag, he yelled at him to come out, explaining that he did not feel comfortable being near the dead and would never feel comfortable being near the dead. However, the youngster remained in his bag and was eventually transported over mountains and valleys to the land of the dead, where he was overjoyed to finally join his loved ones who had passed on. The difference between his own life and the lives of the deceased dawned on him one day.

After a few days, he said to his mother that he missed his sister and wished to return with her. His mom agreed, so she prepared him a lunch and instructed him to eat it somewhere special. He left his sister at home and felt bad about it, so he brought the lunch home to eat with her. He was ready to feed his sister lunch when suddenly it transformed into a lump of inedible husk. After that, the youngster recalls his mother's advice on where to have lunch, and the two set off for that location. Upon reaching their destination, they eagerly unzipped their lunch bag to find an abundance of delicious treats, which they devour to their hearts' delight, resulting in a profound sense of satisfaction and contentment. Even though they grieved for their absent parents, they were able to work more and live more comfortably after that, resulting in an ever-increasing crop.⁵⁷

Another Tales of ChakhesangNaga, There was once upon a time a young girl without a mother named Avino who lived with her brother and her brother's wife. Her mother passed away when she was just a toddler and her father, a trader, was never seen from again after he set sail for a distant nation shortly after she learned to talk. Avino was fortunate in that she had an older brother who looked out for her.

⁵⁷ Hutton, J.H. 1922: *Seven Folktales collected by C.R. Pawesy from the Angami Naga. Folk-lore*, 33(4), Oct-Dec, Pp 397-405.

The brother also pursued a career in business. Before beginning his adventure, he tied the knot with the daughter of a wealthy businessman. Before he passed away, he implored his wife, "Be good to my sister," and he added that she (Avino) had never experienced any kind of adversity. The responsibility of the young daughter was too much for the wife to bear because she couldn't drink wine. She has vino perform the chores and gives her a smack in the face if she doesn't finish a job assignment on time. Even at night, she wouldn't allow her to sleep inside the house. The poor girl would go to the forest outside of the village and weep the entire night while sitting under a tree. Everyone, even animals and birds, felt bad for her and helped her by giving her food and becoming her friends.

After the brother got back from a brief trip, his sister-in-law started acting in a new manner. She acts as though she is showered with affection by Avion, and she doesn't allow her to get her hands dirty by working. The brother, who was content with his choice of marriage, embarked on a more extensive trip this time.

As soon as her brother left, the sister-in-law of Avino altered her appearance completely. She started giving the child the kinds of jobs that there was no way she could finish. She gave Avino a three-holed pot the next day and told her to fill it with cold water from the pond. Avino was aware that this was not going to be feasible, so she left the house and went to a nearby forest, where she wept while sitting under the same tree. The frogs felt sorry for her and jumped into the kettle, where they then covered the openings so that she could fill it with ice water. The sister-in-law was taken aback, and as a result, she resolved to give her a more challenging assignment.⁵⁸

At the subsequent mooring, she gave Avino orders to collect a significant quantity of firewood from the nearby forest. She cautioned, "Don't tie the bundle with a rope," which translates to "don't do that." This time, though, Avino was helped by a snake. It wrapped itself around the bundle of fire wood that Avino was carrying, and after she set it down in their house, it slithered away. Incredulous, Avino's sister-in-law began refusing to feed him. Then, as if that weren't enough, she mixed rice and wheat together on a massive metal platter and told her to spear the grains. Avino started crying once more, and this time a swarm of birds came to her aid and helped her finish the task before it became dark.

The next day, Avino's sister-in-law, who was more enraged than she had ever been, gave her a bucket and instructed her to gather white foam from the ocean. The beach was uncharted terrain for Avino, and none of her animal or bird pals were available to assist her at this particular moment. She traveled for days in order to reach the ocean, and when she finally did, she found that the foam she collected on the way back

⁵⁸ Hutton, J.H. 1922: *Seven Folktales collected by C.R. Pawesy from the Angami Naga. Folk-lore*, 33(4), Oct-Dec, Pp 397-405.

changed into water. After giving it another shot, she was so exhausted that she passed out on the beach. Vino was completely unaware of how long she had been sleeping. She was awoken by mysterious whispers, and as she rolled over, she saw a big sheep dock. There were a lot of males who disembarked, and her brother was one among them.

Avino began sobbing uncontrollably and recounted to her brother the ordeals she had through in his absence. After getting back to his house, her brother asked his wife for an explanation and then subjected his wife to the same treatment that she had given to his sister. The wife has come to terms with her own stupidity and has pledged to treat Avion better in the future.

Tale of Khuzami Naga, There was a young lady who was born to her mother and father once upon a time. They had a happy life for a short period of time, but then bad luck struck when the mother became ill and passed away when her kid was still quite small. After her mother passed away, she and her father were left to live on their own. Her father was the only one who could work in the field, so he had to go there by himself. When he returned home, he had to do all of the housework all over again since his kid was still too little, and there was no one else to take care of them. The father finally reached the point where he couldn't take the struggle any longer and made the decision to remarry another lady.

When their father remarried, they assumed that their new mother would be able to provide for them, but this was not the case. The new mother, alas, was disagreeable and bossy. She was quite cruel to her stepdaughter, and as a consequence, the little girl was put in a terrible position. She was at the age when she should have been able to depend on her stepmother to take care of her, but instead, she forced her to work long hours every day and did not provide her with nutritious meals to eat. Even when her father found out about it, he did not take any action because he was frightened of losing his wife. He also did not say a single negative word about his wife, and as a result, the little girl's life continued to be filled with misery as she matured into adulthood.⁵⁹

Back then, there was a tradition that every young man and women would gather together with their peers and spend one day going into the woods to collect wood for the fireplace. When the appointed time came, the group's leader had the kids get dressed and meet in one area; when the girl didn't show up, her pals rushed to find her and beckoned, "come let's go." She wanted to join them, but her stepmother insisted that she first perform the duties she had been assigned, which included cleaning the husked paddy, filling the cooking pots with water, and feeding the pig.

⁵⁹ Hutton, J.H. 1922: *The use of the Bow among the Naga tribes of Assam. Folk-lore*, 33(3), July-September, Pp. 6-305

She rushed after her friend even though it was getting late. But as she ran, she came across a young guy, and upon getting closer, she saw that he was rather gorgeous. She said, "O young man," and then added, "Did you see my friends?" In a low voice, he told her that her friends had left ages ago and that she'd never catch up to them. Then he offered to help her out by chopping some firewood. She stared intently at the guy, but could not place him in her memory. The guy was well-dressed and impressive in look and physique. His leg jewelry included a coiled headdress made from elephant tusk strips, a kilt fashioned from sea shells, knitted wristlets in a rainbow of hues, and similarly exquisite ornamentation on his calves. The girl was so impressed by his charm that she went with him to a tree so he could cut some wood for her.

She was told not to look at him while he was up in the tree collecting firewood for her, and she disguised her face by putting the basket over her head and wrapping her blanket about her. She nodded her head in agreement and then did what he asked. After a time, she heard a loud noise that sounded like the branches snapping. She unzipped her garment very slowly and cautiously, peering out. She couldn't believe her eyes when she mistook the guy for a snake. The snake was substantial, and it was twisting a branch of the tree with its tail. She re-wrapped the blanket over her head out of sheer terror. The serpent came down from the tree and became a handsome man after what felt like an eternity. He collects the cracked branches off the tree, but his chopping was haphazard and the resulting bundle is awkward. The lad had warned her that he may pay her a midnight visit, so she had no option but to have him carry her burden. The girl was ashamed to bring her burden to the hamlet, since participants in the event traditionally arranged their loads neatly and evenly, with the winner being awarded the reward. She was forced to do it since she was unable to hire someone to carry her weight, and the youngster had said that he could pay her a visit in the middle of the night.

The young guy promised to return to her house later that night after he had helped her carry her load. She became terrified, and her dread of the odd man grew as a result. She stood about with a load of firewood in her arms as she waited for her pals, and once they came, she immediately participated in the yelling and singing. She persisted to take part even though she was terrified and worried about what may happen to her. They are expected since everyone in the village is eager to see the firewood and strive to have the biggest and most impressive-looking load. When they reached the dormitory site, they unloaded their bags and headed back home, arranging to meet up again later for the campfire. She used to sleep at the village dorm with her pals since all the young females were formerly forced to do so. They would gather around

campfires at night to socialize with other men their age. Recently however, all the young women in the hamlet have been free to sleep anywhere they choose.⁶⁰

In the evening, her friends arrived at her home to pick her up and take her to the hostel, but she flatly refused. She first refused to explain why she was acting strangely, but as her companions persisted, she finally admitted that something unusual had happened that day. She finally gave in to her friends' insistence that she come along, but only on the condition that she be forced to sleep on the bottom bunk while they took the upper ones. They assured her they would all sleep with her so they could all live together in peace after she told them she was afraid to sleep with them because of the strange individuals she could encounter along her trip. With that reassurance, she went along with her pals as they headed to the dorm. The outcome was that all the young men in the area gathered at the hostel for a night of revelry. They shared a meal, some laughs, and a song during their time together. Both the guy and the girl were too nervous to join in on the fun, so they sang love songs to each other and told each other how much they cared. She worried herself sick all night long, to the point that she couldn't even eat or drink. After much merriment, they decided it was time to call it a night.

They all slept in the dorm together that night, as they always did, and as usual, one of the girls slept on the floor with her friends, some of whom slept on top of her. Her traveling companions eventually slept off, but she remained awake, worried about what may happen.

That night, the charming young man paid a visit to the girl's place. He looked in every room but couldn't find her, so he discreetly left the home. The young guy found the dorms without any trouble. Aside from the slight sounds of breathing, the dorm room was absolutely dark and silent. Then we heard footsteps and the door opened with a squeak. A cool air rushed in when the door was opened, and the dim moonlight made it seem like a guy was standing in the room. The mysterious person stepped into the light and began scanning the room. The guy examined the faces of the girls one by one as they lay on the ground, before turning to the cluster of women who were lying on top of one another. Then, one by one, he began bringing out the women, looking at their faces and declaring aloud, "this is not the one," before moving on to the next. The young lady began yelling for help, but her traveling companions were sound sleeping and could not be disturbed. The unfortunate girl's hand was seized and the guy dragged her slowly out the building. When they woke up the next day, they found

⁶⁰ Hutton, J.H. 1922: *The use of the Bow among the Naga tribes of Assam. Folk-lore*, 33(3), July-September, Pp.89

that she had disappeared, and out of worry for their friend, they started looking for her right away.⁶¹

The charming guy who was able to assume the appearance of a snake married the young lady. She realized that she was powerless and that it would be pointless to fight the guy, so she got a large spool of thread and tied the end of it to the toe of one of her friends who was sleeping in the dormitory. She then walked inside the room and woke up the other friend. While she was traveling with the snake guy, she slowly unrolled the track. She believed that if her friends followed the tread, they would find her.

The next morning, when her friends sought for her but were unsuccessful, they informed the male friends of the situation, and all of them hunted for the girl together. They continued to follow the tread, which led them through a number of fields and a dense jungle until they lost track of it at the foot of a large tree. They explored the area thoroughly and shouted the girl's name in a loud voice for an uncountable number of times, but they received no answer. Even though her friends adore her, they were unable to help her in any other way, and they reluctantly went back to their homes. The snake guy married the girl and transported her to a large cave in the remote location where they both lived together as a married couple.

The girl's biological father was devastated, while her stepmother was pleased, upon learning that their daughter had disappeared. He often had his thoughts drawn back to his beautiful daughter. The thought of his daughter brought tears to his eyes every day, whether he was at home or in the field. This went on for many days, until he eventually snapped and decided to go look for his daughter.

The grandfather pulled out his sword and polished and sharpened it to perfection. He packed a picnic, filled a flask with wine, and grabbed a spear, then set out after the snake man's footprints in his daughter's unrolled carpet. The father reached the last thread and called out for his daughter, but she did not respond. The father kept shouting for his little girl. After spending the whole day searching for his missing daughter, he finally gave up the search as the sun dipped beyond the horizon. With no new leads, he circled the thick woodland, stopping sometimes to shout for his daughter from higher ground. This went on until he had no more choices. He continued looking for many days.

On a particularly lovely day, he was screaming for his daughter when he became aware of a voice that may have belonged to a female. The reply he got this time was audible since he had increased the volume of his voice. A distant "hao" reverberated

⁶¹ Hutton, J.H. 1922 *Carved Monoliths at Dimapur and an Angami Naga ceremony. Jour of the Royal Anth. Inst.*, LII, Pp. 55-70.

across the air. He found a cave and, upon taking a quick peek inside, spotted his daughter.⁶²

Both the father and the daughter were happy to see one other when he eventually made it to the place where his daughter was staying. "My dear daughter, how are you?" he said as he welcomed her. Later, she sobbed to her father, "I am in great trouble and nobody can understand the pain I am going through, but if you want to see the trouble I am facing, you may go up in the rack above, hide yourself, and see." Her dad took refuge in the roof rack when the snake guy showed up at their house at night. When she broke down in tears, telling her father, "I am in great trouble and nobody can understand the pain I am going through." They went to bed shortly after finishing the lovely meal his wife had prepared for them.

He turned into a huge snake and proceeded to crawl over her gently after they had both gone to bed. After that, the snake coiled around her and slithered away, crushing her under its weight. The girl was paralyzed and unable to take a breath. Her sobs were so intense that the girl's lips and nose filled with froth. The snake's tail then made its way into the girl's mouth, resulting in foaming from the mouth and nose. Her father was overcome with sorrow at what he saw and cried, but he was unable to change the situation. As he saw his daughter suffer, the father took the decision to end the life of the snake man. His daughter and her husband had already made plans to return to their town when he made this choice, so he said his goodbyes and left.

The girl's biological father visited the couple and stayed with them after a few days had gone. When the girl's father and her future husband were having dinner together, the girl's father suggested that they alternate hosting holidays and other important events. The snake guy nodded his head in agreement and then decided it would be best to have the party at the son-in-law's house first.

The day of the feast had come, and the son-in-law had prepared a wide variety of delectable treats for everyone to enjoy. His father-in-law ate until he was completely full, and then he left the restaurant and went home.

It was finally dinnertime, so the snake made his way to his father-in-law's house. The father's cooking was based on a little type of mushroom he had harvested, dried in the sun, and then prepared. Then he took a poisonous fruit, stripped it of its rough rind, ground up the pulp, and used it to ferment wine. He invited everyone over to his house for the feast once he had prepared everything. As a welcome for the snake man, they held a daylong feast in his honor. It was becoming late, and his son-in-law wanted to use the restroom, but his father-in-law prohibited it and had him finish the

⁶² Hutton, J.H. 1922 *Carved Monoliths at Dimapur and an Angami Naga ceremony. Jour of the Royal Anth. Inst.*, LII, Pp. 55-70.

mushroom curry and the wine he'd made especially for him. He was finally allowed to go after completing all of his obligations. The passage of time, however, revealed that the snake man had still not returned. The worried father eventually tracked down his son-in-law at his former residence. However, there was a very enormous dead snake in its place, not the person.⁶³

After the snake was killed, the father went to the cave where the snake man lived with his daughter. They were both happy to see one another, but unfortunately, the girl was already pregnant with the kid that would be born from the snake man. When she arrived at her house, her parents were unaware that she had already given birth to a baby snake. She concealed the newborns she had borne in a huge clay pot because, like any mother, she cared deeply for her own flesh and blood. Behind her husband's back, she fed her children breast milk. After a long day of labor in the field or on another job, she never failed to come home to make sure her kids were doing well. This led to more probing from her parents, but she consistently refused to discuss the matter with them. Her stepmother once followed her inside the house after she had returned from working in the field. As she watched, she heard a sound that sounded like *tsutsu*, and then she saw her stepmother approach a big clay pot, the lips of which were adorned with the heads of numerous snakes. She watched as her stepmother walked out of the room and realized the snakes had bitten her. Her stepdaughter walked outside to where the baby snakes were and began to breastfeed the newborn snakes. The stepmother heated the boiling water and poured it into the pot, which caused the snake kids' skin to become scalded and hot. One by one, the snake babies succumbed to their injuries, but some of them managed to escape the pot alive. And when the girl's family finally arrived home that evening, the mother began searching for her children, but she was unable to locate them anywhere in the house. She was overcome with melancholy and concerned about her offspring, the young snakes.

After the girl's stepmother injured the newborn snakes, people began to see all snakes as enemies and assume they have been biting humans ever since. This is due to the fact that the girl's stepmother caused damage to the baby snakes.⁶⁴

ii) THE BELIEF OF NAGAS IN THE EARLY PERIOD

One of the most complicated histories belongs to the Nagas. The several tribes of Nagas that can be found in the Naga Hills each have their own unique culture and set of traditions, but they also adhere to a common belief system that is composed of spiritual practices as well as superstitions. The correct name for the spiritual practices

⁶³Hutton, J.H. *Three points raised by certain passages in Folk-lore*. Folk-lore, Pp. 34.

⁶⁴Bowers, A.C. 1929: *under Head-Hunters, Eyes*. Philadelphia, Judson press Pp.89.

of the Naga people, which are known as animism, is "Nagaism." All living things and their surrounding environment, such as trees, rocks, rivers, and other natural elements, are imbued with soul, as the Nagas believe. The Naga Hills were peaceful until the fifth century, when Christianity was introduced.

There are various rites that are performed on birth, death, and marriage in the Heraka religion, which is practiced by one group of Nagas. They also have designated days for worship, and on the night of the full moon, they will offer sacrifices and perform ceremonies in honor of their deity. On these worship days, they are forbidden from engaging in any kind of labor, since the purpose of these days is to honor their deity. The Herakas hold the celebration of the full moon in the highest regard as the most holy holiday, and the bulk of Herakas who followed this tradition came from the Zeliangrong Naga.

Despite the fact that the Naga people come from a number of distinct tribes, each of which maintains its own unique culture and set of traditions, the Naga people all adhere to a similar belief system about the presence of the spirit in the elements of nature. Despite the fact that each tribe's theories of creation are fundamentally distinct from one another, the rituals and beliefs that center on those origin myths have a number of common characteristics.

The Nagas believed in many various kinds of spirits, including the spirit of the sky, the spirit of the ground, the spirit of the home, the soul of the field, the spirit of the jungle, the spirit of the trees, and so on. Depending on the underlying nature of the spirit, it may be either beneficial or evil. Spirit is able to have an effect on a person's nature as well as their personality. All material objects and all occurrences are said to be inhabited by spirits, who may be appeased by the performance of rites and the offering of sacrifices. Men and women each have their own unique set of rituals and practices, such as how only women are allowed to observe fasting and perform rituals in order to satisfy the spirit of the home. It is not regarded as a sin if a mistake is performed inadvertently, but it becomes a grave sin if the error is done consciously. This is an essential component of the traditional Naga religion, and it is one of its most prominent aspects.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Barpujari, S.K. 1969: planters and the Naga, their early relations. *Journal of University of Gauhati*, 20(1), Pp. 58-66.

CHAPTER 5

THE CHANGE IN RELIGION OVER TIME OF NAGA TRIBES IN NAGALAND FROM THE PRE-CHRISTIAN ERA TO THE CHRISTIAN ERA AND, POLITICAL HISTORY OF NAGA-TRIBES

During the pre-Christian period, the inhabitants of Naga lived a pagan way of life and engaged in regular raids. When they were vanquished, the conqueror seized possession of the fallen town and ruled it. This was done not only to earn prestige but also to form alliances, which were most beneficial to guard against inter-village feuds and headhunting. The village chief, also known as the king, desired their sons and daughters to marry other village leaders or the chiefs' sons and Dau-warrior.



Figure No. 27: Naga Dau-warrior animation (source: Naga Artist from Kohima Archive indigenous file no .46-NEF 1954)

In the time before Christianity, the Naga people followed a pre-Christian culture that included the practice of headhunting, animism, and taboos. The practice of headhunting originated from the concept that the human brain was the location of the soul matter, which was thought to be the source of all life and was responsible for maintaining it. Therefore, if a person was decapitated and his head was brought to another village, the soul stuff that was contained inside the head was also transmitted to that village (the recipient village). It was thought that this would increase the number of animals and multiply the crops in a luxuriant manner.⁶⁶



Figure No. 28: Oha, which is also known as lucky stone (source: Akatolu Assumi)

⁶⁶Bowers, A.C. 1929: *under Head-Hunters, Eyes*. Philadelphia, Judson press.

Within the Naga peoples, a person's social standing and position are intimately correlated to their participation in the cultural practice of headhunting. Grabbing heads has been around since ancient times and is still done now. This term refers to the practice of taking the severed head or skull of a vanquished opponent as a prize. The act of seizing a head is seen as a rite of passage into manhood in many cultures that engage in headhunting. This ritual marks the transition from boyhood to manhood, and in certain cultures, a young man cannot be married until he has taken a head.

It is also thought that the people of that period kept the heads of their opponents as trophies. They would set the heads of their foes outside the village gate and have a feast after an expedition. Additionally, it is said that the village drum wouldn't strike until a head had been taken and placed on it. The practice of headhunting was taken very seriously and did not include any kind of amusement. The purpose of "headhunting" was to obtain personal status as well as political influence, which was why it was done in the first place. Every adult man had the opportunity to demonstrate his value by bringing the heads of members of opposing tribes or communities. A man was not considered to be a member of the male people if he did not bring head, and a man who had taken the heads of a large number of adversaries was held in very high esteem by the community.



Figure No. 29: Tree where the head of the enemy was hung in the early 1800s (source: Akatolu Assumi)

The practice of directing games with one's brain has played a significant role in the day-to-day activities of the members of many early cultures. It has been known for a long time that the Nagas were ferocious fighters. In Naga culture, the practice of headhunting was considered a sign of valor and masculinity. It is considered to have a relationship between killing and agriculture in that it ensures a successful crop, and this link is one of the reasons for this belief. Headhunting is the practice of severing the heads of one's adversaries. This may be accomplished by hurling spears or firing arrows at the adversary, after which the victim is severed from the body using a dao, or the adversary can be eliminated using a dao on its own. The need for names in society is the primary driving force behind headhunting. Before the arrival of Christianity in Nagaland, conflict, headhunting, animism, and taboo were all common practices in the region.

According to Dr. Clark, the Nagas are "men of blood and war," and their style of combat involves hand-to-hand combat with large knives and spears. This mindset and such customs were present among the Naga people before the arrival of Christianity.⁶⁷

On the other hand, following the advent of Christianity, also known as the Christian period. The Naga were responsible for significant changes in every facet of existence. The Naga people were exposed to modern education by Christian missionaries, which, as a consequence, has resulted in yearly changes to either the Naga society or the Naga people. The Nagas benefited from this schooling since it brought them the knowledge of studying, and it was beneficial to them. As more people become aware of the significance of contemporary education, there is a heightened concern among adults that today's youth continue their education so that future generations will consist of more educated men and women. Reading helped people learn more about the gospel of Christ and how to live a civilized life once they became educated men. Reading also helped people learn more about how to live a civilized existence. Additionally, it causes significant alterations to each individual's personality, conduct, and day-to-day living conditions. In addition to this, it put an end to a great deal of nefarious behavior, such as headhunting, animism, adultery, theft, taboos, fighting, giving false testimony, and so on. Every single person's way of life, as well as their social life, was different from how it had been, and many people were even converted to Christianity at this time. In this manner, not only the material but also the spiritual aspects of life were and continue to be benefited.

The love that Christ has for his followers has changed the hearts of the Naga people. The power of the gospel of Christ had a remarkable impact on the Naga people, causing them to become meek and submissive in all aspects of their lives, including

⁶⁷ Bose, m.L. 1979: *Historical and constitutional Documents of North Eastern India (1824-1973)*. Delhi, concept publishing company, Pp 378.

their social life, cultural life, political life, religious life, and worldview. People's lives were dramatically altered, their communities flourished, and they learned how to worship God as a result of these changes.

People's lives underwent a sea shift as a direct result of the spread of Christianity, which dispelled many of the superstitions that had been practiced before. The Naga people began to educate their children by sending them to school, began to study the bible, and began to donate their possessions for the betterment of their generation as well as the generation that would come after them. People began to live in a more sanitary manner, and people live in dread of God and his people, both of which contribute to their good fortune by making them more charitable members of society.

The foreign missionary had a significant part in the development of new social norms in Nagaland. They (the missionaries) planted the word of God in the hearts of the Nagas via the favorable reaction that the people had to the gospel, which they received in a variety of ways; nonetheless, all of these responses were positive. Shortly after the Naga people became aware of Christianity, churches began to sprout up in each of their several tribes. In its infant years, some churches met for fellowship in buildings constructed out of tree branches, while others first met in people's homes. Individual Nagas and their community as a whole converted to Christianity during the severe revival movement or spiritual awakening that occurred at that time.

As a result, the whole Naga community was able to make amends with one another, shattered homes were repaired, families were brought back together, and friends who had been injured by one another were able to start again with their relationships. On the other side, at that time period, the Nagas were engaged in a war of contention with one another over their eating, drinking, offering, and sacrifice practices. Despite this, these things eventually become less noticeable, and the truth about God eventually wins over the hearts of everyone in Nagaland. The people of Nagas had a strong desire to serve the Lord and provide offerings to him. It is all about Christianity, which enters into our people's (Nagas) lives and transforms their lives for the better.⁶⁸

i) RELIGION

During the time of their ancestors, Nagas practiced a kind of spirituality known as "animism" or "traditional Naga," depending on the context. Belief in the presence of spiritual creatures in the natural world is at the heart of animism, which refers to such beliefs. All Naga tribes are aware of three different sorts of gods and spirits: the creator God, the spirits that live in the sky, and the earth spirits. During this period, the Nagas thought that God was the creator of the heavens and the earth and that he

⁶⁸Barpujari, S.K. 1969: planters and the Naga, their early relations. Journal of University of Gauhati, 20(1), Pp. 89-90.

had a favorable attitude toward man. In ancient days, worship did not follow any particular pattern or adhere to any particular form of worship. The Nagas believed in the presence of bad spirits, with whom they attempted to make peace by making sacrifices. Their whole lives were governed by the authority of the nature of the superstitious and animistic worship that they practiced. Stones are revered as significant objects of deity throughout that period. The majority of Nagas are said to possess a spirit of stone, which is one of the spirits that is believed to live in them. Nevertheless, while praying, Nagas would approach the highest God, who was the one who created the heavens and the earth.

In the time before Christianity, the religion of the Nagas was animism, and this is also true of the people. For the Nagas, life had no meaning apart from religion, and practicing their faith was a daily affair. Their religion did not consist of a moral code but rather a ceremony to accompany each sacrifice. The home spirit, the trees, the fields, the mountains, the moon, the sun, the holy stones, the fields, the mountains, the house spirit, and other things were addressed at the beginning of a prayer to a specific spirit.⁶⁹

It is also a belief of the Nagas that before planting vegetables or any seed, the first thing they must do is kill animals such as hens, cocks, and so on. Then, they will sprinkle the blood of the animals they killed and pray to the spirit of the fields. They believe that if they do this, they will be able to harvest more of whatever it is that they planted, whether it be paddy or vegetables. In order to optimize fertility, have a bountiful crop, and ensure the health of the offspring, people would often offer sacrifices to gods or spirits in the hope that they will intervene positively.

People are so afraid of summoning bad spirits that they won't even risk blowing a whistle at night because they think doing so would bring them. In addition, they are certain in their belief that whistling is the medium via which the spirits exchange information with one another.⁷⁰

Another school of thought holds that the people will continue to be plagued by misfortune until they make a sacrifice of the first grain of rice or the first grain of water to a spirit bear. This is a very real concern.

People have the misconception that housewives shouldn't wash utensils in which there are still remnants of food or curry because, in their opinion, the utensil in question

⁶⁹ Dubey, S.M. 1974: *Plea for the sociology of Frontier Religion*. North Eastern Research Bulletin, 5, Summer, Pp. 1-11.

⁷⁰ Bower, U. Graham (U. Bettles), 1951: *Naga path*. London, John Murray, Pp. 260.

belongs to the spirit, and if they don't wash it, the spirit will be disappointed, and poverty will hunt the family because of the spirit.

They also thought that if they cleaned the home at night, the wealth of the family would disappear if they did so.

The introduction of Christian missionaries into the Naga tribal tribe had a significant effect on the socio-cultural aspects of their society. In addition to bringing literacy and Christian doctrine to the Naga people, they also introduced education. However, early Christian missionaries' prevailing perception of tribal custom, practice, and culture as inherently pagan led to widespread misunderstanding. Church membership began to take precedence over ties to family and community, allowing converts to begin building a new identity alongside their religious beliefs. The emphasis placed on individual salvation gave birth to a whole new person.

However, in modern times, with the arrival of Christianity, the great majority of Nagas have changed their religion to that of Christianity. There are many different Christian denominations, but the Baptists make up the majority of the population. Since the beginning of formal schooling, the Christian churches in Nagaland have had a considerable impact on the state's educational, medical, and humanitarian systems. Nagas's residents are also taking part in community events designed to strengthen Nagas as a whole. The church has also taken part in efforts to stem the tide of social ills in Nagaland. The church as it exists now has the future, has a crucial role to play, and the job of bringing about a change in Nagaland that is both beautiful and meaningful, as well as moving individuals in the direction of constructively contributing to the evolution of their communities.⁷¹

How Christianity Began in Nagaland: Tribes of Nagas are known for their bravery, the size of their hearts, and the fact that the vast majority of their people live in hilly terrain. In earlier times, the Naga people would assault each other's villages. As a result, to prevent their enemies from readily attacking their village, they would build it in a mountainous place. However, after Christianity was introduced to the area, they stopped engaging in harmful practices such as headhunting and other forms of violence.

Beginning of the American Baptist mission in Nagaland, the American Baptist mission was responsible for bringing Christianity to the tribes of the Naga people. Rev. Miles Bronson, an American missionary, operated among the Naga people from 1842 to 1858. The first Naga person to be baptized as a Baptist was Nathan Brown at Sibsagar. The second Naga person to be baptized was Hubi he was, Longjalepzuk, in

⁷¹ Dubey, S.M. 1970: *Political tension, social change in religion in Nagaland. Proceedings of a seminar on Tradition and modernisation*, held at Varanasi, April 60-10, Pp. 19-200.

1851 in the hamlet of Merangkong. It was not until December 1872 that the first church on Nagaland territory was built with the first group of believers in Molungkimong village (which is located in the present-day Mokokchung district). It is believed that the American Baptist mission was the first to make contact with the Nagas as early as 1839. Dr. Clark is credited with establishing the first church in Nagaland in the year 1872. The following year was said to have seen a tremendous expansion of the church in Mokokchung and across Nagaland. The missionaries were successful in generating a self-perception among the Naga people that was "Impur" and "uncivilized," and needed to be modified so that they might be brought into the Christian faith and become civilized.⁷²

Mission of the American Baptist Church to the AO Naga: One of the most important groups of Nagas to come from Nagaland is the AO Naga. Clark arrived in Sibsagar on March 30, 1869, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Clark and his wife, Mary. Dr. Clark was given the responsibility of seeing to the health of the church as well as its public relations. Dabbled by the Assamese as headhunters or Clark, eyes were put on the Naga Hills ever since the first encounter with the stranger Naga from the hills. It was at the time that Supong Meren of Mokokchung had gone down to Sibsagar to hunt for his son that he became acquainted with Godhula and began living with him. Supong Meren was on a mission to find his son. Godhula was the conduit via which Supong Meren was introduced to Dr. Clark, and within a short length of time after their first encounter, the three of them developed a robust period relationship with mutual interests. During his time in Sibigar Supong Meren, he learned the AO language, together with its customs, culture, traditions, folklore, and religious beliefs, from Godhula and Clark. Therefore, the basic preparation for the AO had begun by the late 1870s, and during this time period, considerable literary work was carried out. Clark performed Supong Meren's baptism in Sibsagar in early 1871. After his baptism, Supong Meren joined the American Baptist church, which would subsequently become Molungkimong village. Clark was the one who performed the ceremony. In October of 1871, Godhula traveled to the Molungkimong hamlet to meet with Mupongmeren. He took Mupongmeren with him. At that time, there was a problem in the community caused by the entrance of a foreigner or any individuals, and some of the inhabitants asked that he be leased out of the town as soon as possible. People from outside the community were not allowed to be entertained at this time since it was head-hunting season. Godhula was not kicked out of the community when Supongmeren persuaded the other villagers to change their minds, but the people locked him up in the hut and forbade anyone from communicating with him. Godhula was trusted and given the freedom to talk and tell about his faith to the people or villages. After a few days, he returned to the mission location at Sibsagar, after

⁷²Barpujari, S.K. 1969: planters and the Naga, their early relations. *Journal of University of Gauhati*, 20(1), Pp. 95.

keeping him in the Hut for three days and seeing that he was a calm guy during that time.

In April of 1872, Godhula and his wife Lucy travelled to the Molungkiiong hamlet to see them. While they were there, a bamboo chapel was built in the community to hold religious services. Even though they were receiving all of these threats, nine young men opted to accept baptism, and they were baptized by Dr. Clark on November 11th, 1872, in the Dikhu River. This decision contributed to the struggle that was taking place in the village, which was further fuelled by threats from neighbouring AO communities if they did not expel the new faith.⁷³

Some of Dr. Clark and his wife's literary works are presented here for your perusal:

- MezungAshiba (Ao Naga primer Vol 1) in 1891.
- TanabubaAshiba (Ao Naga Primer Vol 2) in 1893.
- Ao grammar and illustrated phrases in 1893.
- Yoseph Otzu (The story of Joseph)
- Tazungtsu Kaket (Ao Arithmetic) 1902.
- Ao Folklore.
- Translated the gospel of Mathew, John, Acts I, Psalms, and Corinthians.
- Translated the magnificent, the beatitudes, the Nunc Dimittis, and the Lord's prayer.
- The Ao Naga dictionary was published in 1911.
- Ao Hymnal of 125 hymns.

To commemorate the founding of the first Baptist church in the world, which took place on December 22, 1872, in Mulongkimong Village, the Ao Baptist Church Association and the Nagaland Baptist Church Council are holding foundation day celebrations today. It is the biggest Baptist Church Association that is linked with the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC), and there are over 160 churches that are a part of it. Today, it is a significant financial backer of mission work in the neighbouring states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh as well as the neighbouring nations of Nepal, Myanmar, and China.⁷⁴

MISSION WORK TOWARDS LOTHIA TRIBE OF NAGA

The next morning, April 9, 1885, saw Rev. Dr. W.E. Witter and his wife make their way to Wokha. The evangelism of the Lotha Naga tribe didn't get off to a very good start until after Dr. Witter and his wife were on the scene. In addition to the Mission efforts conducted by Dr. Clark at Molung in the regions inhabited by the Ao Naga

⁷³ Interviewed by Khulupu on 2/07/2019.

⁷⁴ Interviewed by Khulupu on 2/07/2019

tribes and by C.D. King in the regions inhabited by the Kohima people. On the other hand, Dr. Witter started his work among the Lothas in Wokha in the year 1885.

Witter started the process of creating a script for the languages spoken by the various tribes of Lotha with a lot of energy and commitment. Another very necessary thing was getting the Bible translated into their language or the languages of the nearby tribes.

The first school in the Lotha region was established in 1885 by Dr. Witter and his wife. H. Daniel Baruah served as Dr. Witter's assistant when they were in Wokha. On August 25, 1886, the first three Lotha boys enrolled in the day school, but the number of students quickly rose.

Dr. Witter is credited with being the first person to put the Lotha language down on paper. The Lotha primer and a sentence from the Book were both created by Dr. Witter in the year 1888. The outline grammar of the tribe of Lotha Naga language, together with vocabulary and illustrative sentences, was printed in Calcutta the same year, and it was produced at the cost of the government. In the same year, 1888, Dr. Witter also translated the hymnal and the first Catechism. After Dr. Witter and his wife went to the United States to get medical care, they did not return to the mission field in Wokha. After receiving his medical degree in 1922, Dr. Witter went to Gauhati, where he practiced medicine till 1923. After returning to the United States, he became the pastor of the Lake Avenue Church until his death in November 1931.

Following Dr. Witter's departure in 1888, the activities associated with their mission were put on hold for more than a decade. They often sent missionaries from Impur and Kohima to take care of the Wokha Mission in their stead.

It wasn't until the arrival of Dr. James Railey Bailey, an American Medical Missionary, that the first Baptist Mission Centre was founded in Vankhosung under Wokha District. Bailey arrived in 1927 and was responsible for establishing the centre. In honour of his legacy, the Wokha Town Baptist Church constructed a college in Wokha in 2006 under the sponsorship of the college, and it was given the name he had given it.

A translation of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John was completed for the Lothas in the year 1940. Reverend Anderson and Reverend Tanquist worked tirelessly throughout 1946 to finish the first version of the New Testament.

During the years 1948-1953, the final missionaries to reside with the Lothas were a married couple named Howard and Harriet Houston.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Interviewed by Rev. P. Dozo on 1/07/2010.

MISSION WORK TOWARDS THE ANGAMI TRIBES OF NAGA.

Reverend C.D. King was the first American Baptist Missionary to the Angami. He came to Chumoukedima in the year 1878. However, as a result of the wars between the Angami and the British, they were compelled to return to Sibragau. In 1879, when the British finally established their administrative headquarters in Kohima, on February 25, 1881, Reverend C.D. King returned to Kohima to spread the Gospel, which is also known as the Good News. The foundation stone for the Kohima Baptist Church was laid on March 29th, 1883. Four Angami were converted to Christianity and baptized in the year 1885 in the city of Kohima. Because of Mr. King's health problems, he had to go to the United States, and unfortunately, this caused many of their early members to lose their faith. To get the work back on track, Mrs. Hattie and Dr. Sidney W. Rivenburg moved to Kohima in 1887 from Molung, Assam, and Nagaland. After toiling or working in Kohima for five years, they saw their first convert, and after that, slowly but surely, people from Angami started to convert to Christianity. Mrs. Hattie E. Rivenburg passed away in Kohima and was laid to rest in the ABCC complex at the other end of the city. Until 1923, Rivenburg was actively engaged in service to the Angami people.

Impur, Kohima, Vankhosung, and Aizuto were the first areas in Nagaland to receive missionary work from the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.⁷⁶

HOW THE TRIBES OF NAGAS BEGAN THEIR HOHO

1. ChakasangHoho was established in 1949; now, they are composed of 83 Churches, and Pfutsero serves as their primary mission area.
2. The Nagaland Kuki Baptist Hoho was established in the year 1986; it now consists of 18 Churches, and its Mission is located in Karbung.
3. The Rengma Baptist Hoho was first established in the year 1940. They consist of 31 different Churches. Zumpha serves as the organization's Mission Centre.
4. The ZeliangrongHoho organization was established in 1953, and its main location for mission work is in Peren.
5. The Sangtam Baptist Hoho was established in 1949. There are 64 Churches, and Yangli serves as their Mission Centre.
6. The Chang Baptist Hoho congregation was established in 1949. They have 47 Churches, and the Mission center for them is located in Furang.
7. The first Konyak Hoho was built in 1951. They have 105 Churches, and Mon serves as the center of their Mission.

⁷⁶ Anderson, B.I. 1978: *we lived in Nagaland*. Aizuto (Kohima, Nagaland), Sema Baptist Church.

8. 8. Phom Hoho was established in 1953; now, they have 33 Churches, and their Mission field is located in Longlen.
9. Yimchunger Hoho was founded in 1950; now, they number 66 churches, and their mission headquarters are located in Samator.
10. Khiamniungan Hoho was established in 1950; now, they number 28 churches, and their Mission center is located in Noklak.
11. The Sumi Baptist Akukuhokuqhakulu (SBAK) was founded in 1929; now, they have 185 congregations, and Aizuto serves as the location of their mission center.
12. The Sumi Apheyu Baptist Akukuhokuqhakulu (SABAK) was founded in 1981, and the Pughoboto area serves as its mission field.
13. The Western Sumi Baptist Church Akukuhokuqhakulu (WSBAK) was established in 1983; now, it has 113 congregations, and Akuvuto serves as the organization's mission center.⁷⁷

HOW CHRISTIANITY ARRIVED IN SUMI TRIBES OF NAGALAND

There was no American Baptist missionary there when the message of salvation was first brought to the Naga people of the Sumi tribe at that time. The majority of the Sumi Naga tribes may be found in the central regions of Nagaland. They (the Sumi) were affected by the Angami Naga on one side, and the Ao Naga on the other side. There were several members of the Evangelical Church of the Angami Naga. It has come to our attention that these evangelists brought the message of salvation to the neighboring Sumi Naga village, such as Ighanumi.

On the other side, in 1906, an American Baptist Missionary named Rev. Bailey and Rev. K. B. Longwell lived in Impur. They were having a difficult time converting the Sumi Village.

The Sumi people see their Village Chiefs as their teachers, and if their Village Chief does not permit or prohibit them to convert to Christianity, the consequence is the removal of the crimson blanket. On the other hand, they came to the conclusion that the Sumi Naga could not be readily persuaded or converted, in contrast to the Ao Naga, whose political system is democratic. It was difficult to convert the villagers if the village Chiefs were not already believers in the new religion. In order to communicate with the other people, the missionary had to go through the Chiefs of the community first.

At its beginning, Christianity was met with vehement opposition or opposition. Preachers of the Christian faith were driven out of the hamlet, and those who

⁷⁷ Interviewed to Tohevi Assumi on 15/05/2018.

remained there were prevented from using many of the community's resources to eradicate Christianity. In the meantime, there existed a Dobhasi person with the name Inaho Kinimi. He was opposed to Christianity, and his opposition was so strong that he sought and received approval from the SDO of Mokokchung to establish regulations that prohibited conversion. People continued to convert and embrace Christianity despite the stringent regulations that were established, and eventually, even Dobhasi himself converted to Christianity. Despite the rules, people continued to convert. He was even given the job of Head Dobashi to prevent him from converting, but he declined the offer and ended up being baptized instead. After that, he pursued a career as an evangelist. On October 1 of the same year (1927), he formally tendered his resignation as Dobhasi. Following his conversion to Christianity, individuals from the Sumi hamlet in the vicinity of Mokokchung began to convert as well.⁷⁸

Sumi lived in the Mokokchung area up until 1928, when they joined forces with Ao tribes from the Mokokchung region. 1929 was the year when they severed their ties with Ao Hoho and established the beginnings of their own Hoho in the village of Naghutomi (TsuvekhaPhutomi). And the following is a list of several Hoho leaders chosen on that day that may be found below:

- 1) Chairperson – Rev InahoKinimi
- 2) Assembly Speaker - Litrakatsuba, Pastor Sapotimi
- 3) Recorder – Sureptsuba, Pastor Apitomi (Sutemi)
- 4) Speaker – Nihevi, Master Lumtsami

It wasn't until 1937 that Bengt Anderson created the first Mission center for the huge Sumi tribe of Nagas in AizutoZunheboto. Before then, outreach to the other tribes of Nagas had begun in general, but outreach to the other tribes of Nagas had not. Aizuto housed the American Baptist Mission field's youngest missionary at the time. According to what Bengt Anderson has written, the Sumis' gathering in 1937 was the most successful one ever documented in the whole history of the mission. In 1943, the Aizuto Lower Primary School opened its doors, and in 1947, it also transitioned into a Middle English School, being the only institution of its kind in the region of Sumi at the time.

ii) VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION AND POLITICS

The Nagas used three distinct models for the management of their villages. To begin, there were the types of villages that were led by members of the community who were elected by the general populace. Members are selected from each of the village's

⁷⁸ Interviewed to ToheviAssumi on 15/05/2018

clans; this system, which is said to be the most effective method for administering villages that can be found in rural India, was formed. The Konyak Naga tribe has its unique kind of village governance which is the second type. There is one angh or king who rules over one or more communities and gives instructions. Angh are in charge of the administration of the village together with the other village elders. The Sumi Naga and a few of the other Naga tribes have begun implementing the third kind of government. The village chief, also known as the Goan bora, is the person in charge of administering a particular community. He has the same level of power as a Konyak Angh.

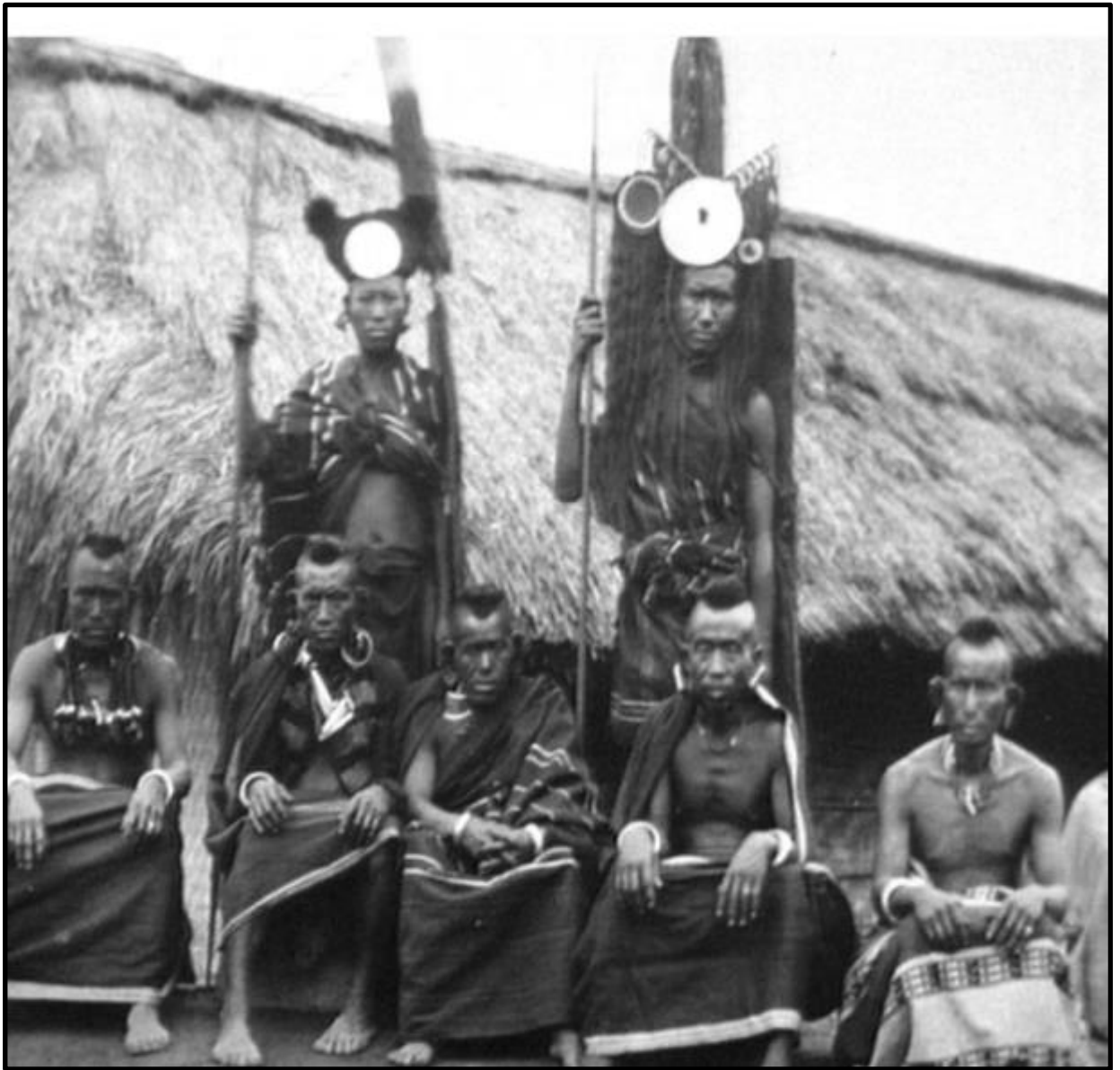


Figure No. 30: Village heads in 1700s (source: Nagaland Archive)

A form of administration that is based on the authority of the village chief may be found among the Naga tribes. The administration was run in an autocratic fashion, which meant that the head of the organization controlled himself on a whim, while his helpers served as his subordinates. The term "administration" refers to the act or practice of guiding the affairs of day-to-day elements of life. This may be done either formally or informally. In his capacity as an administrator, the Chief works toward obtaining the response that is both the most appropriate and desirable in light of the interests of the public or the villagers.⁷⁹

As a result, the obligations of a chief include not just personal concerns but also the duties associated with running a community. He is obligated to provide leadership to the locals. As the owner of the property, he decides which parcels should be used for agricultural purposes during each succeeding year. When it comes to matters of religion, the performance of gennas involves showing respect to local traditions and issuing instructions for the day's events to the whole community. It is the responsibility of the chief to bear the weight of receiving and entertaining guests from outside the village, as well as taking responsibility for the welfare of the less fortunate members of his community. Following deliberation with the other elders of his village, the chief makes decisions about all matters of the village and any other villages in the immediate vicinity. It is important to note that the authority of the chief varied not only from one hamlet to the next but also from one tribe to the next among the Nagas.⁸⁰

The government of the hamlet functioned very much independently. The individual had a lot of independence, but the group's needs were taken into consideration as well.

In every Naga village, there are often two or more clans. According to Naga custom, the privilege of headship (G.B.) is awarded to the clan that either has a majority of the residents in the village or whose ancestors founded the hamlet. Even if the G.B. or village Chief died away, members of any clan other than the one that founded the village were not permitted to assume leadership roles. The headship will/used to be succeeded by his son, and after his son, it will go on to his grandson. Long if that person were to die away, the tradition would still go on long after they were gone.

Before the villages established village councils as part of the political and judicial administration, the GBs were the only authoritative bodies in place. All of the regulations of law and order that were established by the general assembly of the

⁷⁹ Burling, 1871: *Administration Report of the Naga Hills*, Pp. 71-1870.

⁸⁰ Hungyo, P. 1977: *Village administration of Tangkhul Naga's*. Proceedings of a seminar on Social and political institution, organised by NEICSSR, Shilong, Pp. 4.

village were upheld by the GBs. It makes no difference to the selection process whether a candidate belongs to; the GB might be a Christian or not.

Nagas have always been village dwellers, and this pattern of communal life continues to this day. Almost every village is a cohesive and well-run community with its time-tested system of governance.

In Nagaland, the village councils are an essential component of the overall system. Each one of the Naga tribe's villages is required to have a village council, and the members of that council must rotate regularly. The people themselves are going to decide who will serve on the village council, and they will do it in line with the prevalent customary customs and usages. Gaonburas and Angs, who are hereditary village heads, will have the power to vote as members of the council. For the village, the chairman and secretary of the council will be selected from among the members of the council; however, the secretary may be a person who is not a member of the council, provided that in this event, he or she would not have the ability to vote. The meetings of the Village Council will take place either monthly, whenever they have business to attend to, or on a more regular basis if one-third of the members so request. In a similar vein, the authority of GBs has been significantly diminished ever since the village council was established. The Nagas village now defers all of its most important decisions to the Village Council.

The village council also has the jurisdiction necessary to keep the peace and administer justice inside the village proper, in line with the customary laws and usages recognized by the canons of justice established in Nagaland. The councils serve as the equivalent of local courts, exercising the jurisdiction vested in them by the Nagaland Regulations for the Administration of Justice, 1937. If there are problems between villages, the councils from two or more of the villages may have a joint session to work out the kinks. These reforms helped disperse power in the government and gave ordinary people more say in shaping the future.

In 1978, the Naga people enacted the village and area council acts to give their village governments more power over development projects. The statutes sought, in part, to strengthen local government by enhancing the role of village councils. Village councils' authority to create village development projects and carry out other community development activities inside the village is codified in the law. These provisions gave the village councils the authority to do both. The formalization of the village development boards' (VDBs') ability to assume these tasks formerly held by the village council came about in 1980 with the notification of the village development board's regulations. This was under what was envisioned in the act of Constitution.

At the current time, the VDBs are also becoming an important part of the conversation over development in the villages of Nagaland. The village development boards are vested with the authority to collect resources from both inside the village and from beyond the community.

In Nagaland, the village development boards (VDBs) have emerged as an essential component of decentralized planning and development. In many different villages, VDBs show or demonstrate to the inhabitants of the community an example of behavior. They have been very instrumental in the construction and upkeep of the community halls, village roads, water tanks, fisheries ponds, bridges, and other important pieces of the village's physical infrastructure. They also bought buses and assisted the locals, which not only helped generate activity but also made it easier for people from the area to communicate with one another. The villages have also been receiving encouragement and assistance from the government in the form of various programs.⁸¹

Each Naga village either now has or once had a village court; members of the village council that was created under the Nagaland village were required to serve on each village court. In addition, the village courts hear matters involving the following types of ensembles and cases:

- i) Civil and miscellaneous cases within village or tribal laws and customs, with immovable property disputes falling under village court jurisdiction, and all parties residing in or grasping land within the jurisdiction. Criminal cases are not covered by village or tribe laws and traditions.
- ii) Crimes within the scope of tribe laws and traditions, including theft, pilfering, damage, trespass, assault, harm, intoxication, disorderly scuffling, public annoyance, and illegal restraint, are handled by the village court.
- iii) A village court cannot impose jail, but can issue fines for offenses up to a specific level. It may also honor customary retribution or recompense to the aggrieved party.
- iv) Village courts should have the jurisdiction to assess charges and compensation to people involved in unfounded or ongoing lawsuits in civil disputes.
- v) The penalties and fines issued under the sub-rules can be enforced by seizing the offender's property to pay the fines and penalties.
- vi) A village court should have the authority to order the presence of suspects and witnesses, impose fines, and enforce punishments for contempt of court.

⁸¹ Horam, M. : 1975 : *Nagaland politics : Point to ponder, Point of view (Nagaland)*, January 18: 7-9

- vii) Village courts must notify the appropriate higher court if they believe their punishment is inappropriate for the case, and the higher court will decide the matter under these guidelines.
 - viii) The village court handles matters in line with applicable traditions and customs for decision-making.
 - ix) Village courts may classify claims and cases after hearing from parties and witnesses, and may render a ruling immediately if someone has already made a decision. The majority of the village court's present members will decide the outcome, with the chairman having a casting vote if there is a tie.
 - x) A village court can decide a matter ex parte if one party intentionally withdraws from the hearing.
 - xi) Village court sessions should be documented in writing, regardless of the case type.
 - xii) Village courts must make decisions on oral notification to parties and witnesses, except in cases where they have determined that only oral notification is required.
- xiii) Village courts can declare judgments and order property attachment, but cannot sell them if the person involved has the right to appeal to the appellate court following regulations.⁸²

⁸²Horam, M. : 1975 : *Nagaland politics : Point to ponder, Point of view (Nagaland)*, January 18: 7-9

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the unresolved question of Naga origins, analyzing oral traditions, colonial records, and archaeological findings. The research challenges the monolithic narratives imposed by outsiders, instead revealing a complex interplay of migrations, inter-tribal exchanges, and localized adaptations that shaped Naga identity. These findings underscore the need for Indigenous-centered historiography in understanding Nagaland's past. The origin of the Naga people in Nagaland remains a contested and under-researched topic in anthropology, history, and Indigenous studies. While various theories—ranging from migration narratives to autochthonous (indigenous) claims—have been proposed, there is no definitive consensus due to:

1. Lack of Written Records – Naga history has been primarily oral, leading to fragmented and sometimes conflicting accounts.
2. Colonial & Outsider Interpretations – Early British administrators and ethnographers often categorized the Naga based on superficial observations, leading to biased or oversimplified classifications.
3. Diversity Among Naga Tribes – With over 16 major tribes and numerous sub-tribes, each with distinct languages and origin myths, constructing a unified Naga ethnogenesis is challenging.
4. Political Implications – Debates over Naga origins influence modern identity politics, particularly in the context of Naga nationalism and resistance to assimilation.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive ethnographic overview of the various Naga tribes residing in the Indian state of Nagaland. By delving into oral histories and cultural practices, it seeks to document and analyze their traditional clothing, rituals, adornments, inheritance systems, and economic structures. The research endeavors to explore how these elements have evolved and how they contribute to the collective identity of the Naga people.

Specific Aims:

To explore the historical evolution and origin of the Naga tribes in Nagaland.

-This will involve a detailed investigation into the oral traditions and legends surrounding the genesis and migration patterns of the Naga people.

-The study will examine how the tribes' cultural identities and appearances have transformed over time, in response to internal developments and external influences.

-Special attention will be given to major historical transitions and the differing narratives that emerge from oral histories, highlighting diverse interpretations and hypotheses.

1. To document and interpret the oral sources relating to the origin of the Naga tribes.

- Oral history is the cornerstone of the Naga people's cultural transmission. This aim focuses on preserving and analyzing narratives that have been passed down through generations.

- The study will identify common themes, symbolic meanings, and tribal variations within these oral accounts, aiming to reconstruct a multifaceted picture of tribal origin and migration.

2. To conduct a comparative analysis of different Naga tribes.

- Given the rich multi-tribal composition of the Naga people, this aim emphasizes a comparative approach to understand the similarities and differences among various tribes.

- Key aspects of comparison will include clothing styles, ritual practices, systems of inheritance, decorative arts, and economic activities.

- This analysis will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of tribal identities and inter-tribal dynamics within the broader socio-cultural fabric of Nagaland.

There is a lot of speculation on where the term "Naga" came from. Before the year 13 A.D., there was neither a written nor an oral history of the Naga people. It wasn't until the arrival of the British that the term "Naga" started to be used in a widespread manner to refer to the tribes that lived on the Naga hills. When the "CHAO SUKAPHA" and "TAKAI" kings of Thailand were on their way to invade Assam in the year 1228 A.D., they also assaulted the Naga people. As a result, people began to hear the word "Nagas" more often. Before that time, the people who lived in these hills referred to themselves by the names of their tribes, which were also used by the majority of people in Assam and across East India. The term "Naga" refers to headhunters who lived in the hills and were naked.

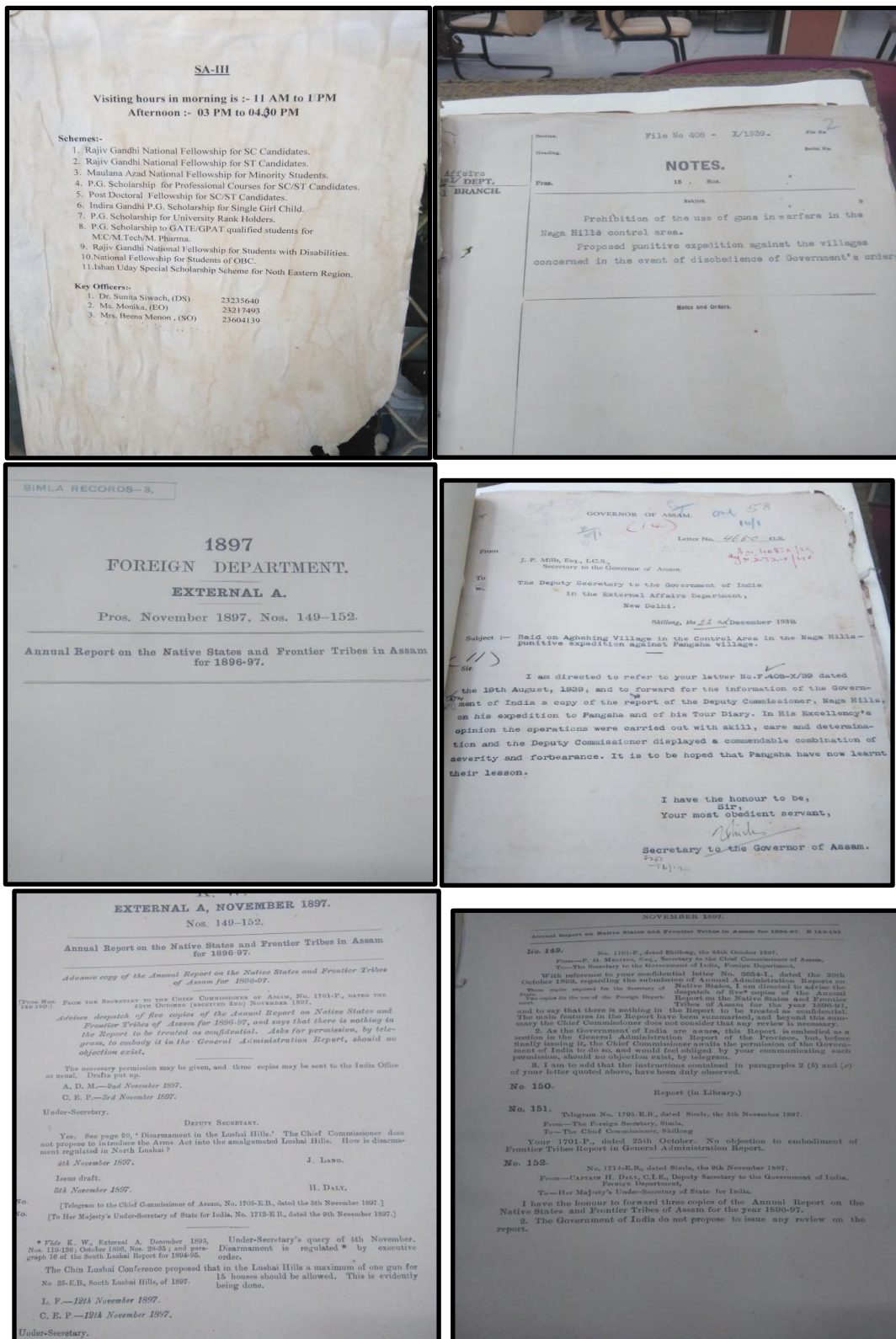


Figure No.31: Image of reports from the National Archive of Delhi (Sources: Akatolu Assumi)

The initial interaction between the Naga people and the Ahom people took place during the reign of SUKAPHA, the first monarch of the Ahom kingdom, which began around the year 1228 A.D. As the Ahom kingdom quickly expanded, there were many confrontations between the Ahoms and the Nagas, but on the whole, the Ahoms kept surrounding tribes under control and collected tributes from them. This was even though there were regular clashes between the Ahom and the Nagas. As a kind of compensation, the Naga people were given tax-free land and fishing waterways, with the understanding that they would abstain from conducting any more predation expeditions into the plains.⁸³

THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD NAGA; There is scant evidence to back up this etymological derivation, as the Bengalees were far more familiar with the Khassias and Garos than they were with the Nagas, and the Garos in particular are traditionally accustomed to a greater degree of nudity than the Nagas. It would indicate that none of the hill tribes themselves are familiar with the appellation "Naga," regardless of where the name "Naga" came from in the first place. The people who live in these villages belong to a diverse range of groups or races, and the only names by which they refer to themselves are those given to them by the tribes to which they belong; there is no overarching term that is used for all of the races. There does seem to be, however, some distinguishing feature that differentiates these tribes from others that surround them, as well as some common links that bind them all together as a single people, even if they may be now separated into tribes due to the variety of dialects they speak. All of today's tribes may have this connection with their ancestors, the big indigenous population who settled in the highlands thousands of years ago. People of different ethnicities may have sought refuge in the billows from time to time, bringing with them their languages. However, it's also likely that they've assimilated into the old stock in terms of habits, manners, and, most importantly, religious superstitions. They are more likely to marry within the Naga society and make alliances with other Naga groups rather than with members of other tribes. This is even though they are always at war with one another and speak such drastically different dialects that members of even close-by tribes can't understand one another unless a third dialect is used as a bridge. It seems that the Nagas are distinct from their neighbors in terms of their physical appearance as well. This is because all Nagas, despite their wide variety, have characteristics such as extreme crudeness and barbarism in appearance and extreme shyness, heaviness, and boredom in character. Some of the rituals practiced by these various groups of people have commonalities. Furthermore, they are easily distinguished from one another because javelins and spears are their exclusive means of protection. Due to the lack of data, it is impossible to make any inferences regarding the Naga people's genetic background from their linguistic

⁸³ Kumar, B.B. 1973: *Origin of the word 'Naga', Highlander: The bulletin of the Culture Research and State Museum*, 1(1), March, Pp. 6-31.

makeup. The apparent diversity in the languages spoken by the various tribes makes it plausible and likely to conclude that they did not all descend from a single progenitor. Therefore, although some of the tribes may have languages that are descended from the same root, others have languages that are unique from one another. It is anticipated that a more widespread familiarity with the people and a more rigorous attention to the languages of the people will soon be able to shed light on these fascinating races. Already, two or three members of the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions have established themselves in the Naga hills, and they have become so familiar with the language of the tribe amongst whom they have located themselves (the Namsangiyas), that they have been able to get up a few elementary books in that dialect, and to open a school for the education of the children. This has allowed them to open a school for the education of the Namsangiyas.⁸⁴ We shall soon owe a debt of gratitude to these extraordinary people for the wealth of information they have provided us with on the Naga tribes and the goods of the hills where they have made their home. The Nagas, who have been the scourge and prey of their more civilized neighbors since the beginning of time, may soon begin to emerge from the deep barbarism that has made the tribe of Cach hill an enemy to that of the next, and which has prevented an Alpine tract of great natural resources and high fertility, from supporting more than a very small population. This is to be hoped, with the blessing of Divine Providence, through the efforts of these excellent men. It stretches for around 36 miles in length and 18 miles in breadth at its widest point. Manipur's verdant and rich valley may be found at an altitude of around 2,500 meters. The Manipuris of this valley are frequently thought to be unrelated to the many Nagas found elsewhere in the nation. Nonetheless, there is no evidence suggesting that the Manipuri language is unconnected to the languages spoken by any of the Naga tribes. Additional research has a significant likelihood of revealing similarities between the two tongues. According to the Reverend Mr. Brown of Jaipur, there are clues suggesting a connection between the Manipuri and Singpho languages. The Manipuris are significantly more developed as a civilization and have a written language than any of the Naga tribes. This might be attributed in great part to the favorable conditions of their location, which promote consistent farming and provide enough resources to keep the locals living in reasonable comfort. Regardless, the Manipuris have reached a far higher level of civilization than any of the Naga peoples. We know very little about the Naga, save for a select few of their primary subgroups. To the south and west of Manipur are the Koong-juices, who inhabit the hills; to the north and west, the Marams; to the east and northeast, the Laohoopas and Ungkools; and to the north and west, the Angamis, who inhabit the same valley. It is unclear to us, however, whether any of these designations really represent any of these federated

⁸⁴ Kumar, B.B. 1973: *Origin of the word 'Naga', Highlander: The bulletin of the culture Research and state Museum*, 1(1), March, Pp. 6-31

tribes, or if the people even recognize these words.⁸⁵ Assamese Nagas live on the northern slopes of the mountains draining into the Brahmaputra; these are the mountains being mentioned here. Nagas are the general term for these people, but the Nagas that make their homes on the mountaintops are known as Arbors or Abor Nagas. They fight constantly because they don't want the Arbors to engage in direct barter with the people of Assam, and because they don't want the Nagas living in the interior to have access to the marketplaces that they do. The Nagas of the lower ranges are very protective of the wealth that comes from their ties to the province. The jealousy is so pervasive that the Arbors are banned from Assamese markets and the Nagas of the northern hills are prohibited from trading with Ava or Manipur. The Naga people live in a number of small settlements between the Namsang River and the Assam border to the east. The more powerful Singphos seem to be oppressing the Naga to the point that the latter are effectively treated as slaves. However, the recent development of our utmost authority has helped them out, which is great news. The Khunung people, who dwell in the mountains where the Irrawaddy River begins, may also be Naga, despite the fact that they are seldom referred to as such. In practice, however, this overarching grouping is seldom utilized to characterize them. Asam is home to many Naga tribes, including the Namsangiya, the Borduriay (sometimes spelled Borduwarias), and the Panidawarias, all of which need more attention than they now get. These tribes have traditionally been required to pledge their fealty to the Rajas of Assam in exchange for access to very important saline springs. Both the Nagas and the government of Assam have historically relied on the export of salt from the hills, and the Nagas have relied on the markets of Assam to exchange salt for grain and other goods. This has led to a climate of mutual respect and understanding between the two peoples. As a result, the Naga highlands have always been accessible to the plains people, and the Nagas have never been denied access to the border towns' markets. Recent tariffs on Naga salt have been particularly onerous, and the method in which they have been enforced has resulted in a considerable degree of extortion on the part of individuals who are responsible for collecting taxes. The individuals who were tasked with collecting the taxes levied tolls at the springs on the hills and the markets below. Both the salt and the goods the Nagas received in exchange for it were taxed in this way. Tax collectors were present in both places where they were expected to be. The old method was quite onerous for the people of Sibpur, Lieutenant Brodie discovered upon taking command of the region. Therefore, he got rid of all the fees the villagers had to pay for the salt they got. Taxes in the form of commodities are now in effect, with the revenues amounting to 3,264, 13.4 rupees from the sale of 652 maunds, 38 seers, and 11 chittacks of salt at the current rate of 5 rupees a maund.

⁸⁵ Barma, Padmanath, 1892: *Naga (in Assamese). The Bijuli* (Calcutta), S. 1814. Pp 12-70.

With the monthly costs subtracted out (a total of 120 rupees, or 1,440 rupees a year), the net ROI is 1,824:13:4. The Nagas own the vast majority of the salt wells in the highlands. The former Assamese government was able to negotiate shared ownership of some of the wells, with the Nagas granted the right to draw brine for a certain time each day.⁸⁶ Raja Purunder Sing allocated a certain number of pykes to the works because he anticipated a high return on investment from this privilege. The British government has yet to exercise its prerogative in these wells because the Pyke technique has been abandoned, and it is highly unlikely that it would be as profitable under a system of hired labor, at least not without some method of boiling the brine that is more profitable than the one that is currently being used. The government has an exclusive right to use several springs at the base of the hills, but the Nagas, out of jealousy during the week period of the previous Assam administration, blocked access to these springs with violence. This happened at a time when the government in Assam was in control. Salt produced by the Nagas is inferior to that supplied from Bengal because it is made using an extremely inefficient and labor-intensive method. However, it is expected that European speculators will soon be able to offer a much more profitable way of generating the salt, which is more likely to succeed due to the closeness of many coal beds, which will provide the means of evaporating the brine with greater ease. It is also envisaged that this new approach may be put into action over the next months. It is now hard to imagine any acts that might be taken that would not upset the Naga people, even if such actions would be to their advantage. The previous government had a hard time dealing with the ongoing hostilities between the various Naga tribes. The Naga people had already been mentioned, so this made sense. A particularly nasty feud has persisted for a long time between the Namsangiyas and the Bordurias. Instead of working to settle the situation, the Asam Raja authorities have made money out of it by fining both parties. This practice just recently began to lose its lucrative status. Recently, Mr. Sub-Assistant C. R. Strong was sent to their hills to find out the root of their feuds and, if at all possible, mediate and bring the warring parties back together. Hopefully, he was able to achieve this goal by convincing both parties to commit to stop further hostility and to send future complaints to the British authorities for resolution. The western Naga tribes are unknown to us, and we have no access to any reputable sources of knowledge about them.

Most of these native populations openly declare their support for the British government, and as a result, they have unfettered access to the hauts, or border market regions. During the reign of the Assam dynasty, the Nagas paid a little fee in exchange for the privilege to cultivate all of the land south of the Dhudur-Alli. Today,

⁸⁶Barpujari, S.K. 1974: *Formation of Naga Hills District: A Landmark in the History of British-Naga Relation. Highlanders*, 3(2), Sept.: 1-8.

the Nagas have built a number of prosperous towns and farms along this frontier.⁸⁷ The majority of the people living in these villages are Assamese Pykes and slaves who were forced to flee their homes because of the systemic persecution they were forced to endure there. As a result, they were able to find safety and sanctuary in these communities. It is believed that an attempt by Raja Purunder Singh to increase the taxes already obtained from these tribes, or a wish to bring under taxation the Nagas who had long been exempt from it, led to the open hostility of the Naga tribes between the Dikho and Disang rivers toward the government of Raja Purunder Singh during the latter part of his reign. These Naga tribes were responsible for such terrifying destruction in the adjoining areas that they cut off all road access. However, now that these disturbances have ended, everyone may breathe a sigh of relief since normalcy has been restored. For the Assamese, the hills to the west of the Dessai River and between the Dessai and Dhansiri rivers are home to the numerous and docile Latoo Naga tribes. Latoo Nagas is the common name for these groups of Nagas. Shopping excursions take them to the Dhansiri River banks, such as Jorhat and Kachari-hat. The huge Angami Naga population lives to the west, on the hills that separate the Dhansiri's many tributaries. As a consequence of the Nagas of the sizable Angami community's persistent violence against the Kachari settlements in the hills of northern Kachar, the British administration has lately come into confrontation with the tribe. These attacks prompted the relocation of the hills to Assam, where the authorities are more equipped to deal with them than their counterparts in Kachar. The British administration was finally forced to take swift and decisive action in response to the persistent acts of brutality committed by these tribes. Two operations conducted by Mr. SubAssistant Grange against them achieved their desired goal. In response to these missions, the most powerful chieftains have sent in letters promising to change their ways and show more tolerance. Lieutenant Bigge, the Principal Assistant in charge of the Now gong, will soon go on a third and, perhaps, last mission. Gong will soon visit the hill tribes to have talks with the leaders there about forming an alliance and establishing open lines of communication. It seems that the Angamis, although being a powerful confederation, had never traded with Assam. This is because the Latoo Nagas, with whom the Angamis have been at war for a long time, are very likely to have intercepted any communications transmitted from those marketplaces. If this is the case, then the Angamis have no ties to the Kachar region along the Jamuna and may ignore it as a possible destination. Even though the Angamis were the rulers of the Kacharis and some of the Nagas of the lowest hills, the Kacharis and the Nagas were nevertheless employed to keep up a little trade with these people.⁸⁸

⁸⁷Barpujari, S.K. 1974: *Formation of Naga Hills District: A Landmark in the History of British-Naga Relation. Highlanders*, 3(2), Sept.: 1-8.

⁸⁸Angami, A. 1975: *Changing Naga Society* (Letters to the Editor). *North eastern affairs*, 3 (4), January-March, Pp. 4.

Because of what seems to have been a very repressive kind of leadership on the part of the Angami chiefs, many of the Naga people have been forced to flee their villages and seek refuge in the Mikir hills, which are located to the west of the Dhansiri. Before Mr. Grange's voyage, the land of the Angami Nagas was travelled through by Captains Jenkins, Pemberton, and Gordon. Their mission was to find a way to establish contact between Manipur and Assam. The expeditions that these officers led, however, were not successful in achieving any long-term goals. This was partly due to the Angamis' vehement opposition to any route being opened through their country, and partly due to the officers of the British and Manipuri governments holding divergent views on the policy of the proposed measure and failing to follow through consistently on what their predecessors had started. The meagre knowledge that we currently have on the Naga tribes is hardly adequate to let us linger at any length on their civic and social status. This is because the Naga tribes have a long history. In all unpolished countries, the duties in the household economy that fall naturally to the share of women are so many that they are subjected to hard labour, and they are required to shoulder their full amount of the common burden. This puts women in a position where they are forced to do harsh labour and must bear their entire portion of the common load. This is especially true among the Naga people, and it may be due, at least in part, to the anarchical state of the country; however, it may also be due to the large number of independent chiefs who, in the past, were ready to go to war with each other over even the smallest transgression, which is the worst kind of war because it is conducted in secret and without being discovered. As a result, it became customary for the women to be in charge of cultivating the fields, while the men were responsible for training for combat and engaging in actual combat. This was because the males were required to be constantly prepared for an attack. The Nagas have a sense of decorum that is unheard of among their more civilized neighbors when it comes to the relationship between the sexes. The males limit themselves to one woman, to whom they feel a deep attachment and whose virginity they seem to be quite possessive of. On the other hand, some say that women are notable for the fact that they appropriately conduct themselves. They are permitted to take part with the men in all of their celebrations and social activities, and the men, in general, show them a great deal of compassion in how they interact with them. The Naga people do not traditionally marry young, unlike the Hindus, and they do not enter into marriage during infancy. Men also do not typically get married at a young age. This is most likely the result of the difficulties in acquiring the resources to pay the parents of the bride the anticipated dowry upon giving the suitor their daughter to be married to the wife. Therefore, a young man who expresses an interest in marrying a girl must, if his proposal is approved, commit to serving the girl's father for a certain number of years. This commitment is often restricted to the amount of time necessary until the girl may be regarded as marriageable. When his time as a slave is done, the young couple's parents build them a home and provide them with an initial supply of pigs, chickens,

and rice. Additionally, the young couple is freed from their obligations.⁸⁹

Nothing is quicker than a Naga's revenge for an offense against his hardworking companion; his spear provides an instant response to any slur against her dignity. The young bride has been preparing for her new role as a wife for quite some time. Her skills are highly valued, and no one will get swifter retribution than a Naga if they are insulted. The agriculture used by the Nagas is neither very arduous nor very vast. Rice is the only crop that is grown in these regions, which are inhabited by some of the tribes. In these areas, every bit of arable ground is terraced up the hills in such a way that rivulets can be used to irrigate the beds, and in these communities, rice is the only crop that is cultivated. They also have some giant capsicums, excellent ginger, and a few cardamom plants in their communities. Arums and yams are found in great quantities among the Naga people; however, most of the time, they are found growing wild around their settlements. Cotton is often cultivated on the slopes of the hills, and it is not uncommon to come across a type of grass known as *Lachrymajobi* beside it. The Naga people make an intoxicating beverage from the grain of this grass using a process that is quite similar to the process of brewing beer. It appears to have been one of the earliest uses of human intelligence to find some concoction of an intoxicating nature, and there is no tribe so backward or so devoid of creativity that they did not succeed in this study that led to fatalities. The Nagas seem to have the same level of dependency on the consumption of alcoholic beverages as any of the other neighbouring tribes. All of the villages have a plentiful supply of pigs, fowls, and ducks, and some of the wealthier villagers even retain herds of cattle that they have acquired from the plains. They have no qualms about consuming meat and are not picky about the foods they eat in any way; dogs and cats, along with reptiles and insects, are all consumed in equal measure as sources of nutrition. The Nagas, in general, do not consume a large amount of vegetable food. As a direct result of this, the majority of the Nagas who have reached old age exhibit severe and repulsive signs of skin eruptions, scurvy, and leprosy. There is no question that in a mountainous region of such vast proportions as that which is inhabited by the Nagas, the number of beneficial plant and mineral compounds that are generated there must be quite high; nevertheless, due to our limited familiarity with their territory, we will only be able to highlight a select handful of these substances. Among the former, there are numerous kinds of laurels; that producing cassia is known to occur plentifully on the eastern highlands, and the plant that we know as the bay leaf, or the text of commerce, is abundant everywhere. Bay leaves are used in a variety of medicinal and culinary applications. During Mr. Grange's journey to the Angami Nagas, he discovered the wild tea plant growing in significant numbers on their hills. The Shyans, who accompanied him on his journey, attested to the plant's high level of quality. The

⁸⁹Angami, A. 1975: *Changing Naga Society* (Letters to the Editor). North eastern affairs, 3 (4), January-March, Pp. 4.

product of these hills, known as agarwood, was at one point in very high demand as a commodity in the marketplace. In addition, there is an abundance of a highly resinous fir in all of the upper elevations, and in addition to other important timbers, oaks are abundant in all sorts.⁹⁰ As we have already mentioned, salt is the only mineral product we are aware of that is used by the Naga people. However, we have been able to trace coal along the lower ranges bordering the valley, and we know that salt springs exist westward on the banks of the Dhansiri at Sunkar, in the Kachar hills, as far east as the banks of the Dehing and Namsang rivers. The Nagas trace their ancestry back to the Mongoloids. The Naga languages have been classified by linguists as belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group. Unlike the Naga, who have many different towns and each town speaks its dialect, all members of the Cach tribe speak the same language. For example, there are three Poumai Naga settlements, and the language spoken there is incomprehensible to the other residents. The Tangkhul Nagas are distinguished by the fact that each village speaks a unique dialect that is incomprehensible to speakers of neighbouring villages. The Naga people are known for their bravery, hard work, politeness, colourfulness, friendliness, and sincerity. They have a good sense of humor, are not afraid to speak their minds, and are welcoming to others they do not know. Several authorities on Nagas provided their thoughts on the creature. To paraphrase what Dr. Verrier Elwin had to say about them, "They are a fine people, of whom their country is proud, strong, and self-reliant. They possess the free and independent outlook that is typical of highlanders everywhere." Pleasant to the eye, with an unfailing sensibility for colour and design, affable and upbeat, with a sharp sense of humour, endowed with wonderful dances, and in love with music"⁹¹

The Myth of Naga Origin: Since ancient times, a significant number of ethnologists have been studying the Naga tribe. The British were the first Westerners to come into contact with the Naga people and begin collecting data about them. There is no history of the Naga people that has been recorded in written form. However, the folk songs, folk tales, and legends of many Naga tribes are the types of Naga history that we may use to trace the origin of the Naga people. The many specialists on Nagas offered their hypotheses or contributions from their perspectives on the origin of Nagas. Some sources believe that the headhunters of Malay and the races who originally inhabited the Southern Seas were the ancestors of the Naga people. While the findings of other researchers suggested that the Nagas originated in China. The British, who had established contact with the Naga people as early as 1832, researched the many Naga tribes that existed at the time. The Naga people are distinct from the

⁹⁰ Angami, Rulithou, 1975: *Short account of the British Military Expeditions against the Angami Nagas*. Highlanders, 3 (2), September, Pp. 10-12.

⁹¹ Angami, Rulithou, 1975: *Short account of the British Military Expeditions against the Angami Nagas*. Highlanders, 3 (2), September, Pp. 10-12.

other tribes that are found in Northeast India in many ways. Because of this tribe's distinctive characteristics, British ethnologists felt compelled to investigate them and publish their findings. Dalton, Sir James Johnstone, J.P. Hutton, J.P. Mills, Woodthorpe, H.H. Godwin Austin, Mackenzie, Damant, and some other pioneering anthropologists were among those who researched and wrote about the Naga people. The majority of the first ethnographers to study the Nagas were military personnel. The leaders of Nagas were amateur anthropologists in their field of study. This may be one of the reasons why no one has researched the history of the Nagas and the derivation of the term NAGA to provide a suitable answer backed by facts. During the uprisings of 1879, some of the significant records and papers of the Nagas were lost or destroyed.⁹² Damant possessed a Manipur I Dictionary and a study on Angami Nagas, but both were lost in the Kohima stockade along with the Nagas themselves. The early ethnologists did their best to collect data on the Naga people, but they only had a limited amount of knowledge and information on the Naga people. This may be because there was a communication barrier between them (interpretation), and there was no recorded history. The work of the authority on Nagas should be respected and valued despite their imperfect understanding (notion) of Nagas, even if there may be a wide variety of viewpoints on Nagas by outsider Writers and insider Writers. However, there may also be different perspectives on Nagas by outsider Writers and insider Writers. There are many points of view held by the ditto rent writers on Naga on the history of the Naga people. One of the pioneer experts on Nagas, Sir James Johnstone, who came into touch with the Naga people in 1874, wrote on the origin of the Nagas: Where the Angami originated from must remain unclear until the language of our Eastern boundary is thoroughly investigated. Johnstone was one of the first individuals to come into contact with the Naga people. The late Mr. Damant, a man of great brilliance and a pioneer of inquiry, had excellent literature in his hand; however, it was destroyed in the uprising of 1879. The possibility is that they originated from the South, specifically a stem corner of Thibet."10 There is no evidence that folklore and traditions surrounding Nagas can be traced back to Tibet. But the tales of their beginnings converged in the southeastern region. The folklore and folk song neither supported nor refuted the aforementioned belief that Nagas originated in Tibet. James Johnstone first made contact with the Naga people in the year 1874 in Samagudting. in that time, an elderly Naga, who was a centenarian at the time, told him that the Nagas had originally arrived from the North East and that they were the seventh generation to live in that region. Another pioneering scholar on the Naga people, JH Hutton, said the following: "Where the country near Manipur is located is a much more difficult problem, and one that is quite beyond the scope of this book." On the one hand, many origins have been linked with the IHead-hunters of Malay and the races of the Southern Seas, while on the other hand, China is the cradle of many of

⁹²Interviewed Doyel swu on 15/o7/2022.

these beginnings.⁹³

MIGRATION OF THE NAGAS: Oral folklore, folk songs, and folk stories have been handed down from generation to generation via oral traditions. Despite this, the ancient past of the Nagas is shrouded in mystery since there is no historical evidence that has been formally recorded. Many historians, anthropologists, and geographers have speculated on the reasons for the migration of Naga tribes to Nagaland, giving rise to a plethora of different migration hypotheses. Some of the hypotheses on the migration of the Naga people to Nagaland are presented in the following: According to Hutton, all Naga tribes traditionally refer to migration from the south. This observation implies that the Nagas are a Mongolian stock that moved from China before the Christian period. 1) The first hypothesis proposed that the migration of the Naga took place northward from Southeast Asia. 2) The second theory proposed that the migration of the Naga took place westward from central Asia. 2) The second idea proposed that the Naga people settled in the Naga Hills after migrating from China to South East Asia through the Himalayan portion. This migration took place at some point in history. This path travels southward via the Patkai Mountains, the Arakan Yoma, and the Banda Arch in the direction of Java and Sumatra.⁹⁴The oral tradition states that the forefathers of the people of this tribe originated in the Chinese province of Yunnan. During the building of the Great Wall of China, several individuals said that they were coerced into leaving their homes. When a Chinese pilgrim arrived in Assam in 645 AD, during the reign of Bhaskas in the hills, east of Assam, he saw that the locals had many characteristics in common with a barbarian group from southwest China. According to the chronicle kept by the Ahom Buranjis, the Nagas had already established a community in the Naga Hills by the time the Ahoms arrived in Assam in the 13th century. Based on Physical, Skin, Hair, eyes, face and looks traits and culture characteristics, some scholars said that the Nagas are racially as the Indonesian Naga are racially as the Indonesian type, the type of people belonging to Malay and Indonesian tribes of Nagas also seen to have similarities with people outside of the Asiatic mainland such as the Dayaks and Kanyan's of Borneo. This assertion was made by some scholars. Although there are no written sources on the Naga that offer the specific date of the arrival of the Naga tribes into the hill region or the particular areas of origin, or when and why they migrated, it is thought that the Naga tribes invaded the Naga hills before the Christian period. This is because there are no written sources on the Naga that provide the exact date of the arrival of the Naga tribes into the hill area.⁹⁵

⁹³ Interviewed Doyel swu on 15/07/2022

⁹⁴ Interview with ToheviAssumi on 15/05/2018.

⁹⁵ Interviewed Doyel swu on 15/07/2022

FIRST NAGALAND SETTLERS

When the Naga people came to rule Manipur and Nagaland, three brothers, Meite, Hondun, and Thanga, led many people and came. Meite is the eldest brother, Hondung middle, and Thanga the youngest brother, but these three brothers split into two places, that is, Manipur and Nagaland. Meite and Hondung stay in Manipur, and Thanga came to Nagaland. Therefore, when Thanga first arrived in Nagaland, he stayed in the "MEKHROMA" village together with two locals from the "KHUZABOMI" village.

The migration of members of the Sumi tribe of the Naga people is said to have begun at a location known as Khuzabomi (Khezhakenoma), according to one of the numerous legends that describe how the Sumi tribe came to be.



Figure No.32: Litsapa stone in Khezhakheno village (source: Akatolu Assumi)

According to the legend, there was a piece of flat rock known as the Litsapa stone. This rock was different from other types of stone. When they set the rice on the stone and waited until dusk, the amount of paddy either doubled or tripled, depending on how you look at it. This stone had magical properties. According to another legend, Chakhesang was the oldest son of the first man to establish in Khezhakenoma, also known as Koza the father, and Kola, the mother. Angami was the second son, and Sumi was the youngest son.

Before the father passed away, the father told their son, "Since I have already made a career for all of you except for the youngest son, give that Litsapa stone to the youngest son." However, after the father passed away, the two older brothers took turns spreading their rice on the magic stone or Litsapa stone without giving the

youngest brother a chance to do so. One day, the youngest son became enraged and, on top of the Litsapa stone, he lit a fire with some dried leaves, which resulted in the stone shattering into pieces. In the middle of the flames, he saw a cock emerging from the blaze, and it proceeded to fly towards the Yeti (Doyang) river. Therefore, the youngest son followed the cock because he believed that doing so would bring him a blessing. Elders from the Khezhakenoma village said that the Sumi Naga first established in the region that is now known as the Sumi Naga area after migrating from the Khezhakenoma area to other locations. After this, the Sumi Naga developed fast and spread out in many different ways.⁹⁶

ENTRY OF SUMI LAND/ THE SUMI TRIBE

In contrast to the other Naga tribes, the Sumi village is ruled by Akukau, the Village Chief, and his Chochomi, the Helper of the Village Chief. The Chief of the Sumi Village is chosen via a hereditary process, and the villagers place a high value on the importance of family ties. People who are born into the Akukau family or the family of the Village Chief can only ever become a ruler or a superior ruler. While the majority of Naga tribes use democratic forms of government, there are a few exceptions to this rule. The Sumi tribes were characterized by their autocratic government. The civilization of the Sumi tribes of Naga has been centered on Akukau from the time it was founded to the present day, and Akukau is recognized as the leader in his jurisdiction.

The Naga people of the Sumi tribe are continually relocating to newly constructed villages. When a new town was being established, the son of the town's Chief either gained the land via victorious combat, reserved it for himself entirely, or selected ground that had never been farmed before. It was customary for the Chief's son to release a portion of the land to one of his traveling companions who had a more important position. He could also leave land for the people, even those who are reliant on him, to acquire. The chief of the next village gave his dependent some land on the condition that the dependent would assist the chief in battle and labor in the chief's fields for a certain number of days or months each year.

There is no written history of how the first Sumi village was established, but according to some oral tradition, there were IGHA, HEBO, CHISHI and their sisters SHESE while they were on their way to establish the village, their father bound one stone with them and gave them one cock and said, if the stone fall and the cock started crowing, establish the first village there; however, when they reached CHISHOZU, their father told them to establish the first village there. The stone didn't fall, and the

⁹⁶Interviewed by N. Toshi on 2/07/19.

rooster didn't crow, but as soon as they reached IGHANUMI, the stone fell and the rooster began crowing. They recalled their father's words and created the first village there. To this day, people continue to live in that village, and the name of the community has remained the same.

They even constructed the villages of HEBO, CHISHO, CHISHI, and SHESU after they had established IGHANUMI village.

Aside from the oral stories, folk ballads, and folk tales, numerous ideas have been put up by historians, anthropologists, geographers, and other experts on the origin of the Nagas. This is because there are no written records of the ancient history of the Nagas.

It would seem that the term "Naga" was a label bestowed upon them by other people based on their cultural practices. In the works of Ptolemy, a Greek writer, the term "Naga" is recorded for the first time. Ptolemy was in south and west India about the year 150 A.D., and at that time he overheard the locals there referring to a Mongolian race as "Nagalok," which translates to "naked people." According to AZ Phizo, a great leader and liberation warrior from the Naga people, the name "Naga" derives from the Burmese word "Naka." AZ Phizo's interpretation of the word "Naga" is based on this aspect. "Na" means ear in Burmese, and "Ka" means pierced. The Naga people are a human species that belongs to the family of humankind and have a culture that involves piercing their ears. The term "ear-hole" may be translated as "Naga" in Konyak Naga, which is according to Rev. Y. Chingang Konyak, who wrote the book *The Konyak Naga yesterday and today*.⁹⁷

When the Earth was still relatively young, people moved about and lived in different locations according to where they could best ensure their continued existence. During this period, people were constantly moving from one location to another. The Naga people were no exception; they moved about quite a bit until arriving at their current location, which is characterized by several hills and valleys. There are a number of tales and oral traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation in relation to the origin of the Naga people, since there are no written records of their history. One item, on the other hand, is quite widespread, and the majority of people agree with it and find reasons to accept it. The eastern region of the planet seems to be where the Nagas originated. According to E.A. Gait, "all Nagas belong to the tibeto-chinese" and arrived in the region known as Meikhel from the people of Mongolia between the years 10 and 12 B.C. Naga hills various tribes have different versions or traditions surrounding the spread of Nagas Meikhel with respect to the origin,

⁹⁷Bennison, J.F. 1993: *Notes on the origin, customs and sub-tribes of certain Naga tribes inhabiting the Burma side of patkai range*. Census of India 1931, Burma, reports, Vol. II, pt. I. Rangoon, Govt. publication, Pp. 78- 227.

although a large number of Nagas think that their forefathers arrived from a point somewhere far North, in modern-day China.

The name "Nagas," which is used to refer to a family of races that are all related to one another, did not become widely used in this region of the world until after the arrival of the British. Regardless of whatever explanation for its origin you choose to believe, this fact does not change the fact that "Nagas." The Nagas is fortunate to be surrounded by such stunning mountains and to be gifted with an abundance of natural and organic resources. The concept that all Nagas belong to the same tribe was held by many people who were not Naga. 17 different tribes may be found throughout the various areas that make up the state of Nagaland and the Naga Hills. The following are some of the most prominent Naga tribes: Sumi, Angami, Ao, Lotha, Konyak, Rengma, Zaliang, Yimchunger, Tiker, Pochury, Mao, Phom, and Khimigun, among others. The customs and traditions of each tribe are distinct from one another, as are the corresponding languages and dialects spoken by its members. Festivals in Naga are celebrated with a variety of dances, music, and unusual foods. It is said that Nagaland is regarded as the country of festivals; the Naga people are naturally inclined toward music, and as a result, one would discover that every Naga is capable of singing, even those with impairments. Nagas have always been rural people, and each village has its independent administration. This implies that the government of the village has absolute power inside its borders and is immune to the jurisdiction of any other entity outside of the village. With the establishment of the Naga club (N.C) in 1918 and the Naga National Council (N.N.C) as a unified Naga political organization on February 2, 1946, it is possible to declare that each of the tribes that are uniquely defined as Ao, Angami, Sumi, and Konyak, among others, became increasingly apparent.⁹⁸

Before its independence in 1947, the area currently known as Nagaland was a district under the state of Assam called "Naga Hills." From December 15, 1947, until February 18, 1961, it was known as the Naga Hills Tuensang Area and was placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The prime minister of India and the convention leaders of the Naga people reached a 16-point agreement in which India officially acknowledged Nagaland as a separate state within its borders. The Indian Prime Minister has signed this document. Accordingly, in 1961, Nagaland was placed under the Nagaland regulation, which mandated the establishment of an interim committee with 45 members selected by various tribes in line with their respective customs, traditions, and uses. This was done following the Nagaland regulation. On November 30, 1993, the interim body was terminated as an

⁹⁸ Bhattacharjee, Jayanta Bhusan, 1977: *social and political institution of the angami Nagas. Proceedings of a seminar on "social and political institutions"* NEICSSR, July 4-5. Calcutta, anthropological survey of India (in press)., Pp. 15-90.

organization. In January of 1964, the citizens of Nagaland participated in general elections for the very first time, and on February 11 of the same year, the Nagaland Legislative Assembly was legally established. These events occurred concurrently. Oral history was the only form of Naga history that existed in the past since there were no written records or histories of the Naga people. This enabled the Naga moral code to be preserved and transmitted down through the ages. giant log drums, giant husking tables, mega beer vats, etc., were commonplace in their enormously sized material civilization. The Naga people have a unique cultural history in that each of them was carved from a single tree trunk using only simple hand tools.

In addition, each of the tribes has its own distinct culture, set of values, and method of political organization. An example of the cultural diversity that exists in such a compact region is the autocracy practiced by the Konyak people. In this society, "commoners" are not even allowed to stand up straight when they are in the presence of the chief. It is fascinating that such a wide variety of political structures can exist within such a tiny territory. On a scale that is somewhat less important, we have the chief of the Sumi (Sema) tribe, which was where the word of the chief was still regarded as law. After that, there is something of a republican system inside the Ao tribe, complete with elections, and ultimately, there is a true democracy within the Angami tribe, in which the pursuit of agreement was the norm, and election based on the choice of the majority was unheard of.

Nagaland's population has a rich and varied cultural heritage. Traditional Naga communities relied on their members' innate skills in areas like basketry, pottery, gardening, spinning and weaving, carving, dying, and metalwork to sustain themselves. The folk art that is created from traditional clothes is a vital and alive part of each Naga tribe's ethnic identity, since it reflects the distinctive cultural history of that tribe. The traditional clothing is a wonderful illustration of how new ideas may be integrated with time-honored customs.⁹⁹

The customs and traditions of each of Nagaland's 17 main tribes, as well as the smaller sub-tribes, are one-of-a-kind and different, and these traditions and customs are ethically represented in the way each of the tribes' dresses. The inhabitants, particularly the women, are credited with having made significant contributions to the growth of the handloom industry in the area via their traditional clothing and dressing practices. Members of the Naga tribe also wear garments whose patterns and colors convey symbolic meaning and cultural identity. Alluding to their history as headhunters, these signs now serve as crucial indicators of social status. Jewelry is more than just an individual ornament; it also conveys information about a person's

⁹⁹ Bhattacharya, Ajit Kumar, 1973. *Political evolution of Nagaland (1945-1965)*. Calcutta; Book trust, Pp 274.

social and economic position. The blending of traditional Naga culture with Western ways of living is now a daily occurrence in the region of Nagaland known as Nagaland.

THE GOOD CULTURE OF NAGA'S

The Naga tribes undoubtedly have intriguing tales, and the legacies have been passed down from one generation to the next (going back centuries) up to the present day. The Naga people have always shown their village elders respect, affection, and obedience, and this behaviour has been passed down through the generations and continues to this day. The traditional garb worn by Naga people reveals a lot about their origin and the spiritual significance of their culture. In addition to being powerful and brave warriors, they have a rich history that may be shared. Their music and dance also feature the praising, triumphs, and recounting of battles that their ancestors fought a very long time ago.¹⁰⁰

In conclusion, the synthesis of a study investigating the complex and contested origins of the Naga people. It challenges simplistic, monolithic narratives imposed by colonial outsiders and instead presents a history defined by a complex interplay of migrations, inter-tribal exchanges, and localized adaptations. The research methodology relies heavily on Indigenous-centered historiography, prioritizing the analysis of oral traditions, folk songs, and cultural practices to counter the biases found in colonial records.

The details the significant challenges in this research, including the lack of written records, the diversity of Naga tribes (over 16 major groups with distinct languages and myths), and the political implications of origin stories for modern Naga nationalism. It provides a detailed ethnographic overview, discussing traditional governance systems (from autocratic chiefs to more democratic structures), economic activities (terrace farming, salt production), social customs (marriage, gender roles), and material culture (log drums, textiles).

A significant portion is dedicated to exploring the uncertain etymology of the term "Naga," concluding it was an exonym (a name given by outsiders) that only gained widespread use during the British colonial period. The chapter traces historical interactions with neighboring groups like the Ahoms and provides specific case studies, such as the origin and migration myths of the Sumi tribe. Ultimately, the study argues that Naga identity is not a single, unified story but a tapestry of diverse yet interconnected tribal histories.

Findings

¹⁰⁰Interview with Dr. Hotokhu on 14/05/2018.

1. **Rejection of Monolithic Narratives:** The primary finding is that there is no single, unified origin story for the Naga people. Their history is not one of a homogeneous group but of multiple tribes with diverse migration paths and cultural evolutions.
2. **Centrality of Oral Tradition:** The research confirms that oral history (folk songs, tales, legends) is the cornerstone of Naga cultural transmission and historiography. These narratives, while sometimes fragmented, are essential for understanding their past in the absence of written records.
3. **The "Naga" Identity is an Exonym:** The term "Naga" was not a self-designation. Evidence suggests it was a label applied by outsiders (e.g., from the Burmese word "Naka" or Greek records of "Nagalok") and only became a widespread umbrella term during the British colonial era. Historically, people identified primarily with their specific tribe (e.g., Sumi, Angami, Konyak).
4. **Complex Migration Patterns:** The study finds that migration theories are varied and not mutually exclusive. Oral traditions and scholarly hypotheses point to origins and migrations from multiple directions:

-From the North/Northeast (China/Mongolia): Supported by linguistic (Tibeto-Burman languages) and physical traits (Mongoloid stock).

-From the East (Myanmar/Southeast Asia): Suggested by cultural similarities with Indonesian and Malay tribes.

-From the South: A theory mentioned by some early ethnologists.

5. **Diversity in Unity:** A key finding is the extreme cultural and linguistic diversity among Naga tribes (e.g., villages often speak mutually unintelligible dialects). However, this diversity is balanced by common social structures, ritual practices, and a shared sense of distinction from their plains-dwelling neighbors.
6. **Historical Interactions and Conflict:** The Nagas had significant, often conflict-ridden, interactions with neighboring societies long before British rule, most notably with the Ahom kingdom in Assam from the 13th century onwards. These interactions involved trade, tribute, and territorial disputes.
7. **Varied Political Systems:** The research highlights the diversity of traditional political organization, which ranged from:

-Autocracy: Hereditary chiefs with absolute authority (e.g., Konyak, Sumi).

-Republican systems: With elected leaders (e.g., Ao).

-True Democracy: Governance based on consensus and village councils (e.g., Angami).

8. Colonial Impact and Bias: Early colonial records and ethnographies, while valuable, are often biased and oversimplified. They were frequently written by military administrators and missionaries who faced language barriers and whose observations were shaped by a colonial worldview.
9. Cultural Richness and Adaptation: The study documents a rich material and non-material culture, including sophisticated terrace farming, textile production, blacksmithing, and a vibrant tradition of music, dance, and storytelling. It also notes the ongoing dynamic of cultural change and adaptation to modern influences.
10. Need for Future Interdisciplinary Research: The chapter concludes that future research must be interdisciplinary, combining oral history with new methods like genetic anthropology (DNA analysis) and comparative ethnolinguistics to trace lineages and connections more accurately across the Tibeto-Burman region.

Outcomes

- A comprehensive comparative record of oral traditions and cultural practices among key Naga tribes.
- Preservation of indigenous narratives for future generations.
- Insights into the dynamics of cultural change and continuity.
- Contribution to broader discussions on indigenous identity, heritage preservation, and tribal studies in India.

Future Research Directions

1. Comparative Studies: Link Naga migrations to broader Tibeto-Burman ethnolinguistic movements (e.g., Konyak ties to communities in Myanmar).
2. Genetic Anthropology: Use DNA analysis to trace lineage patterns across tribes (e.g., recent studies on Northeast Indian haplogroups).

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