

**BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AND
CHRISTIANITY IN NAGALAND:
Social and Cultural Impact upto 1955.**

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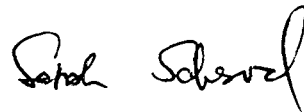
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CERTIFICATE

This Dissertation entitled "BRITISH
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Social and Cultural Impact upto 1955" by Mr.
Longri Chang Ao for the Degree of Master of
Philosophy is an original work and has not
been previously submitted for any other
Degree of this or any University.

We recommend this Dissertation be placed
before the examiners for evaluation.



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PREFACE

Even though it is not possible to say much about the history of Naga people before colonial arrival, we know that the Naga tribes have had a rich culture. Each clan of the tribe had its own beautiful culture, yet there was close affinity between the traits of different clans. Nagas were long famous as head-hunters, looking for the heads of their neighbour villagers. Thousands of former head-hunters are still alive. With the tremendous changes that have been witnessed through the years, and the new social changes, the Nagas have started learning to live together and perhaps that may be regarded as the first noticeable step of progress in Nagaland. The general notion of the changes in the socio-cultural and religious life of the people is often attributed to the spread of Christianity. This study aims at presenting an overall assessment of the impact of Christianity on the Naga people.

At the outset, a word of explanation about the origin of the word 'Naga'. Nagas are very proud of being Naga. They would rather be called Naga than 'tribal'. R.R. Shimray, in his book, Origin and Culture of Naga, uses the term 'Nagaism', to refer to the Naga cultural pride. The term 'Naga' includes the various tribes of the present state of Nagaland, the tribes Noete, Wancho, and Tangsa in Arunachal Pradesh and their congeners in Manipur State and Soma tracts

of Burma.¹ In spite of a political system wherein a sense of sovereignty went down to the village unit, and a multiplicity of languages, those tribes have long had something in common.

Alemchiba Ao, discusses at length the various theories about the origin of the word 'Naga' and the general consensus is that the word Naga was given to them by the plains Assamese people to mean naked hill people. As a matter of fact, the word Naga has remained a terror to the Assamese till recently.² When the Colonial power occupied Assam, they simply adopted the Assamese word, 'Naga'. In the pre-Colonial period there is no evidence that the hills people knew themselves as "Nagas". Alemchiba says that till recently, he has come across people of Tuensang "rarely speaking of themselves as Nagas, but as Chang, Konyaks, Phoms, and so on".³ And even today people feel closer to others of their own tribe than with other Nagas. We may note that the Nagas use the tribe's name as if it were a family name.

In the first chapter we shall review the Naga traditional society. It was a simple village society. Its social activities were confined to its own particular village.

1. R.R. Shimray: Origin and Culture of Naga, 1985, pp. 249-66.

2. Alemchiba Ao: A brief historical account of Nagaland 1970, p. 21.

3. Ibid, p. 24.

Certain aspects of Naga social life, particularly head-hunting, Feast of Merit, Morung, and their religious beliefs, would be examined.

The monographs of J.H. Hutton, The Angami Naga and The Sema-Naga and J.P. Mills, The Ao Naga, and The Rengma-Naga though anthropological studies yet have historical importance. Similarly, Furer-Haimendorf The Naked Naga writes about the social customs of the Nagas in general. R.R. Shimray's recent work, Origin and Culture of Nagas provides useful information for the discussion of particularly Morung and Feast of Merit. We shall examine the Naga traditional society on the basis of these sources.

In Chapters 2 and 3, we shall examine the coming of, and the conversion process to, Christianity. In the beginning the pace of conversions was slow. However from 1930s on, conversions picked up tempo and hit a climax during World war II in Kohima district, and during the political turmoil in the 1950s in all over Nagaland.

Christianity has been synonymous with school work. The government left the school work with the mission, concentrating itself on political control and the administration.

The study of the working of the mission suffers from a scarcity of source material. First of all American Baptist Mission does not maintain any archives in India.

The Impur mission station, the first in Naga Hills, could have provided the necessary information, but the material was reportedly lost in a fire in 1919.

Dr. F.S. Downs The Mighty works of God deals with the Church history of the Northeast in general, his account is not adequate for Nagaland. Reverend Kijung Ao, Nokinketer Mongchen (in Ao dialect), mainly deals with Ao Churches. Moreover, since his book is in regional dialect, it cannot be read by outsiders. The growth of Baptist Churches in Chakhesang Naga tribe, by Reverend Phuveyi Dozo provides fairly good information with regard to the Chakhesang area. The recently published work, Baptist Missions in Nagaland by Joseph Puthenpurakal certainly gives deeper insight on the subject. Puthenpurakal could utilize the archives of the American Baptist Historical Society, Rochester, New York and of the Baptist International Ministries, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania pertaining to mission work in Nagaland.

Chapter 4 deals with the British occupation of Naga hills. This study does not try to go into details about the British occupation. It only seeks to examine the influence of British administration on the Naga socio-cultural life. The British did not try to rule the Naga hills in a European model of administration nor did they apply the Indian system of administration. They adopted a new administrative system which would suit the Nagas' own situation.

For the British occupation of Naga Hills, there is no lack of source materials. However, Nagaland being a restricted area, files pertaining to Naga Hills District from 1915 to 1947 which have not been transferred from External Affairs ministry were not available to me. Nevertheless, Foreign Department files from 1832 to 1913 were made available in National Archives of India.

In addition to these files, there are a number of published works Anglo-Assamese Relations by S.K. Bhuyan and History of the Assam Frontier area bordering on Assam by Robert Reid are basically compilations of various administrative reports over the years.

Chapter 5 is the overall view of this study. It examines the socio-cultural impact of British rule and of the mission on the Naga people. With the introduction of modern education along with Christianity, the Nagas came into contact with the outside world.

The extension of British rule further to the interior area and the formation of different Church associations have been powerful forces for the unification of Naga tribes.

Chapter I

NAGA TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

The study of Naga tribal society is a matter of great detail. There are 14 major tribes in Nagaland. To understand them better each tribe needed to be examined carefully. Dr. J.H. Hutton, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills District and J.P. Mills, Sub-Divisional Officer, Mokokchung (SDO), used the terms "Ao country" "Angami Country", "Lotha Country", "Sema Country" and so on in their writings.¹ The use of this term separately for each tribe indicates that it was necessary to understand each tribe more closely. In this limited study it is not possible to go into all details about the Naga traditional society. Nevertheless it would be necessary at the outset to have a general idea about the Naga society.

In the distant past Naga traditional society was basically a village society. Their sort of government and other social activities were for the general interest of their own particular village. The Nagas are rice eaters Their main occupation was agriculture. Both extensive and intensive² rice cultivation were practised.

1. J.H. Hutton, The Angami Naga, (1921); The Sema Naga (1921). Mills, The Ao-Naga, (1926). The Lotha Naga; The Rengma Naga (1926).

2. 'Extensive' means shifting cultivation and 'intensive' means terrace cultivation. The term extensive is used because it extended to a wide area. The terms 'jhum' or 'slash and burn' are also used in other places for the same.

"Nagas were known for paucity of their wear".³ Each tribe had its own dresses. In the main, it was not more than a loin cloth wrapped around one's waist. Trade transaction in a limited manner was carried on in barter system.⁴ The whole village followed a common mode of life. On the whole the Naga village society was simple. It was through British rule and the mission that the Naga society emerged into a "period of transition". In this study we shall examine some important aspects of social and cultural life of the people.

1. Head-hunting:

The Nagas were known to the outside world for their head-hunting. When the British occupied the Naga hills area, the main concern of the administration was to check the Naga head-hunting raids. In the beginning the British attention was attracted by constant Naga raids at their frontiers.⁵

The Naga logic of head-hunting was that the head of the enemy would add to the fertility of the soil; whenever human sacrifice was made, the harvest, it is said, was excellent. "The most important factor for waging war," says Shimray, "was however, the Naga tradition that

3. Ghosh, The history of Nagaland, 1982, p. 209.

4. Ibid, p. 248.

5. Assam Judicial Proceeding, June 1866, nos. 133-34, (National Archives of India) (N.A.I.).

a man could not climb the ladder of social recognition till he brought enemy heads, particularly the long hair of women to enrich the soil.⁶ This seems to indicate that, to climb up the social ladder, they would go rampant for head-huntings. However, without a just cause, the Nagas would wage no war with others. Whenever the boundary between two villages was violated, or when a woman was divorced and sent back to her village without reasonable cause, the offended villagers would declare war on the offenders.⁷ After the declaration of war, they would not go and attack treacherously in secret. The message of war would be sent through a friendly third party that "on such and such a day we would raid your village"

It is said that once Chuchu village sent the war message to Aonokpu saying that on the sixth day from then, their village would be raided for a certain reason. But Aonokpu being a Mongsen speaking village and Chuchu a Chongli speaking village, the message did not come across. Therefore Aonokpu people were not aware of the raid. Anyway, on the sixth day Chuchu raided Aonokpu and took away 90 heads and burnt the village to the ground. Since then the Aonokpu have never improved their village. It was believed that Chuchu raid was a deadly blow.⁸ Because of this till

6. Shimray: Origin and Culture of Nagas, 1986, p. 72.

7. Shimray; op.cit, p. 73.

8. Tajen Ao recorded that there were only 40 houses in Aonokpu in 1890. Tajen Ao, Christianity versus Ao Naga, 1984, p. 73.

recently Aonokpu people did not intermarry with those of Chuchu. However with the coming of Christianity this kind of age old ill-feeling has been removed, and the people became friendly for the sake of Christ. Thus the Naga head-hunting was normally done in daylight and in a straightforward manner.

Concerning head-hunting among the Ao and the Lotha, Verrier Elwin wrote:

It stimulated the crop to grow better, especially when the head was that of a woman with long hair. Moreover the Nagas have always been a warlike race and the warrior, especially the young warrior, who had taken a head held a great advantage over his fellows in attracting the most beautiful girl of his village for marriage. Indeed, it is said that youth who had not taken a head found considerable difficulty in obtaining a wife at all.⁹

Two essential factors determined social recognition in Naga society - who gathered more heads and who performed the feast of merit.¹⁰ These two factors were interrelated: only one who could gather enemy heads could perform the feast of merit. A man who brought in a few heads would be given the title 'warrior' and was entitled to wear a special type of shawl imprinted with the human skull which the commoners were not permitted to wear. He was then given a special seat at social functions.

9. Verrier Elwin: Nagas in the Nineteenth Century, 1969.

10. Shimray: op.cit., p. 73.

Seen from a later generation, certainly the Naga head-hunting sounds savage and barbarous. But in their given social situation it was just the way they lived. The Nagas never thought that their head-hunting was something bad. It was a source of prestige for an individual and for his village at large. They lived with it through the generations. Modern man can appreciate such smaller traditions only in their own social context.

2. Feast of Merit.

In Naga traditional society Feast of Merit played so important a role that their social life was incomplete without it. Shimray says: "If we travel through the unrecorded pages of Naga history, we shall find that the core of Naga life was full of competitions and challenges of which feast of merit was the highest form"¹¹ The competition for social honour was so high that those who performed a series of feast of merit were esteemed socially high. Thus according to Shimray "it can be called feast of Honour".¹²

It was performed in a series of ceremonies.¹³ The series ran upto 14 stages. A person who could reach this last stage would have been hard-working and would have acquired

11. Shimray, op.cit., p. 118.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p. 117.

a huge amount of wealth. "Great is the cost of the sacrificed animals and of the food required even for the first feasts, expense increases with every stage, and only few men ever complete the full series".¹⁴

Tradition says that when a person performed the 14th stage he would have literally used up all his wealth.

The procedure of the ceremony of the feast of merit was elaborate.¹⁵ We need not go into all the details. However a brief description about the social importance of the feast of merit would be necessary.

The philosophy of the feast of merit was partly to show generosity in sharing one's wealth with others but mostly it was the competitive spirit to climb the ladder of social recognition.¹⁶ In the feast, the donor gave without reservation. It was said that the feast of merit was the time for the donor to open his house and barn widely. It was the time for wealth to flow like from a fountain. "Wealthy men have set them up to commemorate their fame and generosity, and to enhance in a magical way the fertility of their fields".¹⁷

14. Fürer Haimendorf, The Naked Naga, 1939, p. 19.

15. For details of procedure for Nagas in general, please see Shimray, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-120. Also Mills, The Ao Naga, pp. 370-396.

16. Shimray: op.cit., p. 117.

17. Fürer Haimendorf, *op.cit.*, p.19.

In the traditional society, by dint of hard work and valour a person earned his place in society. A young man by his hard work became worthy of his choice girl in the village. Similarly, a father of many girls would certainly become rich because of so many hard-working future sons-in-law. This kind of situation provided an atmosphere of competition in Naga traditional society. The competition to earn social recognition never ended till death. Though the feast of merit was limited to married persons¹⁸ the younger generation also aspired for it. After two or three series of the feasts, the donors were entitled to display horns on their house which was "the highest symbol of glory and prestige".¹⁹ Mills says:

It is the ambition of every Ao to proceed as far as he can in the series and thereby gain for himself honour both in this life and after death, and for his clan and village the favour of the spirits and the prosperity (aren) of great men of the past. He wins, too, thereby the coveted right of wearing certain cloths and ornaments and of decorating his house in a particular way, and the skulls of the sacrificed animals hanging in the outer room bring prosperity not only to him, but to his heirs who inherit them after him.²⁰

Such was the social status which the people cherished and for which they strove in the traditional society.

18. Mills: The Ao-Naga, 1973, p. 257.

19. Fürer Haimendorf, op.cit., p. 19.

20. Mills: The Ao Naga, p. 257.

Generosity on the part of donor in the feast of merit is beyond doubt. At the same time, it also shows that the social system did not permit anyone to become excessively rich. It was said that a person who was rich enough to perform at least one feast of merit but do not perform it was considered "selfish". Thus the society had control over the individual's wealth through this public system.

With the advent of Christianity, the importance of the feast of merit dwindled, and it appears to have been replaced by the Christmas festival. It later became a common practice in Ao area that every year a family would entertain the whole village community on Christmas day.

3. Morung:

The Aos call it 'Arichu', the Angami call it 'Kichuki', the Lotha call it 'Jambo' and so on. It was the only social institution where the youngsters were instructed in their social responsibilities. Hutton and Mills described the institution; later writers used the terms "Dormitory" or "bachelors" house" for the same Morung. However the institution of "Morung" had been more than just 'Dormitory' or "bachelors" house" in traditional society. The mission

understood the significance of 'Morung'. They replaced the older terms with the term 'room' for both boys and girls growing up in the Christian faith. Each room would be left in the charge of one Church elder. Every night scripture would be read and the prayer meeting conducted. In this manner Christian faith was imparted to the youngsters.

In Naga village society where the village was engaged in constant war, the Morung served a social necessity. In the Morung all young men, say in their early youth till they were married, slept together as a social custom.²¹ Apart from learning and teaching the discipline of life Morung served the security of the village. The young people in Morung kept vigil throughout the night, guarding the village by turn against the enemies.²² Naga handicrafts have their origin in Morung. The most beautiful handicrafts, like basket or skillful wood carving, come from Morung. Obedience and discipline was the watch word in Morung. The juniors were taught manners, obedience and discipline. Family pride and personal arrogance had no place in the Morung. One emphasis in Naga social life was the respect to the

21. Tajen Ao: Ao Naga Customary Laws, 1980, p. 14.

22. Shimray: op.cit., p. 195.

elders. The youngster learned to respect his elders, and the elders treated him in like manner. The Moring prepared a young man to be a responsible social being in every way.

In this tough Naga society of the past where menfolk often fought wars and at other time ringed tigers or wild pigs, the women's dormitory might not have been so important. Nevertheless it had its own role. Like the young men as soon as the young women reached a certain age, they entered the dormitory and stayed there till they married. There they learned the art of life for themselves from the senior women. They learned there the art of weaving of various kinds, embroidery and design work, and other handicrafts. Naga women with their simple traditional loom made beautiful shawls with blended colors just to match their mode of life.

Being Naga himself, a product of Naga traditional society, Shimray describes the girls' dormitory life beautifully:

The young girls learned there, social behaviour, manners and obedience. They learned many more things from the seniors which their parents could not tell them. In the days' hard work or in the family affairs, the girl might have got some disappointment or problems. The moment she reached the

school, however, her mood was changed in the company of her friends and the young boys who would have already arrived there to study their minds and characters. She had to adjust herself to the changed environment; from a smaller family to the much bigger family of groups of girls who would be there till marriage separated them. She might have been leading a very secluded life in the family, but in the community life in the dormitory, she would forget all her woes and sufferings. She might have the tendency of doing wrong things in her private family life but the time she spent in the school amidst her friends would make her conscious of her shortcomings and anything bad that might have crept into her character would gradually melt away. Here in the dormitory the way was paved for her future responsibility as a mother.²³

4. Religious beliefs:

In approaching the religious beliefs of the Nagas, one is met by an obstacle of great difficulty. They believed in and worshipped almost everything under the sun. This makes the subject so vast. Commenting on Angami Naga religious beliefs, Hutton wrote:

In common with other savage races the Angami regards the supernatural in general from a point of view that is sublimely vague. So vague is his idea of the deities and spiritual beings in which he believes that he makes no attempt whatever to reproduce in carving or in picture the mental image which he forms of them, if indeed any clear formation takes place in his mind.²⁴

23. Ibid, p. 119.

24. Hutton, The Angami Naga, p. 177.

However, Hutton categorically observes that the Angami was no "idolator". "Polytheist pantheist he may be, but he is no idolator".²⁵

Hutton and Mills have discussed all aspects of Naga religion in great detail. It is impossible to discuss all about Naga religion in my limited study. We can only appreciate Hutton and Mills for their great pioneering work. This study is only an attempt to examine what Nagas really believe.

Deities and Spirits:

A Naga had some idea about a supernatural power which controlled his fate. The presence of this supernatural power was felt by him so deeply that he would "perform necessary sacrifices".²⁶ This belief encompassed every aspect of life of the Naga people.

For instance, the Ao made a sacrifice just before the sowing for a good crop²⁷ and observed one day's 'Genna'.²⁸ Though the Nagas had their own herbal medicines, all sickness was attributed generally to the spirit of

25. Ibid.

26. Mills: The Ao Naga, p. 215.

27. Tajen Ao, op. cit., p. 87.

28. 'Genna' has been used widely among the Naga tribes. Most probably this word has Assamee origin. We could not find any similar words in the Naga languages. The word Genna denotes slightly different meaning among different tribes in usages. In general it is understood as the prohibition of some activity. For example during agriculture Genna no one in the village should go to the field.

sickness. In case of illness, an Ao would offer sacrifice after sacrifice in order to appease the spirit.²⁹ Likewise, the Nagas believed that every object had some sort of spirit which interfered in their life in one way or the other. Describing sacred stones, Mills says, "no one spits or jabs his spear into the ground when passing the stone, and if disturbed it is likely to bring on a bad storm".³⁰ In this case they had to offer worship to the boulders. Thus the boulders' worship was common all over Naga country. Mills noted about a huge boulder in Changkikong range between Waromung and Dibulia villages, called Changchanglung. Every year a dog was offered by Waromung to Changchanglung.³¹ In this way many sacrifices were offered to the spirits according to the particular spirit's place in the hierarchy of spirits.

How did the Nagas personify the spirits in which they believed?

The supreme deity who brings weather and seasons for humankind on earth is itself known as 'Aning Tsungba'

29. Mills: The Ao Naga, p. 232.

30. Ibid., p. 217.

31. Ibid. It is said that in the 1960s, when the government opened a High School in the area near Changchanglung, the area's evil spirit used to harass the students in dormitory at night. Sometime hailstones would fall on the roof but never pass through. ~~At~~ Another time the sound of military was heard marching around the place. Yet another time boys sleeping in the dormitory would be knocked off their sleeping benches, it is said, by invisible hands, or even carried bodily outside.

(Lord of the Sky) in Ao country. It resides in the sky. Hutton's description about Kepenopfu in Angami country seems to correspond with 'Aning Tsangba' in Ao. Hutton says: "The dwelling-place of Kepenopfu is always located in the sky, and the souls of those who have lived good lives, according to the Angami standard that is, go to the sky after death and dwell with her".³² Similarly among the Sema the spirit of the sky is called 'Kungumi'.³³

The second great deity among the Ao is called 'Lijaba'. He is the creator of the earth. The creation story of Lijaba runs thus. He created the plains first. While he was still creating it, a water-beetle called out, "Enemies are upon you". So Lijaba could not finish the creation, he had to run away. The unfinished portion is the Ao country,³⁴ they believed. This creation story has no mention about the creation of man. Therefore there must have been someone who created man. Interestingly enough, there is hardly any mention about the creation of man or the origin of man in their traditional beliefs. In Naga religion, no one asked where did man come from?

32. Tajen Ao, op.cit., p.7.

33. Hutton, op.cit. p. 181. Hutton says that the literal meaning of Kepenopfu is 'birth spirit'. He suggests that the Kepenopfu might also be regarded as the ancestress of animals.

34. Mills: The Ao Naga, p. 220.

The Angami Kepenopfi seems to imply some idea about the creation of man but it only implies the ancestor or ancestress actually.

In Sema country "Alhou" was regarded as the creator God. Hutton finds it close to the western idea of supreme God. According to Hutton "Alhou" is a "beneficent but somewhat remote creator interfering little in the affairs of men".³⁵

According to this belief 'Alhou' is a creator God. However this does not tell us what 'Alhou' really created. We can presume that 'Alhou' was the creator of the heavens and the earth.

Phoveyi Dozo says that "there was a common idea of a High God, dispenser of everything." "This God was called 'Chepo-o' the owner of everything"³⁶ among the Chakhesang. Dozo notes that no worship was offered to him.³⁷

These were the spirits who were revered more than many others. There were numerous other lesser spirits,

35. Hutton: The Angami Naga, p. 191.

36. Phoveyi Dozo (Reverend): The growth of Baptist Churches in Chakhesang Naga Tribe 1978, p. 24-25. Presently Dozo is the General Secretary of Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC).

37. Ibid.

some benevolent and others malevolent. They were too many to name here. The spirits had their abodes in trees, stones, rivers, mountains and in unknown places. These deities were not worshipped but were feared. Offerings were made to appease them.

Priesthood as an institution was absent in Naga traditional religion. Mills says "the Ao knows nothing of any priestly caste, or priesthood upon which special powers have been conferred by consecration".³⁸ The oldest man in the village performed the religious ceremony. Except some portion of the animal which had been killed for the occasion, the priest was not a beneficiary from the ceremony formally. He performed his duties as the occasion arose.³⁹

A Naga might not know what this spirit was that he revered, yet he accepted it deeply, and this belief governed every aspect of his life. As Mills says:

this does not mean that he is a devil-ridden, terrified wretch, unable to distinguish right from wrong He cheerfully performs the necessary sacrifices, and hopes for the best. When the inevitable day comes at last on which offerings for sickness are no longer of any avail he meets his end with resignation and, unafraid, goes to join his forefathers.⁴⁰

38. Mills, The Ao Naga, p. 243.

39. Tajen Ao, op.cit. p.1.

40. Mills, The Ao Naga, p.215.

Chapter II

ADVENT OF CHRISTIANITY

In his book Baptist Missions in Nagaland, Joseph Puthenpurakal discusses at length the origin of the Baptists their doctrine and beliefs. In Nagaland, the American Baptists pioneered the Christian Mission, and the Baptist Church dominates the scene. At the beginning Roman Catholic Mission was not accepted by the people favourably.¹ In this chapter we shall examine the beginning of gospel work in Nagaland.

Adoniram Judson and his wife Ann Hasseltine belonged to the Congregational Church in Plymouth, Massachusetts, USA. They were commissioned by the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Mission to come to India on February 19, 1812. In India the Judsons were convinced by Baptist doctrine and beliefs and their world Mission view. While staying in Calcutta, the Judsons decided to follow Baptist doctrine and beliefs and indicated their desire to Dr. William Carey. At the same time they informed the Home Board of their decision to become Baptist. On September 6, 1812, Sunday, Adoniram Judson and his wife Ann Hasseltine were given water baptism² in Lal Bazar Chapel, Calcutta by Rev. William Ward.

-
1. Much later the Catholic Mission could establish their mission in Wokha district and Kohima district. Still there has been reservation among the Nagas in other parts of Nagaland toward Catholic Mission.
 2. 'Baptism' is an act of immersion in water to show publicly that one believes in or accepts Christ personally.

This act is taken by some to mark the beginning of American Baptist Foreign Mission in India.³ On June 22, 1813, the Judsons left for Burma.

While in Burma, they extended their mission vision to Shan tribe of South China and to the hill tribes between Burma and Assam. The Burma Mission attempted to enter Assam, but due to the mountainous terrain and thick forest they could not succeed. The next event in the history of Christianity in Nagaland is in the 1830s. At the instance of Major F. Jenkins, the Commissioner of Assam, Gauhati, a small Mission station was established at Sadiya, Assam.⁴ The Baptist group in Calcutta, thinking that it would be more feasible to open a new mission station in Assam, invited Judsons and their Burma mission to take up the job. Judsons were only too happy to take the opportunity of open door mission field in Assam. The new mission station in Assam would mean to Judson an opportunity to preach the gospel to hill tribes between Assam and Burma and ultimately to the Shan tribe of China which the American Baptist Mission was trying to reach since some time back. In 1836, Rev. Nathan Brown and O.T. Cutter, who had been working in Burma, were appointed by the

3. Kijung Ao, Nokinketer Mongchen, 1972, p. 4 (in Ao-Naga dialect).

4. For Deptt. Pol- A, Aug. 1840, No. 93 (N.A.I.).

American Baptist Foreign Mission Board to work at Sadiya.⁵
 At this time the political situation in Assam was not favourable for the mission work. The old Ahom Kingdom was disintegrating. The political unrest prevailed all over Assam plains. The missionaries tried to open "school among the tribal"⁶ but these people were constantly attacking plains people therefore they could not succeed. Consequently, they had to concentrate their work in the plains. More missionaries were demanded in Assam. Two missionary families Rev. & Mrs. Jacob Thomas and Rev. & Mrs. Miles Bronson were appointed to work in Assam by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Just before they arrived at Sadiya, Rev. Thomas was killed while travelling during a storm in a small boat. The Bronsons and the rest arrived at Sadiya on July 17, 1837.⁷

The political situation in Assam continued to be tense. So the mission station was shifted from Sadiya to Jaipur (in north-eastern Assam) in 1840. Dr. Downs observes that this new mission station had been established with a view to revive the Shan Mission of China

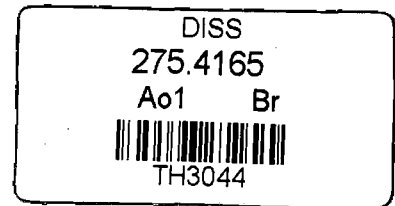
5. Those days it was thought that Assam and Burma had a close affinity in language and culture. Therefore it was reasonable for the American Baptist Mission Board to ask Judson and his Burma mission to take up the Assam field. From the time the mission station was established in Assam we do not hear much about Judson and his Burma mission. This indicates the Burma mission itself was not successful from then on. No written record is available about Judson and his Burma mission.
6. Later on Kijung Ao and Dr. Downs both found that these tribals were Singpho, Khampti and Abhor.
7. Puthenpurakal p. 50. Also 1972, p. 8-9. Baptist Missions in Nagaland, 1984, Kijung Ao, Nokinketer Mongchen;

and to make a bridge between Assam and Burma. In Jaipur, Rev. Bronson was interested to work among the Nagas. There he met a group of Nagas from Namasangia village, south-east of Jaipur (today part of Tirap district, Arunachal Pradesh), and talked with them about the possibility of his visit to their village. During his first visit Bronson was suspected of being an agent of East India Company.⁸ Later on, the doubt was removed and the Bronsons moved into Namsangia village on March 14, 1840 - which, for some, became the day marking the beginning of the Naga Mission.

In Namsangia the Bronsons' zeal met with great difficulties. They continued in ill-health. Bronson's sister Rhoda Bronson got seriously ill. They took her to Jaipur for treatment. In Jaipur, after a few days of sickness Miss Bronson passed away. The Bronsons could not return to Namsangia again. Meanwhile the mission station was again shifted from Jaipur to Sibsagar in the Brahmaputra valley. Thus the hope of preaching the gospel among the tribals between Assam and Burma was interrupted.

8. , Kijung Aoj, op. cit., p. 11.

In this first visit Bronson was kept outside the village for 7 days on the pretext that there was no good drinking water available in the village. In fact they were not willing to bring the white man into the village.

The Naga Mission:

To follow up Bronson's work in Namsangia or to evangelise the Nagas, practically nothing was done for a full generation until Rev. (Dr.) E.W. Clark arrived at Sibsagar Mission Station in March 1869.

Until then almost the whole of north-eastern Naga hills was not under British jurisdiction. Therefore, it did not encourage missionaries to venture into the hills.⁹ On November 6, 1872, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Sibsagar replied to Dr. Clark that he was not allowed to go to Naga hills: "not to give permission to enter is my duty"¹⁰ he added. However, this did not restrain Dr. Clark's interest in preaching the gospel in the hills.

The Ao living south of Sibsagar, who usually visited the plains bartering goods, drew Clark's attention. He happened to meet one Subongmeren, a Naga from the Ao village of Dekahaimong, from whom he learnt many things about the Aos who were then outside British jurisdiction. Clark encouraged Godhula Babu, an Assamese convert (who was working in the mission printing press in Sibsagar), to

9. Dr. F. S. Downs: The Mighty Works of God, 1971, p.65
Presently, Dr. Downs teaches Church History in United Theological College, Bangalore.

10. Kifung A^o op. cit., p. 26.

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learn the Ao tongue with the help of Subongmeren. From 1871 to November 1872 Godhula spent most of his time in Naga Hills. On November 8, 1872, 9 converts went down from Dekahaimong to Sibsagar with Godhula and were given water baptism by Dr. Clark on 11 November 1872.

Subongmeren and Godhula made all arrangements for Clark's visit to Dekahaimong.¹¹ On December 18, 1872, Dr. Clark entered the village. Dr. Clark was very encouraged to see that, on their return to the village, those nine converts who had been baptised by him earlier had built a house which served as a 'place of worship' for themselves.¹² On December 23, 1872, 15 new converts were baptised and observed the "Believers' Holy Communion". With all the 24 members now, a Church was organised in Dekahaimong. Consequently, Kijung Ao holds that December 23, 1872 is the beginning of the Naga mission.¹³ Puthenpurakal has discussed the circumstances that led Dr. Clark to look for a new mission field - ultimately the Naga Mission - which we need not discuss here. In the following pages, further mission work in Naga Hills will be examined, beginning from the Ao area.

11. The village ruling council known as 'tatar' had strong suspicion of Clark's visit because they believed that all white men were company agents and company people were not allowed on Naga soil.

12. Tajen Ao, op. cit., p. 36.

13. Kijung Ao: op. cit., p. 40.

Puthenpurakal¹⁴ is inclined to see 1876 as the base year for Naga Mission. This is because Dr. Clark took residence there in 1876 though the first Church was organised in 1872. Later, in 1876, the believers separated themselves from their village Dekahaimong and founded a new village, Molungyimsen, where a mission station was established.

Dr. & Mrs. Rivenburg joined Dr. Clark in 1885, followed by Rev. & Mrs. Perrine in 1893 and Rev. & Mrs. F. A. Haggard in 1894 at Molungyimsen mission station. Dr. Clark wanted to preach the Gospel to all the Nagas. This can be seen from his plan to find a new centrally located mission station. Eventually a suitable place was found between Sungratsu and Mopungchukit village called Impur.¹⁵ On 1 October 1894 the mission station was shifted from Molungyimsen to the new station at Impur. Evidently the new mission station was successful in becoming the base for Naga evangelisation. The Church history of Nagaland always starts from Impur mission station.

14. Puthenpurakal, op. cit., p. 86.

15. Kijung Ao (op. cit., pp. 63-64) reported that Dr. Clark was very happy about the land he obtained from Mopungchukit villagers. He wanted to give it a new name so he called all the elders and asked them what kind of a name they would give him (Dr. Clark), for he was the first man to clear the land and establish a mission station. The Mopungchukit elders called him, "he was the first one who came there" ('Oh, na Yimpur or Impur chanuti'). Thus the new mission station was called Impur Mission Station.

From 1876 to 1955 altogether 16 missionary couples and 5 single lady missionaries served in the Naga Hills. Except Rev. Mrs. C.D. King, Missionary in Angami country, and Rev. & Mrs. W.E. Witter, missionary in Lotha country, all the missionaries served at Impur mission station at one time or the other.

Puthenpurakal has compiled the Church statistics for Ao area from 1876 to 1900,¹⁶ but he does not mention the number of Churches that existed. However, Kijung Ao says that there were five Churches when Dr. Clark invited them to discuss the formation of an 'Association'. Eventually the first Ao Baptist Church Association (ABCA) meeting was held in Molungyinsen, March 12-14, 1897. Clark's desire was to preach 'the kingdom of God' to all Ao villages. He felt that a collective effort could realise his desire. Therefore the purpose of ABCA was to unite all Ao Christians and preach the gospel in all Ao villages and make them learn the word of God, as will be seen in the following text from (Kijung Ao:

Nukjidongji Khristan ajakkakuma lungjemtsu aser ibaji ajanga Ao kin ajak ka kuma lung-gemdaktsuktsu. Osangtajang yim ajak nung sayutsungitsu, school lapoktsu aser Tsungrem O angazukdaktsutsu.¹⁷

16. Puthenpurakal; op. cit., p. 70.

17. Kijung Ao, op. cit., p. 73.

The purpose was to unite all Christians together through which entire Aos would be united. They would preach the gospel in all the villages, open schools and make effort to learn the word of God.¹⁸

The second ABCA meeting was held the following year on November 5 to 8, 1898 at Impur. By then there were 6 Churches in Ao area. Since then the ABCA meetings have been held every year. From 1876 to 1920s, the growth of the Church was slow, but after 1930 the conversion was rapid. By the end of the period under study there were 58 Churches under ABCA (in Ao area alone) with 20,404 Church members.¹⁹

Dr. Clark's vision of preaching Gospel in the Naga Hills was realised from Impur mission station. Initially the Lotha mission field and the Sema mission field were looked after from Impur as outstations.²⁰ However, by 1926 Lothas were in a position to have their own Lotha Baptist Church Association.²¹ Similarly, the Sema also formed their own Association in 1929. We shall examine these two separately in some detail later. As we noted above the main purpose of the Baptist associations was to reach out to those yet unreached by the gospel. At the same time the Church associations

18. The translation from Ao into English is not literal; it seeks only to preserve meaning.

19. Ibid, p. 129.

20. Kijung: op.cit., p. 112.

21. Puthenpurakal: op.cit., p. 125.

helped tremendously in uniting the formerly secluded Naga communities into a single Church administrative body. As early as 1937, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) ²² was formed.

Impur was the base for missionary work among other bordering tribes: Sangtam, Chang, ²³ Konyak and Phom. A brief note for each of them would be necessary.

Sangtam:

Till 1920, the bordering tribes beyond Tzula river were outside the British administration. Therefore, the Government did not favour the preaching of the gospel in that area. Yet the mission felt the great necessity of preaching the gospel among the bordering tribes. A kind of tussle between the Government and the Mission arose which we shall consider in the fifth chapter.

Kijung Ao noted that Sekyuling was the first convert among the Sangtam. He accepted the gospel while he was in Aonokpo village of Ao area. He was given

22. Dozo, op. cit. p. 100.

23. Two minor tribes, Yimchunger and Khamngan were included with the Chang. Later on they were separated and now formed separate tribes. During the post-Independence period such minor tribes combined together is a continual process. See B.B. Ghosh: The history of Nagaland, 1982, p. 20.

water baptism by Dr. Bailey in Impur while he was staying there with him. Later, Jongpongukshi, Khmsang-khaba, Moyaniken and Semliangba received baptism in Impur on August 25, 1925 from Rev. Subongwati. They were from Chari village of Sangtam area, very close to Ao area. A certain Samsalepzung was appointed from Impur to work among the tribes beyond Tzula river and settled down at Chari.²⁴ Kijung Ao, reported that by 1930 there were believers from Chari, Chunglivimti, Lonsipek, Alisopore, Thungare and Chadorge villages.

According to Dr. Downs, "by 1936 there were 6 Churches with 140 members. A Christian movement was clearly well under way in the area because by the next year there were 225 Sangtam Christians in 7 Churches".²⁵ From 1937, the Church growth was significant. Till 1945, the Sangtam Churches' work was looked after by ABCA. On November 7-10, 1946, the first Sangtam Church Association meeting was held at Chari. By then there were 14 Churches with 1,896 members on the Church roll.²⁶ Kijung Ao was fully incharge of mission work among the bordering tribes, succeeded in 1946 by J. Onenlepden.

24. No Church was mentioned; however, a Church may have been organized in Chari itself when Samalepzung was placed there.

25. Downs, op.cit. p. 131.

26. Kijung Ao, op.cit., p. 119.

Chang:

An unsuccessful attempt by Dr. Clark to preach the gospel among the Chang is indicated by [Kijung Ao. In 1882, Rev. Godhula and his wife Lucy, went to Noksen and stayed there for some time but could not achieve anything in the field of preaching. They had to leave the place the same year. The first converts were Yancho and Mangunumba from Chakpa village. They were baptised by Rev. Dowd in Impur on August 20, 1905. No report with regard to Chang work is available from 1905 until early 1939. This seems to be because of the government policy. [Kijung Ao reported that SDO Mokakchung, had given the order that gospel should not be preached beyond Tzula river except to Sangtam tribe. However the situation was changing in favour of the mission. Kijung Ao tells us that on 6 April, 1939 Ajubai from Yimrup village and some others whose names are not available in the record, were baptised.²⁷ Since then mission work in Chang area appears to have progressed. Dr. Downs reported that by 1946 there were already 11 Churches in Chang area with 250 members on Church roll. Till 1947 Chang work was looked after from Impur under ABCA. As the work progressed, in 1948 Chang work was separated from ABCA, and they formed their own Chang Baptist

27. Kijung Ao; op.cit., p. 119-120.

Church Association.²⁸ By 1950, Chang Church membership rose to 1,500.²⁹ Small portions from Phom area and Khiamngan area were also looked after by Chang Baptist Church Association.

Konyak:

Namsangia Nagas with whom Bronson lived in 1840 are closely related to the Konyaks and it is possible that the first Naga convert, Hubi, was a member of this tribe.³⁰

When Dr. Clark joined the mission in Sibsagar in 1869, he knew of the earlier mission attempt in Namsangia. In addition, Clark had a personal friend called Wanlai, the Chief of Tamalu village, whom he met at Sibsagar when Wanlai came to pay a fine for murder of some men of Dekahaimong in 1875.³¹ Dr. Clark took residence in Dekahaimong in 1876. By then he sent Godhula to Merangkong village.

28. Downs, op.cit., p. 137.

29. Ibid.

30. Downs reported that on 12 September 1846 Hubi was baptised in Sibsagar but he died the same year. Longjanglepszuk of Merangkong village was baptised in 1851 by Rev. Whiting in Sibsagar. On his return to his village, fortune took its turn. His head was relieved from his shoulder by a Konyak party raiding Meranghong village.

31. Tajen Ao: op.cit., p.38.

Merangkong is an Ao village, and Tamlu a Konyak village, yet the distance between them is small. In 1881, Dr. Clark and Godhula visited Tamlu. Different stories have been told among the Ao about Dr. Clark's 1881 visit to Tamlu. Some say that he escaped an ambush party narrowly, his heel injured badly by a spear thrown at him.³² However he reached Tamlu the same day. Dr. Clark and his party were most welcome in the village. Certain doubts were cleared up, and Clark established his freindship there again. The same day the party returned to Merangkong. No report of mission work in Tamlu for many years is available.

A certain boy, Yongna (Longna) from Tamlu came to Akoia village of Ao area to attend school and later to Impur. While he was in Impur on December 11, 1932, he was baptised by Rev. Vickstrand.³³ On his return to his village he began to preach the gospel. He persuaded six of the villagers who were baptised by Rev. Subongwati on November 15, 1934, and he organised a Church there: the first Church among the Konyak. Two years later a second Konyak Church was established in the neighbouring village of Kangching, under the leadership of Ongthai.

32. For details, see Kijung Ao: The Nokinketer Mongchen, pp. 57-59.

33. Ibid, p. 122.

When these two Churches are first mentioned in the mission report of 1936, their combined membership was still only 14.

Between 1938 and 1949, the Church grew rapidly in Konyak country, Dr. Downs reported that 'by 1947 there were 900 Konyaks Christian in a rapidly growing Church'. In 1949, there were 14 Konyak Churches with 1,780 on Church roll.³⁴ Till then, the Konyak Churches were under ABCA. After a year, on December 9, 1950, Konyak Churches were separated from ABCA and formed their own Association. The same year Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India (CBCNEI) took over Konyak mission field under their care and appointed Rev. Longri Ao as full time missionary to serve among the Konyaks.

Phoms

The emergence of Phom as a separate tribe is a recent arrangement. Earlier the Phoms were grouped under Konyaks.³⁵ Some Phom villages were undecided as to whether they should join Changs or Konyaks. So some of the Phom Churches were looked after by the Chang

34. Ibid, p. 124.

35. B.B. Ghosh, History of Nagaland, p. 44 (B.B. Ghosh was the Editor, Nagaland District Gazetteers).

Baptist Church Association.³⁶ However, the mission work was done in the name of Konyak by and large. It is believed that the first convert was from Chota Kangtsing and was baptised by Rev. Vickstrand in Impur, September 22, 1929. However no written record is available about him later.

On 12 December 1945, Kijung Ao baptised 11 Phom from Mongdi village.³⁷ By 1950 there were 10 Churches with 392 Church members. The same year the Phom Baptist Church Association was formed, and it separated from ABCA.

We turn now to review the mission work among the Lothas.

Lotha:

Referring to the circumstances that led to the opening of a new mission station at Wokha in Lotha area, Puthenpurakal says that it was for fear of another mission that the American Baptist Mission was in a hurry to

36. Ibid, p. 9.

37. By then Kijung Ao was in charge of the mission work among the Konyak. He does not mention any Church but it appears that at Mongdi itself a Church must have been organised. Kijung Ao mentions that a certain Jungpong, a pastor from Longjang village of Ao area, was sent to help with the work in Mongdi.

put Mr. & Mrs. W.E. Witter at Wokha in April 1885.³⁸

According to Puthenpurakal, there was:

a letter of W. Macfarland, a Church of Scotland missionary, to C.D. King, dated 28 February 1885, in which the former expressed the desire of his Church to start a mission among the Lothas and wanted from King useful information on the Lotha area. That this letter sounded an alarm is clear from what followed. King sent the letter to Witter at Sibsagar, hoping that it could be discussed in the presence of Clark who was expected there on his way to America. But since Clark was still at Molungyimsen, the missionaries P.H. Moore, W.E. Witter, and A.K. Gurney came to Molungyimsen to hold meeting with Clark and Rivenburg. The decision was unanimous to place the Witters at Wokha "immediately" and to occupy that station. The Witters were only too glad, because Wokha had a better climate for their weak health. All the difficulties that stood in the way of the Witters' coming to Wokha were removed in a united effort, and on 9 April 1885, they were already at Wokha to take up mission work among the Lotha Naga.³⁹

Kijung Ao gives another account of the event. He says that some other mission⁴⁰ had asked the Deputy Commissioner of Kohima for permission to open their mission in Lotha area. The Deputy Commissioner

38. Puthenpurakal: op.cit., p. 100.

39. Ibid.

40. No name of the mission was mentioned. However, it would be the same mission that Puthenpurakal had mentioned since no other mission was interested among the Lotha at that time.

made no reply for a long time. Meanwhile Dr. Clark had also asked for permission for the American Baptist Mission to open its mission in Lotha area and this was given by the Deputy Commissioner, Kohima. Kijung Ao says:

Tanga Mission Kajagi asungdangdang Yakta
D.C. jagi langzur alika asunungbo tanu ⁴¹
Lotha Lima nungji tanga Mission ka lila .

(Had the D.C. given the permission promptly, today there would be another mission in Lotha area). ⁴²

In any case, Dr. Clark's mission strategies played a prominent role with regard to Lotha mission. Puthenpurakal tells that as early as 1876, Clark wrote to the American Baptist Missionary Union (ABMU) that he himself will go to Lotha country, ⁴³ and it was reported that Dr. Clark himself donated Rs. 500/- to the Witters to help them on their journey to Wokha. There seems to be a clear concern on the part of Dr. Clark, not necessarily a fear of the other mission.

There is no record of any convert among the Lothas during the Witters' two years' stay in Wokha.

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41. Kijung, op.cit., p. 112.
 42. The English translation by me.
 43. Puthenpurakal, op.cit., p.100.

Unfortunately, they had to leave Wokha (1887) due to their continuing ill-health. After spending some time in Kohima and Nowgong, the Witters left for America in March 1888.

After the Witters' departure from Wokha in 1887, the Lotha mission did not receive a full-time missionary for two generations till the arrival of Houstons in 1947.⁴⁴ Therefore it was looked after from Impur mission centre as an outstation till 1948. Perhaps because of the people's resistance and lack of a full time missionary, the Church growth in Lotha area is reported to be slow till 1920's. No proper record is available for the study of Lotha mission from 1905 till the preliminary meeting of Lotha Baptist Christian Association (LBCA) in 1923.

Though Kijung Ao reported that there were 11 Churches with 296 Church members in 1923,⁴⁵ Downs reported that only six Churches were represented at the formation of the first LBCA in 1923.⁴⁶ Downs tells us that apparently this organization was at first thought

44. Ibid., p. 124.

Puthenpurakal reported that though the Houstons were designated for the Lotha work, after a few months in Wokha, they had to come to Kohima (in April 1948) to replace the Supplees. Most probably the Houstons returned to Wokha the following year (1949).

45. Kijung Ao, op.cit., p. 112.

46. Downs, op.cit., p. 128.

of as a kind of subdivision of the ABCA, for in 1926 the mission reports refer to the holding of what is called the first "real" meeting of the Lotha Association in that year.⁴⁷ Puthenpurakal points out that the Lotha Baptists consider the year 1926 as the year of the first Lotha Baptist Association meeting⁴⁸ though the Lotha Association now traces its origins to the Okotsu meeting of 1923.

Ten year after the Witters' departure from Wokha, the first Lotha converts were reported in 1898: two youngmen, Nkhao from Yikhum village and Shanrio from Tsungiki village, who were baptised by Rev. Haggard at Impur on 2nd October 1898.⁴⁹ During the next two years four more Lotha boys were baptised at Impur. Downs reports that several youngmen were baptised in Wokha though he does not provide any details about them. The first Lotha Baptist Church appeared at Okotsu village in 1904.⁵⁰

At the beginning, Lothas posed strong resistance to the gospel. Puthenpurakal reported that Rev. Longwell who often used to visit Okotsu was once, in 1909,

47. Ibid., p. 128.

48. Puthenpurakal: op.cit., p.125.

49. Downs, op.cit., p. 126.

50. Kijung: op.cit., p. 112.

compelled to escape from the village at night, for his life was in danger.⁵¹ Government took action against the Lothas' cruel treatment to missionary Longwell but this did not protect Christians from other forms of persecution. Downs tells us that when people did become Christian they were driven from their villages and forced to establish new ones.⁵² In 1928 the mission was able to purchase land at Vankhosung, the present Lotha Centre near Wokha, and to establish a school there.

From 1930s on the mission reaped a rich harvest in Lotha area. Downs reported that the Church grew rapidly among the Lothas in 1930s. By 1936 Churches had been established in 37 of the 76 Lotha villages and it was estimated that 10% of the tribe belonged to the Christian community. In 1950 there were 72 Churches with 3,000 members, and it was possible to say that the entire tribe had been evangelised.⁵³ Within 8 years after that, all Lotha villages had Churches. By the time the Houstons, the last missionaries among the Lothas, left Naga Hills in 1953, the Lotha Baptists numbered over 4,000.⁵⁴

51. Puthenpurakal, op.cit., p. 124.

52. Downs, op.cit., p. 127.

53. Downs, Ibid, p. 129.

54. Puthenpurakal, op.cit., p.126.

Sema Mission:

Dr. Clark hoped that along with Lotha work, it could be extended to Sema area too. As early as 1886, he advised the executive committee of ABMU to place a missionary in Lozema in the Sema area, an easy and convenient day's march from Wokha, so that the new family besides being able to look after the Sema work, could provide company for the Witters.⁵⁵

When Dr. Clark was in America after retiring from active mission field in the Naga Hills, he strongly recommended that Rev. Tanquist be sent to Sema area. Later on, the Assam Reference Committee felt that the Sema work could be looked after from the Kohima field for some time. Thus a missionary to Sema area could not materialise until the Andersons arrived at Kohima in 1928.

Meanwhile, the Dicksons had arrived at Kohima in November 1905 and from there they took a keen interest in the Semas. Dickson visited Sema villages himself and also he sent Avilhu to visit Sema villages close to Angami area.⁵⁶ However, there is no evidence of any convert or of a Church organisation from the Kohima side; the first Church was established from Ao side. One Imnasusu,

55. Ibid, p. 102.

56. Puthenpurakal: op.cit., p.

Ao from Ungma village visited a Sema village and preached the Gospel.⁵⁷ Through him some were converted in Semassettsu. On July 4, 1920, Dr. Bailey who was the mission in-charge at Impur gave water baptism to six persons in Settu-Moya and organised a Church there.⁵⁸

In the meantime a mass conversion was taking place without any preacher from outside. One Inaho who was then an interpreter (Dobashi) was also converted. He quit his job in October 1927 and went to Rev. Vilisu in Rengma area and was baptised by him on November 10. He was appointed an evangelist among the Semas. Meanwhile the mass conversion which was under way spurted out, and the gospel was reaching every Sema village. Puthenpurakal observes that the Sema work was a unique example of a "mass movement".⁵⁹ For some time Sema mission work was looked after from Impur Mission Station, but Sema Baptist Church Association was formed in 1929. In 1928, Rev. Anderson took residence in Aizuto and continued the mission work.

The Kohima Field:

The Kohima Field Mission included the Angami, Nagaland Kuki, Zeliangrong, Rengma, Chakhesang and

57. Kijung, op.cit., p. 113.

58. Ibid, p. 114.

59. Puthenpurakal, op.cit., p. 104-105.

Western Sema. The study of the Kohima Field suffers from scarcity of source material. Kijung Ao who has good command over Church history in Nagaland is silent over Angami Field Mission. Dr. Downs finds it difficult because of the lack of information and whatever was available to him was not thorough. Dr. Downs admits that, whatever he has done, relies upon the work done by his student in the field.⁶⁰

However, Joseph Puthenpurakal certainly sheds light on the Kohima Field. By and large he credits to Dr. Clark the progress of the preaching of the gospel in Nagaland. He says "that for Clark the desire to open a mission station among the Angamis had been prior to the work he undertook among the Ao-Naga".⁶¹

At the repeated insistence of Dr. Clark to the Missionary Union Executive Committee, L.D. King was sent in as a missionary. King and his recently married wife, Anna M. Sweet, reached Samaguting (the present Chemkedima in Kohima district) on 27 June 1879 after a journey which took them two months from Nowgon.⁶² The Kings' four months in Samaguting were still a period of 'spying the land'. The Angami uprising to

60. Downs, op.cit., p. 138, 1 f.n.

61. Puthenpurakal, op.cit., p. 90-91.

62. Puthenpurakal, op.cit., p. 93.

extirpate every European from Angami country was getting more serious.⁶³ The political Agent of the Naga Hills Mr. Damant felt that it was not wise for the Kings to stay on in Samaguting at this juncture. Therefore they escaped to Sibsagar on November 2. Thus nothing concrete was achieved in the field of preaching during the Kings' short stay in Angami area.

While in Sibsagar King still looked for a way to return to the Naga Hills and in consultation with Dr. Clark and administrative officials he was able to settle down in Kohima by 25 February 1881. As was common with early missionaries, King has described his 'lonesome' journey to Kohima on 'five mules and one pony'.⁶⁴

Despite King's earnest effort to preach the gospel, no record is available to show conversions from among the Angami though a Church was organised on 29 March 1883. "The members, as reported by King, were: Mrs. King and myself and Henry, Robie and Sarbey (our three Assamese helpers) and Jabusie (Henry's wife)".⁶⁵ The difficulty of learning the language, his weak health, and the worse

63. For. Deptt. Pol. A. January 1880, Nos. 498-511 (N.A.I.).

64. Puthenpurakal: op.cit., p. 96.

65. Ibid., p. 98-99.

condition of his wife in America, finally prompted King to ask to be recalled from Kohima.

The Angami Field Mission work received impetus with the coming of the Rivenburgs. As noticed earlier they were first appointed at Molungyimsen mission station in 1885.⁶⁶ They succeeded L.D. King at Kohima in February 1887.

Right from the beginning Rivenburg understood the importance of school work in relation to the preaching of the gospel. This point we shall discuss in the next chapter.

There are different opinions about the formation of the first Angami Baptist Church Association. Downs says that in Nerhema village in 1913 two Churches were joined together in an Association.⁶⁷ However Puthenpurakal holds that the first Angami Baptist Association was formed in Iganumi village in 1912, and in the following year (1913) the Association held its annual meeting in Nerhema.⁶⁸ Whatever the case may be, in all Nagaland the organisation of the first Church is remembered as an important event in Church history. And,

66. See p. 7 above.

67. Downs; op.cit., p. 141.

68. Puthenpurakal; op.cit., p. 120.

as we saw, the first Church in Kohima was organised by the Kings on 29 March 1883.⁶⁹

After almost thirty years in Kohima the Rivenburgs retired from the service in 1923. By then there were 531 Baptists in the Kohima field, and some 120 pupils in Kohima school. The Church among the Angamis did not really begin to grow until the 1930s. In 1936 there were still only 650 Angami Christians. In 1939 alone, 115 persons were baptised. By 1950 Angami Church membership had risen to 1,500.⁷⁰

The Nagaland Kuki Association, the second to be organised in the Kohima field, was formed in 1926.⁷¹ The first Kuki to become Christian was Ngulhao Thomson of Taning village. His life story and ministry is a long one. However, after Bible school training in Jorhat he concentrated among the Thadou Kuki of Manipur. In 1926 when Kuki and Zeliang Church Association was formed, there were still only a few Churches. After 10 years in 1936 there were only 200 Nagaland Kuki Christians, and even in 1950 there were only 700 Christians in the whole area.

69. See p. 24, above.

70. Downs, op.cit., p. 143.

71. Ibid., p. 144.

Little is known about the work among the Rengma tribe. The work was started in 1922, but practically nothing can be noticed for more than 10 years. Dr. Downs reports that in 1937 there were 350 Rengma Christians and by 1950 some 1,300 in 13 different Churches.⁷²

A separate tribe named Chakhesang is a recent arrangement. Ghosh reported that in 1948 three tribes known as Chakruma, Khezham and Sangtam together formed into one tribe called Chakhesang.⁷³ Therefore till 1948 Chakhesang area was grouped with the Angamis and was called by the name "eastern Angami".

According to Dozo, Rivenburg, with Sieliezhu and Kruneizhu organised a Church in Chazuba 1895.⁷⁴ This has given rise to debate among the Church historians (in Nagaland). Downs argues that there were only two Churches in Kohima field till 1918 - Kohima and Nerhema.⁷⁵ According to Downs baptism probably took place among the Chakhesang atleast 20 years after 1895. Puthenpurakal is doubtful "if any mission work was done among the Eastern

72. Ibid, p. 145.

73. Ghosh: op.cit., p. 20.

74. Dozo: op.cit., p. 30.

75. Downs: op.cit., p. 145.

Angami (i.e. Chakhesang) prior to 1906". According to Puthenpurakal it was an Angami convert Lhusietsu who was the first to preach gospel among the Chakhesang in 1908.⁷⁶ Unfortunately no written record is available about the mission work among the Chakhesang till early 1920. Even Dozo bases his argument on Chakhesang tradition.⁷⁷ With this difficulty it is hard to say anything concretely about the first Church among the Chakhesang during 1890s or even 1910s. However Chakhesang trace their first Church to 1895.

Dozo says that "the years of 1895 to 1930 were a "non-growth period". The Christians were persecuted. The evangelists were opposed and rejected in most cases". The Chakhesangs thought that becoming Christians would displease their gods who would punish them with natural calamities, afflictions and failure of their crops and harvest. Therefore people remained indifferent toward Christianity. The period 1930 to 1953 shows "slight growth". Dozo reports seven Churches in 1935, but by 1945 there were 27 Churches, and 52 Churches in 1950. By 1953 there was a total of 2,300 souls in the Christian

76. Puthenpurakal, op.cit., p. 231.

77. Dozo, op.cit., p. 35.

community. In 1949, the Chakhesang Church Council separated from the Angami Council and formed its own Chakhesang Baptist Church Council.⁷⁹

The main factor in the conversion process during this period seems to have been the threat of World War II in 1940s. Relating the impact of World War II, Dozo wrote:

During the second World War the Chakhesangs were filled with fears and woes. Their land became combat ground where Japanese and British armies struggled for supremacy, people ran into the jungles for safety, and noise of war terrified the people, the land being major battlefield. This was the first time for the people to see such mighty armies and heavy battles. The few educated people mostly Christians and the village leaders were taken out of their villages to be used as interpreters to the troops. These abnormal activities brought different world views and many changes to the thinking of the people. Now, the sight of bloodshed and fighting made them ponder about human problems and the solutions.⁸⁰

The mission work among the Zeme, Mzieme, Liangmai, and Rongmai tribes now identified by the composite name, Zeliangrong was reported in 1910 Kohima Field Mission reports.⁸¹ The first Church appeared to be in

78. Ibid, p. 35.

79. Ibid, p. 42.

80. Ibid.

81. Downs, op.cit., p. 146-47.

Benreu village and the first Christians were Keneise and Nsarangbe. By 1913 a full time Angami evangelist was working in the area. However Church growth appears to have been very slow in the area. By 1937, when the first figures are recorded, the Kuki and Zeliangrong Christians of Nagaland together numbered only 334. The Churches were included within the Angami Church Association until 1953 when a separate association of Kuki and Zeliangrong Churches was organised. Downs reported that in 1951 the Christians of these two groups numbered about 807.⁸² (Map in next page shows the major area of the spread of the gospel).

From the forgoing it will be clear that, by the end of the period under review, almost all the Naga tribes were within the fold of Christianity. This was the beginning of a new era for Naga people. Christianity and education have been synonymous in Nagaland. These have been a tremendous force in the development process which we shall now examine.

82. Ibid, p. 147.

NORTH EAST
INDIA

China



Spotted area indicates major gospel enrout in Nagaland

Chapter III

PROCESS OF CONVERSION

A number of factors determined the conversion process when Christianity was first preached in Naga Hills. Written texts were a first step in the preaching of the gospel. School work can be seen right from the beginning; this was the beginning of formal education in Nagaland.¹ School work was followed by medical work. Though the medical mission was not at the same level as educational mission, it too played its own role in the overall conversion process. Furthermore, the local situation and the ongoing historical events had great impact on the whole. The pattern of community living of the Naga village also seems to have contributed to an extent. Through the generations, the Nagas were bound by the strong cords of village community. It appears that conversion often occurred in a village as a whole.

During British rule, the Nagas witnessed both the great World Wars. The first World War had relatively less impact, through those who served in the labor corps in France (1917) during the War. The Second World War, however, came to Nagaland itself, especially in Kohima district.

Yet, above all these factors, the Naga political movement appears to have been more significant. After the Independence in 1947, the Naga identity became a sensitive

1. Ghosh, Gazettes of India; Nagaland 1975, p. 209.

issue. The aspirations of the Naga leaders to make Nagaland into a 'Christian state' won the sentiments and emotions of the Nagas. Thus the years of political turmoil have also been the years of religious transformation in the Naga Hills. We shall consider these factors one by one.

(1) Literary and School works:

The gospel could not have been preached unless the missionaries learnt the local language. Therefore, one practical step in relation to preaching was to learn the local language. In this connection Puthenpurakal pointed out that:

In the beginning the missionaries had to do real pioneering work in the field of language study. Clark reduced Ao to writing, Rivenburg worked on the same and then had to pick up also Angami; Miss Narola, Rivenburg's daughter, learned Angami; the Witters started with organising the Lotha language; Perrine besides learning Ao, worked on Sema and Lotha; Tanquist studied Angami and attempted also Rengma, Sema and Lotha; Dowd and Longwell learned Ao; the Dicksons started with Sema, hoping to work among the Semas; and the Howstons studied Lotha; while Anderson and Delano tried to master Sema.²

The above account gives us a fairly good picture of the missionaries' linguistic efforts in the beginning. And we see that it was not a simple task for them. Among the Naga languages, Angami was found to be more difficult. Rev C.D. King, the first missionary among the Angamis, found the Angami language 'too tough'. As noticed earlier, the Kings

2. Puthenpurakal, op. cit. p. 140-41.

left Kohima in 1887 and were replaced by the Rivenburgs the same year.³ A year later, on January 1, 1888, Rivenburg wrote to the Foreign Secretary, American Baptist Missionary Union (ABMU): "We have been mining and smelting and pudding and forging and grinding away at this Angami language". Ten Years later, he wrote again: "Don't send a man (to Kohima) who has not done well in Hebrew, for this Angami language is no joke".⁴

However, through the missionaries' relentless effort, the literature in Naga dialects grew. Clark's first 'little' Ao Naga Primer and a few hymns were ready by the beginning of 1877. In October 1893, a second Primer or First Reader, prepared by Mrs. Clark, was printed.⁵ In 1911, the Clark's Ao Naga Dictionary (977 pages) was printed. Thus by 1911, the year Clark retired from the mission in the Naga Hills, the Aos were in a position to learn to read and write in their own tongue.

Right from the beginning throughout the period under study the translation of scriptures received much emphasis. We shall return to this later.

3. Quoted in p. 224.

4. Quoted in p. 224.

5. Ibid, p. 81-82.

According to Puthenpurakal, the situation with regard to Bible translation was as follows in the 1950s⁶:

<u>Tribe</u>	<u>Bible</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	<u>Four Gospels</u>	<u>Other</u>
Angami	Yes			
Ao	Yes			
Chakhesang		Use Angami Bible		
Chang			Yes	
Kheamungan (Sic)				
Konyak		"		
Kuki	Yes			
Lotha	Yes	"		
Phom		"		
Pochury				Mathew, Luke
Rengma		"		
Sangtam		"		
Sema		"		
Yimchunger		"		
Zeliangrong		"		

What was the position of school works in relation to the preaching of the gospel? The mission found that school was a necessity in relation to preaching. Firstly, in school the young minds could be prepared for the gospel. Secondly, in school they could train the future preachers who could reach out to their own people. The consequent events show

6. Puthenpurakal, op. cit. p. 142.

that these two purpose have been fully realized through school institution. We do not have any source material concerning school work in the initial period. The Impur mission station Church record could have helped in this regard; but it was lost in a fire in Longkhun village.⁷ Nevertheless, the recent work of Joseph Puthenpurakal which used the archives in Valley Forge, USA, pertaining to Baptist mission activities in the Naga Hills sheds light on the subject. We reproduce here from Puthenpurakal the text of Clark's letter of 1874 giving his ideas on the School and its relationship to preaching. This was even before Clark had lived in Naga Hills:

As long as there are thousands of heathen who will probably receive the gospel by preaching, the maintaining of many primary schools at large expenses as a means of evangelization, cannot be defended. Because, the preaching of the gospel to those who will receive it is so much the cheapest and most efficiently made. Where schools can be maintained at small expenses and the missionary or his wife or the Native preacher in addition to his preaching work do the school teaching, then all right.

So, too, if we are likely to loose (Sic) the the control of a prosperous mission unless we launch out for schools, then we must do it or do more than otherwise.⁸

7. ~~Rev.~~ Kijung Ao did not mention the year of the fire tragedy. But it seems that it was in 1919. Mills reported a big fire in Longkhun Village in 1919 in which almost the entire village was turned to ashes. Kijung Ao himself had to go to USA, to study about Church History in Nagaland. He could utilise the record of American Baptist Convention Head quarters office in Valley Forge and New York Library for his work Nokinketer Mangchen in 1963.

8. Puthenpurakal, op. cit. p. 76-77 (emphasis in Puthenpurakal).

Clark considered School work as 'an expensive mode of evangelization'⁹. Yet he felt that he must launch the School in order to gain the 'prosperous mission field'. To Clark it was clear that the School work was an instrument for furthering evangelization. However, as the years passed the School work took a little different turn as we shall see.

As we mentioned earlier, Clark's contribution to literary work will be remembered by the Nagas in general and the Ao in particular. However, Puthenpurakal argues that, with his pre-occupation with preaching and baptizing, and in the primitive circumstances in which he was living, Clark was not able to lay a long-term and solid basis for the education of Naga children¹⁰. Later on Clark's mission work was severely criticised by other missionaries, especially Rev. Perrine and Rev. Haggard in the 1890s. According to Perrine and Haggard there was no real Clark's mission work in the Ao area of Naga Hills. Rivenburg, who succeeded Clark at Molungyimsen, during Clark's furlough in America in 1886-87, commented on the condition of School work at the beginning of 1886:

Of school work little has been done personally
 The Native school teachers have been the
 source of no little anxiety. During the year
 six schools, five for boys and one for girls
 have been left open for one hour in the early

9. Ibid, p. 77.

10. Ibid.

morning before the people go to work. This school work has been very unsatisfactory owing chiefly I think to the little time spent in the school. How to better the system is an unsolved question. The people are very poor and cannot afford to give their children their time to be spent in school for which they see so little or no use. If the children are paid (there is no money to try it this year) for their time, a very bad system will be inaugurated from which it will be difficult to break.

Our teachers save one are Assamese. The present system will not give competent Naga teachers for the future. I trust Mr. Clark will return with plans and a spirit to make these schools a success. I believe there is an immense amount of nonsense talked about Christianizing heathen savages, at least, without giving them secular schools to make the work permanent. I am the last to want to do school work. In fact I do not intend to do it. As soon as I can I desire to give the whole of my time to preaching. But someone must teach schools and make books or our work will be transitory or vain....¹¹

Some drastic changes were taking place from 1890s in the field of education. Puthenpurakal reported that, with the coming of the Ferrines (1893) and the Haggards (1893) to Naga Hills, something began to take shape which came to be regarded as an absolute necessity by Perrine and later by Dowd and other missionaries in the Naga Hills, namely "some sort of an educational system for the Nagas," who were, in the words of Perrine "so ignorant and so unlettered". In January, 1894 he wrote to the Missionary

11. Quoted in Ibid, p. 77-78 (emphasis in Puthenpurakal).

Union: "At present there is no part of our work that is so important to the success of our work as this school work"¹².

Subsequent events show that Perrine whole-heartedly devoted his time to school work. Puthenpurakal reported that one of Perrine's proposals was to get boys from the various tribes into a common school, educate them in a common language to be preachers, and send them back to their own villages to preach the gospel to their own people. At the same time Perrine started teachers' training programme in the school. By 1899, he could write to Executive Committee, Missionary Union on his teachers training programme:

The work of the Training School has made some very long services this year in advance of that of former years. The interest in education has grown, the school is on a much firmer basis, Self support is nearer, we have a better house and apparatus and some are ready to go out to "overcome the world" - not thoroughly prepared, you must understand, but relatively prepared for their life work.¹³

Rev. & Mrs. F.W. Dowd were also designated educational missionaries who served in Imphur station, 1901-1920. Kijung Ao reported that Dowds were once entrusted as Secretary of Mission schools in entire Assam. The Director

12. Quoted in Ibid, p. 111.

13. Quoted in Ibid, p. 112.

of Education for East Bengal and Assam sought his advice in connection with schools works in Naga Hills more than once. Eventually on 18 May 1906, the Lieutenant Governor of Assam appointed Rev. F.W. Dowd, the Impur missionary, as Honorary Inspector of Schools in Naga Hills.¹⁴

Dowd considered schools as the "most effective means for establishing the Kingdom of God among these people", and the students as the "best way to get the gospel into a heathen village".¹⁵ True to their dream, School classrooms were the best places to impart religious education which was part of the school curriculum throughout the period under review.

However, despite the missionaries' earnest effort, the mission school did not seem to improve very much. Puthenpurakal reported a poor situation of the mission school in the early 1900s, mainly for lack of funds. Perhaps at this point, the Government felt the need to open their schools in Naga Hills. In 1906 Government opened a Lower Primary (LP) School in Kohima¹⁶. In 1911, R.B. Longwell, wrote about the village schools:

The teachers bring in their monthly reports, have a little talk about their work, get their money and go back. Their work is rarely inspected and their classes seldom examined¹⁷.

14. Kijung, op. cit. p. 109-110.

15. Puthenpurakal, op. cit. p. 112.

16. Ibid, p. 10.

17. Ibid, p. 113.

We do not see much improvement in the Impur mission school for more than a generation. Religious activities continued to be a major aspect of the school. It was reported that even as late as 1945 Impur mission school did not have a curriculum 'worthy of its name'¹⁸.

Given the situation, the role of Impur mission school was significant for the Nagas, despite all its deficiencies in the field of education. As we have seen, it prepared the stage for the government to open a school in the Naga Hills. Thus in course of time, the Impur mission school became a centre of education not only for the Ao, Sema and Lotha, but later for all other bordering tribes of Sangtam, Chang, Kongyak, Phom, and Yimchunger,¹⁹ Kijung Ao says that Impur mission school was like a Theological College, and the student passing from Impur School was considered as Theological Graduate²⁰.

We may now consider the School work in Kohima which was also similar to that in Impur. As noted earlier, the Rivenburgs were first appointed at Molungyimsen. When King left Kohima in 1887, Rivenburg replaced him. Right from the beginning, he devoted himself to literary and

18. Puthenpurakal, op. cit. p. 113.

19. Ghosh, Gazetters of India, Nagaland, 1975, p. 211.

20. Kijung Ao, op. cit. p. 106.

school works in Kohima. In the words of Alemchiba Ao, Rivenburg was a 'worthy' missionary: "the Angamis are indebted for their education to this talented educationist who spared no pains to open the way for education and enlightenment"²¹. Since Rivenburg's time, that is to say from the beginning, school works have been crucial in relation to preaching the gospel. Puthenpurakal says that the school in Kohima took on a more institutional character, losing somewhat its role as a quick "soulwinner". The quality of the Kohima missionary necessarily included his ability to contact the 'British officers' and to "command their respect and confidence"²². A clear picture of collaborative effort between the Mission and the Government is to be seen through the subsequent events in the field of education. Puthenpurakal reports that, encouraged by Rivenburg's attempt to publish some basic school textbooks, and the interest he showed in the education of the Nagas, the Chief Commissioner of Assam proposed a scheme for education in 1903 and promised Rivenburg all possible help in addition to an annual grand-in-aid. In the following year, Rivenburg made a new beginning in his own mud-walled home in Kohima with an enrollment of some twenty boys

21. . Alemchiba Ao, op. cit. p. 157.

22. Puthenpurakal, op. cit. p. 118.

and a non-Christian Angami. From that point on, government aid and Rivenburg's effort went hand in hand, adding a new class to the previous one as the need arose. In the middle of 1913, the I.P. Government School in Kohima village which had existed there since 1906, was combined with the Mission School and placed under the supervision of the missionaries, the government continuing to meet all the expenses²³. In 1920, Class VII was started. The number of students on the roll that year was 120, the highest reached till then.

Rivenburg's stayed in Kohima almost thirty years until he retired in 1923. In appreciation for his services in Naga Hills a year before his retirement, he was awarded the 'Kaiser-i-Hind' medal by the British government on 2 January 1922.

Another educational missionary couple, the Supplees, who first went to Impur station, were transferred to Kohima in December 1922 to take charge of the school work

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23. Puthenpurakal, op. cit. p. 121-22. For Rivenburg's contribution to Angami literature and other works, see the list in Puthenpurakal 'Baptist Missions in Nagaland', p. 120-121, including Miss Narola Rivenburg, daughter of Rivenburg who translated 'Gospel of Mark'. A brief description about Narola Rivenburg: 'Naro' means in Ao, flower, and 'la' is affix of a girl's name. She was born at Molungyimsen and her Ao 'ayah' give her the name Narola. At the death of her mother Narola came to Kohima to help her father, probably in 1908. During her two years stay in Kohima Narola translated the gospel of Mark into Angami. She went back to America in June 1910.
24. Ibid, p. 120.

in view of Rivenburg's imminent retirement²⁵. By that time the need of a high school section was felt by all the missionaries in Naga Hills. Four years after the Supplees' arrival, a grant of Rs. 2000/- was secured for the school from ABMU²⁶. However, the high school section which had been started in 1920 with Class VII did not improve much. It has closed down twice in 1927-28 and in 1935-36, during Supplees' furlough in America. About this time the government also felt the need to open a high school for Naga children. Puthenpurakal reports that after much negotiation between the government and the mission, it was decided to combine the two plans - the one of the mission and that of the government. On 3 May 1941, Supplee received the order for a joint high school,²⁷

Over the years the joint school came to include a lower primary section upto class two, a high school from class three to eight and a technical school which grew up along with the high school section. In all it had, in 1941, nearly 800 students, of whom "more than 100 had fallen by the wayside" in the sense of not taking the Christian faith seriously any more²⁸.

25. Ibid, p. 122.

26. Ibid,

27. Ibid, p. 123.

28. Ibid,

(2) Medical Mission:

According to Naga beliefs, all sickness is related to evil spirits. Therefore the way to find a cure was for the sick person to appease the evil spirits through sacrifices. Mills says that "an Ao man would do any sacrifice if, by doing so, he could expect the sick person to be cured"²⁹. Elsewhere Mills suggested that in the extreme case Nagas resort to human sacrifice. However, this suggestion does not accord with the Naga traditions in which there is no tale of human sacrifice. Such an incident might have occurred in Mills' knowledge, yet it may have been only a case of mischief.

In the field of medicine, the missionaries started modestly. The use of medicines was so new in Naga country that even a painkiller did wonders in the beginning. The more significant aspect was that, through the use of medicines, the missionaries were accepted more easily among the natives. Even as early as 1873 Clark realised this and he asked the ABM^W Executive Committee to grant him some allowance for medicines³⁰.

29. Mills: The Ao Naga p. 232.

30. Puthenpurakal reports that "in 1874 Clark asked his Committee in America to grant him some allowance for a small stock of medicines and requested them to send him a box of Perry Davis painkiller and Jayens' Medicines. For the first time he included Rs. 75 for medicines for the Nagas in the list of appropriations for 1878, and added his reason, saying ... success under God in treating the sick has been of very great service in mission work!"

Clark drew his lessons from his field experience in the use of medicines. From 1881 onwards, Clark wrote to the Secretary of the ABMU that he should pay some attention to medical mission. Clark suggested that a potential missionary might take some medical course along with his theological studies. He found the medical mission was successful. However, Clark's priority was gospel preaching. "Let the main thing, he insisted, be preaching the gospel, not doctoring the body"³¹.

It seems that Clark's advice with regard to the medical mission was accepted by the ABMU policymakers. During his furlough in America from February 1892 to September 1894 Rivenburg completed his medical studies at Johns Hopkins University³². Later on, medical missionaries were sent to Naga Hills.

However just then, it was difficult for the Mission Board to find the needed personnel. The Naga Hills mission had to wait over 10 years for their medical personnel.

The first medical missionary W. A. Loops arrived at Impur in November 1905.³³ But his short stay of some three years did not produce much result in the field of medical care. Again Impur had to wait for some time

31. Ibid, p. 84.

32. Ibid, p. 119.

33. Ibid, p. 114.

for Loop's successor. On December 12, 1910, Dr. J.R. Bailey arrived at Impur in place of Loops. Dr. Bailey's 18 year's stay at Impur rendered outstanding medical service. Puthenpurakal reported that,

in the first year of his stay at Impur he handled over 3,000 cases in the Impur dispensary. Throughout his stay, an average of 2500 out-patients were cared for annually³⁴.

A report of Dr. Bailey in 1914, will give us a glimpse of the medical work among the Nagas:

About 100 in-patients cared for; about 5000 out patients, 1000 free treatments given (to) Impur school boys. Something over 200 sick calls were made throughout the district, 50 minor operations were performed, and a total of over 7000 treatments were given. To do this work many hundreds of miles had to be travelled on pony and when paths were too steep, on foot. Many times I have sat down to rest, thinking that my last ounce of strength had been used up, only to renew the climb in a few minutes, up and on till the village was reached, and there to meetings, sell medicine, visit sick and then to bed about midnight, tired and weary, yet conscious of being spent in the Master's service³⁵.

The successful Impur dispensary received a sad set back at the sudden death of Dr. Bailey on 8 December 1928³⁶. After that, Impur did not receive any medical missionary. The dispensary was served by compounders or

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid, p. 114-115.

36. Ibid, p. 115.

nurses and by the government doctor from Mokokchung. Even as late as 1953 Impur missionary Truxton felt the great need of medical care not only in Ao area but in all of the Naga Hills. He appealed to the ABMU "to provide regular supervision of the work for the dispensary at Impur through monthly tours until a resident Christian doctor was engaged". But before the ABMU could do anything concretely the missionaries had to leave the Naga Hills. At the dispensary, ordinary cases of common sickness were treated to keep alive a service that was much appreciated by the people³⁷.

(3) Naga Village Community Living:

In the distant past, Naga society was a village society. In a real sense they knew only their own village and a few others. Oral traditions say that there used to be allies between the villages but on a limited scale. This kind of intimate village life enabled the Nagas to follow a common mode of life under strong village authority.

When missionaries went to a village, the whole village would hear what they had to say. Even after Christianity became available, some would continue their old way of life for many years. In general, the whole village would come to the fold together in a body. This

37. Ibid.

has been a common phenomenon all over Naga Hills. Nalini Natarajan reports a similar situation in Khasi Hills when the gospel was first preached there.³⁸ Even after 1955 there were non-Christians but they were in a small minority and they were often ashamed of not being Christian.

(4) Impact of the Wars:

The two great World Wars have a significant role in relation to conversion of the Nagas into Christianity. Especially World War II had a vital role in Kohima district. Alemchiba Ao says that 'the First World War had no impact though about 2,000 Nagas were recruited for a labour corps in France'³⁹. However, Tajen Ao has a slightly different opinion. According to Tajen Ao, many in this labour corps:

saw the outside World with its mighty civilization. After they returned home, they liked to live and function in civilized ways and manners. Many of them started sending their children to the schools in the village and to Imphur as well. In short the situation immediately following the great war worked in favour of effective evangelization among the people; they came to believe that it was the Christian religion which alone could increase the standard of comfort and living.⁴⁰

38. Natarajan, Missionary activities among the Khasis, 1977.

39. Alemchiba Ao; op. cit. p. 152.

40. Tajen Ao, op. cit. p. 44.

There is no evidence of any other impact of World War I. Conversions remained slow till the 1920s. However in Ao area even before World War I, the conversion was going on steadily. According to 1901 Census, the Christian population in the Naga Hills district was 601⁴¹. In Puthenpurakal's Church statistics, 382 were on Church rolls in 1900, with 132 added during the year. Out of these 382, 368 were recorded in Impur station. Examining the Church statistics upto 1900, Puthenpurakal explains the overall picture since the inception of the mission in Ao area in 1872. From 1900 on, the growth of the Impur mission station became more steady. In 1911, Impur Church rolls had 1228 members. Kijung Ao reported that in 1921 the Church membership of Impur station was 5,003: from 51 Ao Churches with 4,734 members, and 9 Lotha Churches with 269 members⁴². Till then Lotha Mission was under Impur station. Kijung Ao recorded the Church members in 1926, as 8,584. Then on Kijung Ao does not record membership.

In contrast, Puthenpurakal shows that in 1921 Impur Church rolls had only 3659 members; the difference from Kijung Ao's figures remains unexplained.

41. According to 1901 Census report the total population in Naga Hills district of Assam was 102, 402 Census of Assam 1901, Vol. I & II.

42. Kijung Ao, op. cit. p. 100.

Mills observed that 'men have changed their faith as often as seven or eight times, or even more'.⁴³ On the other hand, the mission was also dogmatic in its view. Anyone who touched rice beer would have his name removed from the Church roll. It appears that it was not easy for Nagas to switch from rice beer to tea which came along with the mission.

For 1941-42, Puthenpurakal shows a sharp fall from 27,983 in 1941 to 14,580 in 1942, and the latter figure continues in 1943.

In Ao area, those who participated in World War I may not have contributed to the numbers of Christians visibly but they did help prepare the environment for the gospel ministry. The ABCA was to celebrate its Golden Jubilee in 1926. The five year preparations began in 1921. The main focus of Jubilee plan was to preach the gospel throughout the Ao area and to the neighboring tribes and to revive the Churches. Kijung Ao says that during those years many backsliders were taken back into the Church and many were converted. As a result, the Church membership increased in all Ao Churches⁴⁴. The Impur rolls show annual increase except in 1941-43, reaching a climax during the Naga Political movement from 1946.

43. Mills, The Ao Naga, p. 413.

44. Kijung Ao, op. cit. p. 100.

(1883-1926). However, between 1927 and 1934, conversions maintained a faster tempo, the Church roll reaching 6986 in 1934. From 1935 on, however, there was a dramatic fall in Church roll; 2580 in 1935, 3250 in 1936, remaining at that level till 1940⁴⁷. We have no means to explain this fall in the Church roll, except as for the same phenomenon in Ao area.

However, a sea change was awaiting in the whole of Kohima district. During the last phase of World War II Kohima developed into a strategic point. In April 1944 Japanese stormed Kohima, and a fierce, historic battle was fought; the Japanese suffered a crushing defeat and had to retreat from Kohima⁴⁸. Alemchiba Ao says that:

the defeat of the Japanese armies, who knew no defeat, in this tough historic battle cannot alone possibly be attributed to the valour, heroism of the British and Indian troops forces who fought far beyond the limit of endurance but also the loyalty, help and valuable services rendered by the Nagas to the benefit of the Allied cause running (sic) most deadly risk and torture in bringing information of enemy movements. They acted as guides to the British and Indian columns, carried supplies, dug out trenches and refused to aid the enemy. It was through the Nagas, an excellent intelligence system was also built up without which the operations might have been much handicapped. But much of the services of priceless value offered by the Nagas had (sic) remained hidden for want of written records and documents.⁴⁹

47. These figures are based on Puthenpurakal, op.cit. Appendix VII, p. 258.

48. Alemchiba Ao, op.cit., p. 152.

49. Ibid.

The growth of conversions in Kohima was slow. In 1900 the Church roll of Kohima field mission was 14 members; in 1911, it was recorded as 105; in 1926 as 1417. From 1927 onward, the Church roll shows a steady increase. In 1934 it hit 6986, close to the Imperial mission station Church roll for that year, 9068.

Why this slow growth in Kohima field? J.H. Hutton, the Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, Kohima admitted that the Angamis were the "most difficult tribe among the Nagas".⁴⁵ All missionaries who served in Kohima field mission tasted the hard situation there. As Puthenpurakal notes, the Angami language was 'too tough' for the missionaries. As we notice earlier, C.D. King and Rivenburg had very difficult time in learning Angami⁴⁶. In fact King almost concluded that he would never be able to learn Angami language. It is said that one reason King was called back to America was his inability to master the Angami language. Clark urged the ABMT to send to Kohima field a person who had good command over languages so as to master the tough Angami language in a reasonable time. Going by only Church membership, it reached only 1417 in 1926 after 43 years of mission work in Kohima field

45. Hutton, The Angami Naga,

46. Puthenpurakal, op. cit. p. 96.

The news of Japanese bombing in Burma and the untold human misery caused thereby was enough to soften the minds of the Nagas. During the war the existence became uncertain. This situation made people ponder upon the problem of security of life.⁵⁰ A mass conversion in Kohima district is supported by Puthenpurakals statistics for the first half of 1940s. In 1942 it was recorded as 17872. In 1943 again it fell to 16400 and stayed there till 1945. In subsequent years, the Kohima Church roll stood at 7485 in 1946, 7750 in 1947, 7600 in 1948, 9200 in 1949. This figure continued with little ups and downs till 1955⁵¹.

For Imphar station, the trend was similar: 27983 in 1941; only 14580 in 1942. Figures for the next two years 1943 and 1944 missing. In the absence of a reliable source, it is extremely difficult to explain this sharp fall in Church roll. We have noted, however, that many men were toying with their religion. Christianity was a new thing for most Nagas. Out of curiosity one might accept the new faith but later find it difficult to follow, and one might thereby fall away from the fold. In Kohima district, the war threat itself would explain this situation. Out of fear of life, during the War, the Nagas thronged around the gospel message. With the passing of the shadow of death from their heads the Nagas began to

50. Dozo, op. cit. p. 42.

51. Puthenpurakal, p. 258.

long for their own way of life. In Kohima district, after 1945 the Church membership does not seem to improve much throughout the period under review. In the early 1920s Mills observed that "many Ao became Christian because they believed in the truth of the Gospel Message, but many, on the other hand, have far different motives":

A significant remark was made to me one day by an elderly man. He had long had a sore on his foot and I asked him how he was. He replied: "I have become a Christian, but my foot is no better". On another occasion I expressed surprise at a man who almost alone in his village was not Christian. He said: "I used to be rich and I was told I should become richer still if I became a Christian. I became one. But instead of growing richer I grew poorer. So I have given up and I am getting on quite nicely again now". Yet another man who longed for children was assured by an Ao pastor that he would become a father if he would only be baptised⁵².

These examples are not isolated instances and represent "a common frame of mind", Mills added.⁵³ Mills' observation was only about Aos but it would have been a common frame of mind everywhere.

Elsewhere, the Impur Mission station had 573 Lothaš as Church members in 1927, growing gradually

52. Mills, The Ao Naga, p. 411-412.

53. Ibid.

till 1949 when Wokha Mission field was established. Among the Sema, Church membership rose to 16000 by 1947, with a mission bungalow in Aizuto though the Sema mission was still under Impur mission station. This steady Church growth took a different, political turn subsequently.

5. The Naga Political Movement:

According to 1951 Census, the Naga Hills District's total population was 205,950.⁵⁴ This figure included all Naga tribes whereas the mission work was concentrated among the Ao, Angami, Lotha and Sema. The Church roll in 1951 enumerated 51376. By the early 1950s, in the Ao area, the mission activities were moving into a new phase, known locally as "Reviving the Church". It is said that there was a mass revival movement in Ao area under Rev. Rikum Ao⁵⁵ which was extended to Lotha and Sema areas. While the Church roll stabilized in Kohima field after 1947, in Ao, Lotha and Sema area, it went on increasing, reaching a peak in 1949-50:

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54. Census of India, 1951, Vol. XII, Assam, Manipur and Tripura Part 1-B Subsidiary Tables.
55. Presently, Rev. Rikum serves as Executive Secretary, ABCA Impur, Nagaland. This is based on discussion with Rev. Rikum Ao in Oct. 1987.

As we noted in the previous section, conversions began to pick up pace in the late 1920s and recorded a quantum jump during World War II in Kohima district. The trend of growth continued throughout the period under study. However, from 1946 on a new pattern was emerging. There was growing political consciousness among the Nagas. From 1946 on, the question of the Naga identity gained ground in Naga politics and Christianity became important to this identity. At the wake of India's Independence, as the whole country was thrown into jubilation, in a distant corner the Nagas were struggling for their political destiny.

A sort of political consciousness among the Nagas can be traced back to 1918. In 1918 'Naga Club' the first organisation ever to be formed in Nagaland was founded in Kohima and Mokokchung. Alemchiba Ao says that "the 'Naga Club' consisted mainly of government officials and a few leading headmen of the neighbouring villages who used to come in for meeting at which social and administrative problem were discussed."⁵⁶ On January 10, 1929, the Naga Club submitted a petition to Simon Commission who were visiting Kohima, on behalf of the Naga people.⁵⁷ It expressed their unhappiness over the

56. Alemchiba Ao, op.cit., pp. 162-63.

57. Ghosh, op.cit., p. 155.

inclusion of Naga Hills within the province of Assam as part of the Reformed Scheme of India. In April 1945, a Naga Hills District Tribal Council was established by the Government. The tribal Council was established with an aim to unite all Naga tribes.⁵⁸ However this Naga Tribal Council did not live long, for it changed its name to Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946. Ghosh says that the original aim of the Naga Tribal Council "was to look into the welfare and fulfil the social aspirations of the Nagas". However, with the change of its name to NNC it emerged into a powerful, and the only, political party in Nagaland.⁵⁹

The NNC was a tribal representative body, consisting of 29 members. Among the members office bearers were elected. Every Naga family were supposed to pay rupee one for the maintenance of the organization.⁶⁰ Z.A. Phizo was elected first NNC President in 1946.

The Nagas under the leadership of NNC believed that once the British leave India they would be left free. But when the British handed over power, the arrangements included the administered area of Naga

58. Alemchiba Ao, op.cit., p. 165.

59. Ghosh, op.cit., p. 158.

60. Alemchiba Ao, Ibid.

Hills District. When India became a Republic under a new Constitution, which also provided district autonomy for the Nagas within the state of Assam, the NNC, with Z.A. Phizo as President, launched a movement for a sovereign, independent State of Nagaland, to be based on Christian principles.

In the initial stage of the movement, public opinion was created and the general public was mobilized. Naga political leaders declared that Nagaland would be a 'Christian State'. Following the policy of the NNC, the Naga people boycotted the first Lok Sabha elections (1952). The political situation was becoming very slippery in the Hills. It amounted to open rebellion and the government of India reacted by inducting massive armed force into the Naga hills. An armed encounter between the "Naga Federal Army" and the Government forces ensued. Much blood has been shed; villages were burnt down; grouping of villages was imposed to discourage dissension. It will serve no purpose to revive bitter memories, 'but it is recognised, to everybody's shame, that this was one of the darker chapter in the history of the Naga Hills.⁶¹ According to Tajen Ao:

61. Nari Rustamji, Imperilled Frontiers, 1983, p. 31.

In the midst of the holocaust, the Naga leaders exhorted the people by telling the story about the suffering of the Israelies in the hands of enemies during their exodus from Egypt to the promised land. During their suffering they often prayed to God and derived peace and solace in their prayer and thereby hundreds of people were converted throughout Naga Hills. ⁶²

After about 18 headache years of political turmoil the state of Nagaland was granted on 1 December 1963. On 6 September 1964 cease fire was declared. People were much relieved. At last Naga people had the opportunity to fully participate in the national mainstream. However, Naga political insurgency still continued. The Peace Mission was founded in Kohima in 1964, with J.P. Narayan as its President. Dr. Aram has vividly described the role of the Peace Mission and the role of the Church in solving the Naga political problems. ⁶³ The role of Church leaders like Rev. Longri Ao in bringing a solution to the Naga political problem will be appreciated by the younger generation.

63. Dr. Aram, Peace in Nagaland.

Chapter IV

BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

In this chapter we shall examine two important aspects of British occupation of Naga Hills - the British Policy and system of administration. In the recent past many scholars have done good deal of work on the subject. "British Policy and administration in Nagaland (1881-1947)" of Piketo Sema is a fine example of such scholastic work. However, in this study we shall limit our discussion to the influence of the British administration on the Naga social and cultural life.

The Policy:

By the treaty of Yandabo 24th February 1826,¹ the whole of Northeast India come under the influence of British. Following the treaty the colonial government consolidated its position in Assam, Cachar, Manipur and Jaintia.² The treaty however slurred over the importance of the territories belonging to the turbulent hill tribes of North East Frontier, viz., the Nagas, Khasis, Garos, Mizos and tribes of what is now Arunachal Pradesh; all these were accommodated as appendages to Assam.

1. S.K. Bhuyan, Ango-Assamese Relations, 1974, p. 547-50.

2. P.C. Chakravarty, British Relations With the Hill tribes of Assam, 1964, p. 16.

Following the annexation of Assam and its contiguous areas, the company developed inevitable contacts with the area beyond the actual social and political control of their feudatory states. However, in the case of the Nagas, the depredations caused by them compelled the British to entrust the control of these tribes to the Rajas of Cachar and Manipur States which were "protected" by the British.³ But in 1835, when Naga raids became frequent in Cachar and Manipur frontier, Tularam Senapati of Manipur openly stated his inability to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining order in the Naga hills. The failure on the part of the protected states to keep Nagas in check again reverted this responsibility to the British. Thus the British Policy towards Naga tribes from 1832 to 1881 formed the background of the study of British occupation of Naga Hills. During this period ^{some} the government followed a policy of non-interference. In all British official correspondence "the policy of non-interference" is to be seen throughout this period. Now non-interference can be understood in two ways. Firstly, as long as their settled districts were safe from Naga raids, the government was satisfied and had no desire to interfere

3. For. Deptt. Pol. A., December 1839, No. 90(N.A.I.).

in tribal affairs. Secondly, after the Naga Hills was brought directly under British rule in 1881 the policy of non-interference took on a different character. This aspect would be discussed in the next section. We shall now examine the first phase of non-interference policy in some detail. Piketo Sema says that "although formally the treaty of Yandabo had encompassed Naga inhabited area within the spheres to British influence for some decades it remained beyond the pale of British administration." Piketo further says that the treaty had no immediate impact on the Nagas and their undefined country.⁴

The first direct Angle-Naga contact was in 1832 during the strategic survey of road communication between Manipur and the fabulous Brahmaputra valley through Naga Hills when an expedition party was passing by Angami country on its way from Manipur to Assam.⁵ The constant Naga raids on the British subjects of the Cachar and Nowgong frontiers attracted the immediate attention of the British Government towards the Nagas during early stage. In their efforts to maintain peace

4. Piketo Sema, British Policy and Administration in Nagaland, 1986, p. (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University).

5. For Deptt. Extrl. A, March, 1832, p. No. 70. (N.A.I.).

and security of their settled districts, however, the British could not follow any consistent policy until 1881 when Naga hills were brought under the British Indian system of Administration.⁶

Piketo used the phrase "Defence of the lowland" to explain the British policy towards Naga tribes. The immediate British concern was to protect the British Districts of Assam plains and keep the Nagas at bay. However, regular Naga raids on the colonial frontier and its subjects made the government change its policy from time to time depending on the circumstances. To check Naga raids the government sent expeditions into the hills. The expeditions were conducted with the desire to establish peaceful relations with the Nagas.⁷ However, each expedition met with the tribes, resistance. The return of government forces from the hills would be followed by new Naga raids on administered territories. The Nagas were proud of their freedom, and when they saw uniformed men who were so strange to them, they could not take these men of the government expedition party as a peace mission, as the government would have hoped. Each expedition was therefore followed by renewed Naga raids on British subjects throughout the

6. B.C. Allen, Assam District Gazetteer, Naga Hills and Manipur, Vol. IX, 1905, p. 9.

7. Piketo Sema, op.cit., 1986, p. 9.

period. During 1853 to 1862, 19 raids occurred in which in all 252 British subjects were killed, wounded or carried off.⁸ Nevertheless, government continued their persistent, relentless effort to establish friendly relationship with Nagas by sending government officers to one Naga village after another, trying to induce its chief to enter into a peace agreement and abstain from attacks on British subjects.⁹

As a measure of peace, the government offered peaceful attractions such as trading facilities, specially for essential commodities needed by the Nagas, viz. salt, dry fish, steel utensils, oil, cloth etc.

Often government peace efforts faltered on the Nagas' inability to keep an agreement. In 1841, Naga village chiefs from Angami country came to Nowgong and made agreement with government promising to obey and pay a yearly tribute,¹⁰ but in December 1844, the chiefs refused to pay the tribute to the British.¹¹

8. Ibid, p. 18.

9. For Deptt. Pol. A, November, 1846, Nos. 17-21.(N.A.I.).

10. For. Deptt. Pol.A, June 1842, Nos. 10-13. (N.A.I.).

11. For Deptt. Pol. A., May 1846, Nos. 30-31.(N.A.I.).

As a result the government once again sent an expedition in November 1845 under Captain Butler, and he successfully collected the tribute from the chiefs.¹²

While pursuing the policy of friendly relations the government's attention was drawn to another aspect of the problem. While it wanted to maintain peace with the Nagas it also felt that it had to interfere in order to settle internal feuds among the Nagas. On 3 August 1848, government sent an expedition to the Hills to settle such internal feuds. Unfortunately Bhogchand, the leader of the expedition, was killed by a combined attack of Angami villages Mezuma and Khonoma.¹³ In response, the government sent another expedition under Lt. Vincent to Naga country in June 1849.¹⁴

At this time the government's authority was put to the test by Nagas. On 8th February 1851, Kekrima, a powerful village of East Kohima, sent two messengers to the camp of Captain Vincent, who had been visiting Naga villages, offering a trial of strength. They handed over a handsome spear to Vincent, with remarks: "Your sipahees are flesh and blood as well as ourselves, come

12. For Deptt. Pol. A., June 1845, Nos. 125-126. (N.A.I.).

13. For Deptt. Pol. A., November 1849, Nos., 157-158. (N.A.I.).

14. Ibid.

and fight man to man; here is a specimen of our weapon."¹⁵

The British power under Captain Vincent would not allow itself to be underestimated. Accordingly on 11 February 1851 the British forces attacked the village. The Kekrima, though brave, were no match for the British forces which used modern fire arms against their daos and spears. More than 100 Nagas were reported killed against 3 killed and 70 wounded on the side of the British.¹⁶

The British government had exhibited its superior power over the Nagas. Under the circumstances it thought it wiser to follow the policy of non-intervention concretely. This became evident during the Manipur invasion of the southern parts of Naga Hills, ~~early~~ 1860s. 22 villages requested the government for protection from the depredations of Manipuri forces. However in keeping with its policy of non-intervention, it regarded Naga Hills as being beyond its concern. In its effort to pursue the policy already laid down, the government withdrew its forces from Dimapur further to an area in North Cachar Hills. To consolidate its defence, the government appointed a European officer in 1853 to take charge of North Cachar, where Border Police posts

15. For Deptt. Pol. A, March 1851, no. 245. (N.A.I.).

16. Ibid.

were established at Asalu, Semkhor and Linglo, and patrol lines were maintained to check the infiltration of the Nagas.¹⁷ Nagas continued their regular raids on British subjects, posing a continual threat to the administration. Yet the government continued its non-intervention policy for a long time.

Ultimately, the government had to reconsider its policy towards Naga Hills. In 1866 it decided to establish the district of Naga Hills.¹⁸ Accordingly North Cachar was given a boundary to the west of Dhanasiri, and Doyang was formed into a new district with its headquarters at Samaguting.¹⁹ The policy pursued hereafter was not *so* much different from that followed earlier. The British Officers as an administrative duty would visit Naga villages and invite their chiefs to submit to British government. Those who agreed were to pay an annual tribute as a token of submission and in return would receive all aid and protection. Where Naga chiefs were not willing, the government would not press hard on them.²⁰

17. For Deptt. Pol. A, March 1880, nos. 657-663 KW, no. 2 (N.A.I.).

18. For Deptt. Extl. -A., July 1980, nos. 122. (N.A.I.).

19. Ibid.

20. For Deptt. Pol. A, June 1866, no. 39. (N.A.I.).

The policy to be pursued from Samaguting was to check Naga raids on British frontiers and internal raids too. The government was successful in checking the raids on the frontier. But the Nagas continued to raid each other just across the border.²¹ The bigger villages always oppressed the smaller villages and exploited them. At the same time, Naga raids continued on the villages under British control near the border. Thus the immediate concern of the British Government was to check Naga raids on the administered frontier and to impose effective control over Angami country. Kohima was found to be suitable for this purpose. Subsequently the government of India agreed to transfer the district headquarters from Samaguting to Kohima on 24 March 1879.²² An administrative report with regard to the occupation of Kohima and its result and the future policy to be adopted in dealing with Nagas said:

For some years, the various officers in this district have pressed strongly on government the necessity of extending British influence throughout the whole country inhabited by the Naga tribes and introduction of a more vigorous policy than which had hitherto been in vogue. Eventually, the government of India was pleased to decide that time has come to interfere actively in intertribal feuds and suppress, once for

21. Sir Robert Reid, A history of the Assam Frontier areas bordering in Assam, 1942, p. 99.

22. For. Deptt. Pol. A, January 1880, nos. 495-497. (N.A.I.).

all, the system of murder which had so long flourished unchecked in the hills. In order that this policy might be efficiently carried into effect, and that the Political Officer might be able to enforce his order with greater promptitude than could be done at Samaguting, it was decided that the headquarters of the districts should be moved to a more commanding position in the centre of the hills and the spot first chosen was Wokha. Doubts were, however, raised as to whether this was the best spot that could be found or not and last year Colonel Keath-inge personally visited the hills, and decided on Kohima as the best site for the new station.

Subsequent events have fully vindicated the wisdom of this choice. Apart from the fact Kohima is in itself much better fitted for a Headquarters station than Wokha; it would have been impossible for an officer stationed at latter place, at a distance of four days journey to have exercised any effectual control over the Angamis the most turbulent and warlike of any of the tribes in the district²³

The above report indicates that the government was relieved that it could successfully penetrate to the interior of Naga country and was fairly confident that, from Kohima district headquarters it could extend its influence all over Naga Hills. As noticed in the above report, once it could manage to control the most turbulent Angami Nagas, the government believed that it would manage to control the other tribes.

23. For Deptt. Pol. A., January 1880, Nos. 498-511, (NAL).

However, as the British were well aware, they would have to pay a high price first of all to bring Angami Nagas under their subjection.

Mr. Damant, the Political Agent of Kohima, considered the general aspect of his relations with the Angamis settled and satisfactory enough that he proposed making an extended tour in the early part of the cold weather late in 1879 among the eastern Nagas, to enquire into some intertribal raids which had been occurring among the Hatigorias.²⁴ It was apparently with a view of ascertaining the real feeling of the Khonoma and Jotsoma in Angami country, a group of villages, that Damant determined to visit them, before undertaking his tour among the eastern Nagas. Damant would have expected to be received peacefully if not in a friendly spirit. But Mr. Damant, one of the most able British Officers in Naga Hills had to pay the price to establish British rule in Naga Hills with his own life. February 1880, Sir S.C. Bayley the Chief Commissioner of Assam reports on the circumstances that led to murder of Mr. Damant:

24. Hatigorias is an Assamese name of Ao country and is used by the government in all official correspondence till the end of 19th century.

On Monday, the 13th October Damant set out on his ill-fated expedition, accompanied by an escort of 86 men of all ranks, 21 military and 65 police. He halted for the night at Jotsoma, and thence obtained coolies to carry the baggage of the party to Khonoma. Before starting the next morning Mr. Damant was warned by a Jotsoma interpreter that the Khonoma men meant mischief. One of Mr. Damant's escorts narrates that the interpreter begged Mr. Damant not to go and on several occasions fell in front of Political Officer and caught him by the hand, beseeching him not to proceed; but Mr. Damant replied that there was no danger.

On arriving at the foot hill on the summit of which the strongly fortified village of Khonoma stands Mr. Damant left his baggage, with half his escort to protect it, and advanced with the other half of the party up the steep pathway leading upto the village. On arriving at its entrance, the gate of the fortress was found to be closed, and a fire of musketry was suddenly opened on the party from behind the walls. Mr. Damant fell dead at the first discharge shot through the head, and the small party which accompanied him, as well as the baggage guard below, were immediately attacked and surrounded by overwhelming numbers of the Nagas, who swarmed down on them from the village. Defending themselves, as best they could the party dispersed, and were most of them cut off by the Nagas.

The Jotsoma men joined in the attack and the Chetonoma Khel of Kohima lay in wait to intercept the survivors from reaching the stockade. Some few, however, succeeded in making good their escape and got back to Kohima; a few others hid themselves in the jungles and found their way, after much suffering and privation, singly or by twos or threes, some to the stockade of Kohima, some to Pephima and some to Samaguting. Ultimately, of the 65 police who accompanied Mr. Damant, 25 were found to be killed or missing, and 14 wounded. Of 21 military, ten were killed and five were wounded.²⁵

The government believed that Damant's murder was a pre-planned step to extirpate Europeans from their country by the Khonoma. After the murder, thirteen Naga villages combined and besieged the British garrison at Kohima. All routes from Kohima to Wokha, Samaguting and Manipur were blocked. However, a messenger escaped and reached Wokha on 16th October and conveyed the news to Mr. Hinde, the Assistant Commissioner. By this time the telegraph line was operating between Kohima and Manipur (Imphal). The Naga messenger to Samaguting never reached his destination.²⁶ The Naga besieged the stockade from October 16 to 27. They contaminated the water supply by putting in it the human heads that they had gathered the other day. The food supply in the garrison was reduced greatly. The Nagas constantly sent the message to the garrison to leave Kohima. But to leave Kohima would have been as dangerous as remaining there, for the Nagas were serious. It was believed that if the garrison moved down from Kohima they would never reach Samaguting. The western Angami villages, Murama and Phipema, were on their way. On the night of 24th October a Naga who spoke broken Hindustani delivered an important lecture, that, "the Britisher had come to their country and occupied their land, had cut their

26. Ghosh; op.cit., p. 103.

trees and bamboos and grass, and wanted revenue from them and made them furnish coolies".²⁷ For want of food and water, the garrison entered into negotiations and agreed to surrender, if allowed a free passage to Samaguting.

Colonel Johnstone, the Political Officer of Manipur, had, as soon as the news of Mr. Damant's death reached him, returned a telegraph message to Mr. Cawley, District Superintendent of Police, Kohima assuring his help.²⁸ The dramatic siege of Kohima ended with Johnstone's arrival along with a force of 2000 Manipuri troops and his own escort of 30 sepoy and 50 police. On their approach, the Nagas withdrew from the stockade.²⁹

Following the siege, in November 1879 an expedition was sent against the villages involved in the attacks on the British garrison. On 22 November, the British troops attacked Khonoma. After loss of two officers and 44 other ranks and two wounded, the British troops occupied the village. However, the Khonoma had already evacuated to the spur of Jafvo mountain at the height of 7000 feet, leaving their village. Of the thirteen villages

27. For. Deptt. Pol. A. February 1880, Nos. 308-335(N.A.I.)

28. For Deptt. Pol. A. February 1880, No. 278(N.A.I.).

29. For. Deptt. Pol. A. March 1880, No. 336.(N.A.I.).

Piphima, Murama, Sachima, Sephema, and Muchauma were destroyed after some engagements, Khonoma was razed to the ground, Jotsoma was captured and partially burnt.

The brave Khonoma, who encamped at the Chakka Fort continued their guerilla warfare. However, in February-March 1880, the troops besieged their fort and cut their supplies. Khonoma yielded to the British troops and the fort was captured on 28 March 1880.³⁰

With the capture of Khonoma, government took precautionary measures against possible further insurrection among the tribes. All villages which had participated against the government were summarily punished, and some villages like Khonoma were not allowed to resettle at their original village site; instead they were directed to settle in some accessible location.³¹ Next, all villages had to submit to an agreement to pay 1 maund rice and 1 rupee per house per year as revenue, to provide a certain amount of labour annually for state purposes, and appoint a headman who should be responsible for good order, carrying out the wishes of the government.³²

The British occupation of Kohima thus was a landmark in the history of Anglo-Naga relations. The further

30. For. Deptt. Pol. A. April 28, 1880, Nos. 264-265.

31. For. Deptt. Pol. A. January 1882, Nos. 134-137, K.W. No. 1 (N.A.I).

32. Ibid.

extension of colonial rule in Naga Hills was a gradual process which went on steadily almost throughout our period. The British directed their policies primarily towards practical and pressing problems such as the establishment of law and order, dispensing of justice, and, not the least, the raising of the revenue necessary for discharging the function of government. In 1875 a new sub-division had been established in Wokha for controlling the powerful Lotha villages of that area which had recently killed Captain Butler, a British Survey Officer.³³ When the Ao, who were then outside the administration, raided the Lotha the government punished the Ao aptly. However, whenever the Lotha raided the Ao, they were left unpunished. This was the immediate situation when the government decided to shift the sub-divisional, head-quarter from Wokha to Mokokchung in Ao country in 1890,³⁴ the former being left in charge of a Tahsildar. This move was also for control of the trans-Dikhu tribal wars.³⁵

The British administration keep the limit of their control at Ao area till 1947.³⁶ "In 1947 when the power

33. For. Deptt. Pol. A. January 1882, Nos. 134-137(N.A.I.).

34. For. Deptt. Extl. February 1890, Nos. 156 K.W.(N.A.I.).

35. Ibid, no. 154 K.W.

36. Piketo Sema, op.cit., 1986, p.42.

was transferred at least half of the present state of Nagaland was left unadministered".³⁷ It was in 1962, Naga Hill Tuensang district was joined with the Naga Hills District to create a new administrative unit - the state of Nagaland which was inaugurated on 1 December 1963.³⁸ (For illustration please see the map in the next page).

The Administrative System

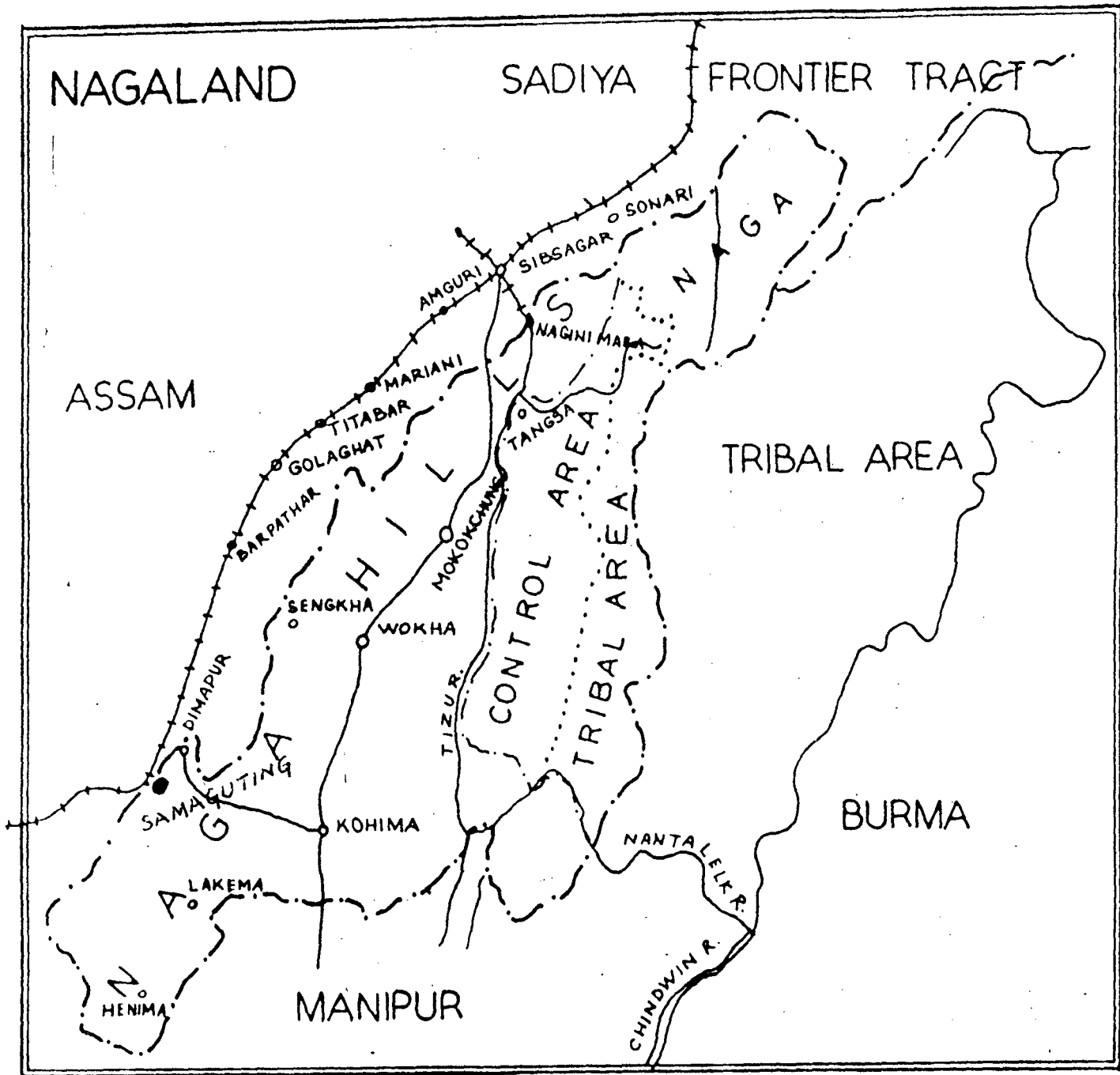
Active British rule in Naga Hills District lasted for about 70 years (1881-1947). During this period the colonial rule concentrated on law and order in this bordering district. The British idea of law and order in Naga Hills appeared to have been derived from their observation of the absence of law and order in the Naga society.³⁹ In 1866, when the Naga Hills district headquarters was established in Samaguting, the government aimed to reclaim the Nagas "from habits of lawlessness to those of order and civilization".⁴⁰ Even after the assumption of active administration in 1881, the main concern of the administration was to put an end

37. Ibid.

38. By the State of Nagaland Act, 1962, by taking the Naga Hills - Tuensang area out of the state of Assam formed a new state of Nagaland. D.D. Basu: Introduction to the Constitution of India, 1985, p.248.

39. For. Deptt. Pol. A. January 1880, nos. 498-511.

40. Assam Judicial Proceedings, June 1866, Nos. 133-34(N.A.I.)



British Naga Hills District of Assam

to Naga head-hunting and raiding of each other's villages.

During those 70 years there is no evidence to show any serious attempt by the colonial regime in the economic or social sphere. During this period tea plantation was developed in Assam, and within a short span of time Assam emerged as a major tea producing area. However no tea plantation was developed in the Naga Hills. The Colonial rule initiated western education; however, from the very beginning, the school work was entrusted to the missionaries. Bareh has noted that when the missionaries' efforts in school work had borne fruits, "they were emulated by the government which started to open schools and educational institutions."⁴¹ Government showed real interest in school institution^s about 1939-40 by opening a high school in Kohima.⁴² Reporting on education during the British period, Ghosh wrote:

During British time not much government attention was paid towards education or any developmental works and so the progress of education was slow. After Independence of India, the Assam government looked into the matter, and some more Primary Schools were opened, and wherever possible the Primary School was converted into Middle and Middle School was converted into High School, in the then Naga Hills as a whole.⁴³

41. H. Bareh, Gazetteers of Nagaland, 1970, p. 191.

42. Ibid, p. 191.

43. Ghosh, Gazetteer of India, 1983, p. 211.

Soon after the occupation of Kohima (1881) the British government realized the need of a new administrative system which would suit the Naga tribes. This was necessary for the government to control them and at the same time to facilitate their accepting of British authority. This was something different from what the British were doing in the Indian sub-continent. In his comparative study of British Imperialism in India and Africa, Low says:

In India the British succeeded to the paramount traditional authority of the Indian state. One can see the point here very clearly in the operation of the Indian land revenue system. In India there was an intimate relation between land and taxation (there was no such relation in Africa, where the basic taxation was not land revenue, but first hut tax and then the poll tax), and what happened was that the British simply took over the traditional role of the Indian state in regard to land and claimed and received the share (or at least something which approximated to the share) of produce of the soil which had traditionally been the state's perquisite.⁴⁴

Low further says that "in India they frequently worked through rajas, Zamindars and village headmen of one sort or another. In Africa they were constantly on the look out for Chiefs".⁴⁵ The establishment of British

44. J.A. Low, The Lion Rampant, 1972, p. 10.

45. Ibid., p. 19.

imperial authority in Africa was at almost the same time that it was reaching over the Naga tribes, that is to say, late 19th century (1880 - 1900).⁴⁶ As in Africa so in all the administered area of Naga Hills colonial administration imposed house tax of Rs. 2 as a token of submission to British authority.⁴⁷ In establishing its authority, the colonial administration recognised the village chiefs' legitimate authority and appointed the chiefs as Gaonboras as was done also in regions of Africa which did not have Kingdoms before the colonial phase.⁴⁸

On the District level a Dobashi⁴⁹ Court was established to assist in the daily administrative transactions of the government. A 'two tier system' of administration, viz. the village and the district levels, was established. The heads of these administrative units were the Gaonboras at the village level and the Deputy Commissioner and Sub-Divisional Officer at the District level.⁵⁰

In the actual administration the Nagas were left to continue to rule and administer their villages according

46. Ibid.

47. For. Deptt. Pol. A. January 1882, nos. 134-137(N.A.I.).

48. Low, op.cit., p. 18-22.

49. For detail, please see below.

50. Piketo Sema; op.cit., p. 51.

to their respective customs and traditions with the least possible interference from the government. The main bulk of the administration such as judicial cases, whether criminal or civil, were carried on through the tribal people themselves.⁵¹ This technique of administration proved very successful and had lasting effect in the District Administration. According to Piketo, "this technique of administration left the Nagas free to govern themselves in their traditional ways while saving the government from the expensive responsibility of detailed administration." Thus the British adopted the native system which would suit local taste while arranging also law and order among the tribals. In other words the British did not seek to interfere in the internal affairs of the Nagas nor try to administer them according to an European model. In some ways they re-inforced the traditional arrangements which suited the peculiar conditions of the Naga people and society.⁵²

Thus the structure of the district administration left the Nagas with no direct weight of alien rule, British rule did not in any way seriously affect the basic social structure of the Nagas it remained traditional in character and contents.⁵³

51. N. Rustamji, Imperial Frontiers, 1983, p. 26.

52. Piketo Sema, op.cit., p. 53.

53. Ibid. , p. 55.

A new role ushered in the field of administration through British rule in Naga Hills is that of Dobashi.⁵⁴ The Gaonbara or village chief was not a government servant though he was selected by the government. He would act as a 'liason officer' between the government and the villagers.⁵⁵ In recognition of this role, they were presented red blankets once in 3 years.⁵⁶ But the Dobashis were government servants appointed by the government.⁵⁷ In 1870s Naga delegates were sent along with the Police force to remote villages to assist the police force to settle disputes among the Nagas there.⁵⁸ Later on the delegates acted as escorts for the Political Officer's tours of Naga villages, also supplying him with the necessary information. This became a permanent institution of Dobashi when the regular administrative system was established in Naga Hills in 1881.⁵⁹ It remains a powerful organ of district administration in Nagaland to this day.

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54. Piketo Sema, op. cit. p explain like this. This word is derived from Hindi word 'Dobhasia', which etymologically means a speaker of two languages. A Dobashi translated a tribal language to a British officer in broken Assamese, and vice-versa. Also see Ghosh op. cit. p. 151-52.
55. Ibid, p. 152.
56. For. Deptt. Extl. B. June, 1891, nos. 62-68. The same year Government bought 600 yards of red broad cloths for presentation to the Naga Hill Tribes.
57. For. Deptt. Pol. A. June 1872, Nos. 510, KW 13. Early 1870's monthly salary of the Dobashi was Rs. 10/- (N.A.I.).
58. For Deptt. Pol. A. Dec. 1870, No. 31. (N.A.I.).
59. For Deptt. Pol. A. May 1876, Nos. 101-3. (N.A.I.).

The Government appointed the Dobashi as native judges since they were familiar with the situation of their own people. Whenever an European officer moved, a Dobashi would accompany him and serve as intermediary between the officer and the villagers⁶⁰. Later on the role of the Dobashi became so important that, under special circumstances, the senior ones among them were given charge of the administration of the subdivision⁶¹ but this was not normal practice.

Administration apart, the British rule did not have much influence by way of other developmental works in Naga Hills⁶². C.A. Elliott, Chief Commissioner of Assam between 1881 and 1885, foresaw the great need of extending the practice of terracing as an alternative to Jhming; but this could not materialize for long. About 1915, Hutton, Dy. Commissioner of Naga Hill, introduced terraces into Sema country but this seems not to have caught on for Nagas continued to practice Jhming even after 1947. Hutton also advocated the cultivation of potatoes as this was successful in Garo Hills⁶³. But this also could not have been successfully extended to other parts of Naga Hills.

60. For Deptt. Pol. A. op. cit. No. 272, (N.A.I.)

61. For Deptt. Pol. A. Feb. 1876, No. 103. (N.A.I.)

62. Ghosh, op. cit. p. 211.

63. Robert Reid: op. cit. p. 101.

Major changes in the fabric of Naga society during the British period, however, are to be seen through the introduction of Christianity and education. As in other colonies, Christianity has often preceded actual political control, whether in Africa or India or elsewhere. In his comparative study, Low wrote:

... Christianity often provided the framework for the structuring of a new order which, with imperial rule, was in any event overtaking both in India and Africa⁶⁴.

The primary motive of colonization was commercial in 17th and 18th centuries and later. However, the role of Christianity cannot be denied in the process of colonization:

The importance of the missionary movement in stimulating imperialism can hardly be exaggerated. The Spanish, Portuguese and later on, the French (in the patent granted by Louis XIV to the French Company of the West in 1664) were all animated by missionary zeal and the spread of Christianity. In all parts of the world missionary preceded the merchants and the magistrate, often preparing the way for them and making their operations easy and possible⁶⁵.

In more backward regions where a state of barbarism or savagery exists, the way for the achievement of direct political control over the native people is often effectually prepared by the missionary influence⁶⁶.

64. Low, op. cit. p. 139.

65. V. Shivaram, Comparative Colonial Policy 1926, p. 6.

66. Ibid, p. 9.

The British observers of Naga society often alleged that it was in a "lower state of culture". The British administration of Assam realized that, through the introduction of Christianity and modern education, these Naga tribes would be brought to the "light of civilization". Accordingly, the Chief Commissioner of Assam major F. Jenkin, invited the Baptist Mission to open a school in Sadiya, Assam, for the hill tribes of Singpo and Khamti. The politically unstable situation in Assam led the mission to extend its activities to Naga Hills in 1840⁶⁷. However, the Naga Mission remained **abeyance** for a full generation. As we noticed earlier, it was Dr. Clark who resumed the active Naga Mission in 1872. Thus, it was the colonial government which initiated the spread of Christianity in the beginning. Certainly, the government fully supported the school works almost throughout the British period in Naga Hills. Today any Naga would unmistakably say that it was through the coming of Christianity and education that the Nagas entered the light of civilized world.

67. For Deptt. Pol. A. Aug. 1840, No. 93. (N.A.I.).

Chapter V

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT

Christianity in Nagaland has had a lasting effect on the social and cultural life of the people. It has entered the fabric of the tribal way of life. It has been said that British administration rendered minimum possible interference in the overall development of the Naga people and their way of life. As Rustamji rightly pointed out:

It was the missionary, and not the administrator, who was the main harbinger of change in the religious beliefs and way of life of the tribal people. And if there was sometimes conflict between the administrator and the missionary, it was over the former's apprehension that the missionary was bringing about changes that would prove detrimental to the cohesion and vitality of tribal society and culture¹.

In the following pages we shall examine the changes in the social fabric of the Naga people in the process of proselytization.

1. Behavioural Changes:

One set of positive and significant changes has been concerning social habits and customs. The main concern of the British Government in Naga Hills administration was to check Naga raids. Earlier the Government policy was to protect the British subjects along the frontier and not to interfere in Naga affairs. But

1. . Nari Rustamji, op. cit. p. 26.

the Nagas from across the frontier raided the British administered villages; and also massacres went on just across the border, observed by British officers. In the Hills, the smaller villages were constantly under the threat of bigger villages and were not allowed to carry on trade with others. Moreover, inter-tribal feuds which consequently led to massacres among the tribes worried the British government. The government felt that if the Nagas were left as they were in their habit of "lawlessness", very soon the whole tribe would be extinct². Such a condition was difficult for the British to contemplate,³ and a regular administrative system was established in Naga Hills in 1881. Subsequently, administrative problems appear to have become more complex.

In 1886, Merangkong attacked Molungyimchen (Dekahaimong), killing five persons and wounding others and finally burning the village completely to the ground⁴. Knowing the feud between these two villages, Clark tried to keep the matter at bay, but in April 1886 Merangkong put into effect a deliberately conceived plan to attack Molungyimchen⁵.

2. Robert Reid, op. cit. p. 101.

3. Assam Judicial Proceedings: June 1866 Nos. 133-34.

4. Molungyimchen is the place where Clark first started his mission work, but later he was staying in the adjacent village with a slightly different name, Molungyimsen (new Molung), which he and the new converts themselves had established recently.

5. Ghosh, op. cit. p. 115.

During the 1880s and the 1890s, there were numerous Government expeditions against Naga villages, all in connection with Naga raids on each other's villages. In May 1887, residents of two Nunkum villages in Ao country were reported murdered by the Sema of Sanchang, and more Nunkum people were killed by the trans-frontier Lotha village, Arc, on 5 June 1887. The government fined both the Lotha and the Sema villages, and one Lobongo Lotha by name was sentenced to 15 years' transportation for murder of Imrungtuba⁶. Similarly in 1888, two Ao villages were attacked by two principal tribes of Chang and Sangtam of trans-Dikhu tribes⁷. Ghosh notes the loss of 173 lives at Mongsenyimti and 44 in Longkong, the two Ao villages⁸. Two British subjects were reported murdered during 1884-85 by Nagas living beyond the frontier⁹. Thus the main business of the administration in those formative years was to control these menacing Naga raids, and British knew that this was not an easy task.

However, as the government took stern action against head-hunting practice, this was dying out gradually. It is hard to say when head-hunting stopped completely in Naga Hills. It is true that even after 1947, it was

6. Ibid, p. 117.

7. Trans-Dikhu tribes denote the Naga tribes beyond Dikhu river. The Ao name for the river is Tzula. The British administration used the term Dikhu for Tzula.

8. Ibid, p. 120.

9. For Deptt. Extl. A: Sept. 1885, nos. 36-38.(N.A.I.).

practised in the unadministered area, but as the government extended its rule, and the Churches were being established in all the administered areas, the habit of head-hunting disappeared.

Yet another social practice among the Naga tribes was that of slavery. It was customary for some rich men to possess as many as 20 slaves¹⁰. Ghosh noted that Ao country was "notorious for its extensive system of slavery"¹¹. In his statistical account of Angami Naga, Hunter wrote:

They make frequent incursions for the purpose of taking slaves, who are afterwards ransomed by their friends giving cloth, conch shells, beads, cows or pigs. A male slave is said to be worth one cow and three conch shells; female is more valuable and her ransom is fixed at three cows and four or five conch shells¹².

It is evident that slavery was practised in Angami country also but no elaborate accounts are available. It appears that slavery was more elaborate among the Aos. Slaves were not allowed to marry, nor to possess property. At first, the government was in a dilemma over how to deal with the practice of slavery in Ao area. Later, it decided

10. Reid, op. cit. p. 124.

11. Ghosh, op. cit. p. 116.

12. Hunter, Statistical Account of Assam, 1975, p. 81.

to discourage the supposed rights of the slave owner¹³. Tajen Ao reports that slaves were released in 1894 from the following Ao villages: Mongsezymti 3, Susu 22, Unger 2 and Santong 3¹⁴.

Fürer Haimendorf gives a personal account of the release of five slaves by Mills in Chingmei village of Konyak Naga in 1920s¹⁵. But no detailed account of slavery is available for Konyak area or other tribes. However, considering the similarities in social life among the Naga tribes, it is likely that slavery was practised among the other Naga tribes probably along the same lines as among the Aos.

Slavery seems to have been given up before head-hunting. Government could not stop slavery outright since it was its policy not to interfere with the domestic institutions of the tribes¹⁶. However, as Christianity spread, slavery disappeared in Ao country slowly and completely.

In the New Testament, Ephesians, Chapter 5:18, says, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit". Drunkenness is thus not

13. Reid op. cit. p. 124.

14. Tajen Ao, op. cit. p. 76.

15. Fürer Haimendorf, The Naked Naga, 1976, pp. 120-24.

16. Ghosh, op. cit. p. 116.

the way for the believers in Christ to behave. Instead they should be filled with the Holy Spirit. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ".

On another occasion, Paul wrote about the conduct of the Elders (deacons) in the Church in I Timothy 3:3, "not given to much wine, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not lover of money". As an overseer Timothy should see that an Elder in the Church be more spiritual, one who conducts himself spiritually before God.

Drinking 'rice beer'¹⁷ has been a social habit among Naga tribes. This gave rise to a considerable degree of problem to the British administration as well as the mission. When drinking in excess, specially during festivals, Nagas would engage in rioting which concerned the administration. Reporting on crime among the Nagas, a British officer wrote in 1885:

The most common offence is rioting generally occurring at the time of harvest and other festivals, when the extra strong brew of rice liquor

17. This is a local drink made of fine rice. The Assamese name of rice beer is 'Madhu', the term which was used by the British. Its Ao name is 'Yi;in Angami it is called 'Zu'.

deadens the dictates of prudence and engenders that love of a free fight characteristic of almost all uncivilized races¹⁸.

Following the Scriptures literally, the mission was dogmatic about rice beer. When the Perrines and the Haggards came to Molungyimsen (1892-93) they demanded that the believers give up drink completely¹⁹.

How could the Nagas give up the age old habit so easily? This was a serious concern for the mission for a long time.²⁰ People continued to drink. However, the mission emphasised the scriptural doctrine and asked that the believer behave in a holy manner. In course of time the habit of drink was gradually given up.

2. Structural Changes:

The new British administrative system at the village and district levels provided an administrative hierarchy: the Gaonboras or the chiefs at the village level and sub-divisional officer (SDO) and Deputy Commissioner (DC) at the district level. The D.C. was at the apex of district administration. He was in turn responsible to the Governor of Assam, who was the agent of the Governor.

19. Puthenpurakal, op.cit., p. 109.

20. Ibid, p. 110.

On the other hand a new social outlook was emerging through the mission. Traditionally, Naga society had been a limited village society. A chief would have been the leader of a particular village. Traditionally there were no Angami, Sema, Lotha or Ao chiefs overall. Konyak 'Ang' controlled some 2 or 3 villages together. Similarly the Chang chiefs also extended their influence to villages around the 'chief' village. But the 'Ang' chief did not speak for Konyak tribe as a whole nor was there a chief for Chang tribe. To protect their own village was the primary concern for the residents of each village in the past.

With the coming of Christianity, a Church was organized in each village; and the mission tried to open a school there too. The believers in each Church were left with one pastor and a group of elders or deacons, called 'Deacon Board'. The size of the Deacon Board depended on the size of the village Church. At this stage the mission could not have provided a professional, trained Pastor in the Churches; but they appointed whoever was available for the 'Lord's ministry' as Pastor of an organized Church. The Pastor, as head of the Church, assisted by the Deacon Board managed the local Church matters.

The second aspect of Church organization is in the construction of the Church building. As we have noted earlier, Clark was very pleased to see that the Dekahaimong converts had built a house of worship by themselves in 1872. Traditionally the Nagas had lived in simple thatched houses. Their building material consisted of bamboos and a kind of palm leaf.

The first Church building in the manner of a modern or western Church appeared in Nagaland at Impur mission station. Subsequently it served as a model for all Churches in Ao areas and elsewhere in Nagaland. By the early 1960s all Naga Church buildings stood magnificently on the hillocks of their villages, even though the people lived in simple houses; this added to the scenic beauty of the Naga Hills. Not only the Church building, the Nagas also started building their own houses according to the European fashion. The government provided model houses in each headquarters. By 1950s the 'tin roof' houses appeared in many villages. It was expected that by next 10 to 20 years almost all Naga houses would change into tin roof houses. These buildings' construction uses timber which is available abundantly from the forest. However we shall leave this aspect to scholars who specialise in the subject.

More significant for us is the formation of Church Associations. As noted earlier, in the past, Nagas had lived in tiny villages. Their organization did not go beyond their own villages. Ghosh has noted that some 10 villages of trans-Dikhu tribes of Sangtam and Chang joined together and attacked two Ao villages of Mongsenyimti and Longkong in June 1888.²¹ This sort of combined attack occurred among the other tribes also. For example, thirteen Angami villages jointly attacked the British garrison at Kohima in 1879 after Damant's murder. But these were combinations for a limited purpose; upon its conclusion, the villages would again be on their own. There is no evidence of any wider corporate organization in Naga traditional society.

At first the Mission thought the believers should join together as a 'body of Christ'. This would serve more than one purpose. First, it was believed that it was the Lord's will that believers should join in a body. Secondly, in a situation like that of Nagas, this would provide an opportunity to get to know each other better. This could remove mutual suspicions, enabling them to live in peace. Thirdly, such a corporate body would provide better Church administration under one administrative body.

²¹ Ghosh, op.cit., pp. 120-21.

With these multiple objectives, Church associations were formed in all the tribes.²² The administrative posts, the functions, and the duties were clearly laid down; the general secretary or executive secretary at the apex, and several departments, like general administration, Christian education, women department, child evangelism, mission department, Sunday school department, youth department and so on. Every year in November, an annual general conference would be held at the mission centre.

As noted in Chapter 2, the Ao Baptist Association was formed in 1897, the Angami Association in 1912, Lotha in 1923, and Sema in 1928. More significantly, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) was born in 1937.²³ All the Church associations were affiliated to NBCC as the parent administrative body. More Church associations were formed in the 1940s and early 1950s; Sangtam in 1946, Chang in 1948, and Konyak in 1950. By the end of our period, all the major tribes had their own Church associations independently managed by themselves and affiliated to NBCC.

22. Kijung Ao: op.cit., p. 72.

23. Phuveyi Dozo, op.cit. 1979, p. 100.

3. Political Changes:

Political order in traditional Naga society was limited essentially within village boundaries. Wider political consciousness began to emerge during British rule when the Nagas had the opportunity to come in contact with the outside world. As the Britishers were about to leave the Naga Hills and the stage had been prepared for the transfer of power to Indian hands, the Naga political identity spurted out. It would even challenge the mighty Indian sovereignty.

During British rule in Assam, the Naga Hills had been administered separately from Assam. An administrative form was adopted which would suit the Nagas' peculiar situation. Though there was no formal separation between Assam and the Naga Hills district, the government introduced the 'Inner line' permit in 1873.²⁴ This regulation was to prevent the intrusion of plainsmen into the Naga Hills District which, the government feared, might disturb the tribal way of life.

4. Material Changes:

The traditional material culture of the Nagas has been very simple. Different tribes had different way of

24. Rustamji, op.cit., p. 22.

dressing but, in general, it was a simple loin cloth below the waist. Food was also very simple. The Nagas were and still are rice eaters. 'Chapati' or 'roti' were unknown. They ate all kinds of meat. All their trade transactions were through barter. The Aos had a form of currency known as chabili²⁵ but this was not in common.

The British introduced the monetary system. In 1885 a British officer wrote:

A taste for the luxuries of civilization has also been engendered and the Angami Nagas now invest in umbrellas, tobacco, and sugar. The great demand for labour has caused a large sum of money to pass into the possession of the inhabitants of the district, and this has been invested in cattle and in the opening out of new land, all tending to the increase of general prosperity.²⁶

This observation would also apply to the other Naga tribes in the initial stage of British rule.

During 1893-94, when the Perrines and the Haggards joined the mission at Molungyimsen, they not only criticised the Clark ministry, but also initiated a rigorous transformation. Their reformation included

25. Ghosh, op.cit., p. 248.

26. For. Deptt. Pol. A., no. 36-38(N.A.I.).

total abstinence from rice beer and the 'people were reproved and corrected publically during the chapel!'²⁷ This reformation in the Churches was noticed but not welcomed by the government. This can be seen from missionary correspondence. On 15 March 1900 Clark wrote to T. S. Barbour of ABMU from Impur:

... missionaries are accused of meddling with their (the people's) food. Of our converts the great question of 99 out of 100 is that of giving up rice beer, not a question of choice between the old faith and the new.²⁸

A kind of tussle between government and the mission is to be seen which continued throughout our period. Kijung Ao reported that government accused the mission of initiating wrong teaching in the school,²⁹ Nagas should be left to themselves. Government observed that through mission many new changes are taking place in Naga traditional society. At about this time also the Assamese dresses, 'dhoti' for the boys and 'saree' for the girls was made compulsory in the mission school.³⁰ The government cautioned the mission not to interfere too much in the internal tribal affairs. Subsequently,

27. Puthenpukaral, op.cit., p. 109.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 110.

30. Kijung Ao: op.cit., p. 106-108.

government started giving scholarships only to students who wore the Naga traditional dress in Impur mission school. To this effect Mr. Steward S.D.O. Mokokchung issued an order on 27 June 1932.³¹ But the mission thought it was only reasonable to make the Naga dress when they saw them with scarcely any clothes on their body.

In Ao area, 'inculcation of self-help' was emphasised from the very beginning. The mission would not make the Nagas depend on itself. However, to encourage the people, the mission shared equally in the Church Budget with regard to mission work beyond Tzula river. For example in 1899, ABCA, collected Rs. 17/- for 'Meri Mission'³² and the Mission also put an equal amount into the fund. This continued for many years.³³ Where a Church had already been organized, to strengthen it further, the mission paid "lump sum" to the native Pastor and the school teachers in the villages to increase the work. ¶ This was the beginning of the use of money among the Nagas. Gradually, they learned the value of money. They did not take much time to engage in other money-making activities like road construction and government employment. Soon they began to realize their wish to

31. Ibid.

32. 'Meri mission' means - mission work beyond Tzula river. That is to say Trans-Dikhu area of British control.

33. Ibid., p. 78.

live in a good house with a tin roof and a timber floor. In the process of development, they have renovated their material culture thoroughly.

The changes sponsored by the Mission and by the British government had certain unintended consequences also. We have noted the Missionary pressure for abandoning drink and for changing over to Assamese clothing. In place of rice beer, tea or coffee was introduced. It might not have been so easy to change over to tea or coffee from traditional rice beer. Yet the change occurred. No more rice beer was made in Naga homes after conversion to Christianity. In the years following, tea with sugar but without milk was served instead of rice beer in every home. But where did the tea and sugar come from? From their Assamese brethern. In Nagaland, no tea plantation was developed during colonial rule nor did the Nagas learn to cultivate it by themselves.

Similarly, it was perhaps inevitable that their patterns of clothing would change, for the 'Nagas are known for paucity of their wear'.³⁴ However simple the Naga wear, however, they had loomed their own dresses in

34. B.B. Ghosh, op. cit. p. 209.

the traditional way through the generations. The mission found that the famous traditional Naga shawl, carrying colourful pictures of animals, was not according to the Christian conception. Therefore the Nagas were not encouraged to use such a shawl which depicted human glory. Hutton described Naga dresses in detail and said that these were "being destroyed by the conversion to Christianity".³⁵ This kind of situation did not encourage the Nagas to develop their own handloom. Whatever little they had also declined in importance. Therefore they began to depend on others for the supply of their clothing.

Another aspect of the changes following from the influence of Christianity is the abolition of the 'Morung System' and the 'feast of Merit'. The 'Morung' (dormitory), or the 'bachelor house' as the scholars termed it, has been more than just a dormitory or house in the traditional Naga society. This used to be the principal institution for imparting social education.

A young man in his youth till he married stayed in Morung. The senior boys taught their juniors all aspects of social life in Morung.

35. Mills: The Ao Naga, Appendix IV, p. 421. This was Hutton's observation, but Mills put it in his footnote.

Another part of cultural life of the Naga was the 'feast of Merit'. In the distant past, without the feast of Merit, the Naga society was not complete. The significance of the feast of Merit lay in its association with the individual climb up the social ladder. In the feast of Merit an individual donor entertained the whole village community lavishly. It was a time of merry-making.

During proselytization, the Morung has been replaced by the dormitory, or the room where Christian youngmen sleep together and conduct their prayer meeting every night. Feast of Merit has been replaced by the Christmas celebration.

The mission saw these social and cultural institutions of the Naga tribes as being heathen. They insisted that the believer shun the heathen ways of life. However, with the decline of Arichu system in Ao - Naga society, the social organization in the villages weakened. Tajen Ao reported a lot of disputes in the Mokokchung S.D.O. office between Christians and non-Christians in 1910s and 1920s.³⁶

36. Tajen, op.cit., pp. 77.

There was a time when there were questions about which authority to accept in the villages, that of the Church or the existing village authority. In the process most of the cases were referred to the government.

Recently, Shimray has discussed the influence of Christianity on the cultural front of Naga society. He recognized that Christianity has done some damage in this area though he finds compensation in other benefits derived from modern education.³⁷ Nagas could not have been kept in isolation. They had to react to the civilized world, whether it was through Christianity or through British administration. Every society has to respond to the times. The American Indians too could not long remain as they had been though they tried. **Therefore** it is more important to note the trend of a particular society in relation to the historical process.

37. Shimray, op.cit., p. 234.

CONCLUSION

In the course of our discussion we have noticed the changes that have in Naga society through the introduction of Christianity and modern education. The trend of changes, has run so deep and fast that it has premeated the fabric of the tribal way of life.

Way back in 1840 a stray mission activity was started by the Bronsons in Namsangia Naga village. But this was interrupted. Active mission work began in 1872 with the coming of Dr. Clark to Sibsagar mission station. In conclusion we may raise the question, why did the mission shift its attention towards Naga tribes,

A number of factors contributed to persuading the mission to turn its attention towards the Nagas. First of all, mission work showed very poor response among the Assamese. About thirty seven years after the mission started functioning in Assam, in 1873 there were reportedly only about hundred converts.¹ The plain settlers were well premeated with the Hindu way of life. This did not make things easy for the mission. On many occasions Dr. Clark was disappointed over this poor response in Assam. As his zeal for Assam mission diminished, his attention was directed towards the hill tribes, especially, the Nagas.

1. Puthenpurakal, op.cit., p. 58.

Secondly, the tribals were free from the influence of any major religious tradition previously. Christianity has been successful among the aboriginal hills tribes in India and elsewhere. Thus mission found the hill tribes 'a field ripe for harvest'. Thirdly, the hills was found to be a healthier place for the missionaries. Right from the beginning health problem appear to have been a 'thorn in the flesh' with the missionaries. We noted that the first lady missionary, Miss Rhoda Bronson, died in 1840 after a brief illness. Mrs. Clark 'weak constitution' was a continuous concern throughout the Clarks' stay in Naga Hills.² As we noticed, the Witters had to leave Wokha in 1887 because of their ill health. Similarly, in Kohima Mrs. King did not do well after they settled there. In this unknown land with no proper medical facilities, the missionaries looked for a healthier place to spread the gospel.

How could Christianity premeated Naga society so deeply? To examine this question one can turn the question the other way, why did the mighty Hinduism in Brahmaputra valley and Buddhism in Burma have no impact on Naga society?

The relationship between the Naga hills tribes and the plains Assamese has not been cordial. Perhaps because of their constant raids the Nagas remained a terror to their Assamese brethren. It is said that whenever the Nagas went

2. Ibid, p. 61.

to barter in the plains area, their Assamese brother would first sprinkled water on their bartering goods before taking these in the house. They seldom invited their trade partner inside their houses. On the other hand Nagas considered the Assamese as idol worshippers. Such was the relationship between the Nagas and the Assamese brethren in the past.

This kind of a situation prevented the two brothers from developing a closer relationship. Christianity has an expansive history, marked with a mission spirit. However such a moving spirit has been weaker in Hinduism as well as in Buddhism.

The topographic situation also played its role. The mountainous terrain, inhabited with wild animals, often prevented the exploration of the hills region. In this regard the early missionaries' services was really sacrificial.

British occupation of Naga hills and the coming of Christianity opened the way for Naga people to get to know each other better and to live in unity. The Britishers were worried that if the Nagas were left in their habit of 'lawlessness', the whole tribe would be extinct. Slowly, British rule was extended to the interior Naga hills and continued till they left the Naga Hills. Christianity played a tremendous role in bringing Naga tribes into one body under Church associations. As we noticed by 1955 all major tribes

had their own Church association. As early as 1937, NBCC came into being. All the Church associations affiliated with NBCC as an administrative body.

Basically Naga society remains a village society even after the acceptance of Christianity. Yet the Church associations and other social and political organisations provide ample opportunity for sharing common causes. This kind of situation they could not have found in their traditional society.

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