

**PRODUCTION OF IDENTITY:
A CASE OF THE NAGAS OF MANIPUR**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled, “**Production of Identity: A case of the Nagas of Manipur**” submitted by Miss Olivia Dirinamai in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge this is an original work.

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

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*FOR YOU 'PUWA'
MY GUARDIAN ANGEL*

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Lohit, JNU

Olivia Dirinamai

Preface

an introductory note

“I am a Liangmai”

“Naga?”

“Yes, I am a Liangmai Naga”

“Oh! You are from Nagaland” (I don’t know whether it was a statement or a question).

“I am a Manipuri Naga, you know, a Naga but from Manipur” (I would always end up clarifying myself)

This is a typical conversation that I have had with others on many occasions.

Sometimes, I use to get irritated with the other person for not knowing who the Liangmais are. Well, it is more of a ‘hurt’ that he or she did not know about the Liangmais. I think that’s quite understandable; because I believe that anybody would want everybody to know about their people, their community and so on. In such moments, I would often be aware of a question: Why do I have to add the suffix ‘Naga’? Mind you, I am proud to be a Naga.

When I put this “suffix”, only then, the other person will have that ‘eureka’ look on his or her face.

The story does not end there, they have to add salt to my already wounded ego and ask or state, “Oh! You are from Nagaland”. I don’t have any ill feeling towards the Nagas from Nagaland, in fact, my ex-roommate in my hostel was from Nagaland, and we got along very well. What irks me is the conclusion that all Nagas are from Nagaland only. Then, what about the Nagas in Manipur or Assam or Arunachal Pradesh?

Some people might think that I am making a ‘mountain out of an ant hill’ or that I am being hyper sensitive. Well, they may be true. But for me, I have always been someone for whom

‘Identity’ matters a lot. My identity as an individual, a woman, a daughter, a sister, a friend, a Liangmai, a Naga, a Manipuri Naga and so on. I don’t like confusion, but that does not mean either that I am not confused sometimes. So as to cut this long story short, here, I am, trying to resolve atleast one of my confusion.

In a critical sense, my endeavour in my dissertation has not been solely an intellectual academic exercise; it has been an existentially rooted academic effort to know for myself, ‘What is a Naga?’ and ‘How did I become a Naga?’ The question is not ‘who is a Naga?’ For that, we can always look up at the census report to know which and which communities (not tribes or tribals) are listed as Nagas. I have consciously avoided using the term ‘tribe’ as far as possible in my work because I am no longer ‘savage’ or ‘barbaric’ or ‘primitive’ as the term ‘tribe’ usually connotes. I think I can safely say that I am a modern woman with a modern sensibility. These are thoughts, however random or confused these may sound. This M. Phil. Work is an engagement with these thoughts, an attempt to understand or clarify some of the issues and questions that I have in my mind.

First step in this effort is obviously the term ‘identity’. What does this term or word ‘identity’ that we use so often mean? The first chapter deals with this question. Since the issue of identity here in my case often comes, couched in issues of ethnic group or national question, as it were, I have also look at the concepts of ethnicity and nation (and its derivatives like nationalism).

When we talk of identity, some sense of history is always implicated. Some idea of “Naga history”, even if one may not know everything about it, is always there when one becomes conscious of being a Naga. It is this awareness that has taken me to the issues of when and how of my identity. These aspects, and other related issues, are what I have tried to address in the second chapter titled ‘Colonial Modernity and its Caricatures’.

One aspect of my awareness of my Naga identity has been the movements of Naga people. It is these movements that have brought alive my identity as a Naga in the real world. The

third Chapter titled ‘Mobilized Identity and Its socio-political moorings’ is an attempt to understand some of these movements in relation to the identity of Nagas.

Undoubtedly, my identity as a Naga has been shaped by the fact that I have grown up in a troubled region with armed movements, and violent conflicts. This environment of conflict and violence has reminded me of my existence as someone belonging to this group or that community. The fourth Chapter titled ‘Conflicts and Consolidation of Identity’ is an attempt to engage with this aspect of my Naga identity, particularly in relation to the Naga-Kuki conflict and the Naga-Meitei conflict.

Towards the end, having gone through this process of reading, reflecting, and sharing with others, I have tried to reflect on what I have come to sense on some of the issues that have critical bearing on my identity as a Naga and as a human being in the form of a small write up titled ‘End Note: A reflection’.

The documents and details that I have come across in the course of this academically and personally rooted exercise are included at the end in the Appendix and References. Sharing these aspects of the present journey in the form of this dissertation may be a closure, but the dynamic aspect of one’s identity shall continue to unfold as long as I live.

Chapter I
Foregrounding Selfhood

Identity, Ethnicity and Nationalism

Properly speaking, a man...has as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares

— William James

Perhaps the question ‘Who am I?’ is as old as the emergence of *Homo sapiens*, the thinking human being. It has been a perennial quest, an existential one which has been the subject matter of philosophical and spiritual treatises. And at another plane, it is a quotidian reality, a part of our everyday life, something that many of us take it for granted. It is a consciousness that stays subconsciously with us, or something that we consciously think we know as to who we are. One senses it sometimes in those moments of pride associated with one’s ‘national identity’ or it comes in matter of forming relationship such as who does one get married to (e.g., religion/caste).

But in the recent human history, this question of ‘identity’ has acquired significance as an issue of great concern both in politics and social science literatures. The issue has come in different forms when we discuss ‘identity politics’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nationalism’ or ‘nationality question’ etc. In these spheres, the question of ‘identity’ is no longer a matter of philosophical truth or spiritual search for the meaning and purpose of one’s existence. Here, ‘identity’ is about a basis for politics, political organizations and contestations and conflict of interests amongst people. Organized violence and programme have often been perpetrated in the name of ‘identity’ of a people. Discrimination against a particular group of people, be it those perpetrated by the whites against the blacks in South Africa or America or those of lower caste by the upper castes in India or those against the (immigrant) ethnic minorities in different parts of the globe, the Nazis’s ‘Final Solution’ that targeted the Jews, ethnic cleansing in the Balkans or the Rwanda, heinous violent acts that were unleashed during communal riots in South Asia — twentieth century is

replete with stories of people discriminating and killing others or being discriminated or getting killed all in the name of or because of one's identity.

So, what is this 'identity' for which one is ready to kill another human being or because of which one becomes an object of violence? What is the nature of this 'identity'? Is it a given reality? Does it have a history insofar as it is a human phenomenon? In short, what is its nature? These are some of the issues I shall try to explore in this chapter by looking at the concept of 'identity', 'ethnicity' and 'nation' (and its derivatives such as 'nationalism').

Identity: A social-psychological phenomenon

The concept of 'identity' is 'quite elusive and slippery...(and even Erik) Erickson, who is said to be responsible for popularizing the term 'identity', did not give us a precise definition of the term' (Angomcha,1993:3). In fact, Erikson "'almost deliberately'- as he would 'like to think'-employs the term 'in many different connotations', using a particular connotation to reflect the particular feature under discussion...by 'identity' (sometimes) he seems to refer to 'a conscious sense of individual uniqueness, at another to an unconscious striving for a continuity of experience, and at a third, as solidarity with a group's ideals'" (ibid. 3). Similarly, '[d]ifferent writers have used the term in many connotations.: sense of continuity, distinctiveness, uniqueness or separateness, group identity of ethnic identity, social role configurations, authenticity, essence or real self, situational roles, efficacy, volition or personal agency, stability of values and sense of life meaning, self conception, (and) the distinguishing character of an individual' (ibid.,4).

Therefore, to try a comprehensive definition of the term would seem to be a futile exercise. But this does not mean that we cannot try to have some sense of this term, particularly if one were to use it as a concept to address issues such as the one that the present study seeks to do (production of Identity with respect to Nagas of Manipur). In this regard, a comment by Richard Jenkins (1996) can be noted here:

'As a very starting point, 'identity is the human capacity – rooted in language – to know 'who's who' (and hence 'what's what'). This

involves knowing who we are, know who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are, and so on: a multi – dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities. It is a process – identification- not a ‘thing’. It is not something that one can have, or not; it is something that one does’ (p. 5).

Certain features can be noted from this observation by Jenkins. First, identity is related to human capacity. Second, it is rooted in language. Third, this capacity rooted in language related to know ‘who’s who’. Fourth, this knowing related to knowledge about oneself as well as those of the others. Fifth, it is a multidimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it (as individuals or members of collectivities). Sixth, it is a process not a ‘thing’ that one can have or not but something that one does.

In a social psychological definition of identity, Bimol Akoijam (2006) also covers these aspects of identity. According him, identity refers to ‘the positionality and directionality of a given sense of being...(which gives a sense of knowing) where one stands in relation to the others amidst a system or network of relationships...(and) where one is going’ (p.xix). And this sense of ‘positionality and directionality’, according to him, ‘covers a self-definition that implicates a sense of continuity and purpose...of its being, enabling a person (by homologous extension, a collectivity) to integrate different facets of experience or moments of self’ (ibid: xix).

From these two definitions of identity, we can derive some common understanding. First, insofar as it is related to a ‘sense of being’ (Akoijam, 2006) and a ‘human capacity...to know’ (Jenkins, 1996), identity is a consciousness. Second, it is a consciousness about oneself in relation to others in ‘a multidimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it (Jenkins, 1996) or in ‘a system or network of relationships’ (Akoijam, 2006). Third, it is a part of human actions (as in what ‘one does’), which is purposive and integrative (integrating various facets of one’s experiences) which gives a sense of continuity and coherence to one’s sense of who one is. Fourth, it is a self-definition rooted in language.

Thus, identity as a consciousness and a self definition rooted in language within the context of multidimensional classification or mapping of the human world and a system of network of relationship, we can safely say, that our identity has a social origin. Such a social origin of self (or identity as a self definition in our case) has been a major theoretical contribution of 'symbolic interactionism' in sociological literature (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). In a viewpoint that anticipated the perspectives of symbolic interactionism, William James, an American psychologist, has said,

'Properly speaking, a man has many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind. To wound any of these images of his, is to wound him. But as the individuals who carry the images fall naturally into classes, we may practically say that he has as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinions he cares.' (Meltzer, Petras and Reynolds, 1975:6)

Other theorists such as Berger (1966) also insist that identity is always identity within a specific, socially constructed world. They are constituted through processes of self-identification and external categorization (Jenkins, 1997). They shape collective and individual self understandings and constitute a source of meaning, and also pattern the experience and the public representation of groups, movements and organizations (Rueschemeyer and vom Hau 2009:3). Brubaker (2002) that the meaning of social identities and the strength of identification with them define the propensity of 'groupness' or sense of belonging. It is this 'groupness' and sense of belonging that relates social identities to the chances of collective action. This identification also has the possibility of mobilizing the group into social movements and organizations (Rueschemeyer and vom Hau, *ibid.*)¹. They create social solidarities and reproduce boundaries, where the ingroup-outgroup mechanism is activated, turning people on either side into friend or foe. Thus, 'identity' is a social-psychological phenomenon, a catch-all phrase for the presumably needed 'thick' moral underpinnings of all social and political order today.

¹ This aspect of identity in relation to mobilizations and social movement shall be discussed in chapter 3)

The fact that our identities are related to social groups and socio-political mobilizations bring in two important categories in our discussion: Ethnicity and nationalism. These two ideas, ethnicity and nationalism, speak about two group identities (ethnic group and nation) that are implicated in various forms of mobilizations and movements that affect the lives of people in the contemporary world. In the following segment, I shall discuss aspects related to ethnicity and nationalism.

Ethnicity and Nationalism: Two Faces of an Identity

Both nationalism and ethnicity are a modern set of categorical identities invoked by elites and other participants in political and social struggles which shape our everyday life. Nationalism is the more pre-eminent rhetoric for attempts to demarcate political communities, claim rights of self-determination and legitimate rule by reference to the people of a country (Calhoun 1993). Ethnicity is characterized as the 'new spectre haunting the power elites of our time', 'variously expressing itself as an assertion of cultures, of communal upsurges, revival of religions, voices and movements of marginalized peoples, regions and nationalities' (Kothari 1989;15). But, what do these terms exactly mean? Like the concept of identity, these terms are not easy to define, precisely because they do not have singular or comprehensive definitions. Nonetheless, for the present work, I shall attempt to make sense of these terms separately, and then look at their inter-relationship in the following pages of this chapter.

Ethnicity

One of the most crucial concepts that have appeared in discourses on identity politics is the concept of ethnicity. As noted above, it is not an easy task to define ethnicity. But it may be useful to begin the effort to understand ethnicity by looking at a fact that we know about it: it is related to the words 'ethnic' and 'ethnic group'.

Although, there is no fixed criterion to define a particular ethnic group and the meaning of the term is equally uncertain, etymologically speaking, the term is derived from the Greek *ethnos*, meaning "a swarm of bees or birds", "a band of friends", 'a race of men or women' (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996:4). But the expression ethnicity itself is a

relatively recent term because prior to the 1970's there was little mention of it. And it has been used in many ways.

Most Americans relate the term 'ethnic' to 'minority groups like African-Americans, Vietnamese or Hispanics', 'a people outside of, alien to, and different from the core population'. Like their British counterparts 'typically ascribe ethnicity only to minority groups in a society' (Wan and Vanderwerf, 2009:5). However, in the European tradition, ethnicity is understood not as a synonym for minority groups, but as a synonym for 'nationhood' or 'peoplehood' (ibid).

There is a variety of definitions for ethnicity. Some of the most widely used definitions of ethnicity or ethnic identity can be noted here:

According to Max Weber, 'ethnic groups are those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists' (Weber, 1996:35). Similarly for Horowitz (1985:52), '[e]thnicity is based on a myth of collective ancestry, which usually carries with it traits believed to be innate.' And for Anthony Smith, an ethnic community is 'a named human population of alleged common ancestry, shared memories and elements of common culture with a link to a specific territory and a measure of solidarity' (Smith, 1986:447). Cashmore (2003:142) defines ethnicity, as, '[t]he salient feature of a group that regard itself as in some sense (usually, in many senses) distinct ... [o]nce the consciousness of being part of an ethnic group is created, it takes on a self-perpetuating quality and is passed from one generation to the next'.

Ethnicity is a 'cultural marker' that distinguishes one community from the other in terms of language or dialect, diet, customs, religion or race (Brass, 1991:19). It provides a common identity, a means to communicate through a shared language and cultural traditions of frames of reference, and reinforces members of a group's sense of a shared

identity, which in turn, further serves to define that ethno-cultural identity, as distinct from other ethno cultural identities (Hastings 1997:3).

This emphasis on ethnicity as an identity marker is found in a 'simple and minimalistic' definition of 'ethnicity' as suggested by Hal Levine (1999). According to Levine, in such a 'simple and minimalistic' definition, ethnicity is a 'method of classifying people (both self and other) that uses (socially constructed) as its primary reference' (ibid: 68). In a very similar sense, Brubaker (2004) also suggests a different approach, that ethnicity is essentially a 'way of seeing' the world around us and 'categorizing' ourselves and others within that world (Brubaker 2004:24-25). In this sense, ethnicity is an identity (as the term has been understood earlier in the chapter).

There are various approaches to understand ethnicity as an identity. Based on certain theoretical assumptions and emphasis on the nature of this identity, those can be grouped under three basic approaches, namely, (a) primordial approach, (b) instrumentalist approach, and (c) postmodern and constructionist approach. These approaches can be briefly noted as follows:

(a) Primordialist approach:

This term was first used by Edward Shills and later taken up by Clifford Geertz who spoke of the 'overpowering' and 'ineffable quality' attached to certain kinds of tie, which the participants tended to see as exterior, coercive, and 'given'(Hutchinson and Smith1996:8)

This perspective was popular till the mid 1970s. It is an 'essentialist theory' or 'objectivist theory' which argues that 'ultimately there is some real, tangible, foundation for ethnic identification' (Sokolovski 1995:190-92). 'The primordialist approach is the oldest in sociological and anthropological literature... (which) argues that ethnicity is something given, ascribed at birth, deriving from the kin and clans structure of human society, and hence something more or less fixed and permanent' (Isaijiw1993:2)

But Barth (1996:294-324) questioned the belief that 'the social world was made up of distinct named groups' and argued that the identity of the group was not a 'quality of the

container' but what emerges when a given social group interacts with other social groups. He further insisted that ethnicity is based on one's perception of 'us' and 'them' and not on objective reality that actually exist 'out there' in the real world and markers like language, religion, or rituals serve to identify these subjective ethnic 'boundaries'. So, since these can change, ethnicity is not fixed but situational and subjective (Jenkins, 2001). He believed that the focus should be placed on the 'boundaries' between groups and not on the groups themselves because it was at these 'boundaries' that ethnicity was 'constructed'. Thus, by separating ethnicity from culture, Barth made ethnicity an ever changing, socially constructed, subjective construct (ibid). This gave rise to the instrumentalist theories.

(b) Instrumentalist theories of ethnicity:

Proponents of this theory view ethnicity as something that can be changed, constructed or even manipulated to gain specific political, cultural, and /or economic ends (Hutchinson and Smith 1996; Eriksen, 2001). They argue that leaders in a modern state (the elite) use and manipulate perceptions of ethnic identity to further their own ends, gain support of the masses and stay in power (Hutchinson and Smith 1996). Here, ethnicity is created in the dynamics of elite competition within the boundaries determined by political and economic realities, and ethnic group are seen as political myths, created and manipulated by culture elites in their pursuit of advantages and power (Sokolovski 1995). 'One of the central ideas of 'instrumentalists' is the socially constructed nature of ethnicity, and the ability of individuals to 'cut and mix' from a variety of ethnic heritages and cultures to forge their own individual or group identities' (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:9).

(C) Postmodern and constructionist theories of ethnicity.

'Theoretically, this approach lies somewhere between Michel Foucault's emphasis on construction of the metaphor and Pierre Bourdieu's notions of practice and *habitus* on the basic factors shaping the structure of all social phenomena says that the basic notion in this approach is that ethnicity is something that is being negotiated and constructed in

everyday living and is a process which continues to unfold' (Isaijw 1993:4). It does not matter anymore if any particular group is 'really' an ethnic group, or what a 'real' ethnic group is, because ethnicity has become so central to social discourse and social competition that its salience and effectiveness have become attractive to all sorts of collectivities (Eller, 1997).

However may be the difference in these approaches, the depth of ethnic identity and ethnic loyalty suggest that ethnicity is a powerful form of identity that not only signifies kinship and community but also carries with it conflict and violence. It is first and foremost an identity marker although it is by no means the sole form of identity. For instance, it is closely linked and often interwoven with another dominant form of identity in the modern era: nationalism.

Nation and nationalism

It is not only ethnicity which is an elusive term. The concepts such as 'nation, nationality, nationalism -- all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyze' (Anderson, 1991/1983:3). Terms like nation, as Eric Hobsbawm (2004/1990) puts it, 'We know what it is when you do not ask us, but we cannot very quickly explain or define it' (p. 1).

The understanding that all humans are divided into groups is the starting point for the ideology of nationalism. The term 'nation' came from the Latin word *natio* meaning 'to be born (of)'; it also refers to a 'university nation, a student organization in ancient and medieval universities'. But Adrian Hastings in his survey of the history of the term argues that the ideal of a nation-state and of the world as a society of nations entered the western world through the mirror of the Bible, Europe's primary textbook,

'No other book had so wide or pervasive an influence in medieval Europe as the Vulgate Bible and it is simply perverse to seek odd meanings for the word *nation* elsewhere while ignoring its use in this absolutely central text. The psalms were repeated every week by thousands of monks and clerics and every time they did so, they used

the word 'nation'... it is absurd to disregard such usage and refer instead for its Latin medieval meaning to the division of students in various universities into four 'nations' (Wan and Vandewerf 2009:13)

In the Vulgate Bible, Israel is presented as a developed model of what it means to be a national people constituted by a common language, religion, territory and government' (ibid).

So what is a Nation? There are various debates as to what constitutes a nation. And this debate can be seen from the definitions of Friedrich Meinecke and Ernest Renan. Meinecke wrote,

'We can see at a glance that nations are large, powerful communities that have arisen in the course of a long historical development and that are involved in continual movement and change. For that reason the character of the nation has something indeterminate about it. A common place of residence, a common ancestry or, more exactly, since there are no racially pure nations in an anthropological sense, a common or similar mix of blood, a common language, a common intellectual life, a common state or federation of similar states – all of the things can be important and essential elements of a nation, but that does not mean every nation must possess them all to be a nation. However, a core based on blood relationship must be present in a nation' (Meinecke, 1970:9).

In contrast, Renan out rightly trashed the blood definition of the nation. He asked,

'How is it that Switzerland, which has three languages, two religions, and three or four races, is a nation, when Tuscany, which is homogenous, is not one? ... In what way does the principle of nationality differ from that of races?' (Renan, 2008/1882:12).

For Renan, nation is,

“a large scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. A nation’s existence is, if you will pardon the metaphor, a daily plebiscite’ (ibid: 19).

Another definition that cannot be ignored is that of Benedict Anderson. In now a popular and influential work, he defines nation as

‘an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow — members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds if each lives the image of their communion’ (Anderson,1991/1983:6).

Normally the ‘nation’ is connected with political and territorial claim on behalf of the bounded community. This is the product of a political ideology: nationalism. Nationalism is above all, ‘a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due to the nation-state’ (Kohn 1955:9). This “state of mind” inspires (or claims to inspire) all its members while maintaining that, “the nation-state is the ideal and the only legitimate form of political organization and that the nationality is the source of all cultural creative energy and of economic well-being’ (Kohn 1955:10). Nationalism is a political movement that builds upon three key assertions: that a particular nation, unique from other nations, in fact, exists; that the values and interests of the nation take precedence over all others, including individual, and that the nation must be as independent as possible from other nations, which often requires political sovereignty (Breuilly, 1993/1982).

Anthony Smith noted four basic approaches to the origin of nation: (a) nationalist theories, (b) perennialist theories, (c) modernist theories and (d) postmodernist theories. These are approaches, as noted by Smith (ibid.), can be briefly described as follows:

(a) Nationalist theories: According to this theory, modern nation states are seen as direct descendents of ancient primordial ethnic groups. The underpinnings of this approach rest on a primordialistic view of ethnicity (Wan and Vanderwerf, 2009:14). The nation was always there as a part of the natural order even when it was submerged in the hearts of the people (Smith, 1994).

(b) Perennialist Theories: This group of theories sees ethnic groups as stable, even ancient units of social cohesion. The first European nations were formed out of pre-modern ethnic cores, which Anthony Smith has labeled as 'ethnie', a collective group that falls between ethnic groups and nations (Wan and Vanderwef, 2009:14). For these theorist the nation is immemorial and unchanging, even though the national form may change, yet the nation is not part of natural order so anybody can choose one's nation and later generations can build something new on their ancient ethnic foundations (Smith, 1994).

(c) Modernist theories: Ernest Gellner was the leading proponent of 'modernism'. In his work Nations and Nationalism (1983), he argued that both nations and nationalism are essentially modern phenomena that emerged after the French revolution as a result of modern conditions such as literacy, education, industrialization, capitalism etc. For him, nationalism is a 'new form of social organization, that is based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures each protected by its own state (Gellner, 1983). The past is irrelevant for the modernist, the nation is the product of the nationalist ideologues and the nationalist is free to use ethnic heritages but nation building can proceed without the aid of an ethnic past, hence nations are phenomena of a particular stage of history, and embedded in purely modern conditions (Smith, 1994).

(d) Post Modernist theories: The most well known proponent of this theory is Benedict Anderson. His definition of nation is probably the most popular definition and widely

accepted by modern scholars. According to Smith (1994) for this group of theorists, the past is more problematic. Though nations are modern and the product of modern cultural conditions, nationalists make liberal use of elements from the ethnic past whenever they appear to answer to present needs and preoccupations. The present creates the past in its own image and so the modern nationalists freely select, invent and mix traditions in their quest for the imagined political community.

Relationship between ethnicity and nationalism:

In the contemporary world, many states face challenges from certain segments of the population who demand autonomy or secession from the existing state of which they are formally a part. Such assertions are often termed as 'ethno-nationalist' assertions or cases of 'ethno-nationalism'. This usage, at one level, suggests that the concepts 'ethnic' and 'nation' are different but interrelated categories. Ethnic group refers to, in this usage, a minority group (a meaning that has already been noted earlier in the chapter, particularly as the term has been traditionally used in the US), and the concept of 'nationalist' is something that has to do with a political status (demand for independent political status for themselves as states).

Ethnic nationalism defines the nation in ethnic terms and excludes from the nation anyone who is not a member of the same ethnic group. They are kindred concepts and the majority of nationalism is ethnic in character. In a situation of conflict, nationalists and ethnicists will, stress cultural differences vis-à-vis their adversaries. Ethnic definitions or origin of a nation tends to draw sharp distinctions between 'us' and the 'others'. Both ethnicity and nationalism stress the cultural similarities of their followers. Therefore, the two terms are intimately related to each other. And this relationship between these two concepts has been a part of the different theoretical discourses on nation and nationalism.

Smith (2005) argues that ethnic cores (ethnies) are the roots of modern nation, although he also acknowledges that nations cannot be seen as primordial or naturals. He writes,

...the nation, unlike the state, is a form of human community which is conceptually a development of the wider phenomenon of

ethnicity...particularly nations originated as specialized and politicized sub varieties of one or more ethnic categories, networks and communities (or ethnies)...Ethnies can be defined ideal-typically as named human communities, with myths of common descent, shared memories and one or more elements of common culture such as language, religion and customs, and a sense of solidarity, at least among the elites (Smith, 2005:38-39).

Positions, such as that of Anthony Smith, which hold the view that the ethnic backgrounds of modern communities should be kept in mind to discern the origins of modern nationalism have been rejected by other theorists. According to Calhoun (1993), generally speaking, most of prominent 20th century analyst of nationalism like Kohn, Seton-Watson, Kedourie, Gellner have rejected the claim that nationalism can be explained by pre-existing ethnicity. Hobsbawm has largely treated nationalism as a kind of second order political movements based on a false consciousness which ethnicity helps to produce but cannot explain because the deeper roots lie in political economy and not culture (ibid.). 'Ethnicity or cultural traditions are bases for nationalism when they effectively constitute historical memory, when they inculcate it as habitus, or as "prejudice", not when (or because) the historical origins they claim are accurate' (Calhoun, 1993:222).

In a similar line argument, Ernest Gellner contends that '[n]ations as a god-given way of classifying men... are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nation, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures' (Gellner, 1983:48-49)

But if there were any doubt about the importance of the claimed link between ethnicity and national self-determination, the fighting in what was once Yugoslavia should have dispelled it (Calhoun1993:212). All nationalism once state controlled is achieved, actively seeks to enhance and reify the specifically ethnic identities of deviant others within the national identity (Eriksen, 2002/1993:144).

From the preceding discussions, it seems clear that both ethnicity and nationalism are not 'givens' but are social and political constructions. This understanding is also in line with the cognitive perspective on the subject, a position that I am inclined to take after going through these issues. Cognitive perspective allows for treating ethnicity and nation as one integrated domain rather than several distinct domains of study. Both of them are 'practical category' and 'skilled practical accomplishment' (Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov, 2004). The point is that the use of categories out of cognitive necessity is not just a way to organize and structure the world around us, but a precondition for social interactions in general since it conveys clues about what to expect from others.

Cognitive perspectives also allows us to negotiate between 'the classic debate the primordialist and instrumentalist or circumstantialist approaches to nation and ethnicity and allow us to recast both positions and to see them as complementary rather than mutually exclusive' (ibid:49). According to this perspective,

"Race, ethnicity, and nationality exist only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, classifications, categorizations, and identifications. They are not things *in* the world, but perspectives *on* the world — not ontological but epistemological realities.' (ibid: 45, emphasis in the original).

Thus, instead of asking whether a certain phenomenon is an instance of ethnicity or nationalism, we have to ask 'how, when, and why people interpret social experience in racial, ethnic, or national terms' (ibid: 53).

These questions of how, when, and why of identity, particularly those which are articulated in terms of ethnicity and nationalism, shall be explored in the remaining chapters with respect to the case of the Nagas of Manipur.

Chapter Two
Colonial Modernity and Its Caricatures
On the historicity of identities

The intractable modernity of the new identity...colonialism was a historical precondition

— *Sudipta Kaviraj*

That the colonial administration of the Imperial British in South Asia has brought about critical changes in the life of the colonized people has been a well documented and acknowledged understanding amongst many scholars. From the institutions that regulate socio-political affairs of the people (e.g., constitutional mechanism, police, army, census etc) to the normative frames (e.g., modern liberal ideas) that guide the ways the colonized people understand their world have been some of those critical areas of change. These changes were not only marked by a new capacity of the people to “objectify” their culture (Cohn, 1987) but also “transformed the cultural priorities of the people” (Nandy, 1983). As groups of people were organized, named, and reified through administrative practices, “fuzzy communities” gave way to “enumerated communities” (Kaviraj, 2010) and ‘[w]hat had been fluid, complex, even unstructured, became fixed, objective and tangible’ (Cohn, 1980:219). Subsequently, people’s sense of who they are have been critically transformed by the new ideas and practices brought about by the colonial administration to South Asia. Many of these changes, which had been effected by the colonial encounter, have survived the end of formal colonialism (Nandy, 1983; Chatterjee, 1994). Hence, the importance of a re-visit to issues of “colonial modernity”, that is, “a specific set of ideas, practices and institutions born out of an unholy marriage between European modernity and colonialism” (Akoijam, 2006, p. xxvi).

Besides, Bernard Cohn points out,

‘To study Australian aborigines or American Indians, or Indian villagers without locating them in relation to the colonial structures which were or

traders, the missionaries and administrators, and to the whole process by which the indigenous peoples become incorporated in various fashions into the capitalist and socialist economies—is to trivialize the experience of the natives’ (Cohn, 1980:218)

The importance of such a re-visit to the ideas and practices of colonial modernity can not be underestimated in accounting the present case in hand, i.e., the case of the Nagas. In this chapter, I shall look at some of these aspects of “colonial modernity” that have critical bearing on the production of the Naga identity, particularly the Nagas of Manipur. Here, I shall particularly look at certain administrative practices and their accompanying forms of knowledge (e.g., anthropology and history) that have informed the formation and articulation of Naga identity.

The Frontier: Ideas and Practices of Colonial Administration

In order to control and regulate the areas and people, the British started mapping the people and land in their South Asian colony more systematically, particularly after the British Raj was inaugurated in mid 19th century. Earlier, having established their hold over the Bengal towards the mid 18th century, the British expanded towards both the eastern and the western parts of Bengal. It is in this expansion that the idea of “North East Frontier” to describe the place and people in the Northern and eastern side of Bengal appeared in the 19th century. This region came into being with the “Bengal East Frontier Regulation 1 of 1873” which “demarcated (the region into) two distinct zones: the area of the inner line, or the hill areas; and directly administered territory commonly known as the area of the outer line, or the plains” (Saikia, 2005, p.4).

According to Captain J.F. Mitchell, the “ inner line is not the frontier; it is merely a line fixed by the government to guide the civil officers as to how far their jurisdiction extends, but it was not in any way intended to cancel [British] treaty rights with the tribe” (Saikia 2005:4). As a result of this demarcation, the distinction between the plains and the hills became more pronounced.

This colonial idea of “North East Frontier” came to be termed as the ‘Northeast of India’ in the post colonial period. Today, it is a term that denotes “the seven states of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh” (Saikia 2005:3). These states were “further divided into ‘plain’ and ‘hill’ states depending on their topography and the culture of the people living in them. Assam is the dominant “plain” state; Tripura and Manipur straddle the classification as both hill and plain states; and the remaining five are strictly defined as hill states” (ibid.:3).

But India was in a ‘dilemma in inheriting the frontiers’ (Rustomji 1983), because they knew so little about the myriad tribes inhabiting the region. So like the British, after considering the strategic location of the frontier tribes, their historical experiences and their differences from the plains people, the postcolonial Government of India decided to govern these tribes through exceptional provisions in the Constitution. So the British policy of “backward tracts” or “excluded areas” was carried forward in the new garb of “scheduled area” and as result The Sixth Scheduled of the Constitution of India was evolved to administer the tribal majority areas in the states of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram through the district or the regional councils. This provision further increased the divide between the hills and the plains people.

The above legacy of mapping of the land and people, division of the hills and the plains, was also followed in Manipur. From 1891 when Manipur was brought under British management and later given the status of a native ruler the British succeeded on developing a separate administrative setup for the hill areas of Manipur which was in line with the overall British policy towards administration of the Northeast. On 15 May 1907, administration of the Manipur state was handed over to Raja Churachand Singh, and a Darbar was established with a “Set of Rules” sanctioned by the Government of India (Singh, 1989:22) with Raja Churachand Singh as the President and W.A. Cosgrave as the Vice-President and three other members. This ‘set of rules’ was re-drafted and when it came into force in September 1910, the authority of administration of the hills was given to the Vice-President, who is the Political Agent of British India elect:

“The Hill tribes are administered by the Vice-President in accordance with rules approved by the Local Government, but his Highness [Raja Churachand Singh] shall be consulted in all matters of importance and the Political Agent, in consultation with the Vice-President, shall try to give effect to His Highness’s wishes, so far as is consistent with the orders of Government. If the Political Agent is unable to agree to His Highness’s proposals, the matter shall, if His Highness so wishes be referred to the Local Government”².

Further more, in December 1919, the hill areas were also divided into three sub-units, namely Churachandpur, Tamenglong and Ukhrul, each to be administered by European sub-divisional officers:

- (i) The South West area with headquarters as Churachandpur which has been named after his highness the Maharaja. This is inhabited by Kuki tribes and is under Mr. Gasper.
- (ii) The North West area with temporary headquarters at Tamenglong. This is inhabited by kukis, Kabui Nagas and Kaccha Nagas and was under Mr. Shaw.
- (iii) The North East area with headquarters at Ukhrul which is inhabited by Tangkhul Nagas and Kukis. This was administered by Mr. Peter (Singh, 2005).

K. Ibochouba sums up the impact of such a policy as follows:

“The most remarkable feature in the administrative control was that the British had brought in a dichotomy in the State administration. The Maharajah and the Darbar were not given any power in the administration of the hills. They were to administer only the plain areas. The hills and the Hill Tribes were to be administered by the Political Agent (Vice President of the Darbar). This form of a dual government virtually separated the people of the hills from those of the plains” (Ibochouba, 1988:109-110).

² Letter No. 453 P., Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Political Department, Political branch, from H.K. Briscoe, Under Secretary to the Government to the Political Agent in Manipur, September 1910 [which attached] the Revised Rules for the Management of the Manipur State, pp. 2-4 (Singh, 1989:9)

The dichotomy between the hills and valley of Manipur by the British was informed by their understanding of the people in this part of the globe. With respect to Manipur, a classic reflection of that European understanding of the people in the state can be seen in the words of Sir Charles J. Lyall:

“It was my fortune to visit Manipur only once (in February, 1888) during my service in Assam, and I am thus acquainted with...this singular oasis of comparative civilization and organized society, set in the midst of a congeries of barbarous peoples, over whom its rulers exercise an authority which, if scarcely approaching the settled polity of more advanced communities, is at least in the direction of peace and order. The valley of Manipur in several respects resembles in miniature its neighbour, that of the Irawadi. In both the civilized people who occupy the central settled and organized region are nearly akin to the wild folk who inhabit the hills which enclose the alluvial plain. But while Burma has accepted the mild and gentle religion of Buddha, and thus profoundly modified the original animistic cult, Manipur has been taken into the pale of Hinduism, and has imposed upon itself burdensome restrictions of caste and ritual from which its greater neighbour is happily free...[t]he state has recently, after sixteen years of British administration, been committed to the government of the Prince who was chosen to fill the vacant throne after the events of 1891; and it is greatly to be hoped that its future may be happy and prosperous, and that it may exercise an increasing influence in winning to civilization the wilder tribes which recognize its authority” (Lyall, 1908, p. xvii)

With such views, the hill territory was separated from the general administration of the state on the plea that “the hill people are not Manipuris and have entirely different customs and languages” (Dena, 1991: 80). Thus, “[w]hile certain forms of pre-colonial distinction between groups of people were re-rendered, consolidated and reified, (and) earlier forms of relation and shared spaces were reordered in terms of new distinct and separate categories” (Akoijam, 2006, p. xxvii). This policy that divided the hills from the

valley of Manipur had a lasting imprint in the form of the hill people resisting full integration and remaining autonomous even today.

After India won its independence from the British in 1947, and Manipur, which was a “Princely State”, was incorporated into the Dominion of India, and became a “Part C state” in 1949. Later on it was upgraded into a Union Territory and organized into five districts in 1969, viz., (1) Manipur Central, (2) Manipur North (Including Sadar hills, Mao West and Mao East), (3) Manipur West, (4) Manipur East, and (5) Manipur South. The administration, which was till then administered by a Chief Commissioner, was upgraded to Lt. Governor as well.

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And like its predecessor, the postcolonial Government of India passed a separate Act for the administration of the hill areas of Manipur called the Manipur Village Authorities Act (MVA) in 1956, which defined the strength of the village authorities and put certain limitations on the position and the power of the village Chief. Thus, in the midst of these postcolonial administrative re-structuring, the “categories of colonial state of the British Indian Empire...was re-rendered by the postcolonial Indian state in the 1950s in terms of “scheduled tribes” (people in the hills), “scheduled castes” and “general category” (people in the valley) in Manipur” (Akoijam, *ibid*, p. xxvii). And consequently, “[t]hese exogenously ascribed self-definitions of the people inform the way people in Manipur think about themselves and how they relate to each other” (*ibid.*).

Discourses and Practices of Colonial Modernity and Naga Identity

The development of Naga identity as a people, which is, as Sanjib Baruah puts it, one of the most remarkable 20th century stories (Baruah, 2003), has lots to do with the ideas and practices of colonial modernity. It can be said that the term Naga is a colonial construct. And there is no evidence of the use of the term by the Nagas themselves for self identification. Anthropologist Verrier Elwin also recorded that, ‘[e]ven as late as 1954 I found the people of Tuensang rarely speaking of themselves as Nagas, but as Konyaks, Changs, Rhoms and so on’ (Elwin, 1961:4). According to Robinson (1841), the inhabitants of the hills were “divided into numerous communities and races and knew



themselves by the designations of their respective tribes only and not by any name common to all the races... whatever be the origin of the word 'Naga', it appears that the appellation was entirely unknown to the hill tribes themselves." Woodthorpe, further reinforced it, "[t]he name is quite foreign to and unrecognized by the Nagas themselves...[a] Naga when asked who he is, generally replies that he is of such and such village"(1881:52-53).

In the early part of the century, most Nagas continued to live in mountain top villages with signs of fortification still intact, and head hunting-an institutionalized form of inter-village warfare-was occasionally still taking place, even though it was criminalized by the colonial state. Neighboring villages spoke 'dialects or languages totally incomprehensible to one another', and in their communications involving war making or alliance building, they relied on sign language, which 'reached a high state of development' (Hutton, 1921:291).

The expression Naga 'is useful as an arbitrary term to denote the tribes living in certain parts of the Assam hills, which may be roughly defined as bounded by the Hokong valley in the northeast, the plain of the Brahmaputra Valley to the northeast, of Cachar to the southwest and of the Chindwin to east' (Hutton,1922:xvi). Further, according to anthropologist Robbins Burling, today the people known as "Nagas" certainly recognize some common "Naga" ethnicity, but the recognition may have come only after the British gave them the name "Naga" (Burling, 2003). Most of the indigenous people of Nagaland, together with some ethnic groups in the bordering areas of Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Myanmar are, by general consensus, now accepted as "Nagas", but this term should not fool us into believing that they must have some linguistic unity' (ibid.). Burling further emphasizes that the term "Naga" is not a linguistic label (ibid).

The Naga society was restructured in a very significant way by the British. Thinking that the Saramati range in the eastern part of Nagaland was the boundary between Burma and the Naga tribes, they divided the Nagas between the two countries leaving Naga villages like Khiamnugan on the other side of the Saramati range (Lotha 2007:51). The Naga tribes were also divide into three units for administrative purpose- administered

(southern, western and northern Nagas), un-administered (central Nagas), and free (Nagas bordering Burma) (ibid.).

The writings of that period were attempts by the British to colonize and civilize the so called “barbaric and savage people” and also to consolidate the Naga Hills. The recurrent and apparently the most relied upon sources of information for the colonial state about the Naga territories were the detailed descriptive accounts of visits and tours of colonial officials among the tribes, most of which were written in an ethnographic style and claimed to offer an accurate and detailed knowledge of the country (Elwin 1969:123).

By and large, the colonial writings projected the Nagas as a group of people, living in isolated geographical conditions, with customs and a mode of life that were distinctly primitive and characteristic of a true savage (Crooke, 1907). Bayly also represented them as a heterogeneous collection of ‘imperfectly civilized tribes...savages and wild men speaking a bewildering variety of languages, inhabiting a geographically isolated region and subject to impulsive and irrational behaviour (cited by Mishra, 1998:3276).

This kind of representation of the Nagas endowed the colonial power with the objectives of isolating the tribes, preserving their customs and manners (Alemchiba, 1976:42). In fact, these representations — information, sources or the ethnographic method employed in general — have to be seen in the context of the conjunction between the anthropologist and the interest of the colonial state. Anthropologists’ theories and fieldwork methods were predominantly meant to serve as instruments of governmental planning (Malinowski in Mair 1938). J.H. Hutton and J.P.Mills who wrote on the various Naga tribes were still in active government service when their works were published. Their works were the results of administrative needs, funded by the government and aided by the government personnel. Colonialism was thus a critical dimension in the development of Naga anthropology and ethnography on the Nagas developed side by side with the growth of the British Empire in the Naga Hills (Lotha 2007).

The tour accounts and survey expeditions, apart from the colonial official records, sought to portray colonial intervention as having been motivated by an altruistic regard for the

natives and colonization as some form of benevolent assimilation where the earnest and paramount aim of the colonizer was that of winning the confidence, respect and affection of the colonized. Central to the understanding of this complex nature of colonial rule are the processes through which the targets of such 'benevolent assimilation' could be identified and apprehended (Mishra, 1998). Here, the census, surveys and expeditions in the Naga Hills provided the British with the systematic information on the colonized. Stagl J. had rightly said that statistics and ethnography were the carriers of modern classification of race, nation, and ethnicity. So all these information from the census, surveys and expeditions shaped the way in which the "colonial state imagined its dominions, rendering visible, through categorization, the subjects it ruled". (Pels, 1997:176) It is clear that governmental notions of population and economy, and the "numbering" they necessary imply, were pioneered in the colonies.

W. Grange expeditions in the Naga Hills from 1839 to 1840, and his lengthy accounts of his travels were amongst the first attempts at locating the Naga as colonial subjects. Besides the detailed insights of the natural conditions and resources of the region, he also recorded the strength of the Angamis and their resentment against the expeditions which they expressed through attacks on the survey party and through continuous raids (Mishra, 1998). J.M. Masters also gave a detailed description of the physical location of the Naga country along with its diverse botanical and geological aspects (ibid). Others like Lieutenant Bigge's, Woodthorpe's and Lieutenant Holcombe's also gave reports of similar nature (ibid: 3275). What is of significance in all these accounts is the attempt to locate objects of cultural significance-rivers, mountains and plains-with the purpose of identifying, possibly, future resources that could be developed and landscapes that could be peopled, all of which was to aid in the further penetration of colonial rule into the Naga Hills.

But at the same time, the ethnographic information were also responsible for the absence of direct annexationist policy or limited use of force in the Naga Hills. The Naga lands were reported as wooded, mountainous and difficult for conducting warfare, inhabited by people who were "wild", "savage" and who were in "darkness and ignorance".

Lieutenant Vincent, who undertook the ninth expedition to the Angami territory, says that “nothing should have induced me to withdraw from it, had I not been convinced of treachery at their very threshold” (Butler, 1978/1855:190-191). He also said that complete subjugation of the Nagas would be an expensive endeavor for the British in terms of finance and personnel. Thus, suggestions for the ‘establishment of permanent military posts in the hills, with the view of ‘effecting progressive reform’ by way of constructing roads which would make the hills easily accessible, were countered by arguments which urged a complete and immediate abandonment of the hills’ (Mishra, 1998:3274). The Minute’s of Lord Dalhousie of 20th Feb. 1851 stated the reasons clearly for the British policy of nonintervention in the Naga Hills:

I dissent entirely from the policy which is recommended of what is called obtaining a control, that is to say, of taking possession of these hills, and of establishing our sovereignty over their savage inhabitants. Our possession could bring no profit to us, and would be costly to us as it would be unproductive. The only advantage which is expected from our having possession of the country by those who advocate the measure, is the termination of the plundering inroads which the tribes now make from the hills on our subjects at the foot of them. But this advantage may more easily, more cheaply, and more justly be obtained by refraining from all seizure of the territory of these Nagas, and by confining ourselves to the establishment of effective means of defence on the line of our own frontier (Mackenzie 1979:114).

But the Naga raids on the British subjects did not abate with the adoption of this non-interference policy by the British in 1851. So fearing that if these raids were not stopped soon, Assam would be divided up between the different warring wild tribes and they themselves would be driven out, the British decided to bring the whole of the Angami Nagas under their subjugation by friendly means. Subsequently, a post was set up at Samsugooding with Lieutenant Gregory as the officer in charge in 1866 with the purpose of winning the confidence and friendship of the neighboring villages and

gradually bringing the whole Naga country under their control (Lotha, 2007:21). By 1874, two Naga villages were formally under the protection of the British. So in March 1875, the Chief Commissioner, Colonel Keating, proposed the “gradual and systematic prosecution of the survey of the hills, not for mere purposes of exploration, but as a continuation of our political occupation of the hills” (Mackenzie, 1979:128-129). For this purpose, the British took upon themselves to get more information about the Nagas, whom they decided to ‘civilize’. The predominant “investigative modalities” used during this phase were topographical and ethnographic surveys (Lotha, 2007:23). It can be noted here that in the context of colonial India, the concept of the survey came to cover any systematic and official investigation of the natural and the social features of the Indian empire.

The intention of the British to locate and extend the territoriality of the colonial state in the Naga Hills was evident not only from the writings and ethnographic accounts and surveys but also from their increasing concentration on mapping. The map not only enables the identification of territorial boundaries it also made the subjects of colonization visible. In the words of Thongchai Winichakul,

“Geographical inquiries, surveys and map-making were parts of the colonial advance and the main tasks of many diplomatic and exploratory missions. Key colonial officials were map makers. Map-making was encouraged and rewarded with promotions” (Winichakul, 1996:77).

One of the earliest maps of the Naga country was plotted by Thornton who accompanied Captain Butler in his expedition in 1846. He ‘surveyed the route traversed and plotted off on a large scale, a most valuable map of the greatest portion of the Naga hills attached to the districts of Nowgong; the grand object of the Naga expedition, the conciliation of the tribes and the acquirement of a more accurate knowledge of the country was therefore considered achieved’ (Mills 1854 in Elwin, 1969:123). ‘Thornton’s maps helped to identify the ‘tribes’ along the frontier and the country of the tribes’ (Lotha, 2007: 51).

'During the early years of contact, it was more convenient for the British to distinguish the different Naga tribes with reference to their political relations to the British frontier districts along the Assam border instead of any ethnical differences' (Mackenzie, 1979:77). According to Abraham Lotha, in general, the Nagas in the west and the north of the Naga Hills were classified into *Boree* (tamed or dependent) and *Abor* (untamed or independent) 'tribes' and in the south, the Nagas were generally known as *pakka* (genuine) and *Kacha* (raw or half baked) Nagas (Lotha, 2007). 'The *Boree* Nagas were those tribes that lived at the Assam border, and the *Abor* were those tribes in the interior Naga Hills...(and the) *pakka* Nagas were naked and the *kacha* Nagas had short black kilts or loin cloths' (Lotha, 2007:51).

But it must be noted that the 'map' is not necessarily a representation of the objective reality. A 'map is a model for, rather than a model of, what it purported to represent' (Winichakul, 1983 cited by Mishra, 1998:3275). In the case of the Naga Hills, the consistent redefining and demarcation of boundaries by the British is an example of such use of the map. One such instance was when Lt. Bigge put forward a proposal in 1842 for 'the demarcation of a boundary between the Angami Naga country and the British protectorate of Manipur with the objective of separating the Angami Nagas and all the inferior tribes subject to their influence from the Nagas of Manipur' (Mishra, 1998: 3275). And Captain W.F. Badgley and Captain John Butler were deputed in 1873-74 to determine the boundary between Manipur and the Nagas. Captain Badgley and Lieutenant Holcombe were to work in a southwesterly direction from Jeypur, while Captain Butler and Lieutenant R.G.Woodthorpe were to survey the northeast from Samoogoodting (Lotha 2007:23). According to Sanghamitra Mishra, the 'demarcation of boundary between the Naga Hills and Manipur was completed only in 1873' (ibid: 3275).

This shows the remarkable relation between map and military forces. In the words of Thongchai Winichakul,

"The desire of the force was to make the territory exclusive and map it...[s]ometimes, mapping advanced one step ahead of the troops. Then the military followed, making the mapping proposal of the areas come true. In

a sense, mapping spearheaded the conquest... [i]n a sense, map anticipated the space; force executed it; map again vindicated it” (Winichakul, 1996: 81).

Thus, Grange’s expedition in 1838 meted out deterrent punishment to Angami Nagas accused of killing British subjects, “demonstrating thereby that the English had the power of bringing to book even the strongest confederacy of the Nagas” (Mishra, 1998:3275).

The Naga society was restructured in a very significant way by the British. Thinking that the Saramati range in the eastern part of Nagaland was the boundary between Burma and the Naga tribes, they divided the Nagas between the two countries leaving Naga villages like Khiamnugan on the other side of the Saramati range. The Naga tribes were also divided into three units for administrative purpose- administered (southern, western and northern Nagas), un-administered (central Nagas), and free (Nagas bordering Burma) (Lotha 2007:55).

While many of these images, which were based on ethnographic works of colonial administrators, could be critically challenged by the contemporary scholars, it remains a fact that the formation of Naga identity is critically shaped by these discourses and practices colonial modernity. Another critical feature that has come to inform the Naga identity has been, as it has been in many ex-colonies (Chatterjee, 1989; Nandy, 1995; Kaviraj, 2010), is the idea of history. Consequently, ‘uniqueness of Naga history’ has become a crucial feature of articulating the Naga identity by the Naga nationalists (see, Echa, 2005). From historicizing the ‘myth of origin’ to the documented events of the 19th and 20th century form this historicized identity of the Nagas (Sanyu, 1996, Echa, *ibid.*).

Some of these critical features of Naga history relate to the encounter with the colonial regime of the imperial British and the contestation between the Indian State and the Naga nationalists under the Naga National Council or NNC (Echa, *ibid.*). Some of the critical events that mark this history are the submission a Memorandum to Simon Commission (1929) by the Naga Club (started in 1918 in Kohima), the Nine Point Hydari Agreement of 1947 (signed between NNC and Sir Akbar Hydari, Governor of Assam), Declaration

of Independence by NNC on 14 August, 1947), Naga National Voluntary Plebiscite of 1951 conducted by NNC, and the boycott of the first and second general elections to the Indian Parliament (1952/1957) in the then Naga Hills District of Assam. These historical events underscore the reality of Naga nationalism that informs the nationalist Naga identity and nationalist confrontation of the Nagas with the Indian state in the twentieth century (see, appendixes). Besides these historical moments, the tales of sufferings of the Naga people in the hands of the violent confrontation between the Naga nationalists and security forces of the Indian state form crucial aspects of Naga history that shapes the Naga identity.

Like most hegemonic expansion and appropriation of nationalist history involved in the development of nationalist identity (Chatterjee, 1994), the above nationalist history of the Nagas also informs the development of Naga identity in Manipur. Ironically, such expansion and appropriation could be factually problematic in the context of Nagas of Manipur. It has been pointed out that many of the aspects of the 'unique' Naga history are not applicable to the Nagas of Manipur (Akoijam, 2010a). For instance, the Nagas of Manipur did not take part in the Plebiscite of 1951 and they did not boycott the Elections to the Indian parliament in 1952 and 1957 (*ibid.*). In fact, two Tangkhul Nagas represented Manipur Hills in the Parliament, R. Kieshing (1952) and R. Suisa (1957).

Perhaps, such historical debates point to the centrality of history in identity politics as Ashis Nandy has provocatively suggested that the site of conflict based on identities is often history (Nandy, 1995). In any case, 'nationalism is not merely an object of historical enquiry, but a political object — a movement...an ideology and...all political ideologies...try to coerce enquiry about itself into an agenda constructed by it' (Kaviraj, 2010:170).

Thus, many concepts rooted in the anthropological and the historical ideas and discourses that have come to this part of the world and various practices of colonial administration — all have played crucial roles in the development of Naga identity in Manipur as well as elsewhere in the region.

Having been shaped by the ideas and practices of colonial modernity, Naga nationalists have over the years sought to mobilize the Naga national identity. In the next chapter, I shall look at the mobilizations that have shaped the production of Naga identity.

Chapter 3

Mobilized Identity and Its Socio-Political Moorings

On the emergence of Naga identity

A nation's existence is...a daily plebiscite

—Ernest Renan

In the preceding chapter, we have seen how that identity of the Nagas has been shaped by the ideas and practices of colonial modernity. As a new political identity of a nationalist kind, it is also informed by the idea of the modern nation-state, which, as Ashis Nandy says, ‘entered Indian society in the second half of the nineteenth century, ridding piggy-back on the western ideology of nationalism’ (Nandy, 1994, ix). And like most identities informed by nationalist ideologies which have been products of nationalist mobilization (Chatterjee, 1994; Kaviraj, 2010), Naga identity too can be considered a product of nationalist mobilization that came about in the course of its encounter with colonial modernity, during the colonial and postcolonial periods. In this chapter, I shall try to locate the mobilizations that have informed the Naga identity.

Historically speaking, there are three major movements or mobilizations that can be noted with respect to the development of Naga identity. These are (a) Zeliangrong Movement under Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu, (b) Naga nationalist movement under the Naga Nationalist Council to its offshoots, and (c) Naga integration movement. Before I proceed to these three movements, a few words on the (social) movement are in order.

Social movement

To begin with, the ‘English word *movement* comes from the old French verb *movoir*, which means to move, stir or impel, and the medieval Latin *movimentum*’ (Wilkinson, 1971:11). The English usage which designate a ‘series of actions and endeavours of a body of persons for a special object’ dates from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries and is still the most widely accepted usage of the term as applied to social phenomena (Wilkinson, 1971).

There are varying definitions of social movement. For instance, Rao (1978:2) sees a social movement as 'an organized attempt on the part of a section of a section of society to bring about either partial or total change in society through collective mobilization based on an ideology'. Some look at social movements as sustained, collective mobilizations through either formal or informal organization which are generally oriented towards bringing about change, either partial or total, in the existing system of relationships, values and norms (Datta, 1990). Another view sees, social movement as an organized and relatively sustained activities that have a clear goal in terms of achieving or preventing some social change.

Whatever their differences in defining the phenomena 'social movement', there also exists a consensus amongst the different scholars regarding certain features essential to call a movement as a social movement. These common features are:

1. social movement involves collective action as different from individual action.
2. this collective action is sustained and not of a sporadic nature.
3. this action is formally or informally organized
4. this action attempts to bring about partial or total change
5. this action is based on an ideology, as we shall see later in the Naga movements which is based on nationalism. Nationalism is a political ideology (Nandy, 1994).

Rao (1978) also mentions the locus of a movement that helps us in identifying or classifying a given social movement into linguistic, religious, ethnic, student so on and forth.

Zeliangrong Movement under Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu

Social movements are historically multi-dimensional and kaleidoscopic, and have the characteristics of a class movement, religious movement and even imperialism and nationalism (Singh, 1992:41). What has been termed in many literatures as 'Zeliangrong movement' has various facets. It is both a 'socio-religious' and 'political' movement (Kabui, 1991; Singh, 1992). Jadonang, its founding leader or whose activities form the original moments of the movement, had talked of a political integration of his people after the achievement of social unity through religion (Kabui 1991:136). The move from individually held national sentiments to collective political action in the name of the nation is usually called mobilization; therefore, mobilization denotes 'the deliberative activity of a group of individuals for the realization of political objectives' (Kuntzsch, 2009). In this sense, Zeliangrong movement, even during Jadonang's time, had a political inflection as he reportedly talked of 'Kabui Raj' (some use, 'Naga Raj') (Kabui, 1991:136; Singh, 1992:60).

For some, Jadonang and his follower, Gaidinliu, were leaders and demigods but for some other people, they were murderers who perform human sacrifices too. However, John Wilson's statement on social movement aptly describes their emergence as the founding leaders of the movement. According to John Wilson,

'Social movements nurture heroes and clowns, fanatics and fools'. They function to move people beyond their mundane selves to acts of bravery, savagery, and selfless charity. Animated by the injustices, sufferings, and anxieties they see around them, men and women in social movements reach beyond the customary resources of the social order to launch their crusade against the evils of society. In so doing, they reach beyond themselves and become new men and women' (cited in Cohen, 1998:4).

With the coming of the British, Christianity too came to the hills of Manipur and started challenging the traditional religion its old values and ideals. Animism was the religion of the Nagas then. Till 1914, like other animist Nagas, the Zemai, Liangmai and Rongmai

Nagas (collectively called Zeliangrong) were animists. The first conversion amongst the Zeliangrong people was that of K. Namrijinpou (on 6 December 1914), a native of Khukiu village in Tamenglong in Manipur. But by and large, the Zelianrongs held steadfast to their traditional beliefs and did not allow the Christian evangelists to preach in their villages. It is at this juncture that Haipou Jadonang emerged as a self proclaim 'Messiah' for the Nagas, particularly the Zeliangrongs. A deeply religious man, he was resentful of the Christian onslaught on his religion and set forth to reform and revitalize his religion. He was claimed to have divine visions and supernatural powers (Kabui, 1991).

Jadonang was also resentful against the Britishers for the imposition of house tax and the supply of free labor force and foodstuff to the government officials on tour, failing which severe punishment mostly whipping was served on the people. To make matter worst, the ceaseless brutal encroachment of the Kukis on the Zeliangrongs land, and the British lack of empathy made the Zelaingrongs bitter. So at the peak of his popularity, Jadonang took up politics as a logical step and started planning to build an army to fight against the British dominion in their land. "First of all he sent his followers, mostly Lurungpu of Mukti, Miss Gaidinliu of Lungkao, and others, to different villages to spread that Jadonang was the Messiah King of the Nagas who would overthrow the "British Raj" and restore Naga sovereignty' (Yonuo, 1982: 135).

Jadonang also gave a slogan "Makammeirui Gwang Tupuni" meaning his people, will become kings. It is interesting to note that Jadonang's idea of an independent kingdom came about when the leaders in the Naga Hills were demanding only for an exclusion from the constitutional reforms under the Simon Commission.

By 1929, Jadonang's movement had gained momentum and took a semi military, semi religious and political character. In 1930, Jadonang's plan had been well informed to all the villages. What he promised was a 'Naga Heaven' a 'millennium' on earth where there would be no want; it is a land of plenty. He instructed that the villages should stop paying taxes to the government; they should disobey the unjust laws of the state (his programmer of action coincides with the Civil Disobedience movement in India). Then, the 'Raj'

would be proclaimed; the people should pay tributes to the new kingdom; then all able-bodied men should be ready to fight against all foreigners who would be driven out.

Jadonang repeatedly declared that 'the days of the Kabuis and Kacha Nagas had come at last and the days of the Government, Manipur and Kuki are over'. J.P.Mills also mentioned that though Jadonang included Angamis in his scheme he had no direct relations with any village of the Naga Hills Districts³. He talked of the common origin of the Kacha Nagas and the Angamis as brothers of the same stock, who drank *pita modhu* or rice beer. Some scholars have debated that this talk about brotherhood is just a political ploy to get help and support from the Angamis. Jadonang also said that all the Kukis would be wiped out in three days⁴. To achieve the dream of 'Naga Raj', the first step taken by him was mobilizing the people not to pay taxes to the government. According to the information collected by S.J. Duncan, S.D.O. North-West Sub-Division, it was reported that about 400 men were gathering at Lungkao and Jadonang was responsible for this and that he asked all the Kabuis not to pay any revenue from 1931-32 (Singh, 1992). Meanwhile Jadonang issued an order that from 1913-32 all the revenues were to be paid to him and according to his order most of the Kabui and Kacha Naga villages as far as the Naga Hills paid him tributes of *mithuns*⁵. "Jadonang himself soon became intoxicated with his own power and, before long had overstepped the limit to which some of the Kabui villages were prepared to go, with the result that certain villages in the Naga Hills reported the whole affair to the District commissioner who at once communicated with the State authorities' (Singh, 1989:78). This was at the commencement of the year 1931 (Ibid).

Jadonang's activities created unrest and fear amongst the state servants posted at Tamenglong area, which requested the government to either sent sepoy to protect them or to take them back to Imphal. As a response to Jadonang's appeal, the people began to

³ Letter from J.P. Mills Commissioner of Naga Hills to Commissioner Surma Valley and Hill Division, Silchar, Dated 24th March 1931.(File No. XII office of the Political Agent in Manipur, regarding Jadonang and Gaidinliu Naga Manipur Secretariat).

⁴ This conflict between the Kukis and the Nagas would be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

⁵ Information collected by S.J. Duncan, S.D.O. North Cachar, 10-2-1931 (File No. XII)

withdraw all their co-operation to the government servants, and government machinery came to a halt. Some scholars have observed that this idea of non-cooperation might have been inspired by Gandhi's non co-operation movement (Yonuo, 1982). Jadonang was a great admirer of Gandhi's style and he also composed a song on Gandhi in 1927 which runs as follows,

*“Oh Mighty Gandhi,
Come to rule upon us,
You are the leader,
You are the great,
Come to rule us.”* (ibid: 64)

Jadonang tried to bring the feud and differences among the different villages to an end and bring about unity and solidarity among the Zemais, Liangmais and Rongmeis, now collectively known as the Zeliangrongs. His movement gave rise to national consciousness among the people. But an unfortunate incident in March 1930 put an end to Jadonang's goal and life. On that day, when Jadonang was away to a neighboring village to preach animism, four Manipuri betel leaves traders from Imphal on their way to Silchar in Kachar, who had stopped at Kombiron village were murdered (Yonuo, 1982:69-70). This incident was like a god-send opportunity to the Britishers to quell the movement and arrest Jadonang, who have been giving them the jitters with his anti-British stand and 'Naga Raj' slogans. Thus taking advantage of this development, the government accused him of the murders of the four beetles leaves traders. And Jadonang was arrested and jailed under 302/109 and section 302/149, and tried at the court of Political Agent which found him guilty and executed on the 29th August 1931 at Imphal.

The execution of Jadonang did not subside the movement, but went ahead under the leadership of Gaidinliu, a Kabui girl and a close associate of Jadonang. Gaidinliu, like her predecessor Jadonang, also believed in Gandhi and told the people that the British would soon be driven out by Gandhi and also praised him. She popularized the song composed by Jadonang in 1927 in praise of Gandhiji. Seeing this upsurge, the government decided to take strong measures against the movement and its supporters. An arrest warrant was

issued for Gaidinliu. The state government also declared an award of Rs.200 and guns for apprehension of Gaidinliu or for information concerning her whereabouts, which was further raised to Rs.500 and any village which would give any reliable information leading to her capture would be granted ten years full remission of house tax⁶.

But all these rewards did not sway the peoples' support away from the movement. Instead, it became much stronger, and Gaidinliu went about mobilizing, recruiting and planning to attack the British. But unfortunately for Gaidinliu, Mr. Mills received information about her whereabouts and sent Captain N. Macdonald, commandant of the Assam Rifles with a big column to Pulomi village in Naga Hills from where she and her rebel groups were taken by surprise and she was finally arrested on the 17th October 1932, and sent for trial at Imphal where she was sentenced for life imprisonment by the Political Agent. After her arrest some of her followers tried to sustain the movement but they failed to do so.

Jawaharlal Nehru learnt about her and her movement in his visit to Assam in 1935. He called her the 'Naga Rani', which is how she came to be called as Rani Gaidinliu. At the Congress session held at Haripur in 1936, a resolution was adopted for the immediate release of Gaidinliu. Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha, in its 4th session held in Imphal in 1938 also took a resolution demanding the immediate release of Gaidinliu (Singh, 1989). Similarly, *Assam Mahila Samity* at the eleventh session of their conference held in Gauhati in January 1939 also adopted a resolution of the early release of Gaidinliu. But the Indian government was indifferent to the appeals of different political organizations for the release of Gaidinliu. It was only with the independence of India that she was released and granted a political sufferer's pension for life by the Assam Government.

Some scholars and observers have tried to bring about continuity between the Zeliangrong movement and the Naga movement. But if we make a close observation of the facts, we can see two different trajectories: (1) The Zeliangrong movement under Jadonang was anti Christian and was for the revival and reformation of their traditional

⁶ Administrative Report of Manipur, 1931-32, p. 5.

religious and beliefs system, whereas, the Naga movement was not anti-Christian; instead Christianity and western education played a strong role in it, and (2) The Zeliangrong movement was anti British and its goal was to establish an independent 'Naga Raj', whereas the Naga movement as could be seen from its memorandum to the Simon Commission was not anti-British but anti-India.

Gaidinliu after her released from the jail, opposed the independence move of Phizo. In 1956, her followers again became active and rounded up Phizos's men and produced them before SDO at Haflong in 1961. Her adherents also burnt down the Christian *khels* in those villages which had been partly converted to Christianity in the Tamenglong Sub-division of Manipur (Stracey, 1968). But ironically, Gaidinliu herself had become a Christian by the year 1951 (according to Duncan who was the DC of Naga hills and met her during that time in Tuensang) (ibid).

Thus, taking this into account, it is not very clear about her anti-Christian position, at least in the 1950s. But under her leadership Naga nationalism in Manipur, based on the traditional Naga culture, emerged as an alternative force to NNC dominated Naga nationalism based on Christianity and western culture.

Gaidinliu was also said to have appealed to the Indian Government for help to fight the Naga underground but when the government did not respond to her appeal, she took up the fight alone with her soldiers called the Kampais, who were supposed to have pledged to resist the Naga underground movement for independence. According to Stracey (1968),

“After the cease fire in 1964 her forces are said to have entered Nagaland and, imitating the underground, started collecting food and money from the villagers. All this was resented by the Federal Naga forces as an encroachment on their territory. It is said that a clash occurred at a place called Lalung, in the Zeliang area of Nagaland, in April 1965 from which Gaidinliu's party emerged victorious, capturing nine underground men.

...The Government of Nagaland immediately sent armed police and established posts in the area.” (pp. 257-258)

Thus, Gaidinliu inspired nationalistic ideas of the Nagas in Manipur came in direct conflict with the NNC inspired Naga nationalism. This rivalry between the two forms of Naga nationalism, however, gradually died down following the surrender of Gaidinliu and her followers in 1966. But inspite of all these differences, the two cannot be completely delinked from each other, as both were for ‘Naga independence’ in one way or the other. Perhaps, as it stands today, with the spread of Christianity amongst the Zeliangrong people, the link between the two forms of nationalism has become stronger.

Beyond the activities led by Jadonang and Gaidinliu, Zeliangrong movement was activated in an institutionalized way by other developments such as the formation of Kabui Samiti (1934), the Kabui Naga Association (1946), and Zeliangrong Council (1947) etc (Singh, 1992).

To conclude, R. Mahadevan comments are worth mentioning. He remarked,

‘The Zeliangrong uprising was indeed one of the most important anti-imperialistic struggles in the North Eastern region of India. The uprising certainly marked the beginning of the political struggle of the hill people of Manipur against the British. An equally significant and note worthy feature of the movement was the fact that it was an organized rebellion with clear cut programme and objective of shaking off the imperialist yoke, and the establishment of a Naga Raj’ (Mahadevan cited by Yonuo, 1982:110).

Nationalist Movement: From NNC to NSCN.

While the above Zeliangrong movement had its epicenter in Manipur, another powerful movement of a nationalist hue started in the then Naga Hills of Assam, which shaped the tenor of Naga nationalism and Naga identity. This second movement has played a critical

or central role in shaping Naga nationalist movement as a modern phenomenon. As we shall see shortly, the arrival of this movement or its influence in Manipur has been crucial in the development of Naga identity in Manipur. In this segment, I shall discuss the trajectory of this movement.

The coming of the British in the Naga areas, along with Christian missionaries who not only proselytized the people to Christianity but also imparted them Western education, accelerated political consciousness to the Nagas. The missionaries also told them they were neither Muslims nor Hindus, so they were not Indians. It is generally agreed among the historians and writers that the groundwork of Naga nationalism was laid during the days of the British reign. The successive expeditions and encounter of the British with the Nagas since 1832, particularly in the Angami areas, led to the organized fierce resistance against the colonial empire. But the massive organized national spirit for independence came under the aegis of the educated Nagas with the formation of the 'Naga Club' in 1918 at Kohima by government officials, educated men and a few village headmen.

In the late 1920's, when the British were contemplating on a constitutional reform of India, the club presented a Memorandum⁷ to the Simon's Commission, on January 10, 1929, which runs, amongst other, as follows,

'...we pray that the British Government will continue to safeguard our rights against all encroachment from other people, who are more advanced than us...If the British Government, however wants to throw us away, we pray that we should not be thrust to the mercy of the people who could never subjugate us, but leave to us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times'.

This set the pattern for the future of the Nagas and was the first political expression of the Nagas as a distinct entity. Thus, the British India Act of 1935 left the Naga areas as 'Naga Hills Excluded Area', in response to the memorandum.

⁷ See Appendix

However, the expression 'excluded' should not be read as, 'being excluded from British India'. Because it was the very constitution of British India that decided its condition of being excluded and at the same time, the areas were to be governed by the Governor of Assam (a constitutional post under the same Act) at his discretion. According to Akoijam (2010a), 'the status of being "excluded" or "partially excluded" of these areas and the office/power to administer the same were derived from the Govt. of India Act (1935)...(and hence, it will be misreading to take) the same provision as a proof of...(these areas) being outside of the (constitutional arrangement of the then) British India'. Interestingly, Akoijam (2010b) observes,

'Tragically, having misread, and even ironically celebrated, this colonial arrangement of removing from the normal constitutional parameters while still being administered through (sovereign) "discretion", many...hardly recognize that the notorious AFSPA is the postcolonial return of the same spirit/arrangement of exceptionalism' (p.9)

On the other hand, some commentators have pointed out that 'the objective of the Naga Club was social rather than purely political (Venuh, 2005:57). Piketo Sema also emphasized 'the objective of the club was primarily to look after the welfare of the Nagas by the promotion of understanding, development of fraternal feeling and unity among the Nagas' (Sema, 1991:124). But historically speaking, it was the Club that had first expressed and stated the Nagas' wish to be left alone to decide their own fate if and when the British leaves India.

The Second World War, wherein the Nagas found themselves in the midst of it, had brought about changes in their society. At one time, the Nagas had the distinction of having captured more Japanese prisoners than the whole of the Fourteenth Army" (Yonuo, 1974). With the ending of the war and the departure of the British drawing closer, the Nagas efforts intensified for self-determination. History was in the making. According to Krishna Iyer, 'it was a critical time, a formative stage, a creative phase which led to the birth of the Naga National Council (formerly, Naga Hills District Tribal Council) in 1946 (Iyer, 1994). In this context, Iyer (ibid.) also quoted Ramunny,

'This was the time when fundamental political changes in India were in the offing, and, certain foreigners, knowing the nature of the probable changes planted the NNC leader with the idea of organizing a political body to voice the aspiration of the Nagas. The NNC ultimately emerged for the next few years as the only organization in Naga Hills claiming to be voicing the opinion of the majority of the people. It received official patronage and all educated Nagas, who were mostly government servants, were its members. Gradually it extended its activities to the political field also. In October 1946, the NNC passed a resolution asking the Deputy Commissioner to disallow any member of any political party from the rest of India to enter Naga Hills without the consent of the NNC. This apparently was its first major political move' (Iyer, *ibid*: 676).

The NNC also sent a letter dated May 19, 1947 to the British India Government stating that Naga land belongs to the Naga people and will be inalienable. This demand was not responded to by the government and so the Naga impasse continued. India's illegitimate claim of the Nagas land can also be seen from the statements of the Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru.

In August 1946, Nehru wrote a letter to T Sakhrie, stating that the Naga territory in Eastern Assam was too small to stand by itself politically or economically, so it must be a part of India and of Assam. This shows that India had not yet claimed the land of the Nagas as a part of India, which later on it did claim. Nehru was still trying to woo and entice the Nagas to join the Indian union.

The NNC continued its demand for an independent Naga State, and a delegation led by Zapu Phizo met Lord Mountbatten to suggest that the new Indian Government should act as the guardian power for ten years after which the Nagas would be free to determine their political future. The ten-year Interim Government Scheme was also presented to the Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Tribes which Visited Kohima in May 1947, but when the Advisory Committee refused to make any suggestion to the Constituent Assembly on this matter, the NNC declared that since the Nagas had their own Constitution, there was

no question of accepting another Constitutional arrangement. The Nine Point Agreement or the Akbar Hydari Agreement⁸ was an attempt to dissolve this impasse. The Hydari Agreement recognized the right of the Nagas to develop themselves according to their freely expressed wishes". Clause 9 of the Agreement states that "The Governor of Assam as the Agent of the Government of the Indian Union will have special responsibility for a period of 10 (ten) years to ensure the due observance of this Agreement; and at the end of this period the Naga National Council will be asked whether they require the above Agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people arrived at.

But instead of dissolving the impasse, the agreement led to another deadlock over the interpretation of clause 9 of the Agreement—the Indian Government insisted that whatever the revised arrangement might be later, it has to be within the Indian Constitution. The death of Hydari in the midst of all these wrangling further complicated the interpretation of the clause, till the Indian government unilaterally withdrew from the Agreement. The non implementation of the Agreement by the Indian government could be said to be one of the crucial moment in the Indo-Naga Conflict.

With the election of Phizo as President of the NNC in 1949, the NNC changed into political organization demanding for a sovereign Nagaland. The NNC conducted a plebiscite throughout the Nagas areas in 1951 in order to ascertain the views of the people in regard of two basic and important issues. Firstly, whether the Nagas wanted to remain in India or to become a separate independent state; and secondly, to repudiate the charge of the Indian Government that Phizo and the NNC were supported by a segment of minority of the Naga people while the majority opted for joining the Indian Union (Yonuo, 1979). In this plebiscite 99.99% of the Nagas pledged that they would uphold the sovereignty of their ancestors and remain independent and that the NNC shall be the guardian to guide their future political course of action (Ao, 2002:67). They then totally boycotted the General Elections of 1952 simultaneously followed by a civil disobedience movement resulting in the mass resignation of school teachers, boycott of all Government

⁸ See Appendix

of India functions, and refusal to pay taxes. With the success of all these moves, the NNC was able to prove itself as the “voice” of the Nagas and Phizo the symbol of ‘revolt’.

The visit of Nehru and U Nu, the then Prime Minister of Burma on March 30, 1953 to Kohima can be considered as a crucial turning point in the Indo-Naga conflict. This was a very significant visit for both India and Burma and, especially, for the Naga people because any adequate settlement of the Naga problem would have to involve the Governments of both India and Burma. At this initial stage too, Nehru and U Nu could have settled the Naga problem between them without too much difficulty, given the required political will on their part. But the Nagas boycotted this visit by walking out of the meeting when their demand to read out a statement at the public meeting ‘for the acceptance of the 9-point programme and conceding their right to secede after ten years’ were not accepted. Nehru felt so humiliated that he vowed never to visit Naga country again. This event led to hardening of hearts and attitudes on both the sides, and with the rising atrocities and high handedness of the Assam Police, the situation was spiraling to direct confrontation.

The Naga movement now entered a violent phase, marked by Naga hostilities and sharp army reprisals. Thousands of young Nagas joined the Naga Home Guard and almost the entire NNC set up went underground. By 1954 armed violence, murder, arson, looting, and kidnapping, had become quite common and widespread (Vashum, 2008:81). Rebel leaders, among others, like T.Sakharie, J.B. Jasokie, T.N. Angami and Dr. Imkongliba resigned in 1955 from the NNC because they couldn’t reconcile to Phizo’s violent ways(ibid).

In 1954, the formation of the Hongkin government was announced. It was called Khunak Kautang Ngeukhuma, that is, ‘People’s Sovereign Republic of Free Nagaland’. This was the political wing of the NNC to direct and monitor its activities mainly in Eastern Nagaland (Burma). In the following year, on March 22, 1956, the NNC formed the Federal Naga Government (FNG) and later changed it to Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN) in 1959 (Shimray, 2007).

With the formation of the FNG in 1956, direct armed conflict between the militant Nagas and the Indian armed troops began, bringing mass sufferings and troubles for the Nagas instead of freedom. Charles Chasie writes,

‘And the reign of terror began. Most Nagas found themselves at the receiving end of the violence from both sides...Demands for food and shelter, kidnappings and forcible recruitment, tortures and killings from the Underground. Harassment, tortures and killings, rape, burning of villages and granaries...from the Indian troops...It was, from all accounts, hell on earth’ (Chasie, 1999:40-41).

However, there were the Moderates, formed by those who had come to the over ground, who played the middle role between the two conflicting parties – the NNC and the Indian Government. These people formed the All Tribes Naga People Convention (NPC) in 1957 in Kohima, where over 1,765 delegates and over 2,000 visitors representing every tribe came. The NPC advocated a negotiated settlement of the Naga problem and suggested that, before a final political solution could be reached, the present Naga Hills District of Assam and the Tuensang Frontier Division of NEFA should be constituted into a single administrative unit under the External Affairs Ministry. In order to counter the growing strength of the NNC, New Delhi encouraged this suggestion, and so a separate administrative unit called the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA), under the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India to be administered through the Governor of Assam acting in his discretion as the Agent of the President came into effect from December 1, 1957. This was considered as a great step forward for Naga nationalism and for the unity of the tribes by the moderates, but the Federal Government opposed this move as a compromise. But nevertheless, the fact that the new unit had been placed under the Ministry of External Affairs was not disregarded because of its obvious implications.

New Delhi had succeeded in driving a wedge into the Naga movement, and the next step towards finally winning over the moderates was the formation of the State of Nagaland in December 1963. The Federal Government strongly resisted this move and described it as

a plan to set the Nagas against one another, and pledged to continue the struggle. The new state 'Nagaland' functioned under the Ministry of External Affairs till 1972. The creation of the state Nagaland within the Indian Union was not welcomed by the majority of the Nagas, and created mixed opinion on its Agreement even in the Naga Hills Districts alone. Dr. Imkongmeren who was the architect of the NPC and formation of Nagaland State was assassinated on August 22, 1961 by the underground Nagas (Mishra, 1978).

In fact, the creation of Nagaland State was the first venture and/ or association of the Indian State with the Nagas. It is through this scheme that India decisively made inroads into the political history of the Nagas. The creation and the existence of Nagaland State caused great confusion and controversy among the Nagas as much as it had further divided the Nagas. Even in the later years till today, this 'Nagaland State' is a bone of contention among various sections of Naga society, or most of all, the Naga nationalist (underground groups) no matter which faction, has not recognized the existence of Nagaland State (Vashum, 2000).

Despite the creation of Nagaland State, violence was still rampant and there was a cry for peace in the Naga Hills. The government of India realizing its failure to bring about peace gave way to the leaders of the church, which launched the Peace Mission under the umbrella of Naga Baptist Churches on February 24, 1964 at Wokha. This Mission was agreed upon by both the FGN and Indian government and as a result a Ceasefire Agreement was reached in May 1964, which took effect from September 6, 1964.

The Peace Mission appreciated "the desire of the Nagas for self-determination" and their struggle for the preservation of their way of life. It also admitted that the Nagas never formed part of the Indian mainstream and that the Naga Federal Government could on their own volition decide to be a participant in the Union of India. But the Mission could not broker any solution to the Naga issue, because of the uncompromising stand of the FGN on the question of Naga sovereignty while the Indian Government pressed for a solution within the framework of the Indian Constitution, leading to a dead lock. The Ceasefire was withdrawn on August 31, 1972 and Nagaland was once again plunged into

a nightmare of violence. Not only that the Government of India, unilaterally transfer Nagaland to the Ministry of Home affairs from the Ministry of External Affairs, amidst wide protest from the Nagas. In May, 1975 President's rule was imposed in Nagaland.

In this tumultuous time, the Shillong Accord was signed on November 11, 1975, at Shillong between the Naga underground led by Kevi Yallay and the Government of India represented by L.P. Singh, the then Governor of Nagaland. Under the terms of the Shillong Accord, the underground representatives agreed to accept the Indian Constitution and surrender their 'arms', while they have reasonable time to formulate other issues for final discussion for final settlement. But this Accord also came to naught. While A.Z. Phizo, then NNC President, refused to acknowledge the existence of the Shillong Accord, both Isak Chishi Swu (NNC Vice President) and Thuingaleng Muivah (NNC General Secretary) condemned and denounced it as a sold out of the Naga rights. And the Accordists were hunted down and several were killed by the undergrounds who opposed it.

As a result of the damaged image of the NNC, most of the leaders abandoned it and formed a new organization called the 'Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland' (NSCN) on January 31, 1980, with Isak Chishi Swu as Chairman, S.S. Khaplang as Vice President, and Thuingaleng Muivah as General Secretary. NSCN then established the Government of People's Republic of Nagaland (GPRN) replacing the Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN). The NSCN stands for Naga sovereignty and its manifesto is essentially based on the principle of 'Christian Socialism'- a combination of the age old traditional socio-cultural and economic system of the Nagas with a tinge of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism on the one hand and with a great bend towards the teachings of Jesus Christ which is regard as the salvation of Nagaland even as they phrase 'Nagaland for Christ' (Vashum, 2000:95)

But in 1988, the NSCN further split into two factions, NSCM -IM led by Isak Swu and TH. Muivah, and NSCN-K under the Chairmanship of S.S.Khaplang, because of mistrust and differences amongst the leaders (Vashum, 2000). Many reasons, have been have been given for this split, and there seems to be no compromise between the two, each of them

consolidating their powers and trying to outdo the others. Amidst all these chaos, in April 1990, A.Z. Phizo, the father of Naga nationalism passed away in London where he has been living in self exile since 1957. When the mantle of NNC leadership was passed on to his daughter Adino by some of his loyal supporters, a group of former Naga Army Generals and their supporters formed their own parallel NNC led by Khodao Yanthan (NNC-K). This division further divided the Naga undergrounds (now into four groups) and factional fights became a regular feature and many, including non-factional and innocent Nagas, have died at the hands of fellow Nagas, who claim to be Naga Nationalists (Chasie, 1999:43). Amongst all these groups, the NSCN-IM has emerged as the champion or the main spokesperson of the Naga cause to the outside world.

The NSCN-IM became all the more popular and acceptable to the masses Nagaland was accepted as a member nation of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) on January 23, 1993 at The Hague in its Third General Assembly, under its leadership. NSCN-IM is also reported to have offices in many countries, including Sweden, Bangladesh, Singapore, Pakistan, the USA, Nepal, Thailand, among others.

With the rising Naga people's support to the NSCN, the Government of India once again agreed to enter into dialogue. Thus, on 1st August, 1997, the GOI entered into another Ceasefire-Agreement with NSCN-IM for a possible political negotiation between the two conflicting 'entities'. The terms of this negotiation are, (1) the talks shall be unconditional from both sides, (2) the talks shall be at the highest level, i.e., at the Prime Minister level, (3) the venue of the talks shall be anywhere in the world, outside India. Since then, peace talks have taken place at different countries, namely, Amsterdam, Switzerland, Tokyo, Paris, Bangkok, etc. and most recently in New Delhi.

Before concluding this section, let us briefly look into the genesis of the NSCN activities in Manipur. During the first Ceasefire-Agreement period (1964), there were organizational changes in the Federal Government of the NNC. Th. Muivah, a native of Somdal village of Ukhrul District of Manipur was appointed as the General Secretary of the NNC, and Suisa, also a native of Ukhrul District of Manipur became an executive member of the NNC. Then the Naga Federal Government which was earlier inactive

became active in Manipur in the three Sub-Divisions of Ukhrul, Mao, Tamenglong (Tengnoupal Sub-Division was not including the cease fire) which are part of the ceasefire area. Thus, the mid 1960s saw the beginning of an active involvement of the Nagas of Manipur in the Naga nationalist movement with the Tangkhuls, (who are the major Naga population) becoming the backbone of the NSCN (I-M). The NSCN (I-M) is the bridge between Nagaland and the Nagas in Manipur. The NSCN (I-M) started mobilizing the Nagas of Manipur through Naga social organizations like the United Naga Council, Manipur (UNCM), All Naga Students' Association, Manipur (ANSAM), etc. The NSCN (I-M) became the voice of the people of Nagas in Manipur through the public consensus or by the strength of its 'gun-culture'.

Thus, we can see that the Naga nationalism in Manipur had two origins. The first one was the Zeliangrong movement, which started as an anti-British and anti-Christian movement, and had little to do with the Nagas in present Nagaland, in fact Phizo, the founding father of Naga nationalism was against it because of its anti-Christian character. Gaidinliu was supposed to have appealed to the Government of India for help in fighting the Naga underground, though it did not materialize. The second one was the ascendancy of Th. Muivah in the hierarchy of the NNC and now the present General-Secretary of the NSCN (I-M), with whom the Government of India is on talk.

The participation of the Nagas of Manipur in the NNC led Naga nationalist movement, particularly since 1960s and the emergence of the NSCN (I-M) with a large chunk of cadres from Manipur, including its powerful General Secretary, as a force to be reckoned with in the Naga movement, the Naga identity has become more prominent in the state. It is in such a scenario that the movement for Naga integration, another mobilization, has come to play an important role in the production of Naga identity in Manipur.

Integration Movement

A mobilization that has a critical bearing on the development of Naga identity in Manipur has been the 'movement' or mobilization for integration of Naga inhabited area under one administrative unit. This idea of 'Naga integration under one political realm is not a

recent introduction but (it) has been since the time of colonial regime' (Shimray, 2007:81). Asoso Yonuo also reiterated that the process for integration or unification had began when the British unilaterally divided Naga Hills into Manipur, Assam and Burma with the vile motive of dividing them so that the Nagas will not be able to revolt against them (Yonuo, 1979).

Naga leaders who strongly advocated for the integration of Naga areas in Manipur with Naga Hills (Nagaland) were Mr. Athikho Daiho of Mao, Mr. Rungsung Suisa from Ukhrul region, and Mr. Teba Kilong from Tamenglong et al. The Nagas and other hill communities categorically asserted that they would not remain in Manipur since the Manipuri Maharaja had never conquered them and declared that it would be impossible to preserve the best of their culture, tradition, customary laws and political practices (Shimray, 2007:82).

'Before the lapse of the British paramount in Manipur, Mr. A. Daiho of Mao had already begun to canvass for secession of the Hills from Manipur, because in it Mr. Daiho saw the remedy for all the injustice and the indignities suffered by the tribal's of Manipur. They certainly realized that it was the colonial regime, not the territory, which had been responsible for all the miseries' (Singh, 1989:303).

1946 saw the formation of the Naga National League under the leadership of Mr. A. Daiho. The league "press on their rightful demand on merging themselves with the neighboring districts of the Naga Hills on the basis of a closer affinity of ethnic, culture, tradition, geographical configuration and contiguity, except the dim voice which had persistently raised in the form of memorials submitting to the different Governors of Assam and to the Ministry of the States' Department, Government of India. However, no favorable action was taken up on their behalf and the government of Manipur had always been trying to suppress the wishes and the desires of the Nagas and other Hill people such as the Mizos of the State (Ibid.).

With the departure of the British looming near, Maharaja Bodh Chandra set up a Constitution Making Committee (CMC) to draft the Constitution for the State of

Manipur. Wherein five members from the valley were elected indirectly and five from the hills were nominated by the President of Manipur State Darbar (PMSD). R.Suisa, Athikho Daiho (Mao), Teba Kilong (Tamenglong), TC Tiankham (Churachandpur) and Thangoupao Kipgen (South East area) were the five nominated members from the hills. The Committee first meeting was held on 24th March 1947, where none of the Naga representatives attended (Shimray, 2007).

In its minutes of 1947, the Committee stated that a provision must be made for the merger of the valley and the Hill areas under one State Government eighth special safeguards for the Hill people in the form of 'Local Self Government'. The Hill Representatives agreed to this term on the condition that the right to secede from the State at the end of ten years should be given to any section of the Hill peoples if they so desired. Mr. Daiho and Mr. Tiankham made it clear that if such a clause was not incorporated they could not be a part to the CMC. But, the Committee stated that it was not competent to make any such recommendation and that such question could be more properly raised by the dissatisfied party at the end of the five year period. Mr. F. F. Pearson, the Chairman of the CMC, also brought the dissension to the attention of the Maharaja but nothing came out of it (Shimray, 2007:84).

This non accommodation of their views in the Constitution was resented by the Hills leaders and the political movement and desire to merge with the Naga Hill district of Assam increased. According to Shimray (ibid.), the Nagas boycotted the preparation of the electoral rolls in the Naga areas and election to the legislative Assembly of Manipur in 1948.

However, amongst others, R.Suisa, Kakhangai Kabui, MK Shimray, Thisam Luikham, Raying Hungyo, R.Kathing, Mono Monsang, Buishingpou were elected to the Manipur State Assembly, 1948⁹. So, if all the Nagas had totally boycotted the election of 1948, who had had elected these members or how is that the tribal Naga leaders like R.

⁹ Manipur State Assembly Secretary, Imphal, 1985.

Khathing and Teba Kilong were members of the House and also Minister in that Government of 1948?

Unlike their counterparts in the Naga Hills of Assam, where the Nagas had totally boycotted the election to the Legislative Assembly of 1952 and 1957, the same could not be said of the Nagas of Manipur. According to Dhananjoy Usham Singh, R.Suisa spoke actively in favor of the cause of the Nagas but refused to join hands in the non-co-operation movement against the Government of Manipur (Shimray,2007). So one can ask the question as to why Suisa refused to join hands in the non co-operation movement against the Government if he was for the cause.

The Naga National League launched a campaign of 'No House Tax Payment' to the Government of Manipur, and instead to pay it to the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills District of Assam and also sent a memorandum to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister-in-charge State stating their legitimate demand to merge themselves with the Nagas of the district of Naga Hills of Assam Province based on their social, cultural and traditional affinity. In response the Manipur Government along with the Assam Rifles and State Police took severe action against the revolting Nagas, killing three persons, and injuring thirteen at Mao. Daiho, Modoli, Shibo and Kaokho Dilil were arrested on 27 August and imprisoned. The United Naga Council and the Mao Naga Council resolved to observe 27th August as Martyr's Day in remembrance of the persons who lost their lives in the Mao shooting.

The Chief Minister M.K. Priya Brata Singh tried to resolve the Mao crisis by sending Major Khathing, the then Hill Minister of Manipur to bring about a peaceful settlement but to no avail (Singh, 1989).

In 1968, Mr.Rishang Keishing established the Naga Integration Committee (NIC), Manipur. On 26th July 1968, the NIC submitted a memorandum to Smt. Indira Gandhi the then Prime Minister of India stating for the integration of Nagas areas of Manipur with the state of Nagaland. The NIC's memo reiterated to integrate of all Naga areas within

one administrative unit and endorses a resolution of the 5th General Session of the Naga National Organization in February 1968. The resolution reads as follows:

‘As per agreement between the naga leaders and the Government of India, this meeting of the NNO strongly urges the Government of India, to immediately integrate all contiguous Naga areas with the state of Nagaland. Further, we appeal to all Nagas, who are residing outside the Nagaland, to work for early integration for which the State of Nagaland has always kept the doors open. Further this general session express its deep appreciation to the initiative taken by the Nagas of Manipur areas towards this end. It is high time to bring an immediate solution in this regard. The matters are likely to become uncontrollable either the proposed re-organization of Assam. We wish to stress that we put in our demand within believe that we shall sufficiently and correctly demonstrate our loyalty to the Government of India. The integration would definitely strengthen the hands of the administration of the state of Nagaland and the solution of the present trouble there would become much easier.’
(Shimray, 2007:91)

The Convention of the Naga People of Manipur also condemned the delegation of Nagas to New Delhi in demand of statehood for Manipur in the name of the Naga public. They also stated that the ‘plain people and their Naga agents’ plea that on granting statehood to Manipur, the Nagas will cease their demand for integration into Nagaland Date exposes only their political immaturity and utter incapability to measure the depth of Naga political mind. The talk of granting District Autonomy makes no sense at all. The Naga unilaterally uphold the sanctity of the 16th Point Agreement’ (Ibid.: 92).

The Naga Integration Central Committee (NIC) on 3rd October 1970 at Kohima appointed ‘Action Committee Members’ including Rani Gaidinliu, Rishang Keishang, Rano Shaiza, et al. The Committee also resolved to observe ‘Naga Integration Day’ throughout all Naga areas on the 20th November. On 9th November, 1970, an NICC delegation of M. Savino (Chairman), Rishang Keishing (Ex-MP, Gen. Secy, NICC), T. Haralu (Vice-

Chairman), Mason Riame (Joint Secretary, NICC), NG Mono (Ex-MLA), D. Athuibo (Ex-MLA), M.Vero(MP) , et al, submitted a memorandum to Smt. Indira Gandhi stating:

“The Nagas belong to a common ethnic group having similar culture, tradition and way of life. It was the British who in their interest divided the Naga people...The movement of the integration of Naga territories, as a matter of fact, is nearly as old as the freedom movement in India. The movement gained momentum under the leadership of Rani Gaidinliu which was in essence against the British government who kept the Nagas divided into Naga Hills, Manipur and North Cachar of Assam...different delegations and memoranda to the Government of India to urge upon it to take immediate necessary steps for the integration of the Naga areas of Manipur. Their plea has been that it will be a wise political decision in the interest of the Union of India itself to pacify the present political situation which² remains turbulent in Naga areas of Manipur.” (Shimray, 2007:93).

The NICC also passed a resolution to lend its support to the NIC, Manipur members contesting the Mid-term election for the Lok Sabha in 1971, and so the NIC fielded Mr. Rishang Keishing, the General Secretary of NICC. In its election manifestoes, it stated, the immediate integration of all contiguous Naga area in Assam, Manipur, NEFA with Nagaland, and extended its support of the demand of Statehood for the valley areas of Manipur. In the same year, United Naga People’s Integration Council was constituted by the NIC to accommodate more diverse Nagas public opinion. The UNIC then directed its MLAs to give all possible cooperation to the Ministry formed by the legislature party under the leadership of the Manipur’s Peoples’ Party, provided that there would be no interference on the part of the constituent parties, in the basic principles of the respective parties.

But all was not hunky dory amongst the Nagas of Manipur. Mr Solomon's¹⁰ commenting on the NIC activities says, "Naga integration was first started by some leaders of Nagaland. Some frustrated Manipuri Naga leaders were utilized as weapons. These were Ex-MPs or Ex-MLAs, they shouted that they would not part even an inch of land to Nagaland. When the Manipur Legislative Assembly passed a resolution demanding Statehood, they were members of the Manipur Legislative Assembly. Among the four leaders of NIC, one belonged to Tangkhul one to Kabui, one to Mao and another was Anal. Some months ago and in November 1970 they tried to meet the Prime Minister. All of them were defeated in the last general election' (Shimray,2007). It should be noted that Mr. Solomon was later assassinated.

With the attainment of Statehood of Manipur and consequently the strengthening of electoral politics, some NIC members actively plunged into Manipur politics sidetracking its aims and objectives. Mr. Yangmaso Shaiza (former UNIC member) became Cabinet minister (Finance) on 20th March 1972, and Chief Minister of Manipur in 1974 and 1977. Mr. Rishang Keishing (who established the Naga Integration Committee, Manipur in 1968) was the Finance Minister of Manipur in 1974, and Chief Minister in 1980. He was the Chief Minister for five terms and is still the longest serving Chief Minister of Manipur till date. He was condemned by the United Naga Council, 'Mr. Rishang Keishing, for example, has repeatedly stated that not even an inch of Manipur should be given to Nagaland. In other words, in order to save his chair, he had consistently opposed Naga integration movement after he became the Chief Minister of Manipur even though he was the Secretary of the UNIC and was elected as an MLA under its ticket in 1972'¹¹. Mr Keishing while replying to a question regarding the State's territorial integrity answered; 'there is no question of any Southern Nagaland. We will react at the

¹⁰ Mr. Solomon a tangkhul from Tuinem village of Ukhrul was a member of Manipur Territorial Council, Deputy speaker and a Cabinet Minister in 1963.

¹¹ United Naga Council (UNC), 2002, *The Territorial Integrity of Manipur: A Naga Perspective*, December, 10.

appropriate time' (Shimray, 2007). Interestingly, Mr. Keishing was the first to sign the Naga Integration memo to the Prime Minister on May 27, 2005, but by then he had lost the 2002 General Election of Manipur and was just an MP of the *Rajya Sabha*. It should be noted here that, Mr. Keishing also established the NIC when he was expelled from Indian national Congress in 1968. He always had this knack for garnering attention and staying in both the Naga and Manipur politics.

Thus, NIC, NICC became a mere political tools or platform to jump into politics. Even in Nagaland the NICC were actively involved in the State's politics. These led to the deterioration of the integration movement—some abandoned NICC out of frustration while some manipulated it for their individual gain. All this led to political differences, individualism and betrayal of their commitment (Shimray, 2007:96-97).

“Hitherto, Naga integration movement was not supported by the Naga underground and it was termed as Indian constitution based politics. At that time, Naga political movement was totally overshadowed by the concept of ‘Naga independence’. The internal conflict among the independence protagonists and the integrationist systematically weakened Naga politics and ideology. In the interim period of 1970s and 1980s, ‘Gun-Culture’ ruled in Naga politics and many leaders were assassinated including Mr. Yangmaso Shaiza [former Chief Minister], L. Solomon [former Minister], Lungshim Shaiza [younger brother of Y. Shaiza and attempts to assassinate Mr. Rishang Keishing, Hokishe Sema and Mr. S.C Jamir. The wisdom of some Naga leader's could not sustain the movement for fear of the term made by Naga underground. At the same time, wisdom of the Naga integration protagonists simply drowned in electoral politics. (ibid: 99)

It was only in 1997 that the Naga integration movement revived, initiated by the 1997 Naga ceasefire and peace talks between the Government of India and National Socialist Council of Nagalim, Isak and Muivah faction, popularly known as NSCN-IM. On 22nd August 1997, the Nagas of Manipur under the aegis of UNC resolved to support the Naga peace talks and extend ceasefire to the Naga areas of Manipur. Now the word, integration became one of the main agenda of ongoing composite peace talks' (ibid: 102).

The civil society's also strengthened and generated greater opinions which the state had failed to do so earlier. The Naga Civil organizations and Churches also urged the Government of India to expedite the Naga problem (ibid: 103). Knowing the importance of the Naga civil body, the NSCN (IM) leadership initiated the first General Meeting of the Consultative Body on May 31-June 2, 1999 at Niuland, Nagaland with the objective of generating and inviting peoples' opinion and suggestions for an amicable solution. The Fourth such meeting at Bangkok on 6-7 September 2005 declared that 'the unification of all Naga areas is legitimate and therefore non-negotiable'. In this meeting, Mr. Isak Chishi Swu, Chairman of NSCN (IM) stated that:

“For Nagas to have dignity and respect, it is essential that our aspirations for all Naga areas be unified is fully realized. It is unthinkable for the Nagas to be sovereign without unification of all Naga areas. Nagas live on our land that belongs to us. We have been living in these territories from time immemorial. The aspiration of the Nagas to live together is but a natural desire and we will not take anything that belongs to others.” (ibid: 106)

Mr. Muivah, General Secretary of NSCN (IM) also stated in an interview to North East Sun, September 15, 2004: 'It will be meaningless to talk of Nagas solution without uniting the Naga areas.....Nagas are not claiming any land from anybody. Nagas have been living their own land and territories. We don't live on anybody else's land. Our land has been there since time immemorial and there is no dispute about this. Today these Naga areas have been put and named differently. It is the division, which was drawn by the Indians against the will of the Nagas. We were never ruled by the Britishers or any Maharajahs'. It is a position with which the movement for Naga integration has been mobilized in Manipur.

To conclude, starting from the colonial period with movement under Jadonang through the spread of Naga nationalist movement under NNC in the neighbouring areas of Manipur to the movement for 'Naga integration', these movements have shaped the consciousness of Nagas identity in Manipur.

Chapter 4

Conflicts and Consolidation of Identity

On Nagas and Nagalim

the principle of nationalism, demanding compact homogenous ethnic groups within given political-territorial units, is implemented

— Ernest Gellner

Group identity is often consolidated at the time of conflict. Studies in social psychology have shown that competition between groups and group comparisons often produces strengthening of in-group solidarity (Sherif, 1961/1954; Tajfel, 1982). In a sense, group conflict is a phenomenon that (re-)produces group identities; during conflicts, people are often mobilized or forced to identify with either of the groups which is in conflict. It can be argued that the protracted and violent conflict between Naga nationalists and security forces of the Indian make the Naga identity a reality for many tribes who were not conscious of themselves as Nagas. It is in this context of inter-group comparison, competition and conflict that we can see the re-production of Naga identity, particularly in Manipur.

In this chapter, I shall explore this aspect of Naga identity in Manipur through two conflicts or conflict situations: Kuki-Naga conflict and Meitei-Naga conflict. In order to set the context of these two conflicts, a brief background of the state of Manipur and its people are in order.

A Multiethnic State

A conversation between a matron going to Dimapur and a group of Royal Engineers on the Manipur Nagaland border:

“Where have you come from?”

“I have come from Imphal,” she replied...

What is it? What do we find when we get there?”

You will find a little paradise on earth.”

The matron was not exaggerating.’(Constantine, 1981:1)

The matron will be saddened to know that her 'little paradise' is no longer the same, but now it is known all over as a state ridden with conflicts and tension.

Manipur, called the "land of Jewels" by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, is a tiny hilly state in the eastern most part of the north eastern region of India. The state is landlocked on the east by the Somrah ranges and upper Chindwin river of Myanmar, on the south by the Chin Hill of Myanmar and Mizoram state, on the west by the Cachar Hill Districts of Assam and on the north by the state of Nagaland. The state is divided into two distinct geographical divisions viz., the hills and the valley but the valley occupies only one tenth of the entire area and it is called a valley only in relation to the hills rising high above it.

For administrative purpose the state is divided into nine districts. The valley based districts are Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur, and the other five districts of Senapati, Churachandpur, Chandel, Ukhrul and Tamenglong are hill districts. The 2001 Census recorded Manipur's population as 23,88,634 persons. The state has more than 35 indigenous ethnic communities but only 29 have been recognized by the Government of India as scheduled tribes.

The ethnic groups inhabiting the state can be divided into hill communities and valley based communities. The valley communities are the Meiteis, Pangans (Muslims) as well as the immigrants from other states of India. They are recognized as non-tribals. The tribal groups are broadly divided into two groups again, viz., the Nagas and the Kuki-Chin-Zomi groups. Table no.3 indicates the major ethnic groups and their population in Manipur¹. The non-tribal communities constitute the larger share of the state's total population accounting for 65.57 percent, and the tribal communities make up the remaining 34.43 percent. Table no. 3 shows the population of the individual ethnic groups in 2001 and table no.4 indicates the distribution of various ethnic groups in Manipur². The Imphal valley is dominated by the Meiteis and Pangans. Districts of Senapati, Chandel, Ukhrul and Tamenglong belong to the Nagas, while Churachandpur is dominated by the Kukis who are also scattered in all the hill districts.

¹ See appendixes.

² *ibid*

The Meiteis are largely *Vaishnavite* Hindus, and the Pangal follow Islam where as most of the tribal community follow Christianity. Each tribal community has their own dialect or language and the mother tongue of the Meiteis and Pangals are *Meiteilon or Manipuri* which is also use as a link language amongst the different communities in the state. Every community either the Meiteis, the Nagas or the Kukis etc, is very much aware and conscious of their ethnic identity and differences. This identity is based on the formation of large group by bringing together several smaller groups and projecting a unified identity. As mentioned above this ethnic groups are concentrated in well demarcated ethnic territories with some exceptions, making the ethnic consolidation easier, stronger and marking a sharp difference between “us” and “them”. This led to the formation of a number of ethnic- based organization (Shimray, 2004). This multi-ethnic state has its shares of inter-group conflicts which re-produce and consolidate group (ethnic) identities.

Kuki-Naga Conflict in Manipur

Land has been a prime physical possession for both the Kuki and Naga as true to any other tribal. Cultural, traditional, economic and sociopolitical considerations have all prompted the ethno genes to attach to it so much primordial significance because land resource- its extent thereof would apparently measure one’s social status, temporal power and commanding position even in ancient days when territorial polity was not relevant (Gangte, 2009:679). Land is deemed as inherently foundational and inalienable *sine quo non* on which the entire tribal life and cultural edifice still stand and revolve, as over all these centuries.

Kukis are basically migrating tribesmen who came from the Chin Hills in Myanmar in the 18th century in two waves of migration; hence they are classified into two categories: ‘old Kukis’ and ‘new Kukis’. The Naga tribes migrated to their present habitat well before the 12th century.³

³ The Ahom-Tai people who ruled over Assam in the 12th Century mention Naga tribes in their chronicles (Saikia, 2005).

The conflict between the two communities is not a recent phenomenon but has been brewing for long before it finally erupted in a small Indo-Myanmar border town called Moreh in June 3, 1992 with the killing of one Kuki in a shoot out between the Kuki and Naga undergrounds.

A brief look into the uneasy relations between these two communities has had since the 19th century has to be understood in Manipur's evolution as a state. The Meitei kings and the Britishers also played spoilsport between these two communities. They used the Kukis as a buffer between the Naga inhabited areas and their lands. The primary requirement of the Kukis was land, which was given in plenty by the Meitei Kings and the Political Agent, to act as buffer zone to ward off all adversaries, prospective aggressors, intruders, etc. According to Johnstone, this arrangement did not only serve the purpose of defending the people of Manipur but also preeminently protect British interest the best. Johnstone also said that McCulloch who started this policy even helped these new immigrants both materially and financially. So successful was this policy that even Bengal emulated it in 1855 and settled a large colony of Kukis in Langting as a barrier for North Cachar against the raids of Angami raids (Gangte, 2009:675-676). A number of Kukis were also employed in the Manipur's army and together with them they wreaked havoc on many Naga villages.

As a result of this policy, the Kukis have since been found scattered all over Manipur⁴. The Kukis are still found occupying Churachandpur district, Sadar Hills Subdivision of Senapati district and Chandel districts in huge numbers over other Naga communities. They are found mingling with the Tangkhuls in Ukhrul, Mao-Maram-Paomais in Senapati district, and with the Zeliangrongs in Tamenglong districts.

“We are like the birds of the air. We make our nests here this year and who knows where we shall build next year” said a Kuki tribesman, almost nine decades ago, to T.C. Hodson, Assistant Political Agent in Manipur (Patel, 1994:101). So it is not surprising that some Nagas held the view that the demographic imbalance caused by the Kuki-Chin influx over a long period was one of the reasons that led to the conflict.

⁴ See Appendix, Table No. 5 & 6

This demographic imbalance led to competition, clashes of interests and animosity over the sharing of land and resources (Tikoo in Phukon 2005). The Executive body of the United Naga Council (UNC) also held that the demand for the creation of a separate revenue District for the Kukis Homeland and the constitution of Sadar Hill Autonomous District under the North East Reorganization Act of 1971 by Kukis responsible for the conflict (The Freedom, 11 May 1997). It should be noted that Sadar Hills has always been a bone of contention between the two communities⁵. The UNC also held that 1972 would be the base year for the purpose of determining land ownership of the Kukis in all districts of Manipur. But those of who have been staying in their areas before 1972 could continue to do so if they give an undertaking to the original Naga village authorities along with copies to the deputy commissioner of that District that they would be loyal to the Nagas and live peacefully and would recognize the sole ownership and sovereignty of the Nagas over the land and would not allow further in flux of new Kuki settlers in those villages (Tikoo, 2005:157-158).

As mentioned earlier the Kukis are found scattered in all the Naga dominated districts⁶. Some Naga scholars have also expressed their concerns that Kukis settled in a particular village would address themselves as clubbed to the same Tangkhul or Naga village near which they are settled, for example, Kukis settled near Tuson village of Ukhrul would prefer to call themselves as Tuson Kukis. And these Kukis refused to pay taxes to the Nagas and instead countered that the Nagas should pay taxes to them; so Limcart a Village Volunteer Force protested against the Kukis. The Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (Issac-Muivah) [NSCN (I-M)] also got involved in the controversy by imposing land tax on the Kukis and by expressing that the Kukis would not be a part of Independent Nagaland even though the Kukis are scattered in huge numbers in all the Naga dominated districts of Manipur and which are being claimed by the Nagas as a part of Greater Nagaland.

The Kukis also retaliated by openly declaring their different racial descent and demanded an independent Kuki homeland by forming the Kuki National Organization (KNO) (Gangte, 2009:698-699). This formation of the KNO is a process by which

⁵ See indexes. Table no.6

⁶ Ibid. Table no.5 & 6

‘members of a group measure their social advantages and political power against the attainment and aspirations of a neighbouring group’ (Horowitz 1971:241).

The split of the NSCN into two factions in 1988 triggered off the emergence of the Kuki National Army (KNA), the armed wing of the KNO. This further emboldened the Kukis to refuse payment of tax to the NSCN straining the already strained and tensed relations between the Kukis and the Naga insurgents. Naga insurgents have been collecting the ‘house tax’ from every household in the Naga areas since its inception. The Nagas have been paying it regularly. Kukis living in Naga areas have also paying this tax till then.

In this tensed situation, the killing of O. Haokip, a Kuki in June 3, 1992, in an armed confrontation between the Kuki and Naga insurgents near Moreh spiraled into the infamous Kuki-Naga clash in which thousands of homes and lives of both the communities were lost and property worth lakhs of rupees destroyed and many were rendered homeless. This violence lasted for almost half a decade or so.

The fact that the shoot out between the two insurgent groups took place near Moreh is also another factor in the conflict between the two groups. Moreh is a small town in the Indo-Myanmar border which has a flourishing black business from clothes to kitchen items, cigarettes to electronic gadgets, besides forming one of the main corridors for teak and heroin smuggling. The town is the financial hotspot for both the Nagas and Kukis insurgents. The underground Kuki group collects revenue from the smugglers by way of self imposed taxes and commission. And they also wanted to control this area through the collection of loyalty house tax from the Kuki villages in the area, which hitherto have been paying taxes to the Naga insurgents. Thus, this clash which started in Chandel district (Moreh is in Chandel district) spread to other districts too where both the communities co- inhabit. According to the Kuki Inpi, the United Naga Council’s resolution of 22 October 1992 which issued the Quit-Notice to the Kukis living in so-called ‘Nagas areas’ of Manipur also further added more fuel to the fire. The violence spilt over even to the neighbouring states of Assam and Nagaland.

The violence gutted 5724 houses out of which 3110 belonged to Kukis and 2614 belonged to Nagas. Around 15,000 people were internally displaced and nearly 1700 people were killed and properties worth million of rupees were destroyed. The worst carnage occurred at Zoupui, a remote hill village north of the state's capital Imphal, where 87⁷ Kuki males were beheaded (Bhaumik, 2009:142). The Nagas justifies their attacks on Kuki villages as defensive action against killings of Naga civilians by Kukis. It also led to the downfall of the Rishang Keishing led Congress government in the state.

The neutrality of the national or state regime is always doubted or challenged in an ethnically dispersed society during time of stress and conflict⁸. The NSCN alleged that the Kuki militant groups were funded and supported by the Indian army. The Hindu (April 8-9, 1993) reported that the Kuki militants received 'moral' support from official agencies of both the state of Manipur and the Union Government, and that the President of the KNO (Kuki National Organization) Mr.Henglen had claimed that he had met the then Army chief Gen. S.F. Rodrigues in Delhi on December 24,1992, and has been in constant contact with various authorities and agencies in Manipur and Nagaland (Shimray, Luithui & Bose 1993:13).

This kind of report, whether true or false, has hardened the hearts of the Nagas against the Meiteis and is also one of the reasons of the Meitei-Naga conflict which shall be discussed in the next section of the chapter.

The most obvious consequence of this clash besides the innumerable loss of lives and properties is the division of the hill areas into two distinct ethnic groups, viz, the Kukis and the Nagas. Several small communities or tribes which so far were neither Kukis nor Nagas, facing threats and fear for their own survival, came to assert themselves as either Kukis or Nagas according to their cultural or geographical proximity. This indicates the ever changing nature of group identity, it also confirm that ethnic group or identity is no more the 'firm objective reality' instead 'ethnic identities are fluid across time and social contexts... to the point of ethnic switching'

⁷ This number is debatable. Instead of 87, only 35 have been listed in An Introduction to the Ethnic Problem in Manipur & A reportage on the Naga-Kuki Clash: A Prose in Counter-Insurgency.

⁸ The neutrality of the state as suspect also appears in the Meitei-Naga conflict; I shall address this in the next segment later in the chapter.

(Sanders 2002:328). Relation between members has changed from 'blood and stone to clay and putty' (Horowitz 1977:7).

Thus, the decade of violent conflict between the Nagas and the Kukis has consolidated the two identities by strengthening in-group identification and also sucking smaller tribes and communities into the two conglomerations, the Nagas and the Kukis.

Meitei-Naga conflict

Another conflict that has been playing a role in the consolidation of the Naga identity in contemporary time has a basic root in the clash of interests between two politics, one pursuing the goal of integration of Nagas inhabited areas under one administrative unit, which necessarily involves the change of territory of present state of Manipur, and the one pursued by those who want to protect the status-quo of the present territory of the existing state (Manipur). In the words of Baruah (2003:323), 'the goal of creating a single political unit out of all Naga inhabited areas put the Naga project of nationhood in collision course with a parallel Manipuri project'. As it stands today, 'with the sizeable people from the Hills of Manipur involved' in the Naga movement, 'the idea of a Naga nation comes into obvious confrontation with the idea of Manipuri identity' (Akoijam, 2001:2812). And increasingly, 'the idea of a Naga 'nation' and a Manipuri 'nation'' become incompatible' (ibid). This conflict has come to be represented or articulated in terms of a simmering conflict between the Nagas and the Meitcis. This conflict, though has been there, at least in a dormant form, for some time, has undoubtedly sharpened during the last one decade.

As it has been noted in the preceding chapter, there has been a movement for the integration of Naga inhabited areas under one administrative unit. This demand involves a large part of the territory of the present state of Manipur. Although, this demand has been there perhaps as long as the beginning of the Naga nationalist movement starting from 1940s, it became prominent after the peace talk between the NSCN (IM) and Government of India which started in 1997. And the fact that the supremo of the NSCN(I-M), Mr. Th. Muivah, and a large number of its cadres being from Manipur, the issue of integration of Naga areas in the Naga movement acquires

significance all the more. More significantly, it became a major issue in 2001 after the outcry in Manipur, particularly in the valley areas, against the extension of the ceasefire 'without territorial limits' between NSCN (IM) and the Government of India⁹.

The phrase, 'without territorial limits', was read by many, particularly the Meiteis as an admission by the Government of India to the NSCN (I-M) demand for 'Greater Nagaland' or 'Nagalim'¹⁰. The Meiteis accused New Delhi of following a 'Naga appeasement' policy at the expense of Manipur¹¹. This provoked fierce protests and outcries in the Imphal valley on 18th June 2001, where the angry protestors, mostly belonging to the Meiteis burnt down the State Assembly Secretariat, offices of political parties, houses of senior politicians. The Speaker of the Assembly Mr.S. Dhananjay was caught and beaten by the protesters, 54 vehicles were burnt and destroyed, and 13 protesters were shot death by CRPF personals. Finally on 27th June 2001, The GOI announced that the last three words 'without territorial limits' of the agreement between the Centre and NSCM (IM) on June 14 would be deleted and status quo ante of June 14 would be restored. But the NSCN (I-M) says that the Centre's decision was not acceptable to the Nagas.

Subsequently, a binary politics of 'territorial integrity of Manipur' vs. 'Naga integration' comes to define a relationship between the Manipuris, particularly the Meiteis and the Nagas, particularly from the Hills of Manipur. This politics which is characterized by accusations and counter accusations from both sides informs the divide between the two communities.

The Meiteis argued that Manipur is a historically evolved multiethnic state and different communities have been living together since time immemorial¹². Folklores and myths talk about the common origin, and shared mythical and ritual spaces between the people in the hills and valley of Manipur. They gave examples of various cultural practices in Manipur such as, *Laiharaoba* festivals, *Mera Haochongba*,

⁹ Manipur Fact File 2001, compiled by All Manipur College Teachers' Association, Imphal

¹⁰ 'Lim' is an Ao word, which means 'land'. This has come into fashion amongst some of the Nagas, especially after the NSCN (I-M) adopted it in 1997. 'Nagalim' is often used to mean all those Naga inhabited areas besides the state of Nagaland. And hence, the term is equated with 'Greater Nagaland'.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.*

marriage ceremony and the coronation ceremony of the king of Manipur where rituals and dresses that people wear during such festivals incorporate represent the people from the hills of Manipur.

Describing these cultural aspects, Kamson (2009), a Kabui Naga writes,

“While the hill people would bring in their best farm products especially pumpkin, sweet potato, alum, tubers, etc. as presents for the monarchy, the king on his part would present fancy cloths to them in very cordial terms in an overtly festival spirit...Most conspicuously, all the participants dressed in their best attire would swirl in successive rings, dance excitedly almost incessantly and shout a common *Hoi-Hoi* in perfect unison, irrespective of any difference in customs and traditions, whose emotive show of oneness can better be left to imagination, rather than depicted...Tangkhul participation has a pride of place according to T.C. Hodson, who recorded that: *first*, the Tangkhuls in general would be regarded as the elder brethren of the Meiteis; *second*, in every *Lai Haraoba*, or festival before sylvan deities in Meitei habitats, the participation of a Tangkhul is a core ritual; *third*, even the king issued standing royal edict throughout the realm cautioning all the Meitei traders that the Tangkhul participants would be free without any payment to pick up anything they wish from the Kangla central market place on the day of Mera Haochongba; *third* (sic) while picking up, these Tangkhul brethren would very dutifully remind their valley Meitei brethren of the popular legend of the younger Tangkhul brother who left his traditional Tangkhul homestead for the valley to search for the missing piglets in the days of yore, but never came back to the Tangkhul habitat, because the younger brother had since settled in the valley as Meiteis...Ultimately during the British period the festival was completely stopped, when Kangla and its paraphernalia was taken over by the British as Cantonment area,...For obvious reasons the British were more keen to keep the hill administration under the exclusive charge of the President, Manipur

State Durbar, i.e. away from the control of the Manipur administration represented by the *king in Durbar*' (140-141, emphasis in original).

Beyond the cultural sphere, the protagonists of the territorial integrity of Manipur also refute the allegation that tribals have been sidelined in the political and economic life of the state. They further argued that tribals have been taking part in the State politics with many of them holding responsible offices, including the Chief Ministership¹³.

On the other hand, Naga integrationists have called Manipur's history as "concocted". They further insist that Nagas have never been a part of Manipur, and no tax were paid to Maharajah of Manipur. In fact, they claimed that the Nagas and their lands have been divided by the British and Indian state without the "consent" of the Nagas into Burma and India, and different states of the latter as well. They also insist that the Meities have been exploiting the Nagas of Manipur and the under-development of Hill areas are due to Meitei exploitation of the tribals. And therefore, the Government of India must intervene to bring Naga inhabited areas of Manipur into Nagaland. Incidentally, the Meiteis accused the Government of India of playing a divide and rule policy amongst the indigenous people in North East.

The Nagas has also blamed the Meiteis for exploiting and suppressing them making it impossible for the two communities to live peacefully under one administrative unit. To this accusation or claim, the Meiteis have retorted by countering the Nagas claim or accusation. The Meiteis retorted by saying that the Nagas can legally acquire land in any part of the Valley and settle there whereas the Meiteis are not allowed to do so in the Hills. The Meities also cited how the Meiteis travelling by bus along the National Highway 39 between Imphal and Guwahati have been harassed, looted, booted by the Nagas and also how the Nagas have been extorting huge amount of money from the buses and goods tucks plying on this route in the name of different kind of tax, with the consequence that essential goods prices are sold at exorbitant prices to the people who have no other choice but to buy it.

¹³ *ibid.*

The Nagas have also accused the Meiteis and the State regime for negligence of the Hill area leading to its dismal lack of infrastructure and underdevelopment. To this the Meiteis have retorted that it is a part of the administrative failure and cannot be blamed to a community. They buttressed the argument by citing that from being Chief Ministers, influential Cabinet Ministers (including the Tribal Development Minister) and top government officials, the tribals have been significant players in the administrative structure of the State. They further also noted that most of the tribal elites settled down in the capital rather than going back and working in the Hills.

An emotive issue in this accusations and counter accusations has been in the socio-cultural domain. The Nagas pointed out the 'untouchability' practiced by the Meiteis to them. To this accusation, the Meiteis' arguments run something like the following:

'While it is not the intention here to completely deny such historical episodes, such practice as has been often quoted need a proper scrutiny. Many of the instances of 'untouchability' turn out to be an exercise to control power exerting hegemony by the Meitei ruling class to their subjects, both the tribes as well as the Meitei peasants. In fact, Meitei peasants faced harder atrocities in the hands of *Rajkumars* (feudal lords) and the *bamons* (Brahmins). Exploitation took place in terms of several taxes based on religious purity and impurity. There had been cases when suddenly the Maharaja declared all his subjects 'impure' and that they had to pay purification fee to the King to be conducted by the priests. There were taxes like 'chandon senkhai' (tax on use of chandan by the Hindu subjects) and 'Pothang' system (exploitative administrative law associated with four types of free community labour). The so called exploitation by the Meiteis of the hill people turns out to be acts of the Manipuri king and the ruling class. Unfortunately what has been projected in the discourse on Naga identity politics in purely ethnic lines, Meitei's are seen as the oppressor and Nagas the oppressed. Naga political strategy seems to perceive social reality from the prism of ethnic contradiction. Equating Meitei ruling class with the Meitei people would be to commit a major fallacy' (Oinam, 2003:2036).

At one level, these accusations and counter-accusations indicate the increasing gap between the Meiteis and the Nagas, while at another, it does represent the ethnicized

identity politics in Manipur. It is this ongoing politics that have also sharpened the divide between the Nagas and the Meiteis.

Unlike the Kuki-Naga conflict, this politics that marks the relationship between the Nagas and the Meiteis has not witnessed large scale violence. However communally sensitive violence have taken place such as the killing of three Meitei officials by the cadres of NSCN (IM)¹⁴ signals the danger of the possibility of violence becoming a part of the conflict between the two communities.

Thus, this confrontationist politics between the Nagas and the Meiteis has led to the sharpening of boundaries between the two on the one hand, and on the other, consolidation of Naga identity amongst the Nagas of Manipur. This confrontationist politics happened in an environment of armed conflict only facilitates the divide and consolidation of identities including that of the Nagas, in Manipur.

¹⁴ Killing of Dr. Kishan and two other Meiteis, see the Sangai Express, 18/2/2009.

End Note

a personal reflection

This chapter is not meant to be a conclusion of the thesis in the technical sense. But nonetheless it shall stand as a concluding remark to the present exercise. Insofar as my search for some understanding of my Naga identity in the form of a research dissertation is over for the time being, but it does not mean that my quest for the Naga identity has reached its conclusion. This exercise has answered some question and at the same time it has also raised many more questions. But one thing that is clear to me now is that, the Naga identity is a constructed identity, a way of looking at the world. But saying that it is constructed does not mean that it is not real. The identity is a way of knowing my place in the world, knowing where I stand vis-à-vis the others and how the others' sees me. Besides, I am aware that people's behaviour and relationship are crucially marked by such identities.

My Naga identity became much clearer to me after or during the Kuki-Naga conflict, where I lost my near and dear ones too. Before that conflict came into my life, I was aware of my identity as someone belonging to a 'tribal' vis-à-vis the 'non-tribal' community (i.e., the Meiteis) and/or I was just a Liangmai. But the Kuki-Naga conflict made me more aware of my Naga identity. I don't mean by this, that I was not aware of the Naga identity earlier; what I mean is that I never felt the need to use the suffix Naga. In a sense, I have never considered myself as different from the Kukis, amongst whom I have many good friends and relatives (my aunty is a Kuki). If I was aware or conscious of any difference, it was vis-à-vis the Meiteis, and that also mostly in the context of the religious difference ('they' being non-Christians and 'us' being Christians). Maybe my experience is different because I was borne and grew up in the heart of Imphal and, that too, I would say in a 'cosmopolitan area', Dewlahland, where no particular community is a dominant one; all my neighbours were from different community.

As mentioned earlier, it was only during and after the Kuki-Naga conflict that I started differentiating myself from the other non-Meiteis community too, and I also became aware of the other non-Meiteis communities who said that they were neutral (that is, they are neither Kukis

other non-Meiteis communities who said that they were neutral (that is, they are neither Kukis nor Nagas). Of course, many of these groups joined either the Kukis or the Nagas camps later on. This is something I have seen in life and often wonder about. Now, I get to put this experience into perspective. This, I realize, shows the fluid, labile or porous nature of identity. From Gellner to Anderson, most of the scholars have argued for the modernity of nation or nationalism. Likewise I have also understood that both ethnicity and nationalism as a modern set of identities. Perhaps, it is perfectly sensible to assume that the Naga identity or nation is a modern phenomenon, and that some aspects of that fluidity too get implicated in Naga identity.

Another crucial aspect here is that the sense of identity has to do with the fluidity can also come with comparisons and pairing amongst identities. During the Kuki-Naga conflict, the Meiteis were seen as taking sides with the Kukis to quell the emerging Naga nationalist forces or the NSCN (I-M) in Manipur, but still then they were not seen as the 'Enemy No. 1'. Was it because the Meiteis till then had not come into a straight head on collision with the Nagas aspirations? It was only after the bloodbath between the Kukis and Nagas had subsided in the late 1990s and the 'ceasefire extension' agreement between the Government of India and the NSCN (I-M) was extended to all Naga inhabited areas, and all the Meiteis came out in full force against this agreement, only did the Meiteis become the 'enemy' for the Nagas, at some section of the Nagas.

Here it is clear that the ideological power of nationalism is expressed in the official identification of enemies and the Naga identity vis-à-vis the Meities became more sharpened, not just in terms of religious and cultural differences, but also as someone who is standing as an obstacle on our path to freedom, integration with our Naga brethren from Nagaland and our development.

In a situation of conflict, the cultural differences are stressed by both the nationalist and ethnicist as is clear from the case of Manipur. No doubt, the Meiteis and the Nagas have different cultures and beliefs, but we are not as different as we are led to believe or think

we are. Didn't James Scott suggest that the categories 'hill tribes' and 'valley peoples' are 'leaky vessels'? There is no clear cut differentiation marker between them. Though the Meiteis cannot buy land and settle in the hills because of the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms act 1960, the Nagas and other hill communities are allowed to do so. As a result, most of the affluent or elites have lands and houses of their own in the valley. Perhaps, some of these people are more at home in the valley than in the hill.

As Renan has said, a nation is formed by the will of the people and is a daily plebiscite, so also is our identity. The Nagas have the right to form their own nation, the Nagas in Manipur have the right to choose to be with the Nagas of Nagaland. There is no doubt about that. But it also begs lots of questions. For instance, do the Nagas have the right to put all the blame for their underdevelopment on other communities like the Meiteis and on this basis say that we have the right to integrate with Nagaland? Does this mean that all the different communities in the present state of Nagaland are equally developed? In the course of my work, I come to know that census reports (such as 2001) shows a huge gap between the Konyaks (one of the largest community in Nagaland) and the Aos in terms of education, whereas in Manipur, the gap between the Tangkhul Naga and the Meiteis are not as huge or significant as those between the Konyaks and the Aos. In criterion such as literacy, tribal communities in Manipur are better off than many of the 'tribes' in Nagaland. So, even if it sounds politically incorrect, one can ponder oneself if not ask others, whether the Nagas of Manipur would be better off in a unified 'Nagalim'?

However, this does not mean that there are no tangible gaps in the development between the valley and the hills areas of Manipur or that there are no Meiteis who are caught in the obscurantist and shallow pride that treat the 'tribal' people with disdain. This is something that one experiences and cannot be easily put aside as a mere complex of a minority mindset. Just as one feels uneasy with such reality of Manipur, I have also become uneasy with many of the statements that characterize the ethnicized politics in Manipur.

One aspect that I come to sense is the meaning of the oft repeated statement that we, 'the Nagas were divided'. It seems to me that such claims stand on shaky grounds. We all know that all communities now called the Nagas were once all disparate communities, living in isolated regions. We were never together in the sense that we did not have a common awareness of being a people or a political unit as we have today. If so, there is no question of us being 'divided'. Yet again, this does not mean our will and desire to live together should be disregarded nor is it wrong to desire so. Even clause no 13 of the 16- Point Agreement between the Naga people Convention and the GOI, which states that, 'the other Naga Tribes inhabiting the area contiguous to the present Nagaland be allowed to join the Nagaland if they so desire.' This means that it was left to the other Nagas to join Nagaland if they so desire. Here then, one can ask the question, why the Nagas of Manipur did not strive to join Nagaland then, when Manipur was still just a Union territory and not yet a state? Would not have it been easier then? Why now? Were not we Nagas then? Didn't we have the same aspirations and dream like those of the Nagas of Nagaland then? If no, then what is it that has changed our attitude now? These are some questions that need to be pondered upon.

Another nagging question is why were Phizo and his NNC against Rani Gaidinliu and her movement? Was it because her movement, at least in the initial moments, was anti-Christian in nature? If so, what about the Nagas now who are still not Christian both here in Manipur and Nagaland? Aren't they included in the Nagalim aspiration and dream? Or was Phizo against her, because she was from Manipur and the Nagas of Manipur were not considered as pure Nagas or because they were seen as inferior Nagas? Is this is not discrimination too?

These are personal queries that I keep thinking during and after the work. Perhaps, as life unfolds, and dynamic as life is, I shall live as a Naga and my Naga identity shall also continue to unfold with life with new meaning and experiences.

APPENDIX

Table No. 1

MEMBERS OF THE MANIPUR STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1948

| Sl. No | Name | Remarks |
|--------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | MK Priyabrata Singh (Maharaja's Nominee) | Maharaja's Brother |
| 2 | Kh Choaba | Meitei |
| 3 | Kh Ibetombi Singh | Meitei |
| 4 | W Tarpon Singh | Meitei |
| 5 | Kh Gulap Singh | Meitei |
| 6 | A Ibungotomcha Singh | Meitei |
| 7 | E Tompok Singh | Meitei |
| 8 | S Samarendra Singh | Meitei |
| 9 | Y Megha Singh | Meitei |
| 10 | A Anganghal Singh | Meitei |
| 11 | Kh Kamala Kanta Singh | Meitei |
| 12 | M Koireng Singh | Meitei |
| 13 | W Gourkishore Singh | Meitei |
| 14 | N Toyaima Singh | Meitei |
| 15 | Th Shyam Singh | Meitei |
| 16 | I Merajatra Singh | Meitei |
| 17 | Md Suleiman Singh | Muslim (Pangal) |
| 18 | N Iboton Singh | Meitei |
| 19 | W Mani Singh | Meitei |
| 20 | L Chandramani Singh | Meitei |
| 21 | M Ghuno Singh | Meitei |
| 22 | S Chourajit Singh | Meitei |
| 23 | W Nimaichand Singh | Meitei |
| 24 | Md Amjad Ali | Muslim (Pangal) |
| 25 | M Gourachand Singh | Meitei |
| 26 | Md Abdul Kadir Khan | Muslim (Pangal) |
| 27 | Md Alimiddin | Muslim (Pangal) |
| 28 | K Giri Singh | Meitei |
| 29 | L Achaw Singh | Meitei |
| 30 | Dr. N Leiren Singh | Meitei |
| 31 | T Bokul | Meitei |
| 32 | Ch Pishak Singh | Meitei |
| 33 | A Gourabidhu | Meitei |
| 34 | Sinam Bijoy Singh | Meitei |

| | | |
|----|----------------------|---------------------|
| 35 | M Madhumangol | Meitei |
| 36 | Dr. L Kampu | Meitei |
| 37 | Mono | Naga (Anal) |
| 38 | R. Khathing | Naga (Tangkhum) |
| 39 | Raying Hungyo | Naga (Tangkhum) |
| 40 | Thisam Luikham | Naga (Tangkhum) |
| 41 | MK Shimray | Naga (Tangkhum) |
| 42 | Rungsung Suisa | Naga (Tangkhum) |
| 43 | Kakhngal Kabui | Naga (Kabui) |
| 44 | Buishingpou | Naga (Kabui) |
| 45 | TC Tiankham | Kuki-Chin (Paite) |
| 46 | Tualchin | Kuki-Chin (Paite) |
| 47 | Damjakhal Waiphei | Kuki-Chin (Vaiphei) |
| 48 | SL Luneh | Kuki-Chin |
| 49 | Mangpithang Kipgen | Kuki-Chin |
| 50 | Thanggoumang Silthou | Kuki-Chin |
| 51 | Holpao | Kuki-Chin |
| 52 | Teba Kilong | Kom |

SOURCES: Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretary, Imphal, 1985.

Table No:- 2

MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE MANIPUR, 1952

| Sl. No | Name | Sl. No | Name |
|--------|-----------------------|--------|--------------------|
| 1 | Smt. MK Binodini Devi | 16 | E. Nodi Singh |
| 2 | L. Achaw Singh | 17 | P. Tomchou Singh |
| 3 | T. Ibotombi Singh | 18 | S. Chourajit Singh |
| 4 | Md. Tomba Miya | 19 | Chouyaima Singh |
| 5 | Angousana Singh | 20 | Md. Alimuddin |
| 6 | Kh. Chaoba | 21 | Atnam Anal |
| 7 | S. Chatradhari Singh | 22 | Zarrem |
| 8 | H. Dwijamani Sharma | 23 | Suisa |
| 9 | S. Chatradhari Singh | 24 | Daso Thoiso |
| 10 | Y. Megho Singh | 25 | Hepuni Kaikho |
| 11 | RK Maipaksana | 26 | Athuibu |
| 12 | N Tomchou Singh | 27 | Keiben |
| 13 | Girimohon Singh | 28 | S. Bijoy |
| 14 | M Koiren Singh | 29 | Khuman |
| 15 | N Thonglen Singh | 30 | Sumkhohen |

Sources: Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretary, Imphal, 1985.

Table No. 3 Scheduled Tribes (ST) Population of Manipur (1961-2001)

| Sl. | S. Tribe | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001* |
|-----|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| 1. | Aimol | 108 | 836 | 1,862 | 2,108 | 2,529 |
| 2. | Anal | 4,868 | 6,670 | 9,349 | 10,642 | 21,242 |
| 3. | Angami | 632 | 70 | 566 | 308 | 2,465 |
| 4. | Chiru | 1,809 | 2,785 | 3,743 | 6,032 | 5,622 |
| 5. | Chothe | 1,035 | 1,905 | 1,687 | 2,571 | 429 |
| 6. | Gangte | 4,856 | 6,307 | 7,891 | 12,739 | 9,442 |
| 7. | Hmar | 15,365 | 23,312 | 29,216 | 35,767 | 42,933 |
| 8. | Kabui (puimei+rongmei) | 29,218 | 40,257 | 26,006 | 64,487 | 82,386 |
| 9. | Kacha Naga (zemei+liangmei) | 9,734 | 13,026 | 12,753 | 33,640 | 42,013 |
| 10. | Koirao | 406 | 1,620 | 919 | 1,716 | 2,348 |
| 11. | Koireng | 531 | 458 | 949 | 873 | 1,410 |
| 12. | Kom | 5,477 | 6,550 | 9,830 | 13,004 | 14,602 |
| 13. | Lamkang | 1,866 | 2,622 | 3,452 | 4,031 | 5,894 |
| 14. | Mao | 28,810 | 33,379 | 50,715 | 76,972 | 4736** |
| 15. | Maram | 4,928 | 4,539 | 6,544 | 9,592 | 1225** |
| 16. | Maring | 7,745 | 9,825 | 11,910 | 15,698 | 23,238 |
| 17. | Any mizo | 2,746 | 7,483 | 6,126 | 8,240 | 15,164 |
| 18. | Monsang | 1,342 | 930 | 1,139 | 1,803 | 2,130 |
| 19. | Moyon | 647 | 1,360 | 1,642 | 2,081 | 2,970 |
| 20. | Paite | 17,029 | 24,755 | 30,959 | 40,792 | 49,271 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 21. | Purum | 82 | - | 447 | 388 | 571 |
| 22. | Ralte | 80 | 154 | 107 | 250 | 5*** |
| 23. | Sema | 4 | 3 | 24 | 111 | 13*** |
| 24. | Simte | 2,818 | 4,111 | 5,035 | 8,833 | 11,065 |
| 25. | Suhte | - | 3 | 283 | 746 | 1,905 |
| 26. | Tangkhul | 43,943 | 57,851 | 79,029 | 1,07,244 | 1,46,075 |
| 27. | Thadou | 47,998 | 59,955 | 56,466 | 1,21,994 | 1,82,594 |
| 28. | Vaiphei | 8,215 | 12,347 | 15,462 | 26,877 | 38,267 |
| 29. | Zou | 6,761 | 10,600 | 12,576 | 16,803 | 20,567 |
| 30. | Others | - | 1,227 | 1,290 | 5,777 | 8,030 |
| | Total: ST | 2,49,049 | 3,34,466 | 3,87,977 | 6,32,173 | 7,41,141 |
| | Manipur | 7,80,037 | 10,72,753 | 14,20,953 | 18,37,149 | 21,66,788* |

(Source: Relevant Census Reports and other official reports.)

N.B: data under col. no 7 are as per electronic census data as subsequently released by the census office in 2007.

*Excludes Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul subdivisions of Senapati district.

**sharp decline of population (2001) of some groups like Mao and Maram (SL nos 14 and 15) have been exhibited in 2001 as a result of the said exclusion observed.

***Two other groups Ralte and Sema (SL nos 22 and 23) have meanwhile registered miniscule population.

Table No. 4 Tribewise and Districtwise Demography: 1991* (in %)

| Sl. No | Tribes | Senapati | Tamenglong | Churach anpur | Chandel | Urkhul | 4 valley districts | Total state |
|--------|-------------------------------|----------|------------|---------------|---------|--------|--------------------|-------------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 1. | Aimol | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 2.6 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| 2. | Anal | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 16.3 | 0.0 | 0.5 | 1.7 |
| 3. | Angami | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| 4. | Chiru | 1.7 | 1.5 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.4 | 1.0 |
| 5. | Chothe | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.6 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 0.4 |
| 6. | Gangte | 0.2 | 2.8 | 4.4 | 2.6 | 0.0 | 2.5 | 2.0 |
| 7. | Hmar | 0.1 | 0.5 | 19.0 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 7.7 | 5.7 |
| 8. | Kabui (puimei+rongmei) | 2.3 | 50.1 | 1.9 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 28.8 | 9.9 |
| 9. | Kacha Naga (zemei+lianmei) | 5.5 | 28.2 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 5.3 |
| 10. | Koirao | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| 11. | Koireng | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| 12. | Kom | 1.8 | 0.2 | 2.8 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 8.5 | 2.1 |
| 13. | Lamgang | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.5 | 0.1 | 0.6 | - |
| 14. | Mao | 42.8 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 3.0 | 12.2 |
| 15. | Maram | 5.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 1.5 |
| 16. | Maring | 1.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 20.9 | 0.2 | 1.2 | 2.5 |
| 17. | Any mizo | 0.4 | 0.0 | 3.6 | 0.9 | 0.3 | 1.7 | 1.3 |
| 18. | Monsang | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 2.3 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| 19. | Moyon | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.2 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.3 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 20. | Paite | 0.1 | 0.0 | 23.3 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 3.1 | 6.5 |
| 21. | Purum | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| 22. | Ralte | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 23. | Sema | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 24. | Simte | 0.3 | 0.6 | 4.0 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 1.4 |
| 25. | Suhte | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| 26. | Tangkhul | 5.4 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 1.6 | 88.6 | 13.0 | 17.0 |
| 27. | Thadou | 26.8 | 12.1 | 21.4 | 25.8 | 8.1 | 12.4 | 19.3 |
| 28. | Vaiphei | 3.1 | 0.8 | 9.4 | 3.3 | 1.2 | 4.0 | 4.3 |
| 29. | Zou | 0.1 | 0.5 | 7.7 | 4.8 | 0.3 | 1.0 | 2.7 |
| 30. | Others | 1.2 | 1.8 | 0.7 | 1.5 | 0.2 | 4.5 | 1.2 |
| | Total of above | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total ST (No) | 1,75,206 | 83,278 | 1,64,709 | 60,729 | 1,01,878 | 46,319 | 6,32,173 |
| | General population (No) | 2,08,406 | 86,278 | 1,76,184 | 71,014 | 1,09,275 | 1,18,599 | 18,37,149 |

(Source: Census Office)

N.B. *the 2001 census data would appear more arbitrary in view of abnormal growth than that of 1991. Hence the 1991 census data have depicted hereinabove.

Table no. 5 Districtwise concentration of Major/Minor tribes in Manipur: 1991

| Name of districts | | Names of communities | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| | | Major tribes | Minor tribes |
| (1) | | (2) | (3) |
| 1. | Senapati | Mao, Maram and Thadou, kabui; | Tangkhul, Maring, Chiru, Kom, Koirang, Vaiphei, Kacha Nag, Sema and keirao; |
| 2. | Tamenglong | Kabui; | Thadou amd Gangte; |
| 3. | Churcharpur | Hmar, Paite, Thadou; | Anal, Chothe, Kabui, Kom, Vaiphei, Zou, Mizo, Gangte, Simte and Ralte; |
| 4. | Chandel | Anal, Maring, and Thadou; | Lamgang, Zou, Gangte, Mayon, Monsang, Aimol, Chothe, Purum, Mizo, Tangkhul and Kom; |
| 5. | Urkhul | Tangkhul; | Thadou; |
| 6. | Imphal bishnupur and thoubal | Kabui; | All other tribes in small numbers; |

(Source: Census Reports)

Table No. 6 Circle wise and Tribe wise villages: Manipur 1974 (in Nos.)

| <u>1. Sadar Circle No. 1</u> | | 2. Sadar Circle No. 2 | |
|--|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| (Sadar Central Circle: present Sadar hills) | | (Sadar Mao Circle: present day Senapati) | |
| Name of tribe | No. of villages | Name of tribe | No. of villages |
| 1. Kabui | 50 | 1. Mao | 60 |
| 2. kacha naga | 4 | 2. Kuki | 23 |
| 3. kuki | 71 | | |
| 4. kom | 14 | | |
| 5. Maring | 2 | TOTAL | 83 |
| 6. Tangkhul | 11 | | |
| 7. Chiru | 7 | | |
| 8. Koireng | 8 | | |
| 9. Khoirao | 7 | | |
| 10. Aimol | 1 | | |
| 11. Kharam | 2 | | |
| | | 3. Sadar Circle No. 3 | |
| | | (Sadar New Churchanpur Circle) | |
| TOTAL | 177 | Name of Tribes | No. of Villages |
| | | 1. Kabui | 10 |
| | | 2. Kuki | 164 |
| | | TOTAL | 174 |

N.B: Sadar Circle No. 1 has ultimately becomes Sadar Hills Subdivisions; while Sadar Circle No. 2 would form Senapati Subdivision; and Sadar Circle No. 3 Churchanpur District.

| 1. Urkhul Circle No. 1 (East Sub-division office Urkhul) | | 2. Urkhul Circle No. 2 (Tengnoupal and Mombi Circle) | |
|---|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| Name of tribe | No. of villages | Name of tribe | No. of villages |
| 1. kuki | 31 | 1. Kuki | 80 |
| 2. Tangkhul | 77 | 2. Maring | 18 |
| | | 3. Aimol | 4 |
| | | 4. Langang | 7 |
| | | 5. Purum | 3 |
| | | 6. Anal | 40 |
| | | 7. Mayon | 5 |
| | | 8. Tarao | 2 |
| | | 9. Chothe | 4 |
| | | 10. Monsang | 3 |
| | | TOTAL: | 166 |
| 2. Circle No. 2: (Urkhul East Sub-Division) (Phaisat Circle) | | | |
| Name of tribe | No. of villages | | |
| 1. Tangkhul | 75 | | |
| 2. Kuki | 71 | | |
| 3. Burmese | 1 | | |
| TOTAL: | 147 | | |
| (N.B. Urkhul circle No. 1 and 2 would form the present day Urkhul District; while Urkhul Circle No. 3 would form the present day Chandel district.) | | | |

| 1. Tamenglong Circle No. 1 (Northern Circle West Sub-division) | | 2. Tamenglong Circle No. 2 (Northern Circle West Sub-division) | |
|---|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| Name of tribe | No. of villages | Name of tribe | No. of villages |
| 1. kabui | 60 | 1. Kabui | 14 |
| 2. kuki | 53 | 2. Ziamei | 9 |
| 3. Chiru | 1 | 3. Liangmei | 37 |
| | | 4. Nepalese | 2 |
| | | TOTAL: | 62 |
| TOTAL: | 114 | | |

| 3. Tamenglong Circle No. 3 (Southern Circle: West Sub-division: Thanlon) | |
|---|-----------------|
| Name of tribe | No. of villages |
| 1. Kuki | 62 |
| TOTAL | 62 |

Source: Manipur State Hill People (Administration) Regulation, 1947).

Table No:- 7

Names of the various naga community

| Sl No. | Names | Area inhabited |
|--------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Anal | Manipur State |
| 2 | Angami | Nagaland State |
| 3 | Ao | Nagaland State and Assam |
| 4 | Chakhesang | Nagaland State |
| 5 | Chang | Nagaland State |
| 6 | Chiru | Manipur State |
| 7 | Chirr | Nagaland State |
| 8 | Chothe | Manipur State |
| 9 | Kharam | Manipur State |
| 10 | Heimi | Burma |
| 11 | Kengu | Burma |
| 12 | Khiamnuingan | Nagaland State and Burma |
| 13 | Koireng | Manipur State |
| 14 | Konyak | Nagaland State, Arunachal and Burma |
| 15 | Lainung | Burma |
| 16 | Lamkang | Manipur State |
| 17 | Lotha | Nagaland State |
| 18 | Mao | Manipur State |
| 19 | Maram | Manipur State |
| 20 | Maring | Manipur State |

| | | |
|----|-------------|--------------------------|
| 21 | Makhori | Nagaland State and Burma |
| 22 | Monsang | Manipur State |
| 23 | Moyon | Manipur State |
| 24 | Nocte | Arunachal |
| 25 | Pangmi | Burma |
| 26 | Namshik | Burma |
| 27 | Para | Burma |
| 28 | Phom | Nagaland State |
| 29 | Pochury | Nagaland State |
| 30 | Poumai | Manipur State |
| 31 | Rengma | Nagaland State and Assam |
| 32 | Sangtam | Nagaland State |
| 33 | Sema | Nagaland State |
| 34 | Tangkhul | Manipur State and Somrah |
| 35 | Tangsa | Arunachal |
| 36 | Tarao | Manipur State |
| 37 | Thangal | Manipur State |
| 38 | Wancho | Arunachal |
| 39 | Yimchunger | Nagaland State and Burma |
| 40 | Zeliangrong | Manipur |

Sources:-Kohima Naga Club.

MEMORANDUM OF THE HILLS TO SIMON COMMISSION

(January 10, 1929)

Sir,

We the undersigned Nagas of the Naga Club in Kohima who are the only persons at present who can voice for our people have heard with regret that our Hills were included within the Reformed Scheme of India without our knowledge, but as the administration of our Hills continued to be in the hands of the British Officers we did not consider it necessary to raise any protest in the past. Now, we learn that you have come to India as representatives of the British Government to enquire into the working of the system of Government and the growth of the education and we beg to submit below our view with the prayer that our Hills may be withdrawn from the Reformed Scheme and placed outside the reforms but directly under the British Government. We never ask for any reforms and we do not wish any reforms.

Before the British Government conquered our country in 1879-1880, we were living in a state of intermittent warfare with the Assamese of the Assam Valley to the North and West of our country and Manipuris in the south. They never conquered us nor were we subjected to their rule. On the other hand, we were always a terror to this people. Our country within the administered area consists of more than eight Tribes, quite different from one another with quite different languages which cannot be understood by each other, and there are more tribes outside the administered which are not known at present. We have no Unity among us and it is really the British Government that is holding us together now

Our education at present is poor, the occupation of our country by the British Government being so recent as 1880, we have had no chances or opportunity to improve in education and though we are boast of two or three graduates of an Indian University in our country, we have not got one yet who is able to represent all our different tribes or master our language, much less, one to represent us in any Council or Province. Moreover, our population numbering 1, 02,000 is very small in comparison with the

population of the plains district in the province, and any representation that may be allotted to us in the Council will be negligible and ill carry no weight whatsoever. Our language is quite different from those of the plains and we have no social affinities with Hindus or Muslims. We are looked down upon by the one for our 'beef' and the other for our 'pork' and by both for our want in Education which is not due to any fault of ours.

Our country is poor and it does not pay for its administration. Therefore, if it continued to be placed under the Reformed Scheme, we are afraid, that new and heavy taxes will have to be sold and in the long run, we shall have no share in the land of our birth and life will not be worth living there. Though our land at present is within the British Territory, Government has always recognized our private rights in it. But if we are forced to enter the council of the majority all these rights may be extinguished by an unsympathetic council, the majority of whose number is sure to belong to the Plain District. We also have much fear the introduction of foreign laws and customs to supersede our own customary laws which we now enjoy.

For the above reason, we pray that the British Government will continue to safeguard our rights against all encroachment from other people who are more advanced than us by withdrawing our country from the Reformed Scheme and placing it directly under its own protection. If the British Government, however, wants to throw us away, we pray that we should not be thrust to the mercy of the people who could never subjugate us, but to leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times. We claim to represent all those tribes to which belong – Angamis, Kacha Naga, Kukis, Semas, Lothas and Rengmas.

Yours faithfully,

1. I. Nihu, Head Interpreter, Angami
2. Nisalie, Peshkar, Angami
3. Nisier, Master, Angami
4. Khosa, Doctor, Angami
5. Gepo, interpreter, Kacha Naga
6. Vipunyu, Potdar, Angami

7. Goyiepra, Treasurer, Angami
8. Ruzhukhrie, Master, Angami
9. Dikhrie, Sub-Overseer, Angami
10. Zapuzhulie, Master, Angami
11. Zepulie, Interpreter, Angami
12. Katsumo, Interpreter, Angami
13. Nuolhoukielie, Clerk, Angami
14. Lzevi, interpreter, Sema
15. Apamo, Interpreter, Lotha
16. Resilo, Interpreter, Rengma
17. Lengjang, Interpreter, Kuki
18. Nikhriehu, Interpreter, Angami
19. Miakra-o, Chaprasi, Angami
20. Levi, Clerk, Kacha Naga

**chakhesangs were earlier called Eastern Angamis. The above has only followed the text of the letter as signed.*

THE 9-POINT HYDARI AGREEMENT (26 June, 1947)

That the right of the Nagas to develop themselves according to their freely expressed wishes is recognized.

1. JUDICIAL: All cases whether civil or criminal arising between Nagas in the Naga Hills will be disposed of by duly constituted Naga Courts according to Naga customary law or such law as may be introduced with the consent of duly recognized Naga representative organizations, save that where a sentence of transportation or death has been passed there will be right of appeal to the Governor.

In cases arising between Nagas and non-Nagas in:

- a) Kohima and Mokochung town areas, and
 - b) In the neighboring plains district, the judge, if not a Naga, will be assisted by a Naga assessor.
2. EXECUTIVE: The general principle is accepted that what the Naga National Council is prepared to pay for, the Naga National Council should control. This principle will apply equally to the work done as well as the staff employed.

While the District Officer will be appointed at the discretion of the Governor, Sub-divisions of the Naga Hills should be administered by a Sub-Divisional Council with a full time executive President, paid by the Naga National Council who would be responsible to the District officer for all matters falling within the latter's responsibility, and to the Naga National Council for all matters falling within their responsibility in regard to:

- a) Agriculture- The Naga National Council will exercise all the vested in the District Officer.
 - b) C.W.D- The Naga National Council would takeover full control.
 - c) Education and Forest Department- The Naga National Council is prepared to pay for all the services and staffs.
3. LEGISLATIVE: that no law passed by the Provincial or Central Legislative which would materially affect the terms of this agreement or the religious practices of the Nagas shall have legal force in the Naga Hills without the consent of the Naga National Council. In cases of dispute as to whether any law does not affect this agreement, the matter would be referred by the Naga National Council to the Governor who would then direct that the law in question should not have legal forces in the Naga Hills pending the decision of the Central government.
 4. LAND: That land with all its resources in the Hill should not be alienated to a non-Naga without the consent of the Naga National Council.
 5. TAXATION: That the Naga National Council will be responsible for the imposition, collection and expenditure of land revenue and house tax and of such other taxes as may be imposed by the Naga National Council.
 6. BOUNDARIES: That the present administrative division should be modified so as:-
 - 1) To bring back into the Naga Hills District all the forests transferred to the Sibsagar and Nowgong District in the past, and

2) To bring under one unified administrative unit as far as possible all Nagas. All the areas so included should be within the scope of the present proposed agreement. No areas should be transferred out of the Nagas Hills without the consent of the Naga National Council.

7. ARMS ACT: The Deputy Commissioner will act on the advice of the Naga National Council in accordance with the provisions of the Arms Act.
8. REGULATION: The Chin Hills regulation and the Bengal eastern frontier Regulation will remain in force.
9. PERIOD OF AGREEMENT: The Governor of Assam as the Agent of the Government of the Indian Union will have a special responsibility for a period of 10 (ten) years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; and at the end of this period the Naga National Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people arrived at.

16-POINT PROPOSAL PLACED BY NAGA PEOPLE'S CONVENTION
ON 26TH JULY, 1960

Sixteen-Point Proposals

The point placed by the delegates of the Naga People's Convention before the Prime Minister on 26th July 1960 as finally recast by the Delegation in the light of discussion on 27 and 28 July 1960 with the Foreign Secretary.

1. The Name

The territory that were heretofore known as the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area under the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area Act 1957, shall form a state within the Indian Union and be hereafter known as Nagaland.

2. The Ministry Incharge

The Nagaland shall be under the Ministry of External Affairs of Government of India.

3. The Governor of Nagaland

- (1) The president of India shall appoint a Governor of Nagaland and he will be vested with executive powers of the Government of Nagaland. He will have his headquarters in Nagaland.
- (2) His administrative secretariat will be headed by Chief Secretary stationed at the headquarters with other secretariat staff as necessary.
- (3) The Governor shall have special responsibility with regard to law and order during transitional period and for so long as the law and order situation continues to remain disturbed on account of hostile activities. In exercising this special responsibility, the Governor shall, after consultation with the Ministry, act in his individual judgment. This special responsibility of the governor will cease when normalcy returns.

4. Council of Ministry

- (1) There shall be a Council of Ministers with a Chief Minister at the head to assist and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions.

(2) The Council of Ministers shall be responsible to the Naga Legislative Assembly.

5. The Legislature

There shall be constituted a Legislative Assembly consisting of elected and nominated members as may be deemed necessary representing different tribes. (Further, a duty constituted body of Expert may be formed to examine and determine the principle of representation on democratic basis).

6. Representation in the Parliament

Two elected members shall represent the Nagaland in the Union Parliament, that is to say, one of the four Lok Sabha and the other for the Rajya Sabha.

7. Acts of Parliament

No, Act or Law passed by the Union Parliament affecting the following provision shall have legal force in the Nagaland unless specifically applied to it by majority vote of the Naga Legislative Assembly:

- (1) The Religious or the Social Practices of Naga.
- (2) Naga Customary Law and Procedure.
- (3) Civil and Criminal justice so far as these concern decisions according to the Naga Customary Laws. The existing law relating to administration of civil and criminal justice as provided in the Rule for the Administration of Justice and Police in the Naga Hill district shall continue to be in force.
- (4) The ownership and transfer of land and its resources.

8. Local Self-Government

Each tribal shall have the following units of rule-making and administrative local bodies to deal with matters concerning the respective tribes and areas:

- (1) The Village Council
- (2) The Range Council
- (3) The Tribal Council

These Councils also deal with disputers and cases involving breaches of customary laws and usages.

9. Administration of Justice

(a) The existing system of administration of civil and criminal justice shall continue.

(b) Appellate Courts:

(i) The District Court-cum-Session Court (for each district), High Court and Supreme Court of India.

(ii) The Naga Tribunal (for the whole of the Nagaland) in respect of cases decided according to Customary Law.

10. Administration of Tuensang District

(1) The Governor shall carry on the administration of the Tuensang district for a year of 10 (ten) years until such time when the tribes in the Tuensang district are capable of shouldering more responsibilities of the advanced system of administration. The commencement of the ten years period of administration will start simultaneously with enforcement of detailed workings of Constitution in other parts of the Nagaland.

(2) Provided further that a Regional Council shall be formed for Tuensang district by elected representative from all tribes in Tuensang district, and the Governor may nominate representatives to the Regional Council as well. The Deputy Commissioner will be the ex-officio Chairman of the Council. The Regional Council will elect members to the Naga Legislative Assembly to represent Tuensang district.

(3) Provided further that on the advice of the Regional Council, steps will be taken start various councils and courts in those areas where the people feel themselves capable of establishing such institutions.

(4) Provided further that no Act or Law passed by the Naga Legislative Assembly shall be applicable to Tuensang district unless specifically recommended by the Regional Council.

(5) Provided further that the Regional Council shall supervise and guide the working of the various Councils and Tribal Courts within Tuensang

district and wherever necessary depute the local officers to act as Chairman thereof.

(6) Provided further that Councils of such areas inhabited by the mixed population or which have not as yet decided to which specific tribal Council to be affiliated to, shall be directly under the Regional Council for the time being.

And at the end of the ten years the situation will be reviewed and if the people so desire the period will be further extended.

11. Financial Assistance From the Government of India

To supplement the revenues of the Nagaland, there will be need for the Government of India to pay out of the Consolidated Fund of India.

- (1) A lump sum each year for the development programme in the Nagaland, and
- (2) A grant-in-aid towards meeting the cost of administration. Proposal for the above grant shall be prepared and submitted by the Government of Nagaland to the Government of India for their approval. The Governor will have general responsibility for ensuring that the funds made available by the Government of India are expended for the purpose for which they have been approved.

12. The delegation wished the following to be placed on record

“The Naga delegation discussed the question of the inclusion of the reserve forest and the contiguous areas inhabited by the Nagas. They were referred to the provision of article 3 and 4 of the constitution, prescribing the procedure for the transfer of area from one state to another.”

13. Consolidation of Contiguous Naga Area

The delegation wished the following to be placed on record:

“The Naga leaders expressed the view that the other Naga inhabiting contiguous areas should be enable to join the new state It was pointed to them on behalf of the Government of India that article 3 and 4 of the constitution provided for increasing the area of any state, but it was not possible for the Government of India to make any commitment in this regard at this stage.”

14. Formation of Separate Naga Regiment

In order that the Naga people can fulfill their desire of playing a full role in the defence forces of India, the question of raising a separate Naga Regiment should be duly examined for action.

15. Transitional Period

- (a) On reaching the political settlement with the Government of India, the Government of India will prepare a bill for such amendment of the constitution, as may be necessary, in order to implement the decisions, the draft Bill, before presentation to parliament, will be shown to the delegates of the NPC.
- (b) There shall be constituted an Interim Body with elected representatives from every tribe to assist and advised the Governor in the administration of the Nagaland during the transitional period. The tenure of office of the members of the Interim Body will be 3 (three) years subject to re-election.

16. Inner Line Regulation

Rules embodied in the Bengal Frontier Regulation, 1873 shall remain in force in the Nagaland

Sd/- Dr Imkongliba Ao

President,

Naga People's Convention

GROUND RULES FOR CEASEFIRE AGREED BETWEEN GOI AND
NSCN (IM) ON 12 DEC, 1997

AGREED GROUND RULES FOR CAESE-FIRE FINALUSED BETWEEN
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND NATINAL SOCIALIST COUNCIL OF
NAGALAND (NSCN) ON 12TH DECEMBER 1997

In pursuance of the cease-fire originally agreed to on 25th July, 1997 and its further extension on 25th October, 1997 for the period of three months, discussions were held between the representatives of the Government of India led by Shri K. Padmanabhaiah and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland led by Mr. V.S. Atem, to finalize the ground rules and modalities for the implementation of the cease-fire with the view to ensuring continuance of an effective cease-fire to pave the way for peaceful and a meaningful political dialogue . After exchanging views in context of the experience of the first three months of the cease-fire, both sides agreed to undertakes steps for effective and unambiguous implementation of the cease-fire to create a proper and conducive atmosphere for further discussions. It was mutually agreed that during the period of cease-fire:

- (a) There would be no offensive operation like ambush, raid and attack leading to death/injury/damage or loss of property against the NSCN by the Indian Army, Paramilitary Forces and the Police.
- (b) Patrolling by the Indian Army, paramilitary forces and the police would continue to prevent infiltration of militants and arms as hithertofore. However, patrolling within one km of NSCN “designated camps” decided after due consultation in the monitoring mechanism, will be carried out, with intimation of them. It is noted that no such camps are located/ will be located I urban areas and/ or near Highways;
- (c) Protection of convoys and patrolling of roads would continue to be undertaken by the Indian Army, Paramilitary Forces and Police.

- (d) The Indian Army, Paramilitary forces and the Police would issue instructions to their formation, not to use mask to cover their faces, during the period of cease-fire;
- (e) The NSCN would not take offensive operations like ambush, raid, sniping and attack leading to death/injury/damage or loss of property;
- (f) In the interest of promoting peace process, there will no parading (either in groups or individually) of NSCN cadres in uniform and/ or with arms. For the present, this would cover towns including District Headquarters, Public transport, Highway and such EAC headquarters and other areas as may be mutually agreed upon by the joint monitoring mechanism;
- (g) There would be no blockade of roads and communications, disruption of economic or developmental activities as well as essential services by the NSCN;
- (h) It is mutually agreed that no safe haven or sanctuary to any armed groups or elements will be provided by anyone to ensure that the cease-fire conditions were not misutilised;
- (i) On the Government of India side, a concern was expressed that forcible collection of money or essential supplies and intimidating of individuals including government officials were taking place in the state. The NSCN representatives stated that their being a people's organization, they did not resort to such activities. However, in review of the concern expressed by the Government of India and in the interest of promoting the peace process, the NSCN representatives agreed that the above activities would be prevented;
- (i) It was further agreed that implementation of this ground rules and modalities will be monitored by a group constituted for this purpose comprising of representatives of NSCN, NGOs and representatives nominated by the Government of India. However, it was also agreed that any accidental encounter or violation should not be allowed to jeopardized the peace process and the effects of ant such incidents should be localized through mutual consultations. All case of violation of this ground rules would be referred to the monitoring group, so that he reason for violations are identified and steps to be taken to prevent such violations in the future are suggested. Notwithstanding the above, the Army,

Paramilitary forces and the police will act in an impartial and unbiased manner against any group causing public disturbance or when there is imminent danger of public safety or peace.

- (k) On the Government of India side, a concern was expressed about reports of forced recruitment to armed cadres. The NSCN representatives stated that they have not and do not resort to force recruitment. However, in the interest of promoting the peace process, it was agreed that if there are any reports of forced recruitment, they should be discussed in the monitoring group.

GROUND RULES FOR CEASE-FIRE AGREED BETWEEN GOI AND
NSCN (K) ON MAY 28, 2001

INDIA

Text of ceasefire ground rules agreed upon between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K)

On May 28th, the Government of India (GOI) declares a ceasefire agreement with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang for a period of one year. This followed a round of discussion between the GOI's representative lead by Dr. P.D Shenoy and representatives of the NSCN-K led by Mr. Tongmet Wangnao Konyak. The following are the ground rules to be

1. These ground rules will be valid only for the state of Nagaland.
2. Enforcement of ground rules will be the responsibility of the GOI. The GOI and the NSCN will jointly implement the ground rules. Contentious issues leading to the implementation of the ground rules will be resolved by a Cease-Fire Supervisory Board (CFSB) comprising five representatives each of GOI and NSCN and a chairman to be nominated by the GOI.
3. The NSCN will not undertake offensive operation like ambush, raid, or attack leading to death/injury/damage or loss of property against anybody. The NSCN will also act in a manner as not to cause harassment/damage or loss of property or injury to the civilian population.
4. There would be no offensive operation like ambush, raid and attack leading to death/injury/damage or loss of property against the NSCN by the Indian Army, Paramilitary Forces and Police. However, the Government of India reserves its right to continue operation against all other militant groups who are not party to the 'cease-fire'.

5. NSCN will notify to the CFSB, the list of all their camps. Te CFSB would, after due scrutiny, finalize the list of the “designated camps” where all the armed cadres of the NSCN would be located within three months.
6. In the interest of promoting the peace process, there will no movement in uniform and/or with arms outside “designated camps”
7. Movement of NSCM cadres from one “designated camps” to another will be carried out for mutually agreed purposes and with intimation of the security forces and CFSB. The modalities of this would be finalized by the CFSB.
8. The NSCN would refrain from blockade of roads and communications and from any activity which would disrupt the functioning of the local and, State Governments and of economic or development activities as well as essential services.
9. The NSCN would refrain from extending any form of support or assistance to other militant groups.
10. During the course of the cease-fire, the NSCN will refrain from acquiring ant additional arms/ammunition military equipment.
11. The NSCN will refrain from extortion, forcible collection of money and supplies and intimidation of individuals including Government officials.
12. The NSCN will refrain from forcible recruitment of armed cadres.
13. Patrolling by the Indian Army, paramilitary forces and the police would continue to prevent infiltration of militants and arms as hitherto fore. However, patrolling within one km of the “designated camps” decided after due consultation in the Cease-Fire Supervisory Board (CFSB) will be carried out, with intimation of them.
14. Protection of convoys and patrolling of roads would continue to be undertaken by the Indian Army, Paramilitary Forces and Police.
15. Security forces will retain the right to enforce measures necessary to uphold the laws of the land and prevent any disturbances to peace.

Sources: Ministry of Home Affairs

MEMORENDUM SUBMIETD TO THE HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER ON JUNE 24,
2001 BY THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF MANIPUR FOR WITHDRAWAL OF
EXTENSION OF CEASE-FIRE BEYOND NAGALAND

To

The Honourable prime minister of India

New Delhi

Subject: withdrawal of the government for extension on India-NSCN (IM)
cease-fire to Manipur

Hon'ble Sir,

We the undersigned, on behalf of the people of Manipur have the honour to make the following submission for your kind perusal and necessary action.

1. The people and Government of Manipur have been given a solemn assurance by the Government of India during the Prime Ministership of shri I.K. Gujral that the cease-fire concluded between the government of India and NSCM (IM) would not be extended to the state of Manipur and that the territorial integrity of Manipur will be protected. The president of all national political parties including the BJP and the present allies of the NDA and the congress (1) also gave written assurance that the cease fire would not be extended to Manipur.
2. The recent decision taken by the Government of India to extend the India-NSCN (IM) cease-fire to Manipur as implied by the '*cease fire without territorial limits*' and further clarification made by the home secretary is against the assurances given by the government of India during the last four years. We convey to you the resentment and frustration felt by the people of Manipur against the decision of the government of India. While we are not opposed to the cease-fire in Nagaland, we know that extension of the cease-fire in Naga inhabited areas of Manipur is a spring board for the disintegration of Manipur, a death knell for the territorial integrity of Manipur, and this understanding is vindicated by the territorial ambition of the NSCN (IM) which maintains that "Nagalim" has an area of 1,

20,000 sq.km. Which transcends the present administrative boundaries of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland states? Therefore, recision of the agreement for extension of the cease-fire without territorial limits is the only way to remove the public distrust, anger and tension arising out of it, coupled with the incongruities between the official statements of the GOI that the cease-fire '*will not, in any way, affect the territorial integrity of any of the North-Eastern states*' and the claims of NSCN (IM) that '*1, 20, 000 sq.kms. Of land including sizable areas of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, belong to Nagaland*'.

3. Manipur is an ancient country with long history. She maintained her sovereignty till the British conquest in 1881. Despite the vicissitudes in her long history, Burmese conquest (1819-26), British conquest and colonial rule (1891-1947), regaining of independence from the British (1947) and a constitutional monarchy with autonomy (1947-49), merger with India (1949), part C state (1956), union territory (1957-71), statehood since (1972-onwards), Manipur has always maintained her political, historical identity and territorial integrity. Manipur's territorial boundary remained intact since 1834 during the time of Maharaja Gambhir Singh of Manipur (1825-34). We cannot ignore the history of Manipur, and we oppose any extraneous decision and/or action against or history, especially when such decision or action contemplates dismemberment of Manipur and would impair the age-old bond and fraternity between different communities of Manipur.
4. The '*agreed ground rules for cease-fire*' between the GOI and the NSCM (IM) contemplates (i) establishment of NSCN (IM) '*designated camps*' without defining any territorial limits and (ii) movements of NSCN armed cadres from one designated camp to another which will have an adverse bearing on the territorial integrity of Manipur and the other affected states and will also impinge on the legal and administrative jurisdiction of these states, especially Manipur. The truces and extension would give immunity to the armed insurgents and reduce the states machinery to mere spectators.
5. The repercussions of the agreement between the GOI and the NSCM (IM) for extension of the cease-fire question in terms of irreparable loss of public

properties, mental agony of the people of Manipur etc. have nullified its express purpose of creating '*a proper and conductive atmosphere for a peaceful and meaningful political dialogue*' on the one hand and have proved it as poor conception on the other. The 18th of June, 2001 (Monday) was the most violent day in the history of Manipur, and we are afraid any further precipitation of the situation would lead to the collapse of Democracy in the state.

6. The expression '*indo Naga peace talks*' as it is often used by the NSCN (IM) is either misnomer or misplaced in the Indian context. In other words, used of such expression, which had the connotations of parleys or relation between two sovereign countries, in the context of the GOI and NSCN (IM) Cease-Fire agreement should be discouraged as it entails questions of legitimacy and of national integrity for obvious reasons, besides creating a bad precedent
7. We would like to reaffirm the fact and the people's resolve that the territorial integrity of Manipur is unquestionable and cannot be an agenda for discussion. We would also like to reaffirm the conviction of all communities in Manipur to live together and to maintain solidarity and social harmony. However notwithstanding such resolves and conviction of the people and the assurance given to us by the Union Home Minister in a meeting held on 23/6/2001 that '*government of India is not going to permit anything to affect the integrity of Manipur*', in view of the present explosive situation, there is urgent need to take remedial measures-review and withdrawal of the cease-fire extension within territorial limits and any delay in doing so is fraught with danger. If the situation was allowed to slip out of the hands of the state, the political leadership would be completely marginalized and vested interest would exploit it. And, we are afraid, in such eventuality, we would be constrained to retreat and refrain from public service as well as the nation endeavor to sustain democracy to which we are fully committed.
8. We are grateful to the Union Home Minister and the Government of India for assuring that the territorial integrity of Manipur would be protected at any cost and for their empathy with our genuine concern for it. Here we would like to recall a similar assurance given by you, as the Prime Minister of India, in a

meeting with a joint delegation of political leaders from Manipur during December 1998. In addition protection of the territorial integrity of Manipur, among others, is a declaration, clearly spelt out in the National Agenda of the NDA. To substantiate and materialized the assurance and he solemn declaration, the NDA Government of India should review the decision of cease-fire extension without territorial limits and withdraw it from Manipur. We would like to reiterate that the situation prevailing in Manipur is extremely volatile, which not warrant delays, and that the withdrawal of the cease-fire extension without territorial limits needs to be done with greater sense of urgency.

For such a magnanimous decision, the people of Manipur will be grateful to you.

Yours faithfully

New Delhi

June 24, 2001

1. Dr. S . Dhananjay Singh, Speakers
2. Shri R.K dorendro Singh, MLA and Ex-CM.
3. Shri Rishang Keishing, MLA and Ex-CM.
4. Shri R.B Koijam, MLA and Ex-CM.
5. Shri M.Bhorot Singh, President, BJP, Manipur.
6. Shri Th Chaoba Singh, Minister of State for Food Processing.
7. Shri H. Haokip, MP (LS)
8. Shri W Angou Singh, MP (RS)
9. Dr. L. Chandramani Singh, MLA and Ex-deputy C.M.
10. Dr.H. Borobabu Singh,MLA and Ex-Speaker.
11. Shri O. Joy Singh, MLA.
12. Shri M. Hemanta Singh, MLA
13. Dr. Kh. Loken Singh, MLA
14. Shri M. Hemanta Singh,MLA
15. Shri N. Zatwan, MLA

16. Shri C. Doungel, MLA
17. Shri M. Okendra Singh, MLA
18. Dr. Nimaichand Luwang, MLA
19. Shri Vivek Wangkhem, MLA
20. Shri Songchinkhup, MLA
21. Shri H. Bidur, MLA
22. Shri Samuel Zendai, MLA
23. Shri M. Kunjo Singh, MLA
24. Shri O.M. Haokip, MLA
25. Shri K. Govindas, MLA
26. Shri Ksh. Biren Singh, MLA
27. Dr. Y. Jiten Singh, MLA
28. Shri D. Shaiza, MLA
29. Shri L. Tomba Singh, MLA
30. Shri S. Chandra, MLA
31. Shri K. Ranjit, MLA
32. Shri Manihar, MLA
33. Shri C. Haokip, MLA
34. Shri L. Kerani Singh, MLA
35. Shri Th. Bira singh, MLA
36. Shri Kh. Amutombi Singh, MLA
37. Shri N. Nimai Singh, MLA
38. Shri H. Sanayaima Singh, MLA

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