

**THE NINETEENTH CENTURY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AND
THE DYNAMICS OF THE EXPANSION OF MODERN EDUCATION
IN THE NAGA HILLS.**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
In partial fulfilment of the degree of

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
(HISTORY OF EDUCATION)**

BENDANGLILA



Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067
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ZAKIR HUSAIN CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that this dissertation entitled "THE NINETEENTH CENTURY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AND THE DYNAMICS OF THE EXPANSION OF MODERN EDUCATION IN THE NAGA HILLS", submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (HISTORY OF EDUCATION) has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university and is my own work.

BENDANGLILA.

(Candidate)

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Dr. Dhruv Raina

Associate Professor

(Supervisor)

Prof. A.K. Mohanty

(Chairperson)

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Dedicated to
My sons
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Among the religions that originated outside India but have found a place here, is Christianity. Although written records testify the presence of Christians in India from the sixth century onwards due to the lack of documentary evidence, the origin of Christianity in India has been the subject of controversy among the historians. The historical study of Christianity in India was mostly carried out earlier by the 'Church Historians,' but over the last 150 years or so the historiography of Christianity in India has seen an important change. Nineteenth century has witnessed the emergence of a numerous secular historians writing about the history of Christianity.

However, in recent years, by the middle of the twentieth century, the study of the history of Christianity was no longer an issue only for the church. People from a wide variety of fields and from a number of perspectives, have contributed substantially to the knowledge of the history of Christianity. Interestingly, the focus is now being shifted not only to the study of history of Christianity but also towards social and cultural history of Christian communities. The roles of the Christian missionaries in introducing western education and religion have been central through schools. The Christian missionaries were seen as not only leading the educational project in India during the nineteenth century but also in spreading their values.

In the North East India, the scholarly study of the history of Christianity began only recently. There have been several books written on the missionaries in the region, dealing with the social change and response of the people, the role of Christianity in social change etc. Besides, a number of histories of the churches of the region have been produced to mark the occasion of Jubilees and Centenaries. The

other scholarly studies concentrated on the internal histories of the establishment and development of the church and its programme and the efforts of the missionaries in bringing education to the people.

Historians of education have shown little interest in studying the missionary justification of their educational enterprise and the ideological underpinnings of their efforts.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study attempts to give a detailed examination of how the nineteenth century saw the arrival of the American Baptist Mission to the Naga Hills and inaugurated the birth of a new community. The study is an analysis of the Christian missionary activity in limited areas of the Naga Hills breaking new ground in its consideration of the missionaries' ideological indoctrination from the perspective of setting up a modern education programme. This study would seek whether the 'state of darkness' as portrayed by the Christian outsider in which the Naga was living was exaggerated to justify their agenda of civilizing or has this been correct. The hope here is to start a search for the motives behind stimulating the fuller pursuit of enquiries into the relationship between their agenda and involvement which has given shape the schools curriculum. The specified objectives of the study are; (1) to historically investigate the Naga traditional system of learning before the arrival of the Christian missionaries, (2) to study how the Christian missionaries understood and approached the task of spreading the Christian faith through education, (3) to investigate the determinants of pedagogy and curriculum and the installation of the new system of education, and (4) to study how new behavior and modes of thoughts were promoted. In addition, the study ventures to seek responses to three major questions i.e. How is the idea of

establishing modern schools by the Christian missionaries in the hills to be ideologically situated? How did alphabetic literacy among the Nagas supplant their traditional practices? What new conceptions and “ways of life” did this give rise to?

1.2 Scope of the Present Study

The present study embarks on discussing the nature of the traditional institutions of learning prior to switching over to a completely new knowledge system. The Naga world view was limited to its own village and neighbouring villages before the intervention of outside influences. The expansion of British domination throughout Assam and the neighbouring hills marked the beginning of the Naga communities entering into an enclosure of colonialism. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the American Baptist Mission arrived in the hills with their project of “Civilizing Mission” through Christianity. This heralded a new beginning leading to the subsequent evolution of Naga society.

The missionaries’ synthesized the Naga pantheon and Biblical God into one and the schools were a means to effectively pass on their ideology to the Naga people. The major argument in the study is that the curriculum introduced in the schools played an important role in transforming the Naga consciousness of religion and abandoning all traditional practices for the belief in a fixed scriptural identity.

Education has been conceptualized by some as an ideological tool utilized by the colonial state to anchor their role in India. It has also been regarded as the most effective weapon for the suppression of the wild tribes of the North East. Although, the missionaries were considered to be softening the ground for the colonial civilizing mission yet their objectives have been totally different. The study unravels the stand

of the missionaries for carrying out their strategy of evangelization and the responses of the Nagas

1.3 Limitations of the Study

The study of the Christian missionaries in the Naga Hills during the nineteenth century has taken into account only the period of their arrival and their agenda of education. The study did not cover the whole period of the missionary activity in the Naga Hills. The source for studying the traditional Naga institution of learning gives only a few accounts of some tribes and therefore all the tribes could not be accessed. The access to missionary primary sources was also limited because most of their sources lie abroad and are scattered all over India in different churches, theological college libraries and archives.

1.4 Methodology of the Work

The study is carried out through the content analysis of both primary and secondary sources. The study adopts a historical perspective and presents how the missionaries understood and approached the task of spreading the Christian ideology and influence through education. The main sources of information used in this study are the missionary literatures. The sources for this work are numerous ranging from personal and official letters, extensive correspondence, jubilee reports, triennial, biennial, and annual reports of the missionaries in the field, other missionary papers and discussions, to many published research work in the fields by scholars and unpublished works. In addition, general works on Nagaland and North East India have been examined.

1.5 Theoretical Frames and Concepts

The attitude of the missionaries towards the Nagas is evident in their writings. As is projected in the subsequent pages, the Nagas were not seen as good material by both the colonizer and the missionaries. The ideologies of both the colonizer and the missionaries were hegemonic. The Nagas basically endorse images of the inferiority of the savages, which was more of a manifestation of biological inferiority, and cultural chauvinism and religious bigotry.

These representations of Nagas are articulated through various ideologies that need to be situated. The host of civilizing agents, i.e. the British administrators, the missionaries, proposed the transformation of the Nagas, into “civilized Nagas”. The same Nagas were being physically exterminated or pushed into the lowest ranks of the social hierarchy. Missionary action sustained the notion that the Nagas were helpless without their assistance, their customs being so primitive as to endanger their own spiritual salvation.

The theoretical frame proposed by Paulo Freire may offer us some insights into the educational activity of the missionaries among the Nagas. The inferiority of the Nagas in the eyes of the missionaries led the latter to introduce education that would tame the savage Nagas. Initially, the new form of knowledge was introduced to discipline the savages, and that was subsequently imposed on them, and socialized them into prescribed forms of behavior.

Freire¹ says that the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior. For the oppressors, it is the oppressed that are disaffected, violent, barbaric, wicked, and ferocious. His conception of banking education privileges the teacher. It assumes that the teacher knows everything, that the student is merely passive; that there is no

¹ Freire, Paulo. (1972). Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Penguin Books, The Chaucer Press Ltd, Great Britain, p. 56.

possibility of a creative banking concept of education. He is of the view that knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who considered themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing.

The representation of the Nagas as either good or bad requires that they remain mute about themselves, passive figures to be moulded by colonial or missionary ideologies. As the Naga is more easily discarded as a legitimate voice, one can then speak for them; one can assume the position of knowing what is best for them.

The works of the French theorist Louis Althusser² on ideology opens new areas of inquiry such as how ideologies are internalized, how human beings make dominant ideas 'their own', how they express socially determined views "spontaneously". Althusser was interested in how subjects and their deepest selves are interpellated; and shaped by what lies outside them. Althusser's work is pertinent for unraveling dominant paradigmatic images and analyzing the interests that created them. His work may provide another perspective on the relation of ideas and institutions. Missionaries looked for those elements, which led to the fusion of literacy and Christianity. Thus, theirs was not one long term goal but with the consequences of incorporating literacy in the Bible into a non-literate society. They viewed alphabetical literacy as an innovative and transformative technology that helped in conversion. Gramsci formulated his concept of 'hegemony' and argued that the ruling class achieves domination not by force or coercion alone, but by creating subjects who 'willingly' submit to being ruled.³ Ideology is crucial in creating consent, it is the medium through which certain ideas are transmitted and more important held to be

² Althusser, Louis. (1971). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation) Verso, Great Britain.

³ Gramsci, Antonio. (1971). Selection from the Prison Note Books, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (Eds), International Publishers New York.

true. Hegemony is achieved not only by direct manipulation or indoctrination, but by playing upon the common sense of people.⁴

It is in this context, that the missionaries had to struggle to make a breakthrough to gain acceptance of their ideology, whereas the responses was slow initially, it soon created their subjects through education.

1.6 The Geographical Setting

The Naga people inhabit a contiguous hill range, from Barail in Northeastern India, to parts of the Arakan Yoma, in present day Myanmar. As such they inhabit the North Eastern region Indian states of Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. In Myanmar, the Nagas inhabit the Northwest regions that include the Somrah tract bordering India that is divided into two administrative units-Kachin state and Sagaing Sub-Division. A rough estimate of the total population of the Naga people in India and Myanmar is presumed to be approximately two million. According to pre-colonial accounts presented in the Ahom 'Buranjis' (written chronicles of the ethnic Ahom rulers of Assam), the term 'Naga' was used to denote persons who lived in the hills.⁵ Ahom Buranjis also recorded that by the time the Ahoms came to Assam in the thirteenth century, the Nagas were already settled in their present homeland. They wrote of Naga resistance to Sukapha, the founder of the Ahom kingdom.⁶

⁴ Williams, Raymond quoted in Ania, Loomba. (1998). *Colonialism/Post Colonialism*, Routledge, London, p. 29.

⁵ Kikon, Dolly. (2002). "Destroying Differences, Schooling Consent; A Critical Analysis of Education Policy in India-Administered Nagaland", North Eastern Social Science Research Center, Guwahati, Assam, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, Washington D.C, USA, April 4-7, p. 5.

⁶ Gait, E. A (1967). *A History of Assam*, Calcutta, pp. 78-79.

1.6.1 Origin and Migration

The Nagas are an Indo-Mongoloid folk, divided into a dozen of major tribes, speaking languages and dialects more than double the number of tribes.⁷ On the basis of language, their origin is assigned by Sir G A Grierson to that of the Tibeto-Burman's, who came with the second wave of migration from the North Western area of Hwang-Ho river.⁸ According to Grierson the Naga languages belong to the Tibeto-chinese family. The origin of the name 'Naga' has given rise to some considerable speculations, with the result that there are several theories in existence, each with a foundation but with no unanimity of opinion. The term 'Naga' includes the various tribes of the present state of Nagaland, the tribes Nocte, Wancho, Tangsa, etc., of North East Frontier Agency and their congeners in Manipur State and in some tract of Burma.⁹ The history of how the Naga tribes came precisely to occupy their present position has yet to be established. Each tribe has its own legend to give some indications of the course from which the migration took place. A close study of those legends and traditions reveal that the area had been peopled by successive waves of immigrants from different directions. On the whole there was a general movement of people from South to the North.¹⁰ Horam suggests that the Nagas must have wandered around before they found their permanent abode. Further, he writes that the Naga relationship though dim can be maintained with the natives of Borneo for the two have common traditional head hunting practices; with the Phillipines and Formosa through the common system of terrace cultivation; and with the Indonesians, as both used the loin loom for weaving cloth.¹¹

⁷ Alemchiba, M. (1970). A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, Naga Institute of Culture, Kohima, p.1.

⁸ Grierson, G. A. (1903). Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III, part-II, Varanasi, p.11.

⁹ Alemchiba, M. p. 21, note 7.

¹⁰ Alemchiba, M. p. 19, note 7.

¹¹ Horam, M (1975). Naga Polity, B. R. Publication Cooperation, Delhi, p. 28.

1.6.2 Entry of the British

With the commencement of the nineteenth century, colonialism reached its peak having assumed control of most of the sub-continent. The shadow of Burma and China hung over the North-Eastern Frontier, and the British then proceeded to promote their mercantile interests in the region. The declining fortunes of the monarchy in the Lohit (Brahmaputra) valley proved to be an advantage for British colonial expansion. After the Anglo-Burmese War of 1824, the British emerged as the dominant power in the region, following the signing of the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826. Under the terms of this treaty the king of Ava on the Burmese side surrendered among other things his claim over Assam and the neighboring states of Cachar, Jaintia and Manipur to the British.¹² Annexation brought the British into contact with the tribal people of the hilly regions, who they considered unpredictable, primitive and difficult to deal with.¹³

1.6.3 Creating Naga Reserves; the Colonial Process

By 1878, the British established Kohima as the chief administrative center for the Angami area and Wokha as a sub-center for the Lotha Tribal area. The British government conducted surveys and operations for the purpose of demarcating the territorial boundary and extending their administrative control over the Naga People. By July 1882, the British government laid down the boundaries of the Naga Hills District. From the beginning, the British administration was clear that they would not 'gain' anything profitable from the Nagas. The Naga people fitted the colonialist's definition of 'Savages, inhabitants and barbarous people' who were best to be left

¹² Barpujari, H. K. (1977). Political History of Assam (1826-1919), Vol.1, Spectrum, Gauhati, p. 77.

¹³ Robinson, Rowena, "Christianity in the Context of Indian Society and Culture" in Veena, Das. (2003). The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 890.

undisturbed. Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor General of India writes, “Our possessions could bring us no profit, and it would be costly to us (and) unproductive.”¹⁴

1.6.4 The Advent of Christianity

The advent of modern education in the Naga Hills commenced with the arrival of Christian missionaries. The missionaries were members of the American Baptist Mission, who arrived in Sadiya (Assam), in 1836 to take up missionary work. Rev. E.W. Clark, the first missionary, came to the Naga Hills in early 1872. However, a system of modern education per-se could not be established immediately due to the resistance offered by local potentates. The first center of Christian activities was set up around 1876. Its objectives were ostensibly to spread Christian teachings, to teach the Naga people to read the Bible and sing Christian hymns, thus the first elements of a system of modern education were put in place. The introduction of the Roman alphabet transcribed the Naga spoken words and led to the translation of the Bible and hymn books in various Naga languages i.e. Ao, Angami, Lotha, Sema during the latter part of the 19th century.¹⁵

1.6.5 The Nagas, as Viewed by the Christian Missionaries

The Christian Missionaries during their initial stay in the Naga Hills viewed the Nagas as a savage and primitive people. Mary Mead, wife of Rev. E.W. Clark opens her memoirs with the remark, “Mine album is the savage breast, where darkness

¹⁴ Mackenzie, Alexander. (1884). History of the Relations of Government with the Hill Tribes of the North East Frontier of Bengal, Calcutta, pp. 113-115.

¹⁵ Downs, Frederick. S (1983). Christianity in North East India, Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Delhi, p. 33.

broods and tempests rest without one ray of light.”¹⁶ As was typical of such nineteenth century portrayals, the traditional practices of such people were denigrated. This perception of the Nagas was common in the colonial imagination too at that time.

Taylor and Morgan had suggested that there were three stages in human history, these included savagery, barbarism and civilization. It does seem to be obvious that the Nagas in the eyes of the missionaries were passing through the period of savagery because the Nagas have the same sort of gross and absurd superstitions as are common to other savage nations. The only way of civilizing the Naga people, in the eyes of the missionaries was to convert them to Christianity. In order to spread the ‘ray of light’ amongst them, introducing education became a necessary pre-requisite. In fact, the Baptist Missionary Union, in their original constitution had already recognized education as one of the means to be adopted for introducing Christianity in India.

The diffusion of Christian knowledge and the multiplication of missionary schools were considered of central importance for the spread of Christianity, as Dufferin wrote in 1830, “The highways to the general success of Christianity”.¹⁷ Thus, proselytizing through education occupied the center stage in the missionary movement. Through education, missionaries hoped to appeal to the mind of the people, the power of words and knowledge and thereby reshape and soften their mind.

The missionaries of the Naga Hills especially considered this as the best way to inculcate Christian ideals in the area as the natives were attracted by the printed world. Thus, schools were recognized as an agency for establishing a permanent

¹⁶ Clark, Mary. Mead. (1907). A Corner in India, American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia.

¹⁷ Quarishi, Ferdous. A. (1987). Christianity in North-Eastern Hills of Asia, Social Impact and Political Implications, University Press, Dhaka, p.24 Quoted in Lanusangla Tzudir, 2003, “From Head Hunting to Christianity; Questions of Cultural Identity in Ao Land, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, p. 114, CHS, JNU).

foothold in the Naga Hills. Rivenburg, one of the missionaries who served in the Naga Hills, frankly revealed that he was not interested in school education, but as there was immense possibility of converting the local population to Christianity through education, he encouraged school education.¹⁸ Tireless efforts of the American Baptist Mission in the Naga Hills acquired meaning but their emphasis was basically to inculcate Christian ideals and practices.

1.7 Review of Related Literature

In *The Beautiful Tree; Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century*, Dharampal writes that in India, attempts have been made to bring people to an institutionalized, formal, law abiding Christianity as was earlier undertaken in Great Britain. This required literacy and teaching that would assist evangelical exhortation and propaganda to extend Christian “light” and knowledge. This is a comprehensive study of archival materials, relating particularly to education during colonial rule.¹⁹

In his book *Education and Colonialism*, Philip Altbach points out that schools that were established served some of the needs of the indigenous population simply as a result of the interaction between those making policy, the colonizers, and the colonized. Schools were primarily oriented to serving the agendas of the colonizers. The missionaries were permitted to teach what they wanted as long as their activities were confined to the geographical boundaries acceptable to the colonial government. This does not mean that they operated without government supervision or minimal control. Further, he has highlighted the differences in the missionary and colonial

¹⁸ Rivenburg. Quoted in Joseph, Puthenpurakal. (1984). Baptist Missions in Nagaland. Vendrame Missiological Institute, Shillong, p. 78.

¹⁹ Dharampal. (1983). The Beautiful Tree; Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century. New Delhi; Biblio Impex.

education programs. While the colonial administration focused on vocational training, the missionaries emphasized the moral ideal.²⁰

Martin Carnoy argued that nations have come to believe that to be accepted as civilized, they must be educated, and to be educated, they must be schooled. What is significant is, as Carnoy would say is that schooling is a liberating (civilizing) force but his argument as we find in his book is that schooling far from acting as a liberator, came to most countries as part of a project of imperialist domination.²¹ The spread of schooling occurred within the context of imperialism and capitalism. Despite the negative aspects of imperialism and colonialism, formal schooling enabled the colored peoples of the world to transcend their backwardness and ignorance and join the modern world.

Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik have explored the history of the evolution of the modern system of education from different angles. The background of the study is provided not only by the socio-political and constitutional history of India but against the backdrop of socio political and educational developments in contemporary England. They have discussed how the planning of institutions in India was influenced by institutions in England and how changes in the educational policy of England were reflected in Indian education.

Further, the work analyzes the different perceptions of the Indian and English elite of the role and function of education. They discuss the conflict between traditional and western policies and trace its history. The major influence and

²⁰ Altbach, Philip and Gail, Kelly (eds). (1984). Education and Colonialism, 2nd revision, ed., New Brunswick, N.J; Transaction Books, New York and London.

²¹ Carnoy, Martin. (1974). Education as Cultural Imperialism David Mckay Company, INC, New York.

interrelationship between three major groups, the missionaries, the British officials and the Indian people are highlighted.²²

Aparna Basu examined the rapid expansion of English education at all levels in the first two decades of the nineteenth century that set the pattern for future developments. This appraisal of the interplay of politics and educational policy examines the objectives of educational policy, and the interplay between the socio-economic factors of caste, religion and region, which determined the pattern of literacy that emerged.²³ She further suggested that education played a crucial role in establishing and reaffirming colonial hegemony. Hence, in many colonial countries the metropolitan powers introduced western education with the hope that a class of persons would imbibe western culture and values and appreciate the benefits of foreign rule by becoming its political allies.²⁴ Colonialism for most of the third world countries is seen as a significant historical movement since it impacted upon the sphere of economies and culture. The installation of colonial rule generated the felt need to bridge the gap between the rulers and the ruled. Hence, education has played a crucial role in reinforcing the hegemonic status of colonial power. She has mentioned six reasons for the introduction of education. These were of an ecclesiastical, administrative, commercial, cultural, political and moral nature.

Basu and others argue that there were strong positive ties and programs that bound colonizer and missionary together on matters of educating the natives or the colonized. However, she points out that the relationships was not always so clear or close, as their goals were not identical. The missionaries were interested in converting

²² Nurullah, Syed and J.P. Naik. (1962). A Students' History of Education in India, Macmillan, Bombay.

²³ Basu, Aparna. (1974). The Growth of Education and Political Development in India, 1898-1920, Oxford University Press.

²⁴ Basu, Aparna "Colonial Education, A Comparative Approach", Presidential Address Section 1V Indian History Congress, 50th Session, Gorakhpur.

the people through education imparted in the vernacular; whereas the colonial government was committed to instruction in the English language

Krishna Kumar argued that colonial rule permitted no possibility of the inclusion of indigenous knowledge and cultural forms in the curriculum of ordinary schools because it was felt that indigenous knowledge was deficient. The material poverty of India was ascribed to the inherent weakness of Indian culture. Elphinstone seemed to have rejoiced at the fact that the natives were not aware of the connection between education and their eventual acceptance of Christianity.²⁵ Knowledge was what the new education was supposed to impart but its inner agenda was to improve moral conduct. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the role of education in undermining traditional structures of dominance had become well established.

Gauri Viswanathan interrogated the ideology of English colonial rule. The English Parliament demanded a guarantee that large scale proselytizing would not be carried out in India. The British administration and the missionaries were entirely opposed to each other both in principle and in practice. Missionaries were dismayed by the constant monitoring of their activities. Viswanathan stressed that knowledge of the West could not be imparted directly without seeming to temper with the fabric of indigenous religion.²⁶

Robert Eric Frykenberg's study of Christian missionaries summarily disposes of common misinterpretations, e.g. that a majority of missionaries consistently supported colonialism and saw their mission as allied irrevocably with imperialism.²⁷ Contributors of the collection of essays by Iwona Milewska traces the earliest

²⁵ Kumar, Krishna. (1991). The Political Agenda of Education, A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas, Sage Publications, India Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi.

²⁶ Viswanathan, Gauri. (1989). Masks of Conquest Literary Study and British Rule in India, Columbia University Press, New York.

²⁷ Frykenberg, Robert Eric. (2003). Christians and Missionaries in India; Cross Cultural Communication since 1500, Routledge Curzon, London.

missionaries encounters with Sanskrit language and literature and makes clear that only a small minority of missionaries, such as Alexander Duff were thoroughgoing Anglicists who despised Indian language and culture. Some of the most interesting material in the book concerns the impact of the various forms of the European enlightenment on Indian missions.²⁸

Sushil Madhav Pathak looks at the contributions made by the missionaries in the field of evangelism, education, medicine and social work in India and the various policies behind these activities. He remarks that the credit for introducing modern education in India goes to the Christian missionaries and this was clearly evident through the writings of Rev. Gordon Hall. The objective of the mission was to have a school attached where the children were taught the scriptures in the native language.²⁹

According to Rev. Sherring, the most potent and pervasive impact of missionary activity was Christianity itself. He has shown historically what Protestant missions have accomplished in India since the commencement of their missionary activity in India in the beginning of the eighteenth century. He indicates that the minds of the native were remodeled through the translation of portions of the Bible in the native dialects.³⁰ Briraj Singh's³¹ biography of Ziegenbalg, the Lutheran pietist who worked within the territory under Danish-control, Tranquebar points out that the latter was instrumental in providing Christianity a home in India because he showed no desire to impose a western way of life upon his converts. He rather encouraged the Indians to follow their own cultural practices despite the fact that they had adopted a new religion. Singh examines the interactions between Christians and Indian culture

²⁸ Milewska, Iwona in Robert Eric Frykenberg, note 27.

²⁹ Pathak, Madhav, Sushil. (1967). American Missionaries and Hinduism, A Study of their Contacts from 1813-1910, Oriental Publishers.

³⁰ Sherring, M. A. Rev. (1875). The History of Protestant Missions in India from their Commencement in 1706 to 1871, Trubner & Co., London.

³¹ Singh, Briraj. (1999). The First Protestant Missionary to India: Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg (1683-1710), Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

within the context of imperial rule. Ziegenbalg's work reflects the high esteem in which he held the Indians and his open reliance on their knowledge and expertise and gave expression to the Hindu voice even when that was openly resistant to Christianity. Ziegenbalg had not only acquired knowledge of Hinduism but regarded the Hindus highly and desired to preserve the integrity of Tamil language and culture even when he was promoting Christianity.

Robin Horton's³² study on the role of ideas on African Converts has interesting findings to offer. Horton sees that the encounter between the pre-Christian worldview and Christianity produced a double layered cosmology where polytheism was overlaid by a transcendental divinity. This played a vital role in African conversions. Africans, who were living in a period of rapid social change gradually, came to feel that their traditional worldview was no longer adequate as a method of explanation, prediction and control. Therefore, a more satisfactory cosmology, which they found in Islam and Christianity, helped them in the new social scenario.

Similarly, Richard Eaton's study on the conversion to Christianity among the Nagas, in the northeastern region of India is interesting. The "traditional Naga cosmology" had greatly facilitated the process of Christianizing the tribal Nagas. The lower layer of the two tiered system was comprised of "a host of minor spirits" which was overlaid and subsumed by the supreme divinity in the upper tier. This was brought about by the new development set in motion by the expansion of British Empire in the Naga Hills. The assimilation of Christian God into the local one, the building of roads, and the knowledge of the world purveyed through new maps of the world, and various other new developments in the locality had decisively invaded the Naga cognitive realm. Eaton has shown that the propagation of a new notion of God

³² Horton, Robin. (1975). "On the Rationality of Conversion", Part 1, African Journal of the International Institute, Vol.45, No.3.

who is more powerful and all benevolent gradually led the Nagas to convert to Christianity.³³

F.S. Downs viewed mass conversions from a different perspective. He has presented his findings on the apparent correlation between large-scale conversion movements and natural calamities. He attributed conversion to calamities such as earthquakes, bamboo famines and failure of political rebellion. According to him, conversion invariably followed the “traumatic experience of either a natural or political sort”.³⁴

Mary Mead, in “*A Corner in India*” gives an account of her personal observation through years of association with the Nagas. Her book has interesting narratives to convey to the readers their initial contact with the Naga people. She draws the attention of the readers to the delights, disappointments, success and failure of early mission work. She described how the state of darkness in which the Nagas were living was impenetrable during the initial years but arrived to mention that the dawn of light has been shone upon the people, as Nagas became civilized through the introduction of Bible schools.³⁵

A.C Bowers writes that Christianity could not have permitted the men of the wild places of the earth to perish in their savagery. The book discusses how the natural obstacles did not deter the Christian missionaries to take up their work in the Naga Hills. The book also elaborately gives an account of how Rev. E.W. Clark encountered the Nagas and the invitation he received from the Nagas requesting the missionaries to educate them. The book also described the prosperity of the people after embracing Christianity as a religion. Finally, he concluded that people would

³³ Eaton, Richard. (1984). “Conversion to Christianity among the Nagas, 1876-1971,” *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 21, 1, pp. 1-52.

³⁴ Downs, Frederick S. (1992). *History of Christianity in India*, Vol.V, part-5. The Church History Association of India, Bangalore.

³⁵ Clark, Mary. Mead note 16.

wonder upon the marvelous change “from a father’s stained hand with blood to an advanced people.”³⁶

1.8 Chapterization

An outline of the introductory overview and issues to be developed is examined in the first chapter locating the entry of both the British and the American Baptist Mission; the role of the British administrator in the Naga Hills forms the backdrop of the study. The theoretical frame for the analysis of the missionary endeavour is described along with the scope of the study and research questions. A brief review of some of the literatures is undertaken.

The second chapter elaborately traces the Naga traditional learning before the commencement of formal education. An attempt is made to explain how the ‘Morung,’ which is the traditional institution of learning, was explained by the Naga writers, missionaries and the colonial administrators. The second half of the chapter details the various duties and functions performed in the ‘Morung’ and gradual breakdown of the use of ‘Morung’ as an institution of learning.

The third chapter presents the missionaries attitudes towards the Nagas which relates to the missionaries’ strategy of planting education. An outline of the early encounter locating the perception of the missionaries labeling the Naga as savages is discussed. An analysis is made to understand for the reason of placing the Nagas in this category. The chapter examines how this understanding justified the missionary views of evangelizing and giving education to the Nagas.

The fourth chapter considers the nature, motives, and the extent of indoctrination through education. It throws light on the missionaries’ curriculum and

³⁶ Bowers, A. C. (1929). Under Head Hunter’s Eyes. The Judson Press, Philadelphia.

textbooks and examines the intended agenda of disseminating the Christian faith through the print medium. The chapter discusses some of the texts of the missionaries which were seen playing a dominant influence in giving a new role and function to the Nagas. A brief account of the pioneering educational work is highlighted.

The fifth sketches out the missionaries and British administrators experiences with education. It discusses the main generalizations seen in the writings of the missionaries and the colonials. The chapter takes into account the views of different Naga writers tracing both the benefits and dischantment with the new changes.

The concluding chapter summarizes the process wherein the transplantation of ideology formed the basis for reconstructing the Naga past differently.

CHAPTER II

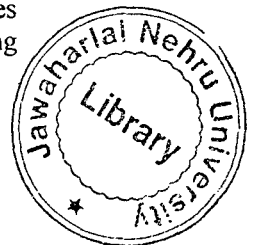
An Overview of the Traditional System of Learning prior to the Establishment of Modern Education

Each society exists and grows with some kind of educational system. Since there was no tribal or inter-tribal organization to deal with the needs of the tribe as a whole, each village became solely responsible for its own economic, social, spiritual and political needs. Such needs required that the young be taught and trained within the village community. One such training centre in Naga society was the Morung¹ (bachelor's dormitory), which was found in many parts of the world.² Horam writes that Morung like institutions existed in Australia, Africa, North and South Africa, Micronesia and Polynesia as well as in India particularly in Assam and among the congeners of the Naga and Kuki tribes in upper Burma.³

W.C. Smith observed:

This institution is found among the Lushei-kuki clans; among the Rengma and the Lotha Nagas, although in these instances it is not a very imposing-looking building; among the Kacha Nagas, where it is an important feature of the village; among the Aroong Nagas of Cachar; and among the Nagas of Manipur; among the Kukis; among the Chins; among the Abors, where this house was occupied by all the bachelor's, both freeman and slaves; among the Garos; among the Singphos and Mishmis; among the wild tribes of the Chittagong hill tract; among the Lalungs the separate sleeping - houses for the unmarried youths and maidens are still kept up in the remoter villages which have not been too much touched by the Hindus on the plains; among the Eastern Nagas; among the Ao Nagas.⁴

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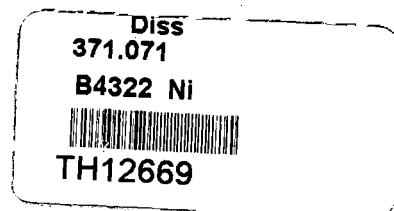


¹ The term Morung derives from the Ahom word referring to a Naga traditional institution in which the - social life of the Nagas was shaped.

² Shisak, A. Tuisem.Rev. (1990). Nagas and Education, in Nagas'90, February 8-11, A Souvenir, p. 27.

³ Horam, M. Naga Polity. (1975). B.R Publishing Corporation, Delhi. p. 66.

⁴ Smith, W. C. (1980). The Ao Naga tribe of Assam, Delhi Gian Publishing, pp. 125-26.



Verrier Elwin pointed out that such institutions are widely distributed among communities of the Austro-Asiatic cultures.⁵ Furthermore, he writes, that the Morung had served as a “village guard-room for the Nagas”. Kekhrie Yhome and Inotoli Zhimomi on similar lines speak of the Morung as the centre where the youth congregate, an interactive assembly of the young and the old, the centre of all social, religious and cultural life.⁶ The Morung epitomizes the Naga traditional school for informal learning, where training is imparted to boys in basketry, cane work, music, martial arts, dance, folklore, arts and crafts, etc. and weaving and singing etc for girls. Through the Morung, leaders are created and made, inculcating in them the promotion of common good and the spirit of understanding. As the Morung is age-specific and sex-exclusive, more like a “dormitory” or “youth hostel”, it acts as the defence of the village. The Morung youth in turn organize the labour force, assist the village chiefs or elders, initiate social work and disseminate information.⁷ Takatemjen, a noted theologian described Morung as the seat of Naga culture and as the traditional institution of Naga learning.⁸

Ursula Bowers, an anthropologist who lived amongst the Zeliangrong Nagas for quite sometime gives an elaborate account of a Morung graduate: “They are the tougher fibre and the rough corners have been off. They are more self-reliant, with common sense and better discipline and above all their loyalty and sense of service to a corporate body is well-developed”.⁹

⁵ Horam, M p. 66, note 3.

⁶ Yhome, Kekhrie. & Inotoli, Zhimomi. (2004). “Indigenous Education and the Formation of Naga Identity, Discussion paper, Naga Indigenous Education House, Chiangmai, 17th Nov, Thailand, p.18.

⁷ Ibid., p.18.

⁸ Takatemjen, Rev. (1997). Studies on Theology and Naga Culture, CTC, Aolijen, Mokokchung, p. 2.

⁹ Bowers, Ursula. G. (1952). Naga Path, Readers Union, London, p. 75.

Dormitories, i.e. youth houses, have been reported to be existent in preliterate societies from all parts of the world.¹⁰ In India, dormitories, bi-sexual as well as mono-sexual, are found in practically all parts of the country where tribal people have their habitation.”¹¹ However, as Chubatola Aier, a Naga scholar has observed, the dormitory system was not uniform among the tribes in India and is more closely associated with the tribes of the North-east.¹² Though each tribe would have a specific term of their own, the most common generic term is “Morung” This house of learning was the central part of the socialization, education and formation of the Naga as Nagas. The house or to put it in the language of few Nagas: *Arju* for the Aos; *Kichuki* for Angamis; *Ban* for Konyaks. It is *Champo* for the Lothas, *Khruchozu* for boys and *Chulozu* for girls in Maos, *Longshim* for the Tangkhuls and for the Sumis, *Apuki* for the bachelors and *Iliki* for the girls existed as a vital institution for the Nagas by providing a place for sustaining culture and teaching the young boys and girls as their passage to adulthood.¹³ Ahu Sakhrie writes that there are variations in the degree of value attached to and the organization of Morungs among the different tribes. An Ao set great value in his Morung and would not speak of himself as belonging to a particular khel of his village but to a particular Morung while to the Semas and Angamis the Morung does not play an important a role except for special religious festivals, and other important political discussions.¹⁴

This explanation also figures importantly in the work of Chubatola Aier. She holds that unlike the Naga tribes that accorded the Morung importance, tribes such as the

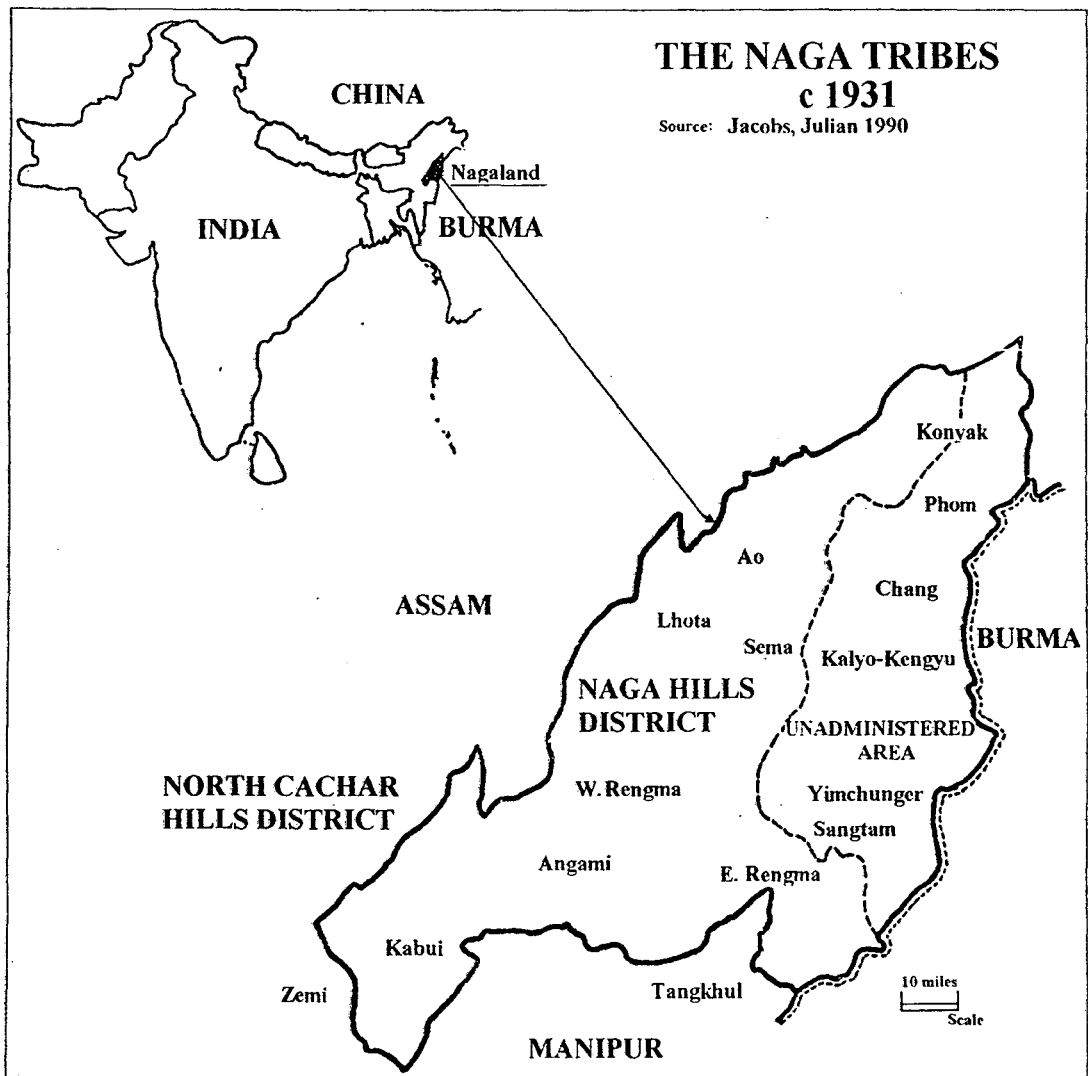
¹⁰ Majumdar, D. N., & T.N.Madan. (1986). An Introduction to Social Anthropology, University Level Text Books, Mayor Paperbacks, p. 111.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 111.

¹² Aier, Chubatola. (1996). An Ethnographic Study of the Language Situation in Nagaland With Special Reference to the Learning and Teaching of English. An unpublished Ph D Thesis, CIEFL Hyderabad, p. 312.

¹³ Yhome, Kekhrie., & Inotoli, Zhimomi. pp. 18-19, note 6.

¹⁴ Sakhrie, Ahu . (1982). Naga Movement: A study in the sociology of social movement , An unpublished M.phil.Dissertation, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, JNU, p. 52.



Semas and Angami did not so. She adds that without sufficient educational instructions, few tribes used this institution for socialization in the evenings.¹⁵

Table 1. Some of the Naga Tribes of present Nagaland and the functions of Morung.

No	Name of Tribes	Functions of Morung
1	Angami (Kichuki)	Not habitually used, used occasionally during the ceremonies and gennas.
2	Aos (Arju)	Affected all domains of existence/ set great values.
3	Konyaks (Bans)	Power and decisions are taken by the young here.
4	Lothas (Champo)	Essential institution which affected all life.
5	Rengma (Rensi)	Essential institution which affected all life.
6	Sema (Apuki)	For special religious festival

Hutton in K.S. Singh identified the Morung as a permanent institution that did not exist among the Angamis, Chakhesang and other western and Southern Nagas. Among the Semas, as a general rule the chief's house served as a Morung, both as a centre of gennas (rituals), and as a bachelor's sleeping place.¹⁶ The role of the Morung in Naga society is likely to be misunderstood unless, as pointed out by Chubatola Aier, its different possible roles are recognized. Thus among the Aos, Rengmas and Lothas, the Morung was an essential institution which affected all domains of

¹⁵ Aier, Chubatola. pp. 312-13, note 12.

¹⁶ Singh, K. S. (1994). *People of India*, Nagaland Volume XXX IV. Anthropological Survey of India, Seagull Books, Calcutta, p.14.

existence in the village and thus served a crucial purpose.”¹⁷ The Morung, as described by J.H Hutton, citing what Mills told him once in reference to the former’s tours in the unadministered area east of the Naga hills,” conducted in 1923:

... Among the Konyaks, the power lies with, and decisions are taken by the young men, acting by Morungs.... In all Ao villages each Morung has a complete set of tartar, who, though boys, have absolute control inside the Morung. The village tatar can be fined if they attempt to interfere.¹⁸

The “Morung” existed as the centre of social, religious and cultural life. All social function in the village was carried out through the efforts of the members of the Morung. J.P.Mills in *The Ao Nagas* describes Morung as both a guard house and club house that played the most important part in the social life of the village. Mills adds that a person could not be touched though he be a criminal or a fugitive so long as he is in the Morung, unless the case against the person was properly discussed and action decided. He described that the functions of Morung is like in a sanctuary.¹⁹ Angeline Loturo, also emphasized the same in her book, *The Nagas; A missionary challenge*, that the house functioned not only as a helpful seminary but also as a ‘sanctuary’.²⁰ She added further that the lawbreaker upon taking refuge in Morung could not be hurt. Ahu Sakhrie observes that the crimes were not committed in a Morung. Property could be left lying around safely, for it was taboo to steal in a Morung. Any stranger entering a Morung as a rule was treated with hospitality and could on no account be refused a night’s shelter.²¹ Haimendorf, commented that the bachelor’s hall was an institution much like the English Public School.²² Mills study of *The Rengma Nagas* suggests that among the Naga tribes that build Morung, the state of the building in the

¹⁷ Aier, Chubatola. pp. 312-13, note 12.

¹⁸ Yhome, Kekhrie., & Inotoli, Zhimomi. p.18, note 6.

¹⁹ Mills, J. P. (1926). *The Ao Nagas*, Oxford University press, 1926. p. 73.

²⁰ Lotsüro, Angeline. (2000). *The Nagas A Missionary Challenge*, Vendrame Institute Publications, Shillong, p. 15.

²¹ Sakhrie, Ahu. p. 53, note 14.

²² Fürer- Haimendorf, Christopher. Von. (1962). *The Naked Nagas*, Thacker Spink & Co, Calcutta, pp. 50-52.

village was an indication of the state of the village itself. He writes that (decaying Morung) indicated a decaying village, and a well-used, well-kept Morung indicated a vigorous community.”²³ Panger Imchen in his book *Ancient Ao Religion and Culture* observed that an outsider appreciated ancient Ao ways of life because of the beautiful and systematic life and order of the arichu (Morung) system.²⁴ Keeping in view the dominance of the Morung in political, economic and even social process, Morung as a traditional institution of learning played a significant role. However, though it existed in all the tribes, there was no uniformity in the form of use.

Hutton’s study of the Angami Nagas, suggests that the Morung or young men’s house (kichuki), was an important feature of most Naga tribes, but was insignificant in the Angami village.²⁵ Angamis, as in the case of Ao and the trans-dikhu tribes, did not habitually use Morung. It was used occasionally during the ceremonies and gennas.²⁶

As Julian Jacobs has shown, the importance of the Morung varies from group to group, in some groups, such as the Angamis, the Morung is an unimpressive building and membership of it is of minor significance.²⁷ P.T. Philip holds the same opinion and writes, “a Morung is the largest house in a village. Angamis use such houses on ceremonial occasions and observance of days of prohibition. For the Semas, the village chief’s house serves both as a Morung and a place for ceremonies”.²⁸ However, he observed that the Morungs are the “finest and the most ornate buildings in Naga villages”. Horam opines that the Morung might have fallen into disuse among

²³ Mills, J. P. (1937). *The Rengma Nagas*, Macmillan & Co .Ltd, London, p. 49.

²⁴ Imchen, Panger. (1993). *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture*, Har-anand publications, New Delhi, p.98.

²⁵ Hutton, J. H. (1921). *The Angami Nagas*, Macmillan &Co, Ltd, London, p. 49.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

²⁷ Jacobs, Julian. (1990). *The Nagas Hill Peoples of North East India*, Thames and Hudson Ltd, Great Britain, p. 28.

²⁸ Philip, P.T. (1976). *The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland*, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, p. 31.

some Naga tribes at the time Hutton began to study the two tribes, the Semas and Angamis: but it has always been an institution of great importance.²⁹ It may however be pointed out that the apparent strength, success and harmony maintained at least within a particular village, and which enabled the tribes to flourish for centuries in their own way, can be attributed to the strong and effective system of socialization or education that existed.³⁰

The foregoing discussion has made it amply clear that the Morung enabled the members to bring about distinct changes in the self and in society. It is also significant to mention here that the tribes did not exclude women although administrators like Mills have shown that the Morung fulfills a variety of functions. It is a club far more strictly preserved from feminine intrusion than any club in England, for were not waitresses admitted into many house during the war. No case has ever been known of a woman entering a Rengma "Morung".³¹ Horam pointed out that "the Morung is out of bounds for women. If a woman enters it she renders, according to a belief and custom, the entire village unlucky".³² Kevi Liegise says in this regard, that the Morung, is a name given to the dormitory of young unmarried boys and in some tribes, for the girls as well, it served as a complete institutions for their education".³³

One may note the significance of Morung for every Naga boy. Mills in *The Lotha Nagas* writes, "A Lotha talks of his happy champo days much as an Englishman talks of his school days".³⁴ He observed that that the common bachelor's

²⁹ Horam, M. p. 65, note 3.

³⁰ Aier, Chubatola, Ngangshikokba. Ao., I. Wati. Imchen. (2003). TALENSEN Reflection On Education Among the Ao Nagas published by the Ao Students Conference (AKM) Mokokchung, Nagaland, p. 21.

³¹ Mills, J. P, p. 51, note 23.

³² Horam, M, p. 65, note 3.

³³ Liegise, Kevi . (1982). Modernisation Among the Nagas, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, JNU, An unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, p. 31.

³⁴ Mills, J. P (1922). The Lotha Nagas, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., p. 25.

house or Morung is one where no woman must set her foot.³⁵ The girl's dormitories, where the unmarried girls used to sleep during the night, corresponded to the Morung. However, these dormitories were inconspicuous buildings and had no ritual significance for the community. They functioned as a training house for all the girls of a ward in the village or a clan.³⁶ The Aos did not neglect the women and had an equivalent system for them called *tsuki*. Several *tsuki* would be spread over the village but were not separate buildings like the *ariju*. A *tsuki* was usually the house of a respectable widow or a maiden aunt. There the unmarried girls of the same clan would gather for the night after the day's work and dinner was taken at home. Thus, together, they taught each other feminine crafts like spinning, weaving, cooking, etiquette etc. The lady of the house acted as chaperone.³⁷ An eminent church leader of Nagaland and a onetime missionary working among the Konyak Nagas Rev. Longri observed that among the Ao the Morung was an "Areopagus" for Nagas. He thought it was a good place for preaching.³⁸

2.1 Morung: Its Purpose and Significance

Writing of the Morung among the Aos, Haimendorf says, "one may agree or disagree with the principle of giving boys training in community spirit outside the individual family; but there can be no question that the Morung is one of the main pillars of the Aos social order".³⁹ Panger Imchen writes that a person who did not go through this Arichu life was not chosen for leadership in any village council.⁴⁰ *Arichu* (Morung)

³⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

³⁶ Fürer- Haimendorf, Christopher. Von. p. 26 note 22..

³⁷ Aier, Chubatola , Ngangshikokba Ao., I. Wati. Imchen . p. 26, note 30.

³⁸ Philip, P. T. p. 32, note 28.

³⁸ Haimendorf, Quoted in Ahu, Sakhrie. p. 52, note 14.

⁴⁰ Imchen, Panger. p. 101, note 24.

life can be best explained in terms of the ancient university, where young men went to study and prepare themselves with all the necessary qualifications to relate to their own generations.⁴¹ Takatemjen observed, “the reasons for starting the Morung were manifold. One of the primary ideas was protective and disciplinary. In the old days the villagers were always in fear of a war and it was necessary to have a disciplined band of young warriors, ready in case of emergency. The Morung, thus served as a guard house to warn the villagers in times of war and the spoils of chase. During festivals and other special occasions the boys of the Morung served the public. The Morung also served as a recreation club for the youth. The other important purpose of the establishment of the Morung was the training of the young people in all ways of life.”⁴²

Although there was a recognized house where the young unmarried men live, a similar house for girls or the young woman’s dormitory was neither compulsory nor was it an important institution. But this institution existed among many Naga tribes, including Aos, Angamis, Semas and Tangkhuls.⁴³ These institutions function as a training house for all girls of a ward in the village or a clan.⁴⁴

2.2 Habitation

J.B. Mills had described the structure of the Morung as follows, “Near each gate, but inside the fence, stands a “Morung”, a really fine building, often over fifty feet long and twenty feet broad, with a front gable thirty feet above the ground”.⁴⁵ The Morung was located at the village entrance or on a spot from where the village could be guarded most effectively. Among the Aos and Konyaks, boys’ Morungs were separate

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴² Takatemjen. p. 4, note 8.

⁴³ Horam, M. p. 72, note 3.

⁴⁴ Fürer- Haimendorf, Christopher. Vorl. p. 26, note 22.

⁴⁵ Mills, J. P. (1926). The Ao Nagas, Macmillan Co. Ltd., London, p. 73.

buildings, whereas among the Tanghuls and Angamis the Morungs were housed in buildings built and was occupied by families.⁴⁶ The Morung was a large building and the most imposing structure in the village. The Morung as Julian Jacob explains is typically a huge building which physically dominates a Naga village, resplendent with carvings representing hornbills, tigers, mithan (bison) and human heads and sometimes with projecting large-boards resembling wings or horns.⁴⁷

W. C Smith observed the same; the posts were painted with the figures of men, tigers, snakes, hornbills and monkeys. Arranged along the walls were skulls of men and animals and skillful imitations that from a distance appeared real skulls. It stood near each gate but inside the fence of the village. Near the Morung would be an open shed in which stood the log drum, formed of a hallowed trunk elaborately carved, generally to represent a buffalo's head painted in front and furnished with a straight tail at the other end.⁴⁸ The magnificent building represents the best ancient Ao Naga piece of architectural remains.⁴⁹

2.3 Membership

Membership of a Morung in most tribes was an elaborate affair. Ahu Sakhrie writes that some tribes even had age restrictions and duties for the various age-groups of the Morung.⁵⁰ Upon reaching the age of puberty, boys and girls are admitted to their respective dormitories.⁵¹ Mar Atsongchanger writes, "Each boy accompanied by his father used to go to *Ariju* where the father offered a prayer, "let my son flourish and

⁴⁶ Shisak, Tuisem . A. Rev. p. 27, note 2.

⁴⁷ Julian, Jacobs. p. 27, note 27.

⁴⁸ Smith, W. C. (1980). The Ao Naga Tribe of Assam. Delhi, Gian Publications, p. 124.

⁴⁹ Imchen, Panger. (1993). p. 102, note 24.

⁵⁰ Sakhrie, Ahu. p. 52 note 14.

⁵¹ Shisak, Tuisem. A. Rev. p. 27, note 2.

let him grow in this *ariju* as the shoots of ficus tree, and may he be wise in all things".⁵²

Horam explains that the actual initiation is preceded by a period of probation, which enables young members to get to know what is expected of them as members of the Morung.⁵³ As part of the qualifying procedure, the youth were subject to several tests and ordeals. It is said that during the early period, fresh students entering a Morung were subject to what today is called "ragging".⁵⁴ Here, Horam compares the junior most members of a Morung, to "fags" at English Public Schools.⁵⁵ Panger Imchen discussed the initiation rituals that youth were subject to before they attained manhood and acceptance in society. The recruits enter to the *arichu* from a *yhanga* (batch) within a gap of 3-5 years of age, and after every five years a new batch enters to a stage called *tzuikoaba*, pouring water.⁵⁶

The first three years are spent in manual service to elders. After this period, one matures into a senior member and assumes other weightier responsibilities in connection with the administration and running of the Morung.⁵⁷

2.4 The Leader of the Morung

The young boys in the Morung were kept under the control of a commander who was solely responsible for their training. The commander was a person with great qualities and was permitted to deliver the severest of punishments on the boys. In the Morung,

⁵² Atsongchanger, Mar. (1995). *Christian Education and Social Change*, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, Assam, p. 14. See also in J.P Mills, 1926, *The Ao Nagas*, Macmillan & Co Ltd, p. 75.

⁵³ Horam, M. p. 68, note 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

⁵⁶ Imchen, Panger. pp. 98-99, note 24.

⁵⁷ Horam, M. p. 69, note 3.

a student was admitted regardless of the family background. Everybody received the same treatment.⁵⁸ There was no class system in the *arichu*.

Each student carried out his prescribed duties and performed all he was ordered to, at any time, such as collecting water for elders, fruits, sharpening dao, message collecting, firewood, making cloths for elders and all work that was necessary.⁵⁹ The new entrants had to work for the older boys and lived under their discipline for three years. Obedience is strictly demanded of them at this stage. The rules are obeyed without objection as each one hoped that in due time his turn would come.

2.5 Curriculum

The Morung was an important educational institution for boys. Normal activities at the Morung were never organized; they were spontaneous and members responded naturally. Much of the teaching-learning process took place at the men's and women's dormitories.⁶⁰ While Morung's curriculum is mainly for the youth, it also was an institution that involved the whole society. It was in the Morung where the boys received the useful lessons in community living. The Morung gymnasium turns out skilful sportsmen, wrestlers and warriors. Here the youth received invaluable lessons in leadership. They were exposed to history (of the Nagas), culture, folklore, songs and dances of their village. The curriculum of the Morung was not all work. Play, singing and dancing were a regular feature of this institution.⁶¹ The art of public speaking was compulsorily taught.⁶²

The Morung serves both a moral and practical objectives the members learn not only of history, values and customs of the people, but also learn and compete

⁵⁸ Takatemjen. p. 6, note 8.

⁵⁹ Imchen, Panger. pp. 98-99, note 24. See also Ahu. Sakhrie. p. 52, note 14.

⁶⁰ Shisak, Tuisem. A Rev, p. 27, note 2.

⁶¹ Horam, M. p. 67, note 3.

⁶² Imchen, Panger. p. 100, note 24.

with each other in sports, and in accomplishing the best forms of handicrafts such as basket weaving, carving, smithy works, etc. Apart from the transmission of traditions, culture and crafts, the *ariju* (Morung) was also the place where the men worked out strategies and modalities for community activities such as a raid on another village, festivals, religious functions or even just to decide on community service, as going to work together in the field of a particular family or to repair a widow's house.⁶³ Shisak informs us that some very popular sports and games such as wrestling, javelin throw, shot put, tug of war, etc. were performed daily informally and competitively during village festivals.⁶⁴ Takatemjen cites examples of Morung the boys performing sports.⁶⁵

While the activity of the girl's consisted of weaving, brewing and the preparation of rice beer, they also learned how to separate seeds from cotton, and spinning. It is said that the girls spent in the dormitory was a time of learning that enabled each of them to become worthy and useful housewives.⁶⁶ Horam indicated that in the absence of schools, the Morung made it possible to train the youth before starting to live independently. The courses offered in this institution though informal, were challenging and as a result of this, both boys and girls were taught the importance and invaluable lessons of discipline, hard work and the spirit of service.⁶⁷

2.6 Discipline

Imparting value and practical education to the youth was undoubtedly a major achievement of the Morung. The Morung sought to maintain a set of rules and

⁶³ Aier, Chubatola, Ngangshikokba. Ao., I. Wati. Imchen. p. 25, note 30.

⁶⁴ Shisak, Tuisem. A. Rev. p. 28, note 2.

⁶⁵ Takatemjen. p. 8 note 8, See also Shisak , p. 28, note 2.

⁶⁶ Takatemjen. p. 1, note 8. See also N.Talitemjen. Jamir, 1992, Asen Sobalibaren, Published by the Author ,Mokokchung, Nagaland . pp. 37-40.

⁶⁷ Horam, M. (1975). p. 68, note 3

regulations and prevent outsiders from interfering in its administrations. The members understandably come within the pale of the village authority and are liable to punishments, as any other ordinary villages, for breach of any traditional or customary law.⁶⁸ Discipline was the keyword in the smooth running of a young man's house.

John Owen has cited an example of how a sentry meted out punishment when he failed in his invigilation.⁶⁹ An Ao young man could not enter the *arichu* (Morung) (the bachelor's Dormitory) without proving his masculinity.⁷⁰

Panger Imchen in his book records the story of Immangdangba of Khari village who went through ritualized tests of manhood. He writes:

The *arichu* life was a life almost of military discipline. The elders of the *arichu* taught us war tactics, such as 'throwing at us with husking poles, six to seven feet long' while we stood hiding behind the bamboo made shield, and tested our courage by giving us difficult tasks. They used to send us to the most strategic jungles at night to collect fruits, flowers and daos they left behind. They used to threaten us by telling on our way through the jungle we might be attacked by wild animals or evil spirits.⁷¹

As Chubatola Aier Ngangshikokba Ao and I Wati Imchen have explained, it was in the dormitories that the Nagas learnt the knack to perceive and live with order in the chaos and follow the law in the freedom. In the Arijju, codes of conduct and protocol were highly systematized and carefully inculcated in the younger generations.⁷²

2.7 Waning of Naga Traditional Institutions for Learning

Takatemjen's book sounds a note of regret when he writes:

With the abandonment of the Morung and with nothing to offer in its place, the Nagas have lost the most valued disciplinary agency which was responsible for giving education in the community and for the community.⁷³

⁶⁸ Sakhrie, Ahu. pp. 51-52 note 14, See also M. Horam. p. 69, note 3.

⁶⁹ Horam, M. p. 70, note 3.

⁷⁰ Tzudir, .(2003). From Headhunting to Christianity: Questions of cultural identity in Ao land, Center for Historical Studies, JNU. An unpublished Ph.D thesis, p. 12.

⁷¹ Imchen, Panger. p. 99, note, 24.

⁷² Aier, Chubatola, Ngangshikokba. Ao .,I.Wati.Imchen. p. 24, note, 30.

⁷³ Takatemjen. P. 13, note 8.

Kekhrie Yhome and Inotoli Zhimomi's insightful article has drawn one's attention in which they have too quoted Takatemjen," Christianity is partly responsible for this loss.⁷⁴ Mills writes, "After the advent of Christianity the importance of this institution was considerably reduced. The conservatives sigh and vaguely blame the American Baptist Mission for forbidding the Baptist boys to use the Morungs on the ground that they were heathen institutions."⁷⁵ The major argument in Takatemjen's book is that the new religion had introduced a new set of ethics and cultural changes. This fact is of special significance in view of the contact of the Nagas with Christianity. In this context, he has commented that all activities relating to the Morung came to a halt and Naga culture began to disintegrate.

For an understanding of the missionary attitude to the Nagas and their transformation, the subsequent chapters seek to explore their attitude which had created a base for the expansion of their network in the Naga Hills.

⁷⁴ Yhome, Kekhrie. & Inotoli, .Zhimomi. p. 19, note 6.

⁷⁵ Mills, J. P. p. 49, note 23.

CHAPTER III

Nagas and Christian Missionaries

It would be worthwhile to examine the underlying agenda and attitude of the Christian missionaries towards the Naga people among whom they worked before enquiring into the method they used to convert the Nagas into Christianity and setting on the task of “civilizing” them. A question of importance that will be asked and answers sought is how did the missionaries view the Naga society when they encountered them?

This chapter seeks to respond to the question to what extent the missionary perceptions of Naga society created a base for installing a new system of education. One needs to look at the ideological baggage the missionaries had carried with them. Further, the relationship between the educational agenda and the colonial project cannot be ignored. A host of writers have contributed to our understanding, though this understanding is quite varied.

3.1 Reviewing missionaries activities and Colonial motivations

F.S. Downs remarked that the detailed knowledge of Naga society was obtained through the observations of the Europeans and the Christian missionaries. The links between Christian missionaries and the government cannot be overlooked as their projects were mutually supportive.¹ Ebe Sunder Raj notes that the cross under the shadow of the union jack had marched into India and that the proselytisation process had helped reinforcing the power of the British. He remarks that the white missionary and the white colonist were like the faces of the same coin, one surviving on the service of the other.² However, the history of Christianity in the different region of India varied. The missionaries were never from the same denominations or from the same nationality. In the same way, their relation with the

¹ Downs, F. S. (1992). History of Christianity in North East India, Vol. 5 part 5 “North East India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” Bangalore, the Church History Association, p. 30.

² Raj, Sunder. Ebe. (2001). National Debate On Conversion Bharat Jyoti, p. 52.

British varied. Piketo Sema, argues that from the early observation of Naga society, the British had realized the importance of propagating Christianity amongst the Naga tribes. The British had observed that the introduction of Christianity would be a sine-qua-non for the upliftment of the Nagas, whom they portrayed as backward and uncivilised.³ The missionaries seemed to have enjoyed an unusual degree of protection and moral support within the British Empire.⁴ As Home Raikhan has puts it: “the dichotomy that manifested itself in the 19th century colonial encounter between the west represented by the British colonial administration and the American Baptist Mission (A B) and the Nagas was that of “civilized” west and “primitive” Nagas”.⁵ Asoso Youno makes similar observations that an important concomitant of the British conquest of the Naga inhabited hills was undoubtedly the expansion of Christian missionary movement.⁶ Evidence of colonial motives in their expansion policy is marked through the declaration made in 1882 by C.A. Elliot, the then chief commissioner of Assam, exhibiting a willingness to assist the missionary endeavour in the establishment of schools at Kohima with government’s grant-in-aid.⁷ Mar Atsongchanger, a Naga writer points out what Captain Jenkins⁸ had said of the Nagas: “the savage Head Hunters could not be raised to the standard of civilization unless they were redeemed from their primitive way of life by spreading Christianity and education.”⁹ Similarly, Alemchiba pointed out that Captain Jenkins had held that the tribes be brought within the scope of missionary activities immediately so that the missionaries could assist in humanizing the rude tribes as were known to them, including their knowledge of the

³ Sema, Piketo. (1992). British policy and administration in Nagaland.1881-1947, Scholar publishing House 85, Model Basti,N.Delhi, p. 67.

⁴ Goldsmith, Yalter. Quoted in Piketo . Sema, p. 69, note 3.

⁵ Raikhan, Home. (1979). Christian Missionaries and Social Change in Naga Hills, An unpublished M.phil. Dissertation, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, N.Delhi, p. 5.

⁶ Youno, Asoso. (1974). The Rising Nagas. A Historical and political Study, Vivek publishing House, Delhi, p.111.

⁷ Foreign Deptt., Pol A, National Archives of India, Unpublished, Jan 1882, No.135.

⁸ Jenkins was a warm, generous friend of the Mission throughout the 36 years he lived in Assam. Missions survived the early years because of him.

⁹ Atsongchanger, Mar. (1995). Christian Education and Social Change, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, Assam, p. 1.

Naga languages and their dedication towards the tribes.¹⁰ Jenkins, from his headquarters at Gauhati wrote on 10 March 1835, “the ground which I would particularly bring to their attention (American Baptists) is the North Eastern District of Assam ...here is an ample field; it extends all over the North and west of China.”¹¹ Rev.E.W.Clark reported: “a secular event of considerable importance is the territory of the tribe being formally annexed to the British Empire. We have had partial military protection for three or four years; now we are to have the full benefit of English law and rule. Mission work can now be prosecuted anywhere in the tribe with all safety.”¹²

R. P. Sharma and Ngangshikokba clarified that Christianisation in the Naga hills could be attributed to the expansionist motives of the British. Viewed in this context, they argued that, although Christianity had arrived in other parts of India since the middle of the first century A.D, Christianity reached the Naga Hills during the middle of the nineteenth century. Their interpretation is found to have been based upon the proposition that the message of Christ arrived in the Naga Hills on the wings of British colonial expansion.¹³ While highlighting the positive aspects of the missionary contributions, they reaffirmed the point that the political dimension of the arrival of the Christianity among the Nagas is not to be overlooked.¹⁴ Rev. Keviyiekielie Linyu stated that the coming of Christianity to Naga areas was accidental, influenced by events, and not intentional.¹⁵ One of the reasons in this regard could be that the missionaries while in the process drew up their educational

¹⁰ Alemchiba, M. (1970). A brief historical account of Nagaland, Kohima ,Naga Institute of Culture, p.153.

¹¹Albaugh, M. Dana. (1935). Between Two Centuries, A study of Four Baptist Mission Fields, Assam, South India, Bengal, Orissa and South China. The Judson Press, Philadelphia, p. 49.

¹² The Baptist Missionary Magazine Vol.LXIX No.7, American Baptist Missionary Union Publications, Boston, July 1889, pp. 259-260. Hereafter cited as The Baptist Missionary Magazine.

¹³ Sharma, R. P., Ngangshikokba. Ao. (2000). Mayangnokcha : the Pathfinder Mayangnokcha Award Trust,Mokokchung, Nagaland. India, p. 44.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁵ Linyu, Keviyielie. Rev. Quoted in Kekhrie. Yhome., & Inotoli. Zhimomi . (2004). “Indigenous Education and the formation of Naga identity”,Chiangmai, 17th November,Thailand, p. 14.

programme with their eyes focused on Burma, and unintentionally encountered the Nagas. The other picture is as Kekhrie Yhome and Inotoli Zhimomi have emphasized, “By resorting to initiating mission works amongst the Nagas, it was finally conceived that the Shans in Burma would be evangelized, for geo-strategic reasons, which ultimately was a failure.” They further remark that the American Missionaries were invited to Naga Hills by the British colonial administrators.¹⁶

Rev. S.A. Perrine reported: “the Naga mission must not then, be looked at as simply of and for the Nagas, but rather as a part of a larger project to reach the Mongolian peoples of Asia. The Naga mission is chiefly valuable because of its position and what it is potentially in relation to the whole Mongolian race.”¹⁷ Though considerably different in their approaches it can sometimes be profitable to see some commonalities. Only then can we acquire an appreciation of the complexity of the issues that motivated the Christian missions. Mary Mead Clark reports:

Since the English government has taken jurisdiction over this tribe, our heads are more secure, it is true, and we may travel where we will; but in many of the villages there has seemed to be a falling off of interest in religious truth and a looking to, a following after, the government. Some villages are now indifferent to the presence of the Christian teacher, and show no interest in sending their children to school.¹⁸

Initially, the missionaries considered the extension of the British dominion and bringing of the Naga Hills within their control good for their safety. But in latter years; their ideas differed, sometimes they were even found intervening in their affairs which as a result confused the Nagas.

The disagreement between the missionaries and British administrators was apparent. Victor Hugo Sword writes that there were some government officials who

¹⁶Yhome, Kekhrie & Inotoli, Zhimomi. , p. 15, note 15.

¹⁷Perrine, S. A. Rev. Reports in Minutes of the Eight session of the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary union, Held at Gauhati, Assam, December 24, 1904-1 January, 1905, p. 56.

¹⁸The Baptist Missionary Magazine. Vol- LXXI, Aug. 1891 No.8, p. 375.

sincerely objected to the propagation of the Christian faith on the ground that Christianity brings with it a westernization that was detrimental to the health and welfare of the unsophisticated village folk, and to the life of the primitive tribes among the hills in Assam.¹⁹ However, Kenneth Scott Latourette states that the British administrators were not entirely opposed to the spread of Christianity for it had long maintained chaplains as its employees and some of its officials had been friendly to the propagation of the faith. Yet in general it was religiously neutral.²⁰ Rev. S.A. Perrine reports;

A few years ago while at Kohima, a government station in the Naga Hills, I was invited to the "officer's mess". During the course of the dinner the colonial turned to me and said, "Do you believe you are doing any good here among these wild Nagas?" I said, "Most certainly," said I, "as surely as anyone." "Bah" said he, "they are worthless no better than dogs; and I would as soon shoot one down as I would a dog."²¹

One is also led to conclude that, despite the negative attitude of the colonial administrator towards the Nagas, there were many points of agreement between the administrators and the missionaries. Both saw education as a means to serving their own ends. Although the colonial administrators seemed to have played a secondary role in initiating education, they also played a decisive role in all the proceedings because the missionaries depended upon them for free movement in the hills. It is therefore, to be remarked that, the history of education in the Naga Hills cannot be separated from the history of the church or from the history of the British take over of the Naga Hills.²² Thus the history of the expansion of modern education in the Naga Hills is anchored within the history of missionary activity and colonial expansion in the Naga Hills.

¹⁹ Sword, Hugo. Victor. *Baptists in Assam. (1935). A Century of Missionary Service 1836-1936* Conference press, Chicago, pp. 32-33.

²⁰ LaTourette, Scott. Kenneth. (1914). *A History of the expansion of Christianity Volume VI The great Century in Northern Africa and Asia A.D.1800-A.D.* Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd, London, p. 1.

²¹ *The Baptist Missionary Magazine*, LXXXI No.7, 1901, pp. 212-13.

²² Aier, Chubatola. (1996). *An Ethnographic Study of the Language Situation in Nagaland with Special Reference to the Learning and Teaching of English* ,An unpublished Ph.D. thesis, CIEFL, Hyderabad, p. 6.

3.2 Savage Nagas; Missionary Narratives

Anna Kay writes in her autobiography, "One of the Naga tribes living on one of the ranges of hill north of us was a very savage and warlike one and the government had tried in vain to get an influence over them."²³

Mary Mead Clark writes in her memoir, "they are savages, village warring with village constantly cutting off heads to get skulls".²⁴ A.C. Bowers remarks how Rivenburgh and Clark invaded the paradise of the head hunters in the Naga Hills.

Rev E.W. Clark, the first missionary in the Naga Hills, reminisces of his early days among the Nagas: "they were short, sturdy men; naked but for a small apron, and to our eyes exceedingly dirty." His description of the Nagas suggests that despite their dirty looks, they wore bits of white cotton symbolizing their love of beauty. On being told that the decorations were from the heads of the women they had killed; his fascination for the Nagas love of colour declined. Thus, he observes:

As they crowded around the door, the odor from their sweaty bodies and the reek of their short-stemmed pipes which served several continued to smoke, was anything but sweet. They stood peering in at the children who were studying and reciting. 'See', said one smiling, 'those children talk to the white and black things they hold in their hands.'²⁵

The primitive nature of the Naga people as projected by Clark and the simplicity of the Nagas as perceived by the missionary facilitated the intended agenda of both sides to bring the Nagas within their dominion. The Nagas as speculated by Clark here seemed transparently in need of a complete change and the missionaries found many of the practices of the Nagas not always acceptable.

Although the attitude of the Christian missionaries towards the Nagas was changed over the years, their initial contact with the Nagas proved frustrating and some of the

²³ M. D. Scott, Anna. Kay. (1917). *An Autobiography of Anna Kay*, Scott, M.D, Chicago, p. 38.

²⁴ Clark, Mary. Mead. (1907). *A Corner in India*, American Baptist Publications Society, Philadelphia, p. 10.

²⁵ Bowers, A. C. (1929). *Under Head-Hunters' eyes* Philadelphia, The Judson press, pp. 197-98.

practices of the Nagas were considered intolerable. Labeling people as wild, savage head-hunters reveals more the biases of the writer's own culture.²⁶ For instance, the same Nagas were criticized for not bathing till the summer rain washed away the dust, and that the filthier a man the happier he seemed to have appeared.²⁷ The Nagas were labeled as:

very uncivilized race, with dark complexions, athletic sinewy frames, hideously wild and ugly visages; their faces and bodies being tattooed in a most frightful manner by pricking the juice of the beta nut into the skin in a variety of fantastic figures. They are reckless of human life; treacherously murdering their neighbors often without provocation, or at best for a trivial cause of offence.²⁸

The same Nagas were described as notorious head hunters. W. Shakespeare writes, "All Nagas are head hunters, their women being the chief incentive to their pursuit, as girls will not look on men with favour who have not taken heads or been in raids."²⁹ The Nagas as is explained here, believed that a large collection of human heads would bring them individual honour and glory, prosperity to the village and bountiful agricultural harvest. A young man wishing to marry must at least show thirty skulls of human beings before he is considered brave enough to defend a wife.³⁰ In this portraiture of the Nagas as a people who valued glory and honour, their pursuit of human heads was not considered as something deplorable but as an endeavour to boost their bravery.

Clark in a letter to Dr. Warren writes:

Now a few words about the savages of the hills, they are men of blood and war. Their fighting is all hand to hand, with knives and spears. But with them it is no Glory to kill a combatant or a slave. But as Indians prized a scalp (sic) so these men Glory (sic) in the kind of a warrior. They live only in the crest of hills in villages from 300 to 1300 inhabitants. They wear very little clothing; eat meat when fresh or putrid. They have small patches of rice cultivation on the hillsides, not per from their sangs (village) when they at cultivation some pretends as guards to prevent surprise (sic) from hostile sangs. Their forms of government are usually democratic A few tribes have a king or a great chief. They are religious or rather superstitious; But their religion amount to little, no caste. They have no written language; some times 50 or more sangs speak the same language. These Nagas have a good name for

²⁶ Sanyu, Visier. Quoted in J.Puthenpurakal. (1996). Impact of Christianity on North East India. Vendrame Institute Publications, Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, p. 510.

²⁷ Smith, W.C. (1925). The Ao Naga Tribes of Assam, London, Macmillan and Co, p. 8.

²⁸ Butler, John. (1847). A sketch of Assam, with some account of the Hill tribes, London, p. 149.

²⁹ Philip, P. T. (1976). The growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, pp. 9-10.

³⁰ M. D. Scott, Anna. Kay, p. 38, note 23.

truthfulness and for general purity of life, except that they are very dirty and blood thirsty.³¹

Another missionary suggests that the Nagas have no books or a written language and their religious practice involves the worship of demons.³² Although, the Christian missionaries portrayed the Nagas as savage and barbaric, yet they constructed another image of the same Nagas as a people possessing admirable values. But this was hardly a subject of discussion. The Nagas as seen by the missionaries appeared to possess nothing beyond their knowledge of hatchet and spear. A missionary writes, "they are like birds and monkeys, lighting on the mountain and stopping on that, and no white man can live among them to teach them."³³

The missionaries' construction of their encounter with the Nagas and their understanding of Naga society legitimated the image that the Nagas were in a destitute state, and that the Nagas had invited the missionaries to educate them. Their continued observation supported by the willingness of the Naga people to be exposed to new cultural influences is recorded in detail, and justifies the missionary endeavor in the Naga Hills. Unfortunately, the principle representations we have of the Nagas as a people were elaborated by the colonial administrators and the missionaries only. Hence, both positive and negative image constructed on the Nagas are to be attributed to them.

The miserable lives of the Nagas as commented upon by many were also found to have been based upon their nakedness.³⁴ Rev. P.H. Moore writes:

You will search in vain for a written history of any of these tribes. Vague, unreliable and contradictory verbal traditions of their origin will taunt you, as

³¹ Clark, E. W. in Letters and Correspondence of Rev, E.W. Clark of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Sibsagar , Assam, 5th December-18th December 1871 .

³² Rivenburgh, S .W. Rev. in the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Papers and Discussions of the Public Conference held in Nowgong , Dec 18-29,1886, p. 85.

³³ Baptist Missionary Magazine Vol.LII.No.9, Sept.1872. New series Vol.No.9. pp. 367-75. See also A.Bendangyapang.Ao. (1998). History of Christianity in Nagaland, A Source Material , Shalom Ministry, p. 60.

³⁴ Butler, John, pp. 149-52, note 28.

a mirage mocks the thirsty traveler, when you undertake to ascertain the original domicile of these rude, simple and interesting people.³⁵

Describing a Naga village called Merangkong, Mary Mead Clark, writes that the Nagas took pride in their participation in wars and their achievement was often testified by their decorations of the village with human skulls. Further, she invokes the presence of God's morning light to shine upon this dark corner in order to dispel from the Nagas heathenism and barbarism.³⁶ The regions inhabited by the Nagas sullied the western notions of order and cleanliness. The filthy surroundings of the Ao (a tribe of the Nagas) houses seemed to be evident enough for Mary Mead Clark to have labeled the Nagas as uncivilized.³⁷ She further explains that the domestic animals shared a living space with human beings as Mr. Cock and Mrs. Hen were found sharing the same room of the family room.³⁸ As Lanusangla Tzudir had remarked, the Nagas then had not acquired human sensibilities, and were yet to define their distance and differentiation from animals. However, labeling the Nagas in this category may not be considered relevant by an ecologist, although the practices of the Nagas remained extremely contradicting to the missionary definition of civilization. The missionaries have constructed the Naga society from their own interpretations which may have not portrayed some of the inherent goodness of any cultural significance. The missionaries have exoticized the Nagas in a series of reactions, demeaning or disqualifying the Naga culture as a practice of heathendom and primitivity. Mary Mead Clark depicts the evidences of barbarism and uncivilization according to the various images she draws from the bachelor's dormitory (Morung). She writes:

Close by the village gate and high up in the nearby tree, with or without the stockade, lookout houses were built, and occupied by sentinels. Within and

³⁵ Ao, A. Bendangyapang. (1998). History of Christianity in Nagaland, A source Material, Shalom Ministry, p. 196. See also Elwin, Verrier. (1969). The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century, Oxford University press 1969, p. 515.

³⁶ The Baptist Missionary Magazine Vol.LXXI Aug.1891 No.8. p. 375. See also Vol LXXI Sept, 1891, p. 405.

³⁷ Tzudir, Lanusangla. (2003). From Head Hunting to Christianity, Questions of Cultural Identity in Ao land, An unpublished Ph.D thesis, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, N. Delhi, p. 23.

³⁸ Clark, Mary. Mead, p. 43, note 24.

near the gates were the “brackets” for unmarried warriors, abounding in unmistakable evidences of an uncivilized and barbarous people. On the great central post were carved very good representations of men, elephants, lizards, snakes, and skulls, human and imitation found a place in the various decorations. The young warriors slept with spears close at hand. Extra spear shafts and large quantities of torch material were kept in readiness.³⁹

Missionary thinking of the Nagas, found in their varied descriptions of the Naga people was transmitted through the language in their letters, memoirs, reports which were then sent to their Home boards⁴⁰ and to their parents. The missionaries’ language seemed to suggest that the primitivism of the Nagas was due to certain practices of the Nagas. The missionaries in their attempt to write down their observations sometimes made some contradictory statements. Sometimes to their delight, they found the Naga way of life striking at the same time reflected their crudeness. Mary Mead Clark in her book, *A Corner in India*, projected how the Nagas exclaimed with wonder as they turn the pages of “Harper’s Weekly” and uttered exclamations on seeing the new missionary map they received from Boston.⁴¹

The missionaries’ experience has played an enormous role in shaping today’s perceptions of the past Naga society; the justification of missionary presence and missionary activity derived from this representation of Nagas as inhabiting a region of darkness. Further, according to the missionaries these regions of darkness were under the control of Satan. This was exemplified by the Naga conviction that the soul did not die with the body or that illness and diseases were caused by spiritual agencies that were essentially evil.⁴²

The image of the Nagas as legitimized by the Christian missionaries in their accounts is that of a people noticeably primitive and apparently barbaric. With this in the

³⁹ Clark, Mary. Mead Quoted in Lanusangla. Tzudir, pp. 24-25, note 37.

⁴⁰ In 1814, the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination of the United States of America for Foreign Missions was founded in Philadelphia ever since then it is from this Home Board that the Missionaries are sent to different places.

⁴¹ Clark, Mary. Mead, p. 108, note 24.

⁴² Clark, Mary. Mead. Quoted in Dane. M. Albaugh. (1935). p. 61, note 11.

background, the missionaries started employing strategies that has given the Nagas a new meaning. Rev. E. W. Clark in one of his articles reported, “there may be 2’000,000 of the Nagas, and they belong to that class which, the world over, have been found the easiest to Christianize, that is, they are for the most part pure pagans, not Mohammedan, Buddhist or Hindu, nor have they caste.”⁴³ Naga society therefore represented “clay ready for the potter’s hand” to the American Baptist Mission. Nagas as described were found without any form of worship, and no minister peculiarly consecrated to their service.⁴⁴

According to John T Seaman’s transplantation model, Christian missionaries viewed other cultures through an optic wherein, all non-Christians were the products of decadent human cultures under the control of Satan and considered theirs as the only valid expression of Christian culture.⁴⁵

3.3 Civilizing the Natives: Agenda of the Christian Missionaries

The Christian obligation to serve and to save all men, regardless of race, language, or color, was the conviction and fresh inheritance in the early days.⁴⁶ To the Christian, the non-Christian people have been termed “infidels, “pagans”, heathen, “barbarous” etc. The Nagas were also similarly categorized by the missionaries. As Norbet Elias put it, “the concept of “civilization” refers to a wide variety of facts: the level of technology, the type of manners, the development of scientific knowledge, religious ideas and customs. This includes the type of food prepared, type of house, the manner in which men and women live together etc.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Clark E. W. Rev. in *The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Papers and Discussions of the jubilee conference* held in Nowgong, December 18-29, 1886 published by the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, p. 224.

⁴⁴ Robinson, W. (1891). *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, London, p. 395.

⁴⁵ Seamands, T. John. (1981). *Tell it Well; Communicating the Gospel across the cultures*, Beacon Hill, Kansas, p.42.

⁴⁶ *A Baptist Monthly Magazine, Missions*, 1911 January Vol 2 No 1, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society and the American Baptist Publishing Society, Boston. p. 5.

⁴⁷ Elias, Norbert. (1994). *The Civilizing Process, The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*. Blackwell, Oxford, p. 3.

The term “civilized” refers to the social quality of people and the Christian outsider’s constructed Naga life in contradiction with the meaning of civilization. They have exposed the kind of life the Nagas were living when they encountered them in their accounts. The reception of the printing press and the culture of books among the Nagas reveal their lack of familiarity with these social technologies. The picture of the Nagas as portrayed by the missionaries speaks of a people with all primitivity and who have never shown any deeper appreciation where they were expected to show. The overpowering portrayal of Nagas as a primitive, possibly decadent people clearly overlooked the strength and simplicity of Naga society. Any positive characterization of Naga society had no foothold in the early missionary narratology. Other instances of the impressions the missionaries made upon the Naga society is reflected in the Naga responses to the clock.⁴⁸ The missionary accounts of the Nagas construct this side of their experience through the metaphors of primitivity and savagery.

The minute missionary descriptions of the Nagas portray the condition of the Nagas whereby the term savagery or primitivity was derived. The colonial administrators’ invitation to missionaries, initially addressed to the Serampore Baptists and passed on to their American counterparts, was testimony to their hope that they would buttress the efforts of the handful of the administrators in “elevating the character of the people” of the new territory.⁴⁹ India was opened to the Christian missionaries on the tacit understanding that they could depend upon official support for their evangelizing activities since the British were committed to native improvement.⁵⁰ However, the English parliament strictly demanded that large scale proselytizing would not be carried

⁴⁸ Rivenburg, Narola. (Ed). (1941). The Star of the Naga Hills, Letters from Rev. Sidney and Hattie Rivenburgh, Pioneer Missionaries in Assam 1883-1923, Philadelphia, The American Publication Society, p. 37.

⁴⁹ Barpujari, H. K. (1986). The American Missionaries and North East India (1836-1900): A Documentary Study Guwahati, p. 93.

⁵⁰ Viswanathan, Gauri. (1989). Masks of Conquest, Literary Study and British Rule in India, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 36-37.

out publicly. The clauses on Christian missions enshrined in the charters of 1813 and 1833 professed the neutrality of the East India Company on religious matters; but this was in no way a deterrent to company officials supporting missions as private individuals.⁵¹

It is important to observe why the missionaries accorded so much importance to education, although as was explained by Pudaite, education was never the chief objective of the missionaries. Education was seen by the missionaries as a means of imparting Christian principles and considered imperative for their evangelical activities. Therefore the Christian mission schools were aimed primarily at religious instruction or intensification of the propagation of Christian faith.⁵² The religion of the Nagas to the missionaries appeared neither notable nor impressive. As E. A. Gait, a former Governor of Assam remarked, "the tribal people who had not adopted one of the historical religions were usually known as animists." His explanation of the type of religion the tribal embraced was considered a religion of low type.⁵³ It is clear through the writing of James Johnson who had observed that the Naga religion despite the fact of its continuity was out rightly ignorant. He has further considered the Naga people highly intelligent and capable of receiving civilization except that the Nagas lack a religion worthy to be embraced.⁵⁴ This is to suggest that the Naga from the very first were thought of as an appropriate people who could be easily won over. If one has to understand the religion of the Naga people prior to missionary take over, Richard Eaton's writing on the conversion to Christianity among the Nagas is a good account. Eaton speaks of a traditional Cosmology which was characterized by the two-tiered scheme consisting, at the upper tier, of a

⁵¹ Bara, Joseph. "Tribal Education, the colonial state and Christian Missionaries; Chhota Nagpur, 1839-1870", in *Education and the Disprivileged Nineteenth and Twentieth Century India* Sabyasachi Bhattacharya. (2002), Orient Longman, New Delhi, p.133.

⁵² Pudaite. (1963). *The Education of the Hmer people*, I.B.P.M, Manipur, p. 73.

⁵³ Elwin, Verrier. (1969). *The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford University Press, p. 501.

⁵⁴ Johnstone, James. (1896). *My Three Years Experience in Manipur and the Naga Hills*, Reprint 1971, Delhi, p. 43.

supreme God who underpinned the universe but seldom was approached by the Nagas due to the large distance involved. The lower tier consisted of a host of minor spirits who were given greater attention as they could be approached since they controlled the specific realities of every day life.⁵⁵ The Nagas were seen sacrificing pigs, fowl or other living things to the spirits in the lower tier as these spirits required regular appeasement.

Horton's study of African Cosmology makes a similar point to Eaton:

The lesser spirits underpin events and processes in the microcosm of the local community and its environment, the Supreme Being underpins events in the macrocosm i.e, in the world as a whole. As the microcosm forms part of the macrocosm, So the lesser spirits are thought of either as manifestation of the Supreme being, or as entities ultimately driving their power from him.⁵⁶

One may however, find a good deal of room for variation and elaboration from one Naga group to another. The Nagas, all have different names given to the different spirits. In some cases, one group showed more concern for the Supreme God than others. But it is incorrect to say that the Nagas did not have a religion of their own as viewed by the colonial administrators or by the Christian missionaries.⁵⁷

Writing about the religion of the Nagas, Mary Mead Clark noted that the notion of a great Naga spirit was based upon vague notions and remarked that the spirit was evil by nature.

Thus Mary Mead Clark desires to rescue the Nagas by calling upon men wishing to work among the Nagas.⁵⁸ She writes:

It is certainly painful for us at Sibsaigor to be unable to lift our eyes without seeing these hills and thinking of the men who have no knowledge of Christ; the water too, flowing in the river past our compound and issuing from these hills only some twenty miles distant, is a constant reminder of those who are perishing without Christ.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Eaton, Richard. (1984). "Conversion to Christianity among the Nagas, 1876-1971", Indian Economic and Social History Review (IESHR) Vol. 21,1, pp. 1-52.

⁵⁶ Horton, Robin. (1975). "On the Rationality of Conversion," Africa Journal of International African Institute, Vol. 45, No.3, pp. 219-20.

⁵⁷ Eaton, Richard, p. 6, note 55.

⁵⁸ Ao, A. Bendangyapang, p. 48, note 33.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Evangelization, and not civilization, was the real goal of civilizing the Nagas.⁶⁰ The portrayal of Naga society legitimates the need of a rescuer in order that the Naga people are saved. The missionaries felt that the measures they considered significant in aiding the Naga people involved a process of evangelization that would give a new meaning and outlook to Naga society. There were two missionary approaches to conversion; that which sought to convert a people by developing them on lines of Christian civilization, and the approach which was satisfied with implanting among a people the seeds of the gospel.⁶¹ The primary objective of the American Baptist Mission was to spread the Christianity among the people. And the effectiveness of the mission depended upon three R's.⁶² In the missionary conference of 1889, E.W.Clark suggested that; "only by teaching the children can we hope to have any church members who will be able to read the scriptures."⁶³ The objectives of the mission clearly mention their intended agenda of evangelizing. As is found in foreign mission policies, the school was considered a direct and conscious agency for proselytization, introducing to the students the challenge of the Christian gospel.⁶⁴

Milton. S. Sangma refers to some of the missionary objectives, wherein, the missionaries were seen as agents that sought to overthrow scientifically false notions wrought with idolatory, who could help people learn to read, and enable people to profit through the printed word and religious tracts.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Merriam, F. Edmund. (1900). "A History of American Baptist Missions, Revised Edition with Centennial supplement, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society, p. 213.

⁶¹ Pradhan, M. C. (Ed). (1969). Morality and Prestige among the Nagas in Anthropology and Archaeology Essays in Commemoration of Verrier Elwin, 1907-64, London, Oxford University Press, p. 156.

⁶² Sangma, S. Milton. (1992). History of American Baptist Mission in North East India. Volume.Two,Mittal Publications, N.Delhi, p. 2.

⁶³ Clark, E. W. Minutes, Resolutions and Historical Papers of the Second triennial conference, of the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary union , Held at Guwahati , December 21-30, 1889, p. 39.

⁶⁴ Foreign Mission Policies, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 276 Fifth Avenue, New York City, Nov.18, Dec.2.1925.A Report of the Special Conference of the Boards of Managers and Delegates from the ten Missions, p. 17.

⁶⁵ Milton, S. Sangma. p. 3, note 62.

Lanusangla Tzudir's study on Ao Naga tribes, argues that the Ao society in the eyes of the missionaries was primitive since the art of writing was absent as was the knowledge of Jesus. This is to suggest that the missionaries remained resolutely Christian in their outlook, and regarded Christianity as the embodiment of Civilization. The evangelizing Christian thus labored to save.⁶⁶ Their intentions are evident in their writings. For instance: "But henceforth the Angami people shall be my people, and my one work shall be to make my God their God."⁶⁷

With this avowal, the missionaries resorted to opening schools of some sort, where one can read the scriptures, and also teach others to read for others.⁶⁸ Here we find the missionaries highlighting the formation of Christian character based upon the spirit and the word, and not upon secular education.⁶⁹ The call and commitment of the Christian Missionaries was to "disseminate", the humane and saving principles of the Christian religion among the "uncivilized barbarians" such as the Nagas as were known to them. This led to the establishment of schools in line with their ideals.

Rev.C.E.Burdette wrote:

Schools have always been considered a good means of disseminating knowledge of any kind, and especially for the instillation of new principles, good or bad. Books and Doctrines have depended largely upon the appearance of a teacher deeply impressed with either their truth or their expediency, who stamped them upon a school.⁷⁰

Thus the method the missionaries tried to enforce upon the Nagas corresponded to what Paulo Freire referred to as the "Banking Concept of education". The teachers were considered resourceful and the subjects to be disciplined in conformity with

⁶⁶ Tzudir, Lanusangla. (2003). From Head Hunting to Christianity. Questions of Cultural Identity in Ao Land, An unpublished Ph D thesis, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, N.Delhi, p.28.

⁶⁷ The Baptist Missionary Magazine. Vol.LXVII. July.1887 No.7. 73rd Annual Report of the American Baptist Missionary Union, p. 226.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 267.

⁶⁹ The Baptist Missionary Magazine. Vol. LXVIII. July 1888 No.7. 74th Annual Report of the American Baptist Missionary Union, p. 259.

⁷⁰ The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union. Papers and Discussions of the Jubilee Conference. Held at Nowgong, Dec 18-29,1886. Published by the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union. pp. 167-168.

their principles.⁷¹ What were the missionary visions of Naga society? It visualized Naga society transformed by the knowledge of Christ and their zeal of propagating the good word. It could be concluded that the missionaries were the vectors of an ideology and that the question of civilizing the Nagas, was a fulfillment of that agenda. David L. Sills writes:

Ideologies are the creations of charismatic persons who possess powerful, expansive, and simplified visions of the world, as well as high intellectual and imaginative powers. By placing at its very centre certain cosmically and ethically fundamental propositions, an ideology brings to those who accept it the belief that they are in possession of, and in contact with, what is ultimately right and true.⁷²

Althusser suggests that ideology is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group.⁷³ And it does seem to be obvious that the missionary programme of civilizing the Nagas was an ideological one. Whatever seemed right to the missionaries was manifested in their strategy. Thus in Althusser's view, the church, a dominating ideological state apparatus, would concentrate not just on the religious sphere but on the educational.⁷⁴ Thus seems appropriate in the context of the missionaries' determination of promoting their ideology through the schools and the church. Kekhrie and Inotoli hold that the evangelization process was orthodox to the core and was reflected in the proselytization and transformation of whole modes of living.⁷⁵ In this regard, C. Limawati. Imchen notes that the first phase of evangelization was marked by the building of a comprehensive school system which consequently laid the foundation for the evolution of modern Nagaland. He remarked that Christian converts

⁷¹ Freire, Paulo. (1972). Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Penquin Books, The Chaucer Press Ltd ,Great Britain, p. 46.

⁷² Sills, L. David. (1968). Editor, International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol 12, The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, p. 69.

⁷³ Althusser, Louis. (1971). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus (Notes towards an Investigation) Verso 1984, Great Britain, p. 32.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

⁷⁵ Yhome, Kekhrie., & Inotoli. Zhimomi, p. 17, note 15.

had been found occupying a superior position in the social edifice at the cost of discarding the prerequisites of traditional life.⁷⁶

There is no doubt that the present Nagaland was shaped by the efforts of Christian missionaries. But this does not entail that the Naga Society had very little to offer. The Nagas in the eyes of the colonizer and the missionaries looked primitive because of certain practices that failed to fit in the western concept of civilization. It is observed that the missionaries' from the beginning of their encounter with the Nagas were constantly in touch with the Home Boards, through the journals and magazines to be read by the public who were financing the missions. But, this is not to say that the missionaries' records are not authentic or accurate. However, when we examine them closely, we find as Firma .K. L.Mukhopadhyay has mentioned: "Most of the missionaries, started to send home their impressions about the people within a short period after their arrival".⁷⁷ We see here Rev.F.P.Haggard writing in his report:

I have spent my first full year in a heathen land, but in this report I shall not be able to give you anything like a full review of the year's work; not that I feel that I have accomplished so much, but the labors have been so incessant, so varied, so trying at times that I scarcely know how to report it. How much had to be learned; how much unlearned.⁷⁸

It appears that the missionaries were not only engaged in missionary work but also bound to constantly intimate to their Home Board their success and failures.

Milton .S. Sangma writes that as one delves into the missionaries' reports, one will find time and again their emphasis of the importance of education in the process of converting and training a local convert.⁷⁹ The reports offer a picture of the social, economic and religious relationships of the Nagas and the need to bring the people into the Christian fold, the urgency of introducing an education suitable for civilizing the Naga.

⁷⁶ Imchen, C.Limawati. (1979). Traditional Ao Naga Social Control in Transition, An unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, School of Social Sciences, JNU, N.Delhi, pp. 160-62.

⁷⁷ Mukhopadhyay, F. L. Firma. (1971). The Christian Missionaries in Bengal 1793-1833, Calcutta, p. 67.

⁷⁸ Haggard, F. B. Rev. in The Baptist Missionary Magazine Vol.LXXV July 1895 No.7. p. 307.

⁷⁹ Sangma, S. Milton, p. 4, note 62.

Unfortunately, one has to remain content with only the colonial and missionaries observations because the Nagas do not have a written literature to respond to their accounts. But through the missionary narratives one can understand that the views of the missionaries and their outlook were partly determined by the ideological convictions of the members of the Home Boards and other bodies. The missionaries scattered in different missions seemed to be obliged to report their progress. The missionaries in the Naga Hills were found reporting in detail their delights, disappointments, their work, discussions, pressing requirements etc. The missionaries have also been found discussing the widespread unhappy effects of civilization upon barbarous and semi-civilized peoples, who had opposed Christian missionary work. They cite an address of Prof. Flinders Petrie before the British Association:

it is a mistake to attempt to change any people from a savage to a more enlightened state by the imposition of extraneous elements of civilization . . . no change is legitimate or beneficial to the real character of a people except that which flows from conviction and natural growth of mind . . . and if any change is produced not in accordance with this rule, . . . the result is death . . . we make a death house and call it civilization.⁸⁰

The missionaries responded to Flinders Petrie's remarks that they were to produce the most beneficial results among every people and to produce them in the most natural and satisfactory growth of mind and character. Their claim was that a true Christian development of any people would never result in any disadvantage whether, political, social or physical. Edmund F Merriam, as discussed earlier, had remarked on the motives of the Christian missionaries and later highlighted the manifold blessings received by the people through the gospels.⁸¹ Naga society before the advent of Christianity, as viewed by the Christian missionaries was plunged in darkness and ignorance. The missionaries certainly played a primary role in introducing and

⁸⁰ The Baptist Missionary Magazine Vol. LXXV Nov 1895.No .11, p. 543.

⁸¹ Merriam, F. Edmund, p. 212, note 60.

developing a system of modern education among the Naga people; but this brought in its wake a transformation of Naga culture.

CHAPTER IV

Education in Missionary Strategy

This chapter will focus on the interplay of several factors that shaped the educational programmes undertaken by the Christian missionaries. The preceding chapter elaborated upon how the missionaries viewed the Nagas, and the issues that motivated them to carry out the task of educating the Nagas as part of the civilizing mission.

The missionaries have been recognized as the pioneers in trying to master the vernaculars of the region by learning and trying to communicate directly with the people. They introduced a western perspective and religion through the translation of the Bible and other books into the native tongues. They also established the first printing presses in the region.¹ Thus, the missionaries established a house of worship, hospital or school trying to reach out to poor, impoverished, and socially deprived sections who had nothing to lose by putting on a coat and tie, reading the Bible, and adopting the tight discipline and self denial of Protestantism in the hope of improving their condition.²

Eric Stokes observed that the evangelical mind had three important features; their intense individualism and exaltation of individual conscience, their belief in character and the total transformation of the mind by assaulting the mind, and their firm conviction of the importance of education in achieving these goals.³ Education had been recommended to dispel error and superstition as it was considered the first requirement for freeing the mind and for preparing the population of the knowledge of

¹ Carnoy, Martin. (1974). Education as Cultural Imperialism Stanford University and Centre for Economic Studies. David McKay Company, INC, New York, p. 89.

² Ibid., p. 89.

³ Stokes, Eric. (1959). The English Utilitarian and India , Oxford University Press, Bombay, p. 31.

Christian truth.⁴ One of the key processes involved in introducing a new system of education was to find an appropriate answer to the question, what is worth teaching?

Education was designed to spread knowledge as well as to serve a good *praeparatio evangelica*.⁵ The new education was supposed to impart knowledge but the moral programme was a euphemism for Christian ethics and therefore improvement of conduct was the core agenda.⁶ In one of the policies for the maintenance of the Christian character of Mission Schools, it was clearly indicated that every educational missionary should be evangelistic in spirit and have urged the schools to be staffed with Christian teachers and Christian students to ensure a sufficiently strong Christian atmosphere that extended beyond the homes of students.⁷

By the middle of the nineteenth century the missionaries were seen as an important part of India's educational scene. They have not only shaped the content of school pedagogy or its method but were running numerous schools and most importantly, they had taken a major part in textbook writing and production both independently through bodies like the Calcutta School Book Society.⁸ It is to be noted that the American Baptist Missionaries had decided to make Assam as their Mission Field in 1841, since the British Officials offered the whole of North East India for the missionary's activity with the assurance that they would protect the Missionaries lives and property. During the initial years, due to the limited resources at their command and lack of missionary personnel, their activities were concentrated in a limited area

⁴ Stokes, Eric. p.32, note 3.

⁵ Pathak, Madhav. Sushil . (1967). American Missionaries and Hinduism (A Study of their contacts from 1813 to 1910) Oriental Publishers and Booksellers, Nai Sarak, Delhi, p. 56.

⁶ Kumar, Krishna. (1991). Political Agenda of Education , A study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas Sage publications Inc, N.Delhi, p. 33.

⁷ Foreign Mission Policies, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, A Report of the Special Conference of the Boards of Managers and Delegates from the Ten Missions , Women's American Baptist Foreign Mission society 276 Fifth Avenue New York, Nov. 18 – 2 Dec, 1925, p.18.

⁸ Kumar, Krishna. p. 62, note 6.

of the Brahmaputra valley, the Garo Hills of Meghalaya, Naga Hills, Manipur and few outlying villages of Arunachal Pradesh bordering Assam.⁹ In the early years, their activities included open preaching in the market places, streets and the villages of the Brahmaputra valley.

They soon found this method fruitless and therefore switched over to opening schools, the publication of literature in local languages, translation and publication of religious texts and the Bible, along with the opening of dispensaries and hospitals, these were their new strategies. Milton remarked that these methods were adopted by the missionaries as additional means of evangelization. He further says that the missionaries did not come to a people whom they have never seen or heard of just to educate them and distribute literature.

Their agenda of converting people to Christianity was evident from the very beginning.¹⁰ The British government at the very outset desired that the mission take up the charge of the educational works so long as the mission was in a position to conduct this task effectively. The mission accepted the school work with grant-in-aid from the government on the condition that that they were at liberty to give as much religious instructions in the schools as per their choice.¹¹

It was seen that despite differences, the missionaries remained steadfastly loyal to the British and later to the Indian government. Although the missionaries were found rejecting non-Christians rituals and religions in their evangelization process, a careful reading of the original papers of the mission particularly of the American Baptist Mission revealed that the missionaries never acted in a way to

⁹ Sangma, S. Milton. (1992). History of American Baptist Mission in North East India, Volume II, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, p .vi-vii.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp, vi-vii.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

embarrass the government.¹² Victor Hugo Sword writes that the missionaries did not strive to “Educate the Heathen” because their chief purpose was to preach the gospel of life and to make them “wise unto salvation” by means of teaching. He further adds that to preach, teach, and make disciples was their main purpose.¹³

The missionaries’ intention was to set India on a path of progress through a diffusion of Christian ideas and western knowledge. The missionaries were not only preachers and translators but also publishers and educators. Their interest in education and social work gradually increased.¹⁴ Rev. M.A. Sherring held that secular as well as religious knowledge was conveyed to the tribes who were plunged in darkness and ignorance, the translation of the portions of the Bible along with the grammars, vocabularies, and educational books written in some of the hill dialects was carried out through the establishment of the schools for the young.¹⁵

As mentioned earlier in the preceding chapter, it was Captain Francis Jenkins, the commissioner of Assam, who wrote to the American Mission at Moulmein (Burma) requesting that missionaries work for the regeneration of the Hill Tribes.¹⁶ The Baptist Foreign Missionary Union of the American Baptists gladly accepted the invitation and sent Rev. Nathan Brown and the Rev. Oliver T Cutter as the first missionaries to Assam in 1838.¹⁷ Later, Rev & Mrs. Jacob Thomas and Rev & Mrs. Miles Bronson were sent to assist the mission in view of the pressing demand for more missionaries.

¹² Barpujari, H. K. (1986). The American Missionaries and North- East India, (1836-1900 A.D.) A Documentary Study, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, p.ivii.

¹³ Sword, Hugo. Victor. (1992). Baptists in Assam , A Century of Missionary Service 1836-1936, Spectrum Publication, Guwahati, p. 146.

¹⁴ Sushil, Madhav. Pathak, p. 52, note 5.

¹⁵ Sherring, M. A. Rev. (1875). The History of protestant missions in India from their commencement in 1706 to 1871 , London ; Trubner & Co, Ludgate Hill, Ballantyne and Company, Edinburgh, p. 146.

¹⁶ Pathak , Madhav. Sushil, p. 40, note 5.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 40. See also Ao, L .Kijung. Rev. (1972). Nokinketer Mungchen ,Ao Baptist Arogo, Impur, Nagaland ,Christian Eiterature Centre, Gauhati, p. 6.

From the time of his arrival in Assam, Bronson became interested in the Nagas and made several trips to their villages to collect first hand information about them. In early 1840 Bronson shifted to Namsang, a Konyak Naga village where he started a school to teach the gospel and the three R's to the Nagas.¹⁸ Kiremwati suggests that the beginning of modern education was attempted by Bronson in the Naga Hills. He prepared the first spelling book and a catechism for the Singpho Nagas from Jaipur in Assam. This activity came to an abrupt end as a result of his ill-health and the death of his sister. The process of education in the Naga Hills thus for almost three decades had been abandoned until Rev E .W. Clark took it up again.¹⁹

4.1 The Missionary Justification for the Introduction of Modern Education in the Naga Hills.

Mar Atsongchanger writes, "The first thing that attracted the Nagas towards the missionaries' invitation was to learn how to read and write. And for this purpose Rev. E.W Clark was invited by the Dekhaimong²⁰ people in the first instance."²¹ The educational programme carried out by the missionaries at Assam continued to attract the attention of the Ao Nagas. Time and again the Ao Nagas invited the missionaries to teach them the "way of knowledge and teach them the new way".²² Thus, one finds Clark writing of the incessant requests of the Nagas, "Come up to our village in the hills, Sahib, and teach our children to talk with the books." Further, he writes:

¹⁸ Quoted in the Preface of the Ao Naga Baptist Church Centenary Album 1872-1972.

¹⁹ Kiremwati. (1995). Education and the Nagas (with special reference to the Ao Nagas).Calcutta , p.11. See also Ao, L. Kijung. Rev. (1972). Nokinketer Mungchen , Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang , Impur, Nagaland, Christian Literature Centre, Gauhati. p. 12.

²⁰ An Ao Naga Village (present Molungkimong).

²¹ Atsongchanger, Mar. (1995). Christian Education and Social Change, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, Assam, p. 32.

²² Tzudir, Lanusangla. (2003). From Head Hunting To Christianity, Questions of Cultural Identity in Ao land, An Unpublished Ph.D thesis, CHS, JNU, N.Delhi, p. 115.

Time after time they called on me and insisted that I go with them to the hills. I refused every invitation for I knew that there was no security there. Still I longed to help them. I saw that they were anxious for something better for these children than they themselves knew; and they believed that they saw the ideal in the work which was being done for the children on the plains. but as for me, the risk was too great to be taken at that time.²³

In this way, the Ao, a tribe of Nagas living in the South of Sibsagar (Assam) who usually visited the plains were drawn towards the missionary activities and persuaded Rev. Clark to educate their children in the same manner as that of the Assamese. As one delves into the various reports of the missionaries, one would find how Aos assured Rev. Clark of safety and protection. This was what the Aos have reported to have said to Clark. "Sir, we are the men from the town of a thousand warriors. We come to request you to return with us in order to teach our children the way of knowledge. Though we ourselves are too old to learn, we will give you our children that you may teach them the new way."²⁴

The Aos also recognized the fears of the missionaries and made a solemn pledge with dignity and assurance; "we, the men of the town of a thousand warriors guarantee to protect you."²⁵

Anxious to bring education to the hills, the Aos requested Clark to start the work of educating them, which does speak of a concern in appreciating the new culture of the outsiders by the Ao Nagas. Rev Clark on their request wrote to the Viceroy of India, at Calcutta with the hope that this would be a starting point for him to work among the hill tribes who would imbibe western cultures and values based on

²³ Clark, E. W. Rev. Quoted in A. C. Bowers. (1929). Under Head-Hunters' Eyes, Philadelphia, The Judson Press, p. 198.

²⁴ Ibid, p.198.

²⁵ Ibid, p.199.

Christian principles.²⁶ The Deputy Commissioner in his response to Clark wrote that the enterprise was very risky: "a man would be a fool to go into the Naga Hills. His head would be off his shoulders on the first night, a white man especially! From his standpoint he was right. But my master had first place, and his command was of the greatest importance."²⁷

Despite the warning without any assurance of protection from the British government Clark decided to set out for the Hills taking own risk.

As the Nagas had no calendar except summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, the daily journey of the sun and the phases of the moon, they fixed upon a certain time of the moon in the month of December, 1872, as the date on which they would come down to escort me to their village, Dekhahaimong knowing that the Deputy Commissioner would prevent my going should he learn of it, I slipped across the border between dark and daylight, and by the next day was far beyond the authority of any earthly government that had power to stop me."²⁸

The greatest difficulty which the missionaries faced during their initial years was the over-cautiousness of the government officers as they prevented the missionaries from going into the territories of these hill tribes. Since the Nagas then were not under complete government administration, the officials feared that intrusion by white people might cause disruption and tribal war. Rev .W. E Witter remarked that Clark had entered the Ao Naga land despite the bitter opposition²⁹ of government officials at Home.³⁰ Lal Dena states the reason for the government opposition to missionary activity among the hill tribes arose from the perception that the

²⁶ Clark, Mary. Mead. (1907). A Corner in India, American Baptist publication Society 1907, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, pp. 15-16.

²⁷ Bowers, A. C, p. 200, note 23.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 200.

²⁹ Although in later years the attitude of the government had changed, during the initial years they opposed missionaries' entry for they saw in the Mission a possibility of disruption of peace which could adversely affect their business.

³⁰ Sword, Hugo. Victor, p. 108, note 13.

missionaries would interfere in their business.³¹ However, there was a shift in this perception from 1866 onwards when the British steadily extended and established their control and authority over the Naga Hills.³² This is to say that although in the beginning the government appeared to impede their activities or maintained a lukewarm attitude especially in matters of education, they were greatly interested in the education of the Nagas in later years.

4.2 The need for Schools

Education was seen as the first step towards freeing the mind and was also considered the least obtrusive method of evangelizing as it did not cause any social or political disturbances. The preparation required for receiving knowledge of the Christian truth required clearing the mind of error and superstition which required education for reasons of prudence. Education therefore, was held important to silently undermine the fabric of error; and restoring to the inhabitants of India the use of their reason, the accomplishment of which constituted a great moral revolution.³³ "Education must be based upon the word of God" was the conviction of everyone. It would be undoubtedly a power for evil. On the contrary, learned with Christian truth, if it was able to divest the minds of old superstitions, errors and prejudices and supply a religion adequate to meet all the demands of the soul, "it would be an inestimable blessing".³⁴

³¹ Dena, Lal. (1988). Christian Missions and Colonialism, A Study of Missionary Movement in North East India: with particular reference to Manipur and Lushai Hills, 1894 -1947, Vendrame Institute, Shillong, p. 3.

³² Thoutang, Robinson. (1997). Christianity and Social Change among the Ao Nagas 1870-1955, An Unpublished M.phil Dissertation, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, N.Delhi, p. 30.

³³ Stokes, Eric, p. 32, note 3.

³⁴ Hastings, E. Rev. "Higher Education and its Value as a Christianizing Agency", Missionary Conference of South India and Ceylon, 1878-79, Vol 1, pp. 71-72.

J. P Naik and Syed Nurullah emphasised the need understand the missionaries' reasons for undertaking educational activities as an integral part of their work in India. The missionaries were not expected to establish educational institutions or work as teachers since their first and foremost object was to convert people to Christianity. There was a phase of early missionary activity when the Home authorities of missions refused to support educational institutions and opined that the priests had no business to found schools. But recognizing the practical experience of the early missionaries convinced them that they needed to start schools as an important means of proselytization.³⁵

Rev. D. O Allen, an eminent missionary of the American Board, cited three reasons of the missionaries in establishing schools. One reason was to educate the minds of the people to help them in understanding and appreciating the facts and evidence, the doctrines of the Scriptures. Another was to increase the influence of the missionaries with the people, by communicating some advantage which the people can appreciate by showing how Christianity rests on an intelligent perception of its doctrines, and finally, it was to procure a means to access the people through preaching. He added that school-houses became important places for meeting people, for social intercourse and religious worship and became chapels under the control of the missionaries.³⁶

Rev. C.E Burdette in one of his reports has highlighted the issues involving different views on education. There were objections to missionary expenditure on school work it was felt that intellectual enlightenment and discipline were the sole requisites for the conversion of the heathen. And in the discussion that followed, Rev

³⁵ Syed, Naik. J.P , Nurullah. (1974). A student's History of Education in India 1800-1973 , 6th revised Edition , Macmillan, p. 38.

³⁶ Allen, D.O. Dr.Rev. Quoted in note 35, pp. 38-39.

Clark disagreed with the views on ordinary Secular Education in moulding character.³⁷ As Lanusangla Tzudir has shown, though Clark saw education as a possible agency for communicating Christianity to the people, he stressed the need of the work of the 'Divine Spirit' and made it known that school alone could not do the work of evangelization.³⁸

There were two main themes that have characterized the debates of the missionaries at the 1886 Assam Mission Conference. One claimed that education alone cannot develop the minds of the natives while others have maintained that education would lead to enlightenment and loss of faith in pagan practices which would help in distancing the Nagas from their past and persuade them to look at the world from a different perspective. Most importantly, the missionaries recognized that for Christian faith, and also to gain a more secure lasting foothold in the Naga Hills, the situation required a demonstration of religious and moral principles, which would validate their position and legitimacy of Christianity. Ideally school education was one means by which this could be achieved.³⁹

Educational institutions were always the main agencies for effectively transmitting the dominant culture, and truly in the context of the Nagas, the American Baptist missionaries saw that the opening of schools in the hills would help the people to appreciate their culture.⁴⁰ Schools thus act as agents of both cultural and ideological hegemony through the process of selective instruction.⁴¹ The schools were considered the best means of passing knowledge and gaining the confidence of the people, as

³⁷ Burdette, C.E. Rev. Papers and Discussions of the Jubilee Conference, The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary union, Held in Nowgong, December 18-29, 1886, Published by the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary union, p. 181.

³⁸ Tzudir, Lanusangla, pp. 116-17, note 22.

³⁹ Tzudir, Lanusangla, p. 117, note 22.

⁴⁰ Scrase, J. Timothy. (1993). Ideology and Inequality-Cultural Domination, Hegemony and Image. Schooling in India, Sage publications, p. 56.

⁴¹ Apple. Quoted in note 40, p. 56.

well as propagating the Gospel. Thus it is worthy of special attention to note that Christianity was at the very core of the educational programme. It was also the understanding of the early Christian missionaries that the schools were of the greatest importance in their endeavor in evangelizing the tribes in the hills.

Lanusangla Tzudir has mentioned that schools were important in Mission Strategy for several reasons. The establishment of schools accompanied the founding of a new church, school was also recognized as an agency for making the Mission work permanently in the Naga hills and it had also brought the natives under the discipline of an institution where Christian ideas could be systematically inculcated in the minds of the natives.⁴² It is to be noted that wherever they founded a church, a school was established for carrying out evangelism. The primary object of the missionary had been the diffusion of the Christian religion among the Nagas along with bringing the same people under the fold of enlightenment through education. Mar. Atsongchanger writes that the reason of opening the Mission Schools in the church was because schools were seen as the ideal agency in propagating the good news and indoctrinating the people. He added that school was doing a good job achieving their goals.⁴³

The missionaries saw education as an “ideal instrument to propagate the good news”. They were seen carrying out the work of evangelism and education side by side, which meant education with conversion of children studying in Mission schools.⁴⁴ Mission schools have played an important role in the evangelization of the Nagas, and other surrounding tribes as well. Schools were seen as a bridge between

⁴² Tzudir, Lanusangla, p. 121, note 22.

⁴³ Atsongchanger, Mar, pp. 31-32, note 21.

⁴⁴ Limala, N. (1994). Christian Education For Middle Age Adults in the Ao Baptist Church of Nagaland. An unpublished Ph.D thesis, Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam, p. 47.

the missionaries and the natives.⁴⁵ Their main aim of imparting education had been based upon the most rigid morality and a strong living spirituality, blended with the intellectual standards whereby Impur.⁴⁶ School would produce trained teachers and preachers not only for the Ao Nagas but for the rest of the tribes as well.⁴⁷ Clark was convinced that the only way to spread Christianity was to educate people and that each educated Christian was supposed to be an Ambassador of the Christian faith and a torch bearer of knowledge.⁴⁸

Panger Imchen states that both Christianity and education worked hand in hand. Schools were the best means for the Mission and the church to grow and if it was not schools, the establishment of the church could have been a failure.⁴⁹ Rev Burdette writes, "if there is anything which the missionary desires to introduce or explain or command to a heathen people, it seems as well to do systematically in a stated place, to enrolled pupils under the discipline of a school as in other ways . It is an advantage to have access to the minds of heathen, old or young, while in the receptive, trustful attitude of a school."⁵⁰

4.3 Language Study

When Rev Clark entered the Naga Hills, he found that the Nagas had no history of literacy because they had no script.⁵¹ R. P Sharma and Ngangshikokba held that, "one way of looking at Clark's introduction of the Roman Script to the Ao language would

⁴⁵ Ao, N.Toshi. (1995). Mission to the Nagas, A tryst with the Aos , Sivakasi, Dimapur, Nagaland, p.126.

⁴⁶ A central location in Ao Naga region to where the American Baptist Mission Headquarters was shifted from Molungyimsen in 1894.

⁴⁷ Ao N. Toshi. p.130, note 45.

⁴⁸ Sharma, R.P., Ngangshikokba. Ao. (2000). Mayangnokcha; The Path Finder, Mayangnokcha Award trust, Mokokchung , Nagaland, p. 48.

⁴⁹ Imchen, Panger. (1993). Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture., Har Anand Publications, New Delhi, p.154.

⁵⁰ Burdette, C.E. Rev, p. 167, note 37.

⁵¹ Sharma, R.P., Ngangshikokba. Ao, p. 55, note 48.

be to see it as the language politics of the white man. By using the Roman script, that is, the English script, to record the Ao language was to connect Ao with English as well as to perpetuate the belief that English was an ideal language.”⁵² Rev. E. W. Clark presented the following resolutions to be adopted.

(1) Resolved—that in the opinion of this conference the Roman alphabet was the best for the Hill Tribes about Assam that have no written language.

Brother Boggs presented the following which was also for adoption –

(2) Resolved that in the opinion of this conference the Italian system of pronunciation of the Roman character should be adhered to in adopting that character for the Hill Tribes that have no written language.⁵³

While in the initial years and before coming into contact with other Naga tribes the question was to decide which of the Ao dialects could be taken for codification as Aos had two dialects—Chungli and Mongsen. Clark decided upon the use of Chungli with the Roman Script and the Italian phonation, for it was to be a suitable script for the Ao language⁵⁴ In this regard Lanusangla Tzudir observes that in the process of reducing the Ao tongue to writing the dominant dialect of the Ao’s, Mongsen, was replaced in the Chungli speaking area.⁵⁵ Mongsen dialect of the Aos has occupied an important place in most of their songs and poetry but loses its place as and when Chungli was recognized for the script.

The missionaries in the Naga hills pursued the policy of presenting the gospel in the local language to relate to the people that they sought to minister. Rev.

⁵² Ibid p. 57.

⁵³ The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Minutes, Resolutions and Historical Reports of the third triennial conference Held in Tura, January 14-22, 1893, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press. 1893, p. 8.

⁵⁴ Olem quoted in Chubatola. Aier. (1996). An Ethnography Study of the Language situation in Nagaland with special reference to the learning and teaching of English. An unpublished Ph.D thesis, CIEFL, Hyderabad, p. 16.

⁵⁵ Tzudir, Lanusangla, p. 119, note 22.

Burdette talked about the 'selection of a dialect' while presenting the paper on 'Claims and Conduct of Mission Schools' at the 1886 Missionary conference. He stated: "It is quite indispensable that the people should hear in their tongue the wonderful news of God, and therefore, that portions of the scriptures should be issued in every considerable and considerably distinct dialect."⁵⁶

4.4 Curriculum

One of the key concerns involved in the missionary strategy was to find a response to the question, what is to be taught? What is worth imparting? The missionaries had their own understanding of what the Nagas required and they saw it as their duty to impart education that would match the aims of Christianity. In the context of the curriculum, the missionaries' perceptions of Naga society helped shape the content of the school curriculum. Rev. S .A Perrine writes:

We do not attempt to give them a common school education nor a theological training. Our work is unique...is specially adapted to the needs found here so far as we are able to make it. What we want to do is simply prepare the Christians for the performance of the duties that must fall on them. Another thing we desire to impress (a vital principle) both by our educational system and otherwise, is, that in the truest sense this is not our work, but their own, and that they must do the work not for us, but for the Master.⁵⁷

Rev. S .A Perrine while reporting from the Ao Naga Field had mentioned that their work is planting of the idea of Christ and helping people to grow a Christian character in their heart. He adds that the work cannot be done by their might alone but by working of the power of the Holy Spirit through them.⁵⁸ W. F Dowd felt that they must have trained leaders for the churches who have been trained to think and acquire

⁵⁶ Burdette, C.E. Rev. Quoted in Lanusangla . Tzudir, p. 118, note 22.

⁵⁷ Perrine, S.A. Rev. The Baptist Missionary Magazine Vol.LXXVII, July 1897 No.7, p. 321.

⁵⁸ Minutes, Resolutions and Historical Reports of the Fifth Triennial Conference Held in Dibrugarh, February 11-19, 1899, The Assam Mission Of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Calcutta Mission Press, p. 43.

knowledge of the world and its history, and who know their Bible thoroughly and not men who can merely read and acquire a slight Christian Doctrine.⁵⁹

Rev. Clark's philosophy was to inculcate in the native Christians the spirit of dignity, self-worth, sound morals and wholesome character. He was not willing to give anything free of cost that would create spirit of dependence in future.⁶⁰ Rev. C.E. Burdette says that the one thing needed by the people and the one peculiar thing to be imparted by the school is knowledge of the word of God. He further adds that:

the best course of study for the accomplishment of this purpose should be honestly selected on approved pedagogical principles. But the fact that a mixed course of instruction will give hope to some that they may get a free education and yet escape the influence of the gospel, ought not to weigh against sound reasons for adopting such a course. It seems to be generally acknowledged that a preceding or accompanying course of discipline and general instruction is helpful in the pursuit of a speciality. It seems best, therefore as soon as the pupil is able to take up memory studies and logical exercises, to introduce Scripture Studies into the course.⁶¹

This was one reason why the missionaries' introduced a simple treatise on arithmetic, geography, history and some select passages in installments from the sacred books making the students committed to memory could be an exercise in their preparation to take up special scriptures course.

In their endeavour to educate the women folk, the missionaries' have emphasized that the women should submit to their husbands in love as the church to Christ, and seek in education a means of becoming, not men, but better women. At the same time a definite pressure should be exerted to bring all to realize that "there is neither male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus".⁶² With regard to discipline to be followed in the school, the missionaries felt that the conditions of most of the

⁵⁹ Report of the Ninth Biennial Conference, Held in Gauhati, Assam, January 5-12, 1907, The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary union, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Ao, N.Toshi. p. 120, note 45.

⁶¹ Burdette, C.E.Rev, p. 177, note 37.

⁶² Ibid, p.180.

heathen are such that it might be difficult to bring them under all the refinements of school etiquette and decorum. The rules they wished to stress therefore, were few, but vigorously to be enforced. They also insisted upon diligence in study, promptness and faithfulness in the discharge of assigned tasks.⁶³

4.4.1 Text Books

After the missionaries had specified their objectives, their next step was to incorporate these ideas in the syllabus and textbooks. A text book is any material meant for pupils which creates a medium for the process of learning and teaching, presented in a controlled form. Hence, they represent a careful selection of material which serves as a guide. Gauri Viswanathan's *Mask of Conquest*, argues that literary studies that have played a key role in imparting western values to the natives, constructing European Culture as superior and as a measure of human values, and thereby, in maintaining colonial rule, So was it with the Christian missionaries, intending to convert the natives to Christianity.⁶⁴

The text book, once, created assumes a position within the spectrum of genres and achieves a temporary status as a legitimate form of knowledge by virtue of a synthesis of these factors. The definitional issues are acute and revealing because textbooks themselves lay a definitional claim to the knowledge they contain, they claim that 'this is certain knowledge and this is the knowledge you need'. Embedded in textbooks therefore is a foundational epistemological assumption, that they have a status, a bonafide status with a potential for universal application.⁶⁵

⁶³ Burdette, C.E.Rev. p.179, note 37.

⁶⁴ Viswanathan, Gauri. Quoted in Ania. Loomba , (1998).*Colonialism/ Post Colonialism*, Rout ledge , London, p. 85.

⁶⁵ Issitt, John. (2004) Nov, *Reflection on the study of textbooks*, History of Education, Journal of the History of Education Society, Volume 33, Number 6, Taylor & Francis, p. 685.

John Issitt has also emphasized that textbook function in many ways. It can celebrate particular values and denigrate others, help indicating desirable knowledge and non-desirable knowledge, build the epistemological foundations of a culture and police the right and wrong way to find about the world. And at the extreme, the textbook is the vehicle for the transmission of authorized dogma.⁶⁶

Textbooks share in the production of hegemony of ideas though this is not meant to say that they are always wicked, it means they reflect all the features of the human condition and they claim that the contents comprise both certain and legitimate knowledge.⁶⁷ The missionaries most often used the Bible and Catechism as text books and later, special readers with moral themes, sometimes translated into native languages.⁶⁸ Rev. W. E Witter writes: “of course the main work of the year has been the study of the language. A considerable vocabulary has been collected, and a phrase-book illustrating the syntax of the language begun. A short catechism has been put into ‘Naga, and a beginning made on the miracles. A primer had been written, and two hymns translated.”⁶⁹

The study of language has been considered the most important work for a new missionary. In this regard, Mr. Haggard writes, “I do not find the language difficult, and it is coming to me rapidly as I venture to use it more and more. I am happy to say that I now regularly, and with increasing confidence and pleasure, make short talks in Naga and also offer prayer.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid ., p. 688.

⁶⁷ Ibid ., p. 689.

⁶⁸ Altbach, Philip., Gail. Kelly. Eds. (1984). Education and the Colonialism, 2nd revised, New Brunswick, N.J, Transaction Books, Longman, New York, p.157.

⁶⁹ The Baptist Missionary Magazine. Vol.LXVII. July, 1887, No.7, 73rd Anniversary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, p. 266.

⁷⁰ The Baptist Missionary Magazine. Vol .LXXV, July 1895, No.7, p. 307.

Rev. Clark while trying to prepare the Ao Naga English Dictionary spent a great amount of time as the meaning of every word and the correctness of the spelling was carefully considered. The primary and secondary meanings, the development and the growth of words had to be shown along with the synonyms.⁷¹ Clark also added that he found difficulty in getting sufficient monosyllables of the first primary book for the schools because the Ao language was polysyllabic. He wrote, "The resolving of the polysyllables into their component parts is sometimes very easy and sometimes very difficult. But until the original parts are ascertained, one is seldom sure of the fundamental meaning of a word. The past year I found a couple of keys that unlocked quite a number of these formidable words that had been baffling me."⁷²

Rivenburg followed Clark in literature. He reduced the Angami language to the Roman Script and translated portions of the Scripture Matthew, John, and Acts and wrote a book of a hundred hymns, an Angami primer and an arithmetic book, which was printed at the cost of the government.⁷³ The Lotha script was romanized. The translation was undertaken and the children were taught the catechism and Lord's Prayer during the initial years.⁷⁴ In the Sema region, the first primer in the people's language was translated by Dickson in 1908 and in the Thangkul region, in 1896. The Arthington Aborigines Mission of England⁷⁵ sent Rev. William Pettigrew who produced several text books, a hymn book and translated the books of Luke, John and

⁷¹ *The Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. LXXVI, July 1896, No. 7. Eighty-Second Anniversary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Asbury Park, N. Jersey, May 22, 1896, pp. 296-97.

⁷² *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* Vol. LXXVII, July 1897, No. 7, p. 320.

⁷³ Philip, P.T. (1976). *The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland*, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, First Edition, published with permission given by Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, p. 83.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁷⁵ The only English Mission to have worked among the Nagas other than the American Baptist Mission during the initial years.

Acts of the Bible.⁷⁶ In the school at Molung (An Ao Naga Village) and later at the training school at Impur, English language was to be used. Text book, were in use here and the entire Bible studied till this was translated in different tongues of the hills.⁷⁷ The first hymn and the Lord's Prayer were translated by Rev. E W Clark and Godhula,⁷⁸ in 1871.⁷⁹ The books the missionaries had translated in the initial years and printed are, The Ao Naga First Reader (1877) or Second Primer (1893), The Grammar with Phrases and Vocabulary (1893), A Catechism (1878), Hymn Book, First School Primer, Revised life of Joseph (1884) and The Gospel of Matthew (1882) and the Gospel of John (1884), Naga Hymn Book, A translation of J.A. Broadus, The Catechism of Bible teaching (1893), Ao Naga Dictionary, The Book of Acts and a large number of hymns, Primary Arithmetic in many Naga Dialects) etc.⁸⁰

4.4.2 Prescribed Text Books in the Early Years

Mary Mead writes, "In our school the Bible is the text-book, with such other books as directly bear on the Bible. Our purpose is to so help any one of any tribe that, on going from this school to his own or another people, he can tell the 'old, old story.'⁸¹ The educational policy of the Baptist mission in the Naga Hills during the initial years was geared towards the preaching of the gospel. The schools that were established

⁷⁶ Kiremwati, p. 15, note 19.

⁷⁷ Clark, Mead. Mary, pp. 132-33, note 26.

⁷⁸ An Assamese teacher and evangelist who volunteered to step into Naga Hills under the direction of Rev.E.W.Clark

⁷⁹ Ao., L.Kijung. Rev. (1972) . *Nokinketer Mungchen* , Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang, Impur, The Christian literature Centre, Guwahati, p. 27.

⁸⁰ Walling, C. Walu. (2001). *All is Light! All is Light! Source Materials on History of Christianity*, Atkar, Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang ,Impur,Nagaland, pp.51-69. See also in Robinson. Thoutang. (1997). *Christianity and Social Change among the Ao Nagas 1870-1955*,CHS, JNU, An unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, p. 78.

⁸¹ Clark, Mead. Mary, p. 132, note 26.

were to be concerned mainly with imparting Christian education.⁸² The missionaries had decided that they should look to the Bible for the method of training and that the text book should be the word of God. The teacher should be a constant inspiration to his pupils and to make the pupils perfect in the scriptures.⁸³

The intention of teaching such books as part of the curriculum in the Mission Schools was to convey theological messages more effectively even before the Bible was taught as an authoritative text.⁸⁴ In one of the texts book titled "Broadus Age", doctrines of the Bible were introduced. An example given in the text (Lesson VIII) on "Born Again" was followed by a discussion. The text translated from the Ao Naga Language is as follows.

1. What is Born Again?

Being born again through the power of God.

2. How can a man be Born Again?

By renewing the heart, the change of heart is Born Again.

3. What kind of a man is he who is Born Again?

Those that despite evil and love to be God's people.

I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them .I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. Ezekiel 11:19, 20.

4. Why must we be Born Again to be saved?

No one can save himself without being Born Again.

⁸² Tzudir, lanusangla, p. 123 note 22.

⁸³ Moore, P.H. Rev. (1886) Papers and discussions of the jubilee Conference , the Assam Mission Of the American Baptist Missionary Union , Held in Nowgong , Dec 18-29, Published by the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, pp. 160-61.

⁸⁴ Tzudir, Lanusangla, p. 124, note 22.

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is Born Again."⁸⁵

In another text, arithmetic was also taught. The text was written to involve the pupils in mastering the basic numbers and understanding the number world. Lesson 1, was learning to count and write; Lesson 2, and was on addition along with mental exercises, subtractions, divisions and time tables to be memorized.⁸⁶ Also in another text was a book titled "The Way to Health" where a brief note on health was inserted.

A healthy body means a healthy life.
A healthy body keeps you fit for your
everyday work and also in helping the
community. Sickness or illness drains
away your strength.
It also creates problem for your
family and your neighbours.
A child who gets sick is a matter of concern
to all.
It causes worry for the whole family.
A mother who is taken ill is worse
than a sick child .Good mother
with a healthy body, works from morning till
evening. But when she is sick, she cannot move about and others
have to do the work on her behalf.⁸⁷

A lesson on Sanitation was included;

The word sanitary is derived from Latin, which means good health. We can learn from other countries to have a healthy body and to reduce sickness. Hundred years back in England, small pox was epidemic and therefore hospitals were established in all the major cities. At times, cities were wiped out by small- pox, while at times one out of four persons either lost their beauty or became blind. An English doctor discovered a vaccine, extracted from the cow which could either stop small- pox or prevent from this disease. The incidence of death by small-pox decreased in England and if people heed the prevention, no one will die.

Every one knows that fire burns down things, but people do not know why they are sick or are unhealthy. How to keep ones body fit and healthy will be taught to you in the school. Learn and listen attentively to the teachers and try to apply this knowledge diligently.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Clark, E.W. (1900). Broadus' Age, Laishi IMSCV LUTETBA O, AO O Meyiptetba, American Baptist Mission, Impur, Naga Hills , Assam , Baptist Mission Press Calcutta, p. 35.

⁸⁶ Rivenburg, S.W.Rev. (1902). TAZUNGTSV KAKVT, Impur, Assam American Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta , pp. 1-55.

⁸⁷ Rivenburg, S.W.Rev. M.D and Native. Assistants. (1904). The Way To Health in Angami Naga, UMO VIKELIE DA, American Baptist Mission Union, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁸ Rivenburg, S.W. Rev. M D., and Native Assistants, pp. 2-3, note 87.

One of the reasons why the missionaries tried to impart this type of instruction could be because of the prevalent cases of cholera and small pox in the Naga Hills. In Rev. L Kijung's book, a section had mentioned that on account of small pox and famine, God prepared the extension of His Kingdom. He stated that the Nagas encountered Rev. Clark at Sibsagar in Assam only because of the outbreak of small pox and famine.⁸⁹

There were lessons on science such as the shape of the earth, Ao folk tales, lessons on discipline, the importance of going to school, etc. Interestingly, the lesson on the human body, discusses the number of bones in the body and the functions of all the parts of the body, but at the same time the student is informed that human beings are God's creation and thus they should give thanks to Him.⁹⁰ One lesson on "knowledge of creation" is reproduced here.

Q. Can a human create a human?

A. Human Beings cannot create other human beings.

The text book discusses the functions of the bodily system and ends speaking about the Supreme God who created both the body and the soul, concluding with the lines; "therefore, all humans must love and worship the Almighty."⁹¹ The same text included a chapter entitled "What is the Shape of the Earth?" Almost all the lessons were presented in the form of question and answers which would enable the Naga learners to accumulate the knowledge in an easier way. This was followed by

⁸⁹ Ao, L. Kijung. Rev. pp. 22-23, note 79.

⁹⁰ Tzudir, Lanusangla, p. 124, note 22.

⁹¹ Clark, M.M. (1893). Ao Naga Primer, The Second Naga Primer, American Baptist Mission, Molung, Naga Hills, Assam, Calcutta Mission Press, pp. 26-27.

discussion and at the same time recollecting what they had acquired. The lesson on the shape of the earth was:

What does the earth look like?
The earth is round like an orange.
Where is the Earth located?
The earth just as the Sun and the Moon hangs in between.
The world is surrounded by oceans.
The size of the Oceans is three times greater than the Land.
The Earth consists of five big Continents
Like Yurop, Eshia, Afrika, North Amerika and South Amerika
There are many smaller countries in each of the continents.
And the Ao country lies in the continent of Eshia.⁹²

In the same manner the missionaries' emphasised the importance of the Bible; the extract of the text given below is a conversation between a student and a non-student.

Student: I have got a new Bible.
Non-student: Where did you get it?
Student: The preacher gave it to me.
Non-student: What is there in the Bible?
Student: Everything.
If we read the Bible we will become wise,
Our knowledge will increase,
We will be able to preach the word of God.
Non-student: what else do we learn if we read the Bible?
Student: We learn of the way to Salvation.
Non-student: Is it for real?
Student: Yes, you come with me to school,
There is the teacher and he will love you and teach you.⁹³

Seeing the enthusiastic response to education, the missionaries were seen to be taking the opportunity to propagate the Gospels for which the schools became the channels of Christianization. Thus the pupils were taught reading and writing along with a

⁹² Ibid., p. 32, note 91. Spellings found in the text as per the Ao Naga pronunciation

⁹³ Clark, M.M. Quoted in Tzudir. Lanusangla, p. 125, note 22.

secular education in rudimentary health care with Christian ethics.⁹⁴ In one of their reports, they stated that, "To this end we teach geography and arithmetic and all the so-called secular subjects; to this end we try to provide Christian teachers and Christian text-books, and so far as possible, favorable surroundings. To make Christian character we must first make Christians, and our schools are doing a great proportion of this work in our Mission."⁹⁵

The missionaries used a sound method in teaching the Nagas. Their accounts have also mentioned the importance of music that had helped the schools and the religious services. Furthermore, they laid special emphasis on writing through helping the pupils by procuring some American copy-books.⁹⁶

The teaching was also dependent to a considerable extent on pupil teaching, under the supervision of missionaries', through which the former had gained valuable experience and training.⁹⁷ Monitors assisted the teacher in reviewing student copies and marked the mistakes in a foot note. The student were then made to read aloud what they had written, sentence by sentence while the teacher maintained discipline, prescribed the lessons and registered the daily labours of each class.⁹⁸

4.5 Training Schools

Besides the normal school, there was a training school, which consisted of a teacher's normal class, the workers class and the English training class. The teacher's normal class was oriented to producing better teachers trained in school methods, writing

⁹⁴ Kiremwati, p. 16, note 19.

⁹⁵ Report of the Ninth Biennial Conference, pp. 28-29, note 59.

⁹⁶ Fifth Triennial Conference, The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Held at Dibrugarh, February 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission, p. 40.

⁹⁷ Minutes of the Eight Session of the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Held in Gauhati, Dec 24, 1904 January 1, 1905, pp. 60-61.

⁹⁸ Kaye, William. John. (1859). Christianity in India, An Historical Narrative, Elder & Co, 65, Cornhill, London, p. 105

Naga, preaching, and translating the Bible from English into Naga. The subject of the Holy Spirit and prayer was taught twice a year. The workers class was given to training in the native tongue intended for those who felt that they have been called to preach but entered the course rather late. The English training class imparted training in English along three lines.(i) In reciting orally stories from the Old and New Testament; believing that such a course improves the English of students rapidly, fixes in their mind what the Bible really says, (ii) the preparation and delivery of Sermons and (iii) Bible Doctrines.⁹⁹

4.6 Role of Printing

Colonial rule had significantly accompanied the dissemination of printed knowledge which was eagerly assimilated by elite Indians seeking greater acquaintance with the new order. This kind of a useful knowledge made its belated appearance in regions such as Assam through the missionaries. It was an intended agenda of disseminating the Christian faith, with a focus on enlightenment through religious exhortations and imparting secular truths.¹⁰⁰ The mission press at Sibsagar (Assam), retained prominence as an exemplar of a new “literature of print” in the region’s vernacular. Thus, through the circulation of the printed media a new readership was created. From 1846, it was through their periodical Orunodoi.¹⁰¹ that the missionaries sought to disseminate their new print culture of Christian devotion and modern information.

⁹⁹ Minutes, Resolutions and Historical Reports of the Fourth Triennial Conference of the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Held in Sibsagar, Dec 14-22, 1895, pp. 44-45.

¹⁰⁰ Sharma, Jayeeta. Missionaries and Print Culture in Nineteenth-Century Assam: The Orunodoi periodical of the American Baptist Mission, in Frykenberg, Eric. Robert. (2003). Christians and Missionaries in India Cross-Cultural Communication Since 1500 with special reference to caste, conversion, and colonialism. Wm.B, Eerdmans Publishing Company. Routledge Curzon, USA, p. 260.

¹⁰¹ A monthly paper devoted to religion, Science, and general knowledge, printed first by the American Baptist Mission after the press was set up which contained components of enlightenment in Assamese language.

The print culture was an important instrument of missionary activity throughout the world. The missionaries felt that through the introduction of printing improvement would be attained.¹⁰² In Homi K Bhabha 's, *From the Location of Culture*, Anund Messeh, one of the earliest catechists is seen asking question to 500 people seated under the shade of the trees outside Delhi; 'Pray who are all these people? And whence come they?' 'We are poor and lowly, and we read and love this book' 'what is that book?' 'The book of God!' 'let me look at it, if you please.' Anand, on opening the book, perceived it to be the Gospel of our Lord, translated into Hindoostanee tongue, many copies of which seemed to be in the possession of the party: some were printed, others written by themselves from the printed ones. Anund pointed to the name of Jesus, and asked, ' Who is that?' 'That is God! He gave us this book.' 'where did you obtain it?' 'An Angel from heaven gave it to us, at Hurdwar fair.'¹⁰³

This is not merely an illustration of what Foucault calls the capillary effects of the microtechnics of power. It reveals the penetration power both psychic and social of the technology of the printed word in early nineteenth-century rural India. It is the opinion of the Rev. Donald .Corrie that 'on learning English they acquire ideas quite new, and of importance, respecting God and His government.'¹⁰⁴

Rev. Clark's resumption of the work among the Nagas in 1871-72 had turned out to be a successful one unlike the earlier attempt made by Rev. Bronson. During the initial years, there was doubt concerning the transcription of an obscure dialect into a written language suitable for the Scriptures. But in the later years, reaching the

¹⁰² Sharma, Jayeeta . pp. 259-60, note 100.

¹⁰³ Bhabha, K. Homi. (1994). *From the Location of Culture*, Routledge, London, pp. 102-3.

¹⁰⁴ Bhabha, K. Homi. pp. 116-18, note 103.

Naga people became more attractive.¹⁰⁵ By the last decades of the nineteenth century, missionary methods were being revamped to meet the needs of a new target group, with the Home Board acceding to the opinions of the Baptists in the field and revising its earlier assumption that schools could be auxiliary to preaching. Anthony Copley's instancing of conferences from 1872 onward, where education had overtaken itinerant preaching as the preferred strategy, seems indicative of a general rethinking about missionary methodology. Scriptural and pedagogical texts were seen to be important in Mission schools.¹⁰⁶

Indeed, a revival in "letters", a sort of Naga Renaissance was brought about and that too by a considerable number of the Naga boys and girls learning to write. The missionaries were encouraged by the growing interest aroused in the Nagas and felt contented that this alone indicates the value of education among the Naga people rather than all their talk with religious instruction combined.¹⁰⁷ A missionary observed; "A raw Naga at first knows no more of the modus operandi of writing than does the pencil he tries to hold in his dirty clumsy fingers. One thing he knows and only one, that is how not to do what you tell him. But he soon improves and the effect of this simple accomplishment at the hands of a few Naga boys and girls has been remarkable. So to speak, so many and urgent became the letters flying back and forth on matters that were urgent , that we had to interfere in the interest of the Sitimungers,¹⁰⁸ or village letter carriers. A Naga Dak is now talked of."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Sharma, Jayeeta, p. 270, note 100.

¹⁰⁶ Copley, Anthony Quoted in Jayeeta . Sharma, p. 272, note 100.

¹⁰⁷ The Baptist Missionary Magazine Vol.LXXIX No.7.July 1899, p. 315.

¹⁰⁸ An Ao Naga word for Postman.

¹⁰⁹ Fifth triennial Conference of the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union , Minutes , Resolutions and Historical Reports, Held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899. Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p. 40.

A Naga writer suggests that Rev Clark was aware of both the good and the evil side of effect of the printed media. Prior to his coming to the Naga Hills he was the editor¹¹⁰ of "The Witness".¹¹¹ In a society like that of the Naga that had no literature and often not even a script for its languages, the establishment of printing presses, even the primitive ones,¹¹² by the Christian missions was said to have radical and far reaching consequences.¹¹³

4.7 Pioneering Educational Work

The first missionary who labored with the Nagas was Rev Miles Bronson of the American Baptist Mission who opened a school at Namsang village (now in Arunachal Pradesh) in 1840. However, Bronson abandoned school work on account of his ill health and his sister's death. The Naga Mission was silent from 1841 till 1871. Despite the abandonment of the Namsang Mission, the missionaries had still retained some contacts with the Nagas from Sibsagar (Assam), where the American Baptist Mission had established its station. Apart from the contact made with the Nagas from here, nothing was done to preach the gospel to them till the year 1871.¹¹⁴

The work ceased for many years until Rev Clark requested the British government to go to the Hills, while permission was granted the government could not guarantee his protection.¹¹⁵ He was detained from entering the Hills, and then, Clark induced one of his Assamese workers, Godhula, who was living at Sibsagar, to

¹¹⁰ Sole Editor of The Witness, A religious Paper of Indiana (Indinapolis), which later on merged with the standard of Chicago

¹¹¹ Ao, N. Toshi. p. 132, note 45.

¹¹² In the absence of a printing press, Rev. E. W. Clark decided to look for a Hand Press, which he could secured from the Boston, the Nagas contributed two days voluntarily to carry the machine on their backs to the Hill Top.

¹¹³ Puthenpurakal, J. (1996). Impact of Christianity on North East India, Vendrame Institute Publications (Sacred Heart Theological College) Shillong, p. 31.

¹¹⁴ The Baptist Missionary Magazine, Vol. January, 1888, No, 1, p. 80.

¹¹⁵ Aier, Chubatola., Ngangshikokba .Ao . I.Wati.Imchen. Talensen, 2003, A reflection on education among the Aos AKM, p. 33.

acquire the Vernacular of the Nagas. Persuaded thus, Godhula was the first missionary to enter the Naga Hills preceding the work of Rev. E. W. Clark.¹¹⁶ It is to be observed that even before the entry of Rev. Clark and Godhula to the Naga Hills, they sought the assistance of Subongmeren¹¹⁷ and one from Dekhaimong to write the first song and Lord's Prayer in the Ao language.¹¹⁸ In November 1872, Godhula with the help of Subongmeren, succeeded in bringing with them a party of Nagas to Sibsagar, nine of whom were Baptized by Clark. Clark finally left for the hills in the winter of 1876 to establish his Mission in the land of the Aos.¹¹⁹

Mary Mead, the wife of Rev. Clark started the first formal school in the Naga Hills in 1878 at Molungyimsen (an Ao Naga Village), which was a girl's school. A small printing press was established in 1883. Clark started the second school in 1880 at Merangkong (an Ao Naga Village) with the assistance of Godhula and M.D. Burnath. On Clark's initiative and strong suggestion, in 1878 the American overseas Missionary Board at Boston appointed Rev. C. D. King as a missionary to the Naga Hills.¹²⁰ In 1879, King opened a Mission school at Samuguting with the help of Ponaram, an Assamese teacher. The Rivenburgs came to Kohima in 1887 and revived the school in 1889. Similarly, in early 1885, the government granted permission to open another center at Wokha, a Baptist post almost equi-distant from both Kohima

¹¹⁶ Rivenburg, Narola. Ed. (1941). The Star of the Naga Hills, Letters from Rev. Sidney and Hattie Rivenburg Pioneer Missionaries in Assam 1883-1923, the American Baptist Publication society, Philadelphia, p. 30.

¹¹⁷ A Naga of the Ao village of Dekhahaimong (Molungyimjen) from whom Rev. Clark learnt many things about the Aos.

¹¹⁸ Ao, Kijung. L. Rev, p. 27, note 79.

¹¹⁹ Ao Naga Baptist Church Centenary Album 1872-1972.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

and Mokokchung. Rev Witter began the first formal teaching of Christianity to the Lotha Nagas in 1885.¹²¹

With the establishment of these missionary bridgeheads spread over the three regions of the Naga Hills, the Christian missionaries devoted themselves to the cause of propagation of the gospel to the Naga tribes.¹²² Chiefly concentrating on physically reaching out to the tribes, the American Baptist Mission initially settled their Mission Centre at different strategic regions in the Naga Hills.¹²³

The first Mission centre, which was opened at Molungkimong village in 1876, was later shifted to Impur on the Northern side of Naga Hills in 1894. This centre served the tribes of the Aos, Sangtams, Changs, Phoms, Lothas and Semas respectively for schooling, evangelization and in training the young natives of the region in Biblical education.¹²⁴ Kohima Mission was mainly instrumental in imparting education as well as training to the Southern tribes consisting of the Angamis, Chakesang, western Semas, and Southern Semas, Zeliangs, Rengmas and the Naga Hills Kukis. Although separate mission centres and schools were later established at Vonkhosung for the Lothas and at Aizuto for the Semas respectively, initially the two areas were treated as appendages to the Impur and Kohima Centres for the purpose of evangelistic outreach.¹²⁵

¹²¹ The Baptist Missionary Magazine. Vol.LXVIII, January, No, 1, p. 80.

¹²² Robinson, L.N. (1841). Descriptive Account of Assam, Calcutta, p. 382.

¹²³ Reports of the Missionaries, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Society, Held in Nowgong , February 17-24, 1916, The Banerjee Press, Calcutta, p. 20.

¹²⁴ Downs, F.S. (1971). The Mighty works of God, Guwahati , p. 95.

¹²⁵ Downs, F. S. p. 137, note 124.

The previous chapter argued that the perception of the Nagas helped the American Baptist Mission in the realization of what the Nagas needed. The persistent efforts in education suggest that the eventual conversion of the Nagas depended upon the success of evangelization and the success was only to be strengthened by the Christian orientation offered in the schools. In this sense, one is lead to assume that the Nagas were open to new ideologies and were willing to adopt new social and religious ties, if the move could improve their lot and integrate them into a greater socio-religious network.

CHAPTER V

Reflecting upon the Impact of Missionary Education

The Christian missionaries believed that education could illuminate the individual mind, which in turn would arouse conviction in the truth of the Gospel. Thus, it was hoped that education would lead to conversion to Christianity. They also believed that as soon as the people would learn to read the Bible, they would be inevitably convinced of the superiority of the Christian religion over their own religion and embrace it. In the preceding chapters, we have seen how the missionaries expressed their firm conviction that schools are instrumental for civilizing the natives as well as for conversion.

This chapter will discuss the impact of the missionary education project among the Nagas and the cultural and religious transformation of education. It will also discuss how new behavior and modes of thought were promoted. There are two main questions this chapter addresses. The first question is: Did modern education imparted by the missionaries widen the mental horizon of the Nagas? Secondly: Did the missionary efforts in bringing changes to Naga society disrupt to the cohesion and vitality of the Naga society and culture?

The discussion will be built round these two questions. Both positive and negative changes were affected through the introduction of modern education that always accompanied evangelization. While reflecting on the implications of missionary education, one can see two representations that are extremely contrasting, while some favored the changes, some did not always readily favor the changes.

According to Visier Sanyu studies on the impact of Christianity on Nagaland generate two extreme reactions. Some scholars, mainly anthropologists, have blamed the missionaries for destroying Naga culture whereas, Christian scholars and theologians glorify the impact of Christianity. He concluded that the scholars have oversimplified the matter by portraying the Nagas, once a warlike people, have changed into spiritual headhunters' and Christ loving people due to the transformation of an animistic culture. While seeing truth in both the views, he stresses something beautiful about the early stage of human civilization died out forever when the American missionaries forbid the new converts to take part in tribal dances, singing, tribal song and other indigenous customs.¹

Several scholars have over the decades, regretted the unfortunate disappearance or elimination of the good things of pre-Christian Naga history.² The significance of the traditional Naga institutions was considerably reduced following the advent of the Christianity. The American Baptist Mission was criticized for forbidding Baptist boys from continuing to use the Morungs on the ground that they were heathen institutions.³ While trying to establish the Church of Christ among the Ao Nagas, there was a lamentable destruction of valuable ancient tradition, customs and moral values. Any culture or society, both modern and ancient, was seen as under darkness, or under the devil's government; and any unchristianised country was termed unsaved, unreached and devoid of the knowledge of the truth in the eyes of the gospel.⁴

¹ Sanyu, Visier. "Christian impact and Conflict Resolution in Nagaland" in J. Puthenpurakal. (1996). Impact of Christianity on North East India, Vendrame Institute Publications, Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, p. 509.

² Sharma, R. P., Ngangshikokba. Ao.(2000). Mayangnokcha : The pathfinder, Mayangnokcha Award Trust, Mokokchung, Nagaland, p. 51.

³ Philip, P.T.(1976). The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, p. 32.

⁴ Imchen, Panger. (1993). Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture, Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, p. 148 .

The missionaries rejected anything in the traditional culture which they judged to be religious or “superstitious”. Many writers have pointed out that the missionaries were not sympathetic towards the Naga culture and were held responsible for the disintegration of the Naga society. Thus, the missionary enterprise that attempted to wipe out everything that was traditional within the Naga society accounts for this view. The missionaries’ were very clear about their mission of converting the Nagas into Christianity in the name of civilization and therefore their emphasis of the need for opting out of traditional practices by the converts. This was their main concern as they felt that way were contrary to Christian teachings.

Fürer Haimendorf, an anthropologist, provides us with a detailed description of the losses of the Aos possession, “the Ao’s most cherished and valued possessions, the pride of generations, lay unheeded and scattered in the jungle; ivory armlets, necklaces of boars tusks, cowrie shells, head dressers and baldrics, and artistically woven coloured cloths, all discarded because they belong to the old times”.⁵ While trying to project the gradual loss of the rich Naga heritage, he suggested that the Ao churches ought to be decorated with the traditional wood-carvings like medieval craftsmen have decorated the gothic cathedrals, which would be closer to Naga hearts than adorned with foreign prints.⁶ Although he has on the one hand shown his appreciation towards the effort of the Christian missionaries, he has on the other hand blamed the missionaries for little appreciation of the finer elements of Naga culture and forcing a sudden clash of cultures.

J. H. Hutton, who was formerly in the Indian Civil service wrote to J. P. Mills, “All Naga tribes have a most remarkable appreciation of the effective and picturesque in dress, and their use of colour is usually in extraordinarily good taste

⁵ Fürer- Haimendorf, Christoph. Von. (1962). The Naked Nagas , Thacker Spink & Co, Calcutta. p. 51.

⁶ Ibid., p. 55.

and particularly well adapted to the surroundings in which it is displayed...all this, not to mention the art of dancing, is being destroyed by their conversion to Christianity.”⁷ Mills expresses a similar view about the Rengma Nagas who were converted to Christianity. The activity was supported by limitless funds and a stronghold of Christianity established. Like Hutton, he blamed the Mission for undermining the Morung as an institution and in forbidding the converts to continue visiting the Morung without studying the psychological aspect involved.⁸

In this regard, F. S Downs writes that Hutton’s negative attitude towards the Mission had been obvious especially in his introduction to Mill’s *The Lotha Nagas*. Mill was urged upon by Hutton to study the Lothas on the pretext that the tribe is on the verge of early denationalization through Christianity. Downs says that though they were Christians, they were not supportive of Christian missions and were against any agencies of change.⁹

Julian Jacobs argues that the British attitude to the Nagas was not based on the theological aspect, but was concerned with the social implications of Christianity that was found to be destroying Naga culture.¹⁰ The Nagas were caught between two western views, (i) a missionary attitude which banned anything traditional but which offered education with modern aspirations and freeing from the burden of communal obligations and (ii) an administrative perspective which banned head-taking but favoured everything that was traditional and close to advocating the isolation of the Naga Society without changing their primitive past.¹¹ Citing the destruction of the log drum in Khiammungan region (in one of the areas of Naga tribes) after the village

⁷ Mills, J. P. (1926). *The Ao Nagas*, Macmillan and Co, London, p. 421.

⁸ Mills, J. P. (1973). *The Rengma Nagas*, Macmillan & Co.Ltd, London, pp. 49-50.

⁹ Downs, F. S. (1976). *Christianity in North East India*, ISPCK, Delhi, pp. 53-55.

¹⁰ Jacobs, Julian. (1990). *Hill Peoples of North East India*, The Nagas, Thames and Hudson, Great Britain, p. 153.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

was converted to Christianity, R.P Sharma and Ngangshikokba, while acknowledging efforts of the missionaries, hold that in the name of Christianity, the ignorant Christians have done irreplaceable damage to Naga culture.¹²

The events leading to the destruction of this age old artifacts which symbolized different forms of expression resulted from the misconception of the earlier missionaries' for they considered anything related to traditional custom as abominations and pagan symbols.

The introduction of Christianity was accompanied by the erosion of good old customs. Another scholar opined that crime in society and the incidence of law breaking increased. All the drastic change followed by erosion of old cultural values is attributed to the introduction of education and the gospel.¹³

The missionaries and government officials had different motives concerning their approach towards the Nagas. The missionaries were committed to a complete change of culture of the Nagas; the British government was in favour of retaining the essential (elements) of the old culture. British officials extended scholarships and grand-in-aid to mission schools, but provided aid on the condition that students remained unchanged in their dress and cultural behavior.¹⁴ Panger Imchen states that the inability to study Ao cultural behavior could explain the missionaries' weaknesses for constructing every ancient culture as devilish.

Frequent quarrels between the believers and non-believers on account of festivals and ceremonies often resulted in disputes, hostility and misunderstandings. The non-participation of Christians in village affairs and festivals proved not only an affront to the old tradition, but began to affect the village chiefs and elder's income.

¹² Sharma, R. P., Ngangshikokba. Ao, p. 53, note 2.

¹³ Imchen, Panger, pp. 101-106, note 4.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 154.

The British had always sided with the majority (non converts) to defend their way of life. Alemchiba writes on the attitude of the missionaries,

They felt every ceremony should be abolished. The tendency was to abolish abruptly the old things and substitute individualism for the strong community...the result was a conflict not necessarily a conflict of arms but of cultures.¹⁵

Christian groups were separated from the non-Christian population of Molungyimchen and a new Christian settlement by the name Molungyimsen was founded by Rev. Clark in 1876.¹⁶

What had led to the founding of the new village was that the Christians refused to continue to support the rites and sacrifices which were considered necessary to propitiate the evil spirits that caused illness and destroyed crops. Most of the Nagas festivals revolve round agriculture. Traditionally, agriculture has not merely been a means of earning a living but a way of life. But discouraging the converts from attending such festivals could have resulted in misunderstandings.

The Christians had abandoned their old belief in witch doctors and asserted that they no longer believed in the power of wizards; and refused to take part in the drinking bouts which accompanied of a feast. As the community expanded, the oppression of the non-Christians intensified till finally the twenty families of believers were unable to endure it any longer and established the new village out of fear.¹⁷

Julian Jacobs writes that the Baptists had prohibited the Christians from drinking rice beer, condemned sexual freedom and prohibited young men to sleep in the Morung. They destroyed house carvings, prohibited singing and dancing,

¹⁵ Alemchiba.A. Highlander, Vol IV, No,192, p. 3.

¹⁶ Ganguli, Miladi. (1984). *A Pilgrimage to the Nagas*, Oxford & I B H publishing Co, N.Delhi, p. 16. Also See also Youno Asoso .(1974). *The Rising Nagas*, A Historical and Political Study, Vivek Publishing House, Delhi, p. 111. See also J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas*. (1926). Macmillan & Co, London, p. 411.

¹⁷ Bowers, A. C. (1929). *Under Headhunters Eyes*, Philadelphia, The Judson Press, p. 201.

expected converts to denounce and despise their “Heathen” neighbors, and banned feasts of merit (because of their apparently reckless celebration of conspicuous consumption). He argued that all of this implied not merely giving up ‘customs’ but ‘opting out’ of the obligations normally attendant by every villager. Christians had refused to join in communal agricultural tasks when it fell on Sabbath, or refused to present gifts to important visitors from neighbouring villages.¹⁸ However, Asoso Yonuo writes that the missionaries prohibited drinking of rice beer only to avoid quarrels and sexual immorality; the missionaries had substituted the drinking of unfermented American grape juice during the celebrations of the Lord’s Supper.¹⁹ The missionaries in this way taught the converts total withdrawal from their habitual practices.

Mill writes that from the time when Mr. Perrine and Mr. Haggard joined the mission in 1829 all converts were strictly forbidden to touch alcohol in any form. Whosoever transgressed the law was expelled from the community and teetotalism has been the outstanding sign of Christianity and the Naga Christians define their religion in these terms.

William C. Smith who worked among the Aos as a member of the American Baptist mission says, “Familiarity with missionary attitudes and practices, which are all too characteristic, makes inevitable the conclusion that there is entirely too much negation, too much taboo, and too little that is positive. There is grave danger that Christianity, as presented to these people, comes to be little more than the adoption of another set of taboos, and taboo is no new element in the life of any group on a low cultural level.”²⁰ The notion of Christianity to the Nagas was

¹⁸ Jacobs, Julian. p. 153, note 10.

¹⁹ Yonuo, Asoso. (1974). The Rising Nagas . A Historical and Political Study, Vivek Publishing House, Delhi, India, p. 116.

²⁰ Smith, C .William. Quoted in J. P Mills, p. 418, note 7.

associated with taboos than the inherent goodness of it. By the time the missionaries' started educating the Nagas, there were sets of rules to be followed wherein avoidance for anything that was against the tenets of Christianity were laid out.

Mills opines that the gravest mistakes the mission inflicted on their converts was imposing an alien western culture. Further he says that no member of the mission ever studied Ao customs deeply, but yet nearly all have been eager to uproot what they have neither understood nor sympathized with, by substituting the superficialities of civilization.²¹ Henry Balfour in his foreword to Mills writes, "As one travels through the Naga Hills one can but notice the evidence of a gradual passing away of the old order of things in the administered area, the breaking down of old associations of ideas, in spite of the innate conservatism which is antagonistic to change and yields closely."²² He decried the policy of suppression and displacement of age-old traditions, customs, ceremonies and dances as a short sighted and retrograde policy.²³ However, there is always a line of difference between the missionary writings and the anthropologists. The missionaries wanted to change the Naga religious structure whereas the anthropologist had described things as they were and wanted the Nagas to continue with the same traditional practices.

Asoso writes that the Nagas were uprooted with the coming of Christianity both in positive and negative ways. By changing altogether to new institutions and cultural forms, Christianity had become a striking subversive force against the long-held traditional assumptions upon which Nagas civilization was founded.

²¹ Mills J. P pp. 420-21, note 7.

²² Mills J.P. p. xxii, note 7.

²³ Thomas. M. M. (1992). *The Nagas towards A.D.2000*, Centre for Research on New International Economic Order, Madras, p. 30.

It prohibited head-hunting, forced the Nagas to abstain from drinking their favourite rice beer. This was not done on scriptural grounds but argued for in terms of the social benefits that would accrue to society. Further, they were disallowed the performance of their mystical religious rites and rituals, ceremonies like taboos and gennas, curtailed the propitiation of the evil Gods and other licentious activities, and from sleeping in bachelor's or maidens' dormitories and from taking part in the feasts of merit held by the rich people for social, religious and prestigious reasons.

A sort of excommunication also had been carried out by the church authority against unfaithful Christian Nagas who used to break the Sabbath and participated in the traditional dancing and singing of folk songs. Such practices had been forbidden as they were found to contradict the teachings of Christianity.²⁴ It appears that the missionaries have used a different discipline to control the newly converts.

The traditional Naga cultural practices judged religious or superstitious by the missionaries were replaced by elements of Christianity. Takatemjen points out that the religious and cultural elements that were once related with head hunting disappeared with this prohibition. The missionaries' attitude towards the material culture of the Nagas had been negative; they regarded the way the Nagas were living primitive and sought various means for its improvement. Besides schools, the newly-converted Christians were instructed through conferences and rallies on subjects such as "changes in food, houses, sanitation, and clothing" for better of living.²⁵

²⁴ Youno, Asoso, p. 119, note 19.

²⁵ Takatemjen. (1997). *Studies on Theology and Naga Culture*, C T C, Aolijen, Mokokchung, Nagaland, pp. 14-15.

Other issues included discussion on the burial of the dead.²⁶ Mills in his book on the Ao Nagas gives an elaborate account of the funerary practices of the Aos contrasting it with the English practice. While the English reverently laid the body to rest in a quiet churchyard, the Aos laid the body on a platform by the village path. As the body began to rot, the stink offended passersby, the village pigs were seen picking the bones and skulls.²⁷ Although not frequently done, in few cases of death, the body was also seen drying in the smoke and was kept over a fire in the front entrance of the house for weeks and months before being taken to its last resting place. While trying to explain the food habits of the Ao Nagas, he writes that an animal long dead was not even despised, "if on a journey an Ao runs into an unpleasant smell in the jungle, he does not hold his nose and hurry on; he rejoices, and seeks the ancient tiger's kill or whatever it may be which would provide supper for him."²⁸ In his footnote, he writes how a Chang (a Naga Tribe) would boil and eat his hide shield when it gets old, having first soaked it to get rid of the dressing. He further notes that a man belonging to this tribe who had been a member of the Naga Labour Corps died when he changed his ordinary ration to eating his boots in France as the tannin was strong.²⁹ Whether this is true or not cannot be ascertained, however, this is a clear indication of the western perception of the Nagas that led to the construction of the image of the Nagas.

Missionaries attempted to retain at least some of the Naga cultural components through the process of substitution. Takatemjen suggests that although the missionaries have tried providing substitutes i.e., black tea was introduced in the place of rice beer as a substitute, and the celebration of Christmas had taken some of

²⁶ Clark, Mary Mead. (1907). *A Corner in India*. American Baptist publications Society, Philadelphia, p. 143.

²⁷ Mills, J. P, pp. 277-78, note 7.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 143.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 143.

the features of the traditional festivals, however, these were inadequate.³⁰ Mills writes that deprived the drink of his forefathers, the Ao Christian had looked for substitutes like opium which were more devilish, yet the habit did not acquire a firm footing among the Nagas.³¹ The Nagas have smoked tobacco leaves which were half dried in the sun using different kinds of pipes called Lhota or Sema pipes, but this practice did not acquire a permanent footing due to the influence of Christianity.

Aos had little faith in European drugs, if the first dose of any medicine did not have an immediate effect; it was regarded as useless: "A good supply of fowls and pigs for sacrifice were to his mind a greater safeguard against ill health than a well filled medicine chest."³² Describing Naga medical practices, medicine, Mills says that they had their medicine besides traditional sacrificial rituals; i.e. in the case of stomach ailments taking the meat of a mole, dried and pounded or crushed berries were considered effective. Hutton says, for any small wound tobacco was chewed and applied, a broken skull was treated by beating up the whites and yolks of raw eggs and placing them in the abrasion and covering the whole wound with the skin of a freshly-killed chicken, the inner side of the skin being applied to the split skull.³³

The labeling of the traditional beliefs and practices of the Nagas as devilish and not valuable alienated the converts from their tradition. Horam writes that "we are told that missionaries stopped the Nagas to follow their customs, such as singing, dancing, drinking and festivals and force them to take up new mode of life."³⁴ But another scholar observed that abandoning animistic practices and observations after converting to Christian faith did not mean that the converts had to abstain from participating in various traditional social festivals, they abstained only from partaking

³⁰ Takatemjen, p. 16, note 25.

³¹ Mills, J. P, p. 147, note 7.

³² Mills, J.P, pp. 148-49, note 7.

³³ Hutton, J. H. (1968). *The Sema Nagas*, Oxford University Press, pp. 101-02.

³⁴ Horam, M. (1988). *Nagas Old Ways New Trends*, Cosmo Publications, p. 86.

food which had undergone the process of religious purification and so on.³⁵ He further says that the impact of westernization on Naga society could be observed and assessed through certain agents of cultural adaptation such as, Christianity, education and the western modes of living found in the dress, music, food habits, etc.³⁶

Drawing upon the works of Mills, Sharma and Ngangshikokba have pointed out some of the negative effects of missionary work that impacted upon the Nagas. Christian Nagas have lost: (a) their sense of humour (b) their interest in using the traditional institutions, rituals, dress and ornaments and have developed a love for (i) foreign clothes (ii) foreign outlook and

(iii) started exhibiting a derisive attitude to their pre-Christian past.³⁷ Traditional fine arts have, unfortunately, become almost extinct. The younger generation with its fascination for western culture and rather negative attitude towards Ao culture, gives no importance to the ancient creativity of Ao music, songs or poetry.³⁸ Though the traditional order of the Nagas society for esteeming values like hospitality, gentleness, religious devotion, hard work, contentment, good family life, honesty, respect for rulers and elders and the spontaneous awareness of God's presence in all the activities of life are still alive among the older folks in the villages, the younger generation displays coldness, strangeness, harshness, lack of interest in religious life, absence of the sense of responsibility desire for more material things without hard work, discontentment with what one has, disharmony, dishonesty and injustice.

When Christian education was imparted to the Aos by the missionaries, it was given in three forms; schooling, conversion and Christianization. When one form

³⁵ Liegise, kevi. (1982). Modernization among the Nagas. An unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, JNU, N. Delhi, p. 34.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 32-33.

³⁷ Sharma, R. P., Ngangshikokba. Ao. p. 52, note 2.

³⁸ Imchen, Panger. p. 180, note 4.

was affected, the others were also affected. This was the basis of their educational policy. Interestingly enough, this was akin to the tribal world view, where there was no distinction between the religious and the secular; therefore education was part of a totality. It appears that the early missionaries were aware of this tribal mentality.³⁹ The tribes had retained their traditional practices for long but once the American Baptist Mission started educating them, they started to dislike their traditional institutions and practices.

The spread of Christianity brought vast changes in the social and moral conditions of the non-Christian world. The contrast between conditions before and after the missionaries arrived with the message of Christ is unmistakable. Wherever individuals were influenced by the mission fields of Northern Baptists, changes in the social environment have always appeared.⁴⁰ A heathen converting to Christianity had to look for improvement in his manner of living, better clothing, housing and eating. Merensky, a missionary pointed out that the influence of Christianity had improved even the physical appearance of those who were converted when "...young people may often be called handsome; especially among the girls...old people are as a whole very ugly."⁴¹ Reports such as this highlight the efficiency of the educational enterprise. What seemed good and acceptable before the missionaries were projected in their reports.

It was suggested that the appearance of the health and strength among Christians was no doubt due to the spiritual elevation of their minds, as well as the moral elevation of

³⁹ Atsongchaner, Mar. (1995). Christian Education and Social Change, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, Assam, p. 44.

⁴⁰ Lippard B William with the collaboration of Esther M Wood and Doris M Amidon, 1929, Overseas, An illustrated survey of the Foreign Mission Enterprise of Northern Baptists, published by the American Baptist Foreign mission society, one hundred fifty-two Madison Avenue, New York, p. 147.

⁴¹ The Baptist Missionary Magazine. Vol.LXX.March 1890, Vol.3, p. 63.

their lives.⁴² The Christians' desired to dress better, to live better in better houses, and to be cleaner. Their desire to learn and to use what knowledge and powers they have for God's glory increased.⁴³ The prosperity of the village grew because the rice was no longer wasted for brewing great quantities of beer, which resulted in the abundance of food (rice) throughout the year. Earlier communities ran out of rice even before the next harvest, this was a common occurrence and therefore the changes had been noteworthy.⁴⁴

Edmund F Merriam writes that the services rendered in the Naga Hills by the Baptist missionaries were many. One aspect was the service of the missionaries to linguistic science which has been of great value. They were working among a people whose language had never been reduced to writing but through their efforts their dialects have been reduced to a written form. The services which the Baptist missionaries have rendered to the various peoples among whom they have laboured, by the introduction of an elevating literature, both religious and secular, are inestimable.⁴⁵ Edmund Merriam holds that the American Baptist mission never placed its principal emphasis on schools as an evangelizing agency, but they have been ever ready and zealous in establishing schools for the broadening and deepening of religious interest and training Christian workers who should be prepared to labor intelligently and usefully among their own people.⁴⁶

Sharma and Ngangshikokba pointed out that Rev Clark is revered for drawing the Nagas from a closed state to a world which opened out to receive the benefits of a universal faith, an achievable goal of literacy and education, a

⁴² Ibid , P.63.

⁴³ The Baptist Missionary Magazine Vol.LXXIX No.7, July 1899, p. 314.

⁴⁴ Bowers, A. C. (1929). p. 205, note 17.

⁴⁵ Merriam, F. Edmund. (1900) A History of American Baptist Missions, Revised edition with centennial supplement, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society, pp. 215-19.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 224.

modernizing and generous outlook on life and a wide variety of subsidiary possibilities.⁴⁷ Before the coming of the Christian missionaries, none of the tribes of Naga Hills had a written form of their languages. It was the missionaries who started studying the diverse dialects to translate the Bibles. Through this a common language and a written literature were given to the people, this brought about a sense of togetherness and common understanding through the medium of language and literature.⁴⁸ They succeeded in bringing the Nagas a new philosophy of life, a status of equality with the rest of the world and a new social consciousness. It transformed the habits and the character of the Naga people.⁴⁹

Yajen Aier writes that along with their sojourn with the natives, the missionaries started educational centers which have trained the Naga people intellectually, physically, morally, socially and culturally. Besides their concern for the spiritual aspect of the people, total well being of the people has also been their concern. The Nagas have learned through the missionaries to be “civilized” in the eyes of the world.⁵⁰ The introduction of a new pattern of thinking also brought new values and restructured the traditional modes of living and existence.

A gradual but fundamental change in the life style of the people and their outlook could be seen when a society changes from its traditional moorings into a modern society. This involves a new orientation in the attitude towards authority and the functioning of government. A total transformation of society takes place when a society consciously chooses a direction leading to modernization.⁵¹ Christianity was thus seen as an inward technology which brought modernization, western ways life,

⁴⁷ Sharma, R. P., Ngangshikokba. Ao. p. 49, note 2.

⁴⁸ Atsongchanger, Mar. p. 45, note 39.

⁴⁹ Takatemjen. p. 1, note 25.

⁵⁰ Aier, Yajen. (2000), Growth of Education in Nagaland, A personal Memoir, Dimapur, Nagaland, Published by the author, pp. 2-3.

⁵¹ Aiyar, S. P. (1973). Modernization of Traditional Society and Other Essays, Macmillan India, p. 4.

education, the renaissance of Nagaism and created a sense of unity among the Nagas.⁵²

With the introduction of education, hygienic conditions and healthcare of the people have been improved. The results were seen in eating habits, dressing and physical appearance, personal hygiene and general cleanliness has led to improved quality life. Rev.S .A Perrine writes,

They are building better houses for themselves, and with rooms...some of the Christians keep their person and homes and food comparatively clean, perhaps I should simply say, cleaner than the heathen. They do not eat rotten flesh, and the money they once spent for drink, opium and false worship is making them prosperous. They have adopted a mode of burial and a more decent dress than the heathen.⁵³

Another major change brought by the Christian missionaries was the change in the practice of the funeral rites. The missionaries had persuaded the people from the point of view of hygiene to adopt Christian burial practices.⁵⁴ Another social practice among the Nagas was that of slavery, where a rich man possessed as many as 20 slaves⁵⁵ Although, no elaborate accounts are available on this issue, it appears that slavery was given more importance among some of the tribes than others. Slavery seems to have been given up before head hunting. The government could not stop slavery immediately since their policy was not to interfere with the domestic institutions of the tribes but it was abolished due to the fervent request of Rev Clark. With the involvement of the missionaries, the traditional practices of the Nagas underwent change. The practice of taking heads, "Head Hunting," which

⁵² Yonuo, Asoso. p. 120, note 19.

⁵³ Perrine, S. A. Rev. The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Minutes, Resolutions and Historical Reports ,of the Fifth Triennial Conference held in Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, pp. 38-43.

⁵⁴ Aier, Chubatola., Ngangshikokba . Ao. I. Wati. Imchen . (2003), Talansen , Reflection on Education among the Ao Nagas, published by the Ao Students Conference Mokokchung, Nagaland, pp. 82-83.

⁵⁵ Reid, Robert. (1942). History of the Assam Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam , Shillong, p. 124.

represented the supremacy of a village, was abolished by the efforts of the missionaries and the British.

Asoso writes that along with the establishment of schools and rendering medical assistance to the sick, the Baptist mission had built churches in the Naga village states. This was a challenge to the basic concept and form of Naga life such as head hunting, village feuds, drinking rice beer, bachelor dormitory, superstition, religious and social practices, etc. They exhorted the Nagas to become Christian, by leaving all their unproductive concepts and practices for the sake of the happiness of the soul, love and service taught by Jesus Christ.⁵⁶ Thus the first church building constructed in the manner of a modern or western church appeared at Impur Mission station, which later served as a model for all churches in Ao areas and the rest of Nagaland. The Nagas have also started to build their houses according to the western style, besides building churches.⁵⁷

The missionaries brought about numerous changes in Naga thought and action and attempted to improve their lot by translating Christian hymns and other literary works into the Naga languages and distributed the Biblical and other literature in the Roman script. The contribution to music has been notable for they brought a number of western musical instruments and songs and introduced new musical modes and forms.⁵⁸

Visier Sanyu holds that the attitude of the Nagas in the early years was hostile and therefore the ones who converted to Christianity were excommunicated from their clan or village. During the initial years, the process of conversion was slow due to the presence of the British civil servants who did not get along with the

⁵⁶ Yonuo, Asoso. p. 116, note 19.

⁵⁷ Ao, Longrichang. (1989). "British Administration and Christianity in Nagaland", Social and Cultural Impact upto 1955, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, An Unpublished Dissertation, N.Delhi, p. 61.

⁵⁸ Yonuo, Asoso. p. 121, note 19.

missionaries, and the pride of the Nagas in their culture that had resisted change. However, on being taught the concept of one God, the Nagas responded to the simplicity and logic of the new religion, Christianity after abandoning their belief in numerous spirits and an accompanying set of elaborate rituals.⁵⁹

The process, by which Christianity is made available to heathens or to the uncultured as known to the missionaries, was designed to assert the authority of the Bible, through which the missionaries' authority and culture were established. The effort was also to convert the natives assuming that the natives can be transformed by the religious or cultural truths enshrined in their principles.

For Paulo Freire,

the oppressed are not marginals, or living outside the society. They are inside the structure which made them 'beings for others'. The solution is not to 'integrate' them into the structure of oppression so that they can become 'being for themselves'. Such transformation, of course, would undermine the oppressor's purposes', hence their utilization of the banking concept of education to avoid the thread of student conscientization.⁶⁰

Prior to the coming of the missionaries, Naga society had a sovereign traditional structure. However, the long held structure gave and society was restructured to suit the agenda of the missionaries. The missionary movement had its own ideological structural dynamics and therefore Naga society was contrasted by the missionaries and subjected to their negative judgment, these accounts portrayed the Naga society as decadent, requiring urgent transformation through the Word based upon the Bible.

Hence, the missionaries concentrated upon ensuring a minimum standard of education which was necessary for converting the Nagas so that they could read the Bible and understand the word of God. They knew that a total transformation of character could be brought about by directly assaulting the mind, whereby

⁵⁹ Sanyu, Visier. (1990). "Nagas in History" in *Nagas'90 A Souvenir*, Nagas 90 Committee, Guwahati, p. 10.

⁶⁰ Freire, Paulo. (1972). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Penguin Books, Great Britain, p. 48.

superstitions and prejudices could be wiped out completely. Mary Mead Clark indicated that a good knowledge of the Naga language, habits, and character was essential for gaining the confidence of the Nagas and winning over their souls. Besides a knowledge of medicine had opened doors of many homes, ending the reign of soothsayers and demon sacrifices.⁶¹ The missionaries were very clear right from the beginning that their goal was to bring the Naga people within the Christian dominion by helping them change their patterns of life by changing their mentality.

Religion and cultural difference became an issue where the Nagas rightly fitted into missionary stereotyping and were constructed as barbaric or degenerate. One cannot forget that the missionaries' ideologies have clearly been manifested all throughout their reports and writings. Mary Mead Clark writes,

Our long-projected plan was considered and its early execution entered upon with the hope of eventually reaching other tribes. From the beginning it was never contemplated stopping alone with these tribes bordering on the frontier; but on and on, conquering and to conquer, beyond and still beyond, until these mountains should be spanned and the kingdom of our Lord extended from the Brahmaputra to the Irawady, and from the Irawady to the Yangtse.⁶²

The most appealing part of this comment, from the point of view of a missionary, was that their main concern had been not just the Nagas but the rest of India as well. Although their strategy of winning over the minds had been education imparted through the schools, yet as Gauri Viswanathan remarks, Duff's⁶³ concern was teaching the Bible which makes an appropriate impact on its readers, both logically and emotionally;

...the power of the Bible lies in its imagery. If images could be regarded as arguments, reasons, and demonstrations that illustrate and reinforce the truth, the best means to conversion was, accordingly, through an appeal to the imagination. The horrors of sin and damnation were not to be understood through reasons but

⁶¹ Clark, Mary. Mead. p. 68, note 26.

⁶² Ibid., p. 135.

⁶³ A Scottish missionary who in 1829 was chosen by the committee of the general assembly of the church of Scotland on Foreign missions to become their first missionary to India.

through images that give the reader a “shocking spectre of his own deformity and haunt him, even in his sleep.”⁶⁴

Missionaries had used the image of Hell-Fire as a powerful weapon for winning over converts. Interestingly, the response of the Nagas to missionary education have been along this line, the new converts soon started showing their resentment to tradition and treated anything that was related to their culture as sin. The converts had maintained loyalty towards their own group and the non converted ones were treated like sinners. The missionaries were ostensibly civilizing the Nagas, the real agenda being the conversion of the Nagas. Krishna Kumar has demonstrated that, the function of education in undermining traditional structures of dominance became well established by the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁶⁵

The modern education programme of the missionaries did more than an enlarge cognitive domain or broaden the mental horizons of the Nagas. The missionaries could implement their agenda by successfully convincing the Naga people to hold on to their ideas as more valuable than long held Naga tradition. Schools run by the missionaries’ have been influential, as they had served the purpose of their objectives in evangelization. Founding a church, followed by setting up a school was always their agenda, thus, the schools and the church both have equally played their roles in the evangelization process.

Althuesser says, “The church, which concentrated within it not only religious functions, but also educational ones, and a large proportion of the functions of communications and ‘culture’.”⁶⁶ In his discussion on the impact of missionary

⁶⁴ Viswanathan, Gauri. (1989). Masks of Conguest, Literary Study and British Rule in India, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 55.

⁶⁵ Kumar, Krishna. (1991). Political Agenda of Education, A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas, Sage publications, N.Delhi, p. 35.

⁶⁶ Althuesser, Louis. (1971). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus (Notes Towards an Investigation) Verso, Great Britain , p. 25.

education on the Nagas, Clark notes that progress was slow in the early years, but picked up later. Those who had been children and youth as they begin to work at Molung had become leaders of the church.⁶⁷ Edmund Merriam writes:

While the gospel has been preached and many hundred thousand persons have been brought into the kingdom of Christ, both these and many others have received large and manifold blessings, the incidental accompaniments of all work for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. That which raises and helps any people is a blessing to the whole human race.⁶⁸

Merriam is commenting here upon the accompanied blessings that had come through embracing Christianity. Another way of looking at this remark is that the missionaries' efforts in educating the people have been only for the expansion of Christianity but in the process many people have received other blessings. Observations have shown that education and Christianity have made a marked impact on Nagas in general and also on their women, leading to wider participation of the latter in different areas of social life such as religious, professional, social and political.⁶⁹

Fürer Haimendorf deliberates upon the unquestioned fact of the good faith and admirable enthusiasm of the missionaries both in the field of literacy and medicine. But points out a sudden clash of cultures could have been avoided if the missionaries had shown a little sympathy on the Nagas culture.⁷⁰ In contrast to Haimendorf's suggestion, P.T. Philip writes, "many anthropologists were shedding crocodile tears disrupting the age old tribal way of life and its foundations. Probably they wanted to keep Nagaland as an anthropological museum."⁷¹

⁶⁷ The Baptist Missionary Magazine Volume LXXX July 1900. No.7, p. 337.

⁶⁸ Merriam, F. Edmund. (1900). A History of American Baptist Missions, American Baptist Publication society, p. 213.

⁶⁹ Sakhrie, Zetso. (1983). The Changing Role and Status of Naga Woman, An unpublished M. Phil Dissertation, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, JNU, N.Delhi, p. 24.

⁷⁰ Fürer- Haimendorf, Christoph . Von . p. 57, note 5.

⁷¹ Philip, P. T. (1976). The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland, Christian literature Centre, Guwahati, p. 207.

The Naga people had lost some of their symbols, and artifacts, fineries through the mindless destruction unleashed by the simple belief that they were pagans. In this process the people lost some valuable links with their past and Naga Christianity remained a potted western plant without roots in the indigenous soil of Nagaland.⁷²

No one will deny the immense contribution of the Christian missionaries to economic development, social progress and enhancing people to a level of enlightenment. Nonetheless, the view of Naga practices as belonging to a “heathen” past has brought about a dislocation in the traditional culture among the Naga people. Thus, the quest for the role of missionaries in distancing the Nagas from their culture is found highly significant. Many authentic and Christian values such as honesty, simplicity, justice, democratic procedures, dignity of the individual, etc, were already present in the tribal society even before the advent of Christianity. But Christianity has not always been able to preserve and build on them. Under the impact of modernization, some of these values have been lost.⁷³ Hutton suggest:

It is difficult to see why the native taste for colour and brilliant effects which the Naga possesses should not be turned to the glory of God instead of being regarded as an offence before Him. If the bright cloths worn as a reward for the giving of the feasts of merit by the ancients, were retained by the Christians for their own acts of social service, if the insignia of renown in war were made badges of rank in the congregation, and deacons and/or pastors encouraged to wear hornbill feathers and cowrie aprons to denote their office, while those assembling for divine worship were encouraged to do honour to the occasion by dressing in their best; if they were encouraged to adorn their church buildings with carvings as they have done their ‘Morungs’ , their artistic sense would be encouraged and possibly imbued with fresh vigour and the villages would not be deprived of the brilliant festivities which at present do so much where Christianity has not yet destroyed them, to brighten the dull monotony of village life.⁷⁴

It is note worth noting that the last few years have witnessed a revival of Naga culture. The Christian Nagas are also showing a new interest in their traditional

⁷² Thomas, M. M. p. 14, note 23.

⁷³ Puthenpurakal, J. (1996). Impact of Christianity on North East India, Vendrame Institute Publications, Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, p. 45.

⁷⁴ Mills, J. P. (1926). p. 421, note 7.

dances and want to build up their own literature in their own languages, to record their old epics and stories.⁷⁵ There is now a tendency among the Nagas to pick some of the better elements of their culture which have been neglected for a long time.

⁷⁵ Elwin, Verrier. (1961). Nagaland, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, p. 16.

CONCLUSION

Christian Missionaries working in the Naga Hills played a key role in the expansion of modern education in the region in the nineteenth century. It is seen that the modern education system instituted in the Hills was a crucial element in the process of evangelization and the creation of a new culture. Naga society began to disintegrate with the arrival of Christian missionaries when the former set up modern schools and therefore one is led to understand that the primary purpose of schooling was imparting an ideology that would flow in Naga society, for which education was structured to achieve their goal of winning converts.

Closer investigation of the traditional institution of the Nagas reveals an abundance of embedded clusters of knowledge, which is no longer in existence and is deeply buried. The significance and values of these institutions varied from tribe to tribe. Drawing on a wide range of interpretations, which includes the British administrators, it is suggested that the American Baptist Mission was responsible for the disintegration of traditional cultures attached with the Morung. This is not merely a nostalgic expression but an inference of a more insightful study. The missionaries did not approve of this institutional practice and therefore the gradual destruction of this institution was a prelude to the missionary activities in the Hills.

The relationship between the British administrators and the Christian missionaries in the Naga Hills remains unclear, although many have emphasized their mutual cooperation. The missionaries had only one motive, i.e. To Christianize the Naga people whereas the British administrators had not only one but several motives. It appears that the American Baptist mission support of the government was only

temporary with no intention of furthering relations, while the British administrators keep modifying their policies every now and then.

The missionaries were found substituting the traditional institutions, practices, dietary habits, medications etc., with new practices. This displaced the practices and learning of the traditional institutions, tribal crafts and mores, songs, and indigenous medicine. The missionary strategy of replacing traditional practices with new ones was synchronized with their educational programme. The relation between the two requires detailed investigation.

The establishment of schools designed to civilize the Nagas, hid the real motives that were possibly evangelical. This led to a loosening of ties with traditional Naga institutions, and the missionary project was construed as an assault on Naga religions and cultural practices. A careful examination of the collapse of the traditional institutions of learning would help unravel the dynamics of the grafting of a totally new world order on an older one.

The contact between the missionaries and the Nagas was a form of cultural encounter: an uncommon conflict between a small but influential and powerful group of foreign missionaries and the ancient religious traditions of the Nagas. The missionaries, during the initial years were persuasively communicating with the Nagas. Later on, they initiated a broad programme to improve the natives, which would determine whether the natives' mind could be conquered or not through schooling. There was no forcible conversion; rather their approach was persuasive, appealing through the Christian Gospel and knowledge. The strategy was preaching through the school curriculum; the later had incorporated all that was needed to convince the Nagas.

The converts were later guided by a set rules framed by the missionaries, As John Mbiti, a modern African theologian, would put it, “missionary culture told the Africans in effect that unless you are circumcised, you cannot inherit the kingdom of God...unless they become culturally westernized, and Lutheranized, methodized, Americanized, Roman Catholicized, presbyterianised, Africans cannot inherit one centimeter of Christian faith.”¹ Although this was not entirely true of the Nagas, there seems to be a resemblance in a different way. The new Naga converts departed from the norms of their reference groups and the social organizations with which they had been identified with for long. These Naga Christian converts were overtaken in the cross-fire of this clash. A question of importance one can ask is whether the Nagas accepted Christianity believing that they would gain personal salvation or whether they accepted Christianity only to raise their quality of living?

From the beginning, the missionaries realized that if they were to make themselves understood in preaching the ‘Gospel’ it was necessary to learn the Naga language. To help the Nagas know the word of God, the missionaries had to teach them first to read and write. Thus began the mission involvement in literary contribution. The process of unpacking the various elements reflected and expressed in the missionaries’ text books is richly revealing. The missionaries’ contribution towards the development of literature has been noteworthy; yet one is also compelled to ask if the process of translation caused a loss of the originality to a certain extent. In a similar strain of thought, Dhruv Raina has emphasized, “the activity of translation has often been considered as the linear rendering of texts, words and concepts from one language into another, assuming that there is no desideratum or residual loss in

¹ Mbiti, John. “African Indigenous culture in relation to evangelism and church development,” in The Gospel and frontier people, Edited by R.P. Beaver. (1972). Pasadena, William Carey Library, p. 82.

the process of translation”.² Although the Nagas do not have any written literature, their ways of preserving their culture was reproduced through memory from one generation to another and the missionaries have depended upon few Naga interlocutors to represent their language and history. Thus, missionaries were credited for, “bringing recognition to a substantial groups of people who had been ignored, a cumulative process of transformation is set in motion”.³ However, in the absence of the Naga voice in the form of a written script, reclaiming the Naga past would be dependent upon their folk tales, songs, crafts etc This could help find words that are no longer in use.

The early missionaries and colonial administrators portrayed the Naga society as decadent. Clearly these accounts were structured by their ideological vision and agenda, and their limited access to the geography and cultural resources of what is now Nagaland. A study of the tribes left untouched by the missionaries during their activity in the Hills would give another view of the Nagas.

This study of the impact of the expansion of Christian education in the Naga Hills, argues that the expansion of education was premised on a cultural migration from one to another form of life touching all spheres of the Naga society, giving way to a new social structure.

² Raina, Dhruv.(2002). “Ptolemy’s Almagest-or Re-Creations of Textual Communities?” in Science as Culture, Volume 11, Number 1, p. 137.

³ Thomson, Paul. “the Voice of the Past: Oral History” in Perks Robert and Alistair. Thomson (Edited) (1998). The Oral history Reader, Routledge, London, p. 26.

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