CHAPTER-III

KOHIMA
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After a long drawn process of migration and settlement, the important centres which emerged in the Angami country are Kohima and Khonoma. In this chapter we shall be focusing on Kohima. Kohima is said to be the second largest populated tribal village in the world and the biggest village in Asia in terms of population.

One of the oldest legends still surviving in the minds of the villagers is that this area was first discovered and chosen for settlement by a man called Whio and that Kohima in course of time came to be termed as Kewhimia, named after Whio, which means 'men of Whio'.

The other version of the origin of this village is that the first settlers were Usou and Rhieo who came with their sister Mesei-u and her son Tsiera from Kigwema. These people saw from afar a huge tree on a hillock on

1. Kohima is presently the capital of the hill state of Nagaland.
2. The population of the traditional Kohima village is around 20,000.
3. There is a section who attribute the origin of Kohima to this legend. Shurhoselie (50) of Kohima told the scholar this legend.
4. Salhouttie (70) of Kohima told this folk tale to the scholar.
the land where Kohima now stands. The tree appeared to be in the centre of the area, and they searched for seven days to locate it.\(^5\) When eventually they found the tree they came down to settle in Kohima. The legend also reads that the first settlers had a dream where they saw plenty of white and black ants mixing. This dream was interpreted to mean that this place was a land where the population would increase and that strangers would come and settle here.\(^6\) Notwithstanding the dream, it becomes very clear that a group of the early settlers did realize that Kohima was a place which would assume a central character and welcome people from various directions.\(^7\) This is strongly supported by the fact that in the Angami language "Mia bu u Kehi kepfu-u chutuo" means "we shall welcome people" or "people shall come to us". The name Kewhimia was adopted by the British as Kohima, and was eventually accepted by the Nagas thereafter.\(^8\)

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5. The figure seven is a mysterious and sacred number for the Angamis. Much of the folklore is connected with the number seven such as seven days, seven years, seven clans and so on.

6. Visietuo Linyu narrated the history of the first settlers of Kohima to the scholar.


Tradition shows that the early settlers found Kohima to be a land of seven lakes and seven hills. Later, Kohima developed into a village with seven gates. Curiously enough it is to be noted that from earliest times the number seven has figured prominently in its history and tradition. Until, for example, even to the present day, the fine for theft is fixed at seven times the value stolen. The reference to the seven lakes is a clear indication of the fact that the land had a good water source to start terrace cultivation which was very important to the early settlers for permanent occupation of the place.

Kohima, from ages past, continues to be in the heart of the Angami country and is surrounded by eleven villages: Jotsoma, Rukhroma, Secuma, Ciedema, Mima, Merema, Chieziema, Nerhema, Phesama, Pfuchama and Chakhaba. The traditional village has a population of more than twenty thousand and the capital city which has grown around Kohima village has a population of around one lakh. Since in the early

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   The original word used here denotes 'lakes'. But from all geographical information, the existence of lakes in this area is highly unlikely. The reference must, therefore, have been to springs or ponds.

10. Based on field work conducted by the scholar.

11. Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, has grown out of the original Kohima village. The original village still stands with its own tribal social organization.
process of settlement and evolution of various Angami villages we do not find any evidence of both the villages of Kohima and Khonoma, it becomes all the more important to probe thoroughly and establish the various factors that led to the evolution of these villages.

We have seen how over a period of time more fertile land and the subsequent growth of population, and search for sustenance split the early Naga tribes into various settlements of Semas, Lothas, Rengmas, Mao, Maram, Tangkhul, Zeliang, Chakhesang, and so on.\(^{12}\) After these processes of splitting up into various tribes took place, each tribe fixed its own perimeter for carrying out their struggle for sustenance with communal labour. Each tribe developed its tribal or clan social and economic organization under the supreme authority of their chiefs or elders. But in course of time each tribe aspired for maximum land, forests, pasture and it became necessary to push back each others' borders. This phenomenon being strongly supported by the gradual growth of population, introduced in-fighting among various tribes which had branched out from the same root.

\(^{12}\) For details see the chapter on Migration and Settlement of this thesis.
In due course some of the weaker and smaller tribes carried out a defence against others by intra-tribal alliances. In this intra-tribal welfare, we find that the Angamis emerged powerful due to some important historical reasons. The first and foremost reason for their emergence as a dominant tribe was the geographical character of the territory they occupied. When we look at these settlements we find that the Angami settlements were well connected with the region of Assam on one side and Manipur on the other. The history of Assam reveals that the process of agrarian organisation had started much earlier with comparatively developed farming and agricultural technology. Besides, Assam was easily linked with the rest of India. So penetration of any influence into Assam was part of the usual historical process. The area bordering Manipur was also occupied by the Angamis or by related tribes and, like Assam, they continued to be influenced by the developing technology in agriculture, craft-making and other fields. It appears that the situation proved to be an added asset to the Angamis

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13. It was at this stage that the early foundations of material culture were being laid down.
because they were the first to receive the waves of development from the rest of the Indian sub-continent through these two directions.\textsuperscript{16}

The other important factor that helped in imposing their dominance was the environment they were in. When the process of settling down was taking place, they chose to settle in an area which was endowed with rich forests, pastures, flora, fauna, springs and streams which continued to irrigate their lands for terrace cultivation almost throughout the year. Naturally, a tribe endowed with all the possibilities for their hunting exercises and some amount of land for settled agriculture to supplement their hunting increased in number and posed their authority over smaller and relatively poorer tribes over a period of time.\textsuperscript{17} Another factor that proved the growth of the Angamis as a powerful tribe was

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Assam and Manipur were the states with advanced culture, economy and politics from ancient times.
    S K Chatterjee, The Place of Assam in the History and Civilization of India, Gauhati, 1955.
  
  \item \textsuperscript{17} David Laibman in his thesis regarding modes of production has brought out the analysis of this aspect clearly wherein he also stresses the accumulation of surplus as a necessary though not sufficient condition for evolution of the preliminaries of class antagonism in the tribal formation.
\end{itemize}
the support provided by the *Tenyimia* group.\(^\text{18}\) In the earlier chapter we have illustrated how the Angamis evolved out of *Tenyimia* as a separate tribe. We find that given the above mentioned advantages, the *Tenyimia* tribes settled in the immediate neighbourhood of the Angamis. They gave all support to the rising Angamis and always provided defence from other tribes. These are some of the factors which favoured the emergence of the Angamis as a prominent tribe in the Naga Hills. In fact, we do not have any literary or even oral evidence for the earlier period but it appears that there must have been mutual assistance between rulers of Manipur, Assam and the Angamis.\(^\text{19}\) It was these factors which appear to have favoured the emergence of the Angamis as a powerful tribe able to subject other tribes and levy tribute from them.

Before we proceed further, it becomes historically essential to probe the emergence of Kohima into an important Angami centre. Why did the Kohima settlement of the Angamis emerge so important? What are the various factors responsible for its development? For explaining this development we have no other alternative but to examine the emergence

\(^{18}\) The details of the *Tenyimia* group of tribes is given in the Chapter on Migration and Settlement of this thesis.

of various clans which led to the formation of Kohima - the intra-clan alliances, feuds and mergers of those various social and material processes which linked and de-linked these various clans together. Earlier in this chapter we have demonstrated how Kohima was selected by some of its first settlers because of its resources and how they perceived that this place would welcome and accommodate more people in course of time.

Let us first look into the history of this clan formation as told by the Kohima folk themselves.20

**LHISEMIA:** As mentioned earlier, the first settlers in Kohima were two brothers - Usou and Rhieo.21 These two brothers lived together in harmony. But one day, Rhieo's hunting dog killed his brother Usou's child. The ancient Angami customary law known as themu required that Rhieo be exiled from the village as the consequence of this, and accordingly Rhieo made preparations to do so. His grief stricken brother, Usou, begged him to stay and not leave him bereft of both child and brother. But Rhieo, in keeping with the ancient law, left the village and settled

20. See Table on Clan Organization at the end of this Chapter.
21. Salhouthie (70) of Kohima village related to the history of Lhismemia clan.
at a nearby place called Moothuzhu which falls in the present Lhiesemia area. He had five sons, three of whom — Soukhrie, Linyu, and Khielie formed Rhiepfumia clan which was named after Rhieo. 22

When Rhieo and Usou came to Kohima, they were accompanied by their sister, Mesei-u, and her son Tsiera. Tsiera became a successful man and it is said that he and his mother were the first Kohima settlers to have performed the Feast of Merit. Tsiera had five sons — Mepfuo, Tsikha, Vizonuo, Yhome and Dzuvichu — whose descendants multiplied and formed the Tsieramia clan. 23

Another clan that emerged was Huoruotsu. Houruo who came from the Zeliang country was adopted into the village. 24 In those days, it was a common practice to adopt a child from another village or even another tribe. Such was the case of Huoruo. Although the story of his adoption forms an interesting snippet of Angami folklore, it is not pertinent to our analysis at this stage. What is important is that Huoruo prospered and became the father of Huoruotsu clan through his sons Suerhie, Liezle, Rulho and Kesiezie.

22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Doorhilie (80) of Kohima village narrated the history of Huoruotsu clan to the scholar. Huoro came from Kenoma village, and his clan there is known as Tolotsu,
Thus we had the three small clans of Rhiepfumia, Tsieramia, and Huoruotsu. However, each of these clans was too weak to stand up to the fighting of other clans alone. It was at such a critical stage of confrontation that a man from the Mao tribe came to settle in Kohima. It was this man who united these three clans by performing a small feast which involved the killing of a pig - a tribal delicacy at that time. The merger gave birth to a new clan called Lhisemia, literally meaning 'three clans'. Thus, this clan which was now the biggest and most powerful was formed not by the descendants of one man, as is usually the case, but was a banding together of three different clans and has worked with amazing solidarity.

DAPFU - When Rhieo left the original Kohima site, he left behind two of his sons - Yiese and Sachu. These two sons also banded together with a certain man called Dapfu who was also an immigrant from the Mao tribe. The clan thus formed was called Dapfutsu, taking on Dapfu's name because he was the oldest member of the alliance.

The name of the Mao man who united these clans was Krenyi who adopted the name Krunyu when he came to Kohima.
Vikrulie Belho of Kohima village provided this information.
26. Ibid.
27. The direction of Angami migration took place from the Mao country, following the general trend at that time.
This clan is divided into five sub-clans - three of which, Khesie, Kire, and Keretsu - are descended from Dapfu. The other two still bear the names of Yiese and Sachu.  

PFUCHA - The third major clan called Pfuchatsu was named after Pfucha who was one of the descendants of Usou, brother of Rhieo. Pfucha's father died when he was a baby and his mother remarried a man from Chumukedima and settled there with Pfucha. He grew up to be popular and sociable in the village. This stirred feelings of jealousy in the hearts of some of his friends who began taunting him, saying that he was an outsider who did not belong to Chukedima. Puzzled, he asked his mother the meaning of the taunt, but she refused to tell him, until one day, he confronted his mother alone in the house, and forced her to reveal the truth. She unfolded to him the story of his origin and seeing her son's desire to return to his true father's people, sent word to Kohima asking that some men be sent to escort him back. When

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28. These clans are occupying the original site of Kohima. The ancient religious seat is still contained by this clan. Another sub-clan of Dapfu is Keditsu who merged into the clan at a later stage.

29. Ado Rutsa (50) of Kohima village narrated this.

30. Ibid.
two of Usuo's men arrived. Pfucha left Chumukedima with his mother's blessing. She gave him one servant, some cattle and also promised that all the lands on which his cattle stopped to rest the night would belong to him. Thus he gained land large enough to house a settlement. In course of time he grew to be a man of influence and stature, so much so, that the descendants of Usuo merged with him, forming the sub-clause of Usuo, Kerutsa, Sote, Rame, Keyho and Pienyu under the banner of Pfucha clan.

TSUTUO - This clan was the result of a chance meeting between a man from the Semoma clan of Khonoma and a girl of Kohima from Pfucha's clan. One day, as the man was travelling, he stopped to have his lunch in this girl's field. The outcome of this brief encounter was that the girl soon became heavy with child. In course of time, she secretly gave birth to her child and carried the newborn baby to the village. When accosted and asked what it was that she was carrying, she replied that it was a Tsutuo, which means 'cucumber' in Angami. Thus the boy came to be called Tsutuo. He grew up in Kohima and

32. Ibid.
had five sons - Sekhose, Belho, Solo, Whuorie and Geisuo. Their descendants multiplied and formed the Tsutuonomia clan.\textsuperscript{33}

From this discussion on the formation of various clans in Kohima, it becomes amply clear that initially when the process of settling took place the split from Khezhakenoma had left a small number in each clan. Though from the resource point of view, the Angamis were endowed with all advantages, their small number was their constant drawback. Besides, there was a regular threat from Manipur and Assam which were bordering the Angami territory.\textsuperscript{34} It was as a result of this that we find that the Angamis of Kohima were looking for more people to settle there. Tradition provides evidence that people were also sometimes brought and adopted from other villages and tribes.\textsuperscript{35} It also appears that the intra-clan fighting forced these clans to accommodate people from outside. Here it is interesting to observe that this intra-clan fighting was generated by various factors.

\textsuperscript{33} Satuo (60) of Kohima village told the history of Tsutuonomia clan to the scholar.

\textsuperscript{34} Although the relations between the Angamis and neighbouring Assam and Manipur were generally good, occasional border disputes did occur. Robert Reid, History of Frontier Areas Bordering Assam, Delhi, 1942, pp. 99-125.

\textsuperscript{35} The present Theunuomia clan of Kohima is an example of such an adoption.
The early tribal settlers had not given up their primitive nature such as the forcible capturing of each other's territory, taking men as captives and hotheadedness which sometimes led to serious consequences.\textsuperscript{36} The feuds over hunting domain or even some of the various arguments on festive and other occasions gave birth to intra-clan warfare which persisted with the tribal mode of life for a long time. As we have already illustrated, it was as a result of these early clan feuds that Huoruotsu, Rhiepfu and Tsiera clans merged into a big clan known as Lhisemia to consolidate their strength.\textsuperscript{37} In fact, there were many more such alliances which led to the formation of other such clans, but we are unfortunate in not possessing all the details at present.\textsuperscript{38}

Generally the increasing insecurity created by this intra-clan warfare continued for a long time in the history of the Angami villages, and Kohima was no exception. It seems that due to this insecurity, the various clans were forced into alliances and alignments and in this process, we find some villages emerging more powerful. This intra-clan fighting was very closely connected with mutual raids. One clan would raid the other clan and take away all their

\textsuperscript{36} We have many examples of this nature which have also stopped the upward economic development of these clans.

\textsuperscript{37} Salhuothie, \textit{Op.cit.}

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid.}
possession and sometimes even burn the houses and push them back to the other areas. At a later stage, this development must have been generated by population pressure, apart from other factors.

We have evidence to suggest that in the early period, the people of Kohima raided their neighbouring villages. There can be two reasons for this - either the population of Kohima increased as mentioned above and their hunting and other resources did not increase in response to the increasing population, and their only alternative was to look to the resources of the neighbouring villages and capture man and materials; or, the other possibility can be that since the population was less in Kohima and they had large measures of land available, they would forcibly capture the neighbours in order to secure labour power. This reason sounds more plausible, because keeping in view the nature of the land and the living conditions, the population must have always remained limited.

When Kohima started emerging as a powerful village, we find Keruma also growing along the same lines. This

30. Evidence of this was gleaned from the fabric of common knowledge and even today, the smaller villages around Kohima remain bitter at the onslaughts suffered in the past.

40. The old Keruma village was settled in what is now Kohima Raj Bhavan and Officer's Hill. When Keruma was defeated, they left their village and settled in the present village but retained the name of the old village.
became further cause for trouble. Kohima people wanted to plunder and destroy Keruma, but could not do so because Keruma under the legendary warrior, Razieo, was too powerful. After trying every means at their disposal, the people of Kohima could not succeed in destroying Razieo. But an account of the story which survives even today bears a remarkable similarity to the story of Samson and Delilah related in the Old Testament. The people of Kohima sent their most beautiful girl to the field which bordered Keruma village with intent to tempt Razieo. He fell in love with the girl and ultimately married her. The people of Kohima tried to find the secret of Razieo's weakness and they found out through his wife that it was on sacred days when performing rituals that he would not put on armour and was ill-equipped and vulnerable. It was on one such occasion when his beloved signalled her clansmen by spreading a white shawl outside her house which could be seen from Kohima, that they attacked Keruma. It was thus that Razieo was caught unawares due to his trust of the traitor woman. He was killed in the encounter. After

41. Satuo Kotsu (60) of Kohima village told the legend of Razieo.
42. The Bible, Book of Judges, Chapters 13-16.
43. Ibid.
Razieo's death, Keruma was besieged for several months.\textsuperscript{44} When the planting season came, the people of Keruma had no other choice but to leave the old village and migrate to another area, which forms the present Keruma village. In this way, the people of Kohima occupied what is the whole of the old Keruma land and later emerged as an important Angami centre.\textsuperscript{45}

When we look at the nature of technology that Kohima made use of, we find that it was not of an advanced type but was very much primitive in nature because of the isolation from the rest of the world. But their tools certainly had their own peculiarities. The people had their own technological devices for carrying out agriculture, hunting, weaving, spinning, transportation, tools for the manufacture of baskets, brewing, lighting, ornamentation and designing of fighting equipment. The number of agricultural implements remained limited since the Angamis in general depended mainly on hunting as well as jhuming and terrace cultivation for their livelihood.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} This evidence has been collected from the field work carried out by the scholar.
The hoe was used for digging the soil in the jhum and terrace processes. A long wooden hammer was used for breaking the earthen clods. A bamboo rake was used for threshing the paddy, and for husking the paddy a wooden mortar and pestle was used. In agriculture, apart from rice, the other crops were corn, millets, job's tear, soya beans etc. for which the same implements were used. For clearing the jungle and cutting down the plants and trees the Angami used the dao. Iron was a speciality in the technological device before the Angamis settled at Kohima. A sickle was used for cutting the paddy sheaves at harvest time. A rake made of bamboo sticks with a wooden handle was used for clearing weeds.

Apart from cultivation, hunting was an equally important source of subsistence. In the early days hunting may often have taken precedence over agriculture especially when the forests and terrain were more abundant in wild life and posed difficulties for jhuming. For hunting there were various categories of spears with iron tips at both ends. The variation in size of these spears depended on the suitability of the occasion and the kind of hunt. The spear

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid. The dao is the most important implement among all the Naga tribes. There is a little variation in its design and size, however, from tribe to tribe.
was also used by the warriors and was often beautifully decorated and designed. The length of the spears varied from four to six feet. They were, however, incomplete as a weapon without the shield which was made out of bear, elephant and tiger hides. The shield was about four to five feet long and approximately three feet wide. These shields were often decorated with feathers along the edges, each feather signifying various achievements in war and social life. The dao, which has a multi-technological purpose, was used for hunting. It was also used in man to man combat and was specifically useful in cutting off the heads of enemies. In appearance it resembles a thick, short sword. But unlike a sword, its tip is squared off and not tapered. It varies in length from one to four feet. Another weapon used was the bow and arrow. Like the dao and spear, it varied in size and in the process of handling and was used during the Sekrenyi festival. It was different, however, from the type used by other Naga tribes. Although firearms or muskets were introduced to the Angamis by the Manipuris in the medieval period, it


50. On such occasions, a wooden effigy is constructed and the men of the village shoot at this effigy. This was done to commemorate the rituals of hunting and of war.
was only when the British arrived that the Angamis became familiar with more sophisticated tools of weaponry.\textsuperscript{51}

Since the climate of the area was of a moderate type, the Angamis depended only on cotton to protect their bodies. Every family used to spin their own clothes. The climate dictated their choice of cotton as a crop and did not necessitate the practice of stock grazing for wool. Sheep and goats were raised and kept for meat instead. It is also probable that the use of wool, needing a more developed technological apparatus, was not adopted since cotton, simpler to process and weave, served their needs equally well. Weaving of cotton was carried out on a wooden frame and loin loom. A wooden machine was also used for the processing of cotton balls into yarns. The whole process of the manufacture of cotton cloths from start to finish was the sole work of women.

Before the Angamis developed proper villages like Kohima and Khonoma, there does not seem to have existed trade or commerce with neighbouring states which should have involved various mechanisms for transporting goods

\textsuperscript{51} The various items of weaponry exposed to them by the British included mountain guns, rifles, cannons and so on. Alexander Mackenzie, \textit{A History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North East Frontier of Bengal}, Calcutta, 1884.
from one area to another. Besides this, the Angamis were not dependant on those domestic and other items which would have to be procured from outside.\(^{52}\) It is as a result of this that we find the technology of transport almost absent in the pre-Kohima phase. For collecting and carrying purposes they used cane containers and baskets. In some rare instances, the Angamis reared horses but they themselves do not seem to have used them for transport and instead used them for bartering and sale.\(^{53}\)

Some small iron implements were used for making cane baskets, containers, wood carvings and for the construction of houses and bridges. Use of bamboo and cane were indispensable. In fact, bamboo formed an important and integral part of the tribal life. It was not only used for raising structures, fencing, implements, warfare, lighting system and in making other articles for decoration, but even as a food in the form of bamboo shoots.\(^{54}\) Like other societies which are

\(^{52}\) It will not be wrong to state that the growth of villages and expansion of Angami areas to the plains broke the self-sufficiency of the Angamis and increased their dependence on outside elements.

\(^{53}\) There is a mention of the horse in Angami folklore, but this animal does not appear to have played any vital or significant role in their daily life. It was considered more as a mysterious animal, and the Angamis would not eat horse meat.

\(^{54}\) Bamboo is such an indispensable item in the whole of South East Asia that one can even use the term 'Bamboo Culture' in relation to this area.
technologically backward, the lighting arrangements mostly consisted of burning resinated pine, dry bamboo and firewood. In most cases, wooden logs were burnt for cooking, and for heat as well as for lighting purposes.  

Apart from all these items there were intricate objects which were used for entertainment. Such items were the musical instruments and ornaments. These items did not assume significance because of their entertainment value alone, but they had deep roots in the religious and tribal culture. For example, blowing the buffalo horn was not only reserved for festive occasions but was a traditional means of calling people on various occasions. The flute and a sort of Jewish harp, a one-stringed violin, a single stringed instrument called tati played on the fingers were used by the Angamis.  

The brewing of local rice beer (su) has been practised by most of the tribal societies since early times. It was taken as an essential part of their daily diet and also used as a means of expressing joy and merry-making on  

55. Based on field work.  
56. All these instruments are still in current use among the Angami villagers although their use is gradually dying out.
festive occasions. Rice beer was also used for ritualistic and religious purposes. 57

In a society where the materialistic culture had not penetrated to large degree in the early period, the sense of making and wearing ornaments is an important and interesting field of study. Looking to their past, they seem to have travelled a long way from their original homeland. Whatever the origin of the ornaments at that stage, they went on assimilating whatever seemed to them beautiful and fitting to their customs. 58 The more common ornaments that Angamis used to wear were earrings, necklaces, headgear, beads, ivory armlets, cane leggings, and a kilt decorated with cowrie shells. 59 Gradually, their contact with the neighbouring tribes of Assam and other non-tribals added many more items to their ornamentation from time to time. The introduction of silver and coins in ornamentations was a nineteenth century development, when the increasing penetration of money economy took place.

57. Rice beer symbolically signifies strength and life and its inclusion in rituals and prayers forms an essential part of religious and social practices, being held in great esteem and reverence. For instance, at the time of birth, rice beer is put first to the baby's lips before any other food. It is also used to warm the spirit in meeting halls and councils.

Angami tools and technology were thus primitive in nature. The chief bottleneck in development was due primarily to the isolation that they maintained with the rest of the world. But it was historically impossible to continue in isolation. This was made all the more apparent with events such as the appearance of British colonization on the North Eastern scene. The effects of this colonization will be discussed further in the next chapter.

From ancient times down to the colonial period, the Angami centre of Kohima has a long history which poses some important questions:

a. How could this centre survive and remain uninfluenced by the expanding Brahmanization process which had enveloped the whole of Assam and even portions of Manipur?

b. What was the nature of the strength which kept the Angamis in possession of this centre as their political, social and economic seat?

In suggesting a solution, we have got to understand the motives behind Brahmanization or Sanskritization. From the time of its conception, the process of Sanskritization was an ideological instrument used by ancient and early
medieval rulers of India in expanding their area of influence. In Assam as well, this movement had similar aims. But the environment was not quite conducive because in Assam there were several tribes. Apart from that, a problem was also posed by the migration of the Ahoms into Assam. Still, in the ancient period there were reference to prove that some of the Assamese Brahmins did attempt the Sanskritization of Nagas but could not succeed. Some old Angamis would refer to priests as 'Bramuno' which is a clear cut indication. However, on the other hand, the process must not have registered much progress due to the problem of internal consolidation. Secondly, the ruler of Assam might not have given much encouragement because this expansion of Sanskritization would not bring any revenue from Naga

60. The best illustration of this nature is provided by the Boros, Manipuris, Ahoms and Dimasas who got Hinduised and witnessed an intense stratification on caste lines.

61. In Assam also, in the pre-Ahom times, the process of Brahmanisation dissolved the tribal structure. In the Ahom period, conversion was taken over by Shankar Devas' neo-Vaishnavism.


63. Thepshwetuo (60) of Khonoma gave this information.
The other important reason which did not permit the Brahmin influence to grow was that, compared to the sanskritized tribes of the Boros, Ahoms, and Manipuris, the Angamis were not prepared to sacrifice their communal tribal organization to a stratified varna and later to a caste hierarchy. The Angamis were also aware of the fact that when the neighbouring tribes were assimilated into the Brahmanical system, they were delegated to the ranks of the lower castes, whereas as tribals operating within their own traditional organizational structure, the Angamis would remain as free and as equal as any man created by God.

In an environment where agrarian economy was not predominant and people had to depend on hunting and other means of subsistence, it was the tribal social organization

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64. The Naga Hills were endowed with meagre resources and not much land was available to support the establishment of Brahmanical design.

65. This becomes clear from the fact that even after getting Christianized, the Angamis have not severed their connection with their tribal heritage.

66. The influence of the neighbouring regions have left a deep imprint on the Angami society. They would not allow any change which would stratify them on exploitative lines by non-Nagas. However, one cannot be sure about the survival of such feelings with the growing penetration of money economy.
which could help them because hunting or even for that matter terrace cultivation could not be carried out without communal labour. Whereas the varna orientation did not permit the mixing of two varnas even in a single religion. Besides religion, the Angamis with their early Mongoloid traditions and customs had a completely distinct way of life from the rest of Assam. All this evidence suggests that the Angamis remained apart particularly in the religio-cultural aspects. Politically and economically there was mutual exchange in various respects.

We find that Kohima was more easily accessible and gradually got transformed into an urban centre within the tribal mode. It was from here that the people from the interior would come and get their products exchanged and gain awareness about the new influences of technology and economy. This development seems to have played a vital role in transforming Kohima from a tribal village into a centre of Angami civilization. It is the urban nature of Kohima which increased the mobility within Naga tribal society.

67. It was a practice among the Angamis both in hunting and in terrace cultivation that communal effort was utilized in order to effect the maximum benefit and efficiency in the practice of these tasks. The system of communal labour was on an organized level, called peli where a group of young people would work in each others' fields in rotation. Sometimes the whole village would also join together in certain prescribed tasks known as Mechutho.
From the establishment of Ahom rule, we get a lot of evidence to prove that there was regular contact between the Angamis and the plains of Assam. In fact many Angami chiefs were rewarded with gifts by Ahom rulers and there commenced a good relationship of trade and commerce -

"The Naga tribes bordering the plains were in constant communication with the plains for trade purposes during Ahom rule. They carried on trade in their hill products like cotton, betel leaves (pan), ginger, taro (kachchu), and salt and in exchange carried back articles in which their hills were deficient."^68

Some of the Angamis were said to have joined the Ahom army.69 Often when there was a fight between two or more claimants to the throne of Assam, the weaker ones sought refuge in Naga Hills.70 Even Atan Borgohain, who was the Prime Minister of Ahom from 1662-1669 also seems to have taken refuge in Naga Hills.71

However, this period of Ahom rule in Assam did not register serious change in Kohima social organization.

69. Salhonthie Miachieo (70) of Kohima village told instances of Kohima villagers who joined the Ahom army in the past.
71. Ibid., pp. 162-163.
Though there was a long drawn process of mutual exchanges, it did not disturb the tribal setting among the Angamis. The Ahom rule which was based on an exploitative structure could not resist the Burmese onslaught and it was in the nineteenth century that extreme poverty developed. Strong symptoms of deterioration began to surface, but before the final liquidation of the empire the Burmese entered Assam and ruled for some years. It was in this period that colonialism made its appearance in North East India. Not merely was the North East important from the strategical point of view to the British but from the material point of view as well, because Assam was possessed with rich forest resources, oil fields, large tracts of land for tea plantations and agriculture. Apart from these economic considerations, the colonial masters recognized that this was the main entry point for operations in the interior of the North Eastern region. Strategically, the North East provided a natural frontier to the British position in India.

72. Prior to the British occupation, the ties of kinship, lineages and clan-based organization did not promote the mobility of the Angamis outside the region. Hence such measures kept tribal social organization uninfluenced and restricted the penetration of outside economy.


It was because of these reasons that the British ousted the Burmese and concluded the Treaty of Yandabo under which the entire Burmese possessions of North East India were handed over to the British. All these developments exercised tremendous influence on Kohima and for that matter, on the entire Naga Hills.

Although with these developments, Kohima society entered into a transitional phase gradually assimilating the influence exercised by outside economy, with the decline of Ahom rule, a closed nature of economy was imposed and Kohima seems to have closed its doors to developing contacts from Manipur on one hand, and Assam on the other, for a period until British made Kohima headquarters in the later part of the nineteenth century. Though initially the British entry in the Angami country met with strong resistance, the British were gradually able to establish themselves in Nagaland with their main centre at Kohima. It was with the establishment of colonial rule that Kohima assumed prominence from every point of view, until Kohima became the centre not only of political activity but the hub of the socio-cultural and political life of the Nagas.

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CLAN ORGANISATION OF KOHIMA

KOHIMA

(1) LHISEMIA  (2) TSUTUONOMIA  (3) DAPFUTSUMIA  (4) PUCHATSUMIA

(a) HUORUOTSU  (b) TSIARA  (c) RHIEPFU

SORHIE  LIEZIETSU  KESIEZIE  RULHO

YAOTSU  CHIELIETSU

(b) TSIARA

MEPFUO  TSEIKHA  VIZONUO  YHOME  DZUVICHU

(c) RHIEPFU

SUOKHRIE  LINYU  KHELIETSU

KELIO  MIACHIEO  KRATSUTSU  TSIESOTSU  KHROMO