CHAPTER-II

Unification/integration of all Naga Areas in the North East

A healthy nation is as unconscious of its nationality as a healthy man of his bones. But if you break a nation's nationality it will think of nothing else but getting it set again. It will listen to no reformer, to no philosopher, to no preacher, until the demand of the Nationalist is granted. It will attend to no business, however vital, except the business of unification and liberation.

--George Bernard Shaw, Preface to John Bull's Other Island, 1904.

Restructuring of Boundaries as part of Conflict Transformation

This Chapter deals with the of restructuring of boundaries in the North East as one important elements of conflict transformation particularly in the context of the Nagas' aspiration to integrate their contiguous territory in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur and Nagaland states. The demand for integration of all Naga areas in the North East into one administrative political unit is one of the substantive issues of the Naga movement. The demand for unification of all Naga areas is not an isolated issue of the Nagas' struggle for recognition of their political aspiration for the right to self-determination. As part of the overall transformation of the relationship between parties, the issue of integration of all Naga areas in the North East has become a crucial area for research analysis and examination.

The Chapter has not only thoroughly delved into the identity of the Naga people, historical accounts of their geographical locations, historical evolution of the international boundaries across the Naga territory and the border tensions in all the states, but has also discussed in details the movement for unification of all Naga people

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and their territory. The important points to be noted is that as part of Indo-Naga conflict transformation, the integration of all Naga areas in the North East is not only an essential element but is also an inevitable step to be taken by parties. Recognition of this aspiration and turning of the recognition into reality will have far reaching positive implications in the parties' efforts to bring a peaceful political solution to the conflict. The important point is without certain structural changes are brought about the past institutional orders will remain static which will hardly help in transforming the conflict. The following discussion brings out the relevant of such changes to be taken place in the context of the Nagas' aspiration for integration of their areas in the North East. In order to arrive at a certain positive argument on the importance of Naga integration, let us briefly discuss the identity of the Naga people, their geographical locations and areas of distributions, historical evolution of international and state boundaries and the consequent boundary tensions across borders and the unification movement and its philosophy.

**Broad Naga Geographical Locations**

The Nagas are indigenous people of about four million comprising more than 40 different tribes. Historically, the Nagas are indigenous people of their own living independently without interference from outsiders since time immemorial. It is estimated that there are at least 5,000 indigenous groups composed of 300 million people living in more than 70 countries on five continents. Their way of life, livelihood, culture, worldview and religion are inextricably intertwined with and dependent on the traditional environment in which they live. In most countries, indigenous people are not members of the dominant, majority groups. Although they may consider themselves "nations", they have no status as States and often have no voice in these nation states. Indeed, the Nagas are a stateless nationality struggling to get a nation-state for themselves since 1940s. The Nagas inhabit a contiguous geographical homeland bound in the north by China, in the west by Assam (India), in the south by Manipur Valley and Mizoram (India) and the

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Chin Hills (Burma), and in the east beyond the Chindwin River and along its tributary the Uyu River (Burma).\(^4\)

The earlier specific reference to the Nagas was considered to have been made by Claudius Ptolemy in 150 A.D. in his Geographia in which the area is referred to as “The Realm of the Nagas.”\(^5\) However, the Royal Chronicles of Manipur recorded by King Meitingu Nongda Lairen Pakhamba of Manipur mentioned about Naga Haochong village of Kabui (Inpui) Nagas around 33 to 150 A.D. Another mentioned of the same village was made by the Manipuri King Ningthourel Lamba during his reign around 662 – 762 A.D.\(^6\) Hieun Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who visited Assam during Bhaskarvarman’s ruled in 1645 A.D. wrote:

“...the east of this country is bounded by a line of hills, so that there is no great city to the kingdom. The frontiers are contiguous to the barbarian of the south west china. These tribes are in fact akin to those of the man people in their custom.”\(^7\)

Ahom Buranjis also recorded that by the time Ahoms came to Assam in the 13\(^{th}\) century, the Nagas were already settled in their present homeland. They wrote of the Naga resistance to Sukhapa, the founder of the Ahom kingdom. Mr. Non. W. Mui, who was the secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department in his letter to the secretary to the government of West Bengal, letter No. 538, Shimla, 8\(^{th}\) June 1866, has mentioned about the name “Naga” and boundary as below:

“That the tribes inhabiting part of the great mountain system which lies to the south of the Assam valley – tribes, many in number and differing in characteristics but extended under the generic name of Naga from Bori Dihing river and Singapho country to


\(^{6}\) ibid, p.15.

\(^{7}\) ibid, p.15.
Lakhimpur west to the Kopoli river in the Nowgoan and south to the confines of Manipur and Cachar.  

Sir James Johnstone, KSCI, found out Naga territory was outside the British territory. In the matter of land survey, he categorically stated that Red Line should not be extended. (The rule was that whenever the red line is marked in the map, it was necessary to carry out the survey work o\in the ground). In justifying his decision, he recorded as below:

"Nagas are not a British territory and we do not want to extend the Red Line (in the map) — that is Nagaland." Vashum suggested that the area of distribution of Naga tribes are spread over the four states of Northeastern (– Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh –) and over the north western part of Myanmar (previously Burma), in Sagaing Division, clustering in the hill villages around Kamhti, Layshi, Lahe, and Nanyun townships, down to the Chindwin river in the east and in Kachin State in Myanmar. The above description of the Naga territory is approximately 120,000 sq km of landmass which corresponds very closely to John Henry Hutton’s descriptions of the Naga lands in his introduction to J.P. Mills’ classic ethnographic account of the Lhota Nagas published in 1922: the area inhabited by the Naga tribes is bounded by the Hukawng Valley in the north east, the plains of the Brahmaputra Valley to the north west, of Cachar to the south west and of the Chindwin to the east. In the south the Manipur valley roughly marks the point of contact between the Naga tribes and very more closely inter-related group of Kuki tribes – Thado, Lushei, Chin, etc. The website of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN) – IM’s quoting Hutton description of the land of Naga people or the area inhabited by the Naga tribes describes precisely the geographical territory belonging to, what the NSCN – IM calls the Naga Nation:

"Nagaland (Nagalim) has always been a sovereign nation occupying a compact area of 120,000 km of the Patkai Range in between the longitude 93°E and 97°E and the latitude 23.5°N and 28.3°N. It lies at the tri-junction of China, India and Burma. Nagalim, without the knowledge and consent of the Naga people, was apportioned between India and Burma after their respective declaration of independence. The part which India illegally claims is sub-divided and placed under four different administrative units, viz., Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland states. The eastern part, which Burma unlawfully claims, is placed under two administrative units, viz., Kachin State and Sagaing Division (formerly known as the Naga Hills). Nagalim, however, transcends all these demarcations of boundary."\textsuperscript{12}

Nagaland or Nagalim\textsuperscript{13} inhabited by the Nagas in both India and Burma, in other words, is known as Naga Ancestral Domain. Historically speaking, the Nagas were contentedly living in their ancestral homeland till the arrival of the Britishers in the early part of 19th century. Each village was a state by itself with a chief and council of elders.\textsuperscript{14} The Naga village is the unit of people's sovereignty and also the first institution of the Nagas. This unit has a territory with clear cut demarcation within which the villagers have due their space and good life. This unit has its own systems in the social, religious, political and economic spheres.\textsuperscript{15} Ancient Greek society also divided into a collection of independent city-states, each of which possessed its own system of government.\textsuperscript{16} The Naga village unit has its own customary laws for the administration of justice without any interference from outside world. The land and people belong to the system just as the system belongs to the people and the land. These village units were never under the rule

\textsuperscript{12} NSCN - IM (National Socialist Council of Nagaland led by Isak Chisi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah), 2002, website: \url{http://www.angelfire.com/mo/Nagaland/Background.html} (2nd November 2002), as cited in Baruah, Sanjib, 'Confronting Constructionism: Ending India’s Naga War'. This paper was presented at the Center for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, on 22nd January 2003.

\textsuperscript{13} The Nagas had started using the word “Nagalim” in placed of “Nagaland” since 1997. “Lim” simply means land in Ao Naga language. When Nagas refer to Nagalim they meant the entire area inhabited by the Nagas in the same way they used to use the word Nagaland. But people wrongly interpreted the word Nagaland to mean only the present state of Nagaland. To dispel this misconception, the term Nagalim is being used.


\textsuperscript{15} Naga Hoho, ibid, p. vii. (forward).

of any government before the advent of the colonial Britain. Even after more than 130 years of Christian influence and introduction of the government system, the villages still retain their uniqueness and de-facto sovereignty. The existence of sovereign Naga villages with their own territory, their system and population from time immemorial to this day is the living proof of Naga sovereignty because the Naga nation is made up of sovereign Naga villages.

The Naga Identity

Broadly, the academic consensus is that the Nagas are “a conglomeration of a number of distinct tribes belonging to the Mongoloid racial group that share physical and cultural traits”. This definition of the Naga social identity was suggested by J.P. Mills in 1922. This received a clearer elucidation in 1925 by W.C. Smith, a British anthropologist. Few peoples evoke such fascination as the highlanders group under the name Naga. To the highlanders themselves, however, the appellation was foreign. They had no generic term for the tribal group as a whole and at most used specific names for a particular group of villages such as: Chingjaroi, Grihang, Kangkum, Ringui Ramhon (Ukhrul); Chishilimi, Khonoma, Longwa, Ungma, Wuangram village (Nagaland state); Machi, Tengnoupal, Chakpikarong, Khoibu (Chandel); Makhel, Oinam, Thangal, Khezeke Noma, Pudungnamei (Senapati); Khoupum, Dolang, Longmai, Tamei (Tamenglong); Namsang, Longkhai (Arunchal Pradesh); Impui (Haflong); and Somra, Lungsa, Sataka, Lasam (Burma). This was largely due to internecine warfare among villages and resulting isolation. As late as 1954 Elwin found the people of Tuensang seldom speaking of themselves as Naga but as Konyak, Chang, Phom and so on. The term “Naga” was actually applied to these highlanders by the dwellers of the plains. It may derive from the Burmese Na-Ka “peoples with pierced earlobes” or the Assamese noga “Naked”. By the late 19th century it was acceptable to speak of certain fixed groups — so-called “tribes” — rather than village units.

17 Naga Hoho, ibid, p. vii.
The classification of tribal groups inevitably passed over many details, even more so the term “Naga”. In 1879 the Naga were estimated at 18 groups. A survey of 1895 listed merely nine (9). Hutton discern 14 Naga groups – as in Elwin’s count (1961) – but their groups differ. In the 1970’s Horam listed 30 and Yonuo 38. The number of Naga tribes suggested by NSCN (IM) is 43 while Vashum suggested 40 tribes. However, the Naga Hoho suggested 66 lists of Naga tribes both in India and Burma.

Udayon Misra suggests that a deep attachment to native soil, to local tradition and rejection of outside domination characterize the modern Naga identity. Indirectly and unwittingly the term “Naga” helped shape what today maybe called “Naga identity”. Yet, this identity also owes much to the existence of common cultural ties between the groups and the generally accepted fact that the Naga derive from one racial stock.

The Naga are a part of a wide scattering Mongolic people found in areas as diverse as China, the Arctic and Amazonia. On the basis of language, origin of the Nagas is assigned by Sir. G.A. Grierson to that of the Tibeto-Burmans, who came with the second wave of migration from North Western area of the Hwang-Ho River. According to Grierson the Naga languages belong to the Tibeto-Chinese family. However, linguistic variations-60 dialects according to the encyclopedia Britannica- are deep and far-ranging. Even the same tribe living in different villages very dissimilar.

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22 NSCN (IM) website http://www.angelfire.com/mo/Nagaland/Background.html
23 Vashum,R., Nagas’ Right to Self-determination,ibid.,p.10; Vashum, R., Indo-Naga Conflict, ibid.,p.4.
24 Naga Hoho, ibid., p. 58. The Naga Hoho is a federation of all Nag tribes and is the third institution of the Nagas after the Naga Village and the Naga Tribe. It was born on 25th June, 1994 at Wokha and its Constitution was adopted after official formation of the Naga Hoho during the 11th and 12th March, 1998 session at Zunheboto. It is neither a political nor a Government body or like other NGOs and social organizations but it is the tribe based apex body of the Nagas under the traditional system and practices of the Naga people.
26 Stirn, Aglaja and Ham, Peter van, ibid., p.30.
27 ibid.,p.30.
28 Nuh, V.K. and Lasuh, Wetshokhrolo, ibid., p.15.
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dialects and, when meeting, must use a lingua franca: Nagamese, a pidgin of broken Assamese and local argot, or Meitei in the Manipur hills, or English.\textsuperscript{29}

While the majority of those inhabiting Northeast India—equal in size to Western Europe—are of Mongoloid stock and linguistically Tibeto-Burman family,\textsuperscript{30} the term “Naga” needs to be extended beyond the merely ethno-linguistic to include socio-cultural aspects.\textsuperscript{31} The institution of the Morung, or bachelor’s dormitory, so typical for the Naga, might be a classificatory benchmark, only such dormitories also exist in other Northeast Indian societies such as Adi of Arunachal Pradesh, yet are rarely found among the Angami, a genuine Naga group. Slash and Burn cultivation as practiced by most Naga groups is likewise of limited use, since the agricultural form is found almost everywhere in Southeast Asia. The most spectacular aspect of Naga culture—head-hunting—narrows the range of peoples considerably. Yet, even head-hunting in some form has existed in other Northeast and Burmese societies, especially if one includes related practices such as human sacrifices.\textsuperscript{32}

Territorial aspects have to be taken into account in classifying the Nagas. The Nagas have always been hill-dwellers. Their natural habitat comprises the mountain ranges and hills running in the Northeastern/Southwestern direction south of the Brahmaputra divide in Assam and west of the Chindwin River in Myanmar. The Himalayan mountain ranges north of the Brahmaputra are outside the region, as are the Lushai and the Chin Hills of Mizoram that run in a straight southerly direction.

The traditional faith of the Nagas was animism. They worshipped no idol or creatures. They did not belong to any major religion of the world but like many other tribals of the world they believed in and feared spirits. And also believed in the existence

\textsuperscript{29} Kumar, Ram Narayan and Murthy, Laxmi, ‘Four Years of the Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of India (GOI) and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN): Promises and pitfalls, for Civil Society Initiatives on the Naga Peace Process, Published by Civil Society Initiatives on the Naga Peace Process and Other Media Communications’, New Delhi, 2002, p.13 (See the footnote No.5)
\textsuperscript{30} Stirn, Aglaja and Ham, Peter van,\textit{The Seven Sisters of India: Tribal World between Tibet and Burma} (Munich/London/New York/Ahmedabad, 2000), as cited in Stirn and Ham, ibid.,p.33.
\textsuperscript{31} ibid.,p.33.
\textsuperscript{32} Stirn and Ham, 2000, ibid.,pp.162-65 as cited in Stirn and Ham, ibid p.33.
of an ultimate being who governed everything in the world that was also behind to be in all that exist. Thus, it was easier for them to embrace Christianity then other religions. There are still among Nagas who cling on to their traditional religion of animism.\textsuperscript{33} Looking at linguistic, ethnic, cultural and traditional aspect together, a fairly clear picture emerges as to who is included under the term “Naga”.\textsuperscript{34} Thus, geo-culturally and historically, the hill ranges inhabited by the Naga tribes were barriers between the kingdoms of south China and the Burmese empires of Pagan, Magung, Pegu, Ava and Arakan, including India – especially the Tai Ahom in Assam – and the Meitei dynasties (Manipur). They were places of refuge for people who were force for whatever reason to migrate from their own territories. Naga groups traditionally builds their villages on hilltops- putting them out of reach of their enemies; the hill climate was also more congenial to them, since winter’s coolness reduces malaria and springs are uncontaminated.\textsuperscript{35}

As we have seen, Nagas have been living independently in their respective village republics from time immemorial; any interference from outsiders would be fiercely resisted. After resolutely fighting British invasion of their land and defending it against all foreign powers and intervention, the Nagas declared that territory an independent sovereign republic on August 14, 1947. However, without their knowledge and consent, the Nagas and their land were arbitrarily divided up and passed on by the British Empire to both Burma and India.\textsuperscript{36} The drawing of an official borders between India and Burma in 1947 certainly affected all Nagas, whatever territory they were on. Yet, they strive to achieve what they have been dreaming for more then last half of the century: to live under one system as a country. However, until the present day, India and Burma have denied the Naga freedom to exercise their sovereign rights and to live together as a people.\textsuperscript{37} Nagas resistance against fifty-eight (58) years of occupation had taken the forms of both non-violence and armed struggle movement.\textsuperscript{38} In modern time, the Naga political struggle for Self-Determination has greatly strengthened the Naga

\textsuperscript{33} Nuh, V.K and Lasuh, Wetshokhrolo, ibid., p.16.
\textsuperscript{34} Stin and Ham, ibid., p.33.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 24
\textsuperscript{36} 'Nagalim' in 'The Indigenous World', 2004, Ibid., p 284
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 284.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 284.
identity. The struggle for territorial integration of all Naga areas by the Nagas could be said as a part of this political struggle. It is a well known a fact that the Naga identity and their land are deeply interconnected. The Nagas have a strong attachment to their land and its resources.

Within a community the Naga’s identity is deeply rooted in the village of his birth and residence. Being a citizen of a particular village is the most important aspect of a Naga’s existence because this identity is marked within a specified racial and linguistic space. The identity affiliated to a village draws attention to clan affinity, possession of ancestral and other properties in the form of land holdings, and underlines one’s responsibility to the community in the form of participating in community rituals, celebrations, and in the governance of the village polity. A Naga who is banished from his ancestral village for political, social or criminal offenses is like a person without a country. There can be no greater humiliation for a Naga than this fate that strips him of this symbolic identity and he is thus disaffiliated from his origin and tradition. At an inter-village level the antiquity and the size of a village lend a certain aura of superiority to a citizen of such a village. For example, a villager from Changki, when addressing a gathering of village representatives of the Aos, begins his speech by introducing himself, as “I am Changki, the father of thirty villages.”39 By this he means that he can claim seniority over others by virtue of the antiquity of his village. In a culture that respects age, such an introduction immediately enhances the speaker’s identity among his peers. On the whole, the combination of nationality and territory gives the Nagas the most dynamic definition of their identity.

The people and the land have been coalesced and that we can not talk about the Naga identity without the inclusion of their land. The Naga identity is not only rooted in their history, culture, economy and polity but it has also deeply intertwined with their land and its resources.

To cut short the discussion, it can be maintained that the conception of the Naga identity can not be completed without taking into consideration the strong connection between the Naga people and their territory. The deprivation of the land to the Naga people would be like tearing their concrete identity. In means the people and the Naga land cannot be separated like politics and the people can not be separated from each other. The disintegration of the Naga areas by the colonial British, and subsequently by the Indian and Burmese states have deeply disturbed the solidness of the Naga identity in terms of political system, socio-cultural aspects and economy. One of the main objectives of the Nagas struggle for Sovereignty is to restore the territorial integration of all Nagas to live together again as one family. The struggle is still on and the issue is being placed on the table during the present peace process between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN).

Historically and politically speaking, the discourse on unification/integration is an essential element of the Naga political movement. But before we proceed on to that discourse, we must point out the Naga tribes and their areas of distribution in the states of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in India and the Sagaing Division and Kachin state in Burma. This chapter explore the history as to how the colonial Britain and, the Indian and Burmese States have demarcated the Naga areas deemed to their interests, and the consequent hardships faced by the Nagas in two contradictory systems of governance. In this context, tracing the historical account of the unification processes as was initiated in the Naga contiguous areas since the formation of the Naga Club in 1918 gain imperative and significance.

The Naga People and their Areas of Distribution

The Nagas and their areas have been placed and dislocated across various states in the process of states' administrative convenience, diplomatic and security concerns and interest. The Naga people and their areas of distribution in the states of Nagaland,
Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in the Indian side, and the Sagaing Division and the Kachin State in Burma can be described as under.40

Area of the present State of Nagaland is 16,579 sq. km. In Nagaland, the Angami Nagas are concentrated in Kohima district and some parts of Dimapur (a newly created district as of late in 1997) and erstwhile sub-division of Kohima district. While Mokokchung district is said to be the abode of the Aos, the Semas are mainly concentrated in Zunheboto and Dimapur districts fringes of Tuensang district. The Lothas and Konyaks (lower and upper) are concentrated in Wokha and Mon districts respectively. Phek district is said to be the homeland of Chakesang and Pochuris. The Rengmas are mainly concentrated in Tseminyu-sub-division of Kohima district. Tuensang district is dominated by the Yimchungers, Khiamniungans, Phoms, Sangtams (The Sangtams are also concentrated in Phek district), Changs, Tikkhirs, Chirrs, Makuri and Mimi. The Zeliangrongs (a combination of Zeme, Liangmei, Rongmei and Puimei) are concentrated in Peren sub-division (of Kohima district) and Dimapur district. The Tangkhuls and Maos among others are also settled in Dimapur and Kohima.

In the present state of Manipur, four Naga Hills districts, namely, Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong and Chandel covers the areas of 15,519 sq km. out of the total areas of 22,327 sq. km. Ukhrul district is the land of the Tangkhul, Tamenglong of the Zeliangrong and it is also the home of Kharam Nagas. The Maos, Poumais, Marams and Thangals are concentrated in Senapati district. In Chandel district the ten Nagas tribes settled, namely Maring, Aimol, Anal, Lamkang, Moyon, Monsang, Chothe, Chiru, Tarao and Koireng. The Koirengs, Chothes and Chiru are sparsely distributed in Chandel, Bishnupur and Senapati districts.

In Arunachal Pradesh four Naga tribes are concentrated in Tirap and Changlang districts. Nocte, Wancho and Tangsa inhabited Tirap and Changlang districts.

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40 The present chapter has made used the works of R. Vashum’s ‘Nagas Right to Self Determination and Indo-Naga Conflict; Aglaja Stirn and Peter van Ham; Naga Hoho; V. K. Nuh and Wetshokhrolo Lasuh and Bhavna-Vij-Aurora’s ‘Talking peace, Looking over their Shoulders’, Indian Express, January 10, 2003, New Delhi, especially in describing the Naga tribes and their areas of settlement in India and Burma.
respectively while Tutsa inhabits the Changlang/Tirap area. The total area of the Nagas in Arunachal Pradesh is 7,052 sq km. out of 83,743 sq km.

In Assam, 24,343 Sq. Km. out of 78,438 sq km. is said to be transferred to the Assam from the Naga Hills by the Britishers and the Government of India. Two Naga tribes Zeliangrong and Rengma inhabits North-Cachar Hill, Karbi-Anglong, and parts of Golaghat, Sibsagar, Nagaon, Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia in Assam. The above Naga areas in Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in India is approximately 63,493 sq km.

In Burma the Naga inhabited various townships like Layshi, Lahe, Singkaling-Hkamti, Nan yun, Homalin and Tamanthi with the approximate areas of 56,507 sq km. The different Naga tribes in Burma are Lainung, Macham, Heimi, Pangmi, Ponyo, Shanpuri, Reingu, Gongvan, Yonkon, Kuku, Konyak, Yimchungyer, Phom, Moyon, Tangsa, Nocte, Wancho, Khiamniungan, Pochuri, Maring, Mimi, Makuri and Tangkhul. The last 13 tribes inhabited in both India and Burma. In Burma, the Tangsa is referred to as Rang pan while Nocte and Wancho are known as Hashik and Kaiyaw respectively. Khiamniungan is known in Myanmar as Nokaw while Pochuri are known as Para in Burma. The Tangkhul inhabits the Naga Hills in eastern Manipur and the Somra tract of Burma. They are referred to as Somra Tangkhul in Burma. The population of more than 130,000 Tangkhuls shows that they are main Naga tribe in Manipur.

In Burma, they inhabited a fairly tight range of villages, and their territory is full of hill ranges and river, such as Thoubal, Tuyungbi and the Maklang. The highest peak is the Shirui Kashong (2568m) where the rare Shirui Lily was first found and name after the village in the foothills. The most important Tangkhul villages are Ukhrul, which gives its name to the District, Humbum, Nungbi, Somdal, Tolloi, Tangkhul Hundung, Khangkhui, Jessami, Chamu, Kangpat, Hongmahn, Dardouy (Nambashi), Sinakeitheli, 41

41 The Hongmahn village is in Senapati District. The village is important because our leader R. Suisa who was born on 4th March 1904 from Somdal village became an MLA in 1948 and 1949 and MP in 1957-1962 after which he directly involved in Naga politics by serving as Assistant to Vice-President, Naga National Council (NNC) from 1964-1966. He also made a proposal called the R. Suisa Proposal as an individual
together with Somra and Konkailon in Burma. The Tangkhul were brave headhunter and the Ukhrul District is home to many Naga Nationalists. The Tangkhul were excellent wood carvers, their Morungs and rich men’s houses have become rare in Manipur, but may still be able to be found in Burma.

In summary, the ‘Divide and Rule’ policy of both the colonial Britain and the post-colonial States vis-à-vis the Nagas has a devastating impact on the Naga people be it political, economy, cultural and many other spheres. Due to the arbitrary demarcation of the Nagas areas by the colonial master and subsequently by the post-colonial Indian and Burmese states, the indigenous Naga people had been forced to live not only in different countries but also in different administrative states. To throw us light on how the Naga ancestral domain has been arbitrarily divided between and within the two countries, it is imperative to go back in search of the administrative policies of the British and the Indian and Burmese States.

**Historical Evolution of Political Boundaries of India and Burma**

The intercourse between the Nagas and the Burmese is as old as the story of their origin and migration was. The Nagas have origin from China and migrated from there and elsewhere towards the hills areas i.e. the Naga Hills, Manipur Hills and the NEFA Hills, which they occupy for centuries, while other settled in the Somra Hills tracts and other places permanently now called Burma. In other words, the Nagas in Burma inhabited the Kachin State and Sagaing Division in Northwestern part of Burma. In the last invasion and rule of Manipur and Assam until 1824, the Burmese certainly laid claims upon the Nagas inhabited Hills and started penetrating into the Naga villages lying in the foothills of Assam. Ultimately, their defeat at the hand of the British in the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26) proved disastrous to them and they gave hope to contact the Nagas because of difficulties in the mountain. The Nagas inhabited hills were included in the scheme of conquest during King Thabou after the 2nd Anglo-Burmese

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well-wisher of Indo-Naga Link, to both the Prime Ministers of India and Federal Government of Nagaland between 1966-1971 for resolution of the long Indo-Naga conflict. But he breathed his on 17th April, 1971 at his cottage, Dimapur and buried Kala Kaphung (Mound of Mirror) at Hongmah village.

War in 1852. He started to claim a few areas over the ill-defined boundaries on the Manipur border where the Nagas live. Yet his ambition was chopped off and defeated by war declare by the British and subsequent annexation of the upper Burma into British India empire in 1825.

Afterwards, from 1885-1947 whatever substantial contact between the Nagas and the Burmese were of the border question arising out of the British administration in the region before and after Burma was finally separated in 1937 from the Indian sub-continent under the Government of India Act, 1935. Going back to early year of migration to the present territories, the Nagas and other tribes did not maintain, in the conventional sense of the term, their boundaries. It was the British administrators who undertook survey, demarcated boundaries for the administrative convenience, and carved units like the Naga Hills, Mizo Hills, Khasi-Jaintia-Garo Hills, Shan States, Kachin Hills, North Cachar and Mikir Hills, Chittagong Hills, etc. In this way, people classified as Nagas were based in Naga Hills in Assam, in Manipur and in Burma, since they were weak to protest against the British for the divided rule. This separation gives rise to serious problem in the frontier areas and particularly that of the division of the Naga Hills along with it. There has been no clear boundaries demarcation between India and Burma even though they had separated in 1937.

In order to find a permanent settlement for this problem of this common ill define border where this Naga and other nationalities are to have a more rational frontier, a boundary agreement was signed on 10th March 1967 by colonial Kyi Maung of Burma on behalf of the Government of Union of Burma and by K.M. Kannampilly on behalf of the Government of India. This agreement resolves to delineate, delimit and demarcate the boundaries of 909 sq. miles between the two countries. By this agreement the Naga Hills was demarcated officially and the people were divided to live in two countries. In Longwa and 16 other villages in Mon district, Longkah village in Tirap district and Tusom Village in Ukhrul district half the village land are in Burma and the half in India.

43 Yunou Asoso, Ibid. p, 327
In fact in Longwa village the so-called international boundary between India and Burma actually splits the Wang’s (Chief) house into two.44

This liminal position of the house of Longwa villages Wang with kitchen in India and bedroom in Burma makes the international boundary between India and Burma problematic. Under the pretext of maintaining peace and security the salient feature of the draconian laws which empowers the army to kill everyone in the slightest suspicion is a practice common to both the countries. This factor spares no Naga whichever side of the border he/she may be. After the geographical division an international boundary legitimising by the strong presence of the army from both countries within the Naga areas served to breach the people from the same tribe. With that a non-existent boundaries came into being. To the Nagas the boundary is imaginary not because it did not exist before but also because it was enforced. This boundary was drawn without the knowledge and consent of the Nagas.

Brief History of Drawing Boundaries

The India-Burma boundary runs from the south to the north extremity, which is the tri-junction as the borders of India, China and Burma. This Boundary line which passes though the densely forested hills streams, trees and the rivers with Nagaland, Manipur and Mizo Hills on the Indian side and Kachin State, Naga Hills and Chin Hills on the Burmese side was arbitrarily drawn by the British company government under the treaty of Yandaboo in 182645. Two years after the treaty, a Boundary Commission was appointed to fix the frontier, which it did without actual demarcation on the ground. However, this boundary, mostly imaginary line, was little known to the peoples of the borders who lived for centuries and even to those known the boundary was regarded as a clear injustice to them in the sense that the native of the same stock or peoples like the Nagas, Mizos, Arakanese, etc. were divided into India and Burma, although British

45 Yonuo, Asoso, The Rising Naga p. 331
Government agreed to let them travel freely twenty miles within the boundary line which were described as social contracts.

However, the people living on the boundary cared little and intercourse frequently by marriage and economic relations etc. without the slightest thought of existence of the boundary. In 1885, the British conquered Burma and their authority was extended to the Northern hills of Burma. In March 1895, the boundary question arose between Manipur and Burma and between Manipur and the Naga Hills in the wake of the Tangkhul Nagas of Somra raid on Sahwpu near the Burmese outpost of Homalin in Chindwin district. The British Government abstained from interfering in the affairs of the tract on the assumption that they would act only when the tribesmen’s attack upon the administrative area became a threat to the security of the area.

The Kabo Valley was for many years a source of contention between the king of Burma and the Raja of Manipur; as fortune smile on either country the valley came into its possession. It was annexed to Burma when Marjit Singh (1812-19) was ruling Manipur as Burmese Vassal. But after Gambhir Singh took it over as part of his country in the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26), the Burmese remonstrated the question of valley again with Col. Burney, the British Agent and insisted upon him that all difficulties and dispute would ceased if it was ceded to Burma. To have peace at the cost of people especially the Nagas of Manipur and to serve the imperial interest, the British sold the Kabo valley to Burma on 8th January, 1834 the day Gambhir Singh died of Cholera, on agreement that the British would make the Manipuri/Meitei King on annual payment of Rs.500 as compensation for its lost.\footnote{Ibid, p. 334.} The British government had continued to pay the compensation upto the 14th of August 1947, but after the independence of India, the Union Government of India continued to pay the same compensation to Manipur. However, with the merger of Manipur to India on 15th October 1949, the compensation paid for the lost of the Kabo valley came to abrupt end.\footnote{Singh, Karam Manimohon, \textit{Hijam Irabot Singh and political movement in Manipur}, B.R. Publishing cooperation[division of D.K. Publishers distributors(p) Ltd.], Delhi, 1989, p. 281}
Again, the MacMohan Line Agreement of 1914, more or less adopted this boundary as far as the northern border was concern with the British objective to ensure that the overland route between Burma and Assam via the Diphu Pass was not affected and it was included inside the British Line. NO need was felt to adjust the boundary, even in 1930s when Burma was finally separated from India. In 1962, the Chinese put a claim at a point several miles south of the Diphu pass with a view to use it as a strategic gateway into North West India and North West Burma.

In the late 1960s, the Nagaland state government demanded that a representative body of Nagaland should be included in the joint Indo-Burma survey party and the move of the Burmese Government to establish their authority over the physically undemarcated Naga inhabited areas between Burma and Nagaland should be shaped immediately. Several members of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly called for the immediate merger of contiguous Naga areas between Burma and Nagaland. Tingmei, one of the members of the Legislative Assembly said that over 100 Naga villages of Tuensang district of Nagaland were given to Burma in an imaginary line drawn up by the British government in 1935.

**Boundary Tension between the Naga Hills and Manipur**

How Chandel, Tamenglong, Senapati and Ukhrul districts of the Naga areas were included in Manipur could be known by the demarcation of boundary between Manipur and Angami country by the British in 1842.

Shortly after assuming authority in Assam and Manipur in 1826, the British got them devolved with the hill tribes particularly the Nagas in order to keep their interest going. In the beginning the British did not wish to directly involve with the Nagas and left it to the Meitei Kingdom and the state of Cachar to keep them under control.48 But, after the failure of Manipur and Cachar to subjugate the Nagas the British were reluctantly drawn into their confrontation with the Nagas for the protection of the

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Manipuris and the Assamese from the Nagas raids.\textsuperscript{49} First of all, the British Company government encouraged Gambhir Singh, the King of Manipur, to subdue the Nagas and extent his rule over them if he could. Enthralled by this elusive promise, Gambhir Singh accepted the precarious responsibility, fought them and claims this authority up to Kohima. Having come to know of his intention to rule them permanently, and also of the suspicion of the fact that strong and powerful kingdom might posed a substantial threat to the British Paramountcy of the region itself, this policy was stopped at once, and the control of the Nagas also was taken into heir own hands. And it was no longer, by and large, possible to have any political deal with the Nagas. Yet, In order to appease Manipur, the Company Government incorporated the Senapati, Ukhrul, Tamenglong and Chandel Naga areas into Manipur in 1842 whereas the Angami areas were placed in Assam, after which the Nagas Hills was created as a district of Assam in 1866.\textsuperscript{50}

Lt. Bigge, Principal Assistant to the Agent of the Governor- General (Nagaon), in conference with Captain Gordon, Political Agent at Manipur, decided that commencing from the upper part of the Jiri River, the western frontier of Manipur, the line of boundary formed (1) by the Dotighur mountain, or that range of hills in which the Mukro river takes its rise, east on the Barak river; (2) By the Barak river upto where it is joined by the Tayphani river which flows along the eastern line of the Popolongmai Hills; (3) By the Tayphani river upto its source on the Bur rail range of mountains; and (4) by the summit or the water pent of the Bur rail range on the source of Mow river flowing North from the point towards Assam was the best boundary between Assam and Angami country.\textsuperscript{51} The boundary laid down in 1842 between Manipur and the Angami country was reasserted by the government in 1867, but it was little respected by Manipur. Since the government officers were prohibited from directly controlling the independent Nagas within the limits of the Hills district, the assertion of such a boundary line merely prevented Manipur from making retaliatory raids on what was nominally British territory, while the Nagas had no surplus in violating that of the Manipur. This furnished a standing excuse for Manipuri/ Meitei reprisals against the Nagas.

\textsuperscript{49} Yunuo, p. 368
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. p. 369
\textsuperscript{51} ibdi. P. 78
After much correspondence the boundary line between Manipur and the Angamis was settled in 1872. The line of 1842 was maintained in all essential points so far as it was clearly identified.\textsuperscript{52} A few villages on the dividing ridges of the water pent over which Manipur had acquired supremacy were demarcated as belong to that state and form the termination of the line of 1843, at a point called Telizo peak, eastward the watershed of the main line of hills, which divided the affluent of the Brahmaputra from those of the Errawady as far as the Patkai Pass was declared to be the limit of Manipur as its northern frontier. The Naga Hills district was advanced to march with the boundary of Manipur as thus determined. The Kuki colonies on the Langting were brought within the limits of the Naga Hills district a measure rendered necessary by their having commenced a course of active hostilities against certain Naga villages. Though subsequently Manipur objected to this boundary, the objections were overruled. The northern boundary of Manipur eastward of Telizo however was not settled until 1878 when a line was finally laid down and accepted by that state.\textsuperscript{53}

In 1828, Captain Grant and Lt. Pemberton were appointed Commissioners to meet the Burmese authorities and settle the boundary, and the final boundary agreement was signed one day after Gambhir Singh died on 9.1.1834. In order to stop the Manipur-Burma border clashes once and for all Mr. Elliot, the Chief Commissioner, became keen on the demarcation of a well-defined boundary line between Manipur and Burma. A Commission headed by Col. Johnstone was sent to survey the frontier with a view to lay down a definite boundary to replace the Pemberton line. The Pemberton line was actually an imaginary line drawn northwards from Kabo Valley (only along the western face of the Kabo valley the Manipur-Burma boundary was defined by natural landmarks). North of the valley the country at the time of laying down the boundary, i.e., in 1834, was totally uninhabited, and the boundary line running through it was never actually demarcated. Since 1834, however, the Tangkhul Nagas from the west and the

\textsuperscript{52} Chakravorty, Birendra Chandra, \textit{British Relation with the Hills Tribes of Assam since 1858}, Firma KLM, (Pvt) Ltd. Calcutta, 1981 p.87
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid p. 88

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Kukis had been gradually occupying the land. The doubtfulness of the boundary line and the standing hostility between the Kukis and the Nagas had resulted in a series of outrages. During Col. Johnstone's survey work the Burmese did not cooperate satisfactorily.

The Commission, however, laid down a boundary, which agreed as nearly as possible with the terms of the Treaty, while it gave a fair and clear-cut frontier line. The boundary thus fixed following the base of the eastern slopes of the Malain Range, crosses the River Namia a few hundred yards south of Kongkan Thana, then turns east to the Talain River, follows that river upwards to its source, and next proceeds downwards along the Napanga River to where it passes through a gorge in the Kasom range, a Tangkhul Naga areas, wherefrom it runs northward along the crest line of range. The points where the boundary intersects the Namia and touches the Talain were marked with borders pillars, and a road was cut connecting these two points. But after a lapse of Sixty-two years this boundary had to be revised as a result of incessant tribal raids into Manipur on the Manipur-Burma frontier. According to the instructions of the Government of India to the Chief Commissioner of Burma and with the approval of the Chief Commissioner, Assam, the boundary between Burma (Kabo Valley) and Manipur, From Kongkan Thana to Tinzin River, was demarcated in 1896 by a new body of Commissioners, Col. Maxwell and Capt. Macnabb. In 1918 Manipur occupied considerable tracts of the eastern Naga Hills down to the western limit of the Somra tract in Burma in order to put down the Kuki rebellion, and ultimately this area was included in Manipur in 1923.

**Assam-Naga Hills-Border**

Historically, prior to the Ahom invasion of Assam in 1228, the Nagas had already established the right of the Jhum or Shifting cultivation on the stretches of their hills for miles and miles together and below in the plains as well, which in those were either

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54 Ibid., p.70.
55 Ibid., p. 71.
56 Ibid., p. 126.
57 Yonuo, Ibid., 365.
unclaimed or no man's land. Having found their Kingdom in the Upper Assam, the Ahoms appropriated their land to themselves and the Nagas thereafter raised boundaries by soil embankment on each side, some of which still survive in certain places and in the other cases by placing stone pillars or stressing on the streams, river or hills which observed as sacrosanct for centuries.\textsuperscript{58} Then the boundary questions arose when Assam was subjugated by the British in 1826 and the Naga Hills was constituted in 1866 by excluding quite a large chunk of Naga areas, disregarding the traditional Assam-Nagaland boundary, for administrative and economic interests particularly tea and oil in Assam. Consequently, what were in fact, the administrative lines became the territorial limits.

Again in between 1866 and 1925, the Naga territories were chopped off a number of times in accordance with administrative orders and they thus went on shrinking in size. Frequent disputes resulting in violence on the payment of compensation to the Nagas for the tea planter's encroachment on the Naga forests forced the British Government to introduce the so-called "Inner Line" Regulation in 1873. With the transfer of District headquarter from Samaguting to Kohima it became difficult for administration to extent effective governance to the people in Meekir Rengma Hills areas. Thus, in 1898, the Meekir and the Rengma Hills including Nambor Reserved Forest along with a part of Dhunsiri valley were transferred to Golaghat in Assam. Further, with the construction of Railway Lines and Tea Gardens sometimes in 1889-90,\textsuperscript{59} it became obligatory to deal with labour and industrial laws.

Once again, under a notification issued on 9 December 1898, large tracts of the Naga Hills were placed in Nowgong and Sibsagar of Assam. In 1902 the question of a clear definition and redrawing of the border was taken up. As a result, a fresh notification slightly changing the earlier decision of 1898 was issued in 1903. The boundary issue between Assam and the Naga Hills flared up once again and was settled by the notification of 25 November 1925 issued under the signature of G.T. Lloyd, Second

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p.364.
Secretary to the Government of Assam. According to this notification, the border between the two started from the junction of the Dhansiri River with Dikhu River at the tri-junction of the Meekir Hills district. Sibsagar and Naga Hills on the west, and stretched over a length of about 200 miles to the tri-junction of Sibsagar district, Tripura district, NEFA and Naga Hills on Tiok River to the east. It further defined the boundary in the Burmese and Manipur sectors also. The rest of the boundary was demarcated from time to time after regular surveys.

On 26 September 1923, Digar Mouza was annexed to the North Cachar Hills on the plea that it was easily inaccessible from Kohima and was easier to be ruled from Haflong. In 1927 a small area east of the Mokokchung lying between the Chichung and Chimei rivers was included in the Naga Hills at the request of the six villages. Dimapur was transferred to the Naga Hills district by a notification on 18 November 1923. The Nagas showed great resentment of the 1925 boundary and at some places the boundary pillars raised after the 1951-54 surveys were removed, claiming that Nagas areas extended ten miles beyond the point where the boundary was shown by pillars.

The Nagaland Government extended the Inner Line regulation to their claimed areas in 1964. The Nagaland Legislative Assembly adopted a unanimous resolution to set up a Boundary Commission. Shilu Ao, the Chief Minister of Nagaland himself sought Prime Minister’s personal intervention into the matter. Assam too started the eviction operations against the Naga occupants in March 1965 causing great hardships to the latter, whereupon the Chief Ministers of Assam and Nagaland agreed to maintain status quo till the border issue was settled peacefully. There had been a series of high-level abortive conferences and meetings between the Chief Secretaries of Assam and Nagaland in 1963, 1966, 1967, 1968, and also in 1969 between the two Chief Ministers. These meetings failed to break the long-standing impasse. As agreed to in the Chief Secretaries’ Conference, the Survey of India started the work of boundary demarcation in

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60 Yono, Ibid., p. 365.
61 Ibid., p. 365.
February 1969. The Naga villagers obstructed the Survey and the Nagaland Government openly expressed its reservation regarding survey operations, which were then abruptly suspended.

Assam has maintained that the 1925 notification on the boundary gives natural and well-defined boundary between the two states as it was clearly demarcated in most parts by stones cairns. Only a small part of the boundary that remains without delimitation along the areas where the pillars disappeared or were removed by the Nagas could be settled with the helps of survey team. If any other alternative to the Nagas has to accommodate, it would have to be on the basis of "some adjustments of territory, exchange of some villages" as suggested by the centre. On this basis Assam has refused the appointment of a Boundary Commission to examine afresh the whole boundary question as demanded by Nagaland because it will entail complete revision of the boundaries and involve possible loss of her grip on what it had gained by 1925 notification. The Nagaland stand is quite naturally the opposite. The 1925 notification, Nagaland holds, was a demarcation of boundaries undertaken by the British Government to serve its own imperial and economic interests at the cost of the Nagas at that time, without ascertaining their will and without respecting their age-old traditional boundary between the Nagas and Ahoms. In other words, the notification, introduced for administrative and financial convenience only, as the Government aptly put, was an act of imposition meant to carve out boundary again and humiliate the Nagas.

Therefore, Nagaland now demands only those areas alienated and removed by the British Government, not laying any illegal and unreasonable claims upon the Assamese territory. Second, the agreement between the Nagas and the Government of India in 1962 provided for the return of the Naga areas to Nagaland. And, Nagaland Government has pointed out that the Assam Government has not raised any objections when the survey was going on for the Tuli Paper and Pulp factory at Amguri on Mokokchung roadside, which Nagaland took to be in its territory. Taking into account the views of the two

62 Ibid., p. 366.
63 Ibid., p. 366.
64 Ibid., p. 367.
governments, the Government of India appointed Sundaram Commission to resolve this
ticklish problem and find a solution acceptable to both the States. On 2nd May 1972, the
state Governments of Nagaland and Assam, at the intervention of the Central
Government signed an agreement to maintain peace along the borders between the two
states. To make the solution much more hard, as late as 1972 Assam has laid claim to
Dimapur as its territory which otherwise has already become a part of Nagaland state.
The border tension is still persisting until today because a huge chunk of Naga areas have
not been re-transferred back to Nagaland from Assam.

Creation of Nagaland State: Incomplete task of Unification of the Nagas

The creation of the state of Nagaland on 1st December 1963 was the culmination
of the process initiated at the three Naga People's Convention (NPC) held from 1957 to
1959. The First NPC was held at Kohima from 22-26 August 1957 under the guidance of
S.M. Dutt. Dr. Imkongliba Ao was chosen as the President of the NPC on 25 September
1957. In their meeting Prime Minister agreed to set up one administrative unit of the
Naga Hills District and Tuensang Frontier Division under a special selected officer. On
1st of December 1957, Tuensang Frontier Division was separated from North-East
Frontier Agency (NEFA) and joined with the Naga Hills to form a new administrative
unit named as Naga Hills-Tuensang Area (NHTA) and ceased to be a district of Assam.
After the promotion of Naga Hills-Tuensang Area the Second NPC was held in Ungma
village in Mokokchung district from 21-23 of May 1958 amidst protests and threat from
Naga National Council (NNC).

Later a 16-Point Memorandum for the constitution of a separate state to be called
‘Nagaland’ with the Indian Union was drafted which was passed with a few
modifications in the Third NPC held at Mokokchung from 22-26 October 1959. Thus,
the principle of a ‘state of Nagaland’ was reluctantly conceded by Nehru at his meeting
with NPC delegation led by Imkongliba Ao on 20th July 1960 within the terms of the
“16-Point Agreement”, and finalized in detailed discussion with Foreign Secretary on 27
18 February 1961, under the provision of the Nagaland Regulation, the Naga Hills -
Tuensang Area was designated as Nagaland. Although Imkongliba Ao, who was the architect of the NPC and formation of Nagaland state, was assassinated on 22 August, 1961 by the Naga Nationalist, President S. Radhakrishnan inaugurated the State of Nagaland as the Sixteenth State of the Indian Union with P. Shilu Ao as Chief Minister on 1st December, 1963.65

Tirap and Changlang Districts in Arunachal Pradesh

As has been mentioned earlier that in 1957 Tuensang Frontier Division was separated out from NEFA and joined with the Naga Hills to form a new administrative unit named Naga Hills-Tuensang Area. However, Nagas in Tirap Frontier Division was left out. Tuensang Frontier Division became a part of the creation of Nagaland state in 1963 by the 13th Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 1962. With the 27th Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 1971, NEFA became Union Territory along with Mizoram and Meghalaya in 1986, NEFA attained full-fledged statehood with the inauguration of the State on 20 February 1987, and new districts were created. The Nagas have been grouped in Tirap and Changlang districts.66 Thus, physical or geographical division of the republic Naga village-states into Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh in India and Sagaing Division and Kachin State in Burma was done with the 'Divide and Rule' policy of the British followed the old policy by the Indian and Burmese States to undermine Naga unity as Lord Curzon did in the case of Bengal by partitioning it with the purpose to destroy the unity and strength of the most politically conscious Bengali people in India.67

Unification of all Naga Areas

Quite relatively connected with the boundary problem, there is the movement for the unification of all the Nagas living in Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh in India and Sagaing, Kachin State in Burma. But what is Naga unification? The philosophy of Naga unification is deep-seated. The quintessence of the philosophy is that, the Nagas want to live as a people in a socio-political set up according to their

67 Yonuo, Ibid., p. 369.
desire and vision. They want to make their world in their own ethos and genius. This has been their unflinching resolve over decades because the Nagas believe that they are one people. They occupied the present territorial domain since time immemorial. The Nagas have been desperately longing for undoing the physical barriers that have been coercively appropriated by external forces at different periods and come together under one socio-political set up. The Nagas too want to be in the comity of nations as co-partner and not as subordinate. Because, they value freedom and dignity as other peoples do, perhaps even more than what many peoples and nations would have. In order to realize this aspiration and dream, unification of the Nagas is a pre-requisite condition. Therefore, the Nagas strongly feel that they must come together, live together, reason together and build their world together in one socio-political set up. This process is known as the movement for 'Naga Unification' or 'Naga Integration'.

The question of unification has already originated when the British Government unilaterally divided the Naga Hills into Manipur, Assam and Burma, with a vile motive of dividing them so that they might not be able to put a united revolt against the British. This act was done at the time when the Nagas were weak, enervated and disunited to resist their will and power. Before the sovereignty was transferred to India and Burma, the British did not make any arrangement towards the unification of the Nagas into one administrative unit while the Naga National Council was going on demanding a Sovereign Nagaland State comprising all the Naga Hills of Assam, Manipur and Burma.

On 12 April 1947 the NNC made their demands in some of the resolutions which stated that the British should make “necessary arrangements with the Government of Assam for immediate establishment of the Forest Department in the Naga Hills, and see that the reserve forest of the Naga Hills which is at present under the control of the Sibsagar Forest Department will be transferred to the Naga Hills...to protest against the measures taken by the government of Assam to include the Konyak Nagas of the

69 Yonuo, Ibid., p. 368.
Wakching area in the Tirap Frontier Tract... stands for the unification and solidarity of all the Naga tribes, and to demand that portion of the North-Cachar Hills where the majority of the inhabitants are Nagas, be included in the Naga Hills.” 70 Nine-Point Agreement of 1947 (Clause 6) also affirmed that the present administrative divisions should be modified so as to (1) bring back into the Naga Hills District all the Forest transferred to Sibsagar and Nowgong districts in the past and (2) to bring under one unified administrative unit as far as possible all Nagas. All the areas so included will be within the scope of the present proposed agreement. No area should be transferred out of the Naga Hills without the consent of the NNC. 71

In support of the unification of the Nagas, the Nagaland State Legislative Assembly have passed four (4) Resolutions, the first on 12 December, 1964, the second on 28 August, 1970, the third on 14 September, 199472 and the last being the Resolution on 18 December, 2003,73 asserting their commitment to Integration of the Naga-contiguous areas.

At the same time, the Naga leaders in Manipur were also making efforts to integrate particularly the Naga areas of Senapati, Ukhrul, Tamenglong and Chandel districts and other Naga areas of Assam and Burma with the Naga Hills of Assam. But the Manipur Constitution which was drafted in May 1947 stated that “the principle of equality and freedom as applied to all without discrimination of caste, creed and race shall include the right of any section of the hill people to secede at the end of the five year period, and should conditions within the Constitution not be satisfactory. 74

In spite of R.Khathing, a simple educated Tangkhul Naga, who served as the Indian Ambassador to Burma during 1974, was appointed Minister of Hill administration of Manipur, the Nagas in protest against the dissection of the Nagas without their consent and sullenly resentful to the political arrangement of Manipur, a campaign known as

70 Ibid., p. 370
71 Nuh and Lasuh, Ibid., p. 68.
72 Naga Hoho, Ibid., p.34.
73 NE SUN, January 1-14, 2004, Vol.9 No. 11, p.5.
74 Yunuo, Ibid., p.370.
Naga National League was successfully launched during 1947 and 1948 during the Chief Ministership of Maharaj Kumar Priyabatra Singh of Manipur. The symbolic expression was "No House Tax Payment" to the Government of Manipur, but they decided to pay the House Tax to the Deputy Commissioners of the Naga Hills District in Assam.\textsuperscript{75} This campaign was spearheaded by Mr. Daiho (Mao), Mr. N. Modoli (Poumai), Mr. R. Keishing (Tangkhul), Mr. Mathiuhom and Mr. Kaikhangai (Zeliangrong), Mr. N.G. Mono (Monsang).\textsuperscript{76} This campaign was launched basically in expression of their solidarity with all the Nagas to live under one Naga administrative unit. The Manipur Government took severe action against the revolting people, in which three persons were killed, 4 others received serious bullet injuries and A. Daiho and N. Modoli were arrested and imprisoned at Dum Dum Central Jail, Calcutta on 27 August 1948 under Regulation III of 1818.\textsuperscript{77} Then the movement had become evanescent if not died down, more quickly than was expected.

The Nagas kept up their demand with the Government of India in 1953 and 1955 regarding the dire necessity of unification of all the Nagas that the Prime Minister Nehru gave an assurance that the way should be prepared to bring all the areas inhabited by the Nagas in the Naga Hills, in Manipur, in the North Cachar and Meekir Hills, in the Districts of Nowgong and Sibsagar and in Burma. Once again, the Naga leaders of the Naga Hills and Tuensang Unit (since 1957) brought up the matter before the Government of India when they entered into an agreement with the latter in 1960, for the formation of a Nagaland state, although the Naga leaders, particularly Dr. Imkonkliba Ao, obviously because of a constricted outlook, did not wish seriously the contiguous Nagas to join the new State and share the benefit of statehood.\textsuperscript{78}

Yet fearing the threat of the underground leaders who were fighting for all the Nagas, the Naga People's Convention leader pressed the Government of India to place the cause of the integration of all other-inhabited areas on record of the agreement, which

\textsuperscript{75} Naga Hoho, Ibid., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{77} Yunuo, Ibid., p. 371.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., p. 371.
the Government did under Point 13 of the 16-Point Agreement. Afterwards, the Nagas in Nagaland and Manipur worked ceaselessly to persuade the rest of the Nagas to join Nagaland. The Nagaland Government made a formal representation to the Government of India on 10 October 1967, demanding that Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong and Chandel areas of Manipur should be with Nagaland. The Naga Nationalist Organization passed a resolution in 1968 in which it stated that the GoI should immediately integrate all contiguous Naga areas with the Nagaland as per agreement of 1960.

The Naga Integration Committee of Manipur headed by Athikho Daiho, the former Finance Minister of Manipur and Rishang Keishing, an ex-Member of Indian Parliament and now MP, Rajya Sabha from Manipur, in cooperation with the Nagaland State Government, made their efforts to the cause with varying degrees of success. The Nagaland State Government was reported to have issued secret instructions to the officials in the borders outposts to keep in touch with the Nagas of Burma cross the border as the Nagaland State Deputy Minister of Medical and Public Health, Hanso strongly urged the GoI to take up with the Burmese Government the question of returning to India the areas inhabited by the Khiamniungan and other Nagas in the wake of their decision for merger of the area with its counterpart in India. However, the Government of India has made separate administrative arrangement for the Nagas and the Kuki hill people within Manipur under the Second Assam Re-organisation Act, of 1971, whose election for the six autonomous Hill District Councils having 108 seats were held in May 1973.

At the same time, Yangmaso Shaiza, a noble Tangkhul Naga leader clamoured that unification of the Nagas in Manipur with Nagaland would better follow with the Meiteis (Manipuris) also as both the former and the latter are ethnically the same except different in religious practices. But the United Democratic Front strongly stands up for the unification of all Nagas as per their election Manifesto placed before the people. An opportunity for Naga unification in India (among others) was also created by the Proposal of Late R. Suisa, sometimes in 1966. The Proposal was a type of limited

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79 Ibid., p. 372.
sovereignty call semi-sovereignty. Had that been accepted, at least as a starting basis of understanding and settlement by the Federal Government of Nagaland, the situation would have been very different today. The Joint Agreement for the merger of the United Naga Integration Council (UNIC) with the All India Congress Party signed on 4th August, 1972 also runs as follows, “It is agreed upon that the Congress Party does not oppose Naga Integration Movement and does not consider Naga Integration Movement as anti-party, anti-national, anti-state and unconstitutional activity.”

The leading Civil Society organisations of the Naga people from all over the northeastern states of India under the aegis of the Naga HoHo, Naga Students’ Federation (NSF), Naga People’s Movement for Human Right (NPMHR), Naga Mothers’ Association (NMA), United Naga Council (UNC) etc. have made their aspirations clear to live together as one people through a number of representations to the Government of India and their meetings with the central leaderships from time to time. Today, Nagas are in a crucial juncture of history. There is a talk of negotiated settlement acceptable to both the Nagas and the Government of India. In an interview by Deepak Dewan, Th. Muivah said, “It’s not possible for the Nagas to go for solution accepting the division of Naga territory.”

The Naga National Movement and the Burmese State

The Naga movement for unification and freedom is not confined to the Indian side alone. The Nagas in Burma have also been struggling for unification and freedom against the successive military junta. The suffering endured by the Nagas in Burma is even worse because of the nature of system of governance. After Burma’s independence in 1948, the country held a National Conference where the Agreement to set up the Federal Union of Burma was made. The Agreement came to be known as “Panglong Agreement” on which basis the Federal Union of Burma was formed. The Nagas in

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80 Charenami, Mani, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) Outer Manipur, in ‘Integration of Naga Areas’, Letter to the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, South Block, New Delhi, 26th July 2004, p. 2.
81 Interview: Th. Muivah, ‘Division of Naga Territories not Acceptable’ in NE SUN, September 15, 2004, p. 23. This Interview is a continuation from last issue NE SUN, August 31, 2004.
Burma refused to enter into such agreement, as they were sovereign by themselves.\textsuperscript{82} It is known that the Nagas participated in the Conference merely as an observer. In due course of time, the Nagas in Burma not recognizing the Burmese administration were compelled to take up armed resistance movement against the foreign occupation of the Burmese. The Eastern Naga Revolutionary Council (ENRC), which was formed in 1958 led by V. Chaopoh from Somra Village in Layshi Township, was the first and the only armed Naga Organisation fighting the Burmese Government during that period in Burma.\textsuperscript{83}

Of course, in the present days, both the NSCN factions have a presence in the region with the NSCN (K) having its stronghold base in Burma. The Nagas in Burma are struggling for independence existence like the Nagas in India. On March 10, 1979 a full-fledged national conference of the delegate and armies of the Liberation Council, was held at Thaton in Karen State, in which 31 Articles were adopted. The Covenant is a pledge undertaken by all and signed by all except the Nagas and Burmese Communist Party. There also the Nagas attended just as observers. After the rejection of Myanmar National Convention convened on 30\textsuperscript{th} March 1979 a new development emerged. The formation of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) was announced on 30 January 1980 and the Organization initiated the merger of the Nagas in Myanmar (East) with those Nagas from the West, in India on 31\textsuperscript{st} January 1981 at Nokpa village. During 1992, the Myanmar Army Government and National League for Democracy (NLD) carried out a General Election for the formation of democratic government in Myanmar. The Nagas of Myanmar (known as Burmese Nagas) totally boycotted the General Election.\textsuperscript{84}

Beginning from the year 1992, the need for having a common neutral Naga platform of such a form was to provide opportunity to the different Naga tribes to

\textsuperscript{84} Naha Hoho, Ibid., p.18
express their voice and strengthen their solidarity. Thus, the Naga Hoho forum that came
into being on 25th June 1994 at Wokha finally adopted its own constitution on March 11,
1998 at Zunheboto, is represented approximately by 66 Naga tribes in both India and
Burma. 85

This is a positive and progressive development as far as Nagas’ yearn for peace,
unity and freedom are concerned. One could say that the Nagas are not resolute and
determined enough to cut the matrix of unification. For e.g., the 16 Point Agreement
have not been either able to capitalize the opportunity of the time and/ or were not given
priority to the cause of Naga integration. Another factor confront for unification is the
unevenness in the level of consciousness and awareness among the Nagas. The other
crucial factor could be the Nagas aspiration for a greater cause and goal (viz., the
struggle for self determination). Much has been devoted to the greater cause, so related
important aspect seems to have been relegated. The other reason should be that the
initiatives for the Naga integration also seems to have been organized in a haphazard way
and/or in bits and pieces for one reason or another.

Hurdles and Possibilities

There are certainly hurdles toward the move for unification of Naga ancestral
domain. Opposition from neighbouring states and communities specially Manipur and
Assam. For example, the Manipuris strongly opposed Bangkok Agreement of June 14,
2001, which says, “The ceasefire agreement is between the Government of India and the
NSCN as two entities without territorial limits.” The Manipuris has demanded for
immediate revision of the three terms “without territorial limits” due to which the
Bangkok agreement was revised deleting three words “without territorial limits”. In
Assam also such opposition was rampant among some political parties and organisations.
Such opposition not only put hurdles but also question the sincerity of the agreement
reached between the negotiating parties. There is also opposition coming from political
parties, elites, NGOs etc.

85 Ibid. p.18
However, despite factors and hurdles, the Nagas’ move for unification can be realized if the Nagas are seriously committed, no matter how long it takes. The Naga unification movement is a politics of possibility and par excellence because the Nagas are confident about the cause for which they are struggling for. The Naga case is both historically and contemporarily strong. The aspiration for the unification of Naga areas (in India) is quite a reasonable claim indeed.86

The claim is justified even if we go by the framework of the Indian constitution under article 3, which categorically provides for reorganization of the states. The uniqueness of article 3, as stated by Hidayadullah, a constitutional expert “is that the process of diminution or increase of areas or carving out of new states out of the areas of the existing states can be made as many as maybe deemed necessary”. Again, it has been observed time and again that “the organization of states can, under the provisions of the constitution, takes place even against the wishes of the states; the states have only the right to be afforded and opportunity to express their views”.87

However, the unification of the Naga ancestral domain is not an end in itself. But it is an essential element towards finding a final political solution. In other words, it is the means or a prerequisite to a greater goal of the Naga people. The demand for unification of the Naga areas is a part of the Naga movement national self-determination. This means territoriality and sovereignty though different issues can not be explained in isolation. Both the issues are inseparable from each other due to the fact that Naga identity as a people has strong attachment to the land they live in. It is undeniably true that Nagas have been resisting against the British colonialism and the Indian and Burmese States for freedom. The unification movement as part of the Naga national movement has/is mainly against the “imposed boundaries, imposed government and imposed system.” The desired meaning of Naga integration can be arrived at by the removal of the “imposed boundaries, imposed government and imposed system.”88

86 Vashum, 2004, Ibid., p. 3.
88 Naga Hoho, ibid, p.viii.
The sovereignty and territorial integration have become the two most difficult issues for the Government of India vis-à-vis the Indo-Naga talks since 1997. Until today the GoI has not shown any political commitment to these interrelated substantive issues. The Nagas have categorically stated time again that political aspiration of the Nagas cannot be compromised. Importantly, the point to drive home is that integration of the Nagas in the North East is the first step towards a final political settlement to the conflict. What the Nagas have been maintaining is that they have survived their cultural and national identity through the land that harbour and generate life for them. The Nagas will continue to respect and protect the sacred Naga homeland, which give life and ensure the continuity of their people. The Naga Students’ Federation (NSF) is of the view that, “the Nagas are not claiming that these lands (Naga ancestral domain) belong to the Nagas-we (Nagas) belong to the land, their homeland”.89 If the Nagas are still divided territorially, there is no question of becoming a free people. And when we talk about unification of Nagas, we must not be particularistic. Indeed, the discourse on unification must be universalistic so as to include psychological, emotional, cultural, social and economic aspects as well. Nagas should be clear of their strategies of the move for Naga unification.90

Thus, we can quote Th. Muivah, General Secretary of NSCN, who said, in an exclusive interview to the Netherlands based National Daily that was made available to the North East Press Service that, unification of the “Naga territories” and their “national identities” are “non-negotiable”. “In other words, the integration of Nagas is a must, and the destiny of the Nagas must be left to the Nagas themselves,” he stated. Muivah also said that “Nagas under the leadership of the NSCN will never lay down from their hands three things: their arms, their freedom and their territories,” although the talks were on.91

It is hoped that a negotiated settlement is brought about in the ongoing peace talks between the NSCN and the GoI. The people’s expectation of the political will of

89 'A Requiem Towards Re-Unification of our Homeland' in Eastern Mirror, issued by: Naga Students Federation, Naga club building, Kohima, 16th July 2004.
90 Vashum, 2004. ibid, p.4.
91 'Integration of Naga Areas a Must: Muivah' by Okenjeet Sandham in Assam Tribune, Kohima, 9th May 2003.
the Government of India for a concrete proposal aimed at bringing an honourable and acceptable solution to both the parties is yet to be seen even after nine years of talks. The dilly-dallying process of talks has brought restive and impatience to the Naga people. The recently held talk on 17-19 October 2006, at Amsterdam has reached a critical stage as the GoI could not come out clearly on the demands of the Nagas. The talk only yielded stalemate to the peace process. Many constitutional experts, analysts and academics are of the opinion that if the stalemate prolonged there is a high possibility of jeopardizing the whole peace efforts. Many people are of the firm belief that unification of the Naga areas would certainly help solve the conflict to a great extent. Many wonder whether there would be any progress in the coming talks in as far as the snail-paced progress in the past nine years is any indication. It is expected of the negotiating parties to politically commit themselves to solving the long conflict. Whatever might have been the progress made in the peace process there is hardly any sign of waning of the Nagas in their resolute aspiration to live in a single political unit having their own form of system and governance.

The political aspiration of the Nagas has been greatly uplifted by the historic unifications of Germany and Italy. The Unification of German was more difficult than the unification of Italy in the modern world because of multiple nationalities and domination of alien powers.92 Their unifications were made possible not only because of military power they had, but because of people’s support and intellectuals. Freedom of press and people’s voice for their national unification paved the ways to achieve their national goals. Bismarck, a man of blood and iron and Prussian King William I, a sagacious and witty person, took the lead for unification of German through all the difficult situations.93

Again, Mazzini, a real revolutionary and nationalist, gave his life for the cause of the unification of Italy. Garibaldi, a devoted patriot and an Army General sacrificed for a total unification of Italy. The successful text of German unification was then economy

93 Ibid., p. 234
whereas the Bible was the fundamental text book of the unification of Italy which brought successful unification of their nations possible in the modern world as one can see in European history.\(^94\)

In the North and the South Koreans case, both the countries have been/are making a lot of diplomatic efforts to unify themselves until today. The land question is one of the main issues in the ongoing-Israel-Palestinian conflict. There are many peoples in the world which are still struggling for liberation from oppression and suppression. The Palestinians, Tamilians, Tibetans, Assamese, Kashmiris, Telengana movement, Naxalite etc. are some of the peoples’ movements still struggling to achieve their aspirations. Obviously, the Nagas are no less in their aspiration to live as a free people to determine their lives by themselves without outside interference. The East Timorese achievement of their independence in 2002 in the 21\(^{st}\) century has been a great inspiration to many struggling peoples.

The international community should not remain as a mute spectator to the world’s problems faced by different struggling peoples. There is a need for framing laws/rules to deal with peoples’ movement for democratic and political solution to the peoples’ aspirations. The world needs peace not bloodshed/violence. We must have a solution to any kind of problem. The GoI and the NSCN should seriously think of bringing in some mechanism to overcome the existing stalemate in the talks. Both the negotiating parties should have political commitment with transparency and sincerity to the political issue giving topmost priority to the people. Any solution being sought should be for long-term benefit. A proverbial saying ‘give peace a chance’ must find a space now after 59 years of clash and conflict. Peace, justice, love and freedom must overwhelm war, conflict, violence and bloodshed, no matter how great the political challenges may be. The world is watching closely the development in Naga areas (Nagalim). The development in Naga areas could be a model for the many indigenous peoples and struggling peoples.

\(^{94}\) Ibid., p. 235