CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAGA ETHNIC MOVEMENT

The Naga ethnic movement initiated a peaceful process which was conceived in terms of 'flexible and graduated forms of self determination.' If the Nagas had not been denied the legitimate expression of their community identities and tribal aspirations, they would have pursued their aims through peaceful means. In making these claims we are echoing arguments which emerge when issue areas are defined objectively. One of the most difficult problems of judging and evaluating information on the Naga ethnic movement is that subsequent armed resistance has created a circle of cause and effect in which a generalised state of war has been asserted as the norm. Then Naga ethnic movement was focussed on self-help to secure honourable existence for the Nagas and indeed it had the predisposition for a long-term accommodation with the Indian State.

The initial impetus of the principle of Naga self determination was induced by de-colonization by the British, and the aims were pursued with considerable flexibility and an orderly transition to Naga
independence could have been secured. In this Chapter we shall examine the shifts in the Naga environment in which conciliatory attitudes had to be abandoned in favour of more intransigent stances.

A. THE NAGAS: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:
The Nagas who are presently settled in the hill region of the tri-junction of India, Burma (Myanmar) and China have occupied the region called the Naga hills for centuries. There are various theories about the origin and how and why they have been called the Nagas. It is generally assumed that the plethora of tribes who are called Nagas have something in common with each other which distinguishes them from the many other people and tribes found in Assam.\textsuperscript{1} However the origin of the term Naga and its people are as mysterious as any theory of origin of any race or community in the history.

The term 'Naga' includes the various tribes who have spread across the present states of Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and some parts of Myanmar. The total Naga population in Indo-Myanmar is estimated at "not less than two million and they are scattered over a contiguous region beginning from the Brahmaputra valley in Assam in the west, to the Chindwin river in north-west

\textsuperscript{1} J.P.Mills, "The Lotha Nagas", Oxford University Press, Bombay, (Reprinted by Government of Nagaland), 1973, P.XV
Burma in the east, most Manipur in the south and Tirap and Changlang district in Arunachal Pradesh to the north".  

According to J.P. Mills, "The Naga inhabited areas are bounded by the Hukawang 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 the very much closely inter-related group of Kuki tribe". For hundreds of years, "The Naga tribes remained untouched by higher civilization, neither Hindu culture nor the influence of Buddhism into these hills, where primitive races were persisting in ancient types of culture".

**Origin of the word 'Naga'**

Before the advent of the British into the Naga Hills, the inhabitants of these hills knew themselves by the designation of their respective tribes only. The name however was not in general use among the Nagas. It was in the last century after the occupation of some parts of the particular hill range the British colonialist called the hill areas as Naga Hills, then onwards the term 'Naga' began to the widely used for all these tribes who settled in this range.

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3 J.P.Mills, n. 1, P.XVII
4 C.V. Furer-Haimendorf, "The Naked Nagas", London, 1939, P.1
There are various theories about the origin of the word ‘Naga’ and there is no unanimity of the opinion. Inspevt of the different theories regarding the origin of the term ‘Naga’ however there is a consensus that the word ‘Naga’ is given to particular tribes by the Aryan speaking people to mean naked hill people. It is a fact that the word ‘Naga’ remained a terror to the Aryan speaking Assamese for ages. To them it was understood to mean naked ‘Hill Men of head Hunter’.

Ptolemy, the Greek scholar in his Geographia had mentioned the words ‘Naga log’ which means the realm of the naked people that was about 150 A.D. Interestingly, the location which Ptolemy described about the naked people has been the exact place in which the present Nagas were inhabited as living now.

Another theory is that the word ‘Naga’ originated from the word ‘Nag’ meaning ‘snake’ in general and the ‘cobra’ in particular. But this is usually referred to the snake worshipper, which is prevalent in many parts of India, but such worshippers are not called the Nagas. This theory has no significance to the Naga of the Northeast India, because Nagas were never worshippers of snakes. Moreover for some Nagas, the snake is a delicacy.

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6 Ibid., p. 26, Quoted from Geographia. VII, ii, p.18, p.22
Further theory attributed to J.H. Hutton suggests that the word 'Naga' originally was a corruption of the Assamese word 'Noga' (pronounced Naga) probably meaning a "mountaineer". It is merely a European lengthening of Assamese word Noga (pronounced Naga).

According to Captain Butler, "the term Naga is derived from the Bengali word 'Nangla' or the Hindustani word 'Naga' meaning 'naked', crude and barbarous, while another theory suggests that the Cachar word Naga 'a youngman' and hence a 'warrior'.

W. Robinson also suggested some related theories of the origin of the word 'Naga'. He writes that "the origin of the word is unknown, but it has been supposed by some to have been derived from the Sanskrit word Nagna and applied in derision to the people, from the paucity of their clothing, but there seems a little foundation for this etymological derivation as the term has never been known to be applied by the Bengalese to either the Khasis or the Garos with whom they were far better acquainted than with the Nagas; and besides, the Garos especially are habitually accustomed to a greater degree of nudity than any of the Naga tribes with whom we are acquainted." It is true that Garos are more naked than the Nagas but the Bengalis and the Assamese people never called them the naked people.

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The collective designation of the origin of the word 'Naga', writes E.A. Gait, by which the Nagas are known to the Assamese seems to be derived as suggested by Holcombe and Peal from 'Nok' which means 'folk' in some of the tribal dialects (Nok or Noka means people). He suggested that there was some connection between this and the Sanskrit Noka."11 The Burmes.e also called 'Naka' which means people with pierced ears. "The word 'Naga' is said to be another form of 'Naka' as the Nagas both man and woman pierced their ears."12

Verrier Elwin suggests that the probability of the origin of the word Naga from the word. 'Nok' or people which is its meaning in a few Tibeto-Burman languages as in Garo, Nocte and Ao.13

Then the origin of the word Naga is still a mystery? It is highly possible that the word Naga is given by the Assamese and Bengalis. Nok or Nog means people or folk (Cachari - Warrior), then there is some probability of connection with the Nog or Nok. For instance, many Naga tribes carrying dao was customary to safeguard themselves from another marauders or head hunter.

11 Alemchiba, n. 5 p 22.
12 Horam, n. 4 p. 25.
It can be inferred then that the group of dao-carrying people have gradually come to be known as Nagas to the Plain settlers of Assam and Bengal.

The preceding passages have attempted to explain the difficulties of definitions of the term 'Naga'. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the term Naga is generally defined as a political construct and as a cultural abstraction. It can be also supposed that the term Naga was given by the plain settlers of Assam and Bengal to the hill people.

**Linguistic and Anthropological Account of the Nagas:**

Nagas comprise the various tribes of Mongoloid stock with distinct culture, laws and customs. Various theories of origin of the Nagas are also linked with the head-hunters of Malay and the races of the southern seas on the one hand and traced back to China on the other.\(^{14}\) Whatever history available today is based on the oral tradition and folklore and songs.

According to some linguistic and anthropologists, the Nagas belong to Tibeto-Burman family and sub families of the Tibeto Chinese race. Comparative philology agreed to point out that “the Nagas were among those who came down through Tibet to the

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\(^{14}\) Hutton, n. 8, p.8.
Brahmaputra valley and the valleys of the Chindwin, Irrawady, Salwin, Mekong, etc. But were forced out of there by successive Tibeto-Chinese invaders and driven into the mountains where they eventually settled down.\textsuperscript{15} There can be little doubt that before the Nagas came to the present areas they must have wandered for some years. The Burma census report also indicates migration of Nagas from region in western China between the source of the Yangste Kiang and Huwang-Ho river."\textsuperscript{16}

The different philologists linguistically classified the race of the Nagas. The classification of Sir George A. Grierson is now generally accepted (vide census of India 1911). According to this classification, "Naga is of the Tibeto-Chinese family. Tibeto Burman sub family, Assam Burmese branch, group Naga sub group Western Naga."\textsuperscript{17}

None of the tribes is of pure blood. Many races are found among the Nagas like Negrito race, later on Austric race of Kol-Annau or Mon-Khmer types. Grouped as Indo-Mongoloid, but the Caucasus element is present among the Nagas in a remarkable degree. As a result the Mongoloid facial and features are softened down in the Naga tribes.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Hutton, n. 8, p. 8
\textsuperscript{18} Horam, n. 7, pp. 28-29.
Most of the Naga tribes could traced back to the Mon Khmer and Bodo races, the Thai races and a fourth races of southern origin akin to some of the inhabitants of the Philippines and Borneo and other parts of Indonesia. The legend of the Nagas have a similar culture with the natives of Borneo, a common traditional way of head-hunting, and with the Philippines and Formosa, the common system of terraced cultivation and also with the Indonesian as both use the loin-loom for weaving the embroidery on the Naga clothes resembles with the Indonesian clothes. According to W.C. Smith, the Nagas and the Indonesians have a similar culture traits and physical characteristics. He traces out some of the Nagas affinities to "the Dyaks and Kayans of Borneo, the Bataks of Sumatra, certain groups of Formosa, the Igorot and Ifugao and several other groups in the Phillipines." 

Again W.C. Smith, in his 'Ao Naga Tribe of Assam' (London, 1925) has given 13 outstanding characteristics which are common to the Nagas even though they speak different languages, which "he attaches racially to the Indonesians, that is the people of Malaya and the islands of Indonesia. These are (i) Head-hunting, (ii) Common sleeping house for the unmarried men, which are taboo to

19 Ibid., n. 7, p. 29.
women, (iii) Dwelling house built on post and piles, (iv) Disposal of the dead on raised platform, (v) A sort of trial marriage or great freedom of intercourse between the sexes before marriage, (vi) Betel-chewing (vii) Aversion to milk as an article of diet, (viii) Tattooing by pricking, (ix) Absence of any powerful political organisation, (x) The double cylinder vertical forge, (xi) The simple loom for weaving cloth, (xii) A large quadriangular or hexagonal shield, and (xiii) Residence in hilly regions with a crude form of agriculture."

There are also many closely parallel culture of the Nagas with those hilly tracts of Formosa, Indonesia and of Oceania.

The Nagas have complex linguistic diversity. There is no common language among the Naga tribes. Each tribe has one or more dialects, which are unintelligible except through the medium of a third dialect by which they converse together. The lack of common language is mainly due to the composition of different stocks, languages and stages of migration from various routes and directions.

There area now occupied by the Naga tribes is known to have been subjected to at least three immigrations of races from different directions. The first wave of migrants were the Maos, Angamis, Semas, Rengmas, Rongmei and Lothas, who moved from the south through the mountain fringes touching the valley of Manipur to the

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21 ibid. n.5, p.4

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north, reached Mao area and settled in Mekruma, then moved north-east ward to Kezokenoma where they spread and went into the different areas. Some groups went to the north west, some to the north-ward and some went to the west-ward, which is now occupied presently by those tribes.

The second wave of immigrants comprised the Aos, Changs, Khiamungans, Sangtams, Yimchunger and Tangkhuls. This group is believed to have migrated from Thangdut, near Chindwin river in Burma by a different route, to their present hills.

The third group of immigrants is the Konyak Nagas who came to their present hills from the north-east of Burma trace their original migration to Burma. Thus all of the Naga tribes came to settle in their respective present hills in different waves of migration at different stages of time.

Though they came from different routes and directions before they migrated to the present hills, the Nagas must have settled somewhere together. They have something common in their origin, which is related with the caves and stone. Mostly, all the Naga tribes indicate Meikhel* or its surrounding area as their place of origin. Some of the Naga tribes like Angamis, Ao's, Semas, Lothas and

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22 Alemchiba., n.5, p.20.
23 Asoso, n.9, p.39.

* Mekhel is a place in Mao area of Manipur believed to be the place of origin from where the Nagas spread to different directions.
Tangkhuls believe that their ancestors emerged from the stone. But the origin of the Nagas is still obscure. One can only hope that perhaps, anthropologist and historians will be able to solve the long waited problem of the origins of the Nagas.

It is a fact that no Naga tribe originated from caves or stones. The use of the term by the Nagas could have signified (i) A shelter from enemies, and (ii) The centre for their socio-political and cultural reformation from where they spread to their respective areas. However, there is no any living witness or recorded history to prove the origin of the Nagas.

The Naga Relations with their Neighbours:

Relations with the Ahoms:

The Nagas were known to the outside world by the end of the 12th century A.D. It is a fact that there was occasional war and peace between the Nagas and their neighbours of Assam and Manipur. The first Naga arm encounter was with the Sukapha, the founder of Ahom kingdom in Assam. The Ahoms who belong to a Tai-race left Maulong in 1215 A.D. From Burma, with 900 men, women and children, with eight nobles, two elephants and 300 horses led by Prince Sukapha, entered into north-east of Assam. On the way to Brahmaputra valley
they came through the Patkai range. They wandered for about 13 years making occasional raids on villages. When they reached the boundary of Naga country of Nocte, Wancho and Tangsa in 1228 A.D. they met stiff resistance from the eastern Nagas who challenged them for trespassing into their territory. But the Nagas were not able to prevent the mighty Ahoms.

However this strong resistance by the Nagas enraged the Prince Sukapha who defeated the Nagas and destroyed their villages, and killed a number of men, women and children. He treated the Nagas with ‘ghastly barbarity’ by forcefully feeding his captive to their relatives. This barbarous treatment given by the Ahoms silenced the Nagas for quite some time. But since then the hostility towards outsiders have become deeply rooted in the minds of the Nagas and against encroachers of their land. They began to retaliate and used to raid the Ahoms frequently. This rivalry with the Ahoms continued till the 16th century.

Later on in the early part of 17th century the Ahom-Naga relationship improved during the reign of Sachimpha (1644-1648) and Jayadraj Sinha (1648 - 1663). That was the early part of the Ahom-Naga history of relationship. There were exchanges of gifts between

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24 Alemchiba,n.5, p.30
25 ibid.,n.5, P.31.
26 Horam., n.7, p.25.
them such as gongs, spears, and daos by the Nagas and ear-rings, beads and cotton from the Ahoms. Some aspects of the Ahom-Naga relations were based on economy. The Ahoms policy towards the Nagas was based on a desire to control the 'brine springs' in eastern Naga territory which was manufacturing salt. Before the British invasion of Assam, the salt was one of the rarest commodities for both the Ahoms and the Nagas. So the Ahoms maintained cordial relations with the Nagas to draw out sufficient quantities of salt from those brine wells. At the same time they exchange their products of rice, other food stuff and medicines.

Another aspect of Ahom policy was to stop the Nagas to carry out any raids in future. The Ahoms granted free revenue of lands and fishing water to the Nagas. These lands were called 'Naga Khats' in Assamese. Subsequently, these 'Naga-Khats' became trading centres. Some of the Naga tribes like the Aos and the Lotha Nagas enjoyed such privileges. According to the history of Ahom-Naga relations this trading centres of Naga-Khats were opened by the king Godadhar Singh (1681 - 96). However the king Godadhar Singh was once overthrown by king Laluk Buraphukan, and he took sheltered in Naga hills for some years. After recapturing his kingdom, he was married to an Ao Naga girl called Sentishila. This folk tale of inter marriage

28 Asoso, n.9, p.56.
remains fresh and clear in the minds of the Ao Nagas. In order to flourish trade and commerce between the Nagas and the Ahoms, king Laluk Buraphukan opened again the link road from Nokpu village to Rongpur calling it 'Assiranga Duar' after the name of Sentishila's father. During the short reign of king Godadhar Singh, the Ahom-Naga relationship was peaceful and tranquil, but it was confined to the Nagas living in the low hills of plain areas bordering Assam.

The Ahom kings did not regard the Naga hills as subjects, and they never attempted to conquer the hills. Accordingly the relationship was only through a confederation and there was never any treaty and agreements signed by the two parties. The Nagas paid nominal tributes to Ahoms in the form of mithuns and other commodities but did not allow to extend their jurisdiction over any Naga hills. The Ahom kings had made no war with the Nagas to protect their frontier from the Burmese invasions, and when the Ahom kingdom was threatened from the Burmese military expansion.

To build up a strong military army, some of the Nagas were recruited by the Ahoms for their superior muscle strength.

It is also said that during the Burmese invasion of Assam, thousands of Ahoms fled and were sheltered in Naga Hill till the

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29 Bendangangshi 'Glimpses of Naga History', Published by Naga Patriots from Soyim, Mokukchung, Nagaland.,(1993), p.11.
30 Alemchiba,n.5, p.39.
31 Ibid.,n.5 p.40.
Singphos of Burma had withdrawn from Assam. During this period, the Nagas had given assistance and support to Ahoms who later on recovered their kingdom.

The Ahom-Naga relationship lasted till the British took over Assam in the early part of 19th century. They developed a new attitude towards each other and became good neighbours for over 600 years.

According to J. Buttler, “the Naga territory was never considered an integral part of sovereignty of Assam.”32 Again another British writer Sir. Edward Gait, who wrote the History of Assam clarified that “the hilly tract inhabited by the various tribes known to us collectively as Nagas has never been subjugated by the Ahoms, and it was no part of the British policy to absorb it.”33

Relations with Manipuri and Kukis:

Nagas relation with the Manipuris and the Kukis are quite different altogether. Only those Nagas who are living in the neighbourhood of the Manipur kingdom had exchanges and at times war. The Manipur Kings tried to extract tributes from Naga tribes of Angami, Mao and Tangkhul. Although racially, the Nagas, Manipuris

32 Quoted by Alemchiba, n.5, p.40, from A sketch of Assam(1847), p.152.
and Kukis are allied Mongoloid stocks, the Nagas relation with them can be described as having wars as well as fraternal relationship.

In the beginning the Naga relations with the Manipuris had were of friendship, mutual and cordial treatment to each other, inter-marriages, mutual exchange of visits and gifts, but at times there were occasional wars between them. The nature of Naga-Manipuris relations was sometime confined to the collection of tributes from the Naga villages. During the head hunting period when there was war among the Nagas, the Kings of Manipur assisted with arms to the friendly Nagas villages against the other. At times, there were also occasional raids by the Angamis and Mao Nagas, whenever the Kings of Manipur tried to extend and impose duties against them. The subsequent invasions by the Nagas also caused great fear to the Manipuri kings. On the other hand, Manipur faced successive invasions by the Burmese from 1750 onwards. To secure and protect from the Burmese invasions, often the Kings of Manipur sought help from the Nagas, Kukis and Assamese for alliances to challenge the Burmese. Intermittent war and peace existed between the Nagas and Manipuris, but the Nagas were not the subjects of the Kings of Manipur.

34 Asoso, n.9, p.46.
35 Ibid., n.9, P.50.
36 Ibid., n.9, p.50.
The Nagas and the Kukis had strange relations from olden days. Kukis are believed to be the last migrants from the Chin hills of Myanmar who came and occupied the foot hills of Manipur, encroached the Naga hills and are ruled by the hereditary despotic chiefs. It is argued by some that from the beginning the Tangkhul Nagas, Zemei, Liangmei and Rongmei (Zelian:grong) Nagas were the victims of the Kukis which they used to raid and punish them heavily. After the British invasion of Assam and Manipur in 1824, the British made the Kukis as frontliners in the war against Nagas. This further antagonised their relationship. Thus the Nagas and Kukis did not have any significant relationship. The relationship between the Nagas and Kukis can be said that the past history has a bearing on the contemporary pattern of Kukis-Naga relationship.

B. BRITISH OCCUPATION OF NAGA HILLS (1832 - 1879):

The beginning of the 19th century marked the struggle for supremacy between the British and Burmese over Assam and north east frontier which ended up with the First Anglo-Burmese War on 24th February 1824. In this war the Britishers defeated the Burmese and drove them out from Assam, and by the treaty of Yandaboo in 1826, Assam was brought under British control. The conflict occurred due to the attempt of the later to have a hold over Assam and to

37 Ibid. n. 9, P. 52.
exploit the vast economic potential of the Brahmaputra valley.\textsuperscript{38}

Historically no foreign country had conquered the Nagas. It was only by the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the British came and colonised some parts of the Naga hills. This is now called the southern part of Nagaland.

From the beginning the Nagas have not shown much interest for unity. Inter tribal feud was very much prevalent among the Nagas, and head hunting was a sort of trophy collection. In that kind of situation the British entered through the Nagas hills on their way to Assam. The first ever Britishers to visit Naga hills was Captain Jenkins and Captain Pamberton in January 1883 with 700 soldiers and 800 coolies. With the help of King Gambheer Singh of Manipur, they marched from Manipur to Assam through the Angami Naga Hills. The party suffered heavily at the hands of the warlike tribes of the Nagas, who attacked them repeatedly in every step of the roads.\textsuperscript{39} They faced a lot of hardships because of stiff resistance from the Angami Nagas.

The British occupation of Assam marked the beginning of punitive expeditions against the Naga hills from 1839 onwards to safeguard the plain areas of Assam from the warlike Nagas. Mr. Grange, Sub Assistant at Nowgong conducted the first expedition to investigate the causes of the Naga raids, and "endeavour to punish

\textsuperscript{38} NSF Seminar Paper, n.2, p.3.
\textsuperscript{39} A.M. Mackenzie, n. 27, p. 101.
the Chiefs of the large villages of Khonoma and Mozemah,” but the expedition returned without achieving much success due to the “unflinching Naga resistance and partly because of mismanagement by the British authorities.”

However, Mr. Grange's second expedition of 1840, succeeded to some extent in which he burnt down five villages and captured eleven Naga prisoners, then reached agreement with the hostile Nagas to pay tributes to the British. But in 1844, instead of paying tributes to the British, the Nagas indulged and committed a series of raids on the neighbouring plain areas. Henceforth, the British government put forward policy for retaliation and adopted defensive military actions against the Nagas. During 1849-50 as many as 10 expeditions were sent under the command of Lieutenant Vincent. In his tenth expedition, he captured a strong Naga fort at Khonoma and fought a bloody battle against the masses of the tribes of Kekrema. But the British troops were withdrawn in March 1851 from the hills. This was the turning point of the British policy towards the Nagas. Consequently, Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor General of India, laid down a policy of non-interference in Naga hills, “our possessions could bring no profit to us, and would be as costly to us: it would be

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40 Ibid., n.27, p.104.
41 Horam, n.7, p.9.
42 Asoso, n. 9, p.77.
43 Mackenzie, n. 27, p.112.
unproductive"... "but to occupy the country was in their instance better than to let it alone" "to protect the administrative areas.

Despite all the policies formulated by the British governors, Nagas frequently raided the plainsmen. According to the sources from 1854 to 1865 the Angami Nagas committed 19 raids, in which 232 people including some British officers were killed.

**Establishment of Naga Hills District, 1866:**

In order to check the war like Nagas from further outrages, the British government created the Naga Hills District in 1866 with its headquarters at Samaguting (Chumukedima) for administrative and political convenience. The creation of the District could also be seen as the Government's policy to check and protect the plain people from Naga's raids. However, this was the first step by the British who advocated the divide and rule policy to push the political boundary in Naga hills. Although "the permanent establishment of a British officer in the Angami Naga country had the effect of stopping the annual raids upon the British territory at the time of Gregory,"\(^4^5\) who was appointed as the first Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills. In March 1871 when Captain Butler took in charge of the Deputy

\(^4^4\) Ibid, n.27, pp.113-115

\(^4^5\) ibid, n.27, p.122.
Commissioner from Gregory in the Naga Hills, the Nagas committed raids in Manipur on the question of the demarcation of the boundary. To resolve the complications of the disputes he adopted "a bolder policy in which extensive explorations were proposed, and the clear definition of boundary lines and local limits was postulated as essential to any proper working of the scheme. This view was eventually accepted by the supreme British government."

**Inner Line Regulation, 1873:**

During the period of 1869-73, the major subject taken up by the British was for expansion of tea plantation in the Naga Hills of Assam. The rapid expansion of tea plantation in the frontiers of Naga hills aroused great resentment against the British and caused lot of disturbances to the tea planters. In order to control the problem "by 1873 under the Chin Hills Regulation and the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, the Inner Line Regulation was enforced prohibiting British India subjects from entering the Naga Hills without prior permission."*

Thus, "The Inner Line Regulation was the first law promulgated in Assam under the authority conferred by the Statute 33

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46 ibid, n. 27, p. 124, quoted from the letter to Bengal, No. 1661, dated 24th July, 1873.

Viet..., Chapter 3, which had given the Government of India power of summary legislation for backward tracts. Such laws are made to distinguish them from the Acts or Laws passed after discussion in the legislature."

This Regulation drew certain line on the ground without necessary permission and was operated for the protection of both the Nagas and the plainsmen. And again it was implied to the tea planters to pay compensation to the Nagas for the land occupied by tea estates which were lying beyond the Inner Line.

Meanwhile Major Godwin - Austin was deputed to Naga hills in 1874 to explore the eastern boundary from Talizo Peak eastward to the watershed between the confluence of the Brahmaputra and Irrawady unto the Patkai Pass for the purpose of laying down the boundary line between Manipur and the Naga hills and not as between Manipur and British territory. The result of his expedition was not altogether satisfactory, because of the thick forest, terrain and hostility by the Nagas.

Then the Naga hills were made under the charge of the Chief Commissioner of Assam in February, 1874. From 1874-1878, the British Government conducted many surveys and operations, but had brought the loss of many officers, and coolies at the hands of the

48 Ibid., n.33, pp.386-387.
49 Asoso, n.9, p. 94.
50 Asoso, n.9, p.95.
51 Mackenzie, n. 27, p. 124.
Nagas including Captian Butler, the Deputy Commissioner in 1875, who was a qualified and influential over the Naga tribes and most able and enthusiastic officer killed in ambush at the village of Pangti (Lotha Naga Village). For a more effective operation in the Naga hills the British Headquarters were shifted to Wokha (Lotha area) in 1875, from Samaguating. The purpose of shifting the headquarters was to influence the neighbouring tribes, and to protect the inroads of the Nagas on the borders for their convenience.

Later on the permanent site for the future political officers' headquarters was shifted in March 1878, from Wokha to Kohima, the principal Angami village and the Manipur frontier line. Till 1947, Kohima was the headquarters of the British India Government.

**Occupation of Kohima, 1879-1880:**

The occupation of Kohima by the British was the turning point of the last war of Naga independence against the imperialist. In July 1878, the government of British India communicated to the new Chief Commissioner Sir. S.C. Bayley, its general view of the more forward policy advocated by Colonel Keatinge to bring the Nagas into complete submission. Such designs propagated by the British had forced the Nagas to defend their country. Amidst all these, there was

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52 Mackenzie, n. 27,p.133.
an inter tribal feud among the Angami Nagas. To prevent and to punish the guilty villages by fine and penalties, Damant, the political officer of Naga hills in the early part of 1879-80, put the British policy into action. At the same time, some complications occurred in April 1879, when a policeman was shot dead by a Naga to obtain the rifle while he was escorting the mail runner who seized the rifle. This report came to the office of Damant, but the killer was left untracked. In May Damant came to know that Khonoma village was acquiring arms and ammunitions, and “in the attitude of Khonoma was decidedly threatening that Damant proposed to organise a hostile expedition against it after the monsoon; but even at this time Khonoma was apparently divided against itself.”\(^{53}\) He was full of confidence with no fear and suspicion from the Nagas, but at that time the Angami Nagas were preparing for the war against the British and drive them out from the Naga soil.

On 13\(^{th}\) of October, 1879 Mr. Damant set out on his expedition accompanied by an escort of 21 military and 65 police\(^ {54}\) to three Angami villages, Jotsoma, Khonoma, and Mezoma. Before he started to Jotsoma “an ominous sign was on its way”\(^ {55}\) as warned by a Jotsoma interpreter who was very kind to Damant. The interpreter advised him not to proceed to Khonoma as the people were preparing war against Britishers. Damant however

\(^{53}\) Ibid., n.27, p.134.  
\(^{54}\) Mackenzie, n.27, p.135.  
\(^{55}\) Asoso,n. 9, p.101.
replied that there was no danger\textsuperscript{56} for him, and went straight to the village. As soon as he entered the fortress gate of Khonoma village an enraged military of the village shot him on the spot. This was followed by a volley of bullets on his escorts suffering a loss of 25 soldiers, three domestic servants and 19 wounded.

The news of this disaster encounter immediately spread like wild fire and reached the British Headquarters in Kohima the same afternoon. The Military and civil incharge of the garrison entrusted Mr. Cawley, District Superintendent of Police at Kohima to make preparation for sudden attack with a force of 180 Police.\textsuperscript{57} A message was sent to Mr. Hinde, the Extra Assistant Commissioner in charge of Wokha, 57 miles away from Kohima and Colonel Johnstone at Imphal. Then Hinde reached the Kohima on 19\textsuperscript{th} October with a heavy war preparation of 40 sepoys and 22 policemen. Equally a great war game was prepared by the warrior Angami Nagas to defend their motherland. The other thirteen Angami villages\textsuperscript{58} also joined Khonoma in the uprising, they blocked Kohima for eleven days, until the relief reached from Manipur.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} Mackenzie, n. 27, p. 35
\textsuperscript{57} Asoso, n. 9, P.101.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., n. 9, P.102.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, n.9, P.102.
After receiving the news of the murder of Damant, Colonel Johnstone, the Political Agent of Manipur, asked the King of Manipur to put a force of 2,000 Manipuri troops at his disposal for the vengeance against the Angami Nagas. The force under the command of a minister and the King's two sons started the next day and covered a distance of nearly hundred miles, over a roadless hills in the jungle and most difficult terrains and reach Kohima in five days. ⁶⁰ On the following day the British attacked Khonoma. However it was not an easy task for the British force to capture the stronghold of Khonoma. Even by using modern weapons the war lasted for a whole day. But at nightfall, they captured the lower portion of Khonoma village. This war has been considered as one of the severest war ever known in the Naga hills. Finally the superior arms defeated the inferior. And the warrior Nagas evacuated the remaining upper portion of the village and fled to the Jungles in the night itself. The following day the British force occupied the village and destroyed the site of opposition. Even Jotsoma, lying close by Khonoma was captured on 27th November and a portion of the village was burnt. ⁶¹ “The Nagas retreated to a strongly fortified position on a crest of the Burrail range, where, as their access to their fields and houses was

⁶⁰ Mackenzie, n 27, p 136.
⁶¹ Alemchiba, n. 5, pp.90-91.
In the war the Britishers lost two officers and subedar Major of the 44th S.L.I was killed, two British and two native officers were heavily wounded and 44 of the rank and file were killed and badly wounded.

In consequent to the war, the freedom loving Nagas were punished heavily, fined in grain, cash and unpaid labour were levied upon them by the British. Nagas lost the war but the victory of British imperialist could not win over the Naga's sentiment. The hostile spirit, resistance against the outsiders and freedom for their country still remained the same. The war of Khonoma was one of the remarkable events of the Nagas the uprising among the Naga history.

Consequent to the fall of Khonoma village in 1879, the other Naga villages also submitted to the British, and by 1881, the British imperialist had succeeded in establishing their authority over the then Naga Hills District.

C. BRITISH POLICY FROM 1881 TO 1947:

The occupation of Naga Hills by the British was initially to protect the plainsmen from Naga raids. But later on mainly after the occupation of Kohima following the battle of Kohima 1879, they started to penetrate the neighbouring Naga hills for their

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62 Mackenzie, n.27, p.137.
administrative as well as political convenience. Sir Robert Reid writes

"The first decision to make the Naga Hills a British district was
taken in 1881...... The necessity of protecting the borders of
Nowgong, Sibsagar against raiding Nagas which in the early days
compelled us to penetrate into the hills little by little ceased with the
formation of the Naga Hill District. But the process of penetration
went inexorably, if irregularly. It was impossible to draw a line as the
boundary of our areas of control and to say that we should be blind
and deaf to all that went on across that line. The trans frontier Nagas
raid on our administered village are involved in dispute with the
former head hunting and massacres go on just across the border and
under the very noses of our officers. In such conditions local officers
inevitably, and with reason, clamour for forward policy. The Chief
Commissioner sometimes supports them, sometimes he does not. The
Government of India is nearly always reluctant. But the frontier
moves forward." 63 From 1881 onwards they continued their punitive
expeditions and annexed more territory of the Naga hill which was
brought under their control till 1947, with the exception of Tuensang
Areas (hills) which remained unconquered and almost unvisited by
the British.

63 Sir Robert Reid, 'History of the Frontier areas Bordering Assam from 1883-1941', Eastern
Mr. McCabe, the then Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills 1881-94 put to work an annexation policy which was carried out in a gradual way and "based on four general principles: (a) to insist a strict obedience within his own jurisdiction; (b) to punish villages within his jurisdiction for all raids committed against trans-frontier villages; (c) to punish trans-frontier villages for raids against this-frontier villages; (d) as far as possible to mediate in disputes between villages adjacent to the frontier." 64

The inter tribal war and head hunting among the Nagas in the trans frontier areas was very rampant causing much inconvenience to the British administered areas. More expeditions were therefore designed to protect their administrative territory.

The annexation policy adopted by Mr. McCabe brought more Naga hills under their control, and at the same time the tribal feud and head hunting among the Nagas were also reduced. One positive thing about the British administrative policy in the Naga hills was that their non interference in the Naga culture and custom, tradition and indigenous village administration. These were completely looked after by the village headmen (Gaonburas) who decided any dispute both of civil and criminal nature according to customary laws.

64 ibid., n. 63. p.102, quoted from Assam Secretariat Judicial Department, file No. 149-J of 1884.
The occupation of the Ao country in 1888 was followed by the establishment of a sub division at Mokokchung. For their administrative convenience, the Naga Hills district was divided into sub-divisions of Kohima and Mokokchung under a Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner who looked after the British Hill District resolved "the inter tribal quarrel to those cases where they involved: (1) Outrages on British subjects, (2) Violation of Inner Line (3) Danger to the interest of people dwelling inside the British borders by reasons of the proximity of disturbance outside, such disturbances for instance, as would be likely to be intimidate to coolies employed upon tea estates or cultivators."65 This order was passed on to the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills and Sibsagar by the Governor General of India. In order to implement the Government's instruction, "the Chief Commissioner then ordered the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills to make two more expeditions (a) to a number of eastern Angami villages along the Manipur border to the east of Kohima and outside the existing boundary of the Naga Hill district, and (b) to a number of Ao villages east of Wokha. Again the same instruction was ordered to the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar to visit the Konyak villages to the east of the boundary."66 Any dispute

65 ibid., n. 63 p.104.
66 Ibid, n.63, p 104.
arising beyond the trans border areas was a British subject to interfere and punish them.

Another policy adopted by the British government was to prevent carrying the daos and spears in the market and other public places. The Government considered that this prohibition would cut down the number of attacks by the Nagas. This imposition was in fact against the tradition of the Nagas for whom the carrying of daos and spears was a way of life besides for the protection against wild animals and enemies as well. This policy did not have much affect on the Nagas.

After the occupation of some parts of Naga Hills the British established two administrative units to extend their authority on the restive Nagas. They initiated imposing of annual House Taxes discriminately as Rs.3 (three) on the Angamis and Rs.2 (two) on the others with Rs. 5. (five) on the foreigners.67 The Nagas were made to pay the House Tax as an acknowledgement of British Suzerainty over them and failure of payment met punitive measures and reprisals.

However, some Nagas refused to pay the extraneous House Tax imposed by the British administration as it was too exorbitant. Thus, the Khonoma War, which was a result of the Naga defiant against the British might by refusing to pay the tax, occurred in 1879.

67 Asoso,n. 9., p.110.
One important duty of the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills was to tour the whole Naga Hills at least one third of the year, no matter how inaccessible the way might be, and find out the problems and disputes of the villages on the spot. The Deputy Commissioner was made the overall incharge of the district for an effective administrative convenience. The colonial government however failed to develop the Naga Hills and education of the people was totally neglected.

**Advent of the Christianity:**

Christianity came to the Naga Hills through the American Baptist Missionaries who came and preached the love of Christ to the head hunting Nagas. Before the advent of Christianity, the warlike Nagas were frequently indulging in raids and head hunting. Life was not secured as neighbours raid each other in search of heads for trophies. Religion being professed was a form of animism.

The American Baptist Missionaries came risking and sacrificing their lives to preach the Gospel of Christ and won the Nagas from head hunting.

The first American Missionary who came to the Naga hills was Rev. Mills Bronson. He arrived in 1839-40 at Namsang, a village in the Tirap frontier. But he did not accomplish much in the Naga hills as he had to leave the place due to illness, demise of his sister and
other misfortunes. In his short stay in the hills he established a Mission school to teach the three R’s and Gospel of Christ to the Nagas. In the year 1869, Dr E.W. Clark came to Sibsagar to join the Missionary work. His attention was attracted by the war like Nagas and his mind immediately turned to the Ao Naga tribe. In 1871, “he engaged an Assamese Christian named Godhula to acquire language from the Ao’s to stay there.” For entering the Naga hills, a special permission from the Deputy Commissioner was necessary as it was restricted to the white people. After obtaining the permission, Dr. E.W. Clark entered the Ao Naga hills of Dickahaimong (village of Molungyimsen) and made preparations for his stay. This was the beginning of American Mission activities in the Naga hills.

Meanwhile, a few Ao Nagas were already baptised in Sibsagar by the Missionaries. In this manner, Christianity slowly spread into the Naga Hills making the Nagas to give up the practise of their old religion and their conversion to the new religion. It was through the American Baptist Missionaries that the Nagas were weaned away from the practices of head hunting and the old religion and were converted into Christianity which taught them to be more loving and peaceful. The American Baptist Mission established 16 schools for the Nagas and ushered in modern education to the wild tribes. In comparison,

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68 Ibid, n.9, p.114.
the British Missionaries succeeded in establishing only 6 (six) primary schools during the years 1881 to 1947.\textsuperscript{70}

There are some writers who are of the opinion that the Naga ethnic movement was instigated by the American Missionaries in 1953. The then Home Minister Dr. K.N. Katju, made a strong statement in the Parliament to the effect that Missionary activities should be restricted in Naga Hills, as their work in politics was not clear. Thus the Government of India issued an order for all the foreign missionary to leave Nagaland.\textsuperscript{71} However it is not true to say that foreign missionaries instigated the Naga movement. Their contribution was confined to providing modern education which made the Naga aware of his surroundings and his ethnic identity and political rights, and of the universal rights shared by all human beings.

\textbf{Impact of the First World War :}

The impact of the First World War was not felt much in the Naga Hills except for the sending of labour corps of 2,000 Nagas to France by the British. But this served as an opportunity for the Nagas to see the outside world and to develop a strong sense of their ethnic

\textsuperscript{70} ibid., p.8.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p.8.
identity. This new awareness they gained also made them more assertive of their differences with the rest of the British Government.

As a consequence, after the First World War the Naga Club was formed in Kohima in the year 1918. This was formed on the advise and initiative of the British whose aim was to unite all the Naga tribes and to bring them into one platform. This was a "watershed" in the history of the Nagas in that it was the first organisation to have representatives of most of the Naga tribes, Government servants and leading headmen of villages. The aim of the club was both social and political in nature, and also an attempt to wean over the Nagas from their inter tribal feuds and foster solidarity amongst them. Later it was followed by the formation of the first Tribal Council in 1923 by the Lothas subsequently followed by Aos in 1928.

The Naga Hills District was declared as 'Backward Tract' in 1921. It was placed under British Assam Province under section 52 (2) of the Government of India Act, 1919, purely for their administrative convenience. This Act also introduced what was known as "Dyarchy System" by which state subjects were divided into Reserved and Transferred subjects. In 1925, under the Transferred subject, forest lands were transferred to the districts of Sibsagar and Nowgong. Unfortunately now, the state of Assam makes claims that it has inherited the transferred forest lands from the British imperialists.
and has so far refused to return them to the Nagas.\textsuperscript{72}

**Simon Commission:**

The British India was passing through political turmoil and rebellions in the early 1920s. The Indian National Congress was launching a non violent movement under the charismatic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi for India's independence from the British yoke. Seeing the situation of British India, the British Home Government set up a statutory commission under the Chairmanship of Sir John Simon known as the *Simon Commission* in 1928 to study the British India situation for future policy. When the visit of the Simon Commission was imminent, the Nagas expressed their desire for independence to Sir. J. H. Hutton who had served 'the distinction of about twenty years of Deputy Commissioner in Naga Hills'\textsuperscript{73} who convened a meeting to ascertain their wishes after the British left India. J. H. Hutton's documents say, "It is the purpose of this note to show that the interest of hill districts will not only served by having them included proposed the reforms but they will suffer very serious detriment by being tied up to the politically more advanced plains district while latter will suffer in the future by being joined with people of an irreconcilable culture in an unnatural union which can

\textsuperscript{72} NSF Seminar Paper, n. 2, p.4.

\textsuperscript{73} M Rammuny,., 'The World of Nagas', Northern Book Centre., New Delhi, 1988, p.14.
ultimately only entail discomfort for both parties.”74 This report of J.H. Hutton brought the Simon Commission to Kohima on 10th January 1929. The Naga Club, representing the Naga People submitted a memorandum to the Commission demanding “that we should not be put at the mercy of the people, who could never have conquered us, and to whom we were never subjected, but to leave us alone, to determine for ourselves (our future as) in ancient times.”75 That was the first Naga political document ever submitted to a foreign ruler. The report of the Simon Commission to replace the phrase ‘Backward Tract’ of the Government of India Act, 1919, was debated in the House of Commons in 1935. The British recognised the Naga claim to be treated separately from the British India Act 1935 renamed the Naga Hills District the “Naga Hills Excluded Area” . It was henceforth directly administered by the Governor of Assam (The House of Commons Session 1934 - 35, Bill 17(1) pp.56-57) In the words of Colonel Wedgewood “they (Nagas) must not be converted from good Nagas or whatever they are into bad Hindus, for no prominent India politicians have ever displayed the slightest interest in this subject as compared with Europeans who had a natural and strong sympathy with these people”76

74 Ibid., n. 73, p.14, quoted from Simon Commission Report, Kohima Raj Bhavan Records.

75 Memorandum submitted to the Simon Commission by the Naga Club on 10th January, 1929.

76 NSF Seminar Paper, n. 2, p.5.
Sir. Robert Reid, the then Governor of Assam explained the implication of excluded and partially excluded areas thus, "Constitutionally only the two valley of Assam came within the ambit of the Reform Act of 1935 and so fell under full control by the Cabinet of elected members. The Hill districts meaning the Balipara Frontier Tract, Sadya Frontier Tract, Naga Hills and Lushai Hills were 'excluded'. They were administered by the Governor 'in his discretion'. But the partially 'excluded areas' comprising the Khasi and Jaintia, the Garo and Makir Hills, enjoyed the privileges to elect members to the Legislature and Ministry was primarily responsible for the administration. But by Section 52(a) of the Act the Governor was charged with special responsibility for their 'Peace and Good Government' a responsibility which was obvious from the start would be and indeed was, very hard to discharge."77 The use of the words 'Excluded' and partially 'Excluded' have been thoroughly exploited politically and wrongly interpreted.

Zeliangrong Movement: 1931-41:
In the late 1920s Zeliangrong movement was launched by Jadonang and later on by Gaidiapliu in the north west hills of Manipur. Jadonang, who initiated this uprising was a Kabui Naga. His aim was to unite three constituents of Naga tribes: the Zemeis, Liangmeis and

77 Rammuny, n.73, p.16.
Rongmeis (Zeliangrong) to drive away the British as well as Kukis who were regarded as outsiders.\textsuperscript{78} Jadonang was supposed to have the powers of a 'sorcerer' and the kacha Nagas "believing that he is the 'Messiah' for whom they have been waiting have sent him as tributes large number of mithuns and domesticated gayals."\textsuperscript{79} The objective of the uprising was a "socio religious reformation and political goal to separate the Zeliangrong from the British regime. And his aim was to establish Naga Raj."\textsuperscript{80} But before achieving his goal, he was implicated and sentenced to death on 13\textsuperscript{th} June 1931.\textsuperscript{81} After his execution, Gaidiliu, a young unmarried girl of only 17 years old carried the movement by organising armed rebellion which was also suppressed in 1932.\textsuperscript{82} Jadonang and Gaidiliu called on the people to disobey the oppressive laws of the British regime and not to pay house tax. Jadonang's religious idea were 'crystallised' in the 'Heraka cult' by Gaidiliu who was regarded as his 'spiritual successor.'\textsuperscript{83} Gaidiliu was 'wanted' on the charge of murder and arrested in September 1932. The 'Heraka Cult' which was revived by Gaidiliu spread over a large area of the Naga hills, Manipur and the

\textsuperscript{78} K.S. Singh, (Ed), 'Tribal Movement in India', Vol 1., Manohar Publications, 1982., New Delhi,p.54.
\textsuperscript{79} Robert Reid., n. 63, p.167.
\textsuperscript{80} Singh,n .78, p.56.
\textsuperscript{81} Robert.Reid, n. 63, p.170.
\textsuperscript{82} Singh, n. 78, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{83} Robert Reid.,n.63,p. 170.
North Cachar Hills. Her capture saved a situation of grave danger of a serious outbreak. But finally she was sentenced to life imprisonment. She was released after 1947 by the Government of India, which acknowledged her as a patriotic freedom fighter. The late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru referred to her as Rani. Since then she came to be known as Rani Gaidiliu, and “she was recognised as a political sufferer, awarded pension.” But it has been argued that she not fought for the Indian freedom struggle. Moreover none of the Nagas participated in the Indian National Congress which led to the Indian freedom struggle. Gaidiliu in fact fought for the unification of Zeliangrong, freedom from foreign rule, reform the practice of ‘Hereka Cult and to establish the Naga Raj’.

Nagas in the Second World War:

The outbreak of the Second World War was of great significance in the History of the Nagas. When the Japanese occupied Burma, their imminent invasion of Manipur and the Naga hills gave a serious threat to the Allied forces. The seizing of Kohima (capital of Nagaland) was equally important for both the Japanese and the Allied power. For the Japanese, it was necessary to make their conquest of

84 Ibid., p.171.
South-East Asia, while for the Allied power the defence of Kohima was very vital to defend the whole of India sub continent.\textsuperscript{86} In September 1943, General Kawabe, the Japanese Commander in Chief in Burma and Subhas Chandra Bose, the Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army decided to launch an attack in the Chin Hills, Manipur and the Naga Hills.\textsuperscript{87} Mr. Zapu Phizo, an Angami Naga who "went to Burma in 1933 also joined in the Indian National Army led by Subhas Chandra Bose as a corporal till 1944."\textsuperscript{88} The main purpose of Subhas Chandra Bose and the Phizo 'game plan' was to bring the Japanese into the Naga Hills to defeat the British forces and to conquer the Indian sub continent for the freedom of India and the Nagas. INA led Subhas Chandra Bose was fighting for India independence from the British yoke and the Naga Zapu Phizo joining with the INA was for the cause of the Nagas. The dream of Phizo unfortunately was not fulfilled. It was a great tragedy for the Nagas.

The Battle of Kohima was one of the fierest in the sub-continent. It is said to be the 'Waterloo' for the Japanese. When the Japanese fought the war in Kohima, the Nagas joined the Allied forces as coolies, guides, and supplied them with food stuff. The Nagas could capture a number of armies. This was made possible due to the

\textsuperscript{86} Alemchibani.5 p.152.
\textsuperscript{87} Asoso,n.9, p.143
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., n. 9, p.199.
loyalty and co-operation by the Nagas to the Allied forces. The combined forces defeated the Japanese in the battle of Kohima.

The Significant of the Allied Forces Victory:

The epitaph: "When you go home tell them of us, and say for your tomorrow we gave our today" in the heart of Kohima war Cemetery, symbolises the sacrifices and significance of the battle of Kohima.

In the aftermath of the Japanese defeat in the Battle of Kohima the Allied forces re occupied Burma. A.Z. Phizo was arrested and imprisoned in the Central jail in Rangoon for seven months for the collaboration of Indian National Army. Phizo returned to Naga Hills in 1946 and joined in the Naga National Council (NNC).

The Crown Colony Scheme:

When the World War II broke out Indian subcontinent was passing through a period of chaos and turbulence. The Subcontinent under the reign of the British joined hands with the Allied Forces against the Japanese, Italian, German Axis. At the same time India was struggling for its independence. By then the British colonialists realised that the subcontinent was about to end.89

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89 ibid., n. 9, p.139.
Sir. Robert Reid who was the Governor of Assam from 1937-1942 realised the ethnic and cultural differences between the Naga tribes and the rest of British India and Burma recommended a scheme to carve out a Trust Territory “comprising of Naga hill areas of Assam and the upper part of Burma inhabited by tribal people to form a Crown Colony.”

This proposal was mooted by Sir Robert Reid to form a new state which would be controlled not from Delhi but from the White Hall. In his confidential report Sir. Robert Reid proposed that:

“ We have no right to allow this great body of non-Indian animist and Christians to be drawn into the struggle between Hindus and Muslims which is now and will be in the future politics in India proper..... They cannot be left to Indian political leaders neither knowledge, interest nor feeling for the areas. In any case if my main premise of separation from India is accepted their intervention could scarcely arise ....

Personally, I am in favour of Dr. Hutton's idea of a North East Province vaguely embracing all the hill fringes from Lushai (or Lakher) land on the south right round to the Balipara Frontier tract on the north, embracing on the way Chittagong hill tracts of Bengal and the Nagas and Chins of Burma and perhaps the Shan state too. I could put this under a Chief Commissioner and he, in turn, could, I imagine, have to be divorced (as in Burma) from the control of the government of India (presumably a
federal body by them) and put perhaps under some appropriate department of Whitehall."  

Robert Reid further notes:

"Those of us who, before 1947, were speculating on the future of the hill were very anxious that they should not be made a plaything of Indian politics and when I retired in 1943, I tried to rouse the interest in this problem at home but everyone was rightly concentrating on winning to war, and any how, India's North East Frontier was much too small to hope for any special treatment in the post war discussions. We had thought of setting up some sort of agency to embrace the whole north east frontier fringe, and to exclude it from the general round of Indian politics with which it had no affinity. But the only way to ensure this would have been somehow to separate this area from the territory being handed over, and British India without qualifications was being transferred to the successor governments of India and Pakistan. So it would not work. The North Eastern Frontier fringe might within the meaning of the Reform Act of 1935 be an excluded area, but it was still part of British India."  

But Crown Colony could not be implemented.

After Sir Robert Reid, Sir Reginald Coupland, a constitutional expert, reviewed Sir Robert Reid proposal and introduced a new proposal famously known as "Coupland Plan". This plan emphasized that "the Government of India and Burma might have a treaty with

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91 Ibid., n.2, pp.5-6. Quoted from Robert Reid's notes, Shillong Raj Bhavan Records, 9&10.
92 Ibid., n. 2, pp.5-6.
the British and it should take share of responsibilities for the areas as 'Trust Territory’. In support of the Plan, he stated ‘there is one major area which seems to call for a special treatment, the hill tracts on the north east frontier of Assam and the adjoin similar hill tracts on the north west frontier of Burma. The inhabitants of both areas are alike in races and culture. They are not Indians or Burma Nation.' But the 'Coupland Plan' was ultimately put in cold storage due to a change of hands in the government. Sir Winston Churchill of the Conservative Party was put out of power, and the Labour Government which subsequently took over the power was not interested in any confrontation in the subcontinent. Despite that “the Nagas opposed it vehemently since they had no affection to any kind of British imperialism and colonialism.” But the Nagas could not anticipate the possible outcome and consequences. They presumed that when the British quit India they would get independence. But that did not happen. It was due to the myopic view of the Nagas who were reluctant to extend support for the British Plans. Lamenting the Naga stand Robert Ried wrote: “If the Nagas had lent slightest support or encouragement to this scheme, the colony might have been a reality.”

93 NSF Seminar Paper, n. 2, pp.6-7.
94 Asoso, n. 9, p.141.
95 Rammuny, n. 73., p.21.
The Cultural and Societal Frames of Reference of the Nagas:

In order to understand the salience and relevance of the Naga ethnic movement it is necessary to develop the cultural and societal frames of reference of the Naga cultural revolutionaries. Robert D. Crane's observation has explanatory significance: "The Naga who now have 3000 college graduates and are one of the most literate nations in Asia have began to conduct original research in their own obscure history. They are conscious of the fact that of all the peoples of Southeast Asia they alone have never once succumbed during the past two millennia to any of the waves of immigrants that periodically swept down into Southeast Asia from the north". Although the political obstacles are still daunting, the ideas and visions of the future held by Naga nationalists are based on the innate strength of traditional culture and therefore highly relevant to the structure of the decision making groups and the personality of individual Nagas. Naga culture is a living organism and affirms the existence of distinctive frame of mind. The Naga ethnic movement has combined the tribal values and organisation with a synergy of the self-determination with the democratic principle. The Naga culture is tribally and socially constructed. Any effort to impose hegemonic atomisation and individualisation on the Nagas through political manipulation would come up against stronger demands.
Naga Decision-Making Groups:
Structure of Power Relation and Accepted Values of the International System

For conflict management to successfully eliminate the danger of ethnic instability, ethnicity should be used for political purposes only if it is harmony with the structure of power relations and the accepted values of the international system. If this is not the case, the danger of "self determination" exhausting its legitimacy is always there. The Naga decision-making groups can generate bargaining leverage channelling ethnic conflicts away from violence provided there is some kind of equity of power and status so as to arrive at solutions which are appropriate. After British withdrawal from India, it could have been agreed that there is no such thing as absolute sovereignty in international law and a real durable peace settlement could have been arrived at through institutional initiatives to build up a series of community councils and municipal arrangements. At the same time, there would have been an increasing role for stable institutionalisation of Naga authority without all politics converging on the sovereign national state. It can be argued perhaps that by formulating its national security priorities and military-political interests without providing adequate measure of self-government to the Nagas, India created a focus on a hegemonic conception of
Nagaland's connection with India. The later political struggle as a war of liberation may not have emerged if coercive assimilation had not been initially practiced.

The preceding passages discussed the historical evolution of the Naga Nationalist Movement. In the Next Chapter, an examination on the Naga resistance movement in the post independence India would be undertaken.