CHAPTER VI

SLOW BUT STEADY PENETRATION

The establishment of a station at Asalu with several outposts in the long line of frontier failed to prevent the marauding raids of the Nagas into the villages of the British border. Hence, it became necessary to occupy a commanding position in the heart of the Angami country to exercise a direct influence over the Nagas. Samaguting was particularly chosen because it was lying between the powerful villages of Mozama, Khonoma and Jotsoma and the tract to be protected. Moreover, it was on the main line of communication with the district of Nowgong and was previously occupied. Its inhabitants who had the experience of British rule seemed to be favourably disposed to have one European officer in their midst. Accordingly in October 1866, in deference to the strong recommendation of the Government of Bengal the establishment of a Deputy Commissionership with headquarters at Samaguting was announced by the Government of India. The new district was constituted with that part of Nowgong which lay on the right bank of the Dayang, but its boundaries were not defined.

Accordingly Lieutenant Gregory occupied Samaguting backed by a moderate force of one hundred and fifty men of the Nowgong Frontier Police. The establishment of the
station was followed by the opening of communications. A road between Samaguting and Dimapur was constructed for the extension of trade with the market established at the latter place. Plans for the improvement of land and water communication between Dimapur and Golaghat was also undertaken.

A dispensary for the benefit of the sick and a school for the Naga children were established at Samaguting. In accordance with his plan already drawn up Gregory had invited the Chiefs of the neighbouring Naga villages to a conference at Samaguting and explained to them the object of his mission. He declared a general amnesty of all offences against British subjects, except those committed recently by Razepamah on the Mikir village of Sirgamcha. It may be stated in this connection that this raid by Razepamah was the immediate reaction of the Nagas to the occupation of their hills. It had clearly demonstrated that they were not yet prepared to accept British suzerainty without a challenge. On his meeting the Naga chiefs, Gregory made them understand that although the British Government was keen to cultivate intimate relations with them, it would not hesitate to punish them for any violation of British territory or that of Manipur, or if they did not surrender proclaimed offenders. At the same time he told them that normally he would not interfere in their quarrels, but if they solicited his good offices he would be prepared to

1. I.J.P. 1866, April, No. 139.
help them in settling their disputes. Those who would willingly submit to the British Government and pay a small tribute would be entitled to its protection.  

DESTRUCTION OF RAZEPEMAH:

By the middle of September 1867, Gregory was free to proceed against Razepemah, the village responsible for the massacre on the Mikir village of Sirgamcha. Accompanied by a strong force of the Frontier Police, Gregory marched against the guilty village. But the expedition was unopposed and there was nothing left for him to do anything than to destroy the village as was previously determined. "The village was razed to the ground; its lands declared barren and desolate for ever; and its people, on their making complete submission were distributed throughout other communities". Although the Government of India very often condemned the policy of burning of villages and destruction of crops, the local authorities by approving Lieutenant Gregory's proceedings against Razepemah, had gone against the very principles which the Government of India so steadfastly insisted. Whatever justifications the local authorities might have given, the spirit of vindictiveness was inherent in such wanton acts of destruction. Rightly the Court of Directors opposed such

methods as they "perpetuate a barbarous system of retaliation and render the pacification of the Nagas utterly hopeless."4

RESIDENTIARY DELEGATES APPOINTED:

The meeting which was convened by Gregory at some place in advance of Samaguting with the representatives of different Angami villages was not a success. This was primarily due to the continuance of their internal feuds. Secondarily, there was the disinclination on their part to participate at a common conference where their own enemies would be treated on equal terms. Moreover, there was the greatest risk for the delegates from the distant villages to cross a hostile village to reach the place of meeting. Under these circumstances, to reconcile the existing feuds Gregory proposed that each powerful clan should have an accredited agent in the court of the Deputy Commissioner who should reside at Samaguting receiving subsistence from the Government. 5

The Governor-General in-Council approved the sanction given by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to the proposal on an experimental basis for one year only.

In 1866, when the system was first introduced, the number of delegates sanctioned was ten, but on account of the great use, their number was subsequently increased.

4. Despatch to the Court (P) 1846, Aug. 12, No. 24.  
Besides acting as Dubhasa or interpreters and escort, the delegates served as "intelligence department" between the Deputy Commissioner and those whom they represented. These delegates were indeed of great help to the officer in-charge of Naga Hills and survey parties on their several tours into the interior of the hills. The Commissioner of Assam, while recommending that the system be made a permanent one hinted that "someday or other, and perhaps not so very far off, the secret of managing some of the hill tribes may be found on the adoption of a plan of representative administration of which these delegates prove the germ". Notwithstanding such expectations, the scheme had miserably failed so far as the healing of any of the long-standing feuds amongst the tribes was concerned and they could not render "any great service as yet towards the object for which they were appointed".

SYSTEM OF PASSES INTRODUCED:

To preserve the law and order and to secure the good behaviour of the Angami Nagas, Gregory decided to introduce the system of passes to all Angamis visiting the plains of Assam. The introduction of such a measure, it was hoped, would facilitate the detection of offenders in British territories. It was proposed that all trading parties of Nagas passing through Samaguting should be required to deposit their

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arms and take a pass from the Deputy Commissioner, before they proceeded onwards. Gregory and later his successor, Captain Butler urged upon the Government to extend the system of passes to the Nagas proceeding to Manipur and Cachar, as well, who were as yet free of all control. The extension of such measures would have brought the officers at Samagurin into direct touch with men from every village in the hills, but the Government of Bengal was decidedly opposed to such an extension in view of the continued good behaviour of the Angamis since 1866. Therefore, instead of multiplying restrictions, the Government of Bengal desired the withdrawal of those that already existed. While ordering the removal of restrictions, the Lieutenant Governor observed:

Our best hope of civilising the Nagas lies in fostering trade and friendly intercourse between them and the settled districts in the neighbourhood of the hills, but it is clear that the pass system impedes the trade with Assam and forces it into unnatural and foreign channels.

BOUNDARY AND JURISDICTION DEFINED:

The necessity of defining the jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioner posed a problem to the Government of India. The Surveyor General, suggested that the boundary should extend as far east as the Namsang river in the East and that its southern limit should be defined as coterminous with Manipur and Burma. But Hopkinson opposed this on

7. B.J.P. 1869, Nov. 1869.
the ground that the hills south of Sibsagar could be conveniently managed from the Sibsagar district and that the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills should exclusively devote himself to the Angamis. He also proposed that a portion of the sub-division of North Cachar (now abolished) inhabited by the peaceful Mikirs and Kacharis should be included within the Naga Hills District. This suggestion was accepted by the Government of India and in December 1967, the Southern boundary of the district was laid down along the sources of the Doyang or Rengma river to the small western feeder of the source of the Dhansiri.

Simultaneously with the announcement of the new line of boundary, the jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills was also defined. A rough system of judicial procedure was laid down and the D.C. was given large discretionary powers to deal summarily against villages guilty of any gross outrage. The Assistant Commissioner, who was also the Assistant Superintendent of Police, was empowered to exercise the powers of a magistrate. Certain cases were left to the village authorities. In view of the fact that a British Officer had assumed the charge of the Angami country, the Manipuris were not allowed to undertake retaliatory raids on the Naga territory. Any necessary action against Nagas committing outrages on Manipur's territory would be taken by

the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills in concert with
the Political Agent of Manipur. However, it was approved
that "in the case of Naga marauders, detected in the act
of making a raid into Munnipore, the Munnipoories, may at
their discretion follow them up and do what they can to
punish them and to recover any plundered property".9

BUTLER APPOINTED POLITICAL AGENT IN NAGA HILLS:

Lt. Gregory could not do much beyond setting up
the rudiments of the administrative machinery at Samaguting.
In course of a few months, he exchanged his appointment for
one in the plains. He was succeeded by Lieutenant Butler,
son of Major John Butler, who had conducted several expeditions
against the Angamis during 1846-50. Although Lt.
Butler's time was mostly taken up by exploration and survey
work since he had taken charge of the district, he had been
able to establish considerable personal influence over the
Angamis by his frequent visits to their villages. He did not
unduly press for porters, for revenue, or interfere in their
internal quarrels.10 It was for his successful relations with
the Angami Nagas, that his title was changed in 1872 to that
of Political Agent instead of Deputy Commissioner.

9. Ibid.
10. B.J.P., 1852, Nov. 18, No. 123.
BOUNDARY DISPUTE WITH MANIPUR:

Lt. Butler was called upon by the Government of India to resolve the boundary dispute with Manipur which had been left unsettled by Lt. Gregory. It may be recalled that in 1842, a vague boundary between Manipur and Naga Hills had been laid down by Bigge and Gordon, the then Principal Assistant of Nowgong and Political Agent of Manipur respectively. Since the withdrawal of British troops from the Angami hills in 1851, Manipur had been gradually extending its authority over the Nagas. In fact, the Manipuris were "not slow to point out to the Nagas the power of their chief, who could and did make reprisals for attacks on his villages." On the formation of the Naga Hills District in 1866, frequent disputes had arisen between Manipur Government and the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills about some villages situated east of the Rengma and north of the Barail range. Manipur claimed the villages in question, so did the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills on the strength of the boundary settlement of 1842. The assertion of this boundary restrained the Government of Manipur from protecting its subjects by way of reprisals, while the Nagas were free to violate that of Manipur. The dispute began, when the Political Agent of Manipur complained of several outrages committed by Nagas.

11. According to the Manipuris even the village of Kohima acknowledged its supremacy for about thirty years since Gambhir Singh's expedition of 1835.
belonging to the villages east and north-east of the watershed. While drawing the attention of the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills to these outrages, he intimated the intention of the Government of Manipur to punish the offending Naga villages. Gregory opposed the intervention of Manipur claiming that the villages in question were within his jurisdiction.

In December 1867, the Governor-General in-Council desired that Gregory and the Political Agent of Manipur should meet early to decide the boundary question which was at the root of all the troubles. But Gregory did not move in the matter and the dispute continued. Again in September 1869, the Government of India took up the question and directed the Government of Bengal to appoint an officer to settle the boundary between Manipur and the Naga Hills District. Captain Butler, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills was accordingly deputed to settle the boundary with Dr. Brown, the Political Agent of Manipur. They met in the cold weather of 1869-70 and were partly successful in tracing out the boundary line of 1842, but they could not come to any agreement. As a result the Government of India directed the appointment of a Boundary Commissioner, who after a long drawn process settled the boundary between Manipur and Naga Hills in 1872 as follows:

12. B.J.P. 1870, Sept., No. 144.
* The Lt. Governor of Bengal appointed Mr. J.P. Browne, Civil and Sessions judge of Chittagong as Boundary Commissioner in November, 1870.
The line of 1842 was maintained in all essential points so far as it was clearly identified. A few villages on the dividing range of the water-pent over which Manipur has acquired supremacy were demarcated as belonging to that State; and from the termination of the line of 1842, at a point called the Telizo peak, eastward of the watershed of the main line of hills which divide the affluents of the Brahmaputra from those of the Irrawady as far as the Patkai pass was declared to be the limit of Manipur on its northern frontier.14

The southern boundary of the Naga Hills which was laid down in December 1867, was now advanced to march with Manipur. The Kuki colonies lying between the present district of Naga Hills and Manipur were also brought under the Naga Hills Administration, because of their hostilities against certain Naga villages. Notwithstanding all these, Manipur did not accept the boundary settlement, but its objections were overruled by the British Government.15

KUKI ATTACK ON THE KUCHCHA NAGAS:

In the middle of 1870, a serious clash took place between the Kukis of the Langting colony with the Kuchcha Nagas of Impemal, in which the former had taken a few heads of the latter tribe.16 Sometime before the occurrence of this incident, Butler was informed by the 'Housha' Rotinmang Thado, one of the leading chiefs of the Langting colony that

15. Ibid.
the Nagas of the neighbouring villages had been forming a league to destroy their village. But before giving the Deputy Commissioner any time to ascertain the reality of the danger so that steps might be taken against them, the Kukis perpetrated the most cruel attack on the Nagas. Butler was not in favour of taking any strong action on the Kukis for taking the law into their own hands, beyond ordering the restitution of all captives and heads of the Nagas. Although the Kuki chief willingly obeyed his orders, he was not hopeful that the present influence which the British Government had preserved among the Kukis would continue for a long time. In fact, the Kukis had already been indulging in arms traffic with the Angamis and other Nagas and in the recent raid they made use of the arms with which they had been entrusted.

It may be recalled here that the Kukis, who constituted a military colony within the British territory were brought into North Cachar by the British Government to check the Angami Nagas. They were equipped by the Government with muskets and ammunitions. As long as there was an officer at Asalu, they had been paying their revenue regularly and were amenable to British authority and control. But with the transfer of the headquarters to Samaguting they were left alone and as a result they went out of hand. Although the Kukis rarely attacked British territory, their quarrels with

the Angamis and the Kuchcha Nagas were becoming a matter of common occurrence. As a measure of precaution against their aggressions, Butler had advised the Government to call in the surrender of the fire-arms from the Kukis. But the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal simply directed that pending a final settlement with the Kukis no fresh arms should be given to them.

CONDUCT OF THE EASTERN NAGAS:

Since the time of Brodie, the outer Nagas on the Sibsagar frontier appeared to have been behaving well and their exterminating wars among themselves had lessened. They had been regularly visiting the plains in the cold season for trade, salt and cotton being the chief commodities of the barter. The great benefit they derived from trade with the plains and the grant of land at the foot of the hills and bound them to a great extent to behave peacefully with the British Government. They valued their grants so much that the mere threat of their resumption always compelled them to comply with the orders of the Government. If a duar could be effectively closed during the trading season, the perpetrators of outrages were readily surrendered. In 1861, on the occasion of the murder of one Tonu Kaohal near the Galeki outpost, Captain Holroyd, the Officer in-charge of Sibsagar closed the Galeki duar to Naga traders. The blockade was so much
complete that the Nagas of Tabloong, Jaktoong, Kamsang and Namchang threatened the Nangota Nagas to deliver up the persons implicated in the outrage which they did accordingly. In March 1863, the Banphera Nagas committed a murder in the Obhoipur mouza of Sibsagar, but the murderers could not be punished as they escaped to the hills. In the same month, a most courageous outrage was committed by the Nagas on the Geleki guard house by way of surprise. Lieutenant Gregory, who conducted the enquiry was told by the chiefs of the neighbourhood that the outrage was committed by the Abor Nagas stealthily at night. He did not give credence to their story as the tribes were accustomed to such subterfuge. Hopkinson directed a fine to be imposed on the tribes living in the neighbourhood of the Geleki duar and until it was paid by the Nagas to close their duars for all purposes.

But the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal did not approve the proposal of blockade on the ground that it would have undesirable effect on the tribes. He directed the Commissioner that such restrictions if anywhere were in existence, should be withdrawn forthwith. There was all quiet on this frontier till 1866, when some Naga parties were seen wandering about Sibsagar armed with their spear and daos. So much alarm was caused by their suspicious movements, that the police authorities not only issued orders prohibiting their entry with

arms, but had to disarm them by the confiscation of their weapons.20

LHOTA AGGRESSIONS ON THE ANGAMI NAGAS:

The Lhota Nagas, who were not yet brought under the subjection of the British Government had been causing much uneasiness in the Sibsagar border. Their hostility to the opening of their areas to tea plantation was becoming a matter of great concern to the British authorities. Their raids into the Kachari and Ahom villages near Borpotha and the measures adopted by the Government to check these aggressions had been discussed in one of our earlier chapters. The Lhota Nagas had the practice of offering up of human sacrifices to ensure a good harvest. They secure their victims usually through raiding the Angami, Rengma or Mikir villages or waylaying travellers or traders passing through their country. It was in pursuance of such an enterprise, a party of 30 Lhotas attacked three Angami traders who were returning from Jorhat.21 The incident took place on April 19, 1871. Though two of the traders had escaped, one of them was speared and his head taken away. Butler, while inquiring into the above outrage, received information that another armed party of Lhotas entered the village of Samaguting the previous night.

He had every reason to believe that this party had been acting in concert with the party which had attacked the traders. He supposed that they belonged to the villages of Sonarigao and Phetagaon. The local authorities proposed to retaliate on the guilty villages, but the Lieutenant Governor recommended only the prohibition of the Lhotas from all intercourse with the plains. But the Governor-General in-Council opposed all such coercive measures as much time had already elapsed since the murder had taken place. The proposal of blockade was, therefore, allowed to drop. 22

GELIKI RAID OF 1867:

The advance to Samaguting had resulted in the cessation of raids by the Angamis into the British territories, but the people in the border areas of the Sibsagar district were still subjected to the raids of the Nagas. Though no attempt was as yet made to establish political control over these tribes, Captains Brodie and Holroyd seemed to have succeeded in persuading them to enter into engagements for keeping the peace of the border and among themselves. But the situation gradually turned from bad to worse with the recurrence of raids into the villages of the border and feuds among themselves. Survey operations undertaken by the Government of India and the gradual extension of tea plantation

22. B.V.P. 1872, March, No. 199.
into the hills had strained the relationship of the British with the Naga tribes to a considerable extent. Boundary disputes between the planters and the Naga chiefs and the latter's claim for tribute and sometimes the ill-treatment of Naga labour in the gardens resulted in quarrels between the Naga Chiefs and the European planters which demanded even the intervention of the Government.\(^{23}\)

One major incident which took place in November 1867, was the surprise made on the Geleki guard house, where three constables, two women and two children were killed.\(^{24}\) Shortly afterwards, the village of Lerreng situated between Geleki tea factory and the police outpost was also attacked by the Nagas. The local authorities who investigated the outrages in question could neither ascertain the particular tribe or tribes concerned in these attacks, nor the motive which prompted them to carry them out.

The District Superintendent of Police, however, attributed the attack to the prohibition against carrying of their spears while coming to the plains for trade. But Captain Clarke, the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar believed that the disarming of the Nagas was not the cause of the present raid, because the Nagas carrying on trade with the plains were accustomed to keeping their arms at the Kotoki's Chokee under the Assam Rajas. He stated that "these tribes are those which

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\(^{23}\) B.J.P., 1871, Sept. No. 50; B.J.P. 1871, Oct. No. 204.

\(^{24}\) B.J.P., 1867, Dec., No. 60.
would be effected by the intrusion or the fancied encroach-
ment of the Naga territory by either the demarcation survey
or by the taking up of lands as tea gardens; both of which
they regard in the same light, viz, an act of the British
Government."

He made a reference in this connection to the
remonstrance of the Nagas before Captain Sconce, that a por-
tion of their land had been taken as Dhopabur mouza, which
the latter had rejected saying that the Government recognised
no boundary. Lieutenant Gregory, the Deputy Commissioner of
the Naga Hills said that the "Namsang clan has been dissatis-
fied with us for years past in consequence of European settlers
having taken up land on what its chief chooses to call his
side of the Ladoigurh and it together with the Tancha or Tamaloo
and Kancha or Konsang form a confederacy." On the other hand,
Mr. Talbot, in-charge of the Revenue and Topographical Survey
of Upper Assam, in his report to the Surveyor-General stated
that the boundary question was not the cause of the recent
raids. Had it been so, he said, his line-cutters would have
been the first to be attacked, as at the time of the raid his
party had been cutting the frontier only six miles from Gale i.

He further stated that while he himself was surveying the
boundary in March 1867 at the foot of the hills, the Nagas did
not in any way objected to the survey proceedings but assisted
the survey parties in cutting the lines for them. 25

25. B.J.P. 1868, April, No. 174.
Whatever might have been the causes behind the Geleki raid, there was no doubt that survey operations and the opening of waste-lands to tea-plantation had aroused a feeling of distrust and suspicion amongst the Nagas. Mr. Dar, the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar stated that even the Manipuries were opposed to survey of the tract between the British frontier and their territory. 26 To remove the suspicion of the tribes, the Government of Bengal directed the Commissioner of Assam in August 1869, not to make any new grants south of the Ladoigurh road pending final orders of the Government. Shortly afterwards, this prohibition was extended to any land in any part of Assam beyond the limits of the recognised revenue jurisdiction. 27

MEASURES PROPOSED AGAINST THE NAGAS:

Captain Clarke, the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar believed that all the clans in the vicinity of Geleki were directly or indirectly concerned in these attacks. He, therefore, proposed to enforce a strict blockade against these tribes as a measure to compel them to surrender the guilty persons. Moreover, for the future security against a repetition of such outrages, he suggested that some definite arrangement regarding the whole line of boundary from Borpothar to Chopabur should be made. He did not believe that the raid had

anything to do with the prohibition of carrying of arms while visiting the plains. He was, however, convinced that the extension of tea-gardens towards the hills had given rise to embittered relations, but not always. If there was any jealousy or suspicion of encroachment, he said, it was imaginary as "no Naga had been disturbed in possession of any land, nor have the British authorities or ryots occupied any localities to which they pretend a claim." Hopkinson did not take into consideration Clarke's proposition for the settlement of boundary, but only said that no Naga in Brodie's time would have dared to raise the question of boundary. However, the suggestion of blockade, appeared to him to be the best measure under the circumstances.28

**BLOCKADE PROVED EFFECTIVE**

The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal authorised the Commissioner to enforce blockade of the passes to the Naga traders as suggested by the Deputy Commissioner. Moreover, he suggested the reconstruction of the existing posts of Geleki and Bihubar on a more solid manner and the re-establishment of the outposts of Dhopabur and a new one at Cherida (Charideo).29 At the same time to increase the confidence of the villagers it was decided to supply a few muskets with

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ammunitions to each of the frontier villages. The stoppage of trade had such a profound effect that the Nagas of Tabloons, Namsang and their neighbours combined to find out the perpetrators of the raids. They indeed succeeded in capturing two men belonging to Yungia Abor clan, who were leaders of the outrage and whom they handed over to the authorities at Sibsagar. It was ascertained from them that prompted by "love of plunder and a craving for skulls", they attacked the guard house thinking it to be a settlement of ryots.

30. Relations between Planters and the Nagas:

Ever since the resumption of Upper Assam from Purandar, individual planters and tea companies acquired lands from different Naga chiefs with full belief that the lands belonged to them. In fact, the Nagas always considered the hill country south of the Ladoigurh road to be independent and their own. The planters conciliated the different Naga chiefs by constant presents, paid them blackmail and made arrangements for their own safety. But with the expansion of tea plantation all along the frontier and the employment of large number of Nagas in garden work serious disputed between the planters and the tribesmen resulted in disturbances jeopardizing the security of the frontier. While reporting to the Government on one such incident in May 1871, Colonel

30. Mackenzie, A; History of the Relations, etc. p.98.
Hopkinson attributed the unsatisfactory relations with the Nagas of the Sibsagar frontier to the presence of European planters in large numbers and their change of temper and attitude towards the tribes and their own Government. He commented that twenty years ago a planter on the other side of the Dhodarali would not have troubled the Government seeking protection of his garden against the Nagas. But now it had become a common fashion with them to claim police protection in every little difficulty resulting in much embarrassment to the Government.

**QUARREL WITH THE CHANGNOI NAGAS:**

In March 1869, the Assam Tea Company complained that the Changnoi Nagas had carried off three labourers belonging to the Towkok garden on the plea that they were their runaway slaves. They denied the charge before the Deputy Commissioner and told him that the men had left the garden of their own accord as they had not been paid their wages. The Deputy Commissioner told the Nagas that if in future they have such complaints to make, should refer to him for settlement. Likewise, the planters were told to be careful while engaging hillmen in their gardens. In March 1871, another quarrel took place between one Mr. Eades, a tea garden Manager with

32. B.J.P., 1869, April, Nos. 274-76.
the Changnoi Nagas. During the same year, a Namchangia Naga was alleged to have been assaulted and robbed by two carterers of the Assam Tea Company. But all these cases were successfully resolved by the Deputy Commissioner through his mediation. Soon afterwards, however, a party of Borlangee Nagas was massacred by Kamsingia Nagas within two miles of a tea estate in which twenty three women and several children were killed and decapitated. 33

INNER LINE REGULATION OF 1873:

The Government of India believed that most of the complications were caused by permitting persons from the plains to penetrate into the hills or sub-montane forests inhabited or frequented by wild tribes. In fact, the entry of a large number of European planters had already created suspicion and distrust of the white-men among the Nagas. The disputes resulting very often from sale, purchase, lease of lands, and questions of rent and compensation created disturbances between the Nagas and the opposite parties causing much concern and embarrassment to the Government. The encroachment of tribal land for extension of plantation and exploitation of mines; and forests for elephants and India rubber sometimes led to serious complications with the Nagas. The great demand and competition for the latter commodity brought

33, F.P.P. (A) 1873, July, No. 469.
down by the Nagas gave special prominence to the need for some restrictions to prevent free entry of outsiders to the hills. 34

The Government of India considered that the best way to prevent such quarrels and disputes was to stop the access of outsiders into the hills as far as possible. In order to prohibit the entry of strangers to tracts where adequate control could not be exercised, the Inner Line Regulation was drawn up by the Government of India in 1873. Under this Regulation, the local authorities were empowered to prohibit British subjects generally, or those of specified classes, without a pass or licence issued by the Deputy Commissioner. This line was drawn along the northern, eastern and south-eastern borders of the Brahmaputra Valley. The Inner Line was a boundary up to which the protection of the British authority was guaranteed, and beyond which except by special permission it was not lawful for British subjects to go. This line was marked at intervals by frontier posts held by military police commanding the roads of access to the tracts beyond, and any person from the plains who received permission to cross the line had to show his pass at these posts. 35

The Inner Line did not indicate the territorial frontier, but only the limits of the administered area. Nor did it in any way decide the sovereignty of the territory

34. Account of the Province of Assam, 1903, p. 156.
35. F.P.P.(A) 1872, Feb., No. 131.
beyond. The active control of the District Officer need not necessarily extend up to the boundary, and under no circumstance carried further.

**POLICY TOWARDS EASTERN NAGAS DEFINED:**

The recurrence of disputes and murders during the last decade convinced the local authorities and the Government of India, that time had come for a definite settlement of the boundary question and a plan for dealing with the feuds and murders of the Naga tribes in this frontier. In the year 1873, the Inner Line was laid down between the British territory and the independent Naga tribes living beyond the district boundary. Beyond this line, the tribes were left to manage their own affairs with only such interference on the part of the frontier officers in their political capacity as may be considered advisable with the view of establishing a personal influence for good among the chiefs and the tribes. Any attempt to bring the country between the settled districts of British India and Burma under the direct administration as British territory was to be resisted. The Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar was enjoined not to allow European planters to accept any grant beyond the line or under a tenure from any chief or tribe.

36. Account of the Province of Assam, 1903, p. 156.
The Inner Line was adopted to protect the Nagas from exploitation of their forests, minerals and agricultural lands by outsiders. Another purpose was to regulate trade and stop unrestricted travel into the hills. The bona fide of the intentions of the Government of India could not be doubted. Since these enactments were made there had been little or no exploitation of forests, minerals or tribal lands. This policy, according to modern anthropologists like Haimendorf, had saved the Nagas from the unfortunate situation suffered by many tribals elsewhere in India. But at the same time it cannot be denied that this policy of isolation retarded the progress of the Nagas in their different walks of life. What was worse, it had the effect of alienating the freedom-loving Nagas from the main-stream of Indian national life.