CHAPTER IX

THE NAGAS UNDER THE ENGLISH

A resume of the foregoing chapter will reveal that the formation of the Naga Hills District was an important landmark in the history of British relations with the Nagas. Since then the history of the district "shows the progressive establishment of peace and good order and the quiet submission of the Nagas to our rule."¹ In fact, the establishment of law and order in the district paved the way towards consolidation of the British authority in the hills. Head-hunting and bloody warfare among themselves virtually ceased within the district. Assaults, thefts and petty quarrels leading sometimes to loss of lives, however existed, but "homicides of such nature were considered less objectionable than the murders which were occasioned from the mere lust for killing".

From 1876, the Eastern Naga tribes had been giving no direct troubles. Of them, the Lhotas were favourably disposed towards the Government, and had been paying their house-tax promptly and eagerly. The Angamis seemed to have given up all hopes of expelling the British from their

¹ Quoted in Account of the Province of Assam, 1903, p.77.
hills and had acquiesced to the new regime. The Kukis and
the Kuchha Nagas had been brought under assessment for
the first time, and the latter seemed to be much more secure
from the aggressions of their most powerful neighbours to
which they were formerly subjected to. The punitive exped­i­
tions sent against the Trans-Frontier Nagas were successful
in their results. The behaviour of the Ao Nagas after the
several expeditions undertaken against them proved to be
satisfactory. On the eastern frontier of Wokha, the Senas
were troublesome, but the military promenades against them
were expected to act as a deterrent in future. The opening
of several outposts in their country particularly that of
Nunkum would enable them to carry on traffic with the plains,
which will in a great measure conduce to their civilisation
and well-being. The Eastern Angamis had given up their
blood-feuds and on several occasions had submitted their
village disputes to the arbitration of the Deputy Commissioner.
These facts clearly demonstrated that before the end of our
period British influence had greatly extended over all the
important tribes living between the Patkai and the Lanier
and between the Dikhow and the plains of Assam.

2 F.P.F. (Extl. A) 1887, Nov. No. 65.
It may be recalled that up to 1874, the administration of the Naga Hills was under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. But with the formation of the separate province of Assam in that year, the administration of the Naga came under the direct charge of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. Along with the creation of the new province, the whole of Assam was classed as a "Scheduled District" in order to enable the Government to provide for the administration of the "Undeveloped Tracts" and to extend to them any enactments in force elsewhere, which might seem desirable to bring into operation. In 1880, the Frontier Tracts Regulation II was passed in order to administer these areas "in a simpler and more personal manner than those of the more civilised and longer-settled tribes." In other words by orders issued under this Regulation, the Naga Hills along with some other border areas were excluded from the operation of the enactments relating to elaborate Codes of law, like the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Civil Procedure Code being never in force in any of the Hill Districts.  

For the better and efficient administration of the district it was divided into two sub-divisions - Kohima and Mokokchung. The Deputy Commissioner, who was in overall charge of the district had also the charge of the sub-

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division of Kohima, but the other sub-division was under a Sub-Divisional Officer. The headquarter of the district was located at Kohima, which had also a garrison consisting of two companies of Native Infantry Regiment, and a battalion of Military Police. The headquarter of the battalion of Military Police was also at Kohima. The Civil Police consisted of 29 Head Constables and men under a Sub-Inspector, but their sphere of action does not extend beyond Kohima town and the Manipur cart-road. The force which was mainly responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the district was the Military Police battalion.4

JUDICIAL:

The High Court of Calcutta had no jurisdiction over the Naga Hills, except in criminal cases relating to European British subjects. The Indian Penal Code and the Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedures were not in force; the magistrates were advised to administer justice in the spirit of the codes and not by their letter. The Deputy Commissioner, who possessed the powers of a Sessions Judge exercised the power of life and death subject to the confirmation by the Chief Commissioner. Sentences beyond three years' imprisonment by the Deputy Commissioner were appealable to the Chief Commissioner. The sentences passed by the Sub-

Divisional Officer and the Assistants could be referred to
the Deputy Commissioner for revision within sixteen days
of their judgements. Many disputes, of both civil and criminal
nature, were decided in the villages without reference to
the courts. It was usually the policy of the Government to
interfere as little as possible with the customs of the
Nagas, and to discourage litigation. Interpreters appointed
by the Government not only translated from the Naga dialects
into Nagamese (the lingua franca of the Nagas), but advised
the officials on the customs and usages of the tribes. 5

The establishment of law and order in the district
had been followed by steady increase in revenue, development
in communications, the extension of cultivation, trade and
commerce, education, public health and a marked development
in the condition of the poorer classes all tending to the
general prosperity.

REVENUE:

In the beginning, the Naga Hills District was in
such a backward state of development that the revenue collected
was very negligible, and it formed only a little proportion to the expenditure. Land revenue in the real sense was
not assessed in the Naga Hills except on a small estate held

Imperial Gazetteer—Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1909, p.474.
by the American Baptists Mission. The bulk of the revenue of
the district came from the house-tax which varied according
to the economic condition of the Nagas. The Angamis were
assessed at Rs. 3 per house, the other Nagas at Rs. 2, while
the foreigners at Rs. 5. Registers were kept showing the total
number of houses in the village, the houses assessed and the
number of houses exempted from assessment. The registers were
checked by the Deputy Commissioner, the Sub-Divisional Officer
and their Assistants in course of their tours through the
villages. They revised old exemptions and granted new ones
where necessary. The house-tax was collected by the village
headman, who received a commission of 12½ per cent for the
troubles. 6

The excise revenue of the district was small,
because there was only one opium, one Ganja and one country-
liquor shop at Kohima. The income tax receipt was consider-
able, but it was mostly derived from the salaries of the
Government servants. Although the amount of total revenue
collected was small, it showed an increase from Rs. 24,000
in 1880-1 to Rs. 78,000 in 1890-1. 7


COMMUNICATIONS:

As the Ahoms did not conquer the Naga Hills, it was no part of their policy to take any measure for the improvement of communications in the hills. Consequently, there were no roads or bridle-paths except foot-tracks or steepy-pathways within the Naga Hills before British occupation. The presence of high hills, difficult terrains, dense forests, unfordable streams and the existence of perpetual feuds among the independent villages always retarded free movement of the Nagas within their hills. Nevertheless, the Ahoms connected the foot hills with accessible roads from the plains for defence as well as traffic between the hills and the plains.

It may be recalled that three British Officers made attempts as early as 1832-33 to open up the Naga country, but their project did not materialise due to the united opposition of the Nagas. However, after the somewhat successful expeditions of Grange in 1839-40, Captain Gordon, Political Agent in Manipur, proposed to the Government of India, the construction of a high-road across the hills between Assam and Manipur. This proposal, however did not find favour with the Government at that time. During the time of Major John Butler, Principal Assistant of Nowgong, rough cart roads from Borpothar to Mohong Dijua and from the latter place to Dimapur were constructed. In 1852, the construction
of two roads, one from Nowgong to Silchar via Hassong Hajo and another from Dimapur to Manipur were proposed. The first proposal was accepted by the Government; and it was decided to make a cart-road from the highest navigable point on the Jatinga river through the Nambor forest to a navigable point on the Dhansiri river. But after survey work commenced, the project was abandoned due to the difficulties presented by natural drawbacks. Up to 1866, the improvement of communications was negligible and except for connecting different posts in a chain with the station of Asalu in North Cachar, no road construction was taken in hand.

After the re-occupation of Samaguting by Lieutenant Gregory in 1866, land and water communications between Dimapur and Golaghat and between the former and Samaguting were improved. During the time of his successor Captain James Butler, a road was made to connect Samaguting with Papolongmai and Mozama. After the establishment of Wokha as the Sub-Division of Naga Hills in 1875, the construction of the first bridle-path was undertaken - the alignment running from Samaguting to Piphima, thence high above the present cart-road to Keruphima and then to Maroma. Notwithstanding, the construction of several roads and bridle-paths, communications between the hills and the plains and with Manipur were extremely difficult up to the year 1880. Connection was,

however, maintained through rough and round-about way below the cart-road up and down the deep valleys. The absence of an all-weather cart-road between Kohima and Manipur and between the former place and the plains of Assam was greatly felt at the time of the Naga uprisings of 1879-80. Even after the restoration of order, due to the absence of communications the political officer of the Naga Hills had to face serious difficulties in provisioning the civil and military population of Kohima.

In 1880-1, the improvement of transport and communications received the immediate attention of the local authorities. Sir Stuart Bayley, while giving importance to the establishment of communications between the hills and the plains stressed the necessity of a cart-road between Kohima and the plains. "Till such a road is constructed", he said "our position will not be secure, the expense of feeding troops will be enormous, and discontent will continue". The Government of India accepted the proposal and a new cart-road was opened through the Nambor Forest to Nichuguard. Similarly improved system of communication was established by constructing a bridle-path through Khonoma to Henima outpost, and from the latter across the Chuleni river to Semkhor and Gunjong.

The establishment of new posts in the Ao country in 1889-90, necessitated the construction of inter-connected roads. Construction of good bridle-paths was at once put in hand from Mokokchung to Nakachari in the plains to Wokha, Longsa, Tamlu and from the latter post to Geleki at the foot of the Naga Hills. Another bridle-path went from Kohima eastwards to Cheswejuma and was continued from that village to Shitsu in the Sema country. The Manipur rebellion of 1891 led to the making of the cart-road from Nichuguard to Imphal through Kohima, a distance of 122 miles. Thus gradually all the outlying posts were linked with Kohima by good bridle-paths which were also extended into the Sema area with comfortable rest houses in different places.

Roads and Bridle-paths were placed in charge of the Deputy Commissioner of the district. Each village was made responsible for the section of the path that passed through its land. The villages were to clear the jungles on both sides of the road twice a year, to dress the surface once, to open up the drains and to remove the obstructions from the roads caused occasionally by land-slides and storms.

13. Ibid.
TRADE AND COMMERCE:

It may be noted that ever since the annexation of Assam, it was the policy of the Government of India to encourage trade between the hills and the plains. The establishment of weekly markets at the foot of the hills, opening of accessible roads to connect the hills with the plains, the posting of police-guards near the markets and the abolition of all vexatious duties imposed by the Ahom Government gave a great fillip to the already existing trade of the Eastern Nagas with the plains. It may be recalled that of the Western Nagas, the Angamis who were keen after "traffic and gain" had no direct trade with the markets of Assam; nor had they any with the markets of Cachar. Little trade, however, was maintained through the Kacharis and Kuchcha Nagas with Assam and Cachar respectively. Although British relationship with the Angamis was marked by hostility from the very beginning, attempts were always made to encourage them to trade with the plains. This policy had resulted in increased traffic of the Angami Nagas with the plains even before their hills were brought under British rule. Major Butler reported to the Government of India in 1848, that a large number of Angamis had visited Nowgong and some of them even crossed the Brahmaputra to reach Tezpur for trade. Mills also was able to report in 1854 that "a vast change has.............come over the Angami Nagas within the last eight
years............ Formerly they did not know the use of money, now many were becoming expert traders ....... desirous of proceeding on the Calcutta to purchase Cornelian beads and muskets.  

The incorporation of the Angami hills under British administration and the establishment peace and order within their area had enabled them to go "anywhere at any time of the year without the fear of losing their heads or being hold up by swollen rivers." The men of Khonoma, Mozuma and Jotsoma were reported to have reached Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon for trade. One of the most profitable items of Angami trade were arms and ammunitions. In fact to obtain a musket or a fowling-piece an Angami Naga will run any risk and pay any price. Inspite of the "Arms Act" which prohibited the sale, purchase and possession of fire-arms without licence, the Angamis carried on this contraband trade with the merchants of Cachar and Bengal. They also obtained supplies

17. Extract from the diary of the Political Agent, Manipur, Nov.6, 1879 (vide F.P.P.(A), Mar. No.493). "Early this year Khonoma imported thirteen fire-arms from Cachar including Enfield Rifles, and now I hear that a Coolie load of percussion caps was also brought over... I believe the Mussulman traders are all more or less engaged in the arms and ammunition trade."

See also Pakhi's statement (vide B.J.P. 1871, Sept. No.17) "We purchase our guns and ammunition sometimes in Manlipore, sometimes in Cachar, the ammunition we get in Manlipore is nearly always cartidges, sometimes only powder (balled cartidges); but in Cachar the powder is sold in bright coloured flasks."
of fire-arms and ammunitions from Manipur through the Kuchcha Nagas and the Kukis. The Angamis also carried on a profitable trade in indigenous tea-seeds with the European tea-planters of Upper Assam.

Unlike the Angamis, the Lhota Nagas were used to visit the markets of Jorhat, Kacharihat and Golaghat from earlier times. Cotton formed the chief article of their commerce. They annually disposed large stocks of this commodity in the plains free of any duty. The establishment of orderly government in their hills from 1875, enabled them to carry on their existing trade without any difficulty. Their neighbours, the Rengmas were poor traders, but they had also a profitable trade in cotton and rice. They used to trade with the Kachari, Ahom and the other people of Golaghat and Nowgong. The security to life and property followed by the subjection of the Angamis to British rule enabled the Kuchcha Nagas to trade uninterruptedly with Cachar and Manipur. Ivory and bee-wax formed their chief merchandise. The Semas had no intercourse with the plains before British conquest of their country and the use of money was not known to them. 18

Notwithstanding the trading activities of the different Naga tribes, commerce as might be expected, was in its infancy. Traffic was confined to a small class of men as well as to a very limited number of articles. Each house-

hold produced practically all that it wanted, and there was little or no surplus for disposal. The only products which a Naga could dispose were rice, cotton, ivory and wax; in exchange he wanted salt and iron and if possible guns and ammunitions. The principal imports were salt, thread, oil, kerosene, cloth, grains, umbrellas and such other articles. The buyers of these articles were mostly outsiders. There were no regular markets, fairs or shops, etc., within the district, but a few shops had been opened at Kohima, Sagatung and Dimapur by Marwari and Mahomedan traders. Whole-sale trade was in the hands of the former. 19 Trade though small had increased considerably at the end of our period. Barter was gradually giving its way to transaction in cash along with the introduction of payment in coins.

AGRICULTURE:

The usual method of cultivation practiced by the Nagas was known as Jhum. As this was a shifting system of cultivation, it entailed waste and required large areas of cultivable lands at the disposal of every village community. On the other hand the Angami Nagas resorted to a permanent system of cultivation on terraced fields on scientific lines. Sir Charles Elliot felt that with the increase of population

which was bound to happen in the Naga Hills, because of prevailing peace and security, the Nagas should adopt a more productive system of husbandry. Accordingly he issued instructions to the Political Officer of the Naga Hills to make every endeavour to encourage the other tribes of Nagas to take to terraced cultivation. He also desired the district officials to introduce the cultivation of potatoes, other staples, and different vegetables which were likely to be sold well or consumed locally. He even suggested free distribution of seeds and necessary instructions to the Nagas in this regard. The officials made attempts to encourage terraced cultivation among the Lhota, Ao and the Sema Nagas who usually practiced Jhum. Potatoes when first tried did not thrive well, but subsequent attempts proved successful. With the establishment of law and order in the district agriculture extended satisfactorily throughout the hills.

McCabe in his Administration Report of the year 1884-5 says:

The Sub-Divisional Officer at Wokha states that from enquiries he has made throughout the Lhota country, after a favourable harvest, each family has as much as fifty or sixty maunds of dhan in its granary. When he took over charge of the Sub-Division, he was of opinion that two thousand maunds of rice collected annually from the Lhota was a severe tax, but he is now entirely of the contrary opinion.
From the very beginning of their contact with the Nagas, the British left the task of educating them entirely to the charge of the Christian missionaries. It may be recalled that Bronson as the pioneer of Naga education did the spade work, but with his departure from the Naga Hills, the educational work among the Eastern Nagas had a setback. It was not until the arrival of Reverend E.W. Clark in the Naga Hills in 1876 that a real attempt was made to continue the works already begun by Bronson. But with the Angamis case was entirely different, they attached much importance to the learning of Assamese. They knew very well the advantage which a knowledge of Assamese would give them in carrying their business with their neighbours and the people in the plains. In fact, several Angami villages sent a number of youths to receive education at Nowgong and Gauhati. 22

The local officials saw in it a great chance to turn the warlike Angamis into a peace-loving people.

Along with the occupation of the advanced post at Samaguting in 1846, a school was opened for the benefit of the Naga children. A similar institution was also established at the post of Hassong Hajo in North Cachar. Although the Government of India doubted the success of these ventures, sanction was given to the appointment of teachers in both

22. B.J.P. 1852, Nov. 18, No.122.
these schools. To establish a school was one thing but to obtain the services of a qualified teacher was another. In fact, no teacher from the plains was expected to work in the hills for long for reasons of health and forlorn nature of the country. Nevertheless, the school at Samaguting was progressing satisfactorily even up to the time of the abandonment of the post in 1851. After the re-occupation of Samaguting in 1866, Lieutenant Gregory proposed the revival of the school. Colonel Hopkins while accepting the proposal recommended to the Government of Bengal for inviting the Christian missionaries to undertake the responsibility of Naga education. The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal requested the authorities of the "Missions to the Hills tribes in Assam and Cachar" to undertake the project. He agreed to assist the undertaking by a grant of Rs. 80/- per month and a special grant of Rs. 100/- for books. Accordingly the Mission Society sent one Reverend Roth, who arrived in November 1871; but being sick since his arrival he lost all heart to continue in the work and ultimately left the job. 23

Thus up to 1876, no systematic effort was made either by the Government or the missionaries towards the education of the Nagas. Immediately after the establishment of a mission centre in the Ao Naga area, Reverend Clark and his wife engaged themselves to school work. They started Sunday

23. Bengal Educational Proceedings, 1870, April, No. 25.
School classes and day school for the Nagas. A school for girls was also begun by Mrs. Clark, which was later entrusted to the management of a Naga girl. Inspite of several handicaps, the school work was progressing well in the Angami area. At the time of Clark's departure for America in 1885, the number of pupils receiving education in nine Mission Schools was about two hundred. School work commenced in the Angami area with the opening of the Kohima Mission by Reverend King in 1879. The school which was started with the help of one Assamese Christian named Punaram, soon attracted students from the Sema, Eastern Angami, Kuchcha Naga and Kuki areas. Similarly the attempts of Mr. and Mrs. Witters resulted in the establishment of schools in the Wokha area for the benefit of the Lhota Nagas. Evidently, the education of the Nagas was the contribution of the Christian missionaries. Although they were inspired by the seal of propagating the Gospel, education developed in the Naga Hills along with Christianity as twin sisters. Instructions were mostly imparted by the missionaries through the medium of Assamese on the three R's. The local authorities being too much occupied with the maintenance of law and order, devoted little or no attention to education of the Nagas. Naturally, the progress of education in the Naga Hills was slow. The number of pupils both boys and 

25. Ibid.
girls under instructions during the year 1890-1 was about three hundred. 26

PUBLIC HEALTH:

Although Naga Hills as a district was not unhealthy, its inhabitants always suffered from some common diseases like small pox, malaria, bowel complaints and a kind of skin disease known as "Naga Sore". Some of the diseases took a heavy toll year after year, and the destituteness of many of the Naga villages might be attributed to the heavy mortality caused by them. The scarcity of water, lack of hygienic conditions, ignorance and belief in superstitions were responsible for the deterioration of public health of the district.

Since the occupation of Samaguting in 1866, attempts had been made by the local authorities to look into the welfare of the Nagas. Immediately after the establishment of the station, Lieutenant Gregory started an well equipped dispensary with full supply of medicines. Although the Nagas were at first reluctant to come to the dispensary due to their blind faith in their indigenous medicines and superstitions, they soon came to take advantage of it. Statistics of the year 1875, shows that in the year sixty three indoor patients were treated at the Samaguting dispensary and the number of 26. Imperial Gazetteer-Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1909, p. 479.
outdoor patients receiving treatment was six hundred ninety nine. 27

After the formation of the Naga Hills District in 1882, a Civil Surgeon was placed in-charge of the public health of the district. In the beginning the district had two hospitals, one at Kohima and the other at Wokha, besides the charitable dispensary at Samaguting. In 1890, another hospital at Mokokchung was established to cater to the needs of the inhabitants of that area. Along with the establishment of these hospitals, steps were taken to encourage vaccination. The absence of Hindu superstitions among the Nagas enabled the staff of vaccinators to carry on their duties without any difficulty.

Whatever might have been the contributions of the Government, the services of the Christian missionaries were unique in this humanitarian work. In fact, doctoring like schooling was an integral part of missionaries' programme. They had established dispensaries presided over by medical missionaries for the relief of the poor and the sick Nagas and other residents of the hills. Besides treating the patients, they helped them by giving free medicines and taught the Nagas on the value of cleanliness and sanitation. Due to the perseverance and tactful approach, the ignorant Nagas by and large responded favourably to modern doctor's treatment.

casting aside their belief in deep-rooted superstitions and evil spirits.

MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE NAGA HILLS:

Ever since the British occupation of Assam, the Christian Missions had been working closely with the administration in its task of pacification and control of the Nagas, as had been the case with other hill tribes of the north-east frontier. It may be recalled that Reverend Miles Bronson was the first American Baptist Missionary to establish a mission at Namchang in 1839-40 to work among the Konyak Nagas. He taught the Nagas not only the Gospel but also some practical arts to earn a livelihood. The Nagas availed themselves of the opportunities of education provided by the missionary, but no one made an open declaration of faith as a Christian. Ill-health and family misfortunes compelled Bronson to leave the Nagaland field; and nothing was done to continue his unfinished works until Reverend Clark came to hand the Sibsagar Mission in 1871. From the very beginning the Ao Nagas attracted his attention and after some occasional visits to the Ao country, Clark moved himself up to Deka Haimong Song and established a new village at Molongyimchen in the spring of 1876. Although the new surroundings appeared to him at the beginning no better than "a leap out of the world and a plunge into
barbarian", he began work in right earnest on being joined by his wife in March 1878. His work was confined to both preaching and teaching. Reverend Clark mostly engaged himself to the production of literature and Mrs. Clark to school work. In the meantime Ao Church membership had risen to fifteen. Clark was at first helped in his task of proselytisation by one Assamese Christian Godhula, who had some influence over the Ao Nagas.

In 1885, on being joined by Dr. W.S. Riverburg and his wife, Reverend Clark went to America on his first furlough after his continuous stay of nine years among the Nagas out of seventeen spent in Assam. During this period he had seen the Ao Church membership rising to seventy nine, and about two hundred boys and girls reading in nine Mission Schools. What had impressed Clark at the time of his departure was that "the hostility of the natives had turned into friendship, for they had.............learned to love and revere him."30

In 1878, on the request of Clark, Reverend C.D. King was sent to work among the Nagas. Hardly had he established himself at Samaguting in the Angami hills, the Nagas rose against the Europeans compelling him to flee with his

29. During his period of stay in Naga Hills Clark had mastered the Ao tongue and made a Dictionary, and had written a Primer, Catechism, Life of Joseph, One Hymn Book and Mathew and John. (See proceedings read by Dr. Riverburg on Ao Naga Mission at the American Baptist Mission Union Conference, Dec. 1886).
family to Sibsagar only to return after the troubles were over. He established a school at Kohima with the assistance of one Assamese Christian. This school soon turned out into a great evangelizing agency. In 1883, he organised the Kohima Baptist Church, and two years after, the first Angami was baptised. In 1887, the Kohima Church membership rose to seven. In 1897, Dr. Rivenburg took charge of the Kohima Mission and continued till his retirement in 1922.31

Clark persuaded Reverend Witter to work among the Lhotas Nagas at Wokha, although he came to serve elsewhere. After acquiring the Assamese language, both Mr. and Mrs. Witter taught the Gospel to the Lhotas. Schools were started by them not only for benefiting the Naga children but for others as well. Books were soon produced in the Lhota language by Witter. But their work was cut short as they had to leave Wokha on grounds of health. With their departure, all organised attempts to evangelise the Lhotas ceased, and the work was destined to be performed by others from the nearby stations of Kohima and Impur.32

31. Before his retirement from Assam, the Government in appreciation of his services in establishing a Christian community, producing a literature, and maintaining schools of a high standard honoured him with a Kaiser-i-Hind Medal.

32. A Mission station at Impur was started in 1894, from which the Lhotas, Semas, Konyaks, Sangtams, Changs and Phoms were reached. From Kohima also evangelists were sent to the Semas, Rengmas, Kukis, Zelians and tribes near Manipur.
Notwithstanding the untiring efforts of the American
Baptists the progress of conversion was at the beginning slow.
Until 1890, with the exceptions of the Ao, the Angami and
the Lhotas, the other tribes of Nagas were without missionaries.

EARLY MISSIONARIES : THEIR DIFFICULTIES :

Immense were the difficulties that confronted the
Missionaries in their activities in the Naga Hills. The foothills, where they established their stations were unhealthy and forlorn. The paths were full of mud and leeches, and without a horse or elephant it was difficult to move. The attitude of the Nagas towards the white man was anything but friendly; they being always suspicious of his movements. The unhealthiness of the stations, absence of medical facilities and physical strain resulting from hazardous tours in the hills always told heavily on the health of all the missionaries. Although, neither the Government of India nor the local authorities in Assam were opposed to missionary work as such, they were always under the dread that any intrusion by the white people into the hills might cause disruption and tribal war. In fact, Reverend Clark wrote to his Mission "If anything

33. Dr. Sword in his Baptists in Assam writes "The paths used by the natives were not made for foreigners but led up and down the precipitous mountain sides, a thing which rendered it impossible for the missionary to make any extended tours among the villages." PP. 105-118.
Another difficulty from which the missionaries suffered was their lack of funds. As these missions were not sponsored by their respective Governments, they had to depend upon their own limited resources, which were entirely made of contributions and collections. If the Government of India made any grant to the Missions, it was distinctly for "objects of practical utility connected with the improvement of the Naga country."  

EFFECTS OF CONVERSION:

Prior to the introduction of Christianity, the Nagas were the so-called "lost souls", leading a primitive life, not infrequently quarrelling among themselves and hunting human heads. The introduction of the new religion brought a tremendous change in the character and habits of the warlike and restless Nagas. They have learnt the value of peace, toleration and peaceful co-existence with their fellowmen and neighbours, and have become more amenable to

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34. Sword, V.H.; Baptists in Assam, p. 103.
35. F.P.9. 1840, Nov. 9, No. 82.
reason and good advice instead of appealing to the decision of the sword. 36

The missionaries were the pioneers in the field of education, literature and medical services. They have established churches, schools and hospitals for the moral and material upliftment of the Nagas, who had given up head-hunting and other social evils and made significant progress under their teachings. The Nagas have learnt the value of education, sanitation, and to keep their persons, homes and surroundings clean. "They do not eat rotten flesh and money once spent for drinks, opium and false-worship are making them prosperous. They have adopted a mode of burial and a more descent dress than the heathen. They are becoming more conscientious in relation of the sexes and in regard to the charging of high interest." 37

36. Rev. Clark pointed out to Col. Hopkinson in 1878, the influence Christianity had exercised on the Nagas thus; "During the past year cows stolen from the plains and taken up into the Deka Haismong Song, been returned to their owners in the plains. By the same Christian influence goods have been returned to Assamese traders in the Song, which had been stripped from them in revenge for their abusive languages.

At one time during the year, the Nagas burning under what they seemed a great wrong and having no hope of any redress through the Commissioner of Assam, were strongly determined to take the law into their own hands in the way of a vindictive raid. They were only restrained by the native christian portraying to them in the strongest terms the suicidal folly of such a course and the terrible punishment Government would be sure to inflict upon them." (See B.J.P., 1875, Jan. No.21).

37. See Report from the Ao Naga Field by Perrine, S.A. read at the Fifth Triennial Conference in Dibrugarh, February 11-19, 1899.
But the oversealous missionaries condemned the age-old Naga religious beliefs, institutions, festivals, dress and mode of living as primitive and paganistic. "They insisted on the convert becoming a teetotaller; he had to restrict himself to one wife; at one time he was not even allowed to eat the flesh of the Mithun since this animal was associated with sacrifices at "heathen's festivals." The missionaries stopped the great feasts of Merit, and forbade boys to attend the Morungs. The Feasts of Merit now prohibited by the missionaries fulfilled an extremely important social and economic obligation for the well-to-do for the good of the community irrespective of their economic positions. Similarly, the Morung around which the social, political, religious, legal and military life of the Nagas revolved sank into insignificance due to missionary propaganda.

Christian hymns, western songs and small tea-parties have replaced their music, war-songs, and elaborate feasts. "The suppression of the wearing of all ornaments or tribal finery, of dancing, of singing (except hymns), of village feasts and of all artistic outlet is spreading an unspeakable drabness over village life." With the suppression of these institutions, the art of wood-carving and textiles did not get any scope or incentive. The disappearance of these social

38. For Feasts of Merit — See Haimendorf, Cj Naked Nagas, pp. 59-5; and Elwin, V.; Nagaland, pp. 10-11.
and communal institutions were followed in its train by the emergence of a spirit of new individualism in place of old community spirit. The spirit of new individualism brought a cleavage between the convert and the animist, between the rich and the poor. "An Animist puts his village before himself. A Baptist puts himself before his village". Consequently the convert being cut off from the village began to despise his own tribe and cultural inheritance. As a result he became a stranger in his own village, which had already become dull and monotonous to him bereft of all that was associated with the hallowed memories of the past.

The change of social customs that was bound to come in the wake of Christianity unnerved the minds of the Government officials, because of the missionaries entertaining exactly opposite views on what was good for the Nagas. "Government's policy", says Haimendorf "has been to avoid any disruption of Naga culture, respect tribal custom wherever it does not prejudice the maintenance of law and order, and temper as little as possible with the old-organisation". 40 Many of the misgivings against the missionaries disrupting the existing social, political and economic orders of the Nagas had been removed due to their adoption of a more realistic policy at a later period. Writing in 1944 on the change in attitude of the missionaries Sir Robert Reid observes:

40. Haimendorf, C.; Naked Nagas, p. 86.
The American Baptist Mission has done excellent work in these hills for a number of years, both educational, medical and in the way of general uplift. The rather iconoclastic zeal of the earlier missionaries who saw evil in anything that savoured of heathenism has in modern times given way to the great advantage of all, to a more sensible policy which is prepared to preserve all that is good in old custom so long as it is not inconsistent with Christian teaching.

Happily the adverse effects of Christianity as discussed above did not become glaring during the period in our purview, because Christianity had yet to make much headway in the Naga Hills. Animists still outnumbered the converts; even many of the converts were not true to their new faith. Superstition and paganism were creeping into some of the churches founded by them. The report read at the Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh in February, 1899 revealed that the Christian missionaries had a larger work before them than to "Plant Christianity." It says:

Christianity was planted long ago in the Naga Hills, and if our task is simply to plant Christianity our work is long ago done. We feel that our work is to plant Christ and to grow is life in the heart of every man. . . . . We are to make them followers, learners of Christ.

41. Reid, R.; The Excluded Areas of Assam, See Geographical Journal, 1944, CIII, Nos. 1,2, Jan-Feb. pp. 18-29.
42. Perrine, E.A.; Report from the Ao Naga Field read at the Fifth Triennial conference, Dibrugarh, 1899, Feb. 11-19.