CHAPTER II

LAND AND PEOPLE

(1) Angami Nagas

Geographical Location and Boundaries

The Angamis during Hutton’s time (1912) were roughly located in the area bounded on the north by a line running from a point slightly south of where the Doyang river issues into the plains through the peaks of Thevûkepû and Mutuhu (on the edge of the Sema tribe) to the junction of the Loi and Tizu rivers between Kivekhu and Chipokitema. On the south the Angamis were bounded by the Barial range and the Diphu river on the west by Nambar forest. And on the east the boundary coincided with the eastern boundary of the Naga Hills District.

The Angamis, one of the Naga tribes, are the principal inhabitants of the Kohima district of Nagaland state in the Indian Union. They inhabit the central and northern portion of the Kohima district. The Angami dominated total area is 7,209 square kilometres. It is bounded on the north by Wokha and Zunheboto districts, on the east by Phek (all districts of Nagaland) on the south by Manipur state and North Cachar district of Assam, and on the west by the Mikir Hills (Karbi Anglong district of Assam). It lies between 25°4’ and 27°4’ North latitude and between 93°20’ and 95°15’ East longitude. The altitude varies approximately between 110 and 3000 metres.
The Angami tribe was divided into two main groups – the eastern Angami and the western Angami during Hutton’s time. The western Angami consisting of four sub-groups such as Khonoma group, Kohima group, Viswema group and Chakhroma group. The Khwunomia (Khonoma) group consisting of six villages – Khonoma, Secüma, Mezoma, Kiruphema, Jotsoma, Kigwema. The Chakhroma groups were those villages nearer the plains, such as Razaphema, Chilmukedima, Kabvoma, Piphema, Medziphema, Chowuma (Choloma) and Seteikiema, which seem to be derived principally from the Khonoma and Kohima groups. The Kohima group, consisting of Kohima and the neighbouring villages, and the Viswema or Zounuo-Keyhonuo group to the south of it, differed slightly, but not very much, in dialect from the Khonoma group, and from one another, and might be regarded as a link between the genuine Angamis or Tenyimia, and the Chakrima (at present with the Chakhesang) Angamis who inhabit the villages north-east and the east of the Kohima group. East of the Viswema group and wedged in between the Chakrima, Tenyimia, and Memi, several villages known as Kezami or Kezama, of which Khezhakenoma and Kezebama were the principal villages. These Khezama villages, like other Angami villages, had a language and to some extent customs of their own, they speak Angami as well as Khezami language. According to Hutton, the term ‘eastern Angami’ had been used in his monograph to signify generally the Chakrima, Khezama, and those of the Memi who lived on the borders, who were distinct from the Tenyimia proper or western Angamis, of the Viswema, Kohima, Khonoma, and Chakroma groups of villages. Chakhroma means ‘road–below men’, the name of the villages with regard to the old Samaguting (Chilmukedima) Kohima bridle path.
At present the eastern Angamis as referred by Hutton, maintain a separate identity and are now known as Chakhesang under the Phek district of Nagaland. The Memis today identify themselves with the Mao tribe under Senapati district of Manipur. Hence, the western Angamis (Tenyitimia proper as called during Hutton’s time) are known as proper Angami, which have been divided into four zones such as, Southern Angami, Northern Angami, Western Angami, and Chakhroma. But today Chakhroma group falls under Dimapur district.

Today, the Angami areas broadly form the present day Kohima district of Nagaland. Kohima, the district headquarter and the state capital is situated on a saddle, north of the Japfū-Barail intersecting Japfū and Ezupu which are eminent peaks of the Angami area. The streams are being intelligently used for terrace cultivation by all sections of the Angami Naga and the Angami are known for their terrace cultivation.

Myth of Origin

The history of how the Naga tribes came precisely to occupy their present position had, of course, passed into the dim obscurity of vague tradition (Hutton, 1921: 6). According to the legend, the Angamis sprung from two ancestors who emerged from the bowels of the earth, not in Angami country, but in some other land to the south. And all the weight of tradition points to migration from the south, except in the case of the Kacha Naga (Zeliang) who believed that ancestors came from the direction of Japfū mountain, where they spread towards the south, which indeed would be the natural course if they came through the Mao gap and spread south where the other Naga tribes spread northward. The Angami
villages trace their root of migration towards Mao. And those days the priest of the Angami villages waited for the priest of Mao and Maikhel to give the word before appointing the day for the celebration of any regular village festivals, and point to the ceremonial of the Mao village of Mekhroma (Maikhel) as the type of Angami ceremony par excellence. The legend recounts that a person named Koza came from the East and after reaching Mekhroma (Maikhel) in Manipur he rested for sometime and pondered on which way his steps should lead him next. Ultimately, he prayed to his God for guidance. Suddenly a bird flew by and alighted on the horn of his mithun and then flew off again in the direction of Khezhakenoma. In order to doubly check this guidance from above, he placed his walking stick on the ground and the stick fell down, pointing in the same direction towards which the bird had flown. Koza took this to be direct guidance from the spirits to continue his journey in that specific direction. He set off for Khezhakenoma and upon reaching his destination, legend has it that he saw the same bird that had appeared to him earlier resting there upon a stone. Later on, Koza found that a frog had brought a grain of rice and left it on the stone where it multiplied into two. Koza also brought a basket of rice which doubled when placed on the stone. He then decided to settle down in Khezhakenoma along with his cattle wealth. Koza was blessed with three sons in course of time.

Every day they used to spread paddy to dry upon a great flat stone, and at dusk a single load spread to dry had become two loads, as the stone was inhabited by a spirit. The three sons used to take turns to spread their paddy on this stone, but one day they quarrelled bitterly as to whose turn it was, and their parents, fearing bloodshed, broke eggs on the
stone, covered it with bushwood, laid faggots about it, and set it on fire. The stone burst with a crack like a thunder, the spirit went up to heaven in a cloud of smoke, and the virtue of the stone departed. The three sons then separated and became the ancestors of the Angami, Lotha, and Sema tribes, while from the parents who remained were descended the Kezami villages. Variant details of this story were sometimes given; the name of the village was only known to the Angamis, who still point out the great cracked stone, a flat slab opposite the house of the kemevo, who was supposed to occupy as a general rule the site believed to have been occupied by the original founder of the village. With this exception substantially the same story was told by the Memi, Lothas, Semas, and Rengmas.

It is interesting to note that the traditions of the Rengmas, Lothas, Semas, and Angamis all ascribe a common origin to these tribes.

Language

The Naga languages had been differently classified by different philologists, but the classification of Sir Grierson is now generally accepted (vide Census of India, 1911). According to this classification, Angami Naga belong to the Tibeto-Chinese family, Tibeto-Burman subfamily, Assam-Burmese branch (group Naga), sub-western Naga. The Angamis were originally known as Tenyimia. The word Angami is a distortion of the Manipuri word gnamei. Angamis were called Tsungumi by the Semas, Tsungmung by the Lothas and Mour by the Aos. Even the modern Angami still trace the place of migration to Maikhel and Khezhakenoma and from there they scattered to different directions. At
present the four sections of the Angami, speak their own distinct forms of
dialect at home, but the common Angami language in which a vast
printed literatures have been produced, is based on the Tenyimia dialect.
Written in Roman script, Angami language is used both in secular and
religious field. At present Angami language has been introduced at the
post-graduate level. Angami dialects belong to the Tibeto-Chinese
family. But the official language is English and Nagamese is the *lingua
franca* of this region. Hindi is now understood and spoken by the
urbanized sections of the Angami.

**Climate**

Angami enjoys monsoon climate with a difference. The difference
is this; that unlike the plains of Assam, here the winter is quite severe and
the summer months are also rather cold. In winter the night temperature
comes down to even $1^\circ$ Celsius in some places in January and February
which are the coldest months. But the average may be accepted as
$3^\circ$ Celsius or more. In summer it is not at all hot but cool, and the highest
summer temperature on the average of minimum temperature is
$6^\circ$ Celsius or $43^\circ$ Fahrenheit and the average maximum summer
temperature is $34^\circ$ Celsius or $85^\circ$ Fahrenheit.

Rainfall on the average ranges from 200 cm to 250 cm. It covers a
period of nine months of the year, greatest concentration being in July
and August and more rainfall is experienced in the northern area of the
state than in the south. The climate is neither too hot nor too cold.
The introduction of colonial education, however, disrupted the indigenous system of learning and redirected them to the new pattern of modern education. Undoubtedly, with the increasing acceptance of colonial education, indigenous system was gradually relegated. Thus modern education has substantially influenced on the socio-cultural life of the Nagas. The Angami Naga education which the British rulers largely entrusted to the American Baptist Mission had a revolutionizing impact on their society. It affected their religion, demeanor, customs and habits. With the progressive dissemination of modern education, the outlook of the people which formerly remained narrow significantly developed and along with it, appreciation of modern education also received further momentum. The development of broader and healthier outlook of the people enabled them to accept the new trends of change in their society. As a consequence of the growth of modern education the people witnessed gradual tendency of social cohesion the characteristic feature which was conspicuously lacking among them in pre-colonial period. It was the education of Angami Nagas which spearheaded the formation of Nagas Club, Tribal Council and Naga National Council.

Prior to the coming of the Mission, a few schools were opened by the government. A school at Chumukedima headquarter in 1876-97 was attended only by the officials' children as the local Angamis then were apathetic to any system of education. In 1878-76, three more schools (government) were started.
In 1884, C. D. King with his efforts had begun to meet success when a first school was opened at Kohima. He put down Angami script to the Roman alphabet and taught school children to read and write in their language. C. D. King left Kohima in 1886 and the Mission was taken over by Dr. Rivenburg. He was a highly qualified medical man, but nevertheless he was gifted as an orthographer and educationist. It was he who successfully adopted Angami alphabets, arithmetic and some versions of the holy scriptures for the use of school children. When administration had become settled, opposition to the Mission also became mitigated and later on, village people extended their cooperation to the mission in respect of school buildings. It was the valued cooperation of non-Christians, to a great extent, which was held responsible for the success of the earliest mission educational enterprises. As elsewhere the Christian missionaries were harbingers of western education. When their effort had borne fruits, they were emulated by the government which started to open schools and educational institutions. An instance was exemplified by the fact that, in 1911-12 out of 22 schools, 12 belonged to the mission, while in 1913-14, 14 schools were managed by the mission against 13 which were government. After 1910 one mission training centre was opened at Kohima upgraded from the mission M.E. School which was the only highest school institution in the Kohima Sadar Sub-division before Independence which became government managed school later. In 1931, mission M.E. school of Kohima had 180 pupils on its roll. The Government M.E. School at Kohima had in October 1930, 142 pupils. In 1937, a government hostel was also opened at Kohima.
Many more schools were started after Independence, and rapid strides were made in the field of educational development. Institutions ranging from primary to high school till college had existed in the Kohima district by 1961-1962. Up to 1963, Kohima district had one science college, 11 high schools, 50 middle schools, 225 primary schools, 1 basic training centre and 1 polytechnic school. In 1967, there were 3 colleges, 26 high schools, 66 middle schools and 268 primary schools. According to 1971 census, the literacy rate was 33.78%. In 1981 Census, the literacy rate was 41.99%, according to 1991 census, the literacy rate increased rapidly to 70.19%. In 2001 Census, the literacy rate was 74.28%.

Education opened up the mind of the Angami Nagas into a new world, new ideas and change. This provides a common language for communications and enhances the sense of unity. Education redeems the Angamis from a world of ignorance into a world of knowledge. Christianity also leads in the education particularly for women, giving them opportunity of acquiring knowledge. At present in the Angami Naga society there is no bar whether a boy or a girl, they can take up education and we see that in the field of academic girls are almost reaching boy's level. The Angami Naga adopted the western life style, music, clothes, and traditions which affected the traditional life style.

Again, education is not only increasingly reaching out in revolutionary pace to embrace the entire life-span of the individual and the whole Angami society but also holds the key to a large number of their living problems. Even the most illiterate and poor are beginning to
send their boys and girls to schools and colleges because they want them to be well educated children so that they would get opportunities for government jobs and other avenues which would improve their standards of living.

A massive adult education programme was launched in 1978 in an effort to educate the illiterate adult population in the age group of fifteen to thirty five years within a period of five years. So this programme also really helped the public to a great extent at least how to read and write. To encourage young people to take up higher studies, the government provides assistance to the deserving students in the forms of scholarships and grants. The first post graduate course in the state, M. A. in education was introduced in Kohima in September 1978 under the North-Eastern Hill University. And later on many new disciplines were introduced. At present the Nagaland government has set up its own University (Nagaland University).

Population

According to 1961 census, the total population of Kohima district was 108,924 out of which 57,704 were males and 51,220 females. The population which hitherto was 57,692 in 1901 increased to 108,924 in 1961, increased almost twice in number. Up till independence, the increase was due to a gradual expansion of the administration. One of the factors for the increase of the population could be attributed to the growth of Kohima as the state capital and Dimapur as an economic centre, where the rate of population density had quickly increased. According to 1961 census, the total population of the Angami tribe was 33,687. In 1971
census, the total population increased to 43,994. In 1981, the total population of the Kohima district was 2,50,105, and the total population according to 1991 census was 3,87,581. In 2001 census, the population density of Kohima district was 101.

(2) Khonoma

Introduction

Khonoma village is derived from the word Khwuno, a native plant which grows wild in the hills. The original name, Khwunomia, meaning ‘men of Khwuno’ has come to be called Khonoma in more recent times. It is believed that the original name was given by settlers who preceded the present inhabitants who moved out because they found the climate ‘too cold’ to grow rice.

The oral history says one of the descendants of Koza (according to legend he was the first person who came and settled in Khezhakenoma from far east) by the name Mekhu lived in Kigwema village. He had two sons – Merhu and Pfukha. Merhu also had two sons Khwukha and Khate who were among the founding members of Khonoma. The oral tradition says Khwukha and Khate discovered Khonoma during their hunting expedition. Both of them went to Jotsoma and invited Ratsa and his brother Vokha to form a new village. Before they set out for Khonoma there was an agreement between them: they were to travel together and each member was to carry a load consisting of exactly the same number of belongings so as to ensure that they all started on an equal footing materially in the new village. However, they stopped on the way and checked each other’s luggage, and it was discovered that Khwukha had
hidden an extra skin of goat's hair in his shield. The presence of this led to a prophecy that Khuwka's descendants would be blessed and that out of his clan would arise the heroes of the new village.

The early settlers also believed that they were led by the Spirits in their selection of a new home. As they approached Khonoma, one of the members of the party lost a packet of salt. A search ensued and the culprit was found. It was then foretold that there would be cases of theft in the village, but in each case the culprit would not escape undetected. The settlers brought chickens to sacrifice during the consecration of a new village. But when the chickens were let out of their basket, they began fighting with each other, signifying that there would be enmity and inter-clan feuds within the village. Tradition also tells us that the leader of the group first arrived at the spot and unearthed a stone under which they found numerous crabs. This led them to foretell that the people would multiply in this land.

According to the Angami tradition and religion, people from one moiety alone could not form a village. Participation of the other moiety was a must. So, although Khuwka, Khate and Ratsa were regarded as the founding fathers of Khonoma, we have no definite evidence because all three of them belonged to Thekrunoma moiety. The presence of the Thevoma moiety in the present structure proves that the formation of the village was completed only when the members of that moiety came to the village.
Geographical Location

Khonoma is situated in the extreme west of Angami country. Although most of the area is mountainous, Khonoma is built on the summit of a hill or on the ridges. The houses are dotted all over the hill slope. Khonoma also has considerable stretches of valleys within the hill tracts. The various hills determining the nature and topography of Khonoma are Ho Phera, Mhoziekha, Nikriba, Sikhri, Virhiecha, Gagidzuthi, Thekhwecathi and Kradi. The northern side faces Zubza, and in the east is the village of Jotsoma while the village of Mezoma to the west. In the south of the Khonoma borders, the Zemi territory and the romantic Dzükou valley which stretches to Manipur.

Flora and Fauna

The village land stretches to over 20 km in length from east to west. The whole area is rich in forest resources and has innumerable varieties of trees. The forests are of a mixed innumerable varieties of trees. The forests are of a mixed deciduous and evergreen type, with vast areas of jhum-stands predominated by Anus Nepalensis, locally known as Rupo. Among the varieties of forest products, Rupo, is popularly known as alder. The tree plays a very important role in the economy of Khonoma. It has a unique capacity for regeneration. The alder plays an important ecological role in maintaining the balance of the fertility of the soil. Its leaves serve to form a rich natural layer of top soil. Almost all the hills have a young sedimentary rock formation and there is a possibility of coal and uranium in some areas.
In Khonoma village a great number of animals are on the brink of extinction owing to the indiscriminate hunting; they are valued not only for its meat but few people earn their livelihood by hunting. Deer's meat is highly valued in the local markets. Earlier even wild elephants were found in the foothills, but today there is no trace of elephant in the dense jungle. Tiger, leopard and lion have their lair in the dense jungle. The deer family comprises the barking deer, sambar and serow.

The monkey and jackal are also available but sparsely distributed. Other species comprise of wild buffaloes, wild pigs, wild bears, wild dogs, antler, squirrels, bats, otters, musk, rats etc.

Snakes comprise of vipers, kraits, rat-snakes, grass-snakes, cobra, lizards, toads, moncetors and pythons.

Some of the birds which are found in the forest are partridge, night jar, warbler, robin, quail, woodpecker, hornbill, pheasant, porcupine, swift, hawk, crow, swipe, wag-tails, myna, cuckoo, sparrow, sun-bird, parrot, parakeet, tragopan etc.

At present in Khonoma the Village Council has banned the killing of wild animals for commercial purpose except for self consumption. If they killed them they have to finish the whole meat within the village, and no one is allowed to carry away even a small piece of meat to other towns or village. They have even set up an organization called 'Tragopan Sanctuary' with the aim to preserve this endangered species which is found only in Nagaland.
Resistance against the British

Khonoma people are known for their bravery and courage and there were many great warriors. Many times they fought with their neighbouring villages. And they even used to fight with the Manipuri several times. There still stands three forts in each of the Khels in the village, which were used as their defence during wars.

During the British invasion in the Naga Hills, Khonoma fought with the Britishers several times, because they were basically courageous, firmly determined and well-organized. The village of Khonoma has played an unparallel role in the history of Nagaland. It has long been considered to be the most powerful and feared village in the Naga Hills.

The reasons why they rose against the Britishers were, they did not want any alien people to rule over them. The warfare continued to the colonial times when Khonoma stubbornly and valiantly resisted the British advent into the Naga Hills. Khonoma was attacked under the Captainship of Elds in 1844. The guns seized by Khonoma were returned but the culprits were withheld, in consequence of which, the village with 500 houses were burnt. As the expedition returned, Mezoma was attacked by Khonoma because of the assistance rendered to the expedition. Khonoma fought with the British several times, and many a times they defeated the British. One of the worst wars was that which was fought between the Khonoma and the Britishers on October 13, 1879. It was at this juncture that the British political agent, G. N. Damont, who sought to impose British authority by forcing collection of taxes, became the victim
of Khonoma. While attempting to enter Khonoma village, without proper security, he was shot dead by Zakiesielie (age: 25). Even the regiment escorting Damant comprising 80 persons including military and police suffered a toll of 35 killed on the spot and 19 wounded. The ones who survived faced great difficulty but managed to escape secretly to Kohima and delivered the news of Damant's death. This created a great sensation among all the British outposts located in the entire North-Eastern region and it was finally decided to launch a final attack on Khonoma. The killing of Damant and his men had encouraged the Angamis to a great extent and they had decided to immediately attack the British stockade at Kohima. It was only on the 23rd October 1879 that the Khonoma warriors along with those from many other villagers reached Kohima and attacked the British stockade. It was perhaps the only time in the entire colonial history that an army general was involved in fighting against a single village. Not only a general but a number of other officers with 3000 soldiers were involved in that 'bloody fight' in order to capture Khonoma village.

The prolonged war of the resistance that the little known village of Khonoma in Nagaland offered to the military might of the arch imperialist of the west has earned its people an enviable position to all freedom loving peoples ... the blood, sweat and tears of the people of Khonoma, the martyrdom of those who laid their lives, their sacrifice and suffering will continue to inspire our present and future generations with the spirit of patriotism and love for freedom. (J. B. Bhattacharjee, 1987: 18-22).

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The final attack on Khonoma village was fought under the charge of affairs under Brigadier General Nation (V. Sanyü, 1995: 108). He
commanded the forces brought from Assam, Manipur and North-Eastern region. Finally, Khonoma was defeated in 1879. So during that time Khonoma’s wonderful terraced cultivation was confiscated and its clans were dispersed among other villagers. The result was that the dispossessed villagers found themselves not only deprived of their homes, but of their settled cultivation. For one whole year they were reduced to the condition of homeless wanderers, dependent to a great extent on the charity of their neighbours and living in temporary huts in the jungle. The result was widespread sickness and mortality.

Khonoma was reconstructed after the war, in spite of the fact that severe punishment was meted out and Khonoma was razed to the ground and its inhabitants dispersed. It now flourishes as of old, however, the sword has been exchanged for the pen and the old barter system began to be displaced by currency for trade. Once cash economy was introduced, their world and perspective began to change. Another important change in the social and political life of the village was the introduction of Dobashis and Goanburas popularly known as D.B. and G.B.

Perhaps the most important contributions made by Khonoma during the British rule was the rise of Naga Nationalism which was born during this period – a movement which continued to gain momentum after the departure of the British. And undoubtedly Khonoma played her role in nurturing the movement. A. Z. Phizo, President of NNC and T. Sakhrie, General Secretary from Khonoma contributed their best for the Naga Nationalism.
After the Britishers left Nagaland, people got exposed to the outside world in the field of trade with East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Burma, Nepal, Thailand, and Southern China. Khonoma people were comparatively more enterprising and adventurous than the other Naga villagers. Khonoma people used to import precious stones, cowries, conch shells, ivory and beads from these countries, and they often travelled to various distant places and they were exposed to varied cultures and civilizations. Thus endowed with vision beyond the horizon, fortified by high morale, political consciousness and better economic prosperity at that time, Khonoma took upon its shoulders the responsibility to provide the required leadership. (Golden Jubilee, *Khonoma Rûffûno*, 1994: 54). Meanwhile, the little flicker of hope of liberation from alien domination after the ten year period of the 9 Point Agreement extinguished when Sir Akbar Hydari died of a sudden stroke at Loktak, near Imphal on December 28, 1948. The next year, the then Chief Minister of Assam, Gopi Nath Bordoloi informed a Naga delegation that the Government of India no longer considered the agreement valid. This made the Nagas realize that the Indian occupation of Nagaland had to be resisted with resolute opposition.

Back home, the Khonoma thinkers felt the urgency of taking up a definite political stand. They felt they must play a pivotal role to awake and organize the Nagas, and that it had to start from home – Khonoma itself. *Khonoma Rûffûno* well fitted into this task.

*Khonoma Rûffûno* is a pan-Khonoma organization in which each and every Khonoma is, by citizenship, a life member. *Rûffûno* literally
means ‘army’, hence *Khonoma Rüffūno* stands for Khonoma legion. This pan-Khonoma organization took upon its shoulders the task of educating the people of Khonoma and surrounding village about modern civilization and the art of self-governance. Discussions were held, seminars organized, and debates took place in various forms. *Khonoma Rüffūno* emerged from its cocoon of being a mere organization for social and educational advancement. It became a useful tool in planning and organizing political strategy and socio-economic programmes. Many of the student activities and the Naga Youth Movement activists of that time were from Khonoma. Zasinihu Zinyū had the distinction of being recognized as the first President of Naga Students’ Federation, and Mowu Gwizan was a prominent leader of NYM.

In as much as the two world wars had tremendously changed Khonoma’s outlook, also the Indo-Naga conflict had completely altered Khonoma’s social life and outlook. In 1956, Khonoma village was burnt to ashes by the Indian Security Forces who persisted their expedition with crude atrocity on the people. Khonoma people had to desert their village and took shelter in the deep woods and caves. A lull in the storm had prevailed as the state administration came up since 1963 to take control of the situation from the hands of the Indian Security Forces. Half of its people had returned to village, but half of the Khonoma people have settled in various places.

Khonoma was more conspicuous as a progressive, revolutionary, and an enterprising village during the period 1945-1975. They participated in almost every walk of life in Nagaland in politics, society,
religious fields, and administration. There was indeed a time when something seemed missing without the adventurous people of Khonoma.

Khonoma, however, became less conspicuous after 1975. This may perhaps be attributed to the waning interest of Khonoma in politics and administration. Khonoma has been concentrating more in the field of education, medicine and religion during the last two decades. Besides, with the change of time, other Naga tribes have come up at par with Khonoma, many even surpassing her in certain fields.

Population and Literacy Rate

Khonoma village is divided into three different Khels, viz., Merhima, Semoma, and Thevoma. Each Khel consists of several clans. And all these clans had some common ancestors. After they fought for Naga sovereignty there was a dispersion. And also seeking for education, jobs, trades and commerce people started settling down in towns and plain areas permanently. Many have settled in Kohima and Dimapur regions. The total number of households permanently settled in the village is about 416, the total population is 1640, male 882, female 818. And the number of people who are above 80 years is 23, the literacy rate is about 78.89%. And the total number of households who are settled outside is 760. Their total population is about 3607, male 1755 and female 1842, and their literacy rate is about 80%. Hence, the over all total number of Khonoma households including those people settled outside is 1176, and the total population of the Khonoma village is about 5241, male 2577 and female 2664. The literacy rate is about 80%, matriculate - 508, graduate - 254, and postgraduate -135, LLB - 10, B. Engg. - 8,
Medical Doctor - 40, BVSc - 5, M. Phil - 7, Ph.D. - 10, IFS - 1, IAS - 4,
Teachers - 121, Headmasters/Principals - 13, College Lecturers - 23,
University Lecturers - 5, Gazetted Officers Class I - 52.

Analyzing the population census from field work sources it is found that more than half of the population stay outside the village. And they are exposed to the outside world and culture, and have adopted the modern way of living. But they are not completely cut off from the village. During special occasions they used to come to the village and interact with the villagers.

Khonoma Village at a Glance

Before the colonial period the village did not have any proper road which led to the village. And even during the colonial period there was only bridle roads for Britishers to pass through with their horses. But after Nagaland got its statehood the government started constructing proper roads. At present the State Highway that leads to Zeliang side passes through Khonoma. The distance from Kohima to Khonoma is about 20 kms. Khonoma people are changed in many aspects. Khonoma people have a strong creative and artistic ability, and they are known for their exquisite quarry works. These ingenious works are reflected in the use of massive slab of stones in the recent road construction within the village. Once the levelling of the ground is done, these stones which are chiseled out into square sizes are symmetrically laid half buried on the ground that will last for centuries to come. This construction work was carried out with an aid from the government and are mostly done by the peer youth groups. Many people have taken up various kinds of
occupations ranging from agriculture, business, government jobs, NGOs etc. The village is well developed with established community hall, playground, regular supply of drinking tap water, regular supply of electricity and also many daily private bus services are available between Khonoma to Kohima and vis-a-vis. The Village Development Board (VDB) also looks after the welfare and upliftment of the village where the allocated funds from the Centre are directly handled by the Board. There are six schools in the village, three government primary schools, one government middle school and two private high schools. There is one primary health centre. There are three denominations viz., Baptist about 1005 members, Roman Catholic about 710 members and the traditional religion with about 55 members, (only those who reside permanently in the village). Including all the other members who stay outside the village, Baptists are about 3765, Roman Catholics - 1210, Christian Revivals - 227 and animists - 260.

Khonoma village has already celebrated its centenary (100 years of Christianity) in January 1997. Nisier was the first person who accepted the Gospel in Khonoma village, who converted to Christianity through the American Baptist Missionary in 1896 and was baptized in 1897. He was the one who first laid the Christian mission in Khonoma village.

Some Khonoma Pioneers in Various Fields

As the dawn of western civilization shown upon the Nagas in the later half of the nineteenth century, a few from Khonoma village made it through to become the ‘first’ in their own fields. Some of them are as follows:
1. Rev. Nisier Meru

Rev. Nisier Meru (father of A. Kevichiisa) was the first Khonoma to have obtained formal education and the first to become a Christian in 1879. He served in D.S.W. Rivenburg's Mission School in Kohima, as a teacher and later as the Headmaster.

2. Rev. Kekhulhu Sakhrie

Rev. Kekhulhu Sakhrie, son of Dosielhu Sakhrie, was born in the year 1885. After reading up to the sixth standard in the Mission School, Kohima, he went to Cherrapunjee and did his theological studies there. He was the first among the Tenyimia to have made a systematic study of the Bible.

3. Dr. Khosa Zinyii

Dr. Khosa Zinyii, who became the first Assistant Surgeon among the Nagas, was born in 1894 at Khonoma. He did his studies in Dibrugarh Medical School. He died on 15th August 1949.

4. Dr. Sevilie Iralu

The third Naga to become a medical doctor, Dr. Sevilie Iralu was born on the 15th May 1898. He obtained his Licentiate Medical Practitioner (LMP) degree from Medical School, Dibrugarh (Assam), in 1918.

5. A. Kevichiisa

Son of Rev. Nisier, A. Kevichiisa was born in 1903. He passed his matriculate in 1919 and Bachelor of Arts in 1924 at Calcutta.
Kevichiisa was the second Naga matriculate and the first Naga Graduate and IAS among Nagas.

6. Rusokhrienyu Sakhrie (Mrs. R.S. Lungalang)

She was born in 1916. Received her early education from the Mission School, Kohima, and passed her matriculation from Welsh Mission Girls’ High School, Shillong. She passed her B.A. from Cotton College, Gauhati, in 1939. She was the first Naga lady to have passed Bachelor of Arts degree.

7. Dr. Vichazelhu Iralu

The first Naga to win a doctorate in scientific research. He was the son of Dr. Sevilie Iralu born in 26th July 1924. He obtained his Ph.D. on the thesis, 'Properdin and its Relationship to Parasites' (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill). He became Professor and Head of Department of Microbiology and Public Health at the Philadelphia College at Osteopathic Medicine, Pennsylvania (USA).

8. Mrs. Khrieleno Terhüja

Daughter of Dr. Sevilie Iralu, Khrieleno became the first Naga lady to have passed Bachelor of Divinity (B.D). She did her B.Th. from Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, in 1960, and passed B.D. from Union Theological College, Bangalore in 1966.