



## Christianity & Missionaries: Harbinger of Change in the Naga Society of North East India

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**Abstract:** Christianity first arrived in India with St Thomas the Apostle as early as 52 CE. The historical study behind how Christianity grew in India, how it spread among the Indians, how it evolved into many different denominations spread across India today, and how Christianity has transformed people's life and their society is intriguing. Among the Nagas of North East India, Christianity was first introduced by the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. The primary objective of the Christian missionaries wherever they went was to preach the gospels (God's Word) to the non-Christian. The Nagas of the present North-East India were non-Christian back then. They had their own religious belief system which could be termed as Naga Traditional Religion, and has been identified as distinctly different from other religious belief system. They also had their own history, identity, social-cultural and political life. The Christian missionaries in their attempt to evangelize the non-Christian Nagas not only changed their traditional religious beliefs but also brought many changes in their socio-cultural life and other aspects of their traditions. This study is to examine how Christianity and missionaries were responsible in bringing a change in the Naga society that had a far reaching impact on the life of the Nagas. While many of the changes have positive effects there are also some negative effects on Naga culture which will be highlighted in this paper. This study will also briefly highlight the history of the arrival of Christian missionaries in the then Naga Hills.

**Keywords:** Nagas, Naga Hills, Nagaland, Christianity, Gospels.

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## Introduction

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Apart from the Ahom Kingdom of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Nagas<sup>1</sup> had little or no contact with the outside world until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was the British who first came into contact with the Nagas, followed by the Christian missionaries. The advent of

British in the Naga Hills<sup>2</sup> also brought many new developments in the Naga society. While the impact of the British was significantly on the system of administration, maintenance of law and order, communication and transportation, postal system, money economy etc the impact of Christianity and Christian missionaries was on the life and culture of the Nagas. It can be argued that the profound and lasting impact on the Nagas and their culture was significantly affected by Christianity and American Baptist Missionaries. But as the main objective of this paper is to study how Christianity and missionaries were responsible in bringing a change in the Naga society and their socio-culture life this paper will remain confined to this particular subject only.

The British after the annexation of Assam province began to expand its control over the Nagas inhabited areas, which was then called as the Naga Hills. The colonial state soon realized that it would be best to leave the hills tribes to themselves, especially the tribal Nagas in the Naga inhabitate areas because of their strong resistance against the British. Thus, the policy of non-interference was adopted by the British towards the Nagas. However, because of the frequent attacks on the British subjects by the Nagas some of the Nagas areas were brought under the British influence.

Although, the removal of the ban on missionary activity by one of the clauses in the Charter of the East India Company in 1813 encouraged American missionary activities in India, it was not until the British annexation of Assam by the Treaty of Yandabo (1826) that Christianity was allowed to penetrate among the native people. The British administrators felt the need to bring the hills tribes on the Assam frontier within the scope of missionary activities at the earliest. As a result the Christian mission and other activities were first extended to the hills tribes of Assam and then to the Nagas in the Naga Hills. Christian missionaries like Rev. Nathan Brown arrived in Sadiya in Assam on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1836, with Mrs Nathan and Rev. and Mrs O.T Cutter. They were the first American Baptist Missionaries to have set foot in North-East India. The primary objective of the American Christian missionaries was to reach out to the Shan of Northern Burma and Southern China by making Assam as its strategic outpost but this mission was never carried out<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, the Christian missionaries did find the Nagas and carried out their evangelical mission to the Nagas. However, it was not until the arrival of Edward Winter Clark in 1869 work of a permanent nature began among the Naga tribes. In October 1871, an Assamese evangelist named Godhula took the gospels to the Naga Hills. Then on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1872, Dr. E.W. Clark arrived in the Naga Hills for the first time and began to sow the seed of Christianity among the Nagas.

Gradually the Christian missionary activities spread deeper into the Naga Hills and left a significant impact in the life of the Naga people. Other pioneer missionaries who played an important role in the lives of the Nagas included Rev. W.E Witter, C.D King and his wife Anna, Sidney Rivenburg and many others. These pioneer missionaries were of had forsaken all to follow the Saviour, and no hardship could prevent them from accomplishing their task. Bronson wrote to the Board of Mission, "We want the choicest men the church has to consecrate; men well-disciplined in mind-well versed in the study of human nature-of unfailing patience-possessing a zeal that difficulty will only enkindle; men who can press onward to the accomplishment of an object for years amid every sacrifices, and not faint; not self-willed, and high-minded, but ready to take any place appointed to them in the providence of God; above all, men of deep piety."<sup>4</sup>

### **Christianity Replaces Naga Traditional Religion**

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Before the arrival of Christianity in the then Naga Hills the erstwhile Nagas practiced a form of religious belief which can be termed as Naga traditional religion. The erstwhile Nagas believed in the existence of Supreme Being who is believed to be the Creator God.<sup>5</sup> Naga are rich in their folklore, many of their myths talk about the creation of the earth by the Creator God. For example, the Samgtam Naga's myth tells about the creation of the earth by *Litsaba* the Creator. Similarly the Ao Naga's myth also talks about a Creator God *Lijaba*, who is said to have created this earth. Among the Lotha Nagas, so their tradition says, this *Potsowho* is the Creator God comes down to the village at least once a year to convey the events of that year to the village. The message is brought to the villagers in symbols of things and animals like tiger, yam, and rice.<sup>6</sup> The belief in thunderbolts, as they are known in the case of stone celts is common to most indigenous people. In China, the thunder axe/thunderbolt was seen as a heavenly object with medicinal properties from as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>7</sup> The Lotha also tends to assign big or curious things to their *Potso*. For example, the polished stone celts which are sometimes found in the fields are regarded as "*Potsophu*" (*God's axe*). Again the long flat seed-case of a certain tree is called *Potsotsitam* (*God's weaving sword*).<sup>8</sup> In spite of the knowledge of the existence of the Supreme Being among the Nagas, they however in much of their day-to-day religious practices were devoted to lesser spirits or harmful spirits. The nature of the Supreme God being kind and compassionate<sup>9</sup> the ancestors of the Nagas invoked this Supreme God occasionally like during birth, marriage, thanks giving etc. The erstwhile Nagas also believed in the existence of

many spirits of different kinds<sup>10</sup>; some benevolent and other malevolent. They paid a great deal of attention to these spirits such as god of harvest, god of wild animal, god of house, god of water or river, god of mountain, god of forest, god of field etc. These local spirits were powerful and have played a significant role in their religious belief system. For example a bountiful harvest was attributed to the god of harvest, success in hunting was attributed to the god of wild animals, good catch of fish was attributed to the god of river etc. All sorts of rituals and ceremonies performed to these spirits were made to appease them and be blessed with many blessings in return. The ancestors of the Nagas also believed in the existence of harmful spirits or evil spirits whose existence could be felt or known by their action. For example, all kinds of sickness and illness were believed to have been inflicted by these harmful spirits. These spirits, so the Nagas say, make men sick by detaining their souls, and the soul can be redeemed by payment of ransom to the evil spirit. Springs, marshy lands, deep forest, rocks, bamboo groves, caves, ponds are believed to be the abode of the evil spirits. The fear of these spirits propitiation or appeasement became one of the main features of the Naga tradition religion. But not very long after the arrival of the Christian missionaries in the then Naga Hills, the Nagas began to understand the concept of true God and His power. There was a breakthrough in their traditional religious beliefs which was mostly dominated by fear and superstitions. The Christian missionaries condemned all sorts of elaborate and costly rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices, and offerings performed to various spirits. Such observations and acts were declared as heathen practices. The Christian missionaries also opposed all sorts of animal sacrifices intended to propitiate the spirits were prohibited and condemned. For many centuries, the non-Christians Nagas who lived in fear now got liberated. The Naga traditional religious belief system which was ritualistic in nature; performed to ward-off danger or calamities or to win favour of the spirits were now replaced by worshipping the true God. The truth of Christianity set the Nagas free from fear and harm/destruction. The power and light of the gospels that penetrated the Naga society has resulted in the spiritual awakening among the Nagas. This spiritual awakening among the Nagas further resulted in the establishment of many churches across Nagaland. Today, more about 99% of the Nagas identify themselves as Christian. Christianity gave the Nagas this new identity.

## **Education**

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One of the most important contributions of the Christian missionaries was education. In order to teach the gospels to the Nagas, education was first imparted

through various mediums. The Christian missionaries understood that unless they teach the Nagas the basic art of reading and writing their mission will not be effective but would be futile. Thus education became an important catalyst in evangelizing and transforming the Naga society and identity. Edward writes, "Wherever a church was founded, the Christian missionaries also established a school. These schools were known as mission schools. Through these schools the gospel was sown, churches were established and a new worldview took form."<sup>11</sup> Up until 1940's the school at Impur<sup>12</sup> established by the Christian missionaries was the only school in the Naga Hills where students from all the neighbouring tribes gathered and studied. Education, religious instructions, Christian values, morals, ethics, philosophy and doctrine were imparted through mission schools, Sunday schools, churches, training centres etc. Literacy and education widened their world view. Mary Clark<sup>13</sup> describes this process in her diary: "You can hardly realize how civilized, comparatively, our Nagas are becoming... You should hear the exclamations of wonders as they turn the pages of "Harper's Weekly"! They are in a new world of which they never dreamed."<sup>14</sup> Education has played a vital role in shaping Naga society, formation of Naga identity, and many more etc. Education opened many opportunities for the educated Nagas in various fields and professions. It also gave the Nagas a new life, better living standards, new outlook, new attitude and behaviour. Education has also brought the Naga people together; a sense of oneness and solidarity. It also promoted inter-tribal relationship among the Nagas. Education broke the long isolation among the Nagas. Education also promoted in building nature, character, personality, leadership, etc. Education also played significant role in eradicating superstitions, taboos, and other social evils in the Naga society. Another major impact of education is on the status of Naga women. The Christian women who received early education and skill development programmes and trainings organised by the Christian missionaries became independent and helped in generating income for their family. These women greatly contributed in enhancing their children and the society. Education permeated every aspects of social, cultural, political, religious life of the Nagas and left a deep impact in the life of the Nagas. Christianity and education thus became the two most important factors in bringing a change in the Naga society. It led the Nagas to the path of modernization.

### **Development of Naga Literature**

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The Nagas did not have any written tradition until the advent of the Christian Missionaries in the Naga Hills. For many centuries, the Nagas transmitted their

tradition and culture by word of mouth from generation to generation. It was only after the arrival of the Christian missionaries that the Naga languages were reduced to writing. In this area, it was Dr. E.W Clark who pioneered in bringing the Naga languages into written form. Dr. Clark writes, “For several years, my mind has been settling down to the conviction that the English alphabet with the *Italic* sound of the letters is the best we can give these hill tribes who have no alphabet of their own”.<sup>15</sup>In order to educate the erstwhile Nagas teaching them to read and write became one of the most important tasks for the Christian missionaries in achieving their goals. Further, in order to teach the gospels to the newly converts translation of the Holy Bible into their languages became one of their priorities. In the beginning, the earliest Naga literature, grammar, translations and otherworks were limited to Christian themes only. In due course of time, the Holy Bible was translated into many Naga languages. The Old and New Testament Holy Bible, English Christian hymnals, the popular Lord’s Prayer “Our Father in Heaven”, short Bible stories and other scriptures, Naga English dictionaries and other texts and books were translated into Naga languages. Some of the forerunners who played a significant role in developing different Naga tribes included - E.W Clark and his wife Mary Clark who were the pioneers in Ao Literature. The Books of Matthew, John and Acts were published in 1885. The Ao Naga grammar was printed in 1893. An Ao-English dictionary appeared in 1911. In 1888 W.E Witter’s grammar and vocabulary was published in Lotha language. The Book of Matthew came out in 1906 translated by Perrine, and this was followed by printing of the Book of Mark in the Lotha language. A hymnal appeared in 1927 and by 1947 the New Testament was printed in the Lotha language. The pioneer responsible for Angami alphabet was H. Rivenburge. The Book of Matthew was published in Angami language in 1889, and by 1892-93 the Books of John, Acts, and a hymnal were published. Among the SumiNagas the Primer by Dickson appeared in 1908 and by 1928 the Book of Mark and a hymnal were published.<sup>16</sup> Similarly the literary works were extended to other Naga tribes.

### **Christian Missionaries & Humanitarians Activities among the Nagas**

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In the past, all sicknesses and illness caused by diseases and others were attributed to the works of the evil spirits. Number of costly rituals and sacrifices were performed to ward off the evil spirits from the person’s body who was inflicted with the sickness. In the Lotha Naga context, when a family member get sick they go to *ratsen* (medicine man) for consultation. For example, in one of the Lotha villages a man fell sick



and hope of recovery was doubtful. So the parents consulted the *ratsen*, who then performed the act of omen and said that his soul was captured by the evil spirit and so appeasement was required. On the advice of the *ratsen* the parents initiated an act of appeasement with required items to be paid to the evil spirits for the release of the soul. Surprisingly after the performance of the act, he recovered from his illness. But after the arrival of the Christian missionaries and with the introduction of concepts like hygiene, cleanliness, and other related health education such practices and beliefs among the Nagas got weaken. Until the advent of the Christian missionaries, the Nagas were not aware of modern medicine, its effects on sicknesses and diseases prevalent during that time. It was the Christian missionaries who brought modern medicine, and with it the basic medical treatment and related services started in the Naga Hills. Later qualified medical missionaries were also brought in and as result many Christian medical centres hospitals, dispensaries, medical collage were opened in the Naga Hills. The humanitarian activities of the Christian missionaries not only improved the health services in the Naga Hills but also greatly facilitated the missionary's activities among the Nagas. Howard and Harriet Houston writes, "The back door dispensary opened many opportunities to witness for Christ to the non-Christians and it was good way to build good will."<sup>17</sup>In the context of Ao and other Naga tribes Bendangyabang writes, "The missionaries' understanding of society, their attitudes and approaches to Nagas, despite their limitation and cultural differences seems remarkable. It contributed immensely to the development of the Aos and tribals in the Hills. Their concern for health and hygiene, food, dress and treatment of the sick won the hearts of the people and thus created new awareness in their social life."<sup>18</sup>The humanitarian works of the American missionaries formed one of the most commendable aspects of their activities. It broke down prejudice and dissipated opposition. The missionaries endeared themselves to the people where they worked. The work of evangelism was aided and Christian principles were disseminated through medical institutions.<sup>19</sup>

### **Prohibition of Drinking Local Rice Beer**

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When Christianity was first introduced to the Nagas they did not take it with favour. One of the reasons was accepting this new belief also meant forsaking their regular social habits, including drinking of rice-beer. The Christian missionaries declared the erstwhile Naga's 'way of life' as ungodly and unhealthy. For example, the use of local rice beer in festivals, community feasts, gatherings and ceremonies was a common feature of the Nagas. Traditionally rice beer was brewed and consumed by

almost all the Naga tribes. It was in fact a staple drink prepared in every household and used significantly in the Naga society. Traditionally among the Lotha Nagas, when a boy wants to marry a girl, a go-between (*Longapvui*) was sent to girl parent's house with a gourd full of finest rice beer brewed by the boy's family. If this act of gesture is accepted by the girl's parents then it would mean the proposal is accepted. The use or drinking of rice beer by the Nagas was a major concern for the Christian missionaries. The Christian missionaries emphasized that to be a Christian one must abstain from all intoxicants. So, all converts were strictly forbidden from using it. Amongst the Sumi Nagas, Angelova writes, "In the early years of Christian conversions, a Sumi would be excommunicated for performing such cultural forms, participating in the celebration of calendrial rites and tribal festivals or drinking rice beer."<sup>20</sup> Lotha writes, "Even though the missionaries thought more in terms of social benefits, to the Naga converts not drinking rice beer was a defining criterion for being a Christian."<sup>21</sup> Those Nagas who gave up the habit of drinking rice beer were labelled as goodly people and this meant Christian and those who still continue to drink were looked upon as "ungodly people" which otherwise meant non-Christian.

### Decline of Tribal Youth Dormitory Tradition among the Nagas Tribes

Youth dormitories are a traditional institution among several tribes of India. While some are exclusively for boys/youth/unmarried men others have dormitories for girls. The tribals have used these institutions for varied reasons and purposes. In the Naga context, traditionally *Morung* (youth dormitory), was a centre where the youths or bachelors of the village slept, and therefore was the largest building in the village. It existed, yet not just as a communal sleeping dormitory but as important centre for several activities. The erstwhile Naga socio-cultural values and beliefs system encapsulated in their oral tradition were transmitted by the community's elders to the younger generation in the *morung*. It was also a centre where the young boys learned various arts and crafts such as head-hunting, warfare, woodcarving, basket making, construction of houses, village gate, etc. They also learned folksongs, folktales, folk dance and music in the *morung*. Similarly, the girls also learnt the art of weaving, spinning, knitting, singing, dancing etc. Much more than these skills and techniques imparted in the *morungs* are the code of conduct, discipline, moral values, ethics, beliefs, attitude, behaviours etc. which significantly contributed to the overall development of the youth. The discontinuation of this tradition in the Naga society can be attributed to the advent of Christianity and the introduction of western education amongst the Nagas. Not very long after the arrival of Christian



missionaries in the then Naga Hills, the Naga's "way of life" underwent a drastic change. Today, the *morung* system has lost all of its functions and significance. For example, *Morung* also used to be a guardhouse of the village but as inter-tribal warfare and hostility decreased among the Nagas tribes because of Christianity and also efforts made by the British, the *morung* no longer continued to be a guardhouse. Another reason for its decline is when education began to be imparted through mission schools, the parents no longer sent their children to take part in the activities of the *morung* which profusely affected the functioning of the *morung* system. One of the major impacts of the discontinuation or decline of the *morung* system resulted in the discontinuation of their story telling tradition or oral tradition. The Nagas were once rich in their folklore but with the decline of the *morung* tradition, many of their rich tradition imbedded in their folklore also died out. Nevertheless, in order to revive this lost tradition of the past, an attempt is being made by the Government of Nagaland to celebrate a festival called Hornbill Festival. It is celebrated every year from 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December at Kisama Heritage Village, about 10 to 12 kms from the state capital Kohima. The main aim of this festival is to revive and protect the rich cultural heritage of the Nagas. One of the main features of the Hornbill Festival is the showcasing of replica *morungs* of different Naga tribes. It is an opportunity both for the Nagas and outsiders to experience the uniqueness of Naga culture; their sumptuous and exotic food, folksongs, folkdance and music, art and crafts, textiles etc. The lost tradition can be revived, protected and preserved only when that group or community practice or perform them. And Hornbill Festival is one festival among the Nagas that is making its effort not only to revive some of the lost tradition and culture of the Nagas but also transmitting Naga rich cultural heritage to the younger generation.

### **Abandonment of Head-Hunting Practices**

The erstwhile Nagas were head-hunters but head-hunting was restricted to enemy's heads only. It became such an intricate and essential part of their culture and identity that no account of these people could be complete without reference to it. Many Westerners (and others) have wrongly assumed that head-hunting was merely a matter of violence and murder, but for the pre-Christian Nagas it was much more than that. To them, it was something noble to be admired, a proof of bravery and strength.<sup>22</sup> It was not an individual affair but the whole village was involved in the raids. In the past, inter-tribal warfare was frequent and so in order to protect their village, women, children, life stocks, territory, forest land etc head hunting became

the sole mechanism for survival. The practice was also associated with many blessings such as good harvest, children, prosperity, wealth, success in hunting and fishing etc. The brave warriors who took heads were revered and admired by the villagers. They were also made to wear special shawls which represented a seal of honour. The practice continued as long as there was inter-tribal warfare and hostility in the Naga inhabited areas. When the British arrived and gained control of the Naga inhabited areas their attempt to stop the practice met with little success. It was only when the erstwhile Nagas learned the value of human life through the teaching of the gospels the warriors or the village as a whole began to give up the practice of head-hunting. Thongs writes, “The American Baptist Missionaries played a vital role in bringing the headhunting culture to an end, by convincing their converts that headhunting is a sin and is against morality. God, the Creator of man and the universe, will punish those who murder their fellow men. Therefore, all who embraced Christianity automatically stopped headhunting raids”.<sup>23</sup> The practice of head-hunting is now entirely abandoned in the Naga society.

## **Conclusion**

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The erstwhile Nagas did not receive Christianity with favour when it first arrived in the then Naga Hills. There was fear in the minds of the Naga people. The Christian missionaries were thought as special agents of the British Government of India. Both the British and the Christian missionaries may have assisted each other in establishing their interest in the Naga Hills but it is clear that their objectives were different from each other. While the British's interest was to establish control over the Naga Hills the aims of the American Baptist Missionaries was to gain converts. In the process of evangelising the “heathen” or “savage”, as the Nagas were sometime referred to as by the Christian missionaries many changes were brought about in the socio-cultural life of the Nagas. While some of the changes that were ushered in by the introduction of Christianity and education had deeper and lasting impact on the life and culture of the Nagas there are also some negative impacts of Christianity and education on their socio-cultural life of the Nagas. Mary Clark remarked that every form of demon worship, open or suspected, was attacked; Sunday breaking, rice beer drinking, licentiousness, and all social vices. Instead of congregating promiscuously at different houses to sleep at night, singing objectionable songs, telling doubtful stories, and engaging in lewd conversations, these young reformers separated themselves and built a dormitory for their own accommodation, in which purity and holiness should reign. Here at morning and

evening time the voice of prayer and songs of praise are heard.<sup>24</sup> Commenting on the positive impact of Christianity, Venuh writes, “By establishing schools, hospitals, and churches, the life of the Nagas were made more orderly, civilized, comfortable and cultured. It also brought about far reaching moral crusade to change the Naga personality in the direction of self-sacrifice for the entire humanity”.<sup>25</sup> Education which first started through mission schools/Sunday schools and later formal schools, colleges and university resulted in producing a group of intellectuals, academicians, scholars, researchers and many other professionals in various fields in the Naga society who contributed further in the development of their society. There also emerged among the Nagas the notions of sovereignty, state, nation, state, independence, liberation etc. Another significant impact of Christianity was the production of number of Naga evangelists who after the departure of the Christian missionaries from the Naga Hills carried forward the task of evangelising the Nagas. Perhaps one of the most significant impacts of the Christianity on erstwhile Naga’s socio-cultural practices was the abandonment of the practice of Head-hunting. The Christian missionaries pioneered in bringing the practice of head-hunting among the Nagas to an end. Joseph Thongs writes, “The American Baptist missionaries played a vital role in bringing the head-hunting culture to an end, by convincing their converts that head-hunting is a sin and is against morality. God, the Creator of man and the Universe, will punish those who murder their fellow men. Therefore, all who embraced Christianity automatically stopped head-hunting raids.”<sup>26</sup> Regrettably the abandonment of the head-hunting practices by the Nagas also drastically affected their traditional socio-cultural practices such as *morung* tradition, feast of merit, ritual and ceremonies, and many aspects of their traditional and cultural practices. As Thong writes, “The practice of head-hunting and Feast of Merit are at the heart and soul of the Naga culture, around which the rest of the life activities are inter-woven. Establishment of Village, the village gate, construction of house and its decoration, dress and ornaments, wood-carving, stone monuments, dyeing, tattooing, songs and dances, marriage, implements and tools, cultivation, chieftains, clan system, beliefs, rituals and festivals etc revolve around and link up with head-hunting and Feast of Merit, which are basically the same in almost all the Naga tribes, except for some local and minor variations from tribe to tribe, village to village and clan to clan.”<sup>27</sup> Furer-Hamendorf’s view on the interruption of the cultural flow writes, “The more closer and intimate contact with the people which affected by missionary enterprise-through preaching of the gospel and schooling not only proselytized the Nagas, but also interrupted the flow of their indigenous culture as well”. About 99.9 % of the total population of

the Nagas identify themselves as Christian. Today, Nagaland is known across India and the world as Christian state.

## Notes

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1. Nagas are a major ethnic group of people. Their oral tradition says that they have migrated from Mongolia, from there they migrated to south-western China, then to Burma (present Myanmar), and finally settled in their present inhabitate which is called Nagaland. Nagaland is one of the states of North-east India. British military and officers, anthropologists, missionaries, and many others have studied about them, testified about the Nagas. For example, Elwin Verrier wrote, "Nagas are a fine people, of whom their country is proud; strong and self-reliant, with the free and independent outlook characteristic of highlanders everywhere, good to look at, with an unerring instinct of colour and design, friendly and cheerful with a keen sense of humour, gifted with splendid dances and a love of songs.
2. Naga Hills was a former district of the Assam province of British India. It was inhabited by the Naga tribes. The area is now part of the Nagaland state.
3. Downs, F.S. (1992) History of Christianity in India, Bangalore: The Church History Association of India.
4. Sword, V.H. (1935). Baptists in Assam. Chicago: Conference Press.
5. Different Naga tribes of North-East India have different local name of the Creator God, for the AoNagas *Lijaba* was the Creator God, *Ukepenuppfu* among the AngamiNagas, *Potsofo* for the LothaNagas, the RengmaNagas called their Creator God as *Sunggigu*, *Litsaba* among the SangtamNagas, *Alhou* among the SumiNagas etc.
6. The tiger would mean the farmers fight with the weeds of their field; yarn would mean entanglement or trouble of various kinds, and if the yarn is red it meant the village will experience bloodshed; rice symbolized a good harvest.
7. Jamir, Tiatoshi and Vasa Ditamulu. (2008). Archaeology of Local Culture: New Findings and Interpretations in Nagaland.
8. Mills, J.P. (1922). TheLotha Naga, London: Macmillan.
9. The ancestors of theLothassay, a mild thunder-storm when someone dies in the village is a symbol of God's sympathy and sorrow.
10. Among the LothaNaags *Ronsyu/Rossi* was the god/spirit of agriculture, Sukhyingo was the god/spirit of wild animals, *Jupvu* was the god of water, *Oki sukhying* was the god of house, and evils spirits is commonly known by the name *tsungrham*.
11. Dudek, E. Edwr, *Tribal Religious Beliefs of North-East India with Special Emphasis on Nagaland and the Introduction and Effects of the Gospel*, Globeserve Journal of Mission.

12. Impur is an Ao Naga town about 15 kms away from the heart of Mokokchung district, Nagaland. It was established as a mission centre in 1894 by the American missionaries.
13. Mary Clark was the wife of the pioneer missionary E.W. Clark known for his pioneering missionary work in Nagaland. He transcribed the spoken Ao language into a written script. Along with his wife Mary Mead Clark, they set up the first school in the Naga Hills region of North-East India.
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27. Ibid, pii

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